

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, WORKPLACE AUTHORITY, AND THE  
PARADOX OF POWER

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## SEXUAL HARASSMENT, WORKPLACE AUTHORITY, AND THE PARADOX OF POWER

For three decades, scholars have developed a large research literature to document and explain workplace sexual harassment. Overwhelmingly, however, this work relies upon cross-sectional data, preventing researchers from understanding whether personal characteristics and job conditions are causes of sexual harassment or simply correlates. This article uses longitudinal data from the Youth Development Study (YDS) to make stronger inferences about the combined effects of gender and workplace power. Using a lagged dependent variable for past harassment, the authors predict change in the likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment and in its frequency and severity. Expressions of gender and workplace authority emerge as consistent predictors. In particular, women supervisors are more, rather than less, likely to report sexually harassing behaviors and to define their experiences as sexual harassment than non-supervisors. Intensive interviews with a subset of survey respondents suggest that male coworkers, clients, and supervisors use harassment as an "equalizer" against women in power, consistent with research showing that sexual harassment is less about sexual desire than about control and domination.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT, WORKPLACE AUTHORITY, AND THE PARADOX OF POWER

Though the term sexual harassment was not coined until the 1970s (Farley 1978), formal organizational responses have since diffused rapidly (Dobbin 2009; Dobbin and Kelly 2007; Schultz 2003). Today, sexual harassment workshops, policies, and grievance procedures are standard, taken-for-granted features of the human resources landscape. Since the groundbreaking work of feminist scholars such as Catharine MacKinnon (1979), the sexual harassment research literature has followed a similar trajectory. Sociologists are today linking sexual harassment to workplace gender inequalities more broadly (Martin 2003) and to other forms of workplace discrimination and abuse (Lopez, Hodson, and Roscigno 2009; Roscigno 2007). Power, at work and in the broader society, pervades each of these literatures and their attempts to explain harassment (Berdahl 2007a; Rospenda, Richman, and Nawyn 1998; Welsh 1999).

Yet after three decades of scholarship on the pervasiveness and predictors of sexual harassment (see, e.g., Benson and Thomson 1982; Gutek 1985; Hendrix, Rueb, and Steel 1998; Tong 1984), basic questions about whether and how workplace power affects harassment remain unanswered. Studies often include inconsistent measures, wide-ranging time frames, and samples or research settings that are narrow in focus. Overwhelmingly, this research relies upon cross-sectional data that are better suited for identifying correlates than for isolating causes (for an exception, see Freels, Richman, and Rospenda 2005). In the absence of high quality longitudinal data, the dynamics of gender, power, and sexual harassment remain poorly understood.

This paper uses quantitative and qualitative data from the Youth Development Study (YDS) (Mortimer 2003) to test predictions from an integrated feminist model of sexual harassment. Our quantitative analysis tests whether expressions of gender and workplace power

remain predictive in models that include strong statistical controls for prior sexual harassment experiences. Using a lagged dependent variable approach, we estimate models predicting whether respondents report any harassing behaviors, the number of behaviors they report, and whether they define their experiences as harassment. We interpret these results in light of our in-depth interviews with a subset of YDS respondents, feminist theories of gender and power, and the extant research literature on sexual harassment.

### **GENDER, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND WORKPLACE POWER**

Sexual harassment is classified as a form of sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) describes sexual harassment as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature...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” (U.S. EEOC 2008). The EEOC thus recognizes both *quid pro quo* and hostile work environment harassment. *Quid pro quo*, Latin for “something for something,” occurs when sexual favors are made a condition of employment or a basis for employment decisions such as promotions, benefits, or job assignments. Most sexual harassment complaints are classified as hostile work environment harassment. This occurs when sexual conduct or materials in the workplace unreasonably interfere with workers’ jobs or creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment.

Catharine MacKinnon (1979) was among the first to argue that sexual harassment should qualify as a form of sex discrimination by linking the phenomenon to gender inequality and patriarchy. Its prevalence is difficult to determine, as estimates range from 16 to 90 percent of

working women and 15 to 45 percent of working men (Kohlman 2001; Welsh 1999). The vast majority of harassment is unreported (Welch 1999; Marshall 2005), but 84 percent of the 13,867 complaints reported to the EEOC in 2008 were filed by women (U.S. EEOC 2009).

MacKinnon's thesis, that harassment results from women's oppression and subordinate position to men, has thus received some degree of empirical support (Berdahl 2007a; Cleveland and Kerst 1993; Gutek 1985; Uggen and Blackstone 2004; Welsh 1999; Wilson and Thompson 2001).

Connell's well-known theory of hegemonic masculinity (1987) similarly emphasizes the intersection of gender and power, providing a broad sociological framework for understanding sexual harassment. Connell (1987; see also 1992) argues that society privileges a single version of masculinity above all others, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. Masculinity is defined as "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (Connell 1995: 71). Connell's theory views gender as a social institution as much as an individual characteristic (Lorber 1994; Martin 2004). As such, gender helps people meet their basic needs by shaping how they organize themselves in families, schools, the workplace, and other institutions. While any number of possible gender ideologies could be invoked to structure social interactions, it is the ideals of hegemonic masculinity that shape norms of gendered interaction.

Research on the meaning and power of "girl watching" (Quinn 2002) is instructive in revealing how hegemonic masculinity operates in the workplace and how ideas about gender organize workplace interactions. Based on her interviews and observations with office workers, Quinn found that men sexually evaluate women as a form of gendered play. Often in the company of other men, verbal gestures or explicit comments about women's bodies occur as a

production of masculinity or a way to display their heterosexuality. In many instances, other men, rather than women, are the intended audience. Girl watching is viewed as light-hearted and playful among men -- who are often confused or surprised when women complain. In its most serious form, however, the male gaze demonstrates their power, as men, to sexually evaluate women (Quinn 2002). Like Quinn, Martin (2001) finds that men tend to “mobilize masculinities” in the workplace in ways that exclude women. She too reports that men’s mobilization of masculinity causes harm to women as a group, even when such actions are not intended to do so. Girl watching and mobilizing masculinities are thus two examples of the sort of “gendering practices in collective contexts” (Martin 2006) that reveal hegemonic masculinity as the predominant ideology shaping gender as a social institution.

Connell, MacKinnon, Martin, and Quinn all point to the conclusion that people who cannot or will not conform to standards of hegemonic masculinity (i.e., women or gay men) will be vulnerable to workplace harassment. This is consistent with research emphasizing the performative nature of “doing gender” in ways that justify social arrangements based on sex, rendering them normal and natural (West and Zimmerman 1987). Workers who fail to “do gender” appropriately face scrutiny, which may come in the form of sexual harassment. Practicing gender is crucial to the perpetuation of gender inequality. As Martin explains, “If the gender institution failed to provide a repertoire of practices for societal members’ use, they (we) would be at a loss about how to ‘do gender’ at work (and elsewhere)” (Martin 2003:344).

While men may be especially vulnerable to harassment if they are perceived to be more feminine (DeSouza and Solberg 2004; Waldo, Berdahl, and Fitzgerald 1998), women may be subjected to sexual harassment if they challenge their subordinate position in the current gender system. Rospenda and colleagues’ (1998) research on “contrapower” sexual harassment suggests



that harassers with lesser organizational authority than their targets may still invoke informal power derived from their gender, race, and social class positions.

Women in authority thus offer an intriguing paradox for theory and research on sexual harassment, and scholars have put forth two distinctive visions of gender and workplace power. The first, known as the “vulnerable-victim” hypothesis, suggests that more vulnerable workers will be subject to greater harassment, including women, racial minorities, and those with the most precarious positions and the least workplace authority. The second vision of gender and workplace power, sometimes labeled the “power-threat” model, suggests that women who pose a greater threat to male dominance are more likely targets of harassment. On balance, there is greater support for the paradoxical “power-threat” model, in which women in positions of power -- at the organizational or societal level -- are most likely to face harassment.

Women supervisors, who hold workplace power and authority over male co-workers, directly challenge the ‘natural’ superiority of men and subordination of women. Joan Acker (1990) argues that workers, though seemingly gender neutral, are actually framed as inherently male. Those perceived as solely committed to paid employment (historically, men) are viewed by others as naturally more deserving of workplace responsibility and authority. Women, in contrast, still retain primary responsibility for childrearing, housework, and other familial responsibilities. Acker argues that women’s bodies, in the context of paid employment, are thus “suspect, stigmatized, and used as grounds for control and exclusion” (Acker 1990: 152).

Stratification and organization research consistently shows women to be underrepresented in positions of authority and often relegated to the lower rungs of management (Elliott and Smith 2004; Gorman 2005; Kalev 2009; Reskin 2003; Reskin and McBrier 2000), although some strategies show promise for reducing inequalities and increasing organizational

gender diversity (Herring 2009; Kalev 2009; Reskin and McBrier 2000). When women are able to crack the glass ceiling (Cotter et al. 2001; Davidson and Cooper 1992; Eagly and Carli 2007) and obtain leadership positions, stereotypical gender beliefs about their “natural” competencies and limitations shape larger perceptions of their abilities and job performance.

