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An overview of the literature on sexual harassment: Perpetrator, theory, and treatment issues

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A B S T R A C T

Sexual harassment has been recognized as a serious problem in the literature over the past 30 years. In this paper, we review the existing research surrounding the phenomenon of sexual harassment, paying particular attention to factors of relevance for understanding *perpetrators* of sexual harassment. We also provide an overview of the perplexing nature of sexual harassment and the various concerns that have surrounded the topic leading to its recognition. The different theoretical perspectives and models of sexual harassment (sociocultural, organizational, sex-role spillover, natural/biological, socio-cognitive, and four-factor) are also considered and reviewed. Finally, lack of empirical evidence and focus on assessment and treatment for harassers is recognized in this paper, and several suggestions are made for future research and treatment avenues relating to the sexual harasser.

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Victimization of women by men in almost all societies has been the focus of academic interest and research for many years (Brownmiller, 1975; Griffin, 1979; Koss, 1992; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). The most common and severe forms of violence against women include: rape, intimate partner violence, sexual coercion, sexual abuse by non-intimate partners, trafficking, forced prostitution, and exploitation of labor (Crowell & Burgess, 1996; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). Potential perpetrators are many and can include spouses and partners, parents, other family members, colleagues, and men in positions of power or influence. Violence is a sensitive subject for many, and this may be the reason why it is almost universally under-reported (UNFPA, 2007; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). However, prevalence statistics suggest that millions of women are experiencing violence or having to live with its consequences on an everyday basis (AIUK, 2008; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; World Health Organization, 2008).

Antecedents and consequences of violence against women have been documented in past research (Lapierre, Spector, & Leck, 2005; Willness, Steel, & Lee, 2007). However, less research has focused on the characteristics of men who sexually harass. And, even less research has examined male sexual harassers' similarities or differences with other sexual aggressors, such as rapists. Research shows that sexual harassment is related to rape behavior (Pryor, 1987), suggesting some significant overlap between sexual harassment and other forms of more serious sexual coercion. Despite this, however, there has been very little focus on the *characteristics* of male sexual harassers, or of potential treatment methods for working with male sexual harassers (O'Donohue, Downs, & Yeater, 1998). Being able to identify the potential characteristics and treatment needs of these men is vital for developing treatments designed to decrease prevalence of sexual harassment and for reducing likelihood of these men engaging in more serious sexual coercion. Thus, the main aim of the current review paper is to provide an updated review of the sexual harassment literature, paying particular attention to current knowledge as to the individual characteristics of male sexual harassment perpetrators. In particular, we will highlight key areas for future research and treatment initiatives with these men. We focus our review on perpetrators of sexualized behavior at *work* since these men represent the best researched of all cases of sexual harassment (European Commission, 1998; Stockdale, 1996; Pryor, 1987; USMSPB, 1981, 1988; 1995).

1. Definitions of sexual harassment

1.1. Academic

The term "sexual harassment" emerged from North America in the mid 1970s following the work of various researchers who helped bring the problem to light (Gutek, 1985; Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979). The issue that has been problematic for researchers in this field, from the very beginning, is defining what constitutes sexual harassment. As with many terms, an all-inclusive definition of sexual harassment has proved extremely difficult to achieve. Researchers, legal scholars, and policy makers around the world have not, up to this point, agreed upon a single universal definition.

One reason for this inherent difficulty is that a definition would mean that boundaries would be set on this particular term which would distinguish it from other expressions of sexual interest (Gutek, 1985). For example, sexual relationships at work are not always mutually fulfilling, but they are, also, not always sexually harassing and harmful (Williams, Giuffre, & Dellinger, 1999). Indeed, some people argue that flirting, joking, and even sexual banter at work could be enjoyable, as it might help to make the workplace feel less austere (Gutek, 1985; Quinn, 1977; Williams et al., 1999).

Feminist approaches at highlighting and publicizing issues of sexual harassment have been characterized, by some, as "coercive instances of political correctness" (Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997, p.5) or jeopardizing free speech and the principles of academic freedom (Davies, 1994; Fekete, 1994; Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997). In the debate about recognizing sexually harassing behaviors, feminist critics accept the general need for legislation in order to prevent the most explicit and worst abuses of power (e.g., explicit demands of sexual favors in exchange for work/academic advancement; Roiphe, 1993). However, other behaviors that feminist researchers and theorists have recognized as serving female subordination, such as staring, whistling, sexual joking, and sexual innuendoes (Wise & Stanley, 1987) are often characterized by critics as natural interaction between the two sexes (Roiphe, 1993). In other words, academic writers have often disagreed upon the specific *behaviors* that constitute sexual harassment. Nevertheless, many contemporary researchers now appear to categorize verbal comments, requests, and non verbal behaviors as sexually harassing (Fitzgerald, 1996; Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993; Gruber, Smith, & Kauppinen-Toropainen, 1996; Timmerman & Bajema, 1998).

Another issue clearly present within academic debates over definitional issues is whether negative effects are required just on the part of the victims, or whether sexual harassment can negatively affect bystanders and co-workers. Contemporary writers from various perspectives appear to agree, however, that it is not necessary that sexual harassment affect only the person it is directed towards, but that it can create a hostile work environment that affects many others (Applen & Kleiner, 2001; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), 1990; Rubin, 1995).

One potential issue associated with becoming too over-inclusive in defining sexual harassment is that this will eventually have a detrimental effect on women's equality (Cohen, 1999; Schultz, 1998). For example, women may begin to be excluded from crucial employment opportunities like informal networking with male colleagues and clients (Cohen, 1999). Schultz (1998), on the other hand, proposes that judicial emphasis on sexuality in the workplace is taking attention away from other forms of gender harassment that are more prevalent but do not involve sex. According to her, sexual harassment focus should shift from sex back to sexism (Skaine, 1996). Thus, another issue crucial to definitional debates is whether sexism represents one potential form of sexual harassment (O'Donohue et al., 1998).

In summary, there appears to be contentious debate concerning how sexual harassment should be defined within the academic literature. Pivotal problems appear to revolve around three main issues: (i) the specific behaviors indicative of sexual harassment (i.e., can nonverbal behaviors constitute sexual harassment?), (ii) whether only the victim must experience negative effects, and (iii) whether sexism represents one of the many methods of sexually harassing behaviors. Clearly, each of these issues plays a fundamental role in how research on sexual harassment is conceptualized, designed, and implemented, and until a clear consensus is reached across researchers from different perspectives this will continue to affect the quality and meaningfulness of our understanding of sexual harassment and of the perpetrators who commit "sexual harassment."

1.2. Legal

1.2.1. United States

In the US, sexual harassment is legally defined as a form of sex discrimination that includes: "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature…" Furthermore, 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." (EEOC, March 2008).

According to the United States' Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (March, 2008), sexual harassment violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991 which amended several parts of the 1964 Act. Title VII "prohibits employment

discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origins" (EEOC, March, 2008). Sexual harassment can occur in many different circumstances, and can include but not be limited to the following behaviors: a) the victim as well as the harasser may be a woman or a man. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex, b) the harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee, c) the victim does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct, d) unlawful sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to or discharge of the victim, e) the harasser's conduct must be unwelcome (EEOC, March 2008,). If any of the aforementioned behaviors takes place, then there is a case for sexual harassment according to US legislations (EEOC, 2008). The U.S. Supreme Court, in essence, makes founding decisions about sexual harassment which are then interpreted and applied as necessary by individual U.S. States (Lee & Kleiner, 2001).

