

# **Of Beauties, Beaus, and Beasts: Studying Women's and Men's Actual and Imagined Experiences of Sexual and Gender Harassment**

Nina Vanselow

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Erstgutachter: Prof. Dr. Gerd Bohner

Zweitgutachterin: Prof. Dr. Melanie Steffens

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## Overview

Is the saucy remark about your female colleagues' great legs in the miniskirt a compliment or a disrespectful transgression? Is the joke about the male student who – look at the caveman! – doesn't budge one step from the barbecue at the faculty's summer party a funny contribution to the great party atmosphere or anti-male? Might these situations even constitute sexual harassment or are they just examples of people's everyday interaction at work? The answers to these questions might be as many as employees of the company or guests at the summer party, because the same behavior is interpreted quite differently by different people. Furthermore, the same person will probably interpret identical behaviors differently in different situations. Finally, even with the same behavior in the same situation, interpretations may change with the individuals who show that behavior.

In this dissertation, I will present evidence from five studies focusing on different factors that influence interpretation of different behaviors constituting different forms of sexual harassment and gender harassment. Six possible factors of influence are under study: (1) physical attractiveness and (2) quality of financial resources or financial prospects of the harasser, (3) gender and (4) attitudes of the harassee, (5) interpreting derogatory versus interpreting "flirtatious" behavior, and (6) interpreting actual<sup>1</sup> harassment versus interpreting imagined harassment presented in a scenario. Thus, the first two factors are inherent to the person who harasses, the third and fourth are inherent to the person who perceives the harasser and his or her behavior, the fifth factor is the behavior itself, and the last factor deals with experimental methodology. Whereas not all five studies combine all these factors, all five studies share the theoretical background of drawing on two broad perspectives on the etiology and instrumental function of sexual harassment, namely, an evolutionary or biological perspective and a socio-structural or power perspective. In essence, the evolutionary approach assumes that sexual harassment is all about sex, and the socio-structural approach assumes that sexual harassment is all about power.

In Study 1, I will – to my knowledge, for the first time in the German-speaking world and for the second time in the published literature – investigate interpretations of two relatively mild forms of actual sexual and gender harassment under controlled laboratory conditions with female participants. The first study and additional analyses from that study were published by Woozicka and LaFrance (2001, 2005).

The overwhelming majority of previous studies of harassment perceptions either presented participants with scenarios depicting harassment, or asked participants about their actual experiences with harassment in the past. As will be seen later, these two methods produce data about

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<sup>1</sup> When using the term *actual* harassment, I usually refer to harassment that people *actually* experience in a given moment, as compared to harassment that people *imagine* to experience. Obviously, retrospective surveys that ask respondents about their past harassment experiences also ask about harassment that actually happened. However, these surveys ask about past behavior, not about perceptions of behavior that currently happens.

harassment experiences that differ from what people experience when harassment actually happens to them.

The two types of harassment in Study 1 (and in the subsequent studies) are explicitly derogatory toward the target or constitute sexual attention that might be unwanted. These harassment types are operationalized as sexist jokes and as remarks about physical appearance of the participant or communicating sexual arousal in the male perpetrator. In the control conditions, jokes and remarks with neutral content replace harassing jokes and remarks. In addition to varying type of behavior, I vary attractiveness of the male perpetrator, both physically and regarding personal resources.

In Study 2, I present female participants with a scenario of the actual harassment in Study 1, without attractiveness information, and compare reactions to and interpretations of the harassing behavior.

To disentangle the influences of physical attractiveness and quality of personal resources, which were confounded in Study 1, I conduct Study 3, again with a scenario of harassing behaviors and female participants. In Study 3, I also compare predictions made by the evolutionary and the socio-structural perspective directly. I draw on the notion of inclusive fitness (Hamilton, 1964) by varying the relationship between the female participant and the harassed woman in the scenario: The crucial comparison is with *genetic and social* relatedness to the target (sister), as compared with *social* relatedness alone (female friend) or *no* relatedness (female stranger).

In Study 4 and Study 5, I concentrate on men's interpretations of sexual and gender harassment. Study 4 closely resembles Study 1 with regard to methodology and is – to my knowledge – the pioneering study focusing on actual harassment of men under controlled laboratory conditions. Again, I vary type of behavior: Critical materials are either sexist jokes (i.e., anti-male) or remarks about the participant's physical appearance or expressing sexual interest of the female harasser. In the control conditions, neutral jokes or remarks are used. Physical attractiveness of the female perpetrator is varied, but no information about her financial prospects is given because men do not value this feature very highly in a prospective mate (Buss, Abbot, Angleitner, Asherian, Biaggio, Blanco-Villasenor et al., 1990).

Study 5 is a scenario version of Study 4 and closely resembles Study 2, thus allowing for comparisons between the perceptions of men and women. I present participants with a scenario of the actual harassment in Study 4, without attractiveness information, and compare reactions and interpretations between the actual and the imagined responses.

Together, these five studies constitute a series of experiments that (1) add to the as yet meager knowledge-base about reactions to and interpretations of actual harassment of women under controlled laboratory conditions (as compared with reactions to and interpretations of harassment scenarios), (2) constitute, to my knowledge, the very first attempt at getting an insight into reactions to and interpretations of actual harassment of men under controlled laboratory conditions, being at the same time also the first attempt at comparing these reactions and interpretations with the reactions to and interpretations of harassment scenarios with male participants, and (3) add to the few existing attempts to compare and disentangle predictions of the two



broad perspectives on the etiology and instrumental function of sexual harassment, namely, the evolutionary psychological and the socio-structural approach.

In the first section of this introduction, I begin with a brief description of sexual harassment as a social phenomenon. Here, I present and discuss definitions of sexual harassment and develop a working definition for this dissertation, outline knowledge about forms and typologies of harassment, give information about prevalence rates, and close with a summary of data regarding consequences of harassment. In the second section, I outline the evolutionary psychological and the socio-structural perspective on etiology and instrumental function of sexual harassment and discuss their similarities and differences. I also touch on other theoretical approaches to origins and functions of harassment, but do not go into detail, as these other approaches are beyond the scope of this dissertation. In the third and concluding section of the introduction, I present empirical evidence about factors that influence interpretation of social interactions as sexual harassment. All subsections of the introduction include brief summaries of their relevance for the empirical studies that constitute Part Two of this dissertation.

In Part Two, the empirical part of this dissertation, the five studies are each presented with a preceding theoretical introduction into the specific research question(s) addressed by the respective study. Each study closes with a discussion of its results. A general discussion and outline of possible applications based on the results of all five studies forms Part Three, and concludes the dissertation.



# PART ONE

## THEORY: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AS A UBIQUITOUS PHENOMENON

### 1. Definitions of sexual harassment

What is sexual harassment? This question feeds a lively, ongoing debate. Individuals, the scientific community, and jurisdiction have their own definitions each. As yet, there is no universally accepted, uniform definition of sexual harassment. Instead, different people, countries, cultures, and justice systems use definitions that might have considerable, some, or only small overlap. Therefore, comparing empirical findings from different domains is difficult. Furthermore, definitions are usually only the intermediate result of an ongoing process of social, legal, and scientific debate. An excellent overview of this process and comparison of sexual harassment law-development in the US, the European Union, and Germany is given elsewhere (Zippel, 2006). To complicate matters, three broad categories of definitions can be distinguished: Behavioral, legal, and psychological definitions also share some overlap, but are nevertheless often independently used. These three types of definitions will be illustrated by examples, compared, and used to develop a broad working definition of harassment.

#### 1.1 Legal definitions

The first legal definitions of sexual harassment were developed in the US. Since the onset of the US Civil Rights movement, public awareness for discrimination has been high. From Civil Rights legislation, a number of juridical instruments against discrimination based on race existed that could also be applied to overcome discrimination based on gender. Because it was (and still is) mainly women who became victims of sexual harassment, sexual harassment was framed as a form of discrimination based on gender. This enabled harassed women, their supporters, and legal representation to draw on existing legislation. In their guidelines against sexual harassment in the workplace, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) definition of harassment included unwelcomeness, sexual nature of the behavior, several types of behavior, and negative effects of the behavior on the target's job performance or the work climate (EEOC, 1980). In this definition, work-related consequences for the victims or an aggravation of working conditions are central. Because US legislation is based on case law, jurisdiction progressed and differentiated between several types of sexual harassment as they were presented in court: *Quid pro quo* (QPQ) harassment covers sexual coercion and sexual bribery. On the other hand, a hos-

tile work environment (HWE) is not necessarily sexual in content (although, e.g., pornographic pictures on display have a sexual content), but can also include behaviors that focus on the target person's gender. The latter type of behavior is termed *gender harassment* and can cover remarks or behaviors that derogate one gender.

The delayed development of German legislation led to the Law for the Protection of Employees (Gesetz zum Schutz der Beschäftigten vor sexueller Belästigung am Arbeitsplatz, 1994), a federal law that only covered public service. This law defined sexual harassment as a intentional behavior instrumental to achieve sex, and that violated the dignity of the target person. It included some behavioral examples and also extended to sexual behaviors liable for prosecution.<sup>2</sup> Importantly it required that the behavior in question needed to be discernibly rejected by the target person in order to constitute sexual harassment.

Several problems surrounded this law: Implementation and publication of the law among employees was rudimentary, despite a legal obligation for thoroughness. Furthermore, the law excluded employees in the private sector. But other problems were inherent in the law itself. Perpetrators could easily claim that they had no sexual aims, and that their behavior was unintentional. Furthermore, many forms of gender harassment do not include sexual innuendos, but have hostile and derogatory content that is essentially "sex-free". That the behavior in question should be discernibly rejected by the target person poses another problem. It implies that at least the first occurrence of a given behavior could not be sexual harassment, by definition, because a perpetrator could always claim he or she thought the behavior would be welcome. This problem is further aggravated by the fact that immediate and open rejection of harassment is far from common, which will be discussed later.

In Germany, the Law for the Protection of Employees was replaced by the Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG, 2006), incorporating a European Union (EU) guideline on equal opportunities in national law. This guideline mirrors the EU's early distinction between sexual harassment and gender harassment (see Zippel, 2006). Consequently, the AGG also distinguishes between sexual harassment and harassment based on a number of other features (such as age, religion, etc.) with gender being among them. Sexual harassment is still defined as unwanted, sexually connoted behavior, that aims at or has the effect of violating the dignity of the target person, and the law includes a number of behavioral examples.<sup>3</sup> Gender har-

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<sup>2</sup> "Sexuelle Belästigung am Arbeitsplatz ist jedes vorsätzliche, sexuell bestimmte Verhalten, das die Würde von Beschäftigten am Arbeitsplatz verletzt. Dazu gehören 1. sexuelle Handlungen und Verhaltensweisen, die nach den strafgesetzlichen Vorschriften unter Strafe gestellt sind, sowie 2. sonstige sexuelle Handlungen und Aufforderungen zu diesen, sexuell bestimmte körperliche Berührungen, Bemerkungen sexuellen Inhalts sowie Zeigen und sichtbares Anbringen von pornografischen Darstellungen, die von den Betroffenen erkennbar abgelehnt werden." (Gesetz zum Schutz der Beschäftigten vor sexueller Belästigung am Arbeitsplatz, 1994)

<sup>3</sup> In the AGG, sexual harassment is taking place „ . . . wenn ein unerwünschtes, sexuell bestimmtes Verhalten, wozu auch unerwünschte, sexuelle Handlungen und Aufforderungen zu diesen, sexuell bestimmte körperliche Berührungen, Bemerkungen sexuellen Inhalts sowie unerwünschtes Zeigen und sichtbares Anbringen von pornographischen Darstellungen gehören, bezweckt oder bewirkt, dass die Würde der betreffenden Person verletzt wird, insbesondere wenn ein von Einschüchterungen, Anfeindungen, Erniedrigungen, Entwürdigungen oder Beleidigungen gekennzeichnetes Umfeld geschaffen wird.“ (AGG, 2006)

assment is defined similarly, except for the sexual connotation of the behavior.<sup>4</sup> Compared to the earlier German law, the current legal definition has the advantage of extending beyond sexual intent: In both definitions (gender and sexual harassment), the purpose (“bezweckt”) stands equal with the consequences (“bewirkt”) for the target person. Despite these improvements, there are still problems: The AGG only covers employees and trainees, but excludes students (as long as they are not also employed as student assistants). This is highly problematic, because students are not only victims of harassment to a considerable extent, as will be seen later, but also especially vulnerable, due to the often very pronounced dependence on their supervisor’s benevolence.

## 1.2 Behavioral definitions

Behavioral definitions of sexual and gender harassment imply that certain behaviors can be consensually defined as harassing. Behavioral definitions are especially important for the development of questionnaires used to establish the prevalence of the problem in a given environment. When developing such measures, authors apply a variety of strategies: Some draw exclusively on actual experiences of victims (e.g., Till, 1980); others try to generate behavioral examples from legal definitions or from legal cases (e.g., Gruber, 1992, United States Merit Systems Protection Board [USMSPB], 1981). Mixed strategies gather behaviors empirically and sort them into (often legally recognized) categories of harassment. In several of the legal definitions, some behaviors are listed as exemplars, thus incorporating behavioral aspects.

Mostly, the behaviors listed in questionnaires as well as legal definitions are qualified with references to unwelcomeness, negative consequences for the target person, restriction to the workplace or a restriction to behaviors that were intended to harm the target person. Behavioral definitions imply that there also exist behaviors that are consensually *non-harassing*. The problem with the latter implication is the huge variety in interpretations of behaviors. There are virtually no behaviors that are uniformly classified as harassing or non-harassing across individuals, situations, and times, a problem which will be discussed later. Because of these variations, the scope of behavioral definitions seems not clearly cut. Instead, they are often rather blurred constructs.

To sum up, categorizing behaviors as clearly harassing or clearly not harassing per se seems premature. Instead, it is vital to at least include consequences for the target person into the definition, if not focusing on those consequences. The latter is the starting point for the psychological definition of harassment.

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<sup>4</sup> „... wenn unerwünschte Verhaltensweisen . . . bezwecken oder bewirken, dass die Würde der betreffenden Person verletzt und ein von Einschüchterungen, Anfeindungen, Erniedrigungen, Entwürdigungen oder Beleidigungen gekennzeichnetes Umfeld geschaffen wird.“<sup>4</sup> (AGG, 2006)

### 1.3 Psychological definition

Psychologically speaking, each and every sexually tinted behavior and each and every behavior that aims at the gender of the target person constitutes sexual or gender harassment, if, and only if, it has negative consequences for the victim (Fitzgerald, Swan & Magley, 1997). The scope of those negative consequences is neither quantified (e.g., negative consequences are experienced at least once a week) nor defined qualitatively: denial of promotion or pay rise, decrease in workplace productivity, feelings of anger or fear, psychosomatic ailments like sleeplessness or eating disorders, or clinically relevant disorders like depression or post-traumatic stress disorder, all equally make a behavior sexual or gender harassment. This laundry list of consequences may seem rather arbitrary at first sight, because a behavior that causes some slight anger is undoubtedly less severe than a behavior that causes a depression. But this is only true as long as different behaviors have systematically different consequences for the victims. It will be shown that this is not the case with sexual or gender harassment: The same behavior can be perceived as flattering by one person and cause severe health problems in another. As Fitzgerald and her colleagues (1997) state: “Importantly, severity of the stressor is not considered to inhere in the event itself; rather it is an individual’s *evaluation* of the situation, [...] that is determinative” (p. 124).

From a psychological point of view, it is not important that victims name their experiences “sexual or gender harassment” or define themselves as being harassed, because only the negative consequences are crucial. Contrary to legal definitions of sexual harassment, the psychological definition is much more comprehensive and not restricted to workplace behaviors. This broadened context has led to some criticism against psychological research into sexual and gender harassment – which predominantly focuses on the psychological definition – because many of the studies do not conform to legal cases dealt with in court. Therefore, applicability of the findings to the legal context has been challenged (e.g., Gruber, 1992). However, taking this criticism seriously would imply that only and exclusively those cases that were recognized in court to constitute sexual or gender harassment represent the totality of experiences with sexual and gender harassment. Given the fact that only a slight minority of known harassment incidents gets taken to court at all, and that the victims are far from being always successful with their claims, this perspective plays down the massive extent of the problem. In a Canadian study, 91 percent of the women who responded reported experiences with sexual harassment in public, at work, or during academic training, in at least one period of life (Lenton, Smith, Fox, & Morra, 1999). As mentioned above, in more current legal definitions, consequences for the victims are incorporated, an achievement that is at least partly due to psychological harassment research.

### 1.4 Evaluation of definitions and working definition

The three categories of definitions mainly differ regarding their application area. Purely legal definitions are usually rather narrow, and not every behavior that victims may perceive as harassing will comply with those legal definitions that are valid in a given country at a given time. On the other hand, some victims, despite fear, anger, sleeplessness, and other negative conse-

quences resulting from a particular experience, do not label themselves as being harassed, although their experience might perfectly conform to the current legal definition (on the labeling problem, see also section 7.1).

From a psychological point of view, sexual and gender harassment are defined solely from the perception of the target person: Behavior that is unwelcome, causes negative consequences for the victim, and has a sexual connotation or is focused on the gender of the victim, is harassing. This perspective is clearly broader than the legal definition and, besides being used in psychological research, is commonly used in counseling settings.

Listing different, specific behaviors is what behavioral definitions do. This approach is also often applied in harassment research, especially regarding prevalence rates. In harassment research, behavioral checklists are widely used. Nevertheless, those lists cannot depict the whole range of what could – psychologically speaking – constitute sexual or gender harassment. The different categories of definitions are, in the end, not clearly separable. There is smaller or greater overlap between them, all categories continually develop, and this process is often marked by some elements of one definition being incorporated into another, thus increasing the overlap. However, without clearly stating what definition of sexual and gender harassment is used, transferring research findings onto applied settings or legal contexts is hampered (see also Fitzgerald, Swan, et al., 1997). Therefore, the effort of delineating common features of definitions on the one hand and differences on the other hand is worthwhile.

In this vein, the working definition for the studies presented in Part Two is strongly influenced by the psychological definition:

*Every behavior with sexual content (referring to the gender of the target person), be it verbal, non-verbal or physical, which is perceived negatively by the target person or another person that observes the behavior, constitutes sexual harassment (gender harassment).*

This working definition includes both sexual harassment and gender harassment. In the course of this dissertation, I will use the term “harassment” to signify both forms<sup>5</sup>, but “sexual harassment” and “gender harassment” when only the respective form is meant. “Behavior” in the sense of the working definition can be verbal or non-verbal, either in personal encounter or transmitted via media (e.g., letter, e-mail), as well as involving physical contact. It includes presentation of materials depicting such behaviors, so that the perceiver “experiences” only a description. This is in line with the majority of previous research that used to operationalize harassment by scenarios to be judged by research participants imagining themselves to be in the depicted situation. In some of the studies presented here, the harassment under investigation is depicted in such scenarios. Importantly, this working definition is developed for the purpose of this dissertation. It is aimed at applicability for a larger field, but not intended to work for every situation. As a reader of a previous draft of this dissertation suggested, a judge handing out case information about a harassment case might also be perpetrating harassment, according to this working definition. This is clearly not intended. Incorporating the presentation of written mate-

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<sup>5</sup> “Harassment” in itself can of course be targeted at numerous other features, such as ethnic background or age.

rial in the working definition serves the purpose of making it comparable to the majority of harassment research.

The working definition is explicitly not restricted to work and study contexts. Therefore, it differs from the legal definition of sexual and gender harassment currently valid in Germany. Because the operationalizations and contexts used in the studies presented here do not conform to every detail of the legal definition, findings are not fully transferable to harassment cases that might end up in court. This qualification also applies to the majority of articles cited here, whose contributions to harassment research are, nevertheless, widely recognized. In Study 3, where this is possible and meaningful for the research question under study, I integrate a work context in order to make transfers of findings to legal contexts more viable.

