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Social identity and integrative complexity: The effects of silent group membership on reasoning about social issues

Stephen Leonard Friedman
Wilfrid Laurier University

Social Identity and Integrative Complexity:

The Effects of Salient Group Membership on Reasoning About Social Issues

By

Stephen L. Friedman

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Abstract

The work of self-categorization theorists (e.g., Conover, 1988, 1984; Turner et al., 1987) suggests that presenting individuals with social issues central to the interest of their social group, and individual differences in group identification, can accentuate the salience of one's group membership. Further, they suggest that social group salience may affect individuals' viewpoints on group central social issues, resulting in more extreme, black-and-white thinking. The present study was designed in order to investigate the extent to which social group salience and/or individual differences in group identification affect the complexity with which gender group members think about a gender-central social issue. Ninety-six participants who identified either weakly or strongly with their gender group indicated their thoughts about a scenario which did or did not involve sexual harassment. It was expected that those who were asked about sexual harassment would be less complex than those who were not, and that those who were asked about sexual harassment and were also high in gender group identity would be the least complex overall. Results indicated that those who considered a sexual harassment scenario (i.e., a gender central issue for both genders) engaged in significantly more black and white (less complex) thought when considering this issue than those who were given a scenario discussing another issue not related to harassment. As well, individual differences in group identity affected the complexity of males', but not females' responses; males who were high in gender identity and were given the sexual

harassment scenario were less complex than those who were low in gender identity and were given the sexual harassment scenario. Results are discussed with reference to gender differences in gender identification, the tendency for group central social issues to accentuate group salience and the impact of group membership on reasoning.

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Introduction

The objective of the present study was to examine how identification with a social group influences the way group members conceptualize social issues that are central to the interests of their group. Issues can be considered central to the interests of a particular group to the extent that they relate to how members of that group are perceived or treated relative to members of other groups. Issues concerning sexual harassment, for example, would be central to women, in that women are usually the victims in sexual harassment episodes.

One theory which presents a comprehensive formulation of group identification is Turner's self-categorization theory (Abrams, Wetherell, Cochrane, Hogg & Turner, 1990; Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Hogg & Turner, 1987; McGarty, Turner, Hogg, David & Wetherell, 1992; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Self-categorization theory describes in detail how individuals come to see themselves as members of a particular group, and delineates some of the consequences of this kind of "self-categorization." The first section of this introduction will describe some of the major principles of self-categorization theory, as it relates to the way in which individuals come to perceive themselves as belonging to a particular group.

It will then go on to discuss two determinants of the extent to which individuals identify with social groups: individual differences and situational/contextual factors. This will be followed by a discussion of how group membership can influence thought and attitudes, and subsequently, a review of

research on one particular attribute of thought, namely integrative complexity (Baker-Brown, Ballard, Bluck, de Vries, Suedfeld, & Tetlock, 1986, 1992; Tetlock, 1977). The introduction will then review recent literature in order to illustrate why group membership might affect the complexity of reasoning about social issues central to group members' interests.

Review of the Literature

Self-categorization Theory

Membership in one or more social groups is an integral part of any individual's self-concept. According to Turner and his associates (Hogg & Turner, 1987; Turner et al., 1987), a social group is a collection of individuals who internalize a group/category label that is significant for its members for the purpose of social cohesion, co-operation, social comparison, and social influence, as well as the acquisition of norms and values. Most individuals will acknowledge their membership in several social groups, be they based on religion, race and gender, or ideology and politics (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Turner et al., 1987).

Self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner et al., 1987) and its forerunner, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), suggest that two of the key aspects of self, which form part of the individual's social self-concept, are the perception of oneself as a unique individual and the perception of oneself as a member of a group. Any factor which causes an individual's identification as a group

member to be salient will tend to result in individuals perceiving themselves as typical members of their group (Hogg & Turner, 1987), and will increase the perceived similarity between themselves and other group members (Turner et al., 1987). In turn, the interests of the group with which one identifies become instrumental in determining group members' norms, attitudes and behaviors, as well as affecting their viewpoints on various social and political issues (Conover, 1988, 1984; Turner et al., 1987).

When individuals categorize themselves into social groups, this may result in the biased processing of information relevant to the group (Schaller, 1991). This biased processing may manifest itself as extremism, or a simplification in the thinking of individuals who identify with a particular group with regard to issues that are seen as critical in distinguishing one's own group from other groups. In fact, some of the earliest work on social judgement processes has indicated that members of groups which advocate specific positions on controversial social issues evidence some of the most inflexible, and presumably extreme, attitudes regarding these issues (Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

SCT suggests that there is an integration of individual and group selves within a hierarchical system of classification of the social self-concept (Turner et al., 1987). This hierarchical system consists of three levels of abstraction: (a) The superordinate level, in which one sees oneself as a human being who shares common feelings, aspirations and needs with other human beings; (b) the intermediate level referring to ingroup - outgroup categorizations, in which an

individual is distinguished from other individuals as a function of identification with a social group; and (c) the subordinate level referring to personal identification of the self as an independent and unique individual (Turner et al., 1987). The various levels of self-categorization operate like schemata, with one level being activated at a particular time as a result of both the characteristics of the individual and the situation at hand (Turner et al., 1987).

The intermediate or group level of categorization, which is the focus of the present study, includes objective belongingness of an individual to a particular social group, a subjective psychological awareness of belonging to that group, as well as cognitive and affective identification with the group. This identification results in one's self-categorization as part of a social group becoming integrated into his/her self-concept. In turn, the interests of the group with which one identifies become instrumental in determining one's attitudes and behaviors (Conover, 1988, 1984; Turner et al., 1987).

While the salience of one's group level of identification (group membership) may be determined by situational cues (e.g., Hogg & Turner, 1987; Oakes, Turner & Haslam, 1991), individual differences in group identification or social identity have been found to exist (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1991, 1992) and might also be assumed to contribute to the salience of one's social category.

Individual Differences in Social Identification

There is an extensive literature on the extent to which individuals identify with the groups to which they belong (e.g., Cartwright and Zander, 1968). The earliest research in this area discussed this kind of identification under the term "group cohesiveness." Group cohesiveness can be defined as the result of all forces which act on group members to remain in the group (Festinger, 1950). A number of measures have been developed to assess closeness or identification with a group (e.g., Converse & Campbell, 1968; Indik, 1965; Sagi, Olmstead & Atelsek, 1955), in line with Festinger's notions of group cohesiveness. All of these measures assess individuals' attraction to groups to which they belong. However, social identity theory and SCT suggest that it is not only one's attraction to a group that is important; equally important is the sense of self-worth or self-esteem that one derives from group membership.

One of the more recent measures of group identification, Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) collective self-esteem (CSE) scale, assesses both individuals' attraction to the social groups to which they belong and the extent to which they derive positive feelings of self-worth and self-identity from their group membership. Luhtanen and Crocker assert that the sense of self-esteem which people acquire from group membership may be a distinct component of their overall feelings of self-esteem. Their results show that the CSE scale constitutes a valid and reliable measure of stable individual differences in the extent to which people positively evaluate their membership in any particular social group.

Across several studies, the 16-item scale has shown high internal consistency (alpha's for total and all subscales > .83), and acceptable test-retest reliability over a six-week period (r = .68 for the total scale, subscale r's range from .58 to .68) (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

SCT assumes that people are motivated to enhance or maintain not only a positive personal identity, but a positive social (or collective) identity as well (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1986). When threats to one's positive social identity are present, one's identity can be maintained by derogating out-groups and enhancing in-group perceptions. The development of the CSE scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) provided an opportunity to examine whether or not stable individual differences in social identity mediate the extent of in-group bias in cases where one's positive social identity is threatened.

In a study investigating this notion, Crocker and Luhtanen (1990) randomly assigned research participants into 2 groups and told members of each group to expect to interact with members of the other group at the end of the study. All participants were then asked to complete a measure of personal self-esteem as well as the CSE scale. After completing a social judgement task, participants were given feedback regarding their group's performance on this task (they were told that their group had performed either above or below average). Group members were then asked to evaluate the performance of above and below average scorers using an adjective scale. Results indicated that those with high CSE who were given group success feedback rated above average

scorers more positively than did high CSE individuals who received group failure feedback. Also, they rated below average scorers more negatively than did high CSE individuals who received group failure feedback. The same effect with respect to individual differences in personal self-esteem was not found. Thus, individuals with high CSE, when this CSE was threatened by receiving negative feedback regarding the performance of their group, attempted to maintain a positive social identity by varying their ratings of other participants in an ingroup-enhancing fashion. It seems then, that stable individual differences in social identity, as indicated by the CSE scale, moderate the extent of in-group bias in cases where one's positive social identity is threatened. Thus, the CSE scale has been successfully used to provide support for SCT's prediction that people are motivated to enhance or maintain a positive social (or collective) identity within the context of intergroup comparisons. Furthermore, this research suggests that there are stable individual differences in the extent to which people identify with social groups, and that these differences will influence the way they evaluate those who do or do not belong to those same groups.

Situational and Contextual Influences on Group Identification

Individual differences in peoples' identification with their social groups are not the only way in which social identities become salient; the situations and contexts in which people communicate their attitudes can also affect the

salience of their social categories.

Self-categorization theory asserts that in order for one's membership in a group to be salient, there must be a "fit" between objective group membership, and the attributes and behaviours of group members, compared to the attributes and behaviours of members of other groups (Oakes, 1987; Oakes, Turner & Haslam, 1991). The fit of a social category can be defined as the extent to which (a) individuals from different social categories manifest behaviours or attributes that differ markedly from one another, and (b) the differences in behaviour or attributes are in line with the expectations that people have for individuals within each category. The more a categorization maximizes differences between individuals belonging to different groups while maximizing similarities between individuals within groups, the better the fit of that social categorization and the more salient this categorization becomes (this is known as the "salience hypothesis") (Oakes, 1987). For example, if a male and a female engage in a discussion in which the male acts in an aggressive fashion, and the female takes a passive role, then the behaviour of the individuals would be seen to 'fit' the male/female categorizations. Moreover, the greater the fit between observed behaviour and social category distinctions, the more salient the social groups to which the discussants belong will be to the social perceiver (McGarty, Haslam, Turner & Oakes, 1993; Oakes, 1987; Oakes et al., 1991).

Oakes and her colleagues (Oakes, 1987; Oakes et al., 1991) have in fact investigated this "salience hypothesis" as it relates to perceptions of others in a

number of related studies. In one such study they showed participants a six-member group discussing a "choice" dilemma, in which the sex composition of the discussion group was either three men and three women (collective condition) or one man and five women (solo conditions). As well, the pattern of agreement within these discussion groups was either one person disagreeing with five others who agreed amongst themselves (deviance conditions), or three disagreeing with three others (conflict conditions). Results indicated that when three women disagreed with three men (the collective/conflict condition), participants described the behaviour of a target in the discussion group as being more due to their social category, and applied more group stereotypes to that target individual than when one man disagreed with two men and three women who agreed amongst themselves, or one woman disagreed with two women and three men who agreed amongst themselves (the collective/deviance conditions). In other words, when the behaviour of the individuals corresponded to the social categories to which they belonged, in that members of one group unanimously disagreed with members of another, the result was high social category salience evidenced by enhanced group stereotyping and enhanced social category attribution of others (Oakes, 1987; Oakes et al., 1991).

Hogg and Turner (1987) have also examined the "salience hypothesis" as it relates to perceptions of one's own behaviours. In their study, participants' attitudes on a number of social issues were determined by way of a pre-test. These individuals then took part in discussion groups. Half of these groups

contained two males and two females, in which the two males (who agreed with each other) disagreed with the two females (who agreed with each other). The other half took part in discussion dyads in which two individuals of the same gender disagreed with each other. Following this discussion, participants rated themselves "as you see yourself now" on a number of behavioural characteristics and indicated the extent to which they felt they and their opponent(s) acted as typical men or women during the discussion.

Turner and Hogg's (1987) results indicated that in discussions in which men and women held opposing views (i.e., two males confronted two females), and the views of each gender group were consistent with typical male and female views, participants perceived themselves as more typical of their sex and described themselves more closely in accordance with positive aspects of their own-sex stereotype, compared to participants taking part in discussions in which two males or two females disagreed with each other. In other words, when the behaviour of individuals corresponded with their gender categories, in that members of one gender group disagreed with members of another, the result was increased self-stereotyping in terms of one's own group stereotypes and an enhanced perception of group characteristics as the determinant of one's own behaviour (Hogg & Turner, 1987). This finding was replicated in a number of subsequent investigations, illustrating that any comparison between one's own and other groups will tend to accentuate the salience of one's group membership (e.g., Abrams, Thomas, & Hogg, 1990; Turner et al., 1987).

In addition to encounters in which a comparison between own and other groups is evident, it may be the case that certain social issues, because they have been so strongly associated with the interests of particular groups, make categorizations relating to those groups more salient. For example, Friedman & Pancer (1994) asked women to indicate the extent to which they felt their gender influenced their attitudes regarding either a social issue which was considered central to the interests of women (i.e., abortion), or an issue not necessarily central to the interests of women (i.e., free trade). They found that women who were asked about abortion indicated that their gender membership influenced their attitudes to a greater extent than women asked about the other, less gender-central social issue. No effects for men were found.