1.2.2. United Kingdom

In the UK, sexual harassment until the 1st of October 2005 was not specifically dealt with under any legislation, although it was outlined in some paragraphs of the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA, 1975) under unlawful discrimination on the grounds of sex. The change in European Equal Treatment Directive, 2002/73/EC, made on 23rd September 2002, required Member States to specifically outlaw sexual harassment. Therefore, the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 section 4A was designed to implement the directive, which inserted a specific definition of sexual harassment into the 1976 Equal Treatment Directive 76/207/EEC (British Employment Law, 2007).

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) Regulations (2008) which came into force on the 6th of April, 2008, had the purpose to "make it unlawful for an employer to fail to take reasonably practicable steps to protect an employee from persistent third party harassment where the employer has knowledge of such harassment" (Explanatory Memorandum to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 [Amendment] Regulations 2008, 2008 No. 656, 2.1, Office of Public Sector Information, 2008). According to the SDA [4A; 1975 (relating to acts committed on or after 1st October 2005)]:

"1) a person subjects a woman to harassment if,
(a) on the ground of her sex, he engages in unwanted conduct that has the purpose of effect of (i) violating her dignity or (ii) of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for her,
(b) he engages in any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of (i) violating her dignity or (ii) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for her, or
(c) on the ground of her rejection of or submission to unwanted conduct of a kind mentioned in paragraphs (a) or (b), he treats her less favorably than he would treat her had she not rejected, or submitted to, the conduct.
2) Conduct shall be regarded as having the effect mentioned in sub-paragraph (i) or (ii) of subsection (1) (a) or (b) only if, having regard to all the circumstances, including in particular the perception of the woman, it should reasonably be considered as having that effect." (Equality and Human Rights Commission, October, 2008). Section 4A(5) also clarifies that the definition also applies, "with such modifications as are required, to the harassment of men" (Equality and Human Rights Commission, October, 2008).

2. Epidemiology

Sexual harassment affects a wide spectrum of people, probably the greatest proportion of the population than any other form of discrimination (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995). Spitzberg (1999) reviewed 120 studies involving over 100,000 participants, amassing statistical prevalence rates and found that, in actual fact, sexually harassing and coercive behaviors are more prevalent than the most physically violent forms of sexual aggression.

Although it is not always the case, sexual harassment is an act more frequently perpetrated by men against women (Pryor, 1995). In the United States, the most recent statistical survey was conducted by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (USMSPB, 1995) surveying employees in the federal government. This survey was a continuation of the two preceding USMSPB surveys (1980, 1987). Their findings show that almost all (93%) out of the 44% of women that reported sexual harassment were harassed by men. However, 65% out of 19% of men that reported sexual harassment were harassed by women.

Furthermore, awareness about the behaviors that constitute sexual harassment appears to have risen in the period between 1980 and 1994, and in particular, the proportion of men that classified unwanted sexual jokes, and remarks as sexual harassment rose from 42 to 64%. As noted in both previous surveys, the less severe forms of sexually harassing behaviors, like sexual remarks/jokes (37%) and sexual looks and gestures (29%) are the most prevalent, while the most severe behaviors like assault and attempted rape still remain low at 4% for females and 2% for male employees. Interestingly, co-workers and other employees (77%), rather than people in higher or supervisory positions (28%), continue to be the most prevalent source of harassment for federal workers (USMSPB, 1995).

In the European Union, the largest statistical survey was the one conducted in 1998 by the European Commission, which included two main summaries of studies conducted between 1987 and 1997, one focusing on eleven northern European countries (Timmerman & Bajema, 1998) and one on five southern European countries (Alemany, 1998). The summary of the eleven north European studies reports that "approximately one out of every two to three women, and one out of every ten men has experienced some form of sexual harassment or sexually unwanted behaviour" (European Commission, 1998, p.14). However, there are variations in the incidence rates of sexual harassment reported in these studies on the basis of definitions used in the studies, the particular question type, the sample type and size, and whether the study was carried out nationally or in specific branches (Timmerman & Bajema, 1998).

With regard to incidence of particular types of sexual harassment, statistics reveal that verbal forms of sexual harassment and specifically "sexual jokes" are the most frequent experiences. In six of the national studies included in the European Commission report, the incidence rates of sexual jokes were on average around 60%. The next most frequently encountered verbal type was "remarks about figure and sexual behaviour" and, although no precise statistical incidence rate is stated in the studies, the authors report it to be as high as that of sexual jokes. Non-verbal forms of harassment like staring and whistling are also among the most frequently encountered forms of sexual harassment (at approximately 50–85%). With regards to physical forms, the most commonly experienced is "unsolicited physical contact and touching." However, rates of unsolicited physical contact differ between countries; while the majority of national studies report a high incidence rate between 60 and 90%, the UK and Finland report percentages significantly lower at 20% and 7% respectively (Timmerman & Bajema, 1998).

The most severe of the physical forms of sexual harassment, "sexual assault/rape" is reported only by 1–6% of the female employees, whereas quid-pro-quo harassment in "the threat for non-submission to advances" form is reported by 3–10% of women. In the "promise of advancement for submission" form quid-pro quo harassment is reported by 7–16% of females (Timmerman & Bajema, 1998). Thus, statistics clearly show that the most frequently reported forms of sexual harassment are the verbal and non verbal forms and the more severe and easily recognizable forms are reported with significantly lesser frequency.

Although research examining prevalence of sexual harassment is likely to be subject to underreporting biases, current figures suggest

that sexual harassment is extremely prevalent in the Western world, with some figures suggesting that the majority of women will experience some type of sexual harassment during their working lives (European Commission, 1998; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). Therefore, it is imperative that researchers begin to understand the motives behind these behaviors and the perpetrators that commit them.

3. The characteristics of men who sexually harass

The importance of the environment for sexual harassment to occur is undisputable (Hesson-McInnis & Fitzgerald, 1997; Glomb, Munson, Hulin, Bergman, & Drasgow, 1999; Willness et al., 2007). However, what is of pressing concern and research interest is the reason why some people, and not others, will go on to exploit that permissive environment, and commit a sexually harassing act.

3.1. Socio demographic characteristics

Some demographic characteristics of perpetrators have been identified. However, it should be noted that a limitation of this research is that it is very sparse and usually dependent on small scale surveys and court cases of sexual harassment (Lucero, Allen, & Middleton, 2006; Lucero, Middleton, Finch, & Valentine, 2003). As noted previously, the majority of studies indicate that the sexual harasser is likely to be male (European Commission, 1998; MacKinnon, 1983; Ménard, Hall, Phung, Ghebrial, & Martin, 2003; Perry, Schmidtke, & Kulik, 1998; Pryor, 1995, USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). However, the research is less directive regarding issues relating to marital status, age, and educational level. Some studies suggest that perpetrators are likely to be married, older and more educated than the victim, as well as being hierarchically superior to their victims (Fitzgerald & Weitzman, 1990; Gutek, 1985; Komaromy, Bindman, Haber, & Sande, 1993; Sev'er, 1999, Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982).

Other researchers, however, dispute the hierarchical aspect of the harasser, finding harassment even in subordinates and peers, with peers being the most frequent type of harassers (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; DeSouza & Fansler, 2003; Hartwell Hunnicutt, 1998; LaFontaine & Tredeau, 1986; USMSPD, 1995). Thus, these findings suggest that harassers may target those of similar status (or even superior status) and may well target those of a similar or superior educational level (DeSouza & Fansler, 2003). Furthermore, the types of workforces affected by sexual harassment are extremely diverse, covering both white and blue collar workers (e.g., police officers, medics, bus and taxi drivers and waitresses; Brown, 1998; European Commission, 1998; Gruber, 1992; LaFontaine & Tredeau, 1986; Niebuhr & Boyles, 1991). Given these research findings, it may be misleading to generate a typical profile of the sexual harasser based upon sociodemographic factors. Sexual harassers appear to permeate all social strata, occupational levels, and age categories.