While men in traditionally female occupations reap the rewards of a glass elevator to leadership positions (Hultin 2003; Williams 2004), women supervisors face legitimacy problems as compared to similar men (Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999). Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin (1999) highlight the importance of mentors for women supervisors from which to “borrow” social capital. Similarly, other research suggests that women managers are more likely to be promoted into positions when a greater proportion of women are already there, highlighting the difficulty in gaining entrance into these positions in the first place (Cohen, Broschak, and Haveman 1998). Both processes point to potential structural vulnerabilities for women supervisors.<sup>1</sup>

The daily experience of sexual harassment, however, is often unaccounted for in research on gender stratification and employment (Roscigno 2007). Using the power-threat hypothesis explained above, Das (forthcoming) suggests that women who are “too assertive” threaten the gender hierarchy and, as a result, are denigrated through harassment (see also De Coster, Estes, and Mueller 1999). Although Das did not find direct support for the hypothesis that women in high status jobs experience more harassment, the analysis was based on a comparison of occupational categories rather than direct measures of supervisory authority. Similarly, in a

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<sup>1</sup> Another gendered practice affecting women in management is a phenomenon that Ryan and Haslam call the “glass cliff” (2007). Based on a series of experiments along with historical research on Britain’s 100 biggest firms, they find that people are more willing to give women positions of workplace power when there is a strong chance of failure (e.g., by promoting women only after an organization has been failing for a number of years) (2007; Haslam and Ryan 2008). Ryan and Haslam contend that those who oppose the idea of women in power use this glass cliff to “prove” that women will fail when given workplace authority.

survey of workers in a large firm, De Coster and colleagues (1999) also found little difference between female managers and non-managers in the likelihood of believing sexual harassment is a problem for them at work. They did, however, find general support for the power-threat hypothesis, as women with greater tenure in the company, independent of age, were more likely to view sexual harassment as a problem (see also Mueller, De Coster, and Estes 2001). The authors conclude that “harassment may be an instrumental behavior against powerful women who are embarking on traditional male territory” (De Coster et al. 1999: 42).

Jennifer Berdahl reconceptualizes sexual harassment as *sex-based* harassment, defined as “behavior that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on that individual’s sex” (2007a: 644). Sex-based harassment is not driven by sexual desire, but rather by an underlying motivation to protect sex-based social standing. As a result, targets of sex-based harassment are most likely to be women who threaten men’s status. This hypothesis was well-supported in other work, where Berdahl (2007b) found that women with stereotypically masculine personalities (assertive, dominant, and independent) were more likely than other women to experience harassment at school, among friends, or at work. When women are targeted by male harassers, Berdahl argues that harassers reinforce male dominance by relegating women to the “low status of being a means to a man’s sexual ends” (2007a: 649). When men are targeted by other men, harassers undermine the masculinity of their targets in attempts to “prove” their own manhood. Based on the dynamics of gender and power in the workplace, we form two primary hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1: Men who do not conform to standards of hegemonic masculinity are more likely than men who do conform to standards of hegemonic masculinity to experience sexual harassment in the workplace.*

*Hypothesis 2: Women with more workplace authority (i.e., women who supervise others) are more likely than women who do not supervise others to experience sexual harassment in the workplace.*

## INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATION-LEVEL CORRELATES

### Individual Characteristics

In addition to gender and power, the extant literature directs attention to individual and work characteristics affecting experiences of sexual harassment. Consistent with the vulnerable-victims hypothesis, some studies show that women of color are more likely to be targeted for harassment, or to experience its more virulent forms (Gruber and Bjorn 1982; Mansfield et al. 1991; Murrell 1996; Welsh et al. 2006). Moreover, women of color may be subjected to a racialized form of sexual harassment, whereby the effect of gender and race cannot be separated when describing their victimization (Buchanan and Ormerod 2002; Texeira 2002). In this regard, a recent examination of discrimination cases filed with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) found that black women are more likely to experience greater discrimination in hiring, promotion, and general harassment (Ortiz and Roscigno 2009).

In contrast to these findings, other studies report that racial minorities are no more likely than whites to be sexually harassed (Das forthcoming; De Coster et al. 1999; Wyatt and Riederle 1995). The power-threat hypothesis predicts that racial minorities pose less of a threat to male dominance because of racist stereotypes and practices that inhibit career advancement. This model suggests that the effect of racial identity on harassment may interact with workplace power or prestige. In a nationally representative sample of workers, Das (forthcoming) also found that foreign-born workers were less likely to report sexual harassment, attributing this effect to the decreased likelihood that immigrants would label potentially harassing behaviors as unwanted or offensive (see also, Shupe et al. 2002).

With regard to age and family status, younger, single women tend to experience greater sexual harassment than older, married women (De Coster et al. 1999; Gutek 1985; Ragins and

Scandura 1995). De Coster and colleagues (1999) theorize that single women are perceived as challenging traditional family structures as well as the economic dominance of men in the workplace and they may also be viewed as less protected and more sexually available. With regard to parenthood, Budig and England (2001) have revealed a 7 percent per child wage penalty for motherhood (see also Correll, Benard, and Cotter 2007). They attribute part of this gap to employer discrimination, as mothers are often funneled into less rewarding jobs, receive fewer promotions, and are offered lower pay than childless women. Given this pervasive discrimination, working mothers may also be vulnerable to harassment for similarly challenging traditional family structures.

Social class background has also been considered in past research as a correlate or predictor of sexual harassment (McLaughlin, Uggen, and Blackstone 2008), though few studies have established an explicit link between family class origins and harassment. De Coster and colleagues (1999) found that more educated women are more likely to report harassment (see also, Das forthcoming). Relying on the power-threat perspective, the authors suggest that more educated women challenge the “economic and status resources traditionally monopolized by males” (De Coster et al. 1999: 29). In contrast, scholars who use the vulnerable-victim model predict that those with fewer economic resources are most vulnerable to harassment.

### **Work Characteristics**

Work characteristics are also closely linked to sexual harassment. Routine activities theory, developed to explain crime and victimization, emphasizes the presence of motivated harassers and the availability of targets. People employed in large establishments, for example, are more likely to encounter employees with sexist attitudes, and potential harassers may be

more inclined to act inappropriately due to the anonymity of large organizations (De Coster et al. 1999). Supporting this assertion, Chamberlain and colleagues (2008) found greater rates of sexual harassment, especially patronizing behavior and sexual taunting, in larger organizations. On the other hand, larger organizations are also most likely to have formal harassment policies in place, in part to comply with federal regulations (Hirsch and Kornrich 2008).

Occupations and industries vary greatly in the prevalence of sexual harassment, though it has been documented across a great range of job settings (Collinson and Collinson 1996; Folgero and Fjeldstad 1995; Giuffre and Williams 1994; Kalof et al. 2001). In addition to vertical gender segregation that results in fewer women in management positions, horizontal segregation also exists, where women are concentrated in devalued, lower-paying, more feminized work (Baron and Newman 1990; Peterson and Morgan 1995; Reskin 1993; Ridgeway 1997). Sexual harassment (Chamberlain et al. 2008; Lopez et al. 2009) and supervisory bullying (Rosigno, Lopez, and Hodson 2009) frequently occur in more feminized work groups. Nevertheless, the weight of the evidence indicates that sexual harassment is most likely to occur in male-dominated work settings (Fitzgerald et al. 1997; Mansfield et al. 1991; Pierce 2004; Rospenda et al. 1998; Uggen and Blackstone 2004). While employment rates among women in traditionally male occupations are on the rise (Percheski 2008), women in these occupations challenge the status quo simply by being women. We thus propose the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 3: Sexual harassment will be greater in industries and occupations characterized by a higher proportion of male workers.*

## **DATA, MEASURES, AND METHODOLOGY**

We analyze data from the Youth Development Study (YDS) (Mortimer 2003). The prospective longitudinal study began in 1988, when participants were ninth graders in St. Paul, Minnesota public schools. The original sample was comprised of 1,010 youth, who have since been surveyed regularly. Respondents were asked about their experiences of workplace sexual harassment at multiple points in adolescence and young adulthood. For this paper, we draw from later waves of survey collection (2003 and 2004) when participants were approximately 29 and 30 years old. Survey retention was 73 percent in 2004 and our analytic sample is comprised of the working participants who responded to sexual harassment items in both of these waves.<sup>2</sup> To better contextualize harassing experiences, we also draw from in-depth interviews with YDS respondents. In 2002 and 2003, we conducted interviews with 14 men and 19 women who had reported some form of sexual harassment in earlier survey waves. Interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes at a place of the respondents' choosing. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms are used to conceal interviewees' identities.