## **1.5 Implications and relevance of definitions for the studies presented in Part Two**

The phenomenon under investigation in Studies 1 to 5 fully conforms to psychological definitions of harassment. In every study, evaluations of the behaviors themselves as positive or negative, and in some studies, feelings experienced as a result of being exposed to the behaviors, are measured. This allows for tests of the experienced valence, the defining element in psychological harassment definitions. In addition, in all studies except one (Study 3), behaviors pretested as non-harassing, used either in control conditions or as filler items among critical items, allow for comparisons between these and behaviors pretested as harassing, offering further opportunities to compare valences. In addition, in four of the five studies, two different types of harassing behavior are studied. Therefore, the scope of behavioral definitions is also depicted to some degree. Together, the studies in Part Two fit into the common spectrum of research based on psychological definitions, thus making comparisons with previous research feasible.

## **2. Forms and typologies of sexual and gender harassment**

Sexual and gender harassment can cover a broad, varying, and continually changing range of behaviors. These qualities make harassment hard to systematize, which is nevertheless very desirable: In order to measure harassment experiences economically, it is just infeasible to ask for each and every possible harassing behavior. For the development of valid and economic measures, it is thus indispensable to clarify whether there are distinct categories of harassment from which exemplars can be chosen to make up a questionnaire. Regarding harassment typologies themselves, extensive overlap between different research groups' typologies is desirable to enable comparisons between findings. The question whether harassment covers several distinct behavior categories or instead consists of a continuum, for instance of severity, is interesting from a theoretical point of view. The endpoints of such a continuum, or the distinct categories,



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could have different preconditions and consequences, which is also meaningful for applied settings. Finally, raising public awareness about an issue is easier if the subject of discussion can be defined clearly. However, definite answers to these questions are impossible, because the concepts of sexual and gender harassment are continually developing.

A number of typologies and category systems have been proposed since harassment aroused the interest of researchers. With the exception of Gruber's (1992) typology, the most influential typologies are presented and compared with each other in Table 1, along with the two types of harassment proposed by the German AGG.

Table 1: Typologies of harassing behaviors.

Author(s)	Behavioral categories							
Till, 1980	Generalized sexist remarks or behavior		Inappropriate and offensive, but essentially sanction-free sexual advances		Solicitation of sexual activity or other sex-linked behavior by promise of rewards	Coercion of sexual activity by threat of punishment	Sexual crimes and misdemeanors	
USMSPB, categories used in 1980, 1988 and 1995	continuum of severity?							
	Sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions	Sexual looks or gestures	Deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching	Pressure for dates	Letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature	Pressure for sexual favors	Actual or attempted rape or assault	
		less severe			medium		severe	
Fitzgerald and colleagues <sup>5</sup>	gender harassment	unwanted sexual attention					sexual coercion	
	continuum of severity	continuum of severity					continuum of severity	
AGG	Belästigung aufgrund des Geschlechts	sexuelle Belästigung						
	no continuum of severity							

<sup>5</sup> e.g., Fitzgerald, Shullman, Bailey, Richards, Swecker, Gold, et al., 1988; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, et al., 1995

## 2.1 Till's category system (1980)

After sexual harassment at work was first publicly and legally recognized by the guidelines of the EEOC (1980), the first attempts followed to investigate harassment in academic settings. The United States' National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Program commissioned Till (1980) with investigating experiences of victims and relevant institutions within universities (e.g., counselling centers). In open format, respondents were asked to report their experiences with sexual harassment, which were not initially defined for two reasons: First, it was unclear whether the (greatly varying) definitions of sexual harassment in the workplace would apply to academic settings, and second, the initiators hoped to develop a definition from the perspective of the victim. Based on responses, the five categories depicted in Table 1 were developed. Till's (1980) category system is mixed with regard to degree of abstractness. The first two categories are labeled rather abstractly, categories three and four are very concrete, and the fourth is again labeled more abstractly. The first category includes, for instance, jokes, ogling, and coarse sexual remarks, and is similar to gender harassment, because no sexual intentions are expressed (even if respondents indicated that some incidents included allusions to sexual demands). The second category differs from the first in the more or less explicit formulation of sexual wishes. Categories three and four both demand performance of sexual acts, using bribes or threats, respectively (the author comments that both categories often fade into each other when respondents do not comply with the demands for sexual favors). Taken together, Till (1980) postulates that the five categories constitute a continuum of severity stemming from the severity of the behaviors included in each category.

## 2.2 The classification by severity of the USMSPB (1981, 1988, 1995)

The USMSPB (1981, 1988, 1995) typically used seven single behaviors in its surveys, which were ordered by degree of severity. Depicted in Table 1 are those behaviors that were used in all three surveys (1981: No sexual crimes like [attempted] rape; 1995: Stalking added). Only behaviors with sexual connotation are mentioned. Gender harassment, as behavior aimed at derogating the target's gender and not necessarily including sexual innuendos, is completely absent. As will be shown later, gender harassment is the most frequent form of harassment. Therefore, the prevalence rates established by the three USMSPB studies are likely underestimates of harassment's true magnitude. A discussion of this problem can be found elsewhere (Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995). This problem might be aggravated because the USMSPB classification is very concrete and surely does not cover all possible harassing behaviors.

### 2.3 Gruber's typology (1992)

Gruber's (1992) often-cited typology is not depicted in Table 1 because it differs considerably from the other typologies discussed and does not fit the table's structure. Furthermore, the subdivision of categories seems quite arbitrary and without clear boundaries, which also makes this typology undepictable in comparison to other category systems.

Gruber's (1992) aim was twofold. First, building clear-cut categories of behaviors, covering the whole range of sexual harassment, and second, building categories conforming to current legal definitions of sexual harassment in order to make transfers to jurisdiction more feasible. Based on published literature, he sorted previously used behaviors or behavioral categories into three new categories: Verbal requests, verbal comments, and nonverbal displays; each divided into several subcategories. *Verbal requests* and *verbal remarks* share the postulated instrumental function of establishing sexual intimacy, with requests also said to aim at relational intimacy, whereas remarks can also have the goal to publicly humiliate a woman. The main difference between *verbal requests* and *verbal remarks* seems to be the intentions of the harasser: Gruber (1992) assumes the expressed interest in the first category to be sincere, whereas in the second category, he assumes it is only pretended with the aim to humiliate the woman. In court, this difference might be very hard to prove, which is detrimental both to the aim to develop a typology with legal relevance as well as to his aim to develop clear-cut categories. *Nonverbal displays* cover a laundry list of behaviors as diverse as sexual assaults, display of sexual material (e.g., pornography), and sexual stares. The author himself concedes that the subdivisions of *nonverbal displays* are hardly clear-cut.

Within categories, Gruber (1992) sorted the subcategories according to severity, but also introduced a continuum from *personal* to *environmental*, with more personal behavior, directed at one woman, being more severe than behaviors directed at woman in general. This additional dimension further contributes to the typology's fuzziness. Furthermore, it is easy to imagine behaviors not aimed at a specific woman at all that seem much more severe compared with other behaviors directed at one woman in particular. The author himself mentions some examples, thus devaluing his own typology. Overall, Gruber's typology does not seem to reach the goals it was intended to fulfill, and is too unclear to be practical.

### 2.4 The model of Fitzgerald and her colleagues

For decades, Fitzgerald and her research group have been investigating numerous factors surrounding sexual harassment. Accordingly, their model is the result of a process of many years and many studies (e.g., Fitzgerald & Hesson-McInnis, 1989; Fitzgerald et al., 1988). The still-valid, current version of the model is depicted here (Fitzgerald, Gelfand & Drasgow, 1995). Fitzgerald, Gelfand et al. (1995) aimed at specifying the theoretical dimensions of the construct *sexual harassment* in order to deduce observable behaviors. They distinguished three conceptually related dimensions of sexual harassment: *Sexual coercion*, *unwanted sexual attention*, and *gender harassment*. With Gruber (1992), Fitzgerald and her colleagues shared the opinion

that in the latter dimension, degrading women, and not getting sex, was the aim. Unlike Gruber, Fitzgerald and her team discuss the simplification of actual harassment experiences and overlap inherent in the theoretical model. For example, unwanted sexual attention from a supervisor with disciplinary power over the harassed woman can have a dimension of sexual coercion. Contrary to Till (1980), who assumed that his categories depicted different levels of severity, and on whose category system Fitzgerald built a widely used measure of harassment experiences (the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire, SEQ, Fitzgerald et al., 1988), Fitzgerald and her team assume that within each of the three categories of their model, behaviors differing in severity are encompassed. According to Fitzgerald and colleagues, their model is a necessary and sufficient basic structure on which every specific incident can be categorized. Furthermore, it is uniform across contexts (e.g., in the workplace and in academic settings), and, within contexts, also stable across cultures. Structure of the model and theoretical assumptions were confirmed in different subsamples (students, employees, military personnel), across cultures, and across contexts (Fitzgerald, Gelfand, et al., 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Gelfand et al., 1995). In view of that evidence, the model of Fitzgerald and her research group seems to reflect a considerable part of actual harassment experiences.

## 2.5 External validity of the typologies

As will be shown later, the most common form of harassment is gender harassment, whereas sexual crimes like (attempted) rape are far less frequent. The fact that the classification by severity used by the USMSPB studies (1981, 1988, 1995) did not include gender harassment is a challenge to the external validity of this classification.

Another challenge to all typologies is that specific forms of harassment encountered by men are missing. Given the fact that the majority of harassment is experienced by women, and that men also experience all forms of harassment that women do, this might not devalue the typologies too much. However, for the sake of completeness, it is still unfortunate. As will be shown, most studies use behavior checklists to ascertain prevalence of harassment. Those checklists are constructed based on typical harassment experiences – and the typical experience is made by *women*. This point was more deeply discussed by Waldo, Berdahl, and Fitzgerald (1998). In addition to harassment forms experienced by women, men also experience specific types of harassment, e.g., enforcement of the heterosexual male gender role (e.g., Berdahl, Magley, & Waldo, 1996). Waldo et al. (1998) investigated legal harassment cases with male victims. In all three of their samples, almost half of the men reported experiencing harassment at least once. The most upsetting experience was enforcement of the male gender role (mean of 3.00 on a five-point scale from 1 = not at all upsetting to 5 = extremely upsetting), whereas for other forms of harassment, participants reported being only slightly upset (mean of 2.00). Berdahl (2007) took personality gender into account (i.e. the degree to which a person possessed traditionally male or traditionally female personality traits). Her data (studies 1 and 3) show that, on a descriptive level, “feminine” men reported experiencing more harassment than “masculine” men. Although this is no conclusive evidence, it adds to the credibility of the argument that gen-

der role-deviant men are policed by enforcement of the traditional male gender role. These data are supported by the first attempt at developing a more conclusive theoretical framework of harassment of men, based primarily on the assumption that all harassment is aimed at enforcing “hypergender” norms, meaning a particularly rigid form of sex role stereotypes (Stockdale, Visio, & Batra, 1999).

In addition to men, other potential target groups’ experiences are underrepresented in current harassment typologies: Ethnicity may also be connected to specific forms of harassment not mentioned in previous research. A study on harassment experiences of African American students seems to show that common typologies are too centered on white women: For African American women, Mecca and Rubin (1999) found a higher likelihood to experience forms of harassment drawing on specific racial-sexual stereotypes.

Virtually all typologies presented here include two types of harassment: One type interpretable as expressing sexual attention to the target, and the other type derogating, devaluing, and repressing the target. The more recent developments seem to reflect a refinement of theory surrounding the research topic: Inclusion of forms of harassment other than the “classical” opposite sex-harassment, with men as initiators and women as targets, might lead to further differentiation of subtypologies of harassment.

## **2.6 Implications and relevance of typologies for the studies presented in Part Two**

In my own studies, concrete behaviors, rather than abstract category labels, are used. The expression “sexual harassment” itself is never used to describe the behaviors under study. However, one response dimension to evaluate the behaviors is usually labeled *how sexually harassing is* [behavior], together with other response dimensions labeled more indirectly. For female participants, the behavioral categories are chosen based on an own, qualitative study conducted previously (Vanselow, 2006). Here, female research participants generated behaviors they considered to be harassing, ambiguous or non-harassing. This method has the advantage that exemplars reflect actual experiences and ideas of women instead of abstract, theoretically deduced categories. To directly compare women’s and men’s perceptions of behaviors, similar exemplars were chosen for studies with male participants. Importantly, both derogatory gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention were chosen to represent harassment. Both categories fit the current legal definitions of *Belästigung aufgrund des Geschlechts* and *Sexuelle Belästigung* of the German AGG (2006) as well as fit into Fitzgerald and colleagues’ categories. Furthermore, they also fit into a new theoretical framework initially developed to study same-sex harassment, which distinguishes approach vs. rejection-based harassment (Stockdale, Gandolfo Berry, Schneider, & Cao, 2004; Stockdale et al., 1999). Unwanted sexual attention resembles approach-based harassment, whereas derogatory gender harassment resembles rejection-based harassment. A particular point of my own studies are systematic and theory-based comparisons between perceptions of the two types of harassment.

### 3. Prevalence rates

Large-scale surveys of employees' harassment experiences began after sexual harassment received some public recognition as a social problem. Public service agencies were the forerunners to initiate those surveys, closely followed by researchers conducting smaller studies at their universities. Due to the early recognition sexual harassment gained in the US, they were first and are still foremost in gathering knowledge about harassment. Until today, the broadest knowledge base is about harassment in public service and in academic settings in the US. However, other countries have caught up, with Northern European countries progressing faster in that process than Southern European countries (European Commission [EC], 1998). In general, the western world has paid more and earlier attention to the problem than other areas of the world, which is reflected in the published literature. The following account of prevalence rates as well as of the two following sections on perpetrators and people who are harassed, mirrors the US' head start (but see, e.g., for studies from China, Chan, Tang & Chan, 1999; Tang, Yik, Cheung, Choi & Au, 1995a, 1995b; Stillman, Yamawaki, Ridge, White & Copley, 2009, for an intercultural comparison between Japan and the US; for a study from Turkey, Çelik & Çelik, 2007; and for studies from India, Menon & Kanekar, 1992; Kanekar & Dhir, 1993).

#### 3.1 How much harassment occurs?

On average, about half of all working women and at least 10 percent of all working men experience some form of harassment at least once during their working life. Many experience multiple forms of harassment, and for most, it is not a singular incident but stretches over a considerable period of time. However, prevalence rates fluctuate from study to study. In a meta-analysis, Ilies, Hauserman, Schwochau, and Stibal (2003) sought to establish a reliable estimate, and test for moderators of prevalence rates. Ilies and colleagues found an average prevalence rate of 58 percent of female respondents who reported having experienced potentially harassing behaviors, and an average prevalence rate of 24 percent of female respondents who labeled their experience as sexual harassment. Such a difference between the number of respondents experiencing harassing behaviors and the number of those labeling themselves as being harassed is usually sizeable and will be discussed later (see section 7.1). Three moderator variables were found: First, type of measurement (lower prevalence with direct question whether respondents were "sexually harassed" vs. use of a behavior checklist), second, method of sampling (lower prevalence with probability sampling vs. convenience sampling), and, third, hierarchical structure of the organization (lower prevalence with small vs. large power differentials).

This meta-analysis would not have been possible without considerable single efforts to establish prevalence rates. The first of a number of large-scale surveys was conducted by the USMSPB (1981), with follow-up studies published in 1988 and 1995. Employees in diverse public service agencies were asked to report their experiences with concrete, potentially sexually harassing, behaviors (see Table 1 for an overview about the behaviors). In the three studies, 42 to

44 percent of women and 14 to 19 percent of men reported having experienced at least one behavior at least once during the past 24 months, with the higher prevalence rates in the more recent studies. The most frequent behaviors fell into the category “less severe” that consists of, e.g., sexual remarks, looks, or gestures, experienced by 37 percent of female and 14 percent of male employees (1995; percentages were slightly lower in the previous studies). The least frequently experienced behaviors were the most severe: Actual or attempted rape or assault was reported by 4 percent of female and 2 percent of male employees in 1995, and in 1988 and 1981, by 0.8 and 1 percent of women, and 0.3 percent of men. The overall rise in prevalence rates over time might reflect a higher public awareness, but these sizeable proportions of employees suffering from harassment might still be an underestimation, because gender harassment was not included.

Results in Europe, and Germany in particular, are similar. The EC (1998) presented a report about sexual harassment in the workplace that consisted of almost 100 single studies from the member states. Those studies were conducted from the mid-1980s to 1997. Eleven of the Northern European surveys were countrywide, the other 64 restricted to several occupations. Besides fluctuations in quality of the research methods, results are similar to those in the US: Almost one in two women reported one or more harassment experiences. Consistently, the proportion of women experiencing gender harassment was larger than the proportion of women experiencing sexual coercion and attempted or actual rape – the latter were experienced by a mean of five percent of employed women. Harassment experiences of men were included only in some studies, and only in Northern countries: About 10 percent of men had experienced at least one form of harassment at least once, but the range between studies was very large (zero to 30 percent harassed men).

According to the EC-report, Germany had a rather high rate of around 60 percent of harassed women, compared to the other European countries. In the (then) largest national study commissioned by the Department of Women, Family, Youth, and Health (Holzbecher, Braszeit, Müller & Plogstedt, 1991), about 19 percent of men indicated harassing experiences by checking at least one behavior from a list. However, men’s questionnaires were often unintelligibly or incompletely filled in, so this number should be interpreted with caution. Among women, prevalence rates were also high: 72 percent had experienced at least one behavior from a checklist (mean = 4.5 behaviors), and those more than once, which is one of the highest estimates reported in the literature. The most frequent experiences in all German studies were with sexist jokes and “accidental” touching, whereas reports of sexual crimes (if part of the questionnaire) were made by one to three percent of women. A more recent German study with a representative national sample of over 10.000 women found slightly lower prevalence rates: According to Schröttle and Müller (2004), 58 percent of women had experienced sexual harassment in various settings. When restricted to the workplace, vocational training, and school, 22 percent of women reported harassment experiences.

In academia, harassment can have particularly detrimental effects on women, even before they start their professional career. Again, the US are far advanced in conducting harassment studies among students. In a comprehensive work of harassment on campus (Paludi, 1990), the authors report mean prevalence rates of unwanted sexual attention for 20 to 30 percent with female undergraduates, 30 to 40 percent with female graduates, and about 50 percent with female



academic staff. These figures rise when gender harassment is included. Similar rates are reported by van Roosmalen and McDaniel (1999) for Canadian universities. Ilies et al. (2003) suggest that prevalence rates from within academia might be underestimates, because female academic staff label themselves less frequently as sexually harassed, even when they check numerous behaviors on a checklist (see also Schneider, Swan & Fitzgerald, 1997, for similar results). A nationally representative survey (Hill & Silva, 2005) of undergraduate students has established a prevalence rate of about a third of female and male students, a rate similar to those found as byproduct of some other, more theoretically guided research in numerous smaller studies (e.g., DeSouza & Fansler, 2003; Mazer & Percival, 1989b).

In Germany, there are only a few studies on prevalence rates in academia. Those studies are generally only published within the respective university and not in scientific journals. Three studies report prevalence rates from nine percent (only female students) to 47 percent (female students and female staff; Färber, 1992; Felten-Biermann, 2005, Holzbecher, 1996). Given the nature of the data, the true extent of the problem in German universities can only be estimated.