It is clear, then, that individual differences in group identity, as well as the situations and contexts in which people communicate their attitudes, may contribute to the salience of one's social category membership. However, in order to further examine the influence these salient self-categories have on attitudes, a review of some work done on the influence of group memberships on thought and attitudes seems appropriate.

Influence of Group Membership on Thought

A number of investigators have demonstrated a link between group membership and thought. Conover (1984, 1988), for example, found that identification with particular political groups can have a profound effect on

individuals' social and political thinking.

In one study, Conover (1984) asked participants to indicate the extent to which they felt psychologically close to a number of social groupings (e.g., gender, race, age, class), as well as which of these groupings they felt "closest" to. These individuals were then asked to respond to various open-ended questions intended to look at the substance of their political perspectives. For example, respondents were asked "What about certain political candidates would make you vote for or against them?" ; "What do you like or dislike about the Republican and Democratic parties?" ; "What does 'liberal' and 'conservative' mean to you?" ; and "What to you are the differences between the parties?". Responses to these open-ended questions were then placed into one of a number of thematic categories (e.g., economic policy, women's issues, racial concerns, education, civil liberties, etc.). As well, participants were asked to indicate their position on a number of specific political and social issues (e.g., their desired level of government services, attitudes toward busing, abortion, and environmental regulations).

Conover's (1984) results indicated that the responses of individuals who felt "closest" to one group showed significantly different themes than those who felt "closest" to another, and that these perspectives were reflective of the nature of their groups' interests. For example, respondents who identified with the business community and the middle class tended to make more comments regarding economic policy than those who felt closest to other groups. Further,

those participants who indicated higher degrees of psychological closeness to any particular social grouping adopted more extreme positions on issues which held particular importance to the interests of that group, than those who indicated lower degrees of psychological closeness to that group. For example, those who identified strongly with economically advantaged groups (e.g., business people, middle class) adopted more extreme conservative views on economic issues (e.g., guaranteed jobs and government services) than those who did not identify strongly with these advantaged groups.

In a similar study looking at political sympathy toward the interests of social groups, Conover (1988) assessed participants' psychological closeness to four groups (i.e., women, working women, feminists and women's liberation group supporters), by asking them to indicate their affective reactions, degree of identification with and perceptions of the degree of discrimination directed towards these groups. Also, participants' political sympathy towards these groups was assessed by asking them "whether women should have an equal role in society as men," and "how much effort government should put into" (a) "improving the social and economic positions of women," (b) "promoting affirmative action programs," and (c) "insuring equal pay for equal work" (p. 68). Her results indicated that individuals react with greater sympathy towards groups with which they experience more psychological closeness than they do towards those groups with which they experience less psychological closeness. For example, individuals who indicated more positive affective reactions and

high levels of identification with 'women' indicated a greater need for government involvement in the various women's issues (e.g., affirmative action, equal pay for equal work) than those who indicated more negative affect and less identification.

Conover's (1988, 1984) work implies that there is a relationship between the psychological closeness one has to a particular group, and one's thoughts regarding issues that are central to the interests of that group. People are likely to spend more time attending to, and give more thought to issues that are central to the interests of their groups, as well as to adopt more extreme positions on these issues. However, it cannot be concluded that this relationship between psychological closeness and thought is a causal one; because Conover's results are correlational, it is not clear whether psychological closeness affects thought and attitudes or vice-versa, or whether some third variable is producing this relationship.

In addition, a recent study by Murrell & Dietz-Uhler (1993) examining the effects of social identification (i.e., gender identity) on attitudes toward sexual harassment has concluded that such attitudes may be reflective of gender group membership. In this study, Murrell & Dietz-Uhler asked men and women to complete a measure of gender identity (Luhtanen & Crocker's (1992) CSE scale), and a measure of attitudes towards sexual harassment. Their results indicated that women who had strong gender group identities evidenced more negative attitudes toward sexual harassment than did those who had weaker

gender group identities. For men, however, identification with gender group was not predictive of attitudes toward sexual harassment (Murrell & Dietz-Uhler, 1993).

The importance of these studies lies in the implications they have for individuals' ability to be relatively objective in their social and political thinking. It is clear that group identifications have a profound effect on individuals' social and political thinking; they may influence people to adopt more extreme positions on issues which hold particular importance to the interests of their groups, and to react with greater sympathy towards groups with which they experience more psychological closeness. The studies reported above (i.e., Conover, 1984, 1988; Murrell & Dietz-Uhler, 1993) indicate that group membership may influence not only the content of one's thinking (i.e., one's attitudes or beliefs), but also the way in which information is processed. That is, they suggest that presenting individuals with issues relevant to their group can result in more extreme, black-and-white type of thinking. In order to further understand the effect that group memberships have on thinking about social issues, we employed a tool for examining the cognitive processing of information: the integrative complexity coding system (Baker-Brown et al., 1986, 1992; Tetlock, 1977).

The Conceptualization of Thoughts and Attitudes: Integrative Complexity

The integrative complexity (IC) coding system (Tetlock, 1977; Baker-

Brown, et al., 1986, 1992) examines patterns of cognitive information processing by looking at the extent to which people acknowledge more than one perspective or dimension of an issue, as well as the extent to which an integration of, or relationship between these different perspectives/dimensions, surfaces in people's communications.

Much of the work on IC has looked at the way in which politicians conceptualize issues that confront them in their various political roles (e.g., Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt, Boisvert & Roth, 1992; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1977; Tetlock, 1983a, 1983b). Relevant to the notion that group membership will influence the way one thinks about group-central issues, is research on the effects of political partisanship which suggests that partisanship is associated with more simple (less complex) conceptualizations of political issues (Pancer et al., 1992; Tetlock, 1983a).

Most relevant to the present study however, is work which has looked at IC in other domains. In one such study, de Vries and Walker (1988) asked participants to write a composition discussing their attitudes toward capital punishment. In addition, respondents completed a questionnaire designed to assess their attitudes towards capital punishment. The compositions were then scored for integrative complexity. Results indicated that individuals with more extreme attitudes toward capital punishment were significantly more simple in their compositions, whereas those individuals with more moderate attitudes toward capital punishment evidenced greater complexity in their compositions.

These results indicate, then, a relationship between extremity of attitudes and complexity of thinking. This in turn suggests the possibility that if group identification leads to extreme attitudes, then it may also be associated with reductions in the complexity with which social issues are conceptualized.

In another study, Linville (1982) examined the relationship between the complexity of knowledge structures and the extremity of evaluative judgments. She employed a measure of complexity of thought in which participants were asked to sort cards, each containing the name of one trait (e.g., passive, humorous, impatient), into piles representing traits that go together. In this task, the number of piles and the number of independent traits included in each pile determines the degree of complexity. The participants in Linville's (1982) study, college-aged males, were first asked to have the piles represent elderly males in their 60's and 70's. In a second session, these participants were asked to read and evaluate two vignettes describing the behaviour of either a college-aged or an elderly male. Results indicated that those with more extreme evaluations of the elderly also demonstrated less complex representations of the elderly. Once again, these results suggest the relationship between extremity of attitudes and complexity of thinking, with more extreme attitudes being associated with less complex thought.

Finally, in a series of 2 studies looking at religious orthodoxy and integrative complexity, Pancer et al. (1995) had respondents complete measures of Christian orthodoxy and religious fundamentalism. These respondents then

wrote a brief paragraph indicating their thoughts and beliefs regarding either life after death (a religious issue) or capital punishment (a non-religious issue). The results of these studies indicated that individuals who were high in Christian orthodoxy or religious fundamentalism evidenced lower levels of complexity when writing about the religious issue than did those low in Christian orthodoxy or religious fundamentalism, while the discussions of participants high or low in orthodoxy did not differ with regard to the non-religious issue. This study again, points to the idea that extreme views may often translate into less complex thought. Moreover, the results are consistent with the notion that identification with a particular group (in this case, fundamentalist Christian groups) can lead to less complex thinking about group-central (in this case, religious) issues.

Why Might Group Memberships Affect Reasoning About Social Issues ?

Individuals who identify with a group might be less complex in their thoughts about central issues because this kind of thought may require less cognitive effort. A great body of research in social psychology has provided evidence for the fact that individuals tend to adopt simple, yet useful strategies and short cuts, or what Chaiken (1980) has called "heuristics," for the processing of complex problems whenever they can (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). That is, they tend to be what Fiske and Taylor (1991) have called "cognitive misers," utilizing rapid and easy, or heuristic processing to provide shortcuts as opposed to more effortful information processing. If a group has an established position

on a particular issue, group members can adopt the group's position as their own and engage in less cognitive work to do so. Consequently, they might have less complex, more one-sided views on that issue than if they were to use more thoughtful, cognitively demanding processing not based on identification with the relatively uncontested views present within the group.

Following from previous studies indicating that extreme views may often translate into less complex thought (i.e., de Vries and Walker, 1988; Linville 1982; Pancer et al., 1995) is another reason why individuals who identify with groups may reason less complexly about group-central issues. This reasoning derives from research which indicates that individuals working as a group may be more extreme in their attitudes than individuals making judgements on their own. McGarty et al. (1992), for example, pre-tested individual participants in order to determine the extent to which their attitudinal responses to a controversial issue (e.g., capital punishment) were either pro or con. These individuals were then placed in like-minded discussion groups on the basis of whether they adopted a pro or con position. They were told that their task in these discussion groups was to reach a unanimous group position on the issue by the end of the discussion. Following the discussion, participants were asked to complete a post-test questionnaire in which they were to, once again, indicate their position on the issue at hand. They found that individuals in both the pro and con groups exhibited post-test views which were more extreme than they exhibited in the pre-test, more extreme than the pre-test mean of their group,

and more extreme than any individual in their group evidenced in the pre-test. Therefore, it seems that individuals working as a group may in fact be more extreme in their attitudes, and consequently less complex, than individuals making judgements independently of a group.

Finally, a study by Friedman & Pancer (1994) also looked at how group identity affects thoughts about group-central issues. They found that women who were asked to indicate their thoughts regarding a group-central social issue (i.e., abortion), evidenced significantly lower IC in their responses than those asked about an issue not considered central to the interests of either gender group (i.e., free trade). In Friedman and Pancer's (1994) study, neither issue was considered group-central for men. Consequently, the social issue manipulation (asking participants to indicate their thoughts about either free trade or abortion) had no effect on the complexity of the male participants' responses.

Thus, both McGarty et al. (1992) and Friedman and Pancer (1994) have provided evidence that when judgments are made by individuals within the context of their membership in a particular group, their thinking about issues relevant to their group may be less complex.

The Present Study

Purpose of the Present Study

The present research investigated the extent to which the salience of

individuals' gender group memberships, as a result of situational cues (exposure to gender-central or gender non-central social issues) and/or individual differences in group identification (collective self-esteem), affects the complexity with which they think about a gender-central social issue – namely, sexual harassment. In addition, this study examined the extent to which exposure to gender-central social issues results in enhanced gender stereotyping of group members. As such it constituted a test of the potential for gender-central social issues to accentuate gender salience.

Overview of Design

The present study examined the influence of three variables on the complexity of thought about group-central social issues, employing a 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design. Male and female participants (gender of participant factor) who identified either weakly or strongly with their gender group (gender identification factor) indicated their thoughts about a scenario which did or did not involve sexual harassment (sexual harassment factor). The main dependent variable was the integrative complexity of participants' thoughts about the scenario. Secondary dependent variables were the extent to which respondents engaged in gender stereotyping when describing the characteristics of the individuals depicted in the scenario, and the evaluative judgements participants made of the individuals depicted in the particular scenario they were given.

The Issue of Sexual Harassment

Research has consistently shown gender differences in perceptions of sexual harassment (e.g., Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1992; Fitzgerald & Ormerod, 1991; Konrad & Gutek, 1986; Murrell & Dietz-Uhler, 1993). For example, women have been found to be more likely than men to label potentially sexually harassing behaviours (e.g., sexist remarks or jokes) as sexual harassment (Fitzgerald & Ormerod, 1991), especially when the depicted behaviours are ambiguous (Konrad & Gutek, 1986). Compared to women, men tend to feel that the issue has been exaggerated by the media, and that women are often too quick to take offence to expressions of sexual interest (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1992; Tangri, Burt & Johnson, 1982). That is to say, women have adopted less tolerant attitudes towards sexual harassment, and generally seem to take the issue more seriously, while men seem not to consider the issue to be as important (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1992).

In addition, the Murrell & Dietz-Uhler (1993) finding that women's gender group identity was predictive of their attitudes toward sexual harassment, whereas it was not for men, illustrates the influence of (gender) group identity on the male/female differences which are reflected in sexual harassment attitudes, as well as the inherent importance this issue holds for women compared to men. When we consider these differences, as well as the fact that women are more likely to be the victims of sexual harassment than men, it seems likely that sexual harassment would constitute a social issue that is more

central to the interests of women than to those of men.