3.2. Sexual harassment proclivity

Although there have been many instruments developed in order to measure experiences of sexual harassment (e.g., *Inventory of Sexual Harassment*; Gruber, 1992, *Sexual Experiences Questionnaire*; Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999; Fitzgerald, Shullman et al., 1988; Fitzgerald, Weitzman, Gold, & Ormerod, 1988; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995, and the *Sexual Harassment Questionnaire*; Barling, Dekker, Loughlin, Fullagar, Kelloway, & Johnson, 1996), John B. Pryor has developed the most influential and frequently used self report method of measuring men's *proclivity* to sexually harass. The *Likelihood* to *Sexually Harass Scale* (LSH; Pryor, 1987) is comprised of 10 hypothetical scenarios and a series of self-report measures that requests respondents to indicate their likelihood to behave in a sexually harassing manner if assured that their behavior would not result in reprisals (Pryor, 1987; Driscoll, Kelly, & Henderson, 1998). Although there have been slight, recent, modifications to the LSH (namely, Dall'Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003 [modified Italian version] and Siebler, Sabelus, & Bohner, 2008 [modified version]), as well as an attempt at developing the *Sexual Harassment Proclivity Scale* by Bingham and Burleson (1996[1]), the LSH still remains the only reliable and widely-used measure to assess male proclivity to sexually harass.

Research using this scale has shown that it holds excellent psychometric properties (e.g., internal consistency of the LSH is typically around .90; Pryor, Giedd, & Williams, 1995; Pryor & Meyers, 2000). Furthermore, in terms of validity, the LSH is related to rape, rape-related attitudes, and adverse sexual attitudes (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Lee, Gizzarone, & Ashton, 2003; Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1995; Pryor & Stoller, 1994). For example, the single best predictor of LSH is Malamuth's (1981) *Likelihood to Rape Scale*, thus indicating that men who are likely to harass are also more likely to indicate a high potential to rape (Pryor, 1987). The LSH has also been found to correlate with Burt's *Adversarial Sexual Beliefs* ($r = .39$) and *Rape Myth Acceptance Scale* ($r = .33$; $n = 117$; Burt, 1980). Several researchers allude to or suggest a link between LSH and self-reported acceptance of rape myths (e.g., Barak, Fisher, Belfry, & Lashambe, 1999; Malamuth & Dean, 1991; Ward, Hudson, Johnston, & Marshall 1997), and others have demonstrated this (e.g., Begany & Milburn, 2002; Pryor, 1987). Most interestingly, however, Pryor, and other researchers have been able to demonstrate that men high on the LSH Scale engage *behaviorally* in harassment-type acts. For example, when provided with a legitimate reason to touch a female confederate (e.g., in order to illustrate golfing technique; Pryor, 1987), men high in LSH engage in more attempts of sexual touching relative to low LSH men (Driscoll et al., 1998; Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1995). Also, when participants witness a male experimenter making sexual innuendos about a female confederate, high LSH men are more likely to attempt to touch that female. However, when the experimenter treated the female confederate professionally, sexual overtures from the male participants were significantly reduced (Pryor, LaVite, & Stoller, 1993). Moreover, computer harassment paradigm research has also indicated that the higher men score on LSH, the more likely they are to send pornographic material (Maass et al., 2003) or to make sexist jokes (Siebler et al., 2008) through the internet. These studies indicate a clear person × situation interaction whereby a male high on the LSH construct will engage in harassing behaviors when contextual factors are favorable (c.f. Pryor et al., 1995).

3.3. Personality characteristics

There has been limited research focusing directly on the personality characteristics and traits of sexual harassers. Lee, Gizzarone, and Ashton (2003) found that the Honesty–Humility trait was more strongly associated with sexual harassment proclivities than any of the other Big Five traits (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) in both self and peer reports. The Honesty–Humility Trait is a dimension that represents individual differences in the reluctance or willingness to exploit others (Ashton, Lee, & Son, 2000). Larrimer-Scherbaum and Popovich (2001) found that *Agreeableness* and *Openness to Experience*, as measured by the *NEO-PI-R* (Costa & McCrae, 1992), were the two personality traits that were most strongly correlated with the LSH measure ($r = -.31$ and $-.21$ respectively). Pryor and Meyers (2000) attempted to predict LSH scores using the Big Five, as measured by John, Donahue, and Kentle's Big Five Inventory (John et al., 1991). In that study, the Big Five personality traits explained merely 9.6% of the variance in LSH; only Conscientiousness contributed significantly (in a negative direction) to the model. Another interesting aspect of the study was the role of Openness to Experience in moderating the

[1] This scale has not yet been widely used or validated.

relationship between LSH and Conscientiousness. According to Pryor and Meyers (2000) Conscientiousness and LSH were strongly related in those men who were low on Openness to Experience. Finally, using multiple regressions, Begany and Milburn (2002) found that authoritarianism significantly predicted LSH (Driscoll et al., 1998), and that rape-myths as well as hostile sexism mediated the relationship between authoritarianism and LSH. Thus, Begany and Milburn (2002) argue that sexual harassment "as non-physically violent sexual aggression is a part of the same continuum as physically violent sexual aggression" (p.125).

In terms of more antisocial personality characteristics, perpetrators of sexual harassment have been found to lack social conscience and engage in immature and irresponsible behaviors, or manipulative and exploitative behaviors (Kosson, Kelly, & White, 1997; Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984). Rapaport and Burkhart, (1984) found that personality measures of irresponsibility, lack of social conscience, and exoneration and legitimization of aggression, particularly against women, where all related to the endorsement of sexually coercive behaviors. Research has supported this link between LSH and the acceptance of interpersonal violence towards women (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Malamuth & Dean, 1991; Pryor, 1987). Kosson, Kelly, and White (1997) used the *Socialization Scale* (Gough, 1960) and the *Narcissistic Personality Inventory* (Raskin & Hall, 1979), and found that men high on LSH (as measured by the *Sexual Experiences Survey*; Koss & Oros, 1982) were also likely to exploit intoxicated individuals and use manipulative intoxication. Callous exploitation of others and lack of empathy are both psychopathic traits commonly associated with rapists and other sexual offenders (Gannon, Collie, Ward, & Thakker, 2008). Thus, the potential risk of sexual harassment escalating to more serious sexual assaults, highlights the importance of future research into the pathology of sexual harassers, which is an area largely neglected.

3.4. Typological descriptions

There have been attempts to devise different typologies of perpetrators based on knowledge of both the behavioral and individual characteristics of the sexual harasser (Dziech & Wiener, 1984; Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995; Gruber, 1992; Gruber, Smith, & Kaupinnen-Toropainen, 1996; Lengnick-Hall, 1995; Lucero et al., 2003; Zalk, 1990). Dziech and Wiener (1984) formulated a categorization scheme for professors who demonstrated a proclivity to sexually harass. This scheme illustrated the different behaviors and attitudes reported by victims. The behaviors ranged from staring, ogling, leering, and commenting on personal appearance, to physical contact out of context, the endorsement of unfavorable attitudes towards women and preoccupation with sexuality across contexts (Dziech & Wiener, 1984; Lucero et al., 2003). Harassers were categorized as either "public" or "private" harassers. The "public" harasser is typically articulate and approachable, and usually engages in overt, deliberate behaviors intended to intimidate or control the victim. The "private" harasser, on the other hand, behaves in a more conservative manner, avoids notoriety, and uses power to covertly control and gain access to students for sexual contact (Dziech & Wiener, 1984; Lucero et al., 2003).