### **Measures: Sexual Harassment**

In both 2003 and 2004, YDS participants were asked whether they had experienced eight different behavioral indicators of workplace sexual harassment at any point in the past year. Respondents then reported whether they considered any of their experiences to be sexual harassment. These behavioral indicators were modeled after the Inventory of Sexual Harassment (Gruber 1992) and the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (Fitzgerald et al. 1988; Gelfand, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow 1995). Taking advantage of the longitudinal nature of the survey, we

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<sup>2</sup> As with any large-scale longitudinal study, panel retention is an issue in these data. Retention among YDS respondents is somewhat higher among respondents from advantaged backgrounds. In 1998, when the retention rate was 76 percent, those remaining in the study had somewhat higher levels of parental education, occupational prestige, and income levels. Moreover, respondents were more likely to be white (80 percent vs. 74 percent of the original sample), native born (94 percent vs. 93 percent), and female (57 percent vs. 53 percent) (Mortimer 2003).

statistically control for respondents' experiences of harassment in the prior year. Though several of the behavioral measures capture similar experiences across the two waves, the wording differs slightly from 2003 to 2004.<sup>3</sup> Participants were also asked how often the behavior occurred, choosing between three options: once, two to three times, or four or more times. Figure 1 displays the number of occurrences for the eight behavioral items for those who experienced any harassment on each measure. For most indicators, people were more likely to report the behavior four or more times than in smaller frequencies. This suggests that individuals seldom experience sexually harassing behaviors as isolated incidents, but are instead repeatedly exposed.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Descriptive statistics for all measures in our study are presented in Table 1. We assess our dependent variable—sexual harassment in 2004—in three ways. First, we report a dichotomous measure that captures whether respondents experienced any of eight sexual harassment indicators. As shown, approximately 36 percent reported some form of sexual harassment in 2004. Where a lagged measure of harassment is employed in models using this dichotomous outcome, our 2003 lagged measure represents whether respondents experienced any of five indicators that best reflect the 2004 indicators (offensive material, staring or leering, staring or invasion of personal space, questions about one's private life, and unwanted touching). The proportion experiencing harassment was quite similar in 2003 and 2004 (see Table 1).

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

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<sup>3</sup> In 2003, participants were asked whether they had experienced: 1) pictures, posters, or other materials that you found offensive; 2) staring or leering at you in a way that made you uncomfortable; 3) staring or invasion of your personal space; 4) direct questioning about your private life; 5) unwanted touching; 6) offensive jokes, remarks, or gossip about other men or women; 7) offensive jokes, remarks, or gossip directed at you; or 8) physical assault by co-worker, boss, or supervisor. In 2004, participants were asked whether they had experienced: 1) offensive pictures, posters, or other materials; 2) staring or leering at you in a way that made you uncomfortable; 3) attempts to discuss sex; 4) suggestive stories or offensive remarks; 5) been touched in a way that made you uncomfortable; 6) repeated requests for drinks or dinner despite rejection; 7) attempts to establish an unwanted sexual relationship with you; or, 8) suggestions to cooperate with sexual behaviors in order to be well treated.



Second, we measure sexual harassment using a count of the number of behavioral indicators experienced in the past year. Because of differences in question wording across the two waves, this outcome variable is reduced to represent the four “core” indicators asked in both waves of survey collection (offensive material, staring or leering, attempts to discuss sex, and inappropriate touching). As shown in Table 1, the mean number of indicators reported in 2004 was less than one. Among respondents who reported at least one indicator, however, the mean count increases to approximately 1.6 (not shown). Where a lag for 2003 harassment is used in relation to this outcome, we control for a count of the following four indicators: offensive material, staring or leering, questions about one’s private life, and unwanted touching.

Finally, we measure sexual harassment using respondents’ subjective reports of harassment in 2003 and 2004, rather than any behavioral indicators. As relatively few men subjectively defined their experiences as sexual harassment, we limit analyses of subjective sexual harassment to women only. As shown in Table 1, approximately 11 percent of women reported subjective sexual harassment in each of the two waves.

### **Measures: Independent Variables**

*Expressions of Gender.* To assess gender identity and performance, we include measures of gender (male is coded as 1, female as 0), self-reported femininity, and sexual orientation. Our femininity indicator is based on the question, “How feminine would you say you are?” with scores ranging from 1 (“not at all feminine”) to 5 (“extremely feminine”). As shown in Table 1, the average femininity score for all respondents is 2.69 (“about average”), 1.51 for male respondents, and 3.58 for female respondents. Our measure of sexual orientation captures both respondents’ sexual identity and how they are perceived by others. In 2000, participants were

asked to describe their sexual identity (straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, unsure, or other). In 2004, they were asked, “Has anyone ever assumed you were a different sexual orientation than you are?” Those who answered yes to this question *or* who self-identified as anything other than heterosexual were coded as 1 (about 10 percent of respondents); all others were coded as 0.

*Workplace Power.* We include measures of supervisory authority and job security to assess overall workplace power. About 32 percent of respondents supervise other employees at their primary place of employment (see Table 1). To measure gender differences in the influence of organizational power, we include an interaction term for gender and supervisory authority. This reveals a sizeable gender difference, with 37 percent of men and 28 percent of women supervising others at their primary job. Job security is based on responses to the question, “How secure is your primary job?” with responses ranging from 1 (“not at all secure”) to 4 (“very secure”). Because experiencing sexual harassment may affect perceptions of job security, this measure is calculated based on the 2003 rather than 2004 questionnaire.

*Individual Characteristics.* Given the racial composition of the YDS (83 percent white in our analytic sample) we are limited to a simple dichotomous measure of self-reported race. We also consider immigrant status (born in the United States is coded as 1), whether the participant is married or cohabiting with a romantic partner (coded as 1), and whether they have children (parent equals 1). As shown in Table 1, 94 percent of respondents were born in the United States, 71 percent were married or cohabiting, and 60 percent were parents. We also include indicators of educational attainment, measured in years of schooling, and self-reported household income.

*Work Characteristics.* Respondents reported the number of weekly hours worked at their primary jobs, as well as the number of employees in their workplace, the latter derived from an ordered categorical measure ranging from “less than 25” to “10,000 or more employees.” We

recoded values to represent the midpoint of each category, and then took the natural log to reduce skewness. Overall job satisfaction ranges from 1 “extremely dissatisfied” to 6 “extremely satisfied,” with a mean of 4.3 corresponding to a response of “somewhat satisfied.” Similar to job security, this measure is taken from 2003 data. We also include dummy variables for primary occupation based on the Census 2000 Special EEO Tabulation (U.S. Census Bureau 2006).<sup>4</sup> As shown in Table 1, 28 percent of workers were classified as professionals, 14 percent held managerial positions, 19 percent as technical or craft workers, and 39 percent in service positions (including sales and administrative support). Finally, the proportion of female workers in respondents’ industry is derived from 2004 U.S. Census estimates of detailed industry compositions (U.S. Department of Labor 2009).

## **Method of Analysis**

We use regression techniques to estimate the effects of individual and work characteristics on sexual harassment for our analytic sample of young adult workers. We first present findings from a logistic regression analysis predicting a dichotomous measure of *any* sexual harassment in 2004. Next, we use a negative binomial regression to predict the *number* of behavioral indicators experienced. We use a count model because the outcome variable is highly skewed. Nearly two-thirds of our sample did not report any harassing behaviors, violating the normality assumption of ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression (we chose the negative

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<sup>4</sup> The EEO tabulation lists nine job categories. Due to the small number of participants belonging to certain job categories, we collapsed our data into four overarching groups: professionals, managerial, technical/craft, and service. The professional and managerial categories are directly equivalent to EEO job categories. The technical/craft category consists of four combined EEO job categories: technicians, craft workers, operatives, and laborers and helpers. Lastly, our service category consists of the following EEO job categories: sales workers, administrative support workers, and service workers. Supervisory status was constructed independently of job categories, and supervisors were prevalent within all four job categories. Approximately 52 percent of workers classified as officials and managers supervised others in their primary job, compared to 29 percent of professionals, 32 percent of technical/craft workers, and 24 percent of service workers. Statistical models excluding job categories produced similar estimates to those presented in this paper (not shown, available from authors).

binomial regression technique over a Poisson model because a chi-square test identified overdispersion in our sample). Lastly, we predict subjective sexual harassment among women only, contrasting these results against our basic dichotomous and count models. The lagged dependent variable in the subjective harassment model refers to whether individuals considered their experiences with any of the eight behavioral indicators listed in 2003 as sexual harassment.<sup>5</sup>

Each of our models takes advantage of the longitudinal nature of the YDS by including a lagged dependent variable for earlier experiences of sexual harassment (in 2003). This approach provides a strong control for stable, person-specific characteristics (such as self-efficacy) that may influence both the likelihood of being sexually harassed and other independent variables. We estimate logistic regression models predicting any occurrence of sexually harassing behaviors, as well as models predicting respondents' subjective understanding of whether they were sexually harassed. These models take the following form:

$$\log [P(Harass_{i2004}=1)/P(Harass_{i2004}=0)] = \alpha + \beta_1 Supervisor_{i2004} + \beta_2 Harass_{i2003} + \dots + \beta_k X_{i2004}$$

where  $i$  represents individual respondents,  $Harass$  indicates the probability of experiencing sexual harassment in 2004 and the lagged measure taken in 2003,  $Supervisor$  represents our dichotomous measure of workplace authority,  $\beta$  signifies the effect of the independent variables,  $X$  denotes other explanatory variables, and  $\alpha$  represents a constant term. Our negative binomial models predicting the count of sexual harassment experiences adopt a similar strategy, assessing variation in more frequent or severe harassment.