Hypotheses

Integrative Complexity. The main dependent variable in this study was the IC of participants' thoughts about a scenario involving a male professor and a female student. It was hypothesized that:

1. Female participants who were given the sexual harassment scenario would be less complex in their thoughts regarding that scenario than women who were given the non-sexual harassment scenario, or men in any condition. In other words, we expected that situational/contextual factors (i.e., exposure to a gender central issue, or a non-gender central issue) would influence the complexity with which people express their thoughts on an issue.

2. Female participants who were exposed to a gender-central situation (those given a sexual harassment scenario), and who were high in gender group identity, would be less complex in their thoughts regarding that scenario than women who were low in

gender identity and were given the sexual harassment scenario, women who were high in gender identity but were given the non-sexual harassment scenario, or men in any condition. That is, the presence of a gender-central social issue and high gender group identity was expected to produce the lowest levels of complexity overall.

In other words, we expected that these situational/contextual factors, in combination with proposed individual differences in the extent to which people identify with their gender groups, would also affect the complexity with which people express their thoughts on an gender-central social issue.

Gender Stereotyping. A secondary dependent measure used in this study was the extent to which respondents engaged in gender stereotyping when describing the characteristics of the individuals depicted in the scenarios. Because the findings of Oakes and her colleagues indicate that high social category salience is accompanied by greater group stereotyping (e.g., Oakes, 1987; Oakes et al., 1991), it was hypothesized that:

3. Female respondents given the sexual harassment scenario (the group-central social issue for women) would describe the potential harasser (the male

professor) as more sterotypically male, and the potential victim (the female student) as more sterotypically female, than female respondents given the non-sexual harassment scenario.

Person Judgements. Another dependent variable was participants' judgements of the individuals depicted in the particular scenario they were given. Again, women have generally been found to adopt less tolerant attitudes toward the issue of sexual harassment than men (Tangri, Burt & Johnson, 1982; Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1992). Thus, it was hypothesised that:

4. Female participants who were given the sexual harassment scenario were expected to judge the professor (the potential harasser) more negatively, and the student (the potential victim of harassment) more positively, than women who were given the non-sexual harassment scenario, or men in any condition.

5. female participants who were exposed to a gender-central situation (those given a sexual harassment scenario), and who were high in gender group

identity, would judge the professor (the potential harasser) more negatively, and the student (the potential victim of harassment) more positively, than women who were low in gender identity and were given the sexual harassment scenario, women who were high in gender identity but were given the non-sexual harassment scenario, or men in any condition.

Method

Participants

The participants for this study were 96 undergraduate students (28 males and 68 females) taking an introductory psychology course at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo Ontario, Canada. Their ages ranged from 18 to 43 years (M= 20.1). All were recruited from an introductory psychology participant pool, with bonus credit towards their course grade as incentive for their participation.

Materials and Procedure

Participants indicated, on a sign-up sheet posted in the psychology department, a time that was convenient for them to take part in a study described as being "Concerned with the ways in which individuals think about various situations which might arise in a university setting." Prior to their arrival

at the laboratory, both male and female participants were randomly assigned to one of the two scenario conditions, either the sexual harassment scenario condition, or the non-sexual harassment scenario condition. Half of the male participants (N = 14) and half of the female participants (N = 34) were assigned to the sexual harassment condition, while the remaining males (N = 14) and females (N = 34) were assigned to the non-sexual harassment condition.

Upon their arrival at the laboratory, participants had a script read to them regarding informed consent and the general purpose of the study (see appendix A). They were then asked to sign a consent form and were reminded that their participation was voluntary and that they were entitled to omit any question they did not care to answer, as well as to withdraw at any time. Further, they were assured of their anonymity and consequently instructed not to place their names on any materials (see appendix A).

Experimental booklets were distributed to all participants. This booklet contained, in the following order: A request for demographic information (age, gender) (see appendix B); a request to read one of the four vignette scenarios, (one of two sexual harassment scenarios or one of two non-sexual harassment scenarios) in accordance with the condition to which each participant had previously been randomly assigned (see appendices B, C & D); and requests to write three paragraphs indicating their thoughts regarding the situation depicted in the scenario that they read, in the form of responses to three open-ended questions (see appendix B). Also included in this booklet was the gender

stereotyping measure, adapted from Williams and Bennet's (1975) sex-stereotype adjective list (see appendix E); two items designed to assess participants' judgments of the individuals depicted in the scenario they are given (see appendix F); the measure of gender group identity (Luhtanen & Crocker's (1992) Collective self-esteem scale) (see appendix G), and three questions designed to measure the strength of the manipulation of gender group salience (see appendix H).

Scenarios. The scenarios used in the study were selected from a set of eight pilot scenarios, designed by the researcher, depicting interactions between a female university student and a male university professor (see appendices C and D). Four of these (the sexual harassment scenarios) described situations involving potentially harassing behaviours on the part of a male professor towards a female student (see appendix C). One of these scenarios (#1) was adapted from Dietz-Uhler & Murrell's (1992) study on gender differences in perceptions of sexual harassment. The other four scenarios (the non-sexual harassment scenarios) were designed to match the wording of the sexual harassment scenarios (i.e., wording of sexual harassment scenario #1 matched the wording of non-sexual harassment scenario #1, etc.), and depicted interactions between a female university student and a male university professor within a context not amenable to a label of sexual harassment (see appendix D).

The eight pilot scenarios were given to a sample of 35 second year

university students whose ages ranged from 20-49 years (M=23.5). These students were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt each scenario depicted a situation which could constitute sexual harassment, on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (definitely not sexual harassment) to 5 (definitely sexual harassment) (see appendix I). They were also asked to indicate the extent to which they felt the situation depicted in the scenario constituted an issue central to the interests women in particular, and the extent to which they felt the situation depicted in the scenario constituted an issue central to the interests men in particular. Participants' responses to these items were indicated on a on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all central) to 5 (extremely central), (see appendix I). Their responses were subsequently used to select the two sexual harassment and the two non-sexual harassment scenarios to be utilized in the present study.

The results of the pilot selection procedure indicated that of the eight pilot scenarios, sexual harassment scenario #1 and sexual harassment scenario #2 (see appendix C) were the two scenarios most likely to constitute sexual harassment ($\underline{M}$'s = 3.54 and 4.06, respectively). In addition, these same two scenarios were judged as depicting situations most central to the interests of women in particular ($\underline{M}$'s = 3.54 and 3.91, sexual harassment scenarios #1 and #2 respectively), and least central to the interests of men in particular ($\underline{M}$'s = 2.91 and 3.11, sexual harassment scenarios #1 and #2 respectively).

The first sexual harassment scenario described a situation in which a female student requests an opportunity to discuss a grade with her male

professor. She is then told by the professor that some kind of "arrangement" could be made regarding this grade, and that they could meet in a campus pub, rather than the professor's office, to discuss the issue. The second describes a situation in which a female student, upon the completion of a presentation, is told by her male professor that her outfit was "flattering" and "attractive". These two sexual harassment scenarios were used to represent the sexual harassment events in the main study, while the two non-sexual harassment scenarios which matched them (i.e., non-sexual harassment scenarios #1 and #2) were selected to represent the non-sexual harassment events.

The first of the non-harassment scenarios described a situation in which a female student requests an opportunity to discuss a grade with her male professor. She is then told by the professor that she will be provided with an opportunity to complete an extra assignment, but the professor evades his promise and does not make himself available to discuss the extra assignment. The second non-harassment scenario describes a situation in which a female student, upon the completion of a presentation, is given feedback regarding her performance. However, the professor, in his praise for this student's presentation, singles out another student's poor performance, making the first student uncomfortable.

For harassment scenario #1 and non-harassment scenario #1, a 2 (gender) X 2 (sexual harassment, non sexual harassment) analysis of variance, with repeated measures on the last factor, was conducted, with the dependent

variable being the extent to which the events in the scenario were seen as constituting sexual harassment. This analysis revealed a main effect due to the repeated measures factor. Sexual harassment scenario #1 was significantly more likely to be perceived as constituting sexual harassment ($\underline{M}$ = 3.54) than the non-harassment scenario #1 ($\underline{M}$ = 1.49), $\underline{F}(1, 33) = 89.3$, $\underline{p} < .001$. Neither gender nor the gender X harassment interaction was significant, $\underline{F}$'s < 1. A parallel analysis for scenario #2 revealed the same result. The sexual harassment scenario #2 was significantly more likely to be perceived as constituting sexual harassment ($\underline{M}$ = 4.06) than the non-harassment scenario #2 ($\underline{M}$ = 1.60), $\underline{F}(1, 33) = 108.5$, $\underline{p} < .001$. Neither gender nor the gender X harassment interaction was significant, $\underline{F}$ (1,33) < 1 for gender; $\underline{F}$ (1,33) = 1.17, n.s., for interaction.

Scenario Responses. Following a request to read the scenario, the experimental booklet asked participants to give their thoughts and feelings regarding the situation described by answering three open-ended questions in spaces provided (see Appendix B). These questions asked participants what they thought about the professor's behaviour and why, what they thought the student should do and why, as well as whether or not the situation should be brought to the attention of a higher authority, and why or why not.

Judgment Items. After indicating their thoughts about the scenario they had read, participants were asked to respond to two items intended to assess

their impressions of the behaviour of both the professor and the student depicted in the scenario (see appendix F). The first item asked respondents: "From what was described in the paragraph you read earlier, how would you judge the student's behaviour?" The second item asked respondents: "From what was described in the paragraph you read earlier, how would you judge the professor's behaviour?" For both of these items, judgments were indicated on a 5-point scale, ranging from -2 (very negatively) to +2 (very positively), with zero indicating neutrality.

Gender Stereotyping Measure. The gender stereotyping measure (see appendix E) consisted of 16 adjective items drawn from Williams and Bennett's (1975) traditionally male (aggressive, adventurous, dominant, forceful, ambitious, boastful, daring, and assertive) and traditionallyfemale (sentimental, emotional, affectionate, sympathetic, soft-hearted, talkative, appreciative and sensitive) sex-stereotype adjective checklist. As well, six sex-stereotypically neutral items were included as fillers (friendly, sincere, reliable, solemn, inhibited and defensive). Participants were asked to indicate whether or not each of these 22 adjectives described how they saw both the professor, and the student, on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (definitely does not apply) to 7 (definitely does apply).

A recent study utilizing this measure of gender stereotyping (Oakes et al., 1991) reported that the scale had reasonable internal consistency (Cronbach's

alpha's for both the male and female items = .81). In the present study, internal consistency of this scale was assessed by subjecting the eight male and eight female items separately, for ratings of both the professor and the student, to reliability analyses using Cronbach's alpha. These analyses indicated acceptable internal consistency for both scales, and for both targets (ratings of the professor: male items alpha = .85, female items alpha = .80; ratings of the student: male items alpha = .85, female items alpha = .81).

A mean male-gender stereotyping score, as well as a mean female-gender stereotyping score, was calculated for participants' perceptions of each target (i.e., the professor and the student) by averaging the eight items in each gender stereotyping scale. Next, following the methodology employed by Oakes et al. (1991), a 'relative maleness' score was calculated for each participant's rating of each of the two targets by subtracting the mean female-gender stereotyping score from the mean male-gender stereotyping score. Thus, higher scores indicated a greater difference between male and female gender-stereotyping (i.e. greater 'relative maleness) whereas lower scores indicated less difference between male and female gender-stereotyping (i.e. less 'relative maleness').

Collective Self-esteem Measure. Following completion of the gender stereotyping measure, all participants were asked to complete the measure of gender group identity, Luhtanen & Crocker's (1993) collective self-esteem (CSE) scale (see appendix G). The 16-item CSE scale was included as a self-evaluation

measure of individual differences in group identification, or social identity, measuring the positivity and awareness of one's collective, or social identity. Although the scale was originally designed to look at a global evaluation of one's identification with social groups in general, the present study looked at CSE as it applied to one particular social group, gender. As such, the scale was adapted by the researcher to look at gender esteem only, an adjustment considered appropriate by the scale's developers (see Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

The scale consists of four subscales (with four items in each) measuring four distinct aspects of CSE: (a) The "membership esteem subscale" looks at evaluations of oneself as a good member of the social groups to which one belongs (e.g., "I am a worthy member of the group men/women."); (b) the "private CSE subscale" examines the extent to which one evaluates one's social groups positively (e.g., "I feel good about being a woman/man."); (c) the "public CSE subscale" assesses one's judgments of how others evaluate one's social groups (e.g., "In general, others respect women/men."); and (d) the "importance to identity subscale" is designed to see how important one's memberships in the social group(s) are to one's self-concept, which is the central focus of this study (e.g., "Being a woman/man is an important reflection of who I am."). Participants indicated their degree of agreement with each item on the CSE scale on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with 4 indicating neutrality.