### **3.2 Implications and relevance of prevalence rates for the studies presented in Part Two**

In my own studies, research participants are students. Psychological research has been criticized for drawing too heavily on college students as research participants, for which Sears (1986) provides an early example. When conducting basic research on people's perceptions of harassment – the focus of this dissertation – it would certainly be desirable to investigate the topic with a more representative sample. However, college students are a necessary and adequate population for basic research on harassment, even though they are homogeneous with regard to age, educational background, and also (in Germany's comparatively segregated higher education system) ethnicity. With regard to work experience, most German students need to work in order to (co-) finance their studies. Therefore, they are able to put themselves in the position of a working woman or man, the "classic" target of harassment research. Furthermore, students can also, unfortunately, draw on their own experiences when participating in fundamental research. In addition, even if participants have never heard of harassment before, they surely share this feature with experienced workers: In German firms and organizations, harassment awareness- and prevention trainings are virtually unknown. Lastly, the fact that so many students experience harassment in academia or their private life definitely warrants focusing on their perceptions.

## 4. Who harasses?

### 4.1 Gender

The one feature most common in perpetrators of harassment is male gender. As far as researchers know, most harassers are men, and for virtually all harassed women, the perpetrator is male. In the recent representative German study, 97 percent of the harassed women reported men as harassers (Schrötte & Müller, 2004). Harassers of men, on the other hand, are in about a third of cases other men (e.g., Cochran, Frazier, & Olson, 1997; USMSPB, 1981; 1988<sup>7</sup>). For homosexual harassees, some evidence points to a shift in gender representation on perpetrator side. Acknowledged lesbians seem to be harassed almost exclusively by men, although this is difficult to determine because of a ceiling effect for male perpetrator gender. Acknowledged gay men are even more often harassed by other men than heterosexual men (Knoll, Bittner, Edinger, Reisbeck, Schmitt, & Keupp, 1995).

Over and above gender, most large-scale surveys as well as smaller studies have investigated other common features of perpetrators. However, most of this information is retrospectively obtained by harassees who describe the perpetrators. Even if respondents are assured of their anonymity, they rarely admit to having harassed others. Therefore, features of perpetrators that are unknown to the harassees, or that harassees do not recall, are missed by this type of research.

### 4.2 Status

Against common thinking, women are not predominantly harassed by supervisors, but by colleagues. Colleagues are reported as harassers in about half, supervisors in about a third of cases. The rest of harassers are patients, clients or customers. In work settings with frequent customer contact (e.g., nurses, hairdressers), the proportion of this last group of perpetrators can account for up to half of all cases (EC, 1998; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). Subordinate men rarely harass women: In most of the European studies (EC, 1998), this group of perpetrators was not mentioned by participants. Only in four studies, between two and 13 percent of perpetrators were subordinate men.

The status groups are reported in the same order of frequency by harassed men. However, the relative proportion of perpetrators on the same hierarchical level (i.e., colleagues) is even

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<sup>7</sup> For the USMSPB studies, the estimate is based on those men who described the most critical incident in open ended format, which were just over half of all men who reported harassment experiences. Therefore, the USMSPB data should be interpreted with caution.

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larger. This might reflect the fact that in most companies, women in supervisory positions are relatively scarce.

### **4.3 Age**

In about two thirds of cases, men who harass women are comparatively older than those who they harass, and married (EC, 1998; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). Virtually nothing is known about women who harass other women. With harassed men, age and marital status of perpetrators are more evenly distributed: Men are harassed most often by younger, married male and female perpetrators, but harassers of the same age as the harassee or older, and divorced, widowed, or single harassers are each more frequent than is the case with harassers of women.

### **4.4 Ethnic background**

Ethnicity seems to be a category that only recently gained recognition in harassment research. Apparently, research has focused not on women in general, but on white, middle class women in particular. The percentage of harassment studies focusing on this subcategory has been estimated at 80 percent (Reid & Kelly, 1994). Regarding ethnic background, in the first USMSPB study (1981), in two thirds of harassment cases, and for male and female harassees, harasser and harassee were of the same ethnicity. For nonminority, female harassees, this was virtually always the case. However, for 88 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander women, and for 62 percent of Hispanic and 53 percent of Black women, harasser's ethnic background differed from their own. It might be possible that this difference covaries with harasser status: Mecca & Rubin (1999) hint that members of ethnic majorities might also be more often of higher organizational status, and that minority members are more often harassed by someone of higher status than themselves. Whereas this reasoning would explain part of the data of the first USMSPB study (1981), those data are unfortunately not presented for a combination of harasser features. Therefore, this question remains unanswered.

### **4.5 Psychological features**

Apart from demographic and status variables, among the most crucial factors for perpetrating harassment are psychological dispositions and attitudes. The Likelihood to Sexually Harass Scale (LSH, Pryor, 1987) measures a disposition of men to take advantage of a power position to harass women. Based on the Person x Situation interaction model (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, Strack, 1995; Pryor, 1987; Pryor, Giedd & Williams, 1995; Pryor, LaVite & Stoller, 1993), LSH is associated with other, related constructs. Rape myth acceptance (Burt, 1980), hostile sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), two measures of authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1981; Berkowitz & Wolkon, 1964), and acceptance of modern myths about sexual aggression (Gerger, Kley, Bohner

& Siebler, 2007) are all positively correlated with LSH (see, for instance, Begany & Milburn, 2002; Pryor, 1987; Siebler, Sabelus & Bohner, 2008). Together, these data on convergent validity link a propensity to harass to general hostility toward women.

LSH, as well as hostile sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), is also positively correlated with actual harassment (e.g., Dall'Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass, Cadinu, Guarneri & Grasselli, 2003; Pryor, 1987; Siebler et al., 2008). Furthermore, Dekker and Barling (1998) report a significant positive correlation between „inappropriate sexual harassment beliefs“, a scale that measures a construct similar to rape myth acceptance, but with sexual harassment as target behavior, and self reported actual harassment in a sample of male academic staff.

## **4.6 Implications and relevance of harasser research for the studies presented in Part Two**

One shortcoming of previous perpetrator research is the absence of studies on actual harassment. Two of the studies presented here aim to fill that research gap: One with a female harasser-male harassee constellation, the other with male harasser-female harassee constellation. In these studies, the harasser (or the person behaving non-harassing in the control conditions) is allegedly real, but in fact computer-simulated. Importantly, all features of the harasser are premeditated and the harasser himself or herself is a stimulus created to test certain hypotheses. In these and another, scenario based, studies, the most important experimentally varied harasser characteristic is physical attractiveness, a factor that scenario research has proven to be influential for harassment interpretations and which will be discussed in more detail later. In the two studies investigating a male harasser-female harassee constellation, harasser status is varied only insofar as quality of financial resources is concerned. In one study, harassers are depicted as having either good financial prospects and being ambitious, or bad financial prospects and being rather unambitious. In the other study, current job position and mode of living are varied. These two characteristics allow for testing the well-established attractiveness effect's replicability in actual harassment. They also allow for gaining clearer insight into the varying effects found for status in scenario studies by testing these effects in actual harassment studies. In addition, these variations allow for testing well developed theories about harassment's instrumental function and origin as well as lay theories about harassment being, in essence, some sort of flirtation gone astray. There is no power differential between the harassing person (the person behaving non-harassing in the control conditions, respectively) and the research participant or the target in the scenario, respectively. Harasser age is held constant: Male harassers are designed to be slightly older than female participants, and female harassers are designed to be slightly younger than male participants, thus replicating the typical age difference in couples, which should provide a conservative test against the "harassment is flirtation gone astray"-mode of thinking. Those harasser features that might serve as references to ethnicity (appearance, first names) are chosen to reflect membership in the majority of the prospective sample of research participants, namely, being German. In two further scenario studies, the only information given about the harasser is of his or her gender: In one study, the harasser is a man, in the other, a woman.

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Taken together, in the studies presented in Part Two, harasser features are construed under careful consideration of research findings in order to serve the experimental purpose in the respective studies.

## **5. Who is harassed?**

Given the fact that most retrospective studies focus on the experiences of those who are harassed, a detailed harassee profile should be easy to develop. However, research seems to boil down to one fact: If you are a woman, you have a fifty-fifty chance of being harassed one day. Although there seem to be some other features that carry a higher risk for being harassed, results are often inconclusive.

### **5.1 Gender**

The most relevant feature that distinguishes people with harassment experience from those without harassment experience is gender. The risk of harassment is five times as high for a woman as for a man. Because of this overrepresentation of women among harassees, and because harassment of men has long been neglected by researchers (because so many more women suffered from it), more is known about risk factors for women. However, some risk factors are valid for women and men alike. An overview of risk factors can be found elsewhere (e.g., O'Hare & O'Donohue, 1998).

### **5.2 Demographic and status variables**

For both genders, single or divorced individuals are harassed more often than married or widowed individuals. Regarding educational background, in the USMSPB studies, better educated women (1981, 1988; in the 1995-study, it was the case with both genders) carried a higher risk for being harassed, whereas in the EC-study (1998) the opposite was true: Lower level education, short period of employment, and temporary employment increased harassment probability. A similar effect was found in the first USMSPB study (1981): Individuals who depended heavily on their current position were harassed more frequently than other individuals. Youth is another risk factor for both genders, as well as working in an environment that is dominated by the opposite gender, working in a non-traditional (for the own gender) occupation, and having a supervisor of the opposite gender.

### **5.3 Gender role orientation**

Openly homosexual individuals seem to experience more harassment than heterosexual individuals or those that are not “out”. As described above, the gender representation on the perpetrator side seems to be shifted here. Similarly, not conforming to a traditional gender role seems to increase the risk of harassment. This speaks in favor of socio-structural theories of etiology and instrumental function of harassment as stabilizing the status quo between the genders, which will be presented below. Women with traditionally “masculine” personality traits (e.g., dominant) seem to experience more harassment than women with traditionally “feminine” personality traits (e.g., emotional; Berdahl, 2007, study 1; Dekker & Barling, 1998). This is particularly pronounced with “masculine” women in male-dominated worksettings (Berdahl, 2007, study 3). Several research groups present similar results under controlled laboratory conditions (Dall’Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass et al., 2003; Siebler et al., 2008).

### **5.4 Implications and relevance of research on people who are harassed for the studies presented in Part Two**

There is a caveat inherent in research on characteristics of people who are harassed: It can be instrumentalized to assign responsibility to them instead of to those who harass. Especially research on gender role orientation might be eligible for those instrumentalizations, because, apparently, the way women behave (i.e., conforming to or rejecting traditional gender roles) is one factor that influences if and how much they are harassed. This suggests that, if only a woman had behaved differently, probably less “masculine”, she might not have been harassed. A similar faulty logic applies for male harassees who conform to or reject traditional masculine roles. For the studies presented later, characteristics of the harassee (except gender, which is held constant within studies), are completely irrelevant. Because of random assignment to harassing and non-harassing conditions, the probability to experience harassing behavior is the same, regardless of participant characteristics. In some studies, measures of sexist attitudes, gender role orientation, and sociosexuality are administered in order to control for its effects. Given that much more is known about how women perceive harassment than how men perceive harassment, two of the five studies presented in Part Two deal with men’s perceptions and interpretations of potentially harassing behavior.

## 6. Consequences of harassment

### 6.1 Consequences on people who are harassed and on organizations

Sexual and gender harassment can have dramatic and manyfold consequences for those experiencing it. Consequences reported in the literature include negative emotions (like fear, anger), psycho-somatic and somatic ailments (e.g., sleeping- and eating disorders), problems in private life (e.g., loss of sexual interest), clinical disorders (e.g., depression, post-traumatic stress disorder), and work-related consequences (e.g., loss of motivation and productivity). Between 30 percent (e.g., USMSPB, 1981) to over 80 percent (German country report of the EC, 1998) of female harassees show one or more of these effects. In a recent German study (Schrötle & Müller, 2004), 56 percent of harassment victims reported psychological problems as a result of their experiences (including, e.g., lowered self-esteem, depression). The authors also show that, for 9 percent of harassees, the experience culminated in unwanted sexual intercourse or other forms of physical violence, for which they report considerably higher percentages of psychological problems (up to 64 and 79 percent, respectively), as well as high percentages of medical problems as a result of sexual and physical violence (44 and 55 percent of victims of sexual and physical violence, respectively, reported various injuries, which were medically treated in about a third of cases each). This vast body of research on negative consequences for women who are harassed is added to by very low percentages of men and women who report enjoying sexual conduct at work (see Berdahl & Aquino, 2009). Consequences for male victims are less well researched, but evidence seems to hint at similar consequences for a substantial proportion of male victims (e.g., 21 percent of male victims, USMSPB, 1981). In a recent meta-analysis on antecedents and consequences of harassment, the weighted correlation between harassment experiences and psychological well-being was  $-.29$ , between harassment experiences and health complaints,  $.24$ ; both figures collapsed over male and female harassees (Topa Cantisano, Morales Domínguez, & Depolo, 2008). Despite the empirical evidence, however, the extent of harassment experiences' negative impact is often questioned, an ongoing discussion illustrated by a review of some challenges regarding the traumatic quality of harassment experiences, and their rebuttal (Avina & O'Donohue, 2002).

The detrimental effects on harassees warrants every effort to reduce harassment, yet these effects on *individuals* might, unfortunately, not be sufficient to raise public awareness. Pointing out negative *economic* effects might prove more useful to make employers aware of what is to gain and what to lose with or without prevention efforts. The USMSPB studies (1981, 1988, 1995) each estimate financial losses for the economy as high as triple-digit million dollar sums over a period of two years (due to, e.g., loss of productivity, job turnover, sick leave). Based on an estimation for the year 1988, harassment costs for the US-military amount to 250.000.000 dollars (Faley, Knapp, Kustis, & Dubois, 1999).

Companies are increasingly aware that their employees' work satisfaction is one of the factors that drive economic success. Therefore, raising awareness in organizations should be improved by publicizing research showing harassment to be related to decreasing work satisfaction and increasing psychological stress, which is in turn related to less physical health (e.g., Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand & Magley, 1997). Even organizations such as the US military have commissioned harassment research that established a direct relationship between harassment experiences and negative effects on health, psychological well-being, and work satisfaction. Here, the more severe forms of harassment (assault and attempted or actual rape) had more severe consequences in a sample of over 20,000 female US-military staff (Harned, Ormerod, Palmieri, Collinsworth, & Reed, 2002). The large-scale surveys in a variety of other organizations find similar relationships between harassment severity and severity of effects (EC, 1998; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). Topa Cantisano et al. (2008), in their meta-analysis, established weighted correlations between harassment experiences and a variety of work-related variables (performance, supervisor and coworker satisfaction, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance) ranging between  $-.20$  (organizational commitment) to  $-.26$  (coworker satisfaction).

The role of biological sex as a moderator of harassment effects was repeatedly investigated (e.g., Munson, Hulin, & Drasgow, 2000), but although women reported far more harassment experiences than men, both sexes reported negative effects to a similar extent. However, Munson et al. (2000) point out that personal resources (psychological and social) can moderate harassment effects, which contributes to individual differences in effects.

Recent meta-analyses broaden the scope of harassment-effect research. Willness, Steel and Lee (2007) differentiated work-related consequences (e.g., global work satisfaction and interpersonal work satisfaction), and found particularly devastating effects of harassment experiences on interpersonal work satisfaction (that is, satisfaction with supervisors and colleagues, weighted mean correlations with harassment experiences, corrected for reliability, of  $-.29$  and  $-.32$ , respectively). Furthermore, negative consequences were not restricted to the individual victim: The productivity of whole teams with one harassed member was reduced.

Another meta-analysis (Chan, Lam, Chow & Cheung, 2008) emphasized psychological and physiological effects of harassment experiences. Harassment experiences were related to less psychological well-being and physiological health, to more psychological disorders (including post traumatic stress disorder), and to more physical symptoms (means of corrected correlations ranging from  $.25$  to  $-.30$ , regardless of the sign). Furthermore, age and questionnaire type were identified as moderators for harassment effects. Younger people seem to experience more negative consequences than older people, and in studies using behavior checklists instead of direct, single questions about sexual harassment experiences, the relationship between harassment experiences and negative consequences seems to be stronger. No moderating role of biological sex for harassment effects was found: Consequences were similar for men and women.

Again, consequences of harassment might be particularly detrimental to students, because these have not even entered the job market. Experiencing harassment at college might therefore hamper the quality of academic education and seriously limit the harassee's career, not to mention the negative psychological effects. A study involving almost 1500 female students shows a



direct link between harassment experiences and less psychological well-being, which in turn is connected with less physical health and less academic satisfaction, and with more eating disorders (Huerta, Cortina, Pang, Torges, & Magley, 2006). As a whole, harassment experiences led to loss of interest in studying and to less achievement.

## **6.2 Implications and relevance of consequences of harassment for the studies presented in Part Two**

As with prevalence rates, the previous section should serve to underline the importance of the research subject in general. Specifically, all data reported are based on retrospective surveys, and are prone to distortions as memories fade. In addition, it remains unclear what happens when harassment actually occurs: Immediate and short-term effects might be very different from long-term effects. Therefore, the necessity to conduct studies on actual harassment, and to compare results with those gathered from the other main source of data on harassment experiences, i.e., scenario studies, is emphasized. Particularly the absence of an effect of biological sex is puzzling and warrants the study of actual harassment with both male and female participants. If men's and women's perceptions of actual harassment are similar under controlled laboratory conditions, this has implications both for theory and research on harassment, and for the public understanding of harassment. If men experience harassment similarly to women, then the common notion that harassment is just flirtation that is misunderstood is defeated. Men that recognize, and do not like, harassment, will probably not show that behavior toward women with whom they want to enter in a consensual relationship.

In the present studies on actual harassment, major dependent variables are evaluations of the harassing (or, in the control conditions, non-harassing) behavior and emotional response of the participants. This allows for a test whether participants actually experienced harassing behavior more negatively than non-harassing behavior, and thus it allows for a check whether the chosen behavior is in line with psychological definitions of harassment.

Given that even moderate forms of harassment can have negative effects on those who are harassed, special care is taken to limit negative impact on research participants in the studies on actual harassment presented in Part Two. First, the potentially harassing situation does not take place face-to-face, but in an allegedly real online chat situation. Therefore, any "contact" between the allegedly real man and the research participant consists only of him or her sending materials to the participant's computer screen. The harassing material consists of jokes with sexist content or remarks (allegedly made spontaneously by the chat partner) about the chat partner's appearance or expressing sexual interest. Materials are pretested to be moderately harassing. In addition, in the (then) absence of an institutional ethics committee, a pretest with proxy participants of the sample population was conducted as a further precaution against a high degree of participant stress. Proxy participant's suggestions about alterations of the study design in order to limit participant stress were fully implemented. Moreover, an extensive discussion with the studies' founding body that included experienced researchers from a variety of fields, including psy-

chology, yielded suggestions similar to those of the proxy participants. The informed consent procedures and post-experimental debriefings were extensive.

## **7. Reactions to harassment**

How do people react to harassing behavior directed at them? This question has received much interest by researchers. From the first surveys onwards, reactions of victims were registered on a descriptive level (e.g., USMSPB, 1981). Now, the emphasis is on developing theoretical frameworks for structuring reactions. As will be shown, distinguishing between actual responses of harassees and imagined responses to fictitious incidents is important.

### **7.1 Actual reactions**

Immediate and delayed reactions of people who are harassed are manifold. However, instead of asking what victims *do*, the question what they *do not* is closer to reality. Table 2 gives an overview about those reactions most frequently captured in large surveys as well as the percentage of victims who reacted that way. As can be seen, a lot of harassees react in a way that is hard to discern.

Table 2: Type of reaction and percentage of harassees who reported reacting that way to harassment in large-scale surveys.