Dziech and Wiener's (1984) categorization scheme was extended into three distinct types according to dimensions of harassment persistence, offense exposure, and emotional attachment to the victim. Zalk (1990) identified the first type as the "seducer/demander" versus the "receptive non-initiator" according to the degree of actually seeking sexual experiences with students. The second type is the "untouchable" versus the "risk taker" according to the degree of exposure and vulnerability in the behavior during the encounters. The third type is the "sexual conqueror" versus the "infatuated" according to the degree of affection felt towards the student (Zalk, 1990). However, there are clear limitations in these two different attempts of typologies, with respect to their generalizability, as they are evidently dependent and limited to the academic context (Lucero et al., 2003). Furthermore, Zalk (1990) herself admits that the profile sketches she provides in her chapter, are preliminary, and her "…analysis is somewhat surface" (p.105).

A more wide-ranging categorization scheme was introduced by Lengnick-Hall (1995). In his overview of the research literature on sexual harassment and methodological critique, he also suggested ways in which the harassing behavior might develop. He differentiated between three types of perpetrators; "hard core"; "opportunist," and "insensitive." "Hard core" harassers are individuals who seek out favorable opportunities to harass, and when confronted, are unlikely to refrain. "Opportunists" do not *actively* seek out situations that enable them to harass, but will take advantage of the opportunity if it presents itself. Finally, "insensitive" harassers are unaware of the impact of their actions on others. The two latter types are more likely to desist if confronted. However, this scheme has not, to date, been empirically supported.

Because some harassers appear to target a small number of victims persistently, whereas others target many more, when the opportunity permits, a number of typologies have tended to focus on this dimension (Gelfand et al., 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Lucero et al., 2003). For example, some men who display unrelenting harassment to few victims have been labeled "persistent pursuers" (Lucero et al., 2003) or "hard-core harassers" (Lengnick-Hall, 1995), while others who show inconsistent patterns of harassment, when the context permits have been labeled "exploitive" (Lucero et al., 2003) or "opportunistic" (Lengnick-Hall, 1995). Finally, some writers have identified "vulnerable" (Lucero et al., 2003) or "insensitive" (Lengnick-Hall, 1995) harassers who usually target fewer victims and whose harassment is interwoven with the search for an affectionate relationship. This last category of harassers appears to confirm some beliefs (Brewer, 1982) that sexual harassment reflects social awkwardness or lack of social skills in men who develop romantic interests towards women at work.

Current typological descriptions of sexual harassers are based largely upon simple behavioral indicators sometimes with the addition of personality characteristics and sometimes not. Such simplistic subtyping resembles some of the very first typological attempts within the sexual offending literature nearly three decades ago (Groth, 1979; Seghorn & Cohen, 1980). Within the sexual offending literature, these early typologies are generally recognized as being limited in their clinical usefulness because of poor empirical validity and their apparent inability to capture offender heterogeneity. Thus, sexual offender researchers in recent years have developed theoretically informed typologies of rape that not only attempt to capture offender heterogeneity, but have also received substantial empirical attention (Knight, 1999; Knight & Cerce, 1999; Knight & Guay, 2006). We view this as being one potential avenue for researchers interested in increasing the utility of sexual harassment typologies. At present sexual harassment typologies are useful for providing professionals with a broad, yet simplified overview of the characteristics of sexual harassers. This is not surprising given that sexual harassers themselves are rarely interviewed for typological descriptions. Consequently, current typologies provide little information regarding the etiological components of sexual harassment. Further, they provide little or no guidance for professionals engaged in the task of attempting to reduce sexual harassment either via organizational restructuring, preventative education, or individual perpetrator treatment.

4. Theories of sexual harassment

It is commonly accepted that there is no single cause of sexual harassment nor is there a theoretical framework that best explains it (Skaine, 1996). However, there have been five widely accepted theories/models of sexual harassment that attempt to explain the phenomenon from different angles and perspectives. These theories

are the sociocultural (Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979, Malovich & Stake, 1990; Tangri & Hayes, 1997), organizational (Gruber, 1992; Tangri et al., 1982), sexrole spillover (Gutek & Morasch, 1982; Tangri & Hayes, 1997), natural–biological (Tangri et al., 1982), and the four-factor theory (O'Hare & O'Donohue, 1998).

According to Ward, Polaschek, and Beech (2006), the terms “theories” and “models” are used interchangeably, and that is certainly the case with sexual harassment. In short, models may be viewed as “metaphors” which help researchers to view the structure of the phenomena under explanation (Ward et al., 2006). However, when these models provide detail about the mechanism and interactions underlying the various factors outlined in the model; then the beginnings of a theory emerge (Ward et al., 2006). To avoid overcomplicating this review, we will use the term “theory” to describe each of the explanations of sexual harassment that we will review. Furthermore, in order to aid our relative appraisals, we will refer to the theory appraisal criteria outlined by Hooker (1987) and Newton-Smith (2002). These writers argue that the following criteria are useful for aiding researchers in the difficult task of evaluating competing theories: *empirical adequacy and scope* (i.e., is the theory supported by existing empirical evidence?), *internal coherence* (i.e., is the theory logical and consistent?), *external consistency* (i.e., is the theory consistent with other background theories that are currently accepted?), *unifying power* (i.e., does the theory bring together previously isolated research findings or theoretical perspectives?), *fertility* (i.e., does the theory provide new hypotheses, arenas for research, or clinical interventions?), *simplicity* (i.e., a theory that makes the fewest assumptions) and *explanatory depth* (i.e., does the theory refer to intricate and detailed operations when describing the intended phenomena?). Thus, we will evaluate each theoretical explanation of sexual harassment along each of these appraisal dimensions in an attempt to evaluate the *relative* usefulness of each perspective. Before doing this, it is helpful to differentiate between different levels of theory (Ward & Hudson, 1998). Single factor theories generally focus upon one single factor hypothesized to contribute to the phenomena in question (e.g., biology, or social cultural factors). Multifactorial descriptions, on the other hand, are overarching theories that attempt to incorporate a number of single factors into a comprehensive etiological explanation of the phenomena in question (in this case, sexual harassment). Generally, more mature, and well developed spheres of research (e.g., rape, child molestation) will contain a variety well established single factor and multifactor theories.

4.1. Single factor theories

4.1.1. Sociocultural theory

Sociocultural theories–largely feminist in orientation–examine the wider social and political context in which sexual harassment is created and occurs. According to these theories, sexual harassment is a logical consequence of the gender inequality and sexism that already exists in society (Gutek, 1985; Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997). According to the feminist perspective, sexual harassment, regardless of its form, is linked to the sexist male ideology of male dominance and male superiority (Matchen & DeSouza, 2000; Stockdale, 1993). Sexual harassment exists because of the views of women as the inferior sex, but also sexual harassment serves to maintain the already existing gender stratification by emphasizing sex role expectations (Gutek, 1985; Malovich & Stake, 1990; Pryor; 1987; Schacht & Atchison, 1993; Tangri & Hayes, 1997). MacKinnon (1979) maintained that women's inferior position in the workplace and society in general, is not only a consequence, but also a cause of sexual harassment. Tangri, Burt, and Johnson (1982) posit that sexual harassment serves to manage the male–female interactions according to accepted sex status norms, and therefore, serves to maintain male dominance occupationally, by intimidating, and discouraging women from work.