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<sup>5</sup> In these analyses, we excluded our control for foreign-born women because it produced unstable coefficients due to insufficient sample size. Moreover, because our sample consists of women only, we exclude the gender interactions present in Tables 2 and 3 for supervisory status and self-reported femininity.

A total of 582 respondents answered our sexual harassment questions in both the 2003 and 2004 waves of YDS data collection. To minimize missing data for our independent variables, we substitute responses from up to two prior waves of survey collection (2002 and 2003).<sup>6</sup> Although this method of handling missing data relies upon a stability assumption (see, e.g., Allison 1995: 147-150; 2002), it has numerous advantages over imputation-based approaches when the time between observations is relatively short.<sup>7</sup>

We first present regression results for our three harassment outcomes, before offering a more focused analysis of gender and authority. We then discuss respondents' own descriptions of their harassment experiences, linking key findings from the quantitative analysis to our interviews with survey respondents.

## RESULTS

### Predictors of Sexual Harassment

Results from our first logistic regression analysis are shown in Table 2. Model 1 is a simple additive model that does not consider interactions between gender and other factors. Here, expressions of gender are not predictive, but workplace power, as measured by supervisory authority, is weakly associated with sexual harassment. While few other variables are predictive in this model, those born in the United States and those with lower levels of overall job satisfaction are more likely to experience harassment. It is important to note, however, that we

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<sup>6</sup> For example, five individuals did not report whether or not they had children in 2004, but responded to the same survey question in the prior year. Similarly, household income was missing for 47 cases in 2004. While we were not able to reach the desired 582 cases for this variable, values for 22 cases were taken from 2003 survey responses and, in cases where values were still missing, 7 cases from 2002 (N=564). Since job satisfaction and job security were lagged one year in our analyses, values were imputed from 2002 only.

<sup>7</sup> We also recoded one outlier for total household income. One respondent reported an income of \$620,964, which was recoded at the maximum (\$423,000) so as not to unduly influence our results.

cannot reject the null hypothesis that all coefficients are equal to zero in Model 1, because the chi-square value for this additive equation is not significant.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

When we include the hypothesized gender interaction terms for self-reported femininity and supervisor status in Model 2, the overall model is much more predictive. The addition of these measures reveals a relationship between expressions of gender and workplace power consistent with our second hypothesis. Because gender conditions the effects of femininity and supervisor status, their associations with sexual harassment are masked in Model 1.

Under the interaction coding, the main *Supervisor* and *Femininity* estimates now indicate their effects for women, while the *Supervisor\*Male* and *Femininity\*Male* interactions show the difference in their effects for men and women. Consistent with our second hypothesis, women who supervise others have 130 percent higher odds of experiencing harassment than female non-supervisors ( $e^{.834}=2.30$ ). The significant *Supervisor\*Male* interaction indicates a large gender gap in the effects of supervisory authority, but male supervisors are not significantly less likely than male non-supervisors to report harassment ( $e^{(.834-.964)}=.88$ ). Self-reported femininity is not strongly associated with harassment for women, but it raises the odds of harassment for men, in keeping with hypothesis 1.<sup>8</sup> Among the individual and work characteristics, the effects for nativity status and lagged job satisfaction remain significant. In addition, race and establishment size also emerge as near-significant predictors, with racial minorities and those in larger firms being somewhat more likely to experience sexual harassment ( $p<.10$ ).

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<sup>8</sup> Table 2 does not provide a direct test of the effect of self-reported femininity on harassment for men. In additional analyses (not shown), we recoded our measure of gender so that the main *Supervisor* and *Femininity* terms reflect their effects for men, while the *Supervisor\*Female* and *Femininity\*Female* interaction terms reflect gender differences in these effects. Under this coding, self-reported femininity increases the odds of harassment for men ( $p<.10$ ). When the sample is restricted to men only, however, self-reported femininity falls just short of standard significance levels when coded as an ordered categorical ( $p=.10$ ) or dichotomous ( $p=.11$ ) measure.

Model 3 includes a statistical control for whether respondents experienced sexual harassment in the previous year. As expected, the lagged dependent variable is a strong and significant predictor. Those who reported harassment in 2003, relative to those who did not, were 6.5 times more likely to report harassment in 2004 ( $e^{1.877}=6.53$ ). Even with the inclusion of the lag, expressions of gender and workplace power remain powerful predictors. In addition, a near-significant main gender effect also emerges in this model. In the lagged equation, the effects of race, the number of employees, and job satisfaction diminish.

In Model 4, we include a combined measure of perceived and self-reported sexual orientation. To avoid over-controlling for expressions of gender, we removed self-reported femininity (and the corresponding gender interaction) from the model. Those who do not identify as heterosexual or who are so labeled by others appear somewhat more likely to experience harassment. In separate models, we tested for gender interactions with other independent variables, including sexual orientation (not shown). In these analyses, the effect of sexual orientation did not differ by gender. While sexual orientation is a proxy for nonconformity with traditional gender roles for both men and women, higher self-reported femininity is only an indicator of nonconformity for men. As such, it is not surprising that non-heterosexual identity is associated with greater harassment for both men and women. As in Model 3, we observe a strong workplace authority effect among women. Women who supervise others are 133 percent more likely to experience sexual harassment in 2004, net of sexual orientation and the other variables.

### **Severity and Frequency of Sexual Harassment**

While the preceding analysis predicts the likelihood of experiencing *any* sexually harassing behavior in 2004, the models in Table 3 offer a total *count* of the behaviors

experienced (ranging from 0 to 4). This helps to determine which factors can predict more severe or repeated sexual harassment. In the negative binomial regression estimates shown in Table 3, coefficients can be interpreted as incident rate ratios, with positive coefficients indicating a greater number (or rate) of harassment incidents over the year.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

In Model 1, our dichotomous gender and race measures and the proportion female in respondents' industry approach standard significance levels ( $p < .10$ ). Here too, workplace power is a strong and significant predictor of harassment. For supervisors, the rate of sexual harassment is 49 percent greater than the rate of harassment for non-supervisors, net of other characteristics. Model 2 of Table 3 includes the hypothesized gender interaction terms for femininity and supervisor status. As in the logistic regression model, expressions of gender and workplace power are significant predictors here as well. Once again, femininity is a positive predictor for male, but not female, workers and supervisory authority is a strong positive predictor for female, but not male, workers. The harassment rate for female supervisors is 1.9 times that of the rate for women who do not supervise others ( $e^{.653} = 1.922$ ). This suggests that not only are female supervisors (and more feminine men) more likely to experience *any* sexual harassment in the last year, they also experience a more varied and sustained form of harassment. As in Model 1, race and the proportion of women in the respondent's industry remain consequential. Note also that the interactive model again fits the data better than the additive equation shown in Model 1.

The addition of the lagged measure in Model 3 reduces several of the effects observed in Model 2 to non-significance. Women who supervise others continue to report significantly more harassing behaviors than female non-supervisors, but the gender difference reflected in the *Supervisor\*Male* interaction is reduced in significance once the strong control for past-year



harassment is included in the model. Among the other individual and workplace characteristics in Model 3, race is the only remaining statistically significant predictor. Lastly, we substitute the effects of sexual orientation for femininity in Model 4. In contrast to the logistic regression results, sexual orientation is not a significant predictor in the negative binomial model.

### **Subjective or Self-defined Sexual Harassment**

In the preceding analyses, we found consistent evidence that female supervisors and more feminine men are especially vulnerable to sexual harassment. Although YDS respondents self-report harassing experiences, there is great ambiguity in the meaning and interpretations of these events. While Tables 2 and 3 identify those most likely to experience harassing behaviors, it remains unknown whether targets themselves consider these to constitute sexual harassment. Over one-third of our sample reported at least one behavioral indicator of harassment in 2004, yet only 7 percent subjectively reported experiencing sexual harassment (11 percent of women but only 1 percent of men). In Table 4, we report logistic regression estimates predicting subjective harassment, a much higher threshold than our previous two measures. In other words, we can be more confident that the harassing behaviors reported do not constitute desired sexual banter and are not reciprocated by targets. Because the process of defining and labeling behaviors as sexual harassment is largely gendered (Uggen and Blackstone 2004) and few men reported experiencing sexual harassment, we focus this analysis on women only.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

The first model of Table 4 shows logistic regression estimates predicting subjective harassment among women, contrasted against models predicting any harassing behaviors and a count of harassing behaviors in the two subsequent columns. As shown in Table 4, supervisory

status is a strong predictor of subjective sexual harassment among women respondents, consistent with the two behavioral models shown. This suggests that not only are women supervisors more likely to experience more frequent or severe harassment than their non-supervisor counterparts, but they are also more likely to subjectively label the behaviors as sexual harassment. As shown in Table 4, supervisors are nearly three and a half times as likely as others to report being sexually harassed in the past year ( $e^{1.224} = 3.400$ ).