Original study	Holzbecher et al., 1991	EC, 1998	USMSPB, 1988	USMSPB, 1995
Respondent gender	women	women & men	women	women & men
type of reaction				
ignore/do nothing	51	39	52	44
go away	-	28	-	-
avoid harasser(s)	46	-	43	28
go along	-	-	4	7
maintain good work relationship	-	31	-	-
demand/request to stop	Ø 38	37	44	35
confront		21	-	-
physical resistance	27	14	-	-
threaten to file a complaint	14	18	-	-
file a complaint	9	6	15	12
threaten to tell others/tell others	6	29 <sup>a</sup> 52 <sup>b</sup> 3 <sup>c</sup> 15 <sup>d</sup>	14	10
transferred, disciplined or gave a poor performance rating to the person	-	-	2	-
sue harasser	1	-	-	-
other	-	-	10	-

Note: Some studies did not capture all types of reaction (-); all studies allowed for multiple answers. EC = mean of responses in northern member states.<sup>a</sup> = talk to colleagues.<sup>b</sup> = talk to friends.<sup>c</sup> = talk to confidential counselor.<sup>d</sup> = talk to supervisor/personnel manager.

In the 1981-USMSPB study, proportions of responses are insufficiently differentiated and therefore not reported here.

Non-confrontative reactions dominate by far. About half of harassees respond with a “non-reaction”, and hardly less react with avoidance. A substantial proportion act alone, and only few seek help from others or make formal complaints. Only a slight minority of harassees seeks legal council, which has recently been replicated with a sample of Turkish nurses (Çelik & Çelik, 2007).

One research agenda focuses on systematizing reactions. On a more descriptive level, the EU-study (1995) distinguished non-interventionist reactions (e.g., ignoring), personal reactions without others (e.g., avoidance, physical resistance), informal reactions (e.g, seeking advice with

colleagues), and formal reactions (e.g., filing a complaint). Other systems of responses order reactions on one dimension from highly assertive (e.g., official complaint) to less assertive (e.g., avoidance), or from active (direct confrontation) to passive (ignoring).

However, one dimension seems insufficient to cover the multitude of possible responses. A more complex typology was presented by Gutek and Koss (1993), who ordered responses in quadrants built by the axes indirect-direct and alone-with others (e.g., indirect alone = avoid; direct alone = physical attack). This typology was further developed by differentiating the content of the quadrants, but then reduced in complexity again because the authors introduced the simplifying dimension of effectiveness (Knapp, Faley, Ekeberg & DuBois, 1997).

With a more thorough theoretical grounding in the coping literature (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), Fitzgerald, Swan, and Fischer (1995) conceptualized responses as coping strategies to tackle a stressful life event, and distinguished between internal and external strategies. Those strategies are qualitatively different: Internal coping strategies aim at dealing with emotional responses and cognitions (e.g., reinterpretation, endurance), whereas external coping strategies aim at dealing with the situation itself (e.g., appeasement, active confrontation).

A similar approach was developed using multidimensional scaling (Magley, 2002). Here, an engagement-disengagement dimension and a cognitive-behavioral dimension emerged. Although these dimensions were not independent, actual responses of the victims could be ordered into the model quite consistently: *Endurance* of the situation would fall into the quadrant cognitive-disengagement, *reinterpretation* of the incident would fall into the quadrant cognitive engagement, *avoidance* into behavioral-disengagement, and *seeking organizational support* into behavioral-engagement.

In accord with the widespread belief that assertive, confronting responses are most effective in stopping harassment (see below), researchers long concentrated on the conditions for these reactions. Several studies show that more severe forms of harassment are associated with more active and direct reactions than are less severe forms of harassment (e.g., Cochran et al., 1997; Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Gruber & Smith, 1995; Loy & Stewart, 1994). Evidence to the contrary is more scarce, but in one study, more frequent (frequency being a proxy for severity) harassment was equally associated with active and passive responses (Stockdale, 1998).

Several studies go beyond these direct relationships and look for potential mediators. For gender harassment and seductive behaviors, the likelihood of filing an official complaint increases with perceived increase of offensiveness, and for gender harassment, perceived offensiveness is also positively related to frequency of the behavior, and to feminist attitudes (Brooks & Perot, 1991). Other moderators for filing a complaint are age, with a higher likelihood of filing a complaint for older people, and belief in an effective and fair procedure (Rudman, Borgida, & Robertson, 1995). Feeling upset after experiencing unwanted sexual attention is related to more external reactions, and feeling less upset is related to more internal reactions (Cochran et al., 1997). Furthermore, Cochran and colleagues found higher likelihood for ignoring the situation when the harasser has a higher status than the harassee. Similar results were found by Gruber and Smith (1995), who also replicate the relationship of more severe harassment with more assertive responses, and in addition show that when women are a threatening minority in a given occupation, the likelihood for assertive responses increases. The status effect is in line with other studies

that report associations of lower organizational status, few personal resources, like low self-esteem, low perceived personal control, feeling of being imprisoned in ones job (Gruber & Bjorn, 1986), and self-blame (Jensen & Gutek, 1982) with more indirect, avoiding reactions.

A number of implications can be deduced from the above cited literature. One could argue that assertive responses would be facilitated when individuals recognized, and then acknowledged, that they had been harassed, compared with “just” having an uneasy feeling about the behavior of a co-worker or supervisor. In addition, being aware that one’s organization follows an anti-harassment policy should open an avenue to seeking official help. Gruber and Smith (1995) already showed that when an organization has *no* harassment policy, *non*-assertive responses are more frequent. From the above, it follows that two preconditions for seeking organizational support seem to exist: Harasseees need to be aware that harassment is unacceptable behavior in their organization, and they need to connect their own experience to what they know about harassment. However, in most cases, only the first precondition is met.

That harassment is unacceptable behavior in the workplace has become a matter of public awareness, at least in the US: In the 1995-study of the USMSPB, more than half of supervisors and non-supervisors agreed that sexual joking and conversations in which people talk about sexual issues are inappropriate in the workplace. Considering that these behaviors are usually rated least harassing, the agreement on that matter is remarkable. Furthermore, in the same study, 87 percent of supervisors had received sexual harassment prevention training, and 70 percent reported that the training made them more sensitive about the matter.

Meeting the second precondition is not so easy: There is considerable ambiguity in what people consciously define as harassment and how they label their own experiences. In addition, even more severe types of harassment, which are more consensually identified as harassment than less severe types, are not associated with a higher acknowledgement rate. In a university sample of students, faculty, and staff, those who reported having experienced three types of harassing behaviors varying in severity did not necessarily answer the question “have you ever been harassed?” in the affirmative (Stockdale & Vaux, 1993). Results show that, contrary to expectations, acknowledgement was not higher for the more severe forms of harassment, but for all three behaviors equally likely. Also against assumptions, women were not more likely than men to acknowledge being harassed. A more fine-grained test of five different acknowledgement models was performed with another university sample (Stockdale, Vaux, & Cashin, 1995). Results did not support one of the models clearly, but several single variables were related to acknowledgement. Women were almost four times as likely as men to acknowledge being harassed, which contradicts Stockdale and Vaux’s (1993) earlier finding. Negative affect was one of the strongest predictors of acknowledgment, with more negative affect being related to higher likelihood of self-labelling. Contrary to expectations, more severe experiences were not related to higher likelihood of labeling experiences as harassment. Three attributional variables were significantly associated with acknowledgement, but not necessarily in the predicted direction (e.g., respondents who perceived high consensus, with harassment being common in their work environment, were *more* likely to self-label, not *less*).

Apparently, labeling one’s experience as harassment is not a simple process, as another test of eight different models with a large sample of military personnel underlines (Magley & Shupe,

2005). Again, no model was supported as a whole, but female gender and negative affect were powerful predictors, as well as negative attitudes toward sexual harassment, and sexual harassment knowledge. To a lesser degree, type of experience, frequency of the harassment, and perpetrator power also predicted acknowledgment.

The leitmotiv of research on reactions to harassment is clearly how many harassees respond assertively, and which factors contribute to assertive responses. However, survey data tell us that assertiveness is more likely the exception than the rule. What consequences does this misrepresentation have for those who are harassed and those who are not?

## **7.2 Differences between imagined and actual responses to harassment – problems for people who are harassed**

We have seen that the majority of harassed individuals do – apparently – nothing when harassed. Nevertheless, research has focused on the – less commonly occurring – assertive responses. This is partly due to the fact that many people think assertive responses are most effective in stopping harassment, even though that is not always the case. In surveys, usually a large proportion of respondents reports assertive reaction having improved the situation, whereas also considerable proportions report an aggravation of the situation after assertive responses (e.g., USMSPB 1981, 1988, 1995). Given that the belief that assertive responses are a good thing is so widespread, researchers have tried to find out what makes harassees respond assertively.

There is a considerable difference between actual responses to harassment, and responses that others imagine they would give if in a harassing situation. The latter is a widely used paradigm in harassment research: Participants are presented with a written or videotaped scenario of a harassment case and asked to evaluate behavior, harasser and harassee, and reactions to the harassing behavior as well as to indicate how they imagine to react if in that situation. Whereas the majority of those actually harassed does not show any clearly recognizable response, a large proportion of research participants in scenario studies, or survey respondents, assume they would respond assertively and confrontatively and use official procedures (e.g., Gutek & Koss, 1993; Koss, Goodman, Browne, Fitzgerald, Puryear Keita, & Felipe Russo, 1994).

Beliefs about responses that effectively stop harassment differ between those who have not been harassed and responses actually shown by those who have been harassed: In the 1995-USMSPB study, only 35 percent of harassees told or asked the harasser to stop, but 88 percent of the total sample (people with and without harassment experience) believed harassed people should react that way, and thought this to be an effective counterstrategy.

Experimental studies offer additional evidence for this gap in actual and imagined responses. In a scenario study varying vignettes of quid-pro-quo harassment by a superordinate male harasser toward a subordinate woman, confrontative responses were rated as more appropriate and more effective than passive responses (Sigal, Braden-Maguire, Patt, Goodrich, & Perino, 2003). Furthermore, 81 percent of participants believed that, when in the woman's position, they would file an official complaint with the harasser's supervisor, whereas only 3.2 percent

imagined ignoring the behavior. Therefore, those behaviors shown *most* frequently by harasses were imagined *least* frequently by research participants, and vice versa.

Systematic comparisons between actual and imagined responses to harassment under controlled laboratory conditions are extremely rare. In one of the few attempts (Satterfield & Muehlenhard, 1997), the authors did not explicitly look at harassment, but varied the behavior of a confederate toward a participant as flirtatious versus neutral. In the flirt condition, self-perceived creativity of the participant in a subsequent task was lower than in the neutral condition. In addition, after the interaction, self-perceived creativity ratings were lower than before the interaction. Given that creativity is a demand of many jobs, these results could indicate some impairment due to experiencing behavior that can be seen as inappropriate in the workplace. However, these results are not fully applicable to harassment, because the research focus was different.

A more thoroughly planned study investigated the physiological and psychological impacts of misogynist behavior by a confederate toward the participant (Schneider, Tomaka, & Palacios, 2001). Compared with non-harassed women, harassed women had heightened cardio-vascular reactivity, felt more anger, sadness, and disgust, prospectively found a task that was to be done after the harassment more demanding, and were retrospectively less satisfied with their performance on the task.

The abovementioned studies can be seen as forerunners to more stringent research on how actual and imagined harassment experiences differ. In the published literature, only one study exists, to my knowledge, that directly compares actual and imagined responses to harassment. Woodzicka and LaFrance (2001) invited female students to an apparently real, but in fact staged job-interview for a research-assistant position. The harassing behavior consisted of three critical questions asked by the interviewer, a male confederate (e.g., whether the interviewee had a boyfriend). In the control condition, three nonsexual, but according to a pretest equally surprising questions were asked (e.g., whether the participant had a best friend). Participants' responses in the actual situation were compared with responses that another sample imagined to give when reading a scenario of the actual situation. Participants in the harassing condition showed the well known behavioral pattern: More than half ignored the harassing content of the question, 20 percent signaled to take the question seriously (i.e. they ignored the harassing content), 40 percent mentioned that this question was irrelevant for the interview, and all participants in the harassing condition finally answered all three questions<sup>8</sup>. In the scenario study, participants believed their behavioral options to be much more varied: Sixty-eight percent believed to refuse answering at least one question, only 32 percent believed they would ignore the harassing content of the question, and between 6 and 16 percent believed they would complain at the interviewer's supervisor, leave the interview, or confront the interviewer with his behavior. In addition, participants in the scenario study believed to feel angry, whereas the participants in the harassing conditions reported having felt fear. In another publication based on these data, Woodzicka and LaFrance (2005) investigated the impact of harassment on interview performance, compared with the con-

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<sup>8</sup> Some participants showed more than one of these reactions; therefore, added percentages exceed 100 percent. The same is true for the scenario study, where participants also imagined to showing more than one reaction.

trol condition. In response to several usual questions (i.e., personal strengths with regard to the position offered), the harassed women performed significantly worse with regard to speech fluency, answer quality, and relevance of own questions asked at the end of the interview.

The huge differences between what people think harassed people should do, what they believe they would do if harassed, and actual responses to harassment, can lead to several problems for those harassed (Fitzgerald, Swan, et al., 1995). If the majority of non-harassed people thinks every woman (and man) can and should react assertively, e.g., file a complaint, then harassees who do not respond in that way may be blamed for not attempting to stop the harassment, or not taken seriously (De Judicibus & McCabe, 2001). In addition, when a person becomes victimized, she or he might blame themselves because they did not react in the way they always thought they would. Third, “doing nothing” can be conceptualized as “instigator in kind” in court, that is, lack of open resistance could be interpreted as secretly welcoming the behavior (Fitzgerald, Swan, et al., 1995). For all these reasons, it is absolutely necessary to gather more empirical evidence on actual reactions to harassment and to compare these with reactions that are only imagined. Otherwise, the frequency of assertive responses might be continually overestimated, and psychological research, instead of contributing to amend the situation for those harassed, might even make it worse.

### **7.3 Implications and relevance of actual and imagined reactions to harassment for the studies presented in Part Two**

One central point of four out of the five studies in this dissertation is comparing perceptions of actual versus imagined harassment. Comparisons will take place on several dimensions. Global evaluations and global emotional responses to harassing and non-harassing behavior as well as specific evaluations and emotional responses are focal dimensions of comparison. In addition, imagined behavioral responses are compared with actual behavioral responses. Considering that many people who experience harassing behavior do not label their experiences as sexual harassment, three specific dimensions for behavior evaluations are chosen for all studies: Behaviors are rated on the dimensions *sexually harassing*, *compliment*, and *insult*. The dimension *sexually harassing* is of course crucial for an appropriate investigation of the research topic. However, it can be expected that some, if not many, research participants do not label their experience as harassment. Therefore, the dimension *insult* is added and offers an opportunity to express negative perceptions without having to use the label harassment. Given that part of the chosen harassing behaviors are offering leeway for a more favorable interpretation, as so many actually occurring behaviors do (and given that all behaviors are pretested to be slightly to moderately harassing only), the rating dimension *compliment* is chosen to offer participants an opportunity to express more favorable perceptions. Naturally, favorable perceptions can also be expressed on the dimensions *sexually harassing* and *insult*, and a negative behavior interpretation can also be measured on the dimension *compliment*, depending on the degree of agreement or disagreement with the label. However, positively and negatively labeled rating scales are also suitable from a methodological perspective to avoid acquiescence bias, and because scale labels



can influence participant's hypotheses about the topic under study, varied labels might hamper the process of finding out about the true research question.

## 8. Etiology and instrumental function of harassment

Two broad theoretical perspectives have dominated scientific and lay discussions of harassment since the beginning of harassment research: Socio-structural models, also known as sociocultural (e.g., Samuels, 2004) and evolutionary models, also known as biological (e.g., Studd, 1996). A third school of thought that proposes organizational models of harassment has not been honed to constitute a theory yet. Instead, proponents of an organizational model usually identify a bundle of organizational factors that facilitate or impede sexual harassment. An example is provided by O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998), whose explanatory four-factor model of sexual harassment presented along with a description of organizational models has not received much attention since its publication, however. Tangri, Burt, and Johnson's article (1982) is an early example of comparing the three types of models.

The evolutionary and the socio-structural model both address questions of etiology and instrumental function of harassing behaviors, but from two very different starting points. Socio-structural models suggest that harassment stems from a motive of men (as a group) to dominate women (as a group). Instrumental function is to maintain societal (or personal) male dominance (Brownmiller, 1975) and to protect the male gender identity (Dall'Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass et al., 2003). The main motive proposed in this class of models is power, and sexualized behavior is seen as a means to achieve that goal (Lafontaine & Tredeau, 1986; Samuels, 2004).

Two further models provide a transition between the socio-structural and the evolutionary approach. The Person x Situation interaction model proposes a link between cognitive power-sex associations of the individual and a tendency to abuse a personal power-position over a woman (Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1993). Because the model explicitly links sex with power, it combines elements of the two broad perspectives. Due to the strong emphasis on situational variables, the model is presented in more detail together with the socio-structural approach below. The Person x Situation interaction model focuses on the constellation male harasser-female harassee; it does not explicitly offer explanations for other constellations.

Another model, sex-role spillover theory (Burgess & Borgida, 1997a, 1997b; Gutek & Morasch, 1982), focuses on the intersection of work roles and sex roles. It proposes that harassment is a result of an overlap of work and sex roles, of sex ratios within a given occupation, and within a given organization on the one hand, and of the predominance of the sex roles, especially for women at work, on the other hand. Harassment occurs, accordingly, because men in general treat women in general as women, and not as professional workers. The emphasis on roles inherent in sex-role spillover theory has common roots with socio-structural models of harassment. However, there is some overlap with evolutionary approaches as well, because the authors argue that some of the behaviors that are potentially harassing, are also potentially appropriate if one aims at establishing a (romantic or sexual) relationship with the target of the behavior. Nevertheless, this assumption and its possible roots in evolutionary thinking are not fully explicated by the

authors. Despite the claim that sex-role spillover theory is “perhaps the most influential explanatory framework in social psychology for understanding why [...] sexual harassment occurs” (Burgess & Borgida, 1997a), there are only few publications on the model.

In its pure form, the evolutionary perspective argues that, instead of drawing on power, “sexual harassment is better explained as one outcome of conflicting sexual desires and interests among men and women interacting in the workplace” (Studd, 1996, p. 83), because men’s “normal” dating behavior, when seeping into the workplace, is seen by (some) women as offensive. The main motive proposed in this class of models is sexuality, and power is seen as a means to achieve that goal (Studd & Gattiker, 1991).

Although both the evolutionary and the socio-structural perspective inspire a lot of research, it seems an established fact for proponents on both sides that the other is outdated. This seems to hamper publication of direct comparisons of both perspectives, although a few examples exist. Berdahl (2007) investigates whether harassment is directed at desirable individuals or gender-deviant individuals, and Bourgeois and Perkins (2003), explicitly address and compare both theoretical perspectives, whereas Pryor and Whalen (1997) differentiate motives for different forms of harassment on a theoretical level.

## 8.1 The evolutionary psychological perspective

The evolutionary psychological approach to sexual harassment relies on the assumption that men and women pursue different sexual strategies. According to this perspective, sexual harassment exists because, in the workplace, these strategies clash (although they might coexist peacefully outside the workplace’s specific social norms). Sexual strategies theory (Buss, 1998; Buss & Schmitt, 1993) is based on parental investment theory (Trivers, 1972). The latter is based on the fact that male and female mammals (including humans) bear differential minimal costs (i.e., the minimum of investment that has to be made in order to produce offspring) for reproduction.