Extension of male dominance in society includes organizations, where the phenomenon is thriving (Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979). Members/Workers of these organizations would therefore carry over their already existing gender roles, beliefs, and stereotypes into the workplace. Men and women are therefore socialized in such a manner that stereotyped interactions occur and are expected to occur; men are expected to be aggressive and dominant, and females are expected to be passive and accepting (Gruber & Bjorn, 1986). Therefore, according to feminist theory, men believe that their behaviors are justified whereas women blame themselves for being victimized (Vaux, 1993). Sexual harassment, hence, is viewed as an inevitable consequence of cultural experiences (Whaley & Tucker, 1998), therefore, it would apply to many different settings including the workplace (Barak, Pitterman, & Yitzhaki., 1995).

A main strength of feminist sociocultural theory has been the logical synthesis of gender issues, patriarchy, and dominance towards an explanation of sexual harassment (i.e., there is some evidence of *unifying power*). Furthermore, feminists' focus on gender inequality in the workplace has often been credited with bringing the issue of sexual harassment to light (Thomas & Kitzinger, 1997); thus opening up new avenues of enquiry for researchers (some evidence of research *fertility*). Furthermore, there does appear to be some supporting evidence for feminist sociocultural explanations of sexual harassment. For example, as noted earlier, prevalence studies show that the majority of perpetrators is male (apparent *empirical adequacy*), and some studies show that harassment is more predominant in male-dominated work forces (Brown, 1998; European Commission, 1998; Gruber, 1992; LaFontaine & Tredeau, 1986; Tangri et al., 1982; Niebuhr & Boyles, 1991). The approach of feminist sociocultural explanations of sexual harassment however, appears to be over inclusive and simplistic (i.e., there is a lack of *explanatory depth*). Gender role socialization has evolved and expanded over time, to include more behaviors than the stereotyped expected gender behaviors, thus permitting more infusions of different behaviors to be accepted as normal for each gender (Bem, 1983). This, however, has not been accompanied by any measurable decrease in the phenomenon of sexual harassment (i.e., a lack of *empirical adequacy*). In addition, even though sexual harassment is a frequent phenomenon in society, it is not a normative behavior for men. Most men do *not* sexually harass, and the over arching nature of the feminist sociocultural theory does not provide a sufficient explanation as to why this is the case (lack of *internal coherence* and *empirical adequacy*).

4.1.2. Organizational theory

According to organizational theory (Gruber, 1992; Tangri et al., 1982), sexual harassment may be explained by a wide variety of organizational-related issues including power and status inequalities within the organization, which increase the likelihood of sexual harassment occurring. So, similarly to socio-cultural explanations, the organizational theory acknowledges that power differentials within the workplace do affect the likelihood of sexual harassment taking place (apparent *external consistency*).

Proponents of this theory broadly accept that one of the central concepts that help to explain sexual harassment is power (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993). The norms that define western societies suggest that there are powerful and powerless individuals, the relationship of which should be defined by hierarchy, and consequently the exercise of power within that hierarchy should be expected and accepted (Lips, 1991). Furthermore, patterns in western societies suggest that men typically hold more power than women and the stereotypes prevailing between genders are that men are goal-oriented, powerful and aggressive, whereas women are passive–receptive and family-oriented (Allgeier & McCormick, 1983; Eagly, 1983; Eagly & Mladinic, 1989; Eagly & Wood, 1982).

However, organizational theory does not focus upon these power differentials as being gender specific. Thus, it could be predicted from the organizational theory, that although sexual harassment may be

more frequently perpetrated by males (due to workplace gender inequality), it may also be perpetrated by females who occupy positions of power (signs of *unifying power*). Furthermore, some researchers whose research could be affiliated with organizational theory suggest that sexual harassment by peers or subordinates can be seen as an attempt to gain power or equalize the power differences between the harasser and the victim within the organization (Cleveland & Kerst, 1993). So, in this sense, organizational theory may be able to explain sexual harassment perpetrated by subordinates since it presumes such individuals harass to reassert or equalize power differences.

The organizational theory deals primarily with the immediate context of the harassment. Thus, according to the organizational theory it is not simply power differentials within the organization that facilitate sexually abusive behavior. Other factors such as permissiveness of the organizational climate, gendered occupations, and organizational ethics, norms and policies affect the likelihood of sexual harassment occurring (Dekker & Barling, 1998; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997; Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Morasch, 1982; O'Hare & O'Donohue, 1998; Whaley & Tucker, 1998; Willness et al., 2007). For example, in workplaces that are more tolerant of sexual harassment (e.g., no clear anti-sexual harassment policy, or complaints procedure), the organizational theory would predict that sexual harassment would be more prevalent. How permissive the organizational climate is, will determine the perceived risk of the potential victims to complain, the possibility and the availability of sanctions for harassers and the reception of one's complaints by the organization and colleagues with regards to seriousness.

A key strength of the organizational theory is that it attempts to unify a number of organizational factors in its explanation of sexual harassment (i.e., there is some evidence of *unifying power*). A further strength of the organizational theory is that many of its principal hypotheses have been both tested and identified as playing an important role in occurrence of sexual harassment (i.e., strong *empirical adequacy* and research *fertility*). For example, meta-analytical research shows that the organizational climate (i.e., tolerance of sexual harassment) and the gendered nature of an organization (i.e., proportion of women in a workgroup) play an important part in the occurrence of sexual harassment (Willness et al., 2007). In fact, the organizational climate is currently considered the strongest empirical predictor of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Pryor, 1995; Welsh, 1999; Williams, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1999).

Weaknesses of the organizational theory revolve around its lack of attention to people's individual differences (actor variability) and how their everyday behavior, stereotypes, and expectations can influence the occurrence of the phenomenon (i.e., a lack of *internal coherence* and *explanatory depth*). Nevertheless, organizational theory has played a prominent role in directing professionals' focus towards the need for effective strategies to combat sexual harassment within the organization and its structural properties (Willness et al., 2007).

4.2. Sex-role spillover theory

The sex-role spillover theory (Gutek 1985; Gutek & Morasch, 1982), attempts to integrate both contextual or situational characteristics (e.g., gender ratio at work) and the individual gender-based beliefs and expectations of the harasser. This theory is sometimes considered as a theory itself but for the purposes of this paper it will be examined as an extension of organizational theories of sexual harassment (Tangri & Hayes, 1997).

A fundamental premise of this theory is that men and women bring to work their pre-existing beliefs and gender-based expectations for behavior in the workplace, even though these expectations may not be applicable in the working environment (e.g., that women should not be employed in powerful positions). Thus, according to this theory, the sexual harassers' beliefs about gender override beliefs about worker equality (Sbraga & O'Donohue, 2000). As a result of this, conflicts are likely to arise in situations in which the sex-role stereotypes held by the harasser are different from the work roles of the particular genders. Women may, therefore, experience sexual harassment in nontraditional work situations, such as being a taxi-driver, a police officer, or even a high ranking CEO (Brown, 1998; European Commission, 1998; Gruber, 1992; LaFontaine & Tredeau, 1986; Niebuhr & Boyles, 1991).