In addition to supervisory status, the proportion of women in each industry also emerges as a significant predictor of subjective harassment, though this effect does not hold in the models predicting harassing behaviors among women. Moving from an industry that is 0 percent women to 100 percent women decreases the odds of experiencing sexual harassment by 92 percent ( $e^{-2.514} = .081$ ), highlighting the greater likelihood of subjectively experiencing sexual harassment in male-dominated industries, such as machinery manufacturing and criminal justice. Lastly, our lagged measure of harassment (2003) is a significant predictor in all three models. As shown in the first model, those who self-reported being sexually harassed in 2003 were over 600 percent more likely to report sexual harassment again the following year ( $e^{1.965} = 7.138$ ). This lagged measure is perhaps most important in models predicting subjective harassment, as the lag effectively controls for stable within-person characteristics that may influence whether a person interprets an event as sexual harassment or as trivial sexual banter.

Our strongest and most consistent finding concerns the greater risk of harassment for women in authority positions. Women supervisors had the greatest likelihood of experiencing any harassing behaviors, multiple harassing behaviors, and subjectively defining their experiences as harassment. To better understand the social position of those in authority positions, we compare female and male supervisors and non-supervisors in Table 5.

[TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]

Relative to non-supervisors, women supervisors are significantly less likely to have children, report greater educational attainment, much higher household incomes, and significantly longer work hours. These "career-track" women, on average, also work in different occupations: they are less likely than women without supervisory authority to work in technical/craft or service occupations, but much more likely to work in official/managerial positions. In contrast to women, male supervisors and non-supervisors report similar rates of harassment, though supervisors report somewhat greater job security, are more likely to have children, work longer hours, and are more likely to work in technical/craft occupations.

### **How Gender and Authority Work Together**

To learn more about the relation between gender and power among our respondents, we turn to their own accounts of harassment from our interviews. Most notably, our interview data demonstrate how women's supervisory status may increase their vulnerability to harassment. Several women reported that male colleagues questioned their ability to effectively supervise others because of their gender. Marie, a project manager in the construction industry, recalled that "guys would just stare at you" when she was out in the field. What most bothered Marie, however, were sexist comments about the abilities of women in the construction industry. She said, "It wasn't maybe necessarily the cat calls and that type of thing, but more 'oh women can't do this.' And 'what are you doing out here, you're not going to be able to do this.'"

As the only female project manager for a general contracting company, Marie explained how an older male subcontractor explicitly told her, "This isn't the job for a woman." After walking the subcontractor through the requirements for some complex paperwork, Marie says, "I

think he just thought I was being a nag and that I didn't know what I was doing.” While on another construction site, Marie learned that somebody had written “nasty things” about her and about other workers on the bathroom walls and “when I found out about it I never went in there again. Actually I was told that I don’t want to go in there. I started reading one of the sentences, and I got to the point where I stopped reading.” Later in her interview Marie observed that, “*Just being a female in management is difficult, and guys don't like it--especially the guys that work in the field. They think that women should be secretaries* (emphasis added).” Marie’s experiences echo findings by previous researchers (e.g., Eisenberg 2001) – that men’s sexual harassment of women has more to do with keeping women “in their place” and marking their own turf than with sexual attraction or arousal.

Holly, the first woman manager at her manufacturing establishment, also experienced derogatory remarks from male colleagues. She recalled that subordinates sometimes joked, “If we had somebody with balls in this position we'd be getting things done.” Holly was sexually harassed at a company dinner where she was the only woman present, being groped throughout her meal by a male client. If not for her status as a supervisor, Holly would not have been present at the company event and would not have been subjected to sexual harassment. Even in female-dominated industries, management positions are often dominated by men (Hultin 2003; Williams 2004) and women like Holly are the only female supervisors in the room.

Holly’s story shows how hegemonic masculinity operates through collective practice (Connell 1987; Martin 2006). While her male coworkers noticed the harassment, it went on for several hours before anyone took action to stop it. Even after her colleagues stepped in, it was only to encourage Holly, and not the man harassing her, to leave the event. As she describes,

Somebody from our company noticed that [the client] had his hands all over my lap and [my coworker] goes, ‘Where are his hands?’ and I go, I was sitting like

this [shows her legs crossed tightly] and I go, ‘Exactly where you think they are.’ And I pushed [the client] away and so that’s when [my coworker] realized and motioned and said, ‘I want the bill. We’re outta here.’

No one other than Holly confronted her harasser directly that evening. While several of her colleagues made it clear to her that they did not condone the client’s behavior, they did not speak out collectively against it. Instead, they privately and individually took Holly aside and urged her to leave. None of the men were willing to publicly protest the harassment, perhaps because the norms of hegemonic masculinity dictate that such conduct is to be condoned rather than confronted. Yet, to the extent they played the role of protectors, Holly’s colleagues only further undermined her authority.

Both Marie and Holly pointed to the special difficulties they experienced as supervisors in male-dominated industries. In light of these comments, we returned to our survey data to learn how workplace gender composition might affect harassment among supervisors and non-supervisors. Figure 2 shows a pattern consistent with that described by Marie and Holly: women supervisors were far more likely to experience at least one harassing behavior when they worked in industries with a higher proportion of men than women. Approximately 58 percent of women supervisors were harassed in predominantly male industries, relative to 42 percent in predominantly female industries. Male supervisors were also more likely to experience harassment in predominantly male industries, but women supervisors in male-dominated industries were by far the most likely to report harassing behaviors.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Men’s collective practice of masculinity similarly undermined women’s authority at Lisa’s workplace. While working as a product manager at an advertising agency, Lisa says that men executives would sometimes exclude women executives:

The boys would go out drinking in the middle of the day and all the girls had to stay. They would go for creative brainstorming meetings and drink the afternoon away. There was always kind of a double standard. There was a lot of work to be done. The women were always counted on to get it done. Like they could count on the women to do it right but yet more of the lax time and the creative power was given to the boys.

Lisa described her work environment as having a “misogynistic culture” and her experience supports our quantitative finding regarding men’s femininity and sexual orientation. When a temporary worker whom she described as “obviously gay” began working for the agency, Lisa recalls her boss telling her, “That guy – get him outta here, or someone’s gonna break his legs....You, you [pointing her finger and shaking her arm] just *get* him outta here.” Lisa added,

[T]he minute he walked in he introduced himself to everybody, as the proper temp does, and I could just *see*, you know, the three guys [the top three men at the firm] as he walked in with, you know, “Oh my god! There’s a gay man in my office!” And you know, I had seen those guys drunk so many times and they were so macho and so misogynistic that I didn’t doubt for one *second* that they’d take him out and beat him up. I thought they were *fully* capable of doing that.

Lisa’s description of her male bosses’ response to this worker shows how gay men can become targets for workplace harassment simply because of their sexual orientation.

As our quantitative findings suggest, even men who do not identify as gay may be subject to harassment if they are not masculine enough. Dan, who is heterosexual but reported being more feminine than most of our interview participants, was subjected to taunting about his sexuality by older coworkers at a post office. When asked what they said specifically, Dan responded, “Oh just the stuff like oh you know ‘you’re gay’ and stuff like that.” He reported that a coworker was also targeted because “he had tendencies, and I think they kind of focused on him because they thought ‘okay, you like men’ or something like that.” While Dan was unsure of this worker’s sexual orientation, he says the coworker was “more feminine” than other men at the post office and that he “hung out with women more than men and stuff. That type of thing.”

Other interview participants described workplace cultures similar to Lisa's and Dan's. Seth, a journalist who also rated himself as more feminine than other male YDS respondents, described a male coworker "coming down on" him for not behaving more aggressively. As Seth described it, "He was a total news guy and I was a total kind of arts and culture guy." Seth also remembered a past restaurant job where sexist comments were a part of everyday interaction and where the male owner of the restaurant would "push that at times just out of arrogance." Seth explained, "It was mostly just stuff that he would say. Like a hostess had a really bad day or something and he said, something like 'oh you just need to get laid,' or you know stuff like that." When asked whether his employer's comments were made more to men or just women, Seth replied, "I think there were a couple of instances where I can remember him kind of ribbing men, gay men that were working there, in sort of a patronizing way," which he partially attributed to their sexuality. In response to a question about whether straight men were immune from the employer's ribbing, Seth said, "Kind of. My memory of it is that with men his attitude was sort of manifest as a sort of dominance thing, just kind of challenging you to prove you're cool or on the ball and doing your job or not, doing what you're supposed to do."