During human phylogeny, different adaptive problems had to be solved by men and women in order to satisfy these minimal affordances: Men (and male mammals in general) theoretically have to invest only one-time sexual intercourse in order to reproduce, whereas women (and female mammals in general) bear much greater costs. During pregnancy and breast feeding, nutritional requirements are heightened. Simultaneously, free movement in order to procure food is constrained. Furthermore, giving birth is a highly risky situation in itself, but also because self-defense is virtually impossible during the process. Thus, even the minimal effort to produce offspring is far greater for females than for males. Because humans are a slow-developing species, the costs for bringing up a child to adulthood (or, in evolutionary terms, sexual maturity, which constitutes maximum reproductive success), are higher still: Raising a child means years of continued restriction of free movement, yet food for the dependent child must be obtained, and one-self as well as the child have to be defended against aggressors. Of course, these restrictions were much more important in prehistoric times and are still in pre-industrial societies.

The odds of females to reproduce successfully under these circumstances are substantially increased in the presence of another adult person that can provide food and protection until the offspring is independent. Accordingly, reproductive success increases for those females that identify sexual partners willing and able to stay on after sexual intercourse and invest in common offspring.

However, finding and retaining a mate willing to commit for a longer period of time is only one way to maximize reproductive success for women. Finding a mate with superior genetic equipment might advance reproductive success also, because the offspring profits from the inherited genetic makeup. Likewise, finding a mate able and willing to part with substantial resources quickly also improves chances of reproductive success, even if the man should not stay on long.

Men, on the other hand, maximize reproductive success when they identify and have sexual intercourse with as many sexually available and fertile women as possible. However, there are also tradeoffs for this short-term strategy. Whereas it is probably the most successful in producing a high number of offspring for males, committing oneself for a longer period to one woman and to raising the joint offspring might increase the chance of survival until sexual maturity for that offspring significantly (again, one has to bear in mind that these strategies developed during humankind's phylogeny, under environmental conditions very different from those of today). With the latter, long-term strategy comes the additional problem, for males, to ensure their paternity. A detailed discussion of this problem is beyond the focus of this research; for an overview, see Buss, Larsen, Westen, and Semmelroth (1992).

During phylogeny, those women and men whose genetic makeup was suited to solve these specific problems had more reproductive success and passed on their genes. With this specific genetic material, men today have a stronger tendency to follow a short-term mating strategy. The short-term strategy is marked by a relatively large number of casual relationships, sexual intercourse after short courtship periods, and sex without much emotional attachment. Women today have a stronger tendency to follow a long-term mating strategy marked by relatively few partners in long-term relationships, sexual intercourse after longer courtship periods, and with a lot of emotional attachment (e.g., Buss, 1998; Schmitt, 2005).

According to sexual strategies theory, women have to scrutinize their potential partners in order to ascertain their commitment- and parenting-potential before they enter a sexual relationship, whereas men can just have casual sex. However, "strategy" here does not imply a planned process; on the contrary, many of the processes described might work sub- or unconsciously. Furthermore, gender-specific strategies are generally enforced by social structures which place much more emphasis on a woman's sexual integrity than on the sexual integrity of a man. In more recent publications on sexual strategies theory, the authors tend to concede that both sexes bring the genetic endowment for both strategies, and that the application of one strategy or the other depends on the situational or cultural context (e.g., Schmitt, 2005). Some evidence points to a convergence of women's strategies with men's in more egalitarian societies. This might be due to the fact that in more egalitarian societies, women have a more equal share in personal and political power and do not depend on men's investment that much (Schmitt, 2005).

Some of the proponents of evolutionary psychological models of sexual harassment postulate that sexually harassing behaviors are not meant to harass, but spring from the stronger sex

drive of men, and that “true” harassment is only perpetrated by a small minority of mentally disturbed men (e.g., Tangri et al., 1982; Tangri & Hayes, 1997). Others concede that, despite the fact that men’s strategy is said to be perfectly “normal” behavior for them, women can feel offended by men’s behavior, because the different sexual strategies can be conflicting (Buss, 1998; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Studd & Gattiker, 1991). Still others discuss a possible evolutionary root of gender harassment as well (Browne, 2006).

## **8.2 The socio-structural perspective**

The socio-structural approach to harassment relies on the assumption that men, as the social group that holds most of a given society’s political and economical power, are interested in maintaining their superior position over women. In this perspective, harassment and sexual violence both serve to suppress women (Brownmiller, 1975), and do so beyond the interpersonal level on a societal level also. The discourse about sexual harassment is still inspired by feminist thinking (see, e.g., Samuels, 2004), although the topic, framed as discrimination based on gender, increasingly seeps into societal structures that are not explicitly feminist (e.g., the German AGG, 2006).

Based on the assumption that harassment serves as a means to control women, it is most probable to occur when a man feels threatened by a woman; both in his superior position as a member of the dominant group, and in his male identity. A number of experimental studies, and references to Social Identity Theory, support this hypothesis (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see also Dall’Ara & Maass, 1999; Pryor & Whalen, 1997). Men harass women more often in an intergroup setting (men vs. women), when male identity is threatened, and when a woman indicates egalitarian or feminist attitudes. Moreover, after having harassed a woman, men identify more strongly with the male group (Dall’Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass et al., 2003; Siebler et al., 2008). When the harassment takes on a more hostile, derogating form, attractive women are not more often harassed than unattractive women, as Siebler et al. (2008) could show. This speaks somewhat against a sex-seeking motive. On the other hand, O’Hare and O’Donohue (1998) report a small but significant positive correlation between self-estimated attractiveness and experiences of unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion in women. Underlining power, not sex, to be a main motive for harassment, hostile sexist attitudes toward a subtype of women challenging traditional male dominance (e.g., feminists, career women) also contribute to harassing behaviors (see Glick & Fiske, 1996; Eckes, 2001; Vanselow, Bohner, Becher, & Siebler, 2009). The negative correlation of these hostile sexist attitudes (national means) with achieved gender equality in a given country supports the assumption of close connections between hostility toward women and suppression of women (Glick, Fiske, Mladinic, Saiz, Abrams, Masser, et al., 2000). In addition, non-traditional women that challenge the status quo between the genders (i.e. feminists, egalitarian women) are more likely to be harassed or sexually coerced than more traditional women that comply with the status quo (Dall’Ara & Maass, 1999; Mynatt & Allgeier, 1990; Schneider, 1982; Siebler et al., 2008).

Although the “classical” feminist perspective on harassment argues that sex has nothing to do with it, the Person x Situation interaction model that includes sex is best summarized under socio-structural models. Pryor’s Person x Situation interaction model postulates an interplay between personal and situational factors as source of sexual harassment (Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al. 1995; Pryor et al., 1993). This model assumes a cognitive association of power and sex on the harasser’s side to be a precondition for sexually harassing behaviors (Bargh et al., 1995): When one of the concepts is activated (e.g., by the fact that one has a power-position over a female secretary), the other is automatically also activated (e.g., perceiving the secretary as sexual object). The personal component, the likelihood to sexually harass can be reliably and validly measured by the LSH-Scale (Pryor, 1987), as described above. LSH is connected with other aspects of social cognition: Men with high LSH perceive a higher illusory correlation between dominance- and sexuality-related word-pairs, are more secure regarding their respective judgment (Pryor & Stoller, 1994), find more reasons to justify harassment (Pryor et al., 1995), and react faster to sexuality-related words after subliminal priming with power-related words (Bargh et al., 1995). Zurbriggen (2000) presents self-report data that offer further support for this model: Men with high power motive and strong power-sex association report more use of sexual coercion in the past than men with high power motive, but weak power-sex association. However, the presence of certain situational factors, such as permissive social norms is necessary for harassment to occur, even in men with a high LSH (Pryor, 1987).

### **8.3 Comparison of the socio-structural and the evolutionary psychological perspective**

Taken together, the socio-structural’s power perspective can explain a broader range of harassing behaviors than the evolutionary psychological’s sex perspective – at least when one assumes that the latter perspective postulates a *consensual* sexual contact to be the goal of harassing behaviors. Telling sexist jokes or making derogatory remarks about a target person or her/his gender, which are the most frequent forms of harassment, can hardly be regarded as enticing courtship behavior. However, these types of gender harassment are plausible means to denigrate and suppress women (or men). From a power perspective, even sexual remarks and unwanted sexual attention can serve to suppress women (or men) by reducing them to their sexuality. Openly hostile behaviors are more plausibly explained by a power motive of the initiator and cannot easily be connected to sexual motives (as long as one discounts sadomasochism). However, some suggest that, in men, subordination and exertion of power are part of their evolved sexuality (Thornhill & Thornhill, 1992). Because harassers tend to keep to one type of harassment (gender harassment or unwanted sexual attention), there might actually be different motives at play that comply with a sex or a power perspective. However, if harassers change their behavior, they tend to add the other type of harassment, and do not substitute one for the other. In favor of a power perspective, harassers who engage in gender harassment also tend to engage in other aggressive workplace behavior (Lucero, Allen, & Middleton, 2006).

Both perspectives, however, share the shortcoming that atypical forms of harassment (e.g., same-sex heterosexual harassment, female perpetrator-male victim harassment) cannot be sufficiently explained, although Browne (2006) argues that same-sex gender harassment is a typical competitive behavior with evolutionary roots among men. A viable theory that can explain these forms of harassment is yet to be developed; for a first attempt of developing such a theory aimed at explaining same-sex harassment among men, see Stockdale et al. (1999). Furthermore, the evolutionary and the socio-structural perspective might come to similar hypotheses regarding which perpetrators should be judged more leniently. Because attractiveness can be an indicator of good genetic material (e.g., Gangestad, Thornhill, & Yeo, 1994), and high status and good resources improve a man's ability to protect and provide for wife and offspring, women should be more likely to interpret advances by an attractive, rich man with high status favorably. However, the socio-structural perspective would predict exactly the same: Attractive people are evaluated more positively on numerous dimensions, making them a more desirable partner (the "what is beautiful is good-stereotype", see Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972). Furthermore, as long as women have less economic and political power than men (see the Gender Empowerment Measure, published in the Human Development Report, United Nations, 2007/2008), having a rich partner with high status can be an improvement to women's status and resources as well. Thus, such a man's behavior should be interpreted more benevolently. However, as we will see later, there is a way to disentangle both perspectives, which was successfully applied in Study 3.

## **8.4 Implications and relevance of the two main theoretical approaches to harassment for the studies presented in Part Two**

Two main perspectives on harassment, namely, the socio-structural and the evolutionary psychological approach, have influenced the design of the studies in Part Two in many ways. Propositions of both perspectives are used to model harassers that are either very desirable or rather undesirable as relationship partners. The aforementioned different rating scales for behavior evaluations as *compliment*, *insult*, and *sexually harassing* are used because from different perspectives, different evaluations can be expected. The different types of harassment under study, behaviors that are either derogating or expressing sexual attention, are also used to compare the typical harassment types proposed by both perspectives. In addition, a measure of sociosexuality (the degree to which an individual tends to a short-term or a long-term sexual strategy, Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) is applied in the studies on actual harassment. Given that some harassing behaviors are interpretable as flirtatious, sociosexuality should be related meaningfully to harassment perceptions. Finally, in one study, a direct attempt at disentangling the very similar predictions of both approaches for the perception of harassing behavior is made. Comparing perceptions of the harassment experiences of a target related versus unrelated to the perceiver is a crucial experimental variation that allows for exploring one area where the two perspectives differ in their predictions.

## 9. Perception of harassment: Influence factors

This dissertation started off with the question of what behaviors constitute harassment, and how perceptions of behaviors change with individuals, situations, and harasser characteristics. We have already seen that there is a difference between the number of women who experience harassing behaviors and the number that label themselves as “sexually harassed” (see section 7.1). Which factors contribute to this gap? This research question has been posed since the beginning of harassment research. Several answers have already been provided, although the search for influence factors is far from completed.

In the following section, a number of well-established influence factors are presented that are relevant to my own studies presented later, such as gender and status of harassee and harasser, are presented<sup>9</sup>. One clarification has to be made beforehand. The differences between reactions of actual targets of harassing behavior and people that only imagine themselves to be the target, or read a scenario depicting someone’s experience, have already been discussed (see section 7.2). There is a similar difference between actual perpetrators and those who only imagine perpetrating harassment, or read a scenario depicting a harasser’s actions. In the following section, these differences will be pointed out during presentation of research findings.

### 9.1 Gender

Similarities and differences in harassment perceptions between women and men have long been the focus of research. Among other reasons, the question of whether men (as the larger perpetrator group) perceive harassment in a systematically different way than do women (as the larger victim group), is legally relevant. Because of scientific evidence, the *reasonable person standard* applied in the first cases of harassment taken to court has been altered to a *reasonable woman standard*. If judges could assume that a reasonable woman perceived the same behavior under similar circumstances as sexual harassment, then it was accepted as sexual harassment in court. The evidence leading to that change in legal procedure had amassed over a considerable period of time. In all three USMSPB studies (1981, 1988, 1995), about 10 percent more women than men defined behaviors as sexual harassment (on average, 84 percent of women and 74 percent of men). Despite a slight increase in harassment definitions over the three studies for both genders, this gender gap remained stable.

Two large meta-analyses were conducted with different research agendas. In an analysis on potential moderator variables of the gender effect (Blumenthal, 1998), a small effect for gender was found: Women were more likely to define behaviors as sexual harassment than were men

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<sup>9</sup> One factor that has been discussed in the literature is left out: Prior experiences of harassment or other forms of sexual violence and discrimination have too little relevance for my own studies, and the space of this dissertation is too limited, to include this factor.

(unweighted mean  $r = .17$ ). None of the potential moderators could be confirmed (e.g., sample characteristics like status as students, workers or scientific staff, or year of publication of the original study). A larger primary effect for perpetrator status will be discussed below.

Given that the effect size found by Blumenthal (1998) was only small, a second meta-analysis focused on type of behavior as a potential moderator of the gender effect (Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001). Earlier research had already provided evidence that the gender gap was greater for more subtle behaviors (e.g., Frazier, Cochran, & Olson, 1995; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). Rotundo and colleagues (2001) ordered the behaviors into seven categories: Derogatory behaviors (personal or impersonal; this category resembles gender harassment); unwanted pressure for dates, sexual propositions, physical sexual contact, physical nonsexual contact, and sexual coercion. These categories were further subsumed under the legally relevant categories QPQ (sexual coercion) and HWE (the other behaviors). Over all seven behaviors, Rotundo et al. (2001) found a small effect similar to Blumenthal's (1998;  $d = 0.30$ ). However, separate meta-analyses showed that the gender effect was significantly larger for HWE behaviors ( $d = 0.33$ ) than for the QPQ behavior ( $d = 0.18$ ). Furthermore, in separate meta-analyses within the seven categories, this reduction of effect size for more extreme behaviors was found again.

Overall, there seems to be a sizeable gender difference in perception of potentially harassing behaviors which is greater the more ambiguous the behavior. However, an important qualification has to be made: The meta-analyses described above relied heavily on scenario studies, where research participants judged vignettes depicting harassing interactions, and on reports of non-victims who judged behaviors from a checklist. Whether the results presented above can be generalized to actual experiences of harassment remains an open question.

Another open question regards the perception of harassment types that might be specific for men. Only since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, harassment experiences of men have been systematically investigated. One focal point of studies is the cause of low prevalence rates for men. One possible explanation leads back to perceptions of harassment. Even if they experience the same behaviors as frequently as women, men might not perceive those behaviors as harassing. Accordingly, they should report harassment less frequently than women. Naturally, this effect should be more pronounced for studies using the direct query "have you ever been (sexually) harassed", and not for studies using behavior checklists.

Results of several studies support the assumption that men find some behaviors not harassing. In a study asking university staff and faculty to describe the most vivid incident of unwanted sexual attention by another university member, 16 percent of the sample provided such a description (Bingham & Scherer, 1993). Of the women, 72 percent defined that incident as sexual harassment. A markedly smaller proportion of men did the same: Sixty-two percent defined the critical incident as sexual harassment. In a study focusing on male university employees, 60 percent of respondents had experienced at least one form of harassment from a checklist during the last two years (Gerrity, 2000). Only five percent answered the direct question whether they were ever sexually harassed in the affirmative. In line with the psychological definition of harassment, Berdahl (2007) differentiated between simply *experiencing* a given behavior and experiencing it as *negative*. Only those behaviors experienced as negative were counted as harassment. The author does not provide gender differentiated percentages of behaviors experienced (65 percent of



the total sample, which included 44 percent men), but she states that more men than women reported experiencing at least one behavior at least once in the preceding 24 months. However, when including only those behaviors that were experienced *negatively* by respondents, prevalence rates for men were lower than for women (53 percent vs. 76 percent), although both prevalence rates are among the highest in the literature. On average, however, men reported to experience potentially harassing behaviors as subjectively positive, whereas women reported to experience potentially harassing behaviors as subjectively negative. Taken together, men seem to experience potentially harassing behaviors with – on average – similar frequency as do women, but seem to evaluate them differently.

Another question surrounding male as well as female harassment is still unanswered: How do men perceive those forms of harassment typically directed at women, when they experience them? Previous retrospective surveys and scenario studies with male respondents only provide the same, comparatively limited, insight as previous research on women's experiences. In addition, for male respondents, even those retrospective surveys and scenario studies are scarce. Therefore, experimental studies of perceptions of moderate forms of actual potentially harassing behaviors under controlled laboratory conditions are necessary, both for the atypical constellation female harasser-male harassee and for the typical constellation male harasser-female harassee.

Not only do men and women tend to define harassment differently. In addition, gender of both harasser and harassee in a scenario influences the perceptions of these scenarios. As LaRocca and Kromrey (1999) could show with an experimental scenario study, both men and women judged a scenario depicting opposite-sex sexual harassment to be less harassing when the perpetrator was a woman, compared to the same scenario when the perpetrator was a man. In another scenario study (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1993), gender constellation was varied to be either same or opposite-sex, with the participant as the reference group, and type of harassment was varied as either gentle or forceful genital touch. Female participants imagined negative effects, if in the harassee's position, for both male and female harassers and for all coercion levels. Male participants imagined almost no negative effects for a female harasser, but strong negative effects for a male harasser, both regardless of coercion level. In yet another scenario study (Madera, Podratz, King, & Hebl, 2007), female complainants of sexual harassment were believed more that their account of the incident was true, compared with male complainants. Furthermore, male harassers' accounts of the incident (which was depicted as alleviating harasser responsibility) were believed less than female harassers' accounts of the incident, male harassers were liked less than female harassers, and for male harassers, recommended punishment was more severe than for female harassers. Another finding of a scenario study is higher penalties for male than for female harassers, for both male and female participants (Cummings & Armenta, 2002).

### 9.1.1 Implications and relevance of gender for the studies presented in Part Two

As the previous account has shown, research on gender effects for the perception of harassment has focused heavily on scenario studies. Again, almost nothing is known about how women perceive actual harassment, and no studies (to my knowledge) exist in the published literature investigating men's perceptions of actual harassment. Therefore, these topics are one focus of the studies presented in Part Two.

## 9.2 Attitudes

Do attitudes like sexism, feminism, gender role identity or specific attitudes toward harassment influence perceptions of potentially harassing behaviors? This question has long been a focus of harassment research (e.g., Mazer & Percival, 1989a; Powell, 1986). At first, this research was conducted because some defense counsels attempted to discredit plaintiffs by asking them for feminist attitudes. In essence, the argument is that of feminist "men haters" seeing harassment everywhere, even in the most innocent behavior. Reversing that argument, more traditional women should perceive identical behaviors as less harassing. Part of a traditional gender ideology is a potentially problematic sexual double standard (Muehlenhard & McCoy, 1991): Men are expected to be sexually daring whereas women are expected to be sexually shy. Previous works (Gender Schema Theory, Bem, 1981, and Powell & Butterfield, 1979) suggest that traditional sex-typing (i.e., feminine-typed women and masculine-typed men as measured with the Bem Sex Role Inventory, Bem, 1974) includes viewing men's sexual boldness and women's sexual shyness as the norm. Therefore, traditional women should be more likely to view sexual advances as the norm rather than a transgression. In a test of this reversed prediction, Powell (1986) conducted a study on subjective harassment definitions in relation to the gender schema. However, predictions were only partly supported: Besides a main effect for biological sex, masculine-typed men were less likely to define a given behavior as sexual harassment, whereas both feminine-typed women and men and masculine-typed women were more likely to define a given behavior as sexual harassment.