According to Gutek and Morasch (1982) the sex-role spillover theory appears to explain sexual harassment in a more holistic manner than any of the previous three theories alone, making it a more comprehensive tool in better understanding sexual harassment (i.e., this theory displays relative strengths of *unifying power* and *explanatory depth*). However, its limitation is that it minimizes perpetrator characteristics, or any other organizational or situational variables that may surface (O'Hare & O'Donohue, 1998; some weakness of explanatory depth or *internal coherence*). In terms of *empirical adequacy*, some of the predictions of this theory have been tested and supported, especially as it applies to women: e.g. women in male-dominated workplaces actually perceive differential treatment from male colleagues, whereas women that work in integrated settings are least likely to report sexual harassment at work, even sexual harassment of the most severe kind (i.e. sexual coercion: cf. Burgess & Borgida, 1997; Gutek & Morasch, 1982; Fain & Anderton, 1987; Sheffey & Tindale, 1992; Tangri & Hayes, 1997). However, according to Gutek and Done (2001) sex-spillover theory fails to make parallel arguments for both men and women, due to the fundamental differences between female and male sex roles. There is also less research on how sex-role spillover affects men as there are fewer men in non-traditional job environments (Gutek, 1985). Despite the supportive results for sex-role spillover, Gutek and Done (2001) suggest the need for a more thorough analysis and refinement of the theory and more thorough empirical testing (evidence of research *fertility*).

4.2.1. Natural/biological theory

The third theory is the natural/biological perspective on sexual harassment (Barak et al., 1995; Browne, 1997; Tangri & Hayes, 1997; Studd & Gattiker, 1991). These perspectives posit that sexual harassment is a natural extension of mate selection evolutionary theory. In other words, sexual harassment represents an expression of sexual attraction, a natural element in mate seeking. According to these researchers, men have a stronger inner drive to be sexually aggressive, and to find a mate. Therefore, such sexual behavior is not meant as harassment (Barak et al., 1995). This higher sex drive of men creates a mismatch between the sexual desires of men and women and consequently leads to sexually aggressive behavior at work (Tangri & Hayes, 1997). According to some other researchers, due to the differences in the evolution of women and men, there are different reproductive strategies that may create a conflict of interest that spills over at the workplace (Studd & Gattiker, 1991), because men simply attempt to maximize their reproductive success and gain sexual access to more females by behaving in a sexually harassing manner. Therefore, men use power instrumentally in these cases, according to the evolutionary perspective, in order to obtain sex (Browne, 1997). Presumably, such attempts to gain sexual access could result in more coercive sexual behaviors such as rape (Ward et al., 2006, for a review of evolutionary theory applied to rape). However, to our knowledge, there is no existing biological theory which unites sexual harassment and rape in a meaningful manner.

A key strength of the natural/biological perspective is that it acknowledges the innate human instincts potentially driving sexually aggressive behavior. In other words it unifies evolutionary perspectives to explain sexual harassment (i.e., some evidence of *unifying power*). However, there is a number of weaknesses with this perspective that we would argue undermine its ability to effectively explain sexual harassment. First, it appears to treat sexual harassment

in a very simplistic way, disregarding all societal and personal factors, as well as serving to trivialize sexual harassment as part of a normal reproductive ritual, or at least the result of a few skewed proclivities in some men (Tangri et al., 1982; i.e., a lack of *explanatory depth*). Second, this theory lacks fertility since it is extremely difficult to design studies that test the theory's core assumptions, and the theory does not provide any core strategies for sexual harassment prevention. Finally, there is very little empirical literature supporting the natural/biological theory of sexual harassment. For example, Tangri, Burt, and Johnson (1982) conducted a study testing the three aforementioned theories of sexual harassment based on the survey data of the first USMSPB (1981) and found no support for the natural/biological theory. Furthermore, the natural/biological theory would predict that women would be the sole victims of sexual harassment. However, as noted earlier, this is not what the research shows (USMSPB, 1995; European Commission, 1998). Thus, the theory's key weakness revolves around a lack of empirical adequacy.

4.3. Social-cognitive theories of sexual harassment

Although we recognize that the sexual harassment literature does not currently feature a mature social-cognitive *theory* of sexual harassment, an examination of the research literature shows that social-cognitive *methods* have been used to both understand and explain sexual harassment (Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1993; Pryor & Stoller, 1994). Furthermore, given the hypothesized relationship between rape and sexual harassment, it is notable that social-cognitive theories play a fundamental role in explaining rape (Drieschner & Lange, 1999; Gannon et al., 2008; Ward et al., 1997). Thus, we propose that the same social-cognitive explanations of rape may be used to understand sexual harassment. Generally, the fundamental components underlying a social-cognitive explanation of any phenomenon involve (1) long term memory content and structure (i.e., belief content and their schematic organization), (2) social-cognitive processing (i.e., the cognitive mechanisms–attention, retrieval–used to process social information), and (3) cognitive products (i.e., end stage beliefs, thoughts, and attributions) that result from content, organization, and processing of social information; Hollon & Kriss, 1984). So, what does the research pertaining to sexual harassment tell us about each of these hypothesized components representing social cognition?

John Pryor and his colleagues have demonstrated that mental concepts of sex and power are found to be associated in men who are high on likelihood to sexually harass (LSH; Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1993; Pryor & Stoller, 1994). For example, Pryor and Stoller (1994) asked participants (high and low on LSH) to view and memorize various word pairings of neutral, sexual, and power-related words. Interestingly, men high on LSH remembered more sex–power pairings than had actually been presented relative to men low on LSH. Pryor and Stoller (1994) showed that men high on LSH perceived a frequent but otherwise illusory correlation between sex and power related words. Bargh et al. (1995) have found similar results. In summary, these findings could be viewed as evidence for the existence of a sex schema in memory that associates power and sex in men with a high LSH (Bargh et al., 1995; i.e., evidence of long term memory and structure). The results of such studies may also be interpreted as providing some evidence regarding social cognitive processing, since, somewhere in the process, men high on LSH must have overly attended to the sex power word pairings, in order to have overperceived their existence in the memorization task.

Fitzgerald (1993) observed that the majority of men that engage in sexually harassing behavior may not be consciously aware that they are doing so. This hypothesis would fit well with Pryor and Stoller's (1994) research, since some men's lack of awareness of the harassing nature of their behavior may be explained by the automaticity and unconscious nature of the power–sex association. In other words, the concepts of power and sex may be so strongly linked for men with a high LSH, that they cause the concept of sexuality to be activated *automatically* whenever the concept of power is evident.

Research by Bargh et al. (1995)) was conducted in order to test the hypothesized power–sex automaticity further. In one of their studies, they primed individuals high and low on LSH with power-related stimuli using a word completion task (e.g., add the missing letter from the word Bos_). The control condition was to complete words that were not related to the power concept. Bargh et al. (1995) were interested in how the priming procedure would affect men's appraisal of a female confederate. If men high on LSH hold an inextricable link between power and sexual concepts, then they should rate themselves as being more sexually attracted towards the female confederate. Results showed that, although men low on LSH showed no difference in their sexual attraction towards the female confederate, men high on LSH, who had been primed by the power words reported (1) that they found the female confederated more attractive and, (2) if given the opportunity, they would like to become more familiar with her. Interestingly, however, men high on LSH did not appear to be aware of the underlying reason for their attractiveness to the female confederate, instead stating that the female's attractiveness was the underlying cause or that the female confederate was more their "type." These results appear to suggest that placing men who hold certain structural schemas between power and sex into contextual positions of power is highly likely to affect their sexual behavior towards women without them even being conscious of such harassment (Bargh et al., 1995; Polaschek & Ward, 2002). These findings may explain why some men who sexually harass appear to have difficulty perspective taking (Driscoll et al., 1998), since, from their frame of reference; no sexual harassment has ever taken place. Bargh et al. (1995) also distinguished between sexual aggressors and sexual harassers; Men who engage in sexual coercion as measured by the LSH do not demonstrate the same effect of power on sexual attraction as the men who engage in sexual aggression as measured by the *Attractiveness to Sexual Aggression* scale (ASA; Malamuth 1989a,b). More specifically, high LSH participants showed a bidirectional power–sex connection, whereas high ASA demonstrated a unidirectional power-then-sex association. The latter indicate that it is the power-then-sex association that is the critical factor for men who sexually aggress against females (Bargh et al., 1995).