John, who like Seth and Dan rated himself as more feminine than most male YDS respondents, talked about a friend and coworker who made derogatory comments about women because he "just doesn't get it." John once observed a woman coworker confront his friend about his sexist jokes. As John described it, "Even when she said stuff to him about 'that's really offensive to women,' he was like 'oh it's just a joke, lighten up.'" While John says he did not condone his coworker's sexism, and even though he *had* confronted his friend about racist jokes, he did not challenge or confront the sexist joking. As with other interview participants, John described a workplace culture in which men were collectively, and in some cases individually,

silent about sexist behavior they observed in the workplace. Such silence, in turn, serves to reduce women's authority and perpetuate hegemonic masculinity.

### **GENDER, POWER, AND BEYOND**

This longitudinal analysis of data from a representative community sample may offer the strongest evidence to date on the interaction of gender and power in predicting sexual harassment (Berdahl 2007a; Connell 1987; Quinn 2002; Uggen and Blackstone 2004). With regard to our first hypothesis, men who do not conform to standards of hegemonic masculinity are somewhat more likely to experience harassment than other men. This finding supports Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, which emphasizes the significance of gender performance, and the negative sanctions faced by those not conforming to the gender expectations of others.

To test our second hypothesis – that women in authority are more likely than other women to experience sexual harassment – we examined the interaction between gender and supervisory authority. While the “vulnerable victims” perspective suggests that authority might act as a protective factor, exempting women from the suggestive gaze or unwelcome touch of male colleagues, we find just the opposite: supervisory status actually increases women's harassment, in keeping with the “power threat” perspective. Could this finding be a product of the greater sensitivity or consciousness of supervisors? Although supervisors may have greater awareness of sexual harassment law and policy, pre-existing differences in consciousness should be absorbed in the lagged dependent variable for harassment measured just one year prior. While legal consciousness undoubtedly evolves over the life course, it is unlikely that supervisors' consciousness changed so dramatically over a 12-month period. Moreover, there is no evidence



to suggest that either consciousness or the lagged dependent variable would operate so differently for male and female supervisors.

It is important to note, however, that these data only allow us to determine whether women supervise others, *not* their specific rank within the organizational hierarchy. There may be significant differences in harassment by level of workplace authority, with women in upper management, or in organizations with few women in supervisory roles, experiencing more harassing behaviors (Cohen et al. 1998). Further research is needed to move beyond a simple supervisory/non-supervisor dichotomy and to better locate workers in hierarchies of authority. Studies of harassment in the armed forces, for example, could more clearly speak to finer-grained differences by rank. Regardless of their organizational rank, sexual harassment objectifies women and strips them of power. As a consequence of the larger gender regime, sexual harassment does not appear to neutralize workplace power for men, as evident by the differing effect of supervisory status for men and women. As Quinn states in her analysis of 'girl watching,' this double standard reduces women to sexual objects in ways that "may trump a woman's formal organizational power" (Quinn 2002: 392).

As Quinn also points out (2002), the gender and power of the harassers must also be taken into consideration in subsequent research. In her discussion of sex-based harassment, Berdahl (2007a) predicts that the most common form of sex-based harassment is men harassing women, followed by men harassing men, women harassing women, and lastly, women harassing men. Although we have limited data on this question, YDS participants also reported whether the harasser was a male or female supervisor, co-worker, or customer/client. As respondents may experience harassment from multiple parties, they could report multiple scenarios for each sexually harassing behavior. Figure 3 reports the number of respondents reporting harassment by

supervisors, co-workers, and customers/clients for our “staring or leering” item. This illustrates the general pattern of relative workplace authority that holds across most of the eight sexual behaviors, though their frequencies vary dramatically.

[FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Consistent with Berdahl’s prediction, the most common scenario in our data involves male harassers and female targets, followed by male harassers and male targets. The figure reports the relative percentage of supervisors, co-workers, and clients within each harasser/target dyad, although we caution that the percentages are based on a small number of cases (as indicated on the y-axis). In three of the four dyads, coworkers -- rather than supervisors or clients -- accounted for at least 40 percent of the staring and leering. In contrast, Roscigno (2007) found supervisors to be most commonly reported as harassers among complaints filed with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. It may be the case that targets harassed by supervisors seek such third-party resolution because they perceive fewer internal avenues for recourse. Women in our sample were also more likely than men to report staring or leering by customers or clients (38 percent in the male-on-female dyad and 41 percent in the female-on-female dyad, relative to 33 percent for male-on-male and 22 percent for female-on-male). Although data on harassers is notoriously difficult to obtain and analyze, research on the harasser/target dyad is critical to understanding how the relative power of both parties shape sexual harassment.

We found mixed support for our third hypothesis regarding differences across occupational and industrial sectors. Women in industries with a greater proportion of men reported significantly greater subjective harassment, with industry composition also approaching significance in the overall count models ( $p < .10$ ). While none of our occupation categories were

statistically significant in the multivariate models, we observed relatively more harassment in service work for men and in technical and craft occupations for women (not shown).

Although this longitudinal approach is well-suited to testing our hypotheses, we must also note several caveats to this research. First, the Youth Development Study is based on a Minnesota sample that is not nationally representative. Second, the YDS is a cohort study and our analysis is based on harassment occurring when respondents were 29 or 30 years old. Supervisory authority and expressions of gender may operate differently in other phases of the life course, and further research is needed to consider potential interactions between age, gender, and power, as well as changing definitions of harassment over time. Third, although we measure sexual harassment both behaviorally and subjectively -- increasing confidence in our findings -- we rely on self-reported accounts by targets.

Despite these caveats, this study may provide the best evidence to date on the gendered effects of workplace authority on sexual harassment and its implications for feminist theories of gendered power. In particular, we find that women supervisors are more, rather than less, likely to be sexually harassed at work. Other research has suggested that gender may combine with workplace power to produce this counter-intuitive result, but this represents the first longitudinal study to clearly reveal this pattern. Sexual harassment functions, in part, as a tool to police gender-appropriate behavior. When they view women's power as illegitimate or easily undermined, male coworkers, clients, and supervisors may employ harassment as an "equalizer" against women supervisors, consistent with research showing that sexual harassment is less about sexual desire than about control and domination (Berdahl 2007a; 2007b; Schultz 2003).

Sexual harassment is well-explained within a feminist framework of gendered power, although these findings may extend more broadly to workplace bullying and other forms of

discrimination and harassment. Beyond gender, characteristics such as race or social class may similarly trump formal organizational authority in determining workplace power. While firms are increasingly adopting training procedures and policies to increase diversity in management (Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly 2006), this study points to a new obstacle for women and racial minorities in leadership positions. An extension of this analysis would involve testing whether racial minorities who supervise others are subject to greater racial harassment. Another noteworthy extension of this research is the examination of workplace harassment from the harassers' perspective (Quinn 2002). Based on the preceding analysis, we predict that such research will show that harassers view their targets as a threat to their own power – in both the workplace and in the broader society.

While legal and organizational responses to sexual harassment have evolved rapidly in the past three decades, the cultural image of harassers and targets has not kept pace with changing workplace realities. In particular, many still view the typical harassment scenario as one involving a sleazy male boss and powerless female secretary. As this article shows, harassment scenarios are today far more varied. For women who become bosses themselves, their positions create a paradox of power in a gender system that continues to subordinate women. In taking on positions of authority, they also take on a greater risk of sexual harassment.