To test the original prediction of more perceived own harassment experience with more feminist attitudes, Mazer and Percival (1989b) conducted an early scenario study combined with a retrospective survey, which were replicated 16 years later (Saperstein, Triolo, & Heinzen, 1995). In both the original study and the replication, the assumption that feminists reported more previous experience was not supported. In addition to own experience, the authors asked male and female students, e.g., whether they defined the scenario incidents as sexual harassment and how common they thought these behaviors were at the university. In addition, two measures of gender role traditionality and tolerance toward sexual harassment were administered in the original study. The only relationship was between own previous experience and commonness perceptions: Those with more experiences of sexual harassment perceived it as more common than those with less experiences of sexual harassment. Neither of the attitudes had a significant rela-

tion to own experience. However, in the original study, the more traditional the gender role orientation of a participant, the more tolerant they were toward sexual harassment in the scenario. Furthermore, traditionality and tolerance toward harassment were negatively correlated with seriousness perceptions and definition of the incidents as sexual harassment. Unlike data from the majority of other studies on perception, Mazer and Percival (1989b) did not find a gender effect for seriousness perception, but Saperstein et al. (1995) did, and the well-known gender effect was present in both studies for definitions: Women defined more behaviors as sexual harassment than men. In a related vein, in an undergraduate sample, students with high self-esteem and traditional gender role attitudes were most tolerant of harassment and expected least negative consequences for a female harassee (Malovich & Stake, 1990).

These works are early examples for research focusing on the influence of gender-related attitudes on harassment perceptions. Recently, measures of sexist attitudes are often applied as proxies for measures of gender role orientation (e.g., Herzog, 2007; del Prado Silvàn-Ferrero & Bustillos López, 2007). In a study applying the Old Fashioned Sexim Scale (Swim & Cohen, 1997), Herzog (2007) found biological sex and traditional gender role orientation to be strongly related to severity ratings and proposed punishment for harassment: Men and those with traditional gender role orientation perceived less severe harassment and proposed less severe punishment.

A measure dominating this line of research is the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI, Glick & Fiske, 1996). The authors explicate how unequal power distribution and interdependence between men and women have given rise to ambivalent attitudes toward women and men. Subjectively positive and openly hostile subcomponents are part of both ambivalent attitudes toward men and women, but the scale measuring attitudes toward women, the ASI, was much more widely used than its complement, the Ambivalence Toward Men scale (AMI, Glick & Fiske, 1999). With its benevolent sexism subscales, ASI and AMI are innovative (Masser & Abrams, 1999), compared with previous measures of sexism that measured only hostile attitudes (e.g., Campbell, Schellenberg, & Senn, 1997; Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995; Swim & Cohen, 1997; Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Joly, 1995). The subjectively benevolent and openly hostile attitudes toward the other sex constitute a set of complementary, system stabilizing and system justifying attitudes (Jost & Banaji, 1994): Women who restrict themselves to traditionally female domains are rewarded, whereas those who leave these domains and challenge male dominance are punished (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997).

Several studies have established a relationship between ambivalent sexism and sexual violence as well as several aspects of harassment. Possible negative effects of hostile sexism are obvious, but subjectively benevolent attitudes can also have detrimental effects, especially on women who behave contrary to traditional gender role prescriptions. Highly benevolently sexist people assign more responsibility to a victim of acquaintance rape when she is presented as adulterous wife (Viki & Abrams, 2002). Similarly, people high in benevolent and hostile sexism perceive women differently: Benevolence, but not hostility, is a good predictor for victim blame in acquaintance rape, but not stranger rape, whereas hostility, but not benevolence, is a good predictor for rape proclivity in acquaintance rape (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003). Fur-

thermore, perceiving the women in the scenarios as violating traditional gender roles or seductress eager for sex mediated the effects of benevolence and hostility on the dependent variables.

Besides these studies on rape, a number of studies have used the ASI (but not the AMI) to explore its relationship with various aspects of harassment. Testing a model to predict LSH from authoritarianism, with hostility, benevolence, and rape myth acceptance as mediators, Begany and Milburn (2002) confirmed hostility and rape myth acceptance as mediators, but not benevolence. This is in line with the theoretical assumption that hostility, but not benevolence, sanctions negatively. Likewise, individual differences in harassment evaluations can be traced back to hostility, but not benevolence (O'Connor, Gutek, Stockdale, Geer, & Melançon, 2004). Tolerance toward harassment is also significantly predicted by ambivalence and hostility, but not benevolence (Russel & Trigg, 2004). For women, but not for men, two further studies have shown that high hostility, but not benevolence, is related to finding less evidence for sexual harassment in case scenarios (Wiener, Hurt, Russel, Mannen, & Gasper, 1997; Wiener & Hurt, 2000).

Overall, the reported evidence on the role of attitudes for several aspects of harassment rather supports the socio-structural account of harassment. If harassment was purely well-meant by male harassers, and recognized as such by the male participants in the abovementioned studies, hostility toward women should not be positively related to more tolerance toward sexual harassment, to finding less evidence for sexual harassment, and to likelihood to sexually harass.

### **9.2.1 Implications and relevance of attitudes for the studies presented in Part Two**

In order to control for the influence of sexist attitudes and gender role orientation on perceptions of harassment, the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), AMI (Glick & Fiske, 1999) and a measure of normative gender role orientation (Athenstaedt, 2000) were included in the studies of actual harassment. To date, there are (to my knowledge) no published studies on actual harassment that include such measures. Therefore, it is unknown whether the well established attitude and gender role effects from scenario studies can be replicated in studies of actual harassment.

## **9.3 Attractiveness**

A well-known phenomenon is that attractive individuals are judged more favorably on a number of socially relevant dimensions than unattractive people. This has become known as the "what is beautiful is good"-stereotype (Dion et al., 1972, see also Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991). In a meta-analysis on the effects of attractiveness and other factors (e.g., socioeconomic status) in mock juries dealing with a variety of criminal offences, high physical attractiveness yielded less inferred guilt and less recommended punishment (Mazzella & Feingold, 1994).

A number of scenario studies and mock jury studies on the influence of harasser physical attractiveness have been conducted, but to my knowledge, no study on actual harassment exist

that varies harasser attractiveness. Because even scenario studies are comparatively scarce, studies on the role of perpetrator attractiveness in rape cases are also included in the following account.

In general, it has been found that more attractive defendants are judged more leniently, both with regard to sexual harassment and with regard to rape. Attractive (versus unattractive) defendants are seen as behaving in a less harassing way (e.g., Cartar, Hicks, & Slane, 1996; Golden, Johnson, & Lopez, 2001, LaRocca & Kromrey, 1999), and attractive (versus unattractive) defendants in simulated rape trials are perceived as less likely to engage in future antisocial behavior (Gerdes, Dammann, & Heilig, 1988), are less likely to be found guilty, and are sentenced to shorter prison terms (e.g., Jacobson, 1981) or less harsh sentences in general (Erian, Lin, Patel, Neal, & Geiselman, 1998). Also, the gender effect found by Madera et al. (2007), with more sympathy for female (compared with male) complainants of sexual harassment, was more pronounced for attractive complainants. In the same line, Castellow, Wuensch and Moore (1990) varied attractiveness of both the male defendant and the female plaintiff in a sexual harassment trial-scenario with a mock jury. Attractive plaintiffs were found creditable with higher likelihood than were unattractive plaintiffs, particularly so when the defendant was unattractive. With an unattractive complainant and an attractive defendant, however, participants were less likely to give a guilty verdict – apparently, being unattractive reduced chances of success for plaintiffs, and being attractive ameliorated chances of success for defendants. Popovich, Gehlauf, Jolton, Everton, Godinho, Mastrangelo, et al. (1996) varied both male harasser and female target attractiveness in a scenario study and found that less severe ratings for sexual harassment were given if both were attractive than if both were unattractive or only one party was attractive. Also, male participants were more likely to assign responsibility to the target when the harasser was attractive, whereas female participants assigned less responsibility to the target when the harasser was attractive. Focusing on men's reaction to scenarios depicting sexual advances by women differing in attractiveness, Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1994, 1997) found that men rated advances of a woman described as attractive as more acceptable, and imagined to experience more positive (or less negative) outcomes, compared with advances made by a woman described as unattractive.

### **9.3.1 Implications and relevance of attractiveness for the studies presented in Part Two**

All told, being attractive seems to be an advantage for perpetrators of sexual harassment, whereas attractiveness of victims yields differing effects. However, even for the consistent positive attractiveness bias for harassers, a number of questions arise. First and foremost, the studies cited are all scenario-based. Therefore, no conclusions can be drawn as to whether the attractiveness effect that apparently exonerates harassers generalizes to actual harassment. Second, with regard to harassment etiology, more lenient judgments of attractive harassers can be taken as support for both the evolutionary psychological explanation of sexual harassment and the socio-structural explanation of gender and sexual harassment, as outlined above. Because attractiveness is an indicator of good genetic material as well as contributing to higher social status, from

both perspectives, advances by an attractive man should be judged more benevolently by women. Finally, to date no study has been published that examines whether men's actual harassment experiences are influenced by the attractiveness of a female harasser. All of these questions will be dealt with in the studies presented in Part Two.

## 9.4 Status

Status is a manifold construct. It can refer to a given individual's position in a specific hierarchy, e.g., middle manager versus CEO in a firm. It can also refer to the position of a whole social group in a given society, e.g., Caucasian Americans having higher status, overall, than African Americans. Furthermore, status can be defined by a number of characteristics: It can be inferred from the social role someone occupies (e.g., supervisor versus subordinate, or mother versus child), by one's occupation (e.g., medical doctor versus welder), or by someone's monthly earnings. Moreover, status can be inferred from or assigned to physical features (e.g., being tall versus being small) or personality traits (e.g., dominance versus anxiousness). Inherent to status, and sometimes used synonymously with the concept, is power. Power is in itself a manifold construct and can refer to the influence one wields by means of social prestige, to earning power, or to power over others. Unfortunately, many researchers on status effects on perceptions of harassment do not clearly state what kind of status they refer to.

High *socioeconomic* status can be advantageous for defendants in mock juries, as a meta-analysis has established (Mazzella & Feingold, 1994). Outside courtrooms also, poor individuals are generally rated less favorably than those who are well off (Lott, 2002). With regard to harassment research, status and power are often confounded: Any manager has higher organizational status than any secretary and probably earns more, but only the immediate supervisor of a secretary has power *over* her or him. When using status as a feature in harassment scenarios, it is therefore important to disentangle status and power. Arguably, being harassed by any manager might be not as upsetting for a secretary as being harassed by one's own supervisor, who can influence one's future career. However, in much of the literature, it is not clarified whether status or power, or which aspect of the two, is addressed.

The two broad perspectives on harassment, namely, the evolutionary perspective and the socio-structural perspective, emphasize different aspects of status and power. The socio-structural approach to harassment focuses on the power aspect of status. Central concept with regard to harassment, according to the socio-structural perspective, is men's use of sexual violence and discrimination to maintain power over women. From a socio-structural point of view, it is inherent to men's (as a group) higher status in any society, compared with women's (as a group), that men in general have more power than women. This relative power-differential is also reflected in many organizational relationships between men and women on an absolute level: An individual man can hold a higher position in an organization than an individual woman. According to a socio-structural perspective, an important feature of a given harassment situation is the existence or absence of a power differential between harasser and harassee. Existence of a

power differential should lead to more severe harassment perceptions, compared with situations where a power differential is absent.

The evolutionary approach to harassment, on the other hand, focuses on the resource aspect of status. This emphasis stems from the concept of harassment as having to do with sex, rather than with power. The higher the status of a man, the more material or immaterial resources he commands (e.g., money, respect of others, social prestige). In line with sexual strategies theory outlined above, men with high status are therefore desirable long term mates for women. It follows that sexual advances made by a man of high status should be perceived as more favorably.

However, to complicate matters, from a socio-structural perspective as well, in the absence of a power differential, a male harasser with good resources should also be perceived more favorably, because having a relationship with high status men can be a means for women to attain high status by association. However, this hypothesis is qualified by certain conditions. Evidence for both perspectives is presented below.

#### **9.4.1 Status from a power perspective**

A number of studies have ascertained that status of a harasser is important to interpretations of a given behavior as harassing or benign. In the USMSPB studies (1981, 1988, 1995), respondents were not only asked whether they defined several behaviors on a list as sexual harassment, but were asked to give their judgments separately for supervisors and for colleagues. Over all studies and all behaviors, and for both genders, 10 percent more respondents defined behaviors as sexual harassment when the behaviors were presented as shown by a supervisor than when the behaviors were presented as shown by a colleague.

In the study on self-labeling presented before (Magley & Shupe, 2005), harassees were more likely to label their experience as sexual harassment when the perpetrator had power over them. Likewise, in their meta-analysis on gender differences in perception of harassing behaviors, Rotundo et al (2001) included existence or absence of a power-differential between perpetrator and victim as a potential moderator. On a descriptive level, men and women showed more convergent perceptions of harassment in the presence of a power differential, and more divergent perceptions of harassment in the absence of a power differential, although this difference was not significant. The earlier meta-analysis by Blumenthal (1998), on the other hand, has found a small-to-medium effect of harasser power over the harassee (average  $r = .31$ ). Studying lay definitions of sexual harassment, students, faculty, and staff of a university were more likely to perceive behavior displayed by people of higher status or greater authority as sexual harassment (Frazier et al., 1995). However, this did only explain three percent of the variance in how upset their sample reported to be about the behavior. Similarly, Cochran et al. (1997) found that harassment by someone with authority over the victim was perceived as more distressing. From a power perspective, therefore, behavior by an individual with power over the target of the behavior, is more likely to be perceived unfavorably, that is, as harassing.

### 9.4.2 Status from a sexuality perspective

Despite the research presented in the previous section, from a sexuality perspective, the higher the status of a harasser is, the more welcome should the behavior be – with the qualification, one might add, that the behavior is not threatening, but allows some leeway to interpret it in a more favorable light. As high economic status is one of the features that contribute to higher ability (albeit not necessarily willingness) to invest in offspring, women should tend to evaluate the harassing behavior of a rich man or a man in a high status occupation with more benevolence than the behavior of a poor man or a man in a low status occupation. If interpretable as expression of sexual interest, an advance by the former should increase one's own chances of reproduction more than an advance by the latter, which is discussed elsewhere (see Buss, 1994; 1999; Littler-Bishop, Seidler-Feller, & Oplach, 1982; Sadalla, Kenrick, & Vershure, 1987).

Black and Gold (2003) tested this assumption in a scenario study in which they varied harasser status by describing his clothing as shabby (vs. expensive) and car owned as old (vs. new) as well as level of coercion (forceful with threat or without force and without threat). Overall, advances by apparently wealthy individuals were perceived as more acceptable than advances by apparently poor individuals. However, when the level of coercion was high, the status effect disappeared and the behavior was perceived as not acceptable.

In a rare attempt to compare the evolutionary and the socio-structural perspective on sexual harassment, Bourgeois and Perkins (2003) found support for the socio-structural perspective. In three experimental scenario studies, the authors varied power differential between harasser and participant (equal power, higher power and lower power) and harasser status (via employment position) simultaneously (experiment 1 and 2) and separately (experiment 3). Both male and female participants imagined to be more upset by harassers with higher power and status, compared with equal or lower power and status (experiments 1 and 2), with women generally imagining being more upset than men (on a descriptive level in experiment 1, significantly so in experiment 2 and 3). Furthermore, women imagined to be most upset by a higher status harasser when he had power over them, but this high status effect disappeared when there was no power differential (experiment 3). These mixed results are comparable to those from an earlier study on men's dating desirability in which participants were asked to judge vignettes describing a man high versus low in dominance (Sadalla et al., 1987). Despite the fact that a man high in dominance received lower warmth, likability, and tenderness ratings, which point to less willingness to invest in children, he was also rated high on dating desirability and sexual attractiveness. However, these two differing associations with high dominance need not necessarily contradict each other when a man's total mate value is concerned. Interpreting the results of Sadalla et al. (1987), Ellis points out that a woman “may want a man who is dominant (and therefore less “warm, likable, and tender”) when he is in competition *with other men*, but who is warm, likable, and tender *toward her* (Ellis, 1992), p. 277, italics added).



### **9.4.3 Influence of status: Summary**

All in all, the two broad perspectives on harassment – namely, the evolutionary psychological and the socio-structural approach – use the concept of status differently, although this is often not made explicit. As long as a power differential is involved, they also make different predictions about the role of harasser status for the perception of his (or her) behavior: From an evolutionary perspective, harasser status should lead to more favorable behavior interpretations, given that the behavior poses no threat, and regardless of a power differential. From a socio-structural perspective, whereas high status should also be connected to more favorable behavior interpretations, this effect should disappear when a power differential is present. In the absence of a power differential, predictions of both perspectives are hard to disentangle.

Status can be, and has been, operationalized in many ways beside in the rather narrow sense of occupying a certain stratum in a given society. Among these operationalizations are those of having power over others and having a large amount of resources at one's own disposal. Proponents of both the evolutionary and the socio-structural perspective have used several of these operationalizations. For both perspectives, there is evidentiary support, but for the socio-structural perspective, it seems there is, numerically speaking, more evidence. This might have something to do with a tendency for harassment researchers to come from the socio-structural school of thinking. However, for the role of status and its different aspects, again, these data come mostly from scenario studies, and not from studies of actual harassment under controlled laboratory conditions. Therefore, any transfer of these studies to actual harassment cases can only be attempted very cautiously.

### **9.4.4 Implications and relevance of status for the studies presented in Part Two**

In the studies on actual harassment as well as the scenario studies in Part Two, the absolute power distribution between harasser and research participants is aimed to be equal. This is partly due to the fact that a power differential could increase stress for participants, which I wanted to limit as much as possible. In addition, the typical harassment case as reported in retrospective studies does not involve a power differential, because colleagues of the same hierarchical level as the harassee are most often the harassers. In order to increase external validity, this most typical absolute power relation, equal power, was chosen for my own studies. However, the resource aspect of harasser status is one central part of experimental variations in the studies on actual harassment and one study with a scenario. Financial prospects and current availability of financial resources of the male harassers is varied. Despite attempts at establishing an equal absolute power distribution in my studies, the relative power distribution between men and women on a societal level naturally remains unchanged.

## 9.5 Summary of influence factors and outlook on Part Two

Which behaviors are considered to be harassment, how much so, when, and by whom? These questions have received much attention by researchers, because they are relevant for numerous domains and different people. A person who is harassed might ask her- or himself whether it is only they who are so oversensitive, and would everybody else just not mind? Employers might consider passing guidelines on acceptable workplace behavior and wonder which behaviors to include? Would a claim for redress be more promising if the offending behavior included force, or no physical contact?

As we have seen, three decades of research have begun to answer some of these questions. The most notable parameter that influences harassment perception, both for harassees and bystanders (or research participants), is gender. Especially being a woman who is harassed, but also the constellation of female harassee and male harasser contribute to greater likelihood of defining an incident as harassment. This parameter is followed closely by the behavior itself – those that are considered more severe, are also more likely to be considered as harassment. High status of the perpetrator, and presence of a power differential between harasser and harassee, is related to perceptions of more severe harassment, although with status, a number of qualifications exist.