In terms of self-report data, research has found that harassers are more likely to endorse rape myths, thereby blaming the victims for their own sexual assault or harassment and justifying their sexual aggression by exonerating themselves in situations (Burt, 1980; Reilly, Lott, Caldwell, & De Luca, 1992). Other research also confirms that perpetrators are likely to blame their victims when confronted about their act (DeJudicibus & McCabe, 2001; Schneider, 1991). It appears from the aforementioned research that harassers have problems identifying the unfairness of their act, thus blaming the victims rather than themselves. Thus, research on sexual harassers' self reported *cognitive products* appears to support the social cognitive view that these men hold harassment-supportive cognitive content which biases their cognitive processing leading to automatic, and unconscious, harassment-type behaviors.

In summary, although the sexual harassment literature has not specifically adopted a clear social-cognitive explanation for sexual harassment, the research literature indicates some substantial empirical support for adapting such a theory for the explanation of sexual harassment. The central tenets of social-cognitive theory are that men who engage in antisocial behaviors hold behavior-supporting belief content and schemas in long term memory that bias their social information processing in an antisocial manner (Ward & Keenan, 1999). Thus, we believe that there is significant scope for such a theory to be adapted and tested with sexual harassers. In particular, one might hypothesize that sexual harassers would hold schemas that overlap somewhat with those documented in rapists (Polaschek & Gannon, 2004). In short then, we believe that there is strong empirical support and fertility for a social-cognitive perspective of sexual harassment.

Such a perspective would open up numerous avenues of empirical enquiry which may well help to elucidate the main similarities and differences between sexual harassers and rapists. A particularly interesting line of inquiry might be to explore whether sexual harassers, like rapists, misinterpret the heterosocial cues of women? If social-cognitive theory was to be implemented successfully to the explanation and study of sexual harassment, we would anticipate that this perspective would add significant explanatory depth and unifying power to current theorizing regarding sexual harassment. Nevertheless, we do recognize that, by itself, social-cognitive theory would not represent a comprehensive understanding of sexual harassment (i.e., it would hold poor explanatory depth if it were not synthesized with other factors).

4.4. Multi factor theories of sexual harassment

4.4.1. Four factor theory of sexual harassment

The four factor theory (O'Hare & O'Donohue, 1998) of sexual harassment is a multifactorial theory that incorporates key components of many of the previous single factor theories. In their paper, O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998) reviewed existing single factor theories of sexual harassment, and then borrowed aspects of Finkelhor's four factor theory of child sexual abuse to develop the only multifactor theory of sexual harassment to date. O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998) hypothesized that, in order for sexual harassment to take place, four basic conditions must be present: (1) the individual must be *motivated* to harass (e.g., they must be driven by any combination of *power*, *control*, or *sexual attraction*), (2) the individual must overcome *internal inhibitions* not to harass (e.g., moral restraints), (3) the individual must overcome *external inhibitions* to harassment (e.g., specific organizational workplace barriers such as professionalism), and (4) the individual must overcome *victim's resistance* (e.g., assertiveness or the victim's relative status within the workplace).

Interestingly, O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998) tested the predictive validity of their theory using self-report data from female faculty, staff and students. In brief, O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998) hypothesized that women who self reported themselves as more physically attractive would report more instances of sexual harassment (testing factor 1 of the theory). Furthermore, it was hypothesized that women who had more workspace privacy, knowledge of complaints procedures, and who worked in an environment characterized by sex equality, professionalism, and more equal sex-ratios would report less harassment (testing factor 3 of the theory). Finally, O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998) hypothesized that women who rated themselves as more feminine (measured via Bem's *Sex-Role Inventory*, 1974), and who occupied lower positions within their organization would be more susceptible to harassment (testing factor 4 of the theory).

Using regression analyses, O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998) found that the four factor theory provided a better explanation of the data than any single factor theory (organizational, sexrole spillover, or sociocultural). Furthermore, it was found that the factors most predictive of harassment were poor knowledge about complaint procedures, unprofessional workplace, and sexist attitudes (all related to factor 3; organizational factors). From these results, O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998) conclude that harassment intervention should proceed at the organizational level, since this is where the predominant risk of sexual harassment occurs.

A primary strength of the four factor theory of sexual harassment is that it synthesizes previously isolated individual, sociocultural, and organizational factors into one multifactorial theory (evidence of *unifying power* and apparent *explanatory depth* and external consistency). Furthermore, the theory shows relatively strong *empirical adequacy* relative to previous single factor theories of sexual harassment. Clearly, this is a great step forward for a field that has been primarily dominated by relatively impoverished single factor explanations of sexual harassment.

There are, however, some limitations to this theory that limit its usefulness as a resource for sexual harassment professionals. First of all, only the organizational and victim-relevant factors of the theory have been adequately empirically tested. In other words, the authors did not fully test factor 1 of the theory (the sexual harasser's underlying motivation to offend) concentrating only upon sexual attraction rather than the power and control elements which may underlie perpetrator motivators. Furthermore, there was no empirical test of factor 2 which relates to the perpetrators' own moral restraints to sexual harassment. This clearly leaves a very large explanatory and empirical gap in our understanding of sexual harassment since the very best theory (and research) we hold is currently loaded in favor of organizational and victim factors (poor *explanatory depth*, *internal coherence,* and *empirical adequacy*). Furthermore, O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998) argue that sexual harassers may be motivated by sexual attraction, need for control, and need for power. However, no clear typology of men is provided and this is something that clearly warrants further attention (perhaps through recruiting male harassers rather than only their victims). Nevertheless, the theory does show some promise of *research* and *clinical* fertility since it opens up new avenues of inquiry and may, in time, lead to effective interventions both at the organizational and individual level.

5. Sexual harassment intervention

5.1. Prevention and recognition

There are currently many training programs offered in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom that target recognition and prevention of sexual harassment in organizations (Hotchkiss, 1994; Sbraga & O'Donohue, 2000). There have been numerous high-profile lawsuits and settlements, as well as the cost of these settlements to organizations that have spurred a proactive stance to recognize and prevent sexual harassment (Sbraga & O'Donohue, 2000). These training programs are usually offered by private management and training companies employing independent consultants, and involve retaliation prevention strategies, educating employers and employees on definitions of sexual harassment, and providing step-by-step guides on how to deal with complaints, offer support to victims, and provide information to alleged harassers. Most academic institutions in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom have clear policies on sexual harassment and in the US and Canada academic institutions offer particular training programs to staff on prevention and recognition of sexual harassment. In Canada, in particular, there are educational programs that even target sexual harassment in schools (e.g., promoting awareness of appropriate sex relationships, recognition of gender and sexual harassment, and the provision of prevention strategies for teachers; Quebec Ministry of Education, 2003).

Although these preventive moves offer the necessary coverage to organizations in the event of sexual harassment cases, and offer a wider recognition of sexual harassment as a current problem in societies, they remain unitary efforts and solutions and it is still unclear whether they succeed in changing either the organizational or individual elements that may be involved in sexual harassment. There is no empirical evidence of a universal evaluation of the effectiveness of any of the aforementioned programs and this is an important question that even today remains unanswered. The necessity of program evaluation studies is now evident in order to take a step forward in preventing sexual harassment at work. Although having educational programs and training on sexual harassment helps both employers and employees to recognize and educate themselves on sexual harassment, these programs do not address the essential issues that surround the occurrence of the phenomenon, such as sexism at work, power misuse and abuse, hierarchical issues, gendered environments, and individual perpetrator characteristics. There need to be alterations and monitoring of those important individual

differences and structural elements of the organization in order to more effectively target and eliminate sexual harassment.