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**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Youth Development Study Analytic Sample**

Variable	Description	Coding	Mean	S.D.
<i>Sexual Harassment</i>				
Any Harassment 2004	experienced at least one behavioral indicator 2004	0=No, 1=Yes	35.63%	
Any Harassment 2003	experienced at least one behavioral indicator 2003	0=No, 1=Yes	36.78%	
Total Harassment 2004	total number of behavioral indicators 2004	Min: 0, Max: 4	.481	.836
Total Harassment 2003	total number of behavioral indicators 2003	Min: 0, Max: 4	.450	.708
Subjective Harassment 2004	defined any behavior as sexual harassment 2004 (women only)	0=No, 1=Yes	11.07%	
Subjective Harassment 2003	Defined any behavior as sexual harassment 2003 (women only)	0=No, 1=Yes	11.74%	
<i>Expressions of Gender</i>				
Male	self-reported gender	0=Female, 1=Male	42.91%	
Femininity	self-reported femininity (full sample)	1=not at all, 5=extremely	2.693	1.269
Femininity*Male	self-reported femininity (males only)	1=not at all, 5=extremely	1.509	.752
Sexual Orientation	Non-heterosexual or mistaken as non-heterosexual	0=No, 1=Yes	10.40%	
<i>Workplace Power</i>				
Supervisor	supervise others (full sample)	0=No, 1=Yes	31.80%	
Supervisor*Male	supervise others (males only)	0=No, 1=Yes	36.61%	
Job Security	security of primary job	1=not at all, 4=very	3.002	.855
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>				
White	self-reported race	0=Non-white, 1=White	82.57%	
Born in the U.S.	non-immigrant	0=Immigrant, 1=Non-immigrant	93.87%	
Partner	married or cohabiting	0=Single, 1=Married or cohabiting	71.26%	
Children	at least one child	0=No, 1=Yes	59.96%	
Years Education	years of education completed	Min: 8, Max: 20	14.676	1.927
Household Income	total household income in thousands of dollars	Min: 0, Max: 423	\$61.772	\$36.781
<i>Work Characteristics</i>				
Work Hours	weekly work hours in primary job	Min: 4, Max: 70	38.603	8.872
Log Employees	Log number of employees at workplace (at your location)	Min: 2.5, Max: 9.2	4.269	1.824
Job Satisfaction	satisfaction with job as a whole	1=extremely dissatisfied, 6=extremely satisfied	4.285	1.126
Technical/Craft	technicians, craft workers, operatives, and laborers/helpers	0=No, 1=Yes	18.77%	
Professional	professional job category	0=No, 1=Yes	27.59%	
Official/Managerial	official/managerial job category	0=No, 1=Yes	14.18%	
Service	sales workers, administrative support workers, and service	0=No, 1=Yes	39.46%	
Proportion Female in Industry	proportion of women in primary job industry	Min: .091, Max: .955	49.85%	

Note: N=522 for all variables except sexual orientation (N=519) and where samples are limited to men or women.

**Table 2. Logistic Regression Predicting Any Sexual Harassment (2004)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Model 1</b> N=522	<b>Model 2</b> N=522	<b>Model 3</b> N=522	<b>Model 4</b> N=519
<b><i>Expressions of Gender</i></b>				
Male	-.105 (.336)	-1.149 (.724)	-1.322 <sup>#</sup> (.794)	.097 (.284)
Femininity	-.007 (.127)	-.242 (.172)	-.291 (.190)	
Femininity*Male		.578* (.261)	.594* (.287)	
Sexual Orientation				.664 <sup>#</sup> (.341)
<b><i>Workplace Power</i></b>				
Supervisor	.405 <sup>#</sup> (.211)	.834** (.288)	.853** (.313)	.846** (.317)
Supervisor*Male		-.964* (.416)	-1.035* (.460)	-.882 <sup>#</sup> (.456)
Job Security	-.027 (.114)	-.028 (.115)	-.054 (.125)	-.032 (.126)
<b><i>Past Harassment</i></b>				
Sexual Harassment (2003)			1.877** (.214)	1.864** (.214)
<b><i>Individual Characteristics</i></b>				
White	-.398 (.266)	-.448 <sup>#</sup> (.269)	-.256 (.292)	-.307 (.290)
Born in United States	1.042* (.479)	1.065* (.485)	.943 <sup>#</sup> (.510)	.961 <sup>#</sup> (.515)
Partner	-.183 (.239)	-.229 (.242)	.012 (.266)	.179 (.269)
Children	-.085 (.217)	.034 (.222)	.017 (.244)	-.027 (.239)
Education	.018 (.057)	.021 (.058)	.035 (.063)	.019 (.062)
Household Income	-.001 (.003)	-.000 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	-.003 (.003)
<b><i>Work Characteristics</i></b>				
Work Hours	.005 (.011)	.006 (.012)	.016 (.013)	.016 (.013)
Log Number of Employees	.081 (.052)	.093 <sup>#</sup> (.053)	.052 (.058)	.071 (.058)
Job Satisfaction	-.183* (.084)	-.175* (.085)	-.149 (.093)	-.162 <sup>#</sup> (.094)
Professional (v. tech/craft)	-.152 (.341)	-.284 (.347)	-.232 (.375)	-.118 (.369)
Official/Manager (v. tech/craft)	-.264 (.365)	-.429 (.375)	-.537 (.408)	-.536 (.406)
Service (v. tech/craft)	.168 (.297)	.120 (.300)	-.019 (.326)	-.013 (.323)
Proportion Female in Industry	-.370 (.506)	-.371 (.510)	-.515 (.560)	-.595 (.562)
Constant	-.843 (1.220)	-.274 (1.279)	-1.271 (1.401)	-2.256 <sup>#</sup> (1.264)
Log Likelihood	-329.452	-324.678*	-282.274**	-280.233**

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>#</sup> $p < .10$  \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed tests).

**Table 3. Negative Binomial Regression Predicting Count of Sexual Harassment Behaviors (2004)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Model 1</b> N=522	<b>Model 2</b> N=522	<b>Model 3</b> N=522	<b>Model 4</b> N=519
<i>Expressions of Gender</i>				
Male	-.479 <sup>#</sup> (.278)	-1.335* (.576)	-.954 <sup>#</sup> (.545)	-.166 (.213)
Femininity	-.008 (.104)	-.175 (.131)	-.128 (.124)	
Femininity*Male		.491* (.216)	.378 <sup>#</sup> (.203)	
Sexual Orientation				.216 (.244)
<i>Workplace Power</i>				
Supervisor	.402* (.171)	.653** (.221)	.553** (.207)	.543** (.211)
Supervisor*Male		-.659 <sup>#</sup> (.345)	-.600 <sup>#</sup> (.327)	-.471 (.323)
Job Security	.010 (.094)	.005 (.093)	.005 (.089)	.017 (.090)
<i>Past Harassment</i>				
Sexual Harassment (2003)			.622** (.088)	.637** (.090)
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>				
White	-.387 <sup>#</sup> (.211)	-.454* (.211)	-.418* (.195)	-.370 <sup>#</sup> (.196)
Born in United States	.394 (.372)	.442 (.372)	.397 (.352)	.322 (.355)
Partner	-.282 (.202)	-.321 (.201)	-.212 (.189)	-.159 (.192)
Children	.116 (.184)	.224 (.187)	.215 (.176)	.165 (.174)
Education	-.023 (.047)	-.017 (.047)	-.020 (.043)	-.049 (.043)
Household Income	.001 (.002)	.001 (.002)	.000 (.002)	.000 (.002)
<i>Work Characteristics</i>				
Work Hours	.004 (.010)	.005 (.010)	.008 (.009)	.009 (.009)
Log Number of Employees	.054 (.043)	.060 (.043)	.052 (.040)	.059 (.041)
Job Satisfaction	-.098 (.071)	-.092 (.071)	-.085 (.066)	-.087 (.067)
Professional (v. tech/craft)	-.070 (.283)	-.161 (.283)	-.117 (.268)	.012 (.268)
Official/Manager (v. tech/craft)	-.330 (.311)	-.449 (.316)	-.417 (.299)	-.365 (.301)
Service (v. tech/craft)	.084 (.247)	.047 (.246)	-.041 (.231)	.029 (.232)
Proportion Female in Industry	-.730 <sup>#</sup> (.430)	-.720 <sup>#</sup> (.426)	-.631 (.404)	-.664 (.410)
Constant	.046 (.992)	.403 (1.015)	-.277 (.959)	-.489 (.872)
Log Likelihood	-474.151 <sup>#</sup>	-470.140*	-445.641**	-445.566**

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>#</sup>p<.10 \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 (two-tailed tests).

**Table 4. Predictors of Subjective and Behavioral Sexual Harassment 2004 (Women Only)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Subjective Harassment (N=304)</b>	<b>Any Harassing Behavior (N=304)</b>	<b>Count of Harassing Behaviors (N=304)</b>
<i>Expressions of Gender</i>			
Femininity	.266 (.279)	-.279 (.190)	-.115 (.127)
<i>Workplace Power</i>			
Supervisor	1.224** (.461)	.793* (.319)	.505* (.222)
Job Security	-.127 (.249)	-.051 (.163)	.068 (.116)
<i>Past Harassment</i>			
Sexual Harassment (2003)	1.965** (.489)	1.780** (.286)	.618** (.106)
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>			
White	.275 (.552)	-.196 (.359)	-.364 (.240)
Partner	.020 (.508)	-.174 (.347)	-.074 (.250)
Children	.189 (.470)	.484 (.336)	.341 (.236)
Education	-.117 (.128)	.149 <sup>#</sup> (.088)	.072 (.060)
Household Income	.005 (.005)	-.000 (.004)	-.002 (.003)
<i>Work Characteristics</i>			
Work Hours	-.004 (.025)	.041* (.017)	.018 (.011)
Log Number of Employees	.059 (.107)	.047 (.073)	.052 (.052)
Job Satisfaction	-.015 (.179)	-.141 (.122)	-.083 (.086)
Professional (v. tech/craft)	.408 (.924)	-.413 (.605)	.073 (.414)
Official/Manager (v. tech/craft)	-.847 (1.046)	-.879 (.655)	-.522 (.466)
Service (v. tech/craft)	.327 (.882)	-.223 (.563)	.088 (.392)
Proportion Female in Industry	-2.514* (1.027)	-.568 (.694)	-.759 (.494)
Constant	-1.292 (2.777)	-3.054 (1.888)	-1.942 (1.285)
Log Likelihood	-89.536**	-165.498**	-281.923**

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>#</sup> $p < .10$  \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed tests).