Factor analyses have confirmed the distinctiveness of these four subscales. In addition, the scale has shown acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha's for total and all subscales > .83), acceptable test-retest reliability over a six-week period (r = .68 for the total scale, subscale r's range from .58 to .68), as well as significant correlations with other measures of social group identity (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

While the psychometric properties of the adapted scale used in the present study may differ from those of the original scale, there is evidence that such adaptations maintain the high levels of validity and reliability shown by the original (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine & Broadnax, 1994; Ethier & Deaux, 1990; Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Internal consistency of the adapted scale used in the present study was assessed using Cronbach's alpha in order to ascertain the extent to which it maintained the reliability reported for the original scale. While the internal consistency of the total scale was somewhat lower for the adapted scale (alpha = .70), the internal consistency of the identity subscale remained at an acceptable level (alpha = .79). The identity subscale score was calculated by summing the scores of the four items for that particular subscale. Since gender identity (i.e., how important one's memberships in the social group(s) are to one's self-concept), was the central focus of this study, the subscale assessing gender identity was used to divide participants into high and low gender identity groups, by way of a median split.

Manipulation Checks. After completing the CSE scale, participants were asked to respond to three items intended to measure the strength of the manipulations (see appendix H). One of these items asked respondents to: "Please indicate the extent to which you feel your responses in the paragraphs that you wrote earlier were influenced by your gender" on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (no influence) to 5 (a great deal of influence). This was an attempt to measure the extent to which both male and female participants attended to their gender group membership (gender group salience) when responding to either a sexual harassment scenario, or a non-sexual harassment scenario. It was expected that while both men and women given the sexual harassment scenario would indicate more attention to their gender than those given the non-sexual harassment scenario, this attention was expected to be greater for women in the sexual harassment conditions than for men in the sexual harassment condition. A second item asked respondents to: "Please indicate the extent to which you feel the paragraph at the beginning of this booklet shows a situation which you would call central to the interests of women in particular." A third item asked them to: "Please indicate the extent to which you feel the paragraph at the beginning of this booklet shows a situation which you would call central to the interests of men in particular." Responses to both these items were indicated on a 5-point scale, with possible responses ranging from 1 (not at all central) to 5 (extremely central). This was an attempt to verify the assumption that both women and men would perceive sexual harassment as

an issue which is more central to the interests of women than it is to men.

Finally, participants were given a debriefing sheet indicating the exact variables of interest, the expected results, and information regarding feedback (see appendix J). All were thanked for their participation.

Integrative Complexity Coding. All respondents' paragraphs were coded for IC, the major dependent variable in this study, according to the scoring manual for integrative and conceptual complexity (Baker-Brown et al., 1986). The IC coding system was designed by Suedfeld, Tetlock and their colleagues (Baker-Brown et al., 1986) as a method of measuring peoples' cognitive information processing along a simplicity-complexity continuum. It concerns two elements of information processing (differentiation between different perspectives or dimensions of an issue, and integration of multiple perspectives or dimensions), and consists of a scoring method based on a 7-point scale. Paragraphs which show neither differentiation nor integration are given a score of 1. Paragraphs which show evidence of differentiation but no integration are given a score of 3. Those paragraphs which demonstrate both differentiation and integration are given a score of 5, and where high levels of integration are evident, a score of 7 is given. Scores of 2, 4, and 6 are representative of transitional stages between the other scores (Baker-Brown et al., 1986, 1992). See Table 1 for examples of responses demonstrating different levels of differentiation and integration.

Table 1

Sample Responses Receiving an IC Score of 1, 2, 3 and 4

Score and reasoning	Example
1. Paragraphs which show neither differentiation nor integration.	"I think the professor's behavior is completely unnaceptable because I feel he is implying a sexual encounter in order for Susan to obtain a better grade."
2. Author recognizes potential for differentiation, but this differentiation is emergent (e.g. author qualifies a normative rule).	"I don't think the professor's behaviour was appropriate because if he wanted to discuss items about school such as grades, he should have discussed them in school, not at a pub. It was alright to discuss material after class with her, but he shouldn't meet in a social setting while she's in his class."
3. Paragraphs which show evidence of differentiation but no integration are given a score of 3.	"I do believe than she should consult a higher university official. It is possible they could review her grades and ensure they are valid. I believe also it is important because this prof may have previously demonstrated this behaviour or may do it in the future, and it is important to record it in case future situations arise."
4. Paragraphs which show the emergence of the ability to integrate different and often conflicting perspectives.	"I don't feel I have been given enough information to accurately assess his behaviour. At the university level it is quite possible for a professor and student to enjoy a friendship. The act of meeting in a pub may just be to help the student relax. On the other hand, the prof may have some sexual motive, but there isn't enough information to assess that here."

In this study, two experienced coders scored all paragraphs contained in a random sample of 20 participants' responses (20.8% of the total respondents; 60 paragraphs in total). Interrater reliability for this subset of participants' responses was assessed by examining the Pearson correlation between the scores obtained by both coders, across all 60 paragraphs. This analysis indicated reasonable interrater reliability ($r = .70$), and discrepancies were all resolved by discussion. The remaining paragraphs were scored by one of the two coders. While the primary coder was aware of the hypotheses, as well as being aware of the sexual harassment condition of the response being coded, he was blind to the gender of the respondent and his/her CSE identity score.

Results

Manipulation Checks

It was expected that the sexual harassment scenarios would be seen as more central to the interests of women than to those of men, while the non-sexual harassment conditions would be seen as equally central to both women and men. A 2 (participant gender) x 2 (sexual harassment vs. non-harassment scenario) x 2 (central to women judgement, central to men judgement) analysis of variance was employed to test these assumptions. The dependent variable was the rating participants made of the extent to which the scenario depicted a situation central to the interests of women or men (considered as a repeated measure in this analysis). Somewhat unexpectedly, this analysis revealed a

significant main effect for the repeated measures factor, in that all participants judged the scenario they were given as more central to the interests of women ($\underline{M}$ = 3.13) than central to the interests of men ($\underline{M}$ = 2.38), $\underline{F}(1,91) = 33.28$, $\underline{p} < .001$. Thus, participants judged the non sexual-harassment scenarios, as well as the sexual harassment scenarios, as being more central to the interests of women than to those of men. This may have been because the person who had potentially been "victimized" in both types of scenario was a woman.

This analysis also revealed a significant main effect due to sexual harassment condition. Those in the sexual harassment condition judged the situation depicted in the scenario as more central to the interests of women ($\underline{M}$= 3.82) *and* more central to the interests of men ($\underline{M}$ = 3.02) than those in the non-harassment condition judged the situation as central to the interests of women ($\underline{M}$ = 2.5) or central to the interests of men ($\underline{M}$ =1.91), $\underline{F}(1,91) = 46.85$, $\underline{p} < .001$. The finding that the sexual harassment scenario was perceived as more central to the interests of men as well as women, compared to the non-sexual harassment scenario, was unexpected. No other main effects or interactions were significant.

Participants were also asked to indicate the extent to which they felt their written responses to the scenario had been influenced by their gender. As expected, those in the sexual harassment condition indicated that their gender had influenced their responses to a greater extent ($\underline{M}$ = 2.89) than did those in the non-sexual harassment condition ($\underline{M}$ = 2.12), $\underline{t}(94) = -3.01$, $\underline{p} < .01$. It was

also expected that women in the sexual harassment condition would indicate that their gender had had a greater influence on their responses than would men in the sexual harassment condition. While women in the sexual harassment condition did indicate that their gender had influenced their responses to a greater extent ($\underline{M}$ = 3.03) than did men ($\underline{M}$ = 2.57) in the sexual harassment condition, this difference was non-significant, t(24.2) = -1.18.

A preliminary one-way (scenario version 1/scenario version 2) ANOVA on participants' 'gender influence' scores revealed that the different versions of the scenarios had no effect on the manipulation of gender salience, $\underline{F}$ (1,94) = 1.38, $\underline{p}$ = .24. As a result, we collapsed across versions for all subsequent analyses.

In summary, all participants in the sexual harassment condition characterized the sexual harassment scenarios as depicting an issue more central to the interests of women *and* men, than those in the non-harassment condition. As well, both genders indicated extensive "gender influence" in their responses to the sexual harassment scenarios. This indicates that the encounters described in the sexual harassment scenarios, despite our assumptions, may represent a social issue which holds relatively equal importance to both men and women.

Scores on the CSE Scale

Both male and female participants' mean scores for the CSE total scale and its 'identity' subscale are presented in Table 2. The median score on the CSE 'identity' subscale for female participants, which was used to assign them to

high or low CSE 'identity' groups, was 22. However, 8 female participants' CSE 'identity' scores fell precisely at 22. Because of the difficulty in assigning these individuals to either the high or low CSE groups, they were omitted from all subsequent analyses involving the CSE 'identity' independent variable. As a result, 31 females were assigned to the low CSE 'identity' group and 29 were assigned to the high CSE 'identity' group. The overall mean CSE 'identity' score for females was 20.9, and their scores for this subscale ranged from 7 to 28.

The median score on the CSE 'identity' subscale for male participants', which was used to assign them to high or low CSE 'identity' groups, was 17.5. Thus, 14 males were assigned to low CSE 'identity' group and 14 were assigned to the high CSE 'identity' group. The overall mean CSE 'identity' for males was 16.5, and their scores for this subscale ranged from 4 to 22.

A preliminary analysis of variance of all CSE 'identity' scores by gender and sexual harassment condition revealed no main effect due to sexual harassment condition. However, this analysis did reveal a main effect due to gender. Female participants exhibited significantly greater gender identity ($\underline{M}$ = 20.95) than did male participants ($\underline{M}$ = 16.46), $\underline{F}(1,92) = 16.33$, $\underline{p} < .001$. The interaction was not significant.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for CSE Total and CSE "Identity"

Condition	Males				Females			
Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
non-harassment								
cse total	87.35	5.9	78	96	87.94	10.4	66	112
cse identity subscale	17.42	3.3	11	22	20.41	5.7	7	28
sexual harassment								
cse total	87.48	8.0	75	104	88.76	10.2	65	107
cse identity subscale	15.50	5.7	4	22	21.50	4.2	12	28
total								
cse total	87.42	6.9	75	104	88.35	10.2	65	112
cse identity subscale	16.46	4.7	4	22	20.95	5.0	7	28

Note. Total N (males) = 28 (14 harassment/14 non-harassment), Total N (females) = 68 (34 harassment/34 non-harassment); M for entire sample (CSE total) = 88; (CSE 'identity') = 19.64.

Integrative Complexity

A 2 (gender) X 2 (sexual harassment vignette/non-sexual harassment vignette) X 2 (high/low CSE) factorial ANOVA was used to analyze participants' average complexity scores. The means and standard deviations for participants' average IC scores are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Average Integrative Complexity Scores

	Males			Females		
Condition	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
non-harassment/low CSE	2.46	.557	5	2.68	.444	15
non-harassment/high CSE	2.66	.440	9	2.45	.563	14
non-harassment total	2.59	.474	14	2.57	.510	29
sexual harassment/low CSE	2.55	.687	9	2.06	.425	16
sexual harassment/high CSE	1.46	.557	5	2.17	.501	15
sexual harassment total	2.16	.824	14	2.11	.459	31
total	2.38	.695	28	2.33	.533	60

Note. $N = 88$, M for entire sample = 2.35.

This analysis revealed no main effect for the gender factor, $F(1,80) < 1$. However, there were significant main effects due to both the CSE 'identity', and sexual harassment/non-harassment factors. Participants who were high in CSE 'identity' were significantly less complex ($M = 2.28$) than those who were low in CSE 'identity' ($M = 2.41$), $F(1,80) = 4.37$, $p < .05$. As well, those participants in the sexual harassment condition were significantly less complex in their responses ($M = 2.13$) than those in the non-harassment condition ($M = 2.58$), $F(1,80) = 17.36$, $p < .001$. These main effects must however be viewed in light of a marginally significant two-way interaction of sexual harassment condition and CSE 'identity', $F(1,80) = 3.76$, $p = .056$ (see Figure 1). While

those participants in the non-harassment condition did not differ significantly in their complexity scores as a function of their level of CSE 'identity', the difference between complexity scores of high and low CSE participants in the sexual harassment condition did approach significance. Those participants in the high CSE/sexual harassment condition were less complex ($\underline{M}$ = 2.0) than those in the low CSE/sexual harassment condition ($\underline{M}$ = 2.24), $\underline{t}(40.26) = 1.37$, $\underline{p}$ = .08.