A research gap that has just begun to be bridged is the question whether real and imagined harassment experiences are the same. The overwhelming majority of studies on any aspect of harassment perception has applied scenario studies or relied on retrospective reports of actually harassed people. Another question that has just recently received some attention is whether harassment experiences of men can be compared with harassment experiences of women. Researchers know a lot about how women experience and interpret harassment (albeit mostly by reading vignettes of incidences), but much less is known about how men think and behave in these situations. Both questions are crucial, however, when it comes to prevention programs. If we continue to rely heavily on scenario studies and retrospective reports, we cannot develop measures to help harassees counter harassment the moment it occurs.

Sexual harassment and gender harassment are multi-faceted phenomena that pervade the lives of many women and a lot of men. Harassment takes on multiple forms, is probably encountered worldwide, and its ill effects can have lifelong duration. What exactly constitutes harassment is shaped as much by current law, perspective of the definition, and historical context, as it is by individuals. However, a considerable knowledge base has already been established, to which the studies in the empirical part of this dissertation aim to contribute.

In Study 1, female participants are allegedly connected online with a man under the cover story of testing a new online dating agency for students. During a chat phase, the man sends either harassing or neutral jokes or remarks to the female participant. The man's mate value, that is his physical attractiveness and quality of financial prospects, are varied together in order to create a very desirable versus a rather undesirable chat partner. During and after the chat phase, participants evaluate the man and his behavior.

Study 2 is a replication in parts of Study 1 and focuses on imagined behavioral responses. Most of the dependent variables from Study 1 are measured and compared with results from Study 1, and data on further imagined behavioral reactions varying in assertiveness are collected.

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Comparing predictions by the evolutionary psychological and the socio-structural approach to harassment is the focus of Study 3. Again varying harasser attractiveness and financial resources, this time separately and in a scenario study, a crucial condition to disentangle predictions by the two approaches is added. Based on the notion of inclusive fitness (Hamilton, 1964), behavior interpretations should differ depending on degree of relationship of the perceiver to the target of harassment. From an evolutionary psychological perspective, ambiguously harassing behavior of an attractive man with good resources should be interpreted more favorably when it is directed at a female target that is genetically related to the participant who perceives the scenario, compared with a female target that is genetically unrelated to the perceiver. From a socio-structural perspective, genetic relation should not matter. In Study 3, degree of relationship is operationalized by varying the (imagined) relationship between the target and the participant: Targets are presented as sister, close female friend, and female stranger.

Studies 4 and 5 focus on men's perceptions of harassment. Study 4 closely resembles Study 1 with regard to method and stimulus material, but the chat partner is female. In addition, because for (heterosexual) men, a potential partner's status and resources are less important than her looks, only physical attractiveness of the chat partner is varied.

In Study 5, a more detailed rating of imagined emotions is added than was the case in Study 2. Otherwise, the studies are again very similar in that male participants are asked to imagine their responses in a scenario of Study 5. Together, the five studies offer new insights into the phenomena of sexual and gender harassment.



## PART TWO

# FIVE EXPERIMENTS: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER HARASSMENT EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN AND MEN

One major shortcoming of virtually all experimental studies on harassment is the use of scenarios and asking participants to imagine being in the depicted situation, instead of studying actual harassment. As Woodzicka and LaFrance (2001, 2005) clearly showed, and as can be deduced from the USMSPB study that included questions about appropriate reactions (USMSPB, 1995), responses of those actually experiencing and those only imagining harassing behaviors differ considerably. The overuse of scenario studies does not only lead to inaccurate data when *actual* harassment is of interest; it can also lead to detrimental consequences for victims of harassment. When research contributes to, emphasizes, or even establishes in the first place, that every victim can and should behave assertively when harassed, then actual victims might continue to blame themselves when they belong to the majority that does not react visibly.

Naturally, one reason for the lack of studies on actual experiences under controlled laboratory conditions is that exposing participants to – even mildly – harassing behaviors can put them under stress. Therefore, a cautious consideration of the ethical feasibility is absolutely necessary before attempting such a study. If such studies are conducted, every precaution has to be taken in order to minimize stress for participants.

In two of the five studies presented here, I investigate actual harassment (vs. non-harassing behavior): one with female participants receiving mildly harassing (vs. non-harassing) jokes and remarks, and one with male participants receiving mildly harassing (vs. non-harassing) jokes and remarks. Both studies contribute significantly to the knowledge about actual harassment experiences: Study 1 is, to my knowledge, only the second study ever to have been conducted on actual harassment experiences by women. The first study was conducted by Woodzicka and LaFrance (2001, 2005). Study 4, also of actual harassment, is pioneering, because, also to my best knowledge, it is the very first ever conducted on actual harassment experiences of men. However, this significant contribution might have been bought too dearly if participants were put under considerable stress. Therefore, I conducted a study with proxy participants before the first study and incorporated changes suggested by these participants. In the absence of an ethics committee at the University of Bielefeld, where the studies for this dissertation were conducted, this is an alternative to ensure ethical treatment of participants. An extensive informed consent-procedure preceded all five studies. In the respective consent forms, it was expressly stated that some of the material presented could be perceived as unpleasant by some people. Participants were ensured that they could end the study at any time they wanted without negative consequences.



## 10. Study 1

### 10.1 Introduction

How do women perceive actual harassment, depending on the harassers' physical attractiveness and financial prospects? In Study 1, I addressed three questions: First, do a perpetrator's high physical attractiveness and good financial prospects change the perception of actual behaviors from being harassing to being flattering? Second, are different types of behavior, namely, misogynist jokes and remarks expressing sexual interest, perceived differently? Finally, do harasser attractiveness and quality of financial prospects moderate effects of type of behavior, and vice versa?

Henceforth, I will refer to the two combined features attractiveness and financial prospects as *mate value*. The adoption of this evolutionary psychological term, however, does not imply that I hold the evolutionary psychological approach to harassment to be more appropriate than the socio-structural approach.

As we have already seen, high physical attractiveness of a male harasser leads research participants in scenario studies to perceive his behavior as less offending. High status of a harasser, on the other hand, has produced mixed effects. In the absence of a power differential between harasser and harassee, high status usually leads to similar effects as high physical attractiveness: Research participants tend to perceive the behavior of a high status individual as more benign than the behavior of a low status individual. However, when a male harasser has more power than his target, and especially when he has power *over* the target, or when he uses force in his advances, research participants in scenario studies as well as survey respondents tend to perceive more evidence for harassment. Although status can be defined on multiple dimensions, one good proxy is quality of financial resources, or the prospect of these. I will get to this point in more detail below.

The two broad perspectives on harassment, the evolutionary psychological as well as the socio-structural approach, make similar predictions when it comes to harasser attractiveness and quality of resources. From an evolutionary psychological point of view, high status is an indicator of good personal resources. These include social resources (e.g., leadership position) and, today, financial resources or good financial prospects<sup>10</sup>. Certain personality traits, like industriousness and ambition, are crucial factors in determining a man's financial prospect, and these traits have been shown to be valued by women in a potential partner (e.g., Buss et al., 1990). Thus, a man has higher mate value when his status and quality of resources are high. This is es-

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<sup>10</sup> In the pleistocene, where, according to evolutionary psychology, humankind's psychological makeup developed due to evolutionary pressures, high status in a group might have resulted from superior physical power. This could result both in more nutritional resources due to own hunting prowess and in more nutritional resources due to tributes delivered by lower status members of the tribe

pecially true for a long term mate, but also for a short term mate, provided he shows willingness to quickly part with his resources for the benefit of the woman.

In addition, physical attractiveness is an indicator of good genetic material. Thus, a man's mate value is higher when he is highly physically attractive. Women see attractiveness in a long term as well as in a short term mate as an asset, although to a markedly lesser degree than men (Buss et al., 1990). However, good financial prospects are valued higher. In a classic study on mate selection (Buss, et al., 1990), women in 36 of 37 cultures (comprising almost 10,000 participants) placed good financial prospects higher than attractiveness. Transferring these findings to harassment, a man's behavior could be interpreted more favorably if (a) the behavior was interpretable as attempt at establishing a (sexual or romantic) relationship, and (b), the man had high mate value.

From a socio-structural perspective also, high status in a male partner, and the accompanying resources that usually go with high status, are desirable for women. This is due to the fact that, on the whole, women's share in a given society's economic and social power is smaller than men's (United Nations, 2007/2008). In a society based on a heterosexual relationship model (which are, to my knowledge, virtually all), the comparatively higher status of a partner enables women to attain higher status and better resources by association, both for themselves and for their children. Therefore, from a socio-structural perspective, high status mates are desirable for women. Interestingly, this pattern blurs with increasing gender equality. In nations with higher gender equality, women put less emphasis on their partners' earning potential (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Schmitt, 2005).

Regarding physical attractiveness, a bulk of studies has supported the existence of a "what is beautiful is good"-stereotype (Dion et al., 1972). Physically attractive people are assigned other positive features as well (see meta-analysis by Eagly et al., 1991). Again, this time from a socio-structural point of view, transferring these findings to harassment, high status and physical attractiveness of a man should lead women to perceive his behaviors more favorably if the behavior was interpretable as an attempt at establishing a relationship.

Taken together, from an evolutionary psychological as well as from a socio-cultural point of view, women should be more likely to perceive favorably behaviors initiated by a man of high (vs. low) mate value. For Study 1, male stimulus persons were developed that have either a very high or a rather low mate value, namely, either high physical attractiveness and good financial prospects, or low physical attractiveness and low financial prospects. However, the effect of high mate value of the harasser leading to more favorable behavior interpretations might be limited to behaviors interpretable as attempts to establish a relationship, but might be absent for behaviors with hostile overtones. The first category includes behaviors interpretable as expressing sexual or romantic interest, such as requests for dates, compliments about physical features, or even rather blunt expressions of sexual interest. The second category consists of derogatory behaviors, such as misogynist jokes, that are unambiguously degrading and hostile in content. Behavior from the first category should be interpreted more favorably with high mate value of the harasser. Both behavior categories are reported as fairly common in surveys on harassment (see section 3.1). Moreover, they are generally subsumed under less severe harassment categories (see Table 1), which enables their use in research on actual harassment. Within the first category of sexual



connoted verbal remarks, however, there can be considerable differences between individual behaviors.

Research by Solomon and Williams (1997) showed that working adults judged highly explicit sociosexual messages (e.g., one employee telling another about a dream he or she had last night about the two of them having passionate sex) to be more harassing than less explicit messages (e.g., one employee asking another whether he or she was dating somebody). Among other factors, the authors also looked at effects of status, gender, and attractiveness of target and initiator. For low-explicit messages, the authors found that differences in attractiveness of target and initiator led to perceptions of more harassment than equal attractiveness levels of target and initiator. Results also show that sufficient leeway for interpretation is necessary for harasser characteristics to influence perceptions. When the behavior is clearly very harassing, then initiator physical attractiveness might be irrelevant for interpretations. Bearing this in mind, and also because subjecting participants to severely harassing remarks rises ethical problems, I aimed at developing a sample of critical behaviors that were ambiguous.

Men's mate value as a combination of physical attractiveness and good financial prospects has not been included in experimental research on actual harassment, but analog studies using proxies for socioeconomic status and hierarchical power have already been conducted (see Black & Gold, 2003; Bourgeois & Perkins, 2003). However, scenario studies varying only perpetrator attractiveness have found that attractive men are judged more mildly (e.g., Golden et al., 2001). The role of harasser's attractiveness in actual sexual harassment, therefore, remains unclear.

In Study 1, I studied women's responses to men's actual behavior in an online chat with an allegedly real, but actually computer-simulated man. Pictures of attractive vs. unattractive men, first names conveying high vs. medium attractiveness and intelligence (Rudolph, Böhm, & Lummer, 2007) and descriptions depicting good vs. bad financial prospects varied men's mate value (e.g., Buss et al., 1990; Green, Buchanan, & Heuer, 1984; Townsend & Levy, 1990).

The following hypotheses were tested in Study 1, using a 2 (Man's Mate Value: high vs. low) x 2 (Type of Behavior: sexual attention vs. misogyny) x 2 (Sexual Harassment: present vs. absent) between-participants design:

- Hypothesis 1.1: Women rate harassing behavior and harassers, respectively, as more negative than non-harassing behavior and non-harassers, respectively.
- Hypothesis 1.2: Women rate both harassing and non-harassing behavior and both harassers and non-harassers as more positive when the man has high mate value.
- Hypothesis 1.3: The mate value effect predicted in hypothesis 1.2 is more pronounced when the harassing behavior is also interpretable as flirtation (sexual attention expressed by remarks), than when the harassing behavior is derogating women (misogynist jokes).

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## 10.2 Method

### 10.2.1 Participants

A total of 161 female students at the University of Bielefeld completed the study. The data of nine participants were excluded from analyses because they correctly guessed the true aim and topic of the study or because they indicated being lesbian. The data of lesbian participants were excluded because the male stimuli were expressly created to differ in mate value, which might not work for lesbians<sup>11</sup>. Mean age was 22.57 years ( $SD = 2.54$  years, range 18 to 33 years). Participants were enrolled in a variety of courses, with six percent psychology students.

### 10.2.2 Procedure

Participants were recruited on campus to test a “*new online dating-agency, Campus\_LoveLink*”. While both male and female experimenters were present, it was taken care that there was always at least one female experimenter present<sup>12</sup>. Participants received the informed consent information both written and orally. They were expressly assured that they could end the study at any point should they wish so.

After obtaining informed consent, participants’ picture was ostensibly taken in individual, computer-equipped cubicles. This was done to enhance credibility, because participants would see a picture of their alleged chat partner later. However, no picture of participants was actually taken. After being randomly assigned to experimental conditions, the participants were left alone in the cubicle and completed the computerized study as described below. At the end of the study, participants received the computerized message that the study was now finished and were asked to contact the experimenter outside the cubicle. Participants were then fully debriefed in a separate room and had the opportunity to ask questions. They also received contact information in case of questions arising later, and an information package about harassment in academic set-

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<sup>11</sup> From the evolutionary perspective, one could argue that mate preferences are hard-wired and independent of current sexual orientation. From a socio-structural perspective, lesbians might well be interested in economic power of a prospective partner, but because the stimulus in this study is a man, his economic power is irrelevant in that respect for a lesbian. A reader of a previous draft of this dissertation suggested that lesbians might enter into a relationship with a high status man in order to secure resources. In current western society, however, my impression is that sacrificing one’s sexual orientation for a purely economic gain might be too high a price to pay. This is not to say that maintaining an appearance of heterosexuality might not subjectively be justified for some, because lesbians and gays are still discriminated against. Furthermore, in some countries where homosexuality is still illegal, or if not actually a crime, is punished nevertheless, entering into a heterosexual relationship might indeed be lifesaving. These deliberations aside, a man’s physical attractiveness could work similarly for all sexual orientations. Whereas this is in itself an interesting research topic, the number of lesbians in this study ( $N = 4$ ) is way too small to gain insight in similarities or differences between their perceptions and those of heterosexual or bisexual women.

<sup>12</sup> I thought that, should a participant feel uncomfortable with her chat partner’s behavior, complaining about it should be easier when other women were present.

tings, including information about a harassment counseling service at the university, 2 Euros or course credit, and chocolate.

### 10.2.3 Materials

#### 10.2.3.1. R-CHP<sup>13</sup>

The Computer Harassment Paradigm (CHP, Dall'Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass et al., 2003; Siebler et al., 2008) is a procedure in which participants can harass virtual others online. For Study 1, I reversed the paradigm, so that participants were now in the role of receiving rather than sending harassing materials, whereas the computer-simulated partner was sending rather than receiving harassing materials, in order to study actual harassment from the target's perspective. Compared with studying actual harassment in direct interpersonal encounters (as in Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001, 2005), the fully computerized R-CHP allows for variation of harasser characteristics and harassing behavior in a fully standardized way, and limits contact between participant and harasser to an exchange via computer, while providing high ecological validity (see Barak, 2005). To illustrate the general make up of the R-CHP, some screenshots are presented in appendix A.

In the first stage, demographic data were collected. Second, filler scales that resembled those often used in online dating services (e.g., regarding hobbies) enhanced authenticity. Interspersed with filler scales, some measures intended to serve as covariates were administered. Third, the "Campus\_LoveLink program" ostensibly chose the best-fitting partner, provided information about him, and "connected" partner and participant online. Fourth, participants read that people valued *humor* or *small talk* (depending on condition) when getting to know somebody, and one of them could now select jokes from a pool of jokes presented to him or her, or formulate statements, to send to the other. The "receiver" (always the participant, ostensibly chosen at random by the program) was asked to give the "sender" feedback on each joke/remark. Each feedback initialized the next stage of the program. Fifth, after the alleged disconnection, additional ratings were collected. All materials (except filler scales) are described below.

#### 10.2.3.2. Independent variables

##### Misogynist and neutral jokes

Based on a pretest, I selected six misogynist and six neutral jokes. An initial pool of 83 jokes was rated regarding their degree of misogyny and funniness by 37 students (15 female, 22 male, mean age 24.70 years,  $SD$  3.76). Ratings were given on seven-point scales (1 = *not at all misogynist/funny*, to 7 = *very misogynist/funny*). The set of critical jokes was rated as more misogynist than the set of neutral jokes,  $M = 5.97$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ , and  $M = 1.08$ ,  $SD = 0.24$ , respectively,  $t(36) = 20.45$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d^{14} = 4.77$ . At the same time, the critical jokes were rated as

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<sup>13</sup> I am indebted to Saskia Sabelus for sharing materials, and to Frank Siebler for his willingness to answer numerous questions with regard to programming and for practical help.

<sup>14</sup> Marie Marekwica provided an Excel-tool for calculating Cohen's  $d$ , for which I am indebted.

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equally funny as the neutral jokes,  $M = 2.51$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ , and  $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ , respectively,  $t(36) = -0.71$ ,  $p < .49$ , Cohen's  $d = -0.13$ . Six further neutral jokes were selected as filler items. Therefore, each participant received 12 jokes from her alleged chat partner. A complete list of jokes, their pretest results, and their position during the chat, is presented in Table 3. Because some of the jokes were untranslatable, the whole stimulus material is kept in the German original.

Table 3: Pretest results of jokes and position during the chat phase in the harassing and non-harassing conditions, Study 1.