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics by Gender and Supervisory Authority**

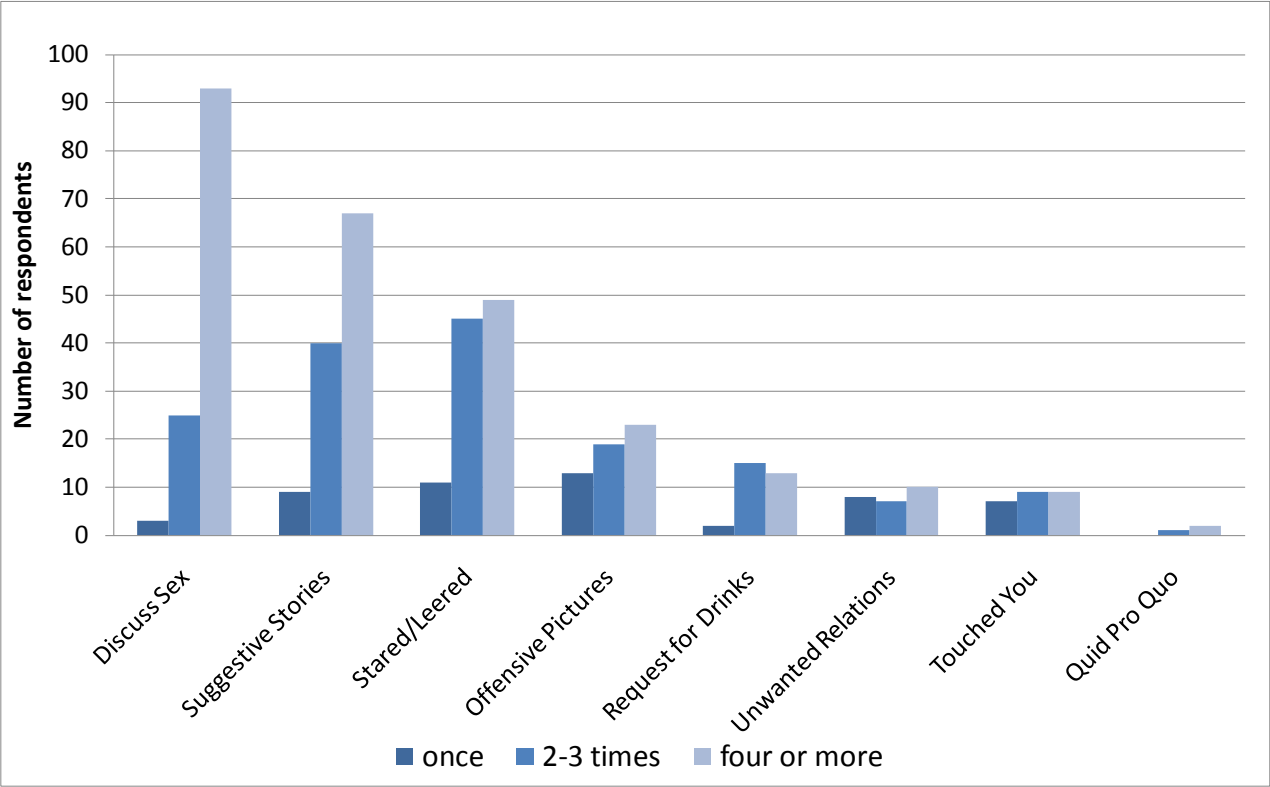
	Female Respondents		Male Respondents	
	Supervisors (N=84)	Non-Supervisors (N=214)	Supervisors (N=82)	Non-Supervisors (N=142)
<i>Sexual Harassment</i>				
Any Harassment 2004	47.62% *	31.78% *	32.93%	35.92%
Total Harassment 2004	.738 *	.472 *	.402	.387
Subjective Harassment 2004	17.86% *	8.41% *	0.00%	2.11%
<i>Expressions of Gender</i>				
Femininity	3.548	3.598	1.610	1.451
Sexual Orientation	9.76%	8.06%	15.29%	11.35%
<i>Workplace Power</i>				
Job Security	3.083	2.949	3.159 #	2.944 #
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>				
White	84.52%	79.91%	82.93%	85.21%
Born in the U.S.	96.43%	95.33%	89.02%	92.96%
Partner	73.81%	68.22%	78.05%	70.42%
Children	46.43% **	67.29% **	60.98% **	56.33% **
Years Education	15.298 **	14.612 **	14.659	14.415
Household Income	72.504 **	57.118 **	67.081	59.372
<i>Work Characteristics</i>				
Work Hours	39.440 **	35.897 **	43.177 **	39.546 **
Log Employees	4.070	4.379	4.108	4.315
Job Satisfaction	4.310	4.327	4.317	4.190
Technical/Craft Occupation	2.38% #	7.94% #	42.68% #	30.99% #
Professional Occupation	32.14%	28.50%	20.73%	27.46%
Official/Managerial Occupation	28.57% **	8.41% **	14.63%	14.08%
Service Occupation	36.90% **	55.14% **	21.95%	27.46%
Proportion Female in Industry	.563	.570	.404	.407

Note: t-tests for differences between supervisors and non-supervisors, separately for men and women.

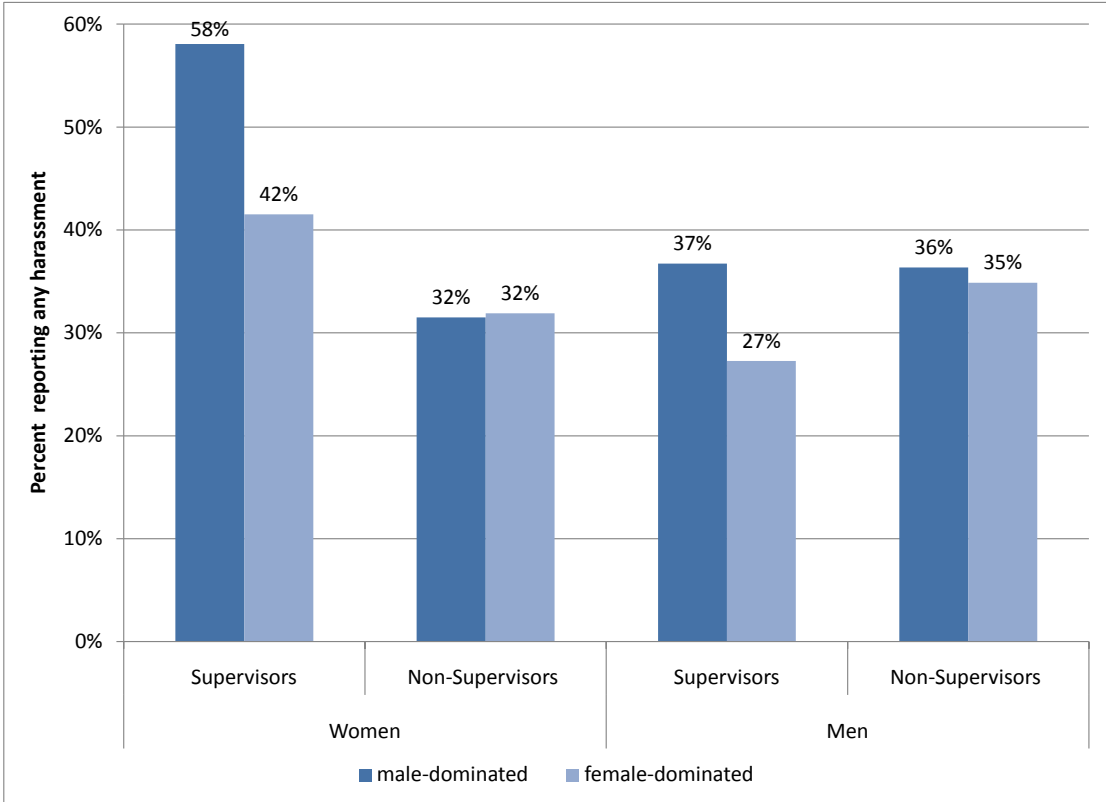
# $p < .10$  \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed tests).



**Figure 1. Frequency of Sexual Harassment**



**Figure 2. Percent Reporting Any Harassment by Supervisory Authority and Gender Composition of Industry**



**Figure 3. Characteristics of Harassers and Targets for Staring or Leering Item**