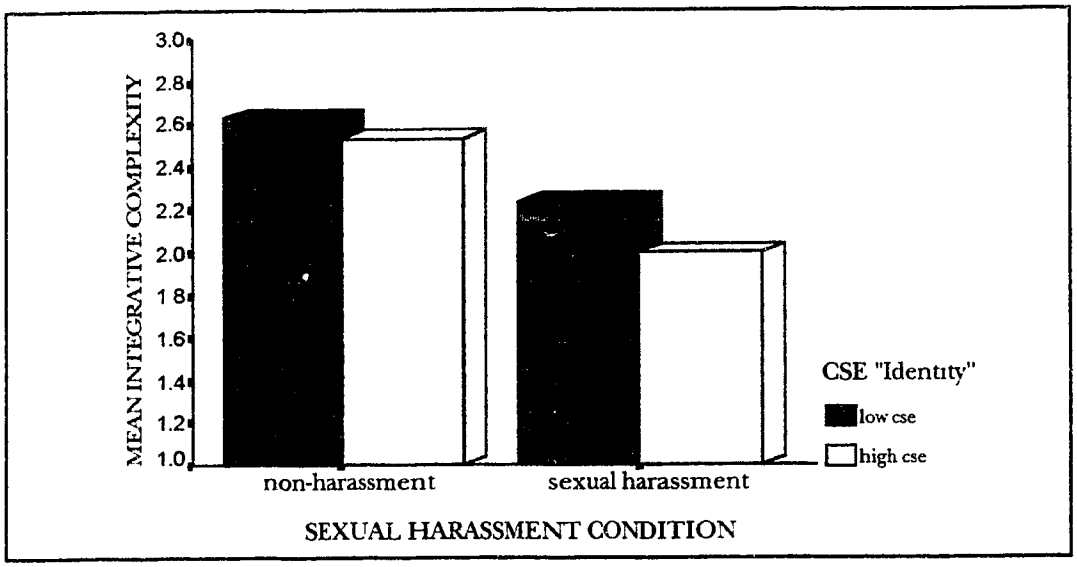

Figure 1. Mean Integrative Complexity as a Function of Sexual Harassment Condition and Level of CSE "Identity".

The analysis of variance also revealed a significant three-way interaction of gender, sexual harassment condition and CSE 'identity', $\underline{F}(1,80) = 11.54$, $\underline{p} < .01$, (See figures 2 and 3). In order to further understand this interaction we examined the effects of sexual harassment condition and level of CSE 'identity'

for female and male participants separately, in two 2 (sexual harassment/non-harassment) X 2 (high CSE 'identity'/low CSE 'identity') factorial ANOVAs. For females, this analysis revealed a significant main effect due to sexual harassment condition. Females in the sexual harassment condition were significantly less complex ($\underline{M}$ = 2.11) than those in the non-harassment condition ($\underline{M}$ = 2.57), $\underline{F}(1,56) = 12.93$, $\underline{p} < .01$, regardless of their level of CSE 'identity' (See figure 2). This analysis did not reveal a significant interaction of sexual harassment condition and CSE 'identity'either, $\underline{F}(1,56) = 1.972$, $\underline{p} = .16$. Analysis of simple effects using Bonferroni's modified LSD test revealed no simple effects due to level of CSE 'identity' for females in the sexual harassment condition or for females in the non-harassment condition, $\underline{p}$'s > .05.

For male participants this analysis also revealed a significant main effect due to sexual harassment condition, in that males in the sexual harassment condition were significantly less complex ($\underline{M}$ = 2.16) than males in the non-harassment condition ($\underline{M}$ = 2.59), $\underline{F}(1,24) = 6.08$, $\underline{p} < .05$. This must however be viewed in light of a significant two-way interaction of sexual harassment condition and CSE 'identity' in this analysis for male participants, $\underline{F}(1,24) = 8.19$, $\underline{p} < .01$, (See Figure 3). Analysis of simple effects using Bonferroni's modified LSD test revealed simple effects due to both sexual harassment and level of CSE 'identity'. The responses of males in the high CSE/sexual harassment condition ($\underline{M}$ = 1.46) were significantly less complex than those of males in the low CSE/sexual harassment condition ($\underline{M}$ = 2.55), $\underline{p} < .05$. As well, the responses of

males in the high CSE/sexual harassment condition (M = 1.46) were significantly less complex than males in the high CSE/non harassment condition (M = 2.66), $p < .05$.

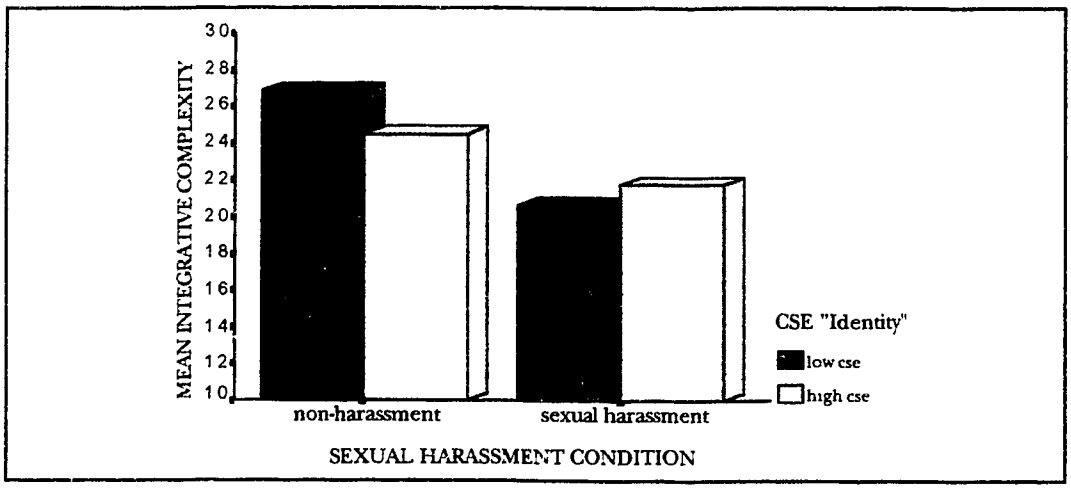

Figure 2. Females' Mean Integrative Complexity as a Function of Sexual Harassment Condition and Level of CSE "Identity"

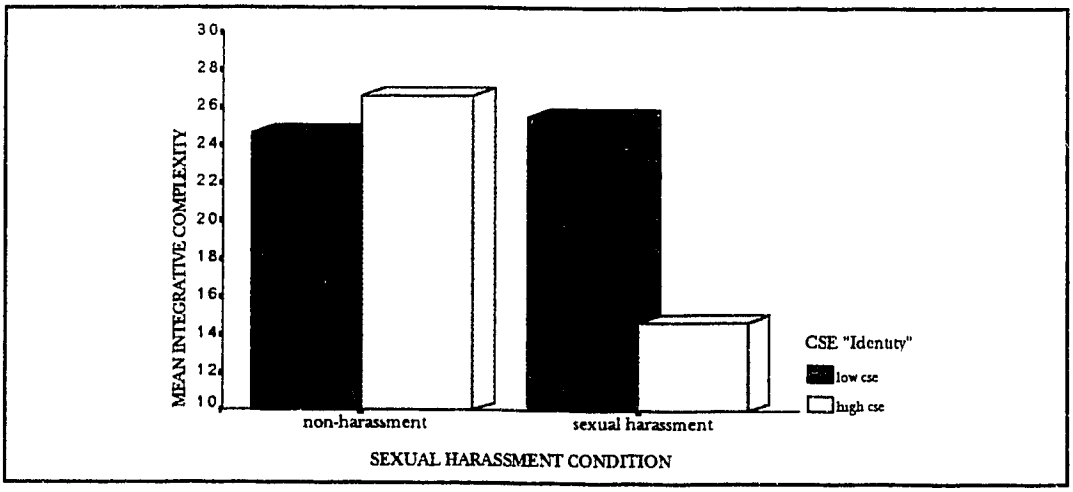

Figure 3. Males' Mean Integrative Complexity as a Function of Sexual Harassment Condition and Level of CSE "Identity"

To summarize then, it seems that for female participants, exposure to the sexual harassment scenario had the predicted effect on complexity; those females given the sexual harassment scenario were less complex than those given the non-harassment scenario. However, contrary to our expectations, this same difference in complexity was also revealed in the responses of male participants; males given the sexual harassment scenario were less complex than males given the non-harassment scenario. Further, while our expectations regarding the relationship between CSE 'identity' and the complexity of females' responses were not borne out, CSE 'identity' did relate to the complexity of males' responses, in the same pattern as was expected for the females; males in the high CSE/sexual harassment condition were significantly less complex than males in the low CSE/sexual harassment condition and males in the high CSE/non-harassment condition.

Gender Stereotyping of the Student

Male and female participants' relative maleness ratings of the student ($N = 87$)[1] are presented in Table 4. Participants' 'relative maleness' gender stereotyping scores for the student were subjected to a 2 (gender) X 2 (sexual harassment vignette/non-sexual harassment vignette) X 2 (high/low CSE) factorial ANOVA. This analysis revealed no significant main effects for either the gender, $F(1,79) = 2.03$, CSE 'identity', $F(1,86) < 1$, or sexual harassment, $F(1,79) < 1$, factors. In addition, the predicted three-way interaction was not significant,

$F(1,79) < 1$. Contrary to our expectations, females in the high CSE/sexual harassment condition did not differ in their relative maleness ratings of the student from females in the low CSE/sexual harassment condition, females in the high CSE/non-harassment condition, or from male participants overall, t's$(79) < 1$.

Gender Stereotyping of the Professor

Male and female participants' relative maleness ratings of the professor ($N = 86$)[2] are presented in Table 4, along with the previously discussed ratings of the student. Participants' 'relative maleness' gender stereotyping scores for the professor were subjected to a 2 (gender) X 2 (sexual harassment vignette/non-sexual harassment vignette) X 2 (high/low CSE) factorial ANOVA. This analysis revealed no significant main effects for either the gender, $F(1,78) < 1$, CSE 'identity', $F(1,78) = 2.38$, or the sexual harassment $F(1,78) < 1$ factors. As well, the expected three-way interaction was not significant, $F(1,78) = 1.44$, $p = .23$. Contrary to our expectations, females in the high CSE/sexual harassment condition did not differ in their relative maleness ratings of the professor from females in the low CSE/sexual harassment condition, females in the high CSE/non-harassment condition, or from male participants overall, t's$(78) < 1$.

Contrary to our expectations, these results indicate that neither the sexual harassment manipulation nor participants' level of CSE 'identity' had an effect on participants' gender stereotyping of either target.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Relative Maleness Ratings of Professor and Student

Condition	**Males**		**Females**	
Variable	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
non-harassment/low CSE				
professor maleness	.32	2.0	.50	1.84
student maleness	-.45	1.25	-1.00	1.21
non-harassment/high cse				
professor maleness	.64	1.54	1.33	1.84
student maleness	-.57	1.61	-.88	.85
sexual harassment/low cse				
professor maleness	.33	1.28	1.19	1.42
student maleness	-.43	1.00	-.86	1.49
sexual harassment/high cse				
professor maleness	1.7	1.17	1.14	1.99
student maleness	-.15	1.30	-.58	1.40

Judgement of the Student

Participants' responses to the judgement of the student item ($N = 87$)[3] were subjected to a 2 (gender) X 2 (sexual harassment vignette/non-sexual harassment vignette) X 2 (high/low CSE) factorial ANOVA. The means and standard deviations for participants' judgements of the student are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Judgements of the Student

	Males		Females	
Condition	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
non-harassment/low CSE	3.60	.89	3.33	.89
non-harassment/high CSE	3.77	.83	3.50	1.09
non-harassment total	3.71	.82	3.41	.98
sexual harassment/low CSE	3.44	.72	3.87	.61
sexual harassment/high CSE	4.0	.70	3.21	1.12
sexual harassment total	3.64	.74	3.56	.93
total	3.67	.77	3.49	.95

Note. $N = 87$, M for entire sample = 3.55

This analysis revealed no main effects for either the gender, $\underline{F}$ (1,79) = 1.19, sexual harassment condition, $\underline{F}$ (1,79) < 1, or CSE 'identity' factors, $\underline{F}$ (1,79) < 1.

The predicted two-way interaction of gender and sexual harassment condition did not receive support, $\underline{F}$ (1,79) < 1. Contrary to our expectations, judgements of the student for male respondents in the sexual harassment condition were not significantly different from those of female respondents in the sexual harassment condition, $\underline{t}(79) < 1$.

The predicted three-way interaction of gender, sexual harassment condition and CSE was also not significant, $\underline{F}$ (1,79) = 2.0. Contrary to our expectations, females in the high CSE/sexual harassment condition did not differ in their judgements of the student from females in the high CSE/non-harassment condition , $\underline{t}(79) < 1$, nor did they differ significantly from the male respondents' judgements of the student, $\underline{t}(79) = 1.64$.

Judgement of the Professor

Participants' responses to the judgement of the professor item ($\underline{N} = 87$)[4] were subjected to a 2 (gender) X 2 (sexual harassment vignette/non-sexual harassment vignette) X 2 (high/low CSE) factorial ANOVA. The means and standard deviations for participants' judgements of the professor are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Judgements of the Professor

	Males		Females	
Condition	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
non-harassment/low CSE	1.60	.54	1.80	.86
non-harassment/high CSE	2.00	1.0	1.78	.80
non-harassment total	1.86	.86	1.79	.81
sexual harassment/low CSE	2.88	1.16	1.59	.80
sexual harassment/high CSE	1.60	.54	2.35	.92
sexual harassment total	2.42	1.15	1.95	.93
total	2.14	1.04	1.87	.87

Note. N = 87, M for entire sample = 1.95

There were no significant main effects for either the gender, F (1,79) < 1, sexual harassment, F (1,79) = 1.75, or the CSE 'identity' factors, F (1,79) < 1.