5.2. Treatment for perpetrators of sexual harassment

Although the known problems and consequences of sexual harassment to its victims are now well documented, there still is very little research or materials that have focused on the characteristics of men who sexually harass. Perpetrators of sexual harassment are often ordered by courts to receive sexual harassment treatment before they are allowed to reenter the workplace (Sbraga & O'Donohue, 2000). However, although this treatment is prescribed, there is, in fact, no known treatment for sexual harassers at present, and, given the paucity of information and theory regarding sexual harasser characteristics, such a task would be very difficult. Given that sexual harassment is often viewed along a continuum of behaviors that could result in sexual violence, it could be helpful to draw information from the treatment provided for serious offenders (e.g., rapists). There have, in fact, been attempts to devise treatment programs from treatments devised for sex offenders (Brunswig & O'Donohue, 1998; Sbraga & O'Donohue, 2000). However, little has been documented about the outcome of such programs.

From our review, it would seem that there are some significant overlaps between the individual characteristics of sexual harassers and other sexual offenders which could warrant significant intervention. Sexual harassers appear to hold problematic schematic fusions between power and sex, unfavorable attitudes towards women, poor empathy, and are likely to blame their own victims for their harassment (Pryor & Stoller, 1994; Reilly et al., 1992; DeJudicibus & McCabe, 2001). In addition to this, some research appears to suggest that men who sexually harass may be lonely individuals who have problems establishing and maintaining intimacy in more appropriate ways (Brewer, 1982). Thus, some adaptations of modules that are used in sex-offender treatment (e.g., offence-supportive attitudes, victim empathy, intimacy deficits, and social skills training) are likely to apply to men who sexually harass, although these modules would need to be adapted carefully. However, no known treatment program or in fact any outcome results of any attempt has been published to our knowledge. This leaves a very important gap in the literature that needs to be filled. Research with sexual offenders indicates that they exhibit problems with emotional regulation, and coping with negative life events (Cortoni & Marshall, 2001; Marshall, Marshall, Serran, & Fernandez, 2006). Furthermore, sexual offenders appear to engage in sex-focused coping mechanisms which appear to increase their risk of sexually offending (Cortoni & Marshall, 2001). Such findings pose some interesting questions for researchers interested in sexual harassment. Do sexual harassers share these deficits? If so: to what extent? Such questions need to be answered in order to establish effective treatment for sexual harassers that will prevent relapse and meet harassers' needs.

Lack of effective treatment programs means that many harassers would receive normal counseling or psychotherapy by an unaware (of the particular sexual harassment issues) professional and then be allowed to reenter the workplace. Clearly, a lack of effective treatment for sexual harassers exerts a damaging effect on the workplace and the victims of sexual harassment; a situation that could be much improved were researchers to examine the characteristics of sexual harassers more thoroughly.

6. Future research and conclusions

It is clear that sexual harassment, as a concept, has been gaining some positive and helpful research attention over the past few decades. The majority of studies and theories has examined the sexual harassment situation either from an organizational or socio-cultural standpoint, or a victim-based perspective. While we believe that such attention has resulted in positive knowledge gains, we also believe that the tendency to focus predominantly upon these perspectives has resulted in some important knowledge gaps that require attention. Thus, in this final section, we highlight the main gaps and limitations evident in the field and make some suggestions for future research applications.

Although there has been one main valuable effort to develop an instrument that measures the likelihood of someone to sexually harass (LSH; Pryor, 1987), this has perhaps been the only popularized and concerted effort on the part of researchers to study the underlying features of the sexual harasser. It is unclear, why researchers have been reticent to examine the characteristics of the individual perpetrator. It may be that other core issues such as socio-cultural and organizational factors have received more attention precisely because such explanations played a key role in placing sexual harassment on the map in terms of academic, legal, and organizational contexts. We would argue, however, that the time has now come to make the next necessary step forward in the fight against sexual harassment: the integration of sociocultural and organizational issues with focused, rigorous research on the individual characteristics of sexual harassers.

A number of researchers appear to view sexual harassment as an act that can be viewed along a continuum of behaviors that could result in sexual violence (Lucero et al., 2006). Harassers may switch behaviors from either gender harassment to unwanted sexual attention individually, or a switch and escalation to both behaviors. Thus, a clear gap exists in the research literature concerning our knowledge of sexual harassers and how these individuals compare with other sexual aggressors. One convincing, yet labor intensive method of filling this gap, would be to design longitudinal studies that follow young sexual harassers for lengthy periods, and examine their individual characteristics, to ascertain who goes on to commit more serious sexual aggression and who does not. Being able to identify the types of sexual harassers who may go on to perpetrate other forms of sexual aggression would increase professionals' ability to devise effective preventative treatment programs for use with first time sexual harassers. As noted earlier, this is clearly essential for the reduction of sexual harassment, and possibly more severe sexual crimes. There is an imminent necessity for longitudinal studies of harassers, in order to assess sexual harassment as part of the continuum of violent behaviors that it is often recognized to be a part of.

A related area of research that requires some significant work is our understanding of the basic typologies of men who sexually harass. Current research is very much victim-focused, and rarely interviews sexual harassers themselves to obtain information as to the key factors facilitating sexual harassment. In fact, in comparison to other fields of related research (e.g., rape), current typologies describing sexual harassers are very simplistic, and offer no useful guidance regarding the key characteristics of harassers. Thus, one possible future avenue of research would be for researchers to develop more sophisticated typologies that may be tested empirically using self-report data from sexual harassers and/or victims.

A further area within the sexual harassment field which requires some significant regeneration is that of theory development. At present, there is only one multifactorial theory of sexual harassment which has been adapted from an aging theory of child molestation developed over two decades ago. While this four factor theory of sexual harassment represents a positive step forward for the sexual harassment literature, it still has the impact of minimizing the role of the sexual harasser since this part of the theory is poorly explicated and tested. Future research must develop more sophisticated multifactorial theories which integrate individual, sociocultural, biological, and organizational factors convincingly, if this field is to grow meaningfully. Before this can occur, researchers may need to develop more convincing single factor theories that focus exclusively on the sexual harassers' characteristics. In other fields examining sexual aggression, for example, there are well established theories describing

the cognitions of sexual offenders (socio-cognitive theories), their empathy deficits, and also their intimacy problems and attachment styles (Ward et al., 2006). We have highlighted one potential single factor theory of cognition for sexual harassers in this review (socio-cognitive theory of sexual harassment), but clearly there is more work to do before this literature may be integrated into a fully fledged multifactorial theory.

Sexual harassment claims more victims than any other sexual crime. It affects a significant proportion of working women and it affects their personal lives and professional functioning, thus preventing them from advancing in the workplace, and affecting one of their fundamental human rights; the right to work with dignity. It is nowadays recognized that both employers and employees need to know what the acceptable behavior at the workplace is, how sexual harassment starts, what it is, how it functions, what the personal and organizational consequences are, and how to effectively deal with them.

The global recognition of the problem that research over the past 30 years on this topic has offered has, indeed, put sexual harassment on the map and has made people aware that it is an everyday problem that could affect anyone. Understanding sexual harassment is the first step in dealing with it, and the ongoing research needs to now focus on how to effectively deal with and treat the sexual harasser. Such research is urgently required in order to prevent and regulate unwanted sexualized behavior at work and, therefore, improve the working experiences of millions of women worldwide, as well as maintain an all-important organizational balance.

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