The predicted two-way interaction of gender and sexual harassment condition did not receive support, F (1,79) < 1. Females in the sexual harassment condition and males in the sexual harassment condition did not significantly differ in their judgements of the professor, t(79) < 1. As well, the two-way interaction of sexual harassment condition and CSE 'identity' was not significant, F(1,79) = 1.20. This analysis did however reveal a marginally

significant two-way interaction of gender and CSE 'identity', $\underline{F}(1,79) = 3.89$, $\underline{p} = .052$ (see Figure 4). Males who were low in CSE 'identity' judged the professor more positively ($\underline{M} = 2.42$) than males who were high in CSE 'identity'($\underline{M} = 1.85$), while women who were high in CSE 'identity' ($\underline{M} = 2.07$) judged the professor more positively than women who were low in CSE 'identity ($\underline{M} = 1.69$). However, this effect must be viewed in light of a significant three-way interaction.

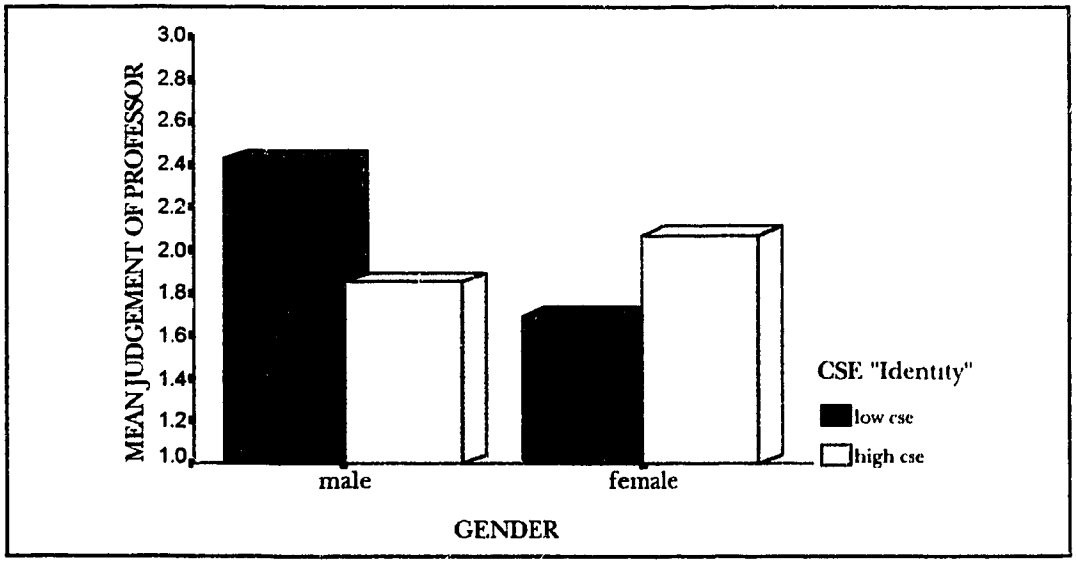

Figure 4. Mean Judgements of the Professor as a Function of Gender and CSE 'Identity'

The anticipated three-way interaction of gender, CSE 'identity'', and sexual harassment condition was indeed significant, $\underline{F}(1,79) = 8.83$, $\underline{p} < .01$ (see figures 5 and 6). In order to further understand this interaction we examined

the effects of sexual harassment condition and level of CSE 'identity' for male and female participants separately, in two 2 (sexual harassment/non-harassment) X 2 (high CSE 'identity'/low CSE 'identity) factorial ANOVA's. For females, this analysis did not reveal a significant main effect due to sexual harassment condition, $\underline{F}(1,55) < 1$, but did reveal a marginally significant main effect due to level of CSE 'identity'. Female participants who were high in CSE 'identity' judged the professor more positively ($\underline{M} = 2.07$) than females who were low in CSE 'identity' ($\underline{M} = 1.69$), $\underline{F}(1,55) = 2.86$, $\underline{p} = .096$ (see figure 5). This main effect must however be viewed in light of a marginally significant two-way interaction of CSE 'identity' and sexual harassment condition, $\underline{F}(1,55) = 3.08$, $\underline{p} = .084$ (see figure 5). Independent samples t-tests employed to analyze simple effects due to level of CSE 'identity' for female participants in the sexual harassment and non-harassment conditions revealed one simple effect. Contrary to our expectations, females who were high in CSE 'identity' and were given the sexual harassment scenario judged the professor significantly more positively ($\underline{M} = 2.35$) than females who were low in CSE 'identity' and were given the sexual harassment scenario ($\underline{M} = 1.59$), $\underline{t}(26) = -2.39$, $\underline{p} < .05$ (see figure 5). There was no simple effect due to level of CSE 'identity' for females in the non-harassment condition, $\underline{t}(27) < 1$.

For males, the following ANOVA revealed no significant main effects due to either the CSE 'identity', $\underline{F}(1,24) = 1.43$, or the sexual harassment, $\underline{F}(1,24) = 1.43$, factors. This analysis did however reveal a significant two-way interaction of

CSE 'identity' and sexual harassment condition for male participants, $F(1,24) = 5.16$, $p < .05$ (see figure 6). Independent samples t-tests used to analyze simple effects due to level of CSE 'identity' for males in the sexual harassment and non-harassment conditions revealed one significant simple effect. Contrary to our expectations, males who were low in CSE 'identity' and were given the sexual harassment scenario judged the professor significantly more positively ($M = 2.88$) than males who were high in CSE 'identity' and were given the sexual harassment scenario ($M = 1.6$), $t(11.9) = 2.8$, $p < .05$.

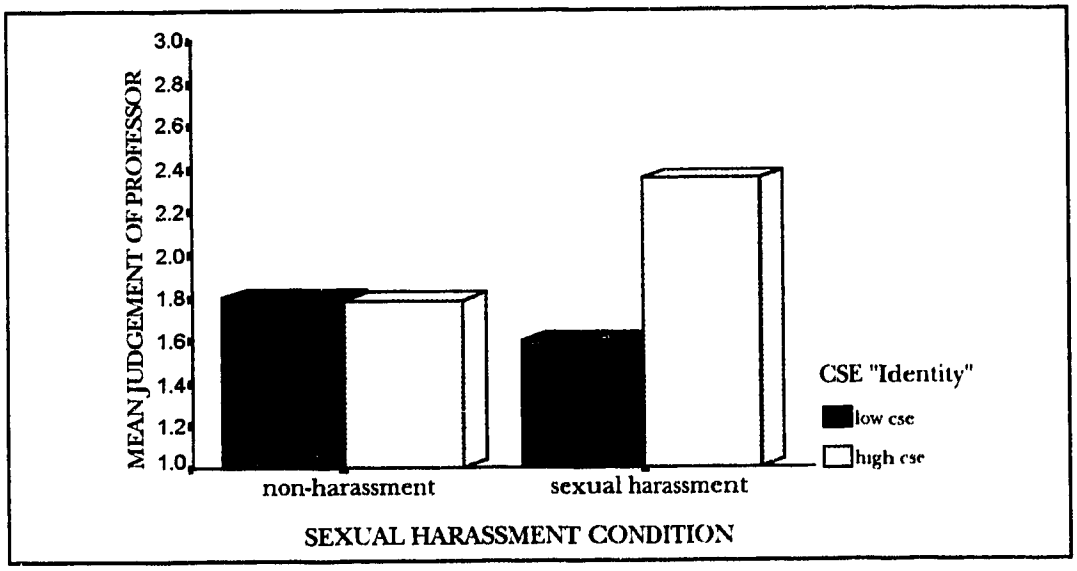

Figure 5. Females' Mean Judgements of Professor as a Function of Sexual Harassment Condition and CSE 'Identity'.

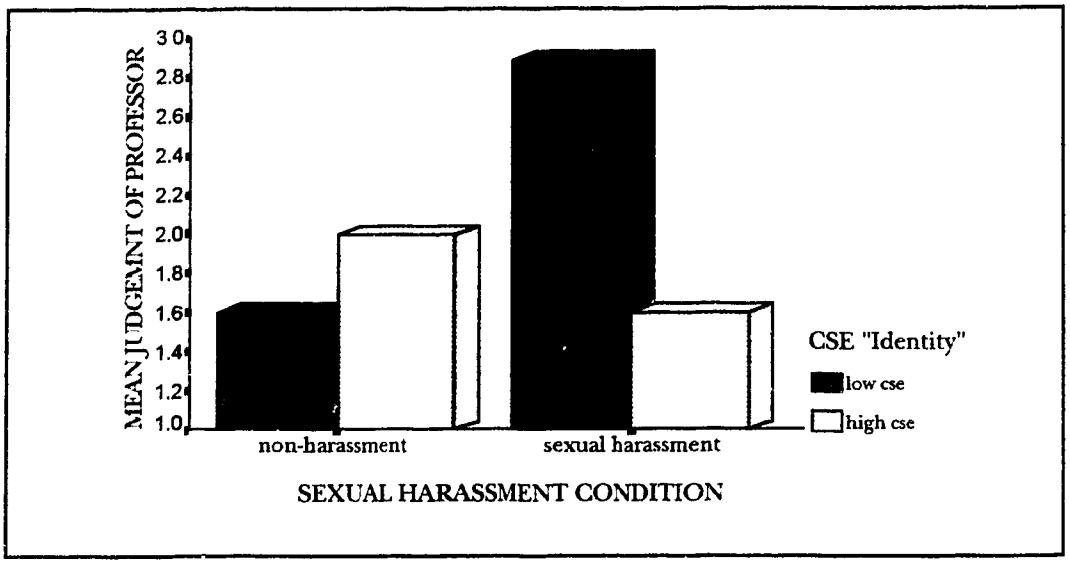

Figure 6. Males' Mean Judgements of Professor as a Function of Sexual Harassment Condition and CSE 'Identity'.

Discussion

Main Findings

The primary purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between the salience of individuals' gender group identity, as a result of situational/contextual cues (exposure to gender-central or non-central social issues) and/or individual differences in group identification (collective self-esteem 'identity'), and the complexity with which they think about social issues.

With respect to our expectations regarding situational/contextual factors (i.e., exposure to a gender-central social issue or a non-central social issue),

hypothesis 1 stated that female participants who were exposed to a gender-central situation (those given a sexual harassment scenario) would be less complex in their thoughts regarding that scenario than women who were given the non-sexual harassment scenario, or men in any condition. In line with our expectations, female participants given the harassment scenario were less complex than those given the non-harassment scenario. However, contrary to our expectations, this same effect was found for males as well as females.

We had also expected that both situational/contextual factors, and individual differences in gender identity would affect complexity. Specifically, hypothesis 2 stated that female participants who were exposed to a gender-central situation (those given a sexual harassment scenario), and who were high in gender group identity, would be less complex in their thoughts regarding that scenario than women who were low in gender identity and were given the sexual harassment scenario, women who were high in gender identity but were given the non-sexual harassment scenario, or men in any condition. In other words, the presence of a gender-central social issue and high gender group identity was expected to produce the lowest levels of complexity overall. While females' complexity did differ as a result of considering a sexual harassment scenario vs. a non-harassment scenario, females who were given the sexual harassment scenario did not differ in complexity as a result of their level of gender identity. In fact, our results indicated that instead, male participants differed as a result of their gender identity; males who were high in gender identity and were given

the sexual harassment scenario were less complex than those who were low in gender identity and were given the sexual harassment scenario. Our surprise at these results may be due to our assumptions regarding the gender centrality of the sexual harassment issue, and consequently these assumptions may have affected our expectations regarding the influence of gender identification on reasoning about the sexual harassment issue. Thus, before going on we must examine our assumptions regarding the sexual harassment issue in greater detail.

The Issue of Sexual Harassment

It may be that, contrary to our assumptions, sexual harassment is a social issue that is central to the interests of both men and women. In fact, the finding that both male and female participants reported considerable gender influence in their responses lends support to this notion.

In addition, while the findings of Dietz-Uhler and Murrell (1992) indicate gender differences in *attitudes toward* sexual harassment (e.g., whether or not the issue has been exaggerated by the media, whether or not telling sexual jokes is a form of sexual harassment), their results also indicated similarity across genders in *judgements* of potentially sexually harassing behaviors (i.e., does a given interaction between a woman and a man constitute sexual harassment). Thus, it is conceivable that both males and females find sexual harassment to be an important social issue. However, conceptualizing sexual harassment as an

issue central to the interests of both genders does not explain why men's gender identity influenced complexity in cases where sexual harassment was implicated, but females' gender identity did not.

This finding seems to contradict Murrell and Dietz-Uhler's (1993) findings, which suggested that gender identification is predictive of females', but not males', attitudes toward sexual harassment. A possible explanation for this finding may be that while sexual harassment has become *more* strongly associated with males' gender identity over time, this may not be the case for females. Further, it may be the case that gender identification for women overall is generally higher than for men. In fact, Lau (1989) has suggested that for groups which lack social mobility (e.g., minority groups, women, etc.), the salience of these social categories might be chronic, in that they come to mind almost immediately across a wide range of situations. Women's individual differences in gender identity may be one example. Indeed, our findings indicating significant gender differences in CSE 'identity' lend support to this notion; female participants were significantly higher in gender identity than were male participants. Our predictions were based on the notion that individual differences in women's gender identity may be one factor contributing to the salience of their social categories (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1991, 1992), and that this salience may result in the biased processing of information relevant to the group (e.g., Schaller, 1991). If however, individual differences in women's gender identity is one of the chronic

factors outlined by Lau (1989), it is possible that it may have little or no impact on the processing of gender relevant information for women.

While these explanations are speculative in nature, we can make plausible suggestions concerning the finding that individual differences in gender identity were associated with males' thoughts regarding a sexual harassment scenario, but were not associated with those of females. When we consider the possibility that women tend to identify more strongly with their gender than do men, and the possibility that the salience of women's social category may be chronic, our findings are not inconsistent with the reasoning underlying our hypotheses.

Integrative Complexity

Our findings suggest that situational/contextual factors *and* individual differences in gender identity may in fact be related to integrative complexity as expected. We expected that when an issue was of great importance to the interests of a group, high levels of identification with that group would be related to less complex thought than when this identification is low. It has also been suggested that sexual harassment is an issue of great importance to both men and women. As well, it has been suggested that sexual harassment has become increasingly central to the interests of men, and that women tend to identify more strongly with their gender group, such that individual differences in women's gender identity may have little or no impact on their processing of gender-relevant information. Having said that, it seems that our results are not

inconsistent with the reasoning underlying the hypothesis; when an issue (sexual harassment) was of great importance to the interests of a group (in this case, men *and* women) high levels of identification with that group were associated with less complex thought than when this identification was low.

Further, the findings of the present study do appear to be consistent with the proposed influences of group memberships on thought, as suggested by self-categorization theory (e.g., Conover, 1988, 1984; Turner et al., 1987). The extent to which any factor causes an individual's identification as a group member to be salient, may influence individuals' perceptions of themselves as typical group members (Hogg & Turner, 1987), profoundly affecting group members' viewpoints on various social and political issues of interest to the group (Conover, 1988, 1984; Turner et al., 1987). This profound influence on thought often comes in the form of extreme, "black and white," or less complex thinking about group-central issues (Conover, 1988, 1984; de Vries and Walker, 1988; Linville 1982; Pancer et al., in press). In addition, it has been proposed that social issues which have been so strongly associated with the interests of particular groups may in fact constitute one such influential factor, making categorizations relating to those groups more salient (Friedman & Pancer, 1994). Such seems to be the case with the findings of the present study. Both male and female participants reported considerable gender influence in their responses to the sexual harassment scenario compared to those who were given the non-harassment scenario. This suggests that mere exposure to the sexual

harassment issue (a group central issue for both men and women) may have made their group memberships more salient, resulting in significantly less complex thought regarding the sexual harassment issue than the non-harassment issue.

Gender Stereotyping

A secondary purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which exposure to a gender-central social issue resulted in enhanced gender stereotyping of group members. As such this measure constituted a test of the ability of gender-central social issues to accentuate gender salience, as indicated by the extent to which participants utilize gender stereotypes to describe the targets (i.e., the professor and the student depicted in the scenarios). Our expectations (stated in hypothesis 3, p. 24) that female respondents given the sexual harassment scenario would describe the potential harasser (the male professor) as more sterotypically male, and the potential victim (the female student) as more sterotypically female, than female respondents given the non-sexual harassment scenario, were not supported.

These findings seem to contradict Oakes et al.'s (1991) suggestion that high social category salience would be evidenced by enhanced group stereotyping of target group members. Instead, conditions which were theoretically expected to enhance gender stereotyping did not appear to do so. Despite the apparent inability of gender-central social issues to accentuate

gender salience, we propose that, for several reasons, this finding is not definitive. Firstly, Oakes and her colleagues have suggested that social category salience is evidenced not only by enhanced stereotypical *descriptions* of targets (i.e., describing individual or idiosyncratic characteristics of a target) but also by a tendency to use these descriptions as *explanations* of a target's behavior (i.e., these characteristics providing explanations of a target's specific actions, e.g., Oakes, 1987; Oakes et al., 1991). Upon reflection then, it seems that the measure employed to index social category salience may not suffice. The gender stereotyping measure merely requested participants to describe the targets themselves, and did not specifically ask them to characterize the target's behavior in the scenario, nor did it ask them to characterize the target's behaviors as being due to their social category vs. being due to individual characteristics. Without taking into account these attributions, the employed measure may not be an accurate index of gender salience.

Secondly, our predictions regarding gender stereotyping were based on the assumption that sexual harassment is more central to the interests of women than to men, such that these gender differences would be reflected in more or less gender stereotypical descriptions of the targets. Clearly, as our results indicated, this assumption was inappropriate. If, as we suspect, consideration of the issue of sexual harassment results in the enhanced salience of both male and female gender groupings, then stereotyping according to gender categorizations alone may not be an appropriate index of social category salience for this issue.

Our findings indicated that both male and female participants reported considerable gender influence in their responses to the sexual harassment scenario compared to those who were given the non-harassment scenario. According to the theoretical reasoning underlying our predictions, this finding suggests that mere exposure to the sexual harassment issue (a group central issue for both men and women) may in fact be related to participants' group memberships becoming more salient. However, we suspect that because of the limitations outlined above, the gender stereotyping measure utilized in this study was not able to tap these salient group memberships.

Judgements of Student and Professor

Although not of critical importance to the theoretical underpinnings of this study, analyses of participants' judgements of the professor and the student yielded some surprising results.

Contrary to our expectations (stated in hypothesis 4, p. 25), judgements of the student and of the professor for male respondents in the sexual harassment condition were not significantly different from those of female respondents in the sexual harassment condition. We had expected that because women have generally been found to adopt less tolerant attitudes toward the issue of sexual harassment than men (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1992; Tangri, Burt & Johnson, 1982), women would tend to judge a potential harasser more harshly, and a potential victim less harshly, than would men. However, given the

finding that sexual harassment may be a social issue which is central to the interests of both women and men, it is not surprising that men in the sexual harassment condition and women in the sexual harassment condition did not differ in their judgements of the targets.

Also, in direct opposition to our expectations (stated in hypothesis 5, pp. 24 - 25), females who identified more strongly with their gender and were given the sexual harassment scenario judged the professor more positively than females who were low in gender identity and were given the harassment scenario. Because of the inherent importance that the issue of sexual harassment holds for women, their gender identity was expected to have the opposite effect on how they judge a potential victim and her potential harasser. This expectation was based on the assumption that high gender identification for women is associated with a more "pro-feminist" approach to the sexual harassment issue, such that these women would be more critical of the behaviors of the male professor and as such would judge him more negatively than those who were low in gender identification. While this may be the case, it may also be that for some women, high gender identification is associated with a more "traditional" approach to the sexual harassment issue, such that those with high gender identification might be more critical of the female student's behavior.

Also contrary to our expectations (stated in hypothesis 5, pp. 24 - 25), was the finding that males who were low in gender identity and were given the sexual harassment scenario judged the professor significantly more positively

than males who were high in gender identity and were given the sexual harassment scenario. We had not predicted any effects due to gender identity or sexual harassment condition for male participants. As we have already suggested however, it is possible that sexual harassment has become an issue of great importance to both men and women. If this is the case, it is possible that men with high gender identification might be more likely to express similar attitudes toward sexual harassment as they would expect from a woman. Thus, in their efforts to side with the interests of women, they might judge the professor more negatively than men who are not high in gender identification.

Despite the above explanations of our contradictory findings, it is also possible that the use of only one item in assessing participants' judgements of the targets was not sufficient to tap evaluative judgements.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although this study has revealed some interesting findings, there are some limitations which need to be addressed. The use of a university sample, not to mention that of a small university, may limit the generalizability of the results. In addition, unequal numbers of females and males, specifically the small number of males available may have affected the validity of our findings.

Most important however, is the apparently mistaken assumption that sexual harassment is most central to the interests of women. Without the ability to compare the responses of two opposed groups, one for whom an issue is of

great importance and one for whom it is not, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding the extent to which this importance actually affected the outcome. Our results would have been strengthened if we had looked at two different social issues for each group, one central and one non-central issue for males, and one central and one non-central issue for females. With this adjustment we might have obtained more conclusive findings regarding the extent to which group-central social issues, for two different groups, affect reasoning.

Another potential limitation of this study is the outcome of the median split used to categorize participants into high and low CSE 'identity' groups. This limitation lies in the fact that the median level of CSE 'identity' was different for men and women, such that some levels of CSE 'identity' which were considered low for females were considered high for males. This might indicate that the split between high and low CSE 'identity' was somewhat artificial. However, the fact that the central focus of this study was *gender* group identity and the finding that women tended to have higher gender group identity than men, suggests that separate median splits for male and female participants were indeed appropriate.

Future research in this area might consider utilizing groups other than gender to examine this problem, as gender-specific issues seem to be muddied by an increased awareness of and sensitivity toward these types of issues by both genders. As well, it would be useful to ensure that for all groups involved, a

readily identifiable group-central, and a readily identifiable non-central, issue are available and confirmed.

Subsequent research on this topic might also attempt to employ an index of group salience which takes into account all factors which might indicate one is attending to their group membership. For example, this measure should take into account not only stereotypical *descriptions* of targets, but should also be sensitive to a tendency to use these descriptions as *explanations* of a target's behavior (e.g., Oakes, 1987; Oakes et al., 1991). We could then state with greater certainty that the mechanism responsible for lower complexity when considering group-central social issues is in fact the extent to which individual differences in group identity or situations/contexts accentuate group salience.

Additionally, future work in this area might consider examining other individual difference variables associated with gender (or group) identity which might affect our ability to be relatively objective when reasoning about group-central social issues. Finally, future studies in this area should not overlook differences in the characteristics of groups themselves (e.g., group cohesion, social mobility, etc.), and their impact on individual members.

Summary

To summarize, the results of this study suggest that the salience of individuals' gender group memberships, as a result of situational cues and/or individual differences in group identification, may indeed affect the complexity

with which they conceptualize and communicate their thoughts regarding group-central social issues. In light of the suggestion that sexual harassment may be an issue central to the interests of both women and men, our findings were not inconsistent with the reasoning underlying the hypotheses. Those participants who were asked to consider a sexual harassment scenario (i.e., a gender central issue for both genders) engaged in significantly less complex thought when considering this issue than those who were given a scenario discussing another issue not related to sexual harassment. As well, both men and women who were given the sexual harassment scenario reported considerable gender influence in their responses to the scenarios. These findings suggest not only that exposure to a group-central social issue may accentuate group salience, but that the salience of one's social group may be associated with a limitation in one's ability to be relatively objective when considering a social issue which holds particular importance to the interests of one's group.

In addition, individual differences in gender identity were predictive of the complexity of males' responses to the sexual harassment scenario, but not of females' responses to the sexual harassment scenario. It has been suggested that while sexual harassment has become more strongly associated with males' gender identity over time, it may be the case that issues such as harassment do not affect the salience of females' gender identity. Moreover, women's greater gender identification may have outweighed any differences due to gender identity. These findings suggest that high group identification and exposure to a

group-central social issue may accentuate group salience, limiting one's ability to be relatively objective when considering a social issue which holds particular importance to the interests of his or her group.

Concluding Comments

The findings of this study contain some important implications for a society whose increasingly diverse nature demands more tolerance and understanding between groups with sometimes disparate views and interests. In order to achieve the tolerance and understanding necessary to implement effective and equitable social policy, it is imperative that group members learn how to consider the numerous perspectives and dimensions involved in all important social issues. Not only will this assist our policy makers and lobbyists in the creation of social policy, but we as individuals might improve our ability to listen without prejudice to members of groups other than our own.

An understanding of how self-categorizations, which include identification with distinct social groups, affects the way we think about issues that matter to our group(s), might provide us with the ability to understand the apparent rigidity of not only our own group's thinking, but that of different or opposed groups. Armed with this understanding, as well as the knowledge of how to encourage more complex, less rigid thinking, we may be one step closer to an understanding of the interests of groups other than our own, and quite possibly one small step closer to the resolution of conflicts between otherwise hardened

adversaries.

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Endnotes

1. The responses of one female participant were not included because of missing data.
2. The responses of two female participants were not included because of missing data.
3. The response for one female participant was not included because of missing data.
4. The response of one female participant was not included because of missing data.

Appendix A

Verbal Instructions:

"Hello. My name is Stephen Friedman. I am a graduate student in the Psychology department here at Wilfrid Laurier University. I am conducting a research project as part of my M.A. thesis work. The research is being supervised by my supervisor, Dr. Mark Pancer. I very much appreciate your interest in participating in my study.

I am interested in how people think about various situations which might arise in a University setting. You will be asked to read a short paragraph depicting a situation which might arise at university, answer two questions in the form of short paragraphs regarding that situation, and complete a short questionnaire.

The entire procedure should take only about 30 minutes to complete. Your responses will be completely confidential. Only myself and Dr. Pancer will view the responses, and your name will not be on any materials. The one form which you sign (a consent form) will be separated from the questionnaires so that nobody will know who completed which forms.

Of course, participation is completely voluntary. If for any reason you do not want to participate, feel free to decline. Also, if you do participate but feel that you do not want to answer a particular question, it is your right to omit that question. Finally, if at any point during the study you decide that you do not want to complete the study, you are free to withdraw your participation.

When we have completed the research we will make the results of this study available to you. The results of the study will be posted on the bulletin board on the third floor of the Central Teaching Building no later than April, 1st, 1995. Thanks again for your interest in this study. I will distribute consent forms which describe the study. Please read, sign and date the form."

Appendix B

Instructions

Age_____ Gender(M or F)_____

●Please read the following scenario and answer the questions which follow:

Susan B., a third year university student, had developed a friendly relationship with one of her professors, Professor David L. in which she would often remain in the lecture hall after class and engage in short, but interesting discussions regarding course materials. At the end of the term, she found herself in danger of receiving a poor grade in Professor L's course. When she went by his office to discuss her concerns regarding her grade, he smiled and told her that he's sure some arrangement could be made to ensure she gets the mark she deserves. Susan didn't quite know what Professor L. meant by an "arrangement", and was somewhat further concerned when Professor L. suggested that they meet in the university pub to talk about this, rather than in his office.

●Please indicate your thoughts and feelings regarding the situation described above by answering the **three** questions which follow on the next three pages, in the spaces provided. Write as much or as little as you wish, but please use only complete sentences. There are no right or wrong answers so please be as honest as possible in your responses:

1. What do you think about the professor's behaviour in this situation, and why?

2. What do you think the student should do and why?

3. Is this a situation that should be brought to the attention of a higher university official or group and why or why not?

Appendix C

Ambiguous Sexual Harassment Scenario #1

Susan B., a third year university student, had developed a friendly relationship with one of her professors, Professor David L. in which she would often remain in the lecture hall after class and engage in short, but interesting discussions regarding course materials. At the end of the term, she found herself in danger of receiving a poor grade in Professor L's course. When she went by his office to discuss her concerns regarding her grade, he smiled and told her that he's sure some arrangement could be made to ensure she gets the mark she deserves. Susan didn't quite know what Professor L. meant by an "arrangement", and was somewhat further concerned when Professor L. suggested that they meet in the university pub to talk about this, rather than in his office.

Ambiguous Sexual Harassment Scenario #2

Susan B., a third year university student was taking a course taught by her professor, Professor David L. Although her work had gone relatively unnoticed during the term by Professor L., she saw the oral presentation she was required to give at the end of the term as an opportunity to show off her ability to present well. Aside from intense preparation and study to ensure the success of her presentation, on the day of the presentation, Susan wore a new outfit she had purchased so that she would look her best for this important event. Following the class, Professor L. asked her to stay behind for a few moments. He then proceeded to tell her that her presentation was well done and that she should have worn such flattering outfits all term because she looked quite attractive in them.

Ambiguous Sexual Harassment Scenario #3

Susan B. is a student in Professor David L.'s course. Susan has enjoyed the course thoroughly and has found Professor L. to be a stimulating and dynamic lecturer. She often stays after class to chat with him about issues raised in the lecture, and occasionally drops by his office to discuss course material and assignments. One day, when Susan is talking to Professor L. in his office late one afternoon, she is somewhat surprised when he starts talking about her personal life. She is particularly disturbed when he asks "so how about your love life Susan? Any young men you're particularly interested in these days?"

Ambiguous Sexual Harassment Scenario #4

Susan B. is a student in Professor David L.'s course. Susan has enjoyed the course thoroughly and has found Professor L. to be a stimulating and dynamic lecturer. As part of her grade for the course, students are required to make an oral presentation. It is Professor L.'s custom to meet with students in his office after the presentation to give them feedback. Susan is dreading this meeting, since she felt that her presentation did not go all that well. However, when Susan meets with Professor L. after her presentation, he is lavish with praise, telling her she did a

fantastic job, and giving her a big hug as she is about to leave. After discussing this incident with other female students, she is somewhat disturbed to find that none of the other students, even those who had done well, received a hug from Professor L.

Appendix D

Non-sexual Harassment Scenario #1

Susan B., a third year university student, had developed a friendly relationship with one of her professors, Professor David L. in which she would often remain in the lecture hall after class and engage in short, but interesting discussions regarding course materials. At the end of the term, she found herself in danger of receiving a poor grade in Professor L's course. When she went by Professor L's office to discuss her concerns regarding her grade, he smiled and told her that he's sure that he could arrange for her the opportunity to write an extra assignment to ensure that Susan gets the mark she feels she deserves. However, when she tried to contact him one week later to discuss the nature of this assignment, he was nowhere to be found and did not return her calls. Susan never got the chance to improve her grade, despite Professor L.'s promises.

Non-sexual Harassment Scenario #2

Susan B., a third year university student was taking a course taught by her professor, Professor David L. Although her work had gone relatively unnoticed during the term by Professor L., she saw the oral presentation she was required to give at the end of the term as an opportunity to show off her ability to present well. Following the class, Professor L. asked her to stay behind for a few moments. Professor L. then proceeded to tell her that her presentation was well done, but that some of the other class members didn't seem to take their work as seriously. He singled out one student in particular (who happened to be a good friend of Susan's), and started to say some very derogatory things about this student. Susan was very uncomfortable hearing her professor say such negative things about her friend.

Non-sexual Harassment Scenario #3

Susan B. is a student in David L.'s course. Susan has enjoyed the course thoroughly and has found Professor L. to be a stimulating and dynamic lecturer. She often stays after class to chat with him about issues raised in the lecture, and occasionally drops by his office to discuss course material and assignments. One day, when Susan is talking to Professor L. in his office, Professor L. starts saying some very insulting things about another professor, who happens to be one of Susan's instructors. Susan likes and respects this other professor, and is in a quandary about how to respond to Professor B.

Non-sexual Harassment Scenario #4

Susan B. is a student in Professor David L.'s course. Susan has enjoyed the course thoroughly and has found Professor L. to be a stimulating and dynamic lecturer. As part of her grade for the course, students are required to make an oral presentation. It is Professor L.'s custom to meet with students in his office after the presentation to give them feedback. Susan is dreading this meeting, since she felt

that her presentation did not go all that well. However, when Susan meets with Professor L. after her presentation, he is lavish with praise, telling her she did a fantastic job. However, when she receives her grade for the presentation, she finds that she has received a poor grade. Susan is upset about the grade, and the fact that Professor L. did not give her accurate feedback about her performance which would have helped her impove future presentations.

Appendix E

For each adjective listed down the left hand side of these two tables, please indicate the extent to which you feel that each applies to the professor depicted in the situation you read about earlier. Use the following scale to record your responses in the spaces provided.

Definitely does not apply to the... 1 2 3 4 5 6 Definitely does apply to the... 7

	Professor
Boastful	
Sentimental	
Sensitive	
Appreciative	
Friendly	
Dominant	
Sincere	
Sympathetic	
Adventurous	
Emotional	
Forceful	

	Professor
Reliable	
Solemn	
Ambitious	
Inhibited	
Aggressive	
Daring	
Defensive	
Affectionate	
Assertive	
Talkative	
Soft-hearted	

Now, for each adjective listed down the left hand side of these two tables, please indicate the extent to which you feel that each applies to the student depicted in the situation you read about earlier. Again, use the following scale to record your responses in the spaces provided.

Definitely does not apply to the... **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** Definitely does apply to the...

	Student
Boastful	
Sentimental	
Sensitive	
Appreciative	
Friendly	
Dominant	
Sincere	
Sympathetic	
Adventurous	
Emotional	
Forceful	

	Student
Reliable	
Solemn	
Ambitious	
Inhibited	
Aggressive	
Daring	
Defensive	
Affectionate	
Assertive	
Talkative	
Soft-hearted	

Appendix F

1. From the situation that was described in the paragraph you read earlier, how would you judge the student? (-2 = very negatively; +2 = very positively; 0 = neutral).

-2	-1	0	+1	+2
very negatively		neutral		very positively

2. From the situation that was described in the paragraph you read earlier, how would you judge the professor? (-2 = very negatively; +2 = very positively; 0 = neutral).

-2	-1	0	+1	+2
very negatively		neutral		very positively

Appendix G

We are all members of different social groups or social categories. Some of such social groups or categories pertain to *gender, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity,* and *socioeconomic class.* We would like you to consider your membership in your own gender group ("women" or "men") and respond to the following statements on the basis of how you feel about yourself as a male, or as a female, and how you feel about your membership in this male or female group. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions. Please read each statement carefully, and respond in the space provided using the following seven point scale:

1 = *strongly disagree* **4** = *neutral* **7** = *strongly agree*
2 = *disagree* **5** = *agree somewhat*
3 = *disagree somewhat* **6** = *agree*

---

1. I am a worthy member of the male/female gender group. ____

2. I often regret that I am a woman/man. ____

3. Overall, being a woman/man is considered good by others. ____

4. Overall, being a woman/man has very little to do with how I feel about myself. ____

5. I feel I don't have much to offer women/men as a group. ____

6. In general, I'm glad to be a woman/man. ____

7. Most people consider women/men on the average, to be more ineffective than men/women. ____

8. Being a woman/man is an important reflection of who I am. ____

9. I am a cooperative participant in activities related to women/men. ____

10. Overall, I often feel that my being a woman/man, is not worthwhile. ____

11. In general, others respect women/men. ___

12. Being a woman/man is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. ___

13. I often feel I'm a useless member of my gender group, women/men ___

14. I feel good about being a woman/man. ___

15. In general, others think that being a woman/man is unworthy. ___

16. In general, being a woman/man is an important part of my self-image. ___

Appendix H

1. Please indicate the extent to which you feel your responses in the three paragraphs that you wrote earlier were influenced by your gender.

not at all_____ slightly_____ somewhat _____

a considerable amount_____ a great deal _____

2. On the following scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you feel the paragraph you read about at the beginning of this booklet shows a situation which you would call central to the interests of women in particular, (1 = not at all central; 5 = extremely central).

1	2	3	4	5
not at all central				extremely central

3. On the following scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you feel the paragraph you read at the beginning of this booklet shows a situation which you would call central to the interests of men in particular, (1 = not at all central; 5 = extremely central).

1	2	3	4	5
not at all central				extremely central

Appendix I

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you feel the above scenario depicts a situation which could be called sexual harassment (1 = definitely not sexual harassment; 5 = definitely sexual harassment).

1	2	3	4	5
definitely not sexual harassment				definitely sexual harassment

2. On the following scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you feel this scenario shows a situation which you would call central to the interests of women in particular, (1 = not at all central; 5 = extremely central).

1	2	3	4	5
not at all central				extremely central

3. On the following scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you feel this scenario shows a situation which you would call central to the interests of men in particular, (1 = not at all central; 5 = extremely central).

1	2	3	4	5
not at all central				extremely central

Appendix J

Explanation of the Research

This study was concerned with how people think about various situations which might arise in a University setting. You were given a paragraph to read, and asked four questions to which you were requested to respond in writing. In addition, you were asked to indicate your perceptions of the individuals depicted in the paragraph you read, and a series of questions relating to your gender group membership.

We were trying to determine whether two factors affected the way in which you think about various situations which might arise in a University setting. Specifically, we wanted to see if reading about a sexual harassment situation, and the extent of identification with your gender, resulted in a different kind of thinking regarding the situation you were confronted with, than when any of the other conditions existed.

The reason behind not telling you the specifics of the study mentioned here, is because we did not want you to be aware that we were concentrating on gender groups, issues central to those groups, or sexual harassment. We wanted to have your true responses without being biased by knowing the specific variables of interest in this study. Please recognize that your responses are strictly confidential and that they will only be seen by myself and my advisor, Dr. Pancer. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Dr. Mark Pancer at 884-1970 ext. 6149. The results of this study will be available no later than April 1st, 1995. Please watch the Psychology Bulletin Board on the third floor of the Central Teaching Building.

One final note: You may know others who will be participating in this study. Because of this, it is very important that you keep the contents of this sheet, and descriptions of the procedures you went through, to yourself. This is of primary importance to the validity of this study, so... please do not reveal any details of this study to others! Thanks again.

This sheet also serves as a receipt of your participation for the purposes of bonus credit. You will receive this bonus credit even if you don't complete the study.

_____ _____

Researcher Date