Position during chat	Sexually harassing	m	f	Non-harassing	m	f
1	Worin besteht der Unterschied zwischen einem Chemiker und einer Hebamme? Der Chemiker sagt „H <sub>2</sub> O“ und die Hebamme sagt „OH <sub>2</sub> “!	1.07 <i>0.26</i>	3.07 <i>1.49</i>	see left	see left	see left
2	Was tut ein Beamter zuerst, nachdem er hingefallen ist? Er nimmt die Hände aus der Hosentasche!	1.00 <i>0.00</i>	4.27 <i>1.44</i>	see left	see left	see left
3	<b>Was ist positiv daran, wenn eine Frau die Kellertreppe herunterfällt? Sie kann gleich eine Flasche Bier mitbringen.</b>	5.84 <i>1.71</i>	2.65 <i>1.77</i>	Was waren die letzten Worte eines U-Boot-Kapitäns? Hier muss mal gelüftet werden!	1.05 <i>0.33</i>	2.76 <i>1.74</i>
4	<b>Wie viele Gehirnzellen hat eine Frau? 4, für jede Herdplatte eine.</b>	6.19 <i>1.39</i>	2.68 <i>1.65</i>	“Wie ging’s dir bei der Führerscheinprüfung?” “Leider bin ich durchgefallen, ich habe einen Geislerfahrer überholt”	1.14 <i>0.54</i>	2.70 <i>1.79</i>
5	Sagt der Kannibalenjunge zu seiner Mutter: “Nein, meine Sippe esse ich nicht...”	1.00 <i>0.00</i>	3.07 <i>1.67</i>	see left	see left	see left
6	<b>Wenn sich Männer mit ihrem Kopf beschäftigen, dann nennt man das denken. Wenn sich Frauen mit ihrem Kopf beschäftigen, dann nennt man das frisieren.</b>	5.57 <i>1.54</i>	2.70 <i>1.68</i>	Fragt ein Spaziergänger den Angler: “Na, beißen die Fische?” “Nein, Sie können sie ruhig streicheln.”	1.08 <i>0.36</i>	3.05 <i>1.70</i>
7	Was sagt ein Sachse, wenn er in England eine Tanne kaufen will? „Attention, please!“	1.00 <i>0.00</i>	4.20 <i>1.61</i>	see left	see left	see left
8	<b>Warum haben Frauen prinzipiell Schuld an einem Autounfall? Eigentlich hätten sie hinter dem Herd stehen müssen.</b>	5.95 <i>1.62</i>	2.30 <i>1.47</i>	„Herr Ober, wie nennen Sie dieses Gericht?“ „Hüttenkäse...“ „Dann habe ich eben auf ein Stückchen Tür gebissen.“	1.05 <i>0.23</i>	2.24 <i>1.19</i>
9	<b>Was macht eine Frau, die vor einem leeren Blatt Papier sitzt und liest? Sie studiert ihre Rechte.</b>	6.24 <i>1.34</i>	2.46 <i>1.76</i>	„Herr Ober, was macht meine Leber?“ „Bin ich Arzt?“	1.08 <i>0.36</i>	2.57 <i>1.56</i>
10	Prüfer zum Prüfling: “Mit dem, was Sie nicht wissen, können noch zwei andere durchfallen!”	1.07 <i>0.26</i>	3.27 <i>1.94</i>	see left	see left	see left
11	<b>Was ist an einer Geschlechtsumwandlung vom Mann zur Frau am schmerzhaftesten? Ist doch logisch, das Gehirn absaugen!</b>	6.03 <i>1.64</i>	2.27 <i>1.47</i>	Wer hat den Namen des Handys erfunden? Die Schwaben: Hen die koi Schnur?	1.08 <i>0.36</i>	2.59 <i>1.42</i>
12	Notruf bei der Bahndirektion: „Auf dem Bahndamm liegt ein Gleis!“ Der Bahnbeamte: „Das ist auch gut so!“ Er legt auf. Nach fünf Minuten ruft der Japaner wieder an und sagt: „Jetzt haben sie den almen alten Mann übefahren!“	1.00 <i>0.00</i>	4.00 <i>2.00</i>	see left	see left	see left

Note: Critical items in bold typeface, standard deviation in italics; m = mean on the dimension misogynist, f = mean on the dimension funniness, response scales from 1 = *not at all misogynist/funny* to 7 = *very misogynist/funny*.

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### Remarks expressing sexual attention and non-harassing remarks

Based on a second pretest, I selected six sexually harassing and six non-harassing remarks, again interspersed with six further non-harassing filler remarks to make up the harassing and non-harassing remarks conditions. I piloted a total of 27 remarks that were designed to be neutral, clearly sexually harassing, or ambiguous. 39 students (22 female, 17 male, mean age 22.59 years, *SD* 2.52) rated the remarks on the following dimensions: *The remark is* (a) *a compliment*, (b) *sexually harassing*, (c) *neutral*, and (d) *meant to be a flirt* (all rating scales from 1 = *does not apply* to 7 = *does apply*). Participants were instructed to imagine that remarks were made by a man to a woman. The resulting stimulus array consisted of six ambiguously harassing and six neutral remarks, each interspersed with further six neutral remarks, with critical items at the same position during the chat as in the jokes condition. Importantly, I chose three clearly non-harassing, but flirtatious remarks or compliments: Almost all other neutral remarks were directed at objects, which would have been a systematic and unintended difference to the critical remarks otherwise. The complete materials for the main study, their pretest results, and their position during the chat, are depicted in the German original in Table 4.

Table 4: Pretest results and position of remarks during the chat phase in the harassing and non-harassing conditions, Study 1.

Position during chat	Sexually harassing	sh				f				c				n			
		sh	f	c	n	sh	f	c	n	sh	f	c	n	sh	f	c	n
1	Ups, musste gerade mein Handy ausmachen	1.42 <i>0.96</i>	1.50 <i>1.15</i>	1.42 <i>1.04</i>	4.60 <i>2.23</i>	see left				see left							
2	In meinem Raum liegt ganz schön viel Zeug rum	1.22 <i>0.56</i>	1.42 <i>1.06</i>	1.30 <i>1.02</i>	5.01 <i>2.04</i>	see left				see left							
3	<b>Du siehst aus als wärst du ein ganz heißer Feger</b>	4.78 <i>1.70</i>	5.27 <i>2.01</i>	4.45 <i>1.94</i>	1.58 <i>0.94</i>	Du siehst aus wie eine richtige Schmusekatze	3.22 <i>1.66</i>	5.55 <i>1.58</i>	4.58 <i>1.83</i>	2.45 <i>1.65</i>							
4	<b>Mir wird ja ganz warm, wenn ich dein Bild sehe</b>	4.06 <i>1.71</i>	5.86 <i>1.51</i>	4.60 <i>2.00</i>	1.81 <i>1.46</i>	Dieser Stuhl ist nicht gerade bequem auf Dauer	1.65 <i>1.27</i>	2.09 <i>1.83</i>	1.22 <i>0.61</i>	4.20 <i>2.39</i>							
5	Die Internetverbindung scheint nicht die schnellste zu sein	1.09 <i>0.25</i>	1.47 <i>1.31</i>	1.04 <i>0.14</i>	5.24 <i>2.06</i>	see left				see left							
6	<b>Du siehst so süß aus wie die Schokolade, die ich gleich vernaschen werde</b>	4.35 <i>1.87</i>	5.60 <i>1.69</i>	4.86 <i>2.10</i>	1.50 <i>1.04</i>	Hier steht ein Regal, das genau so aussieht wie das, das ich zu Hause aufbauen muss	1.14 <i>0.32</i>	1.81 <i>1.30</i>	1.60 <i>1.11</i>	5.17 <i>2.10</i>							
7	Dieser PC ist eine ganz schön alte Möhre	1.14 <i>0.51</i>	1.24 <i>0.70</i>	1.14 <i>0.51</i>	5.06 <i>2.25</i>	see left				see left							
8	<b>Ich wette du hast super Beine</b>	4.06 <i>1.55</i>	5.40 <i>1.78</i>	5.30 <i>1.39</i>	1.65 <i>1.11</i>	Du hast sinnliche Lippen	3.17 <i>1.47</i>	5.91 <i>1.41</i>	5.47 <i>1.65</i>	1.83 <i>1.20</i>							
9	<b>Schade, dass du mir gerade nicht deine Unterwäsche beschreiben kannst</b>	5.94 <i>1.47</i>	4.73 <i>2.11</i>	2.24 <i>1.59</i>	1.22 <i>0.56</i>	Bin gespannt, ob ich gleich noch rechtzeitig in mein Seminar komme	1.40 <i>0.84</i>	2.81 <i>2.15</i>	1.89 <i>1.76</i>	4.68 <i>2.08</i>							
10	Ich glaube ich brauche gleich mal einen Kaffee	1.20 <i>0.55</i>	1.59 <i>1.17</i>	1.09 <i>0.26</i>	5.14 <i>1.97</i>	see left				see left							
11	<b>Bei deinem Anblick wird meine Hose mir echt zu eng</b>	6.42 <i>1.33</i>	4.12 <i>2.22</i>	2.58 <i>1.78</i>	1.27 <i>0.99</i>	Dein Oberteil ist sexy	3.63 <i>1.79</i>	6.09 <i>1.18</i>	5.78 <i>1.42</i>	1.83 <i>1.38</i>							
12	Dieser Raum ist stickig	1.40 <i>0.82</i>	1.55 <i>1.23</i>	1.22 <i>0.63</i>	4.86 <i>2.30</i>	see left				see left							

Note: Critical items in bold typeface, standard deviations in italics, sh = mean on the dimension *sexually harassing*, f = mean on the dimension *flirtatious*, c = mean on the dimension *compliment*, n = mean on the dimension *neutral*. Response scales from 1 = *does not apply* to 7 = *does apply*.

Together, the critical stimulus array was sexually harassing, but was also open to a more favorable interpretation due to its ambiguity. The critical set of remarks was rated as more *sexually harassing*, than the neutral set of remarks,  $M = 4.94$ ,  $SD = 1.16$  and  $M = 2.37$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ , respectively,  $t(38) = 13.82$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 2.79$ , more as a *compliment*,  $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.31$  and  $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ , respectively,  $t(39) = 2.69$ ,  $p < .05$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.52$ , more *flirtatious*,  $M = 5.16$ ,  $SD = 1.38$  and  $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ , respectively,  $t(38) = 4.98$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.95$ ,

and less *neutral*,  $M = 1.50$ ,  $SD 0.73$  and  $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD 1.03$ , respectively,  $t(38) = -15.96$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = -2.71$ . Therefore, the critical set was sexually harassing but also amenable to a more positive interpretation. In total, each participant received 12 remarks from her alleged chat partner.

### Chat partner characteristics

#### Pictures

Two pretests were conducted to select pictures of men high vs. low in physical attractiveness. For the first study, 31 pictures of men were downloaded from a public dating-website (age range 20 to 28 years, information provided on the site). All pictures were implemented in a VisualBasic computer program that presented each picture for ratings in a fixed random order (forward and backward for half of the sample each; no order effects occurred). Twelve female students (mean age 23.50 years,  $SD 7.08$ ) participated and rated the pictures on the dimensions *attractiveness*, *sexiness*, and *attractiveness as a partner in a romantic relationship* (all scales from 1 = *not at all attractive/sexy* to 7 = *very attractive/sexy*). Analyses were conducted on the single measures as well as on a compound measure of the mean over all three items. The three pictures with the highest vs. lowest overall ratings (range 3.61,  $SD 1.49$  to 4.94,  $SD 1.14$ , vs. range 1.22,  $SD 0.67$  to 1.36,  $SD 0.58$ ) were retained for the second pilot study.

Following the same procedure as described above, 45 female students (mean age 24.84 years,  $SD 5.08$ ) participated. The two pictures with the highest and the two pictures with the lowest overall ratings were retained for the main study to provide a stimulus replication. The two highly attractive pictures were rated significantly more attractive overall than the two unattractive pictures,  $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD 1.13$  and  $M = 1.36$ ,  $SD 0.52$ , respectively,  $t(44) = 12.67$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 2.46$ .

#### Description of chat partner

Quality of financial prospects was varied by descriptions apparently formulated by the stimulus himself and by subjects of study. Self-descriptions were designed to depict a stimulus person with high vs. low career prospects, ability to provide for a family, and attractiveness as a partner in a romantic relationship, but with equal niceness and arousing an equal desire to meet with him. Age was constantly given as *26 years*, which is slightly above the expected average age of female student participants. First names were chosen to convey high vs. moderate levels of attractiveness and intelligence.

**Partner with high mate value.** Subject of study was *business administration*, first name was *Lukas*. The self-description for the high mate value stimulus was:

*I have studied economics (will graduate in spring) because with this subject, you have an abundance of possibilities to get jobs where you are in charge and earn well. Many people think the subject is not very interesting, but I have learned differently: During summer break, I have regularly worked in big companies; also because I want to enter a career path quickly and was looking for a good employer. I have already found one. Next spring I*



*will start working for a company in Gütersloh, where I will be trained to be a central executive. I'm looking forward to that, because the working atmosphere there is great.*

The city of Gütersloh, near Bielefeld, where the study was conducted, was chosen for its many renowned companies, and because it is well connected by freeway and commuter train, so establishing a relationship with *Lukas* could be realistic even after he started working.

**Partner with low mate value.** Subject of study was MA in History, Philosophy, and English, first name was *Olaf*. The self-description for the low mate value stimulus was:

*I was always interested in history, and philosophy is a good match for that, especially when you are fond of the antiquity. I added English for no special reason – I was good at it at school. I find studying very interesting. My future plans: I need to study a bit more quickly now, otherwise I will have to pay penalties for long-term-students soon. In my MA-studies you have to organize and decide on seminars you want to attend completely by yourself, that takes time. I don't quite know yet what career path I will choose. Maybe I will do an internship at a publishing company.*

Stimulus descriptions (containing self-description, first name, subject of study, and age), were pretested with  $N = 42$  female students, mean age 21.71 years,  $SD 1.74$ , who either rated the high or low mate value stimulus (each  $N = 21$ ). All ratings were made on scales from 1 (target concept highly pronounced) to 7 (target concept not pronounced at all). As intended, the high mate value stimulus was rated better than the low mate value stimulus on the dimensions *career prospects*,  $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD 0.70$ , vs.  $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD 0.87$ , respectively,  $t(40) = 10.20$ ,  $p < .000$ , Cohen's  $d = 3.22$ , *future ability to provide for a family*,  $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD 1.11$ , vs.  $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD 1.16$ , respectively,  $t(40) = 4.36$ ,  $p < .000$ , Cohen's  $d = 1.38$ , and *attractiveness as a relationship partner*,  $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD 1.54$ , vs.  $M = 5.19$ ,  $SD 1.37$ , respectively,  $t(40) = 2.23$ ,  $p < .05$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.70$ . Also as intended, on the dimensions *niceness* and *desire to meet*, the high mate value stimulus was not rated differently from the low mate value stimulus: for *niceness*,  $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD 1.28$  and  $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD 1.67$ , respectively,  $t(40) = 0.24$ ,  $p < .80$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.08$ , and for *desire to meet*,  $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD 1.29$  and  $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD 1.63$ , respectively,  $t(40) = 0.75$ ,  $p < .45$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.24$ . Therefore, these self-descriptions were retained for the main study.

### 10.2.3.3. Covariates

According to previous research as presented above, a number of attitude measures are related to harassment scenario perceptions. The following measures were administered during the R-CHP in order to control for their possible effects: ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), AMI (Glick & Fiske, 1999), NGRO (Athenstaedt, 2000), and SOI-R (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). To control for a tendency for socially desirable responding, a pertinent measure was added (Soziale-Erwünschtheits-Skala-17, SES-17, Stöber, 1999).

### 10.2.3.4. Dependent variables

Dependent variables are described in order of collection during the R-CHP. Intercorrelations between variables, means, and standard deviations are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics and bivariate intercorrelations between dependent variables, Study 1.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Mean Immediate Evaluation of Behavior	4.05	1.07	-	.59**	.44**	-.34**	.33**	-.29**
2. Mean Immediate Emotional Response Toward Behavior	2.94	1.21		-	.46**	-.48**	.40**	-.45**
3. Overall Attractiveness of Chat Partner	2.92	1.62			-	-.27**	.31**	-.27**
4. Behavior is Insult	2.32	1.54				-	-.32**	.45**
5. Behavior is Compliment	2.48	1.57					-	.02
6. Behavior is Sexually Harassing	2.59	1.76						-

Note: *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; \*\* =  $p < .01$  (two-tailed). Ratings on the dependent variables were made on a six-point scale, coded so that higher values indicate a more positive evaluation/feeling (1. and 2.), higher Attractiveness/Mate Value (3.), or a more pronounced rating of the target concept (4. to 6.; e.g., higher values indicate stronger insult).

### Immediate evaluations and immediate emotional responses

Participants were asked to “send feedback” to the partner after each remark/joke by indicating their *evaluation* and current *feeling* on two six-point scales anchored with 1 = *very good* to 6 = *very bad*. The header was “*The joke/remark was...*” and “*I feel...*”. Evaluative and emotional responses to items on the critical positions during the exchange correlated highly within the respective categories: for evaluations of critical items, bivariate intercorrelations ranged from  $r = .55$  to  $r = .85$  (both  $p < .01$ , average  $r = .70$ ), Cronbach’s alpha was .93. Therefore, the items were averaged, and then recoded, so that higher scores indicated a more positive evaluation. For emotional responses toward critical items, correlations were lower and more varied, from  $r = .34$  to  $r = .66$  (both  $p < .01$ , average  $r = .49$ ). However, Cronbach’s alpha was .85 and thus satisfactory, therefore, the items were also averaged and recoded, so that higher scores indicated a more positive emotional response.

### Evaluation of partner after chat

When the chatline was allegedly disconnected after the exchange, participants rated their partner regarding *attractiveness*, *niceness*, *attractiveness as a relationship partner*, and *desire to meet* (from 1 = *not at all attractive/nice*, etc. to 6 = *very attractive/nice*, etc.). These ratings correlated highly, with bivariate intercorrelations ranging from  $r = .64$  to  $r = .89$  (both  $p < .001$ , average  $r = .71$ ). Responses were averaged to create an overall attractiveness measure (Cronbach’s alpha = .90), with higher scores indicating a higher attractiveness rating.

### Evaluation of behavior after chat

Participants rated the man's behavior on the dimensions *sexually harassing*, *insult*, and *compliment* (all anchored 1 = *not at all* to 6 = *very much*). These ratings were retained as separate variables in the original coding, so that higher values indicate more sexual harassment, stronger insult, and more of a compliment, respectively.

### Suspicion checks: perceived reality of chat partner and aim of the study

At the end of the study, participants were asked to describe their chat partner and the probability to meet such a person in open ended format. To check whether participants had believed to be connected to a real person, a random sample of answers from all experimental conditions ( $N = 61$ , 40.13 %) was analyzed by two raters (one female, one male). On a response scale anchored 1 = *completely real* to 6 = *not at all real*, raters indicated whether participants wrote about her partner as if he was a real person. The mean rating of 1.64 ( $SD = 1.10$ , inter-rater agreement  $r = .92$ ,  $p < .001$ ) shows that overall, participants believed to chat with a real person. Participants who guessed the study's aim were excluded from analyses.

### Other behavioral reactions

Immediate debriefings were prepared for the unlikely event that participants left their cubicle during the chat in order to report sexist behavior of the chat partner to the experimenter. Although previous research suggests that such a response to actual harassment is unlikely, the informed consent procedure could have encouraged that reaction.

## 10.3 Results

ANOVAs were conducted for the full experimental design, with Sexual Harassment (yes vs. no), Mate Value (high vs. low) and Type of Behavior (remarks vs. jokes) as between-participants factors. Before the analyses reported below, I conducted the respective analysis with the four different pictures representing the two levels of physical attractiveness instead of combining the two pictures representing each level into the factor Mate Value. The few effects of individual picture were always in line with the Mate Value level they represented. Therefore, all analyses are reported collapsed over the two respective pictures. Similarly, a preliminary inspection of correlations between covariates and dependent variables showed only very few and small significant correlations. In total, 56 correlations between dependent variables and covariates were inspected. Out of the 56 correlations between the potential covariates, namely, the BS and HS subscales of the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and the BM and HM subscales of the AMI (Glick & Fiske, 1999), NGRO (Athenstaedt, 2000), the behavior, attitude, and affect subscales of the SOI (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008), and the SES-17 (Stöber, 1999), and the six dependent variables, only six were (marginally) significant. Immediate emotional responses were correlated with BS,  $r = .18$ ,  $p < .05$ , and with BM,  $r = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ . Behavior ratings as compliment were correlated with BS,  $r = .15$ ,  $p < .07$ , with HS,  $r = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ , and with NGRO,  $r = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ . Finally,

overall attractiveness ratings of the chat partner were correlated with the affect subscale of the SOI,  $r = .17, p < .05$ .

Nevertheless, all analyses were first performed with covariates included. However, as the correlational analysis already suggested, covariates had only very few, inconsistent, and small effects in the ANCOVAs. In addition, the pattern of results, both with regard to direction and with regard to significance of effects, was the same with and without covariates. Furthermore, a few covariates were not independent from some experimental factors. Because of the overall few and very small effects, I do not report ANCOVA results here.

### 10.3.1 Immediate evaluation of behavior

The first dependent variable was the mean *evaluation* of items on the critical positions during the exchange. Means are depicted in Figure 1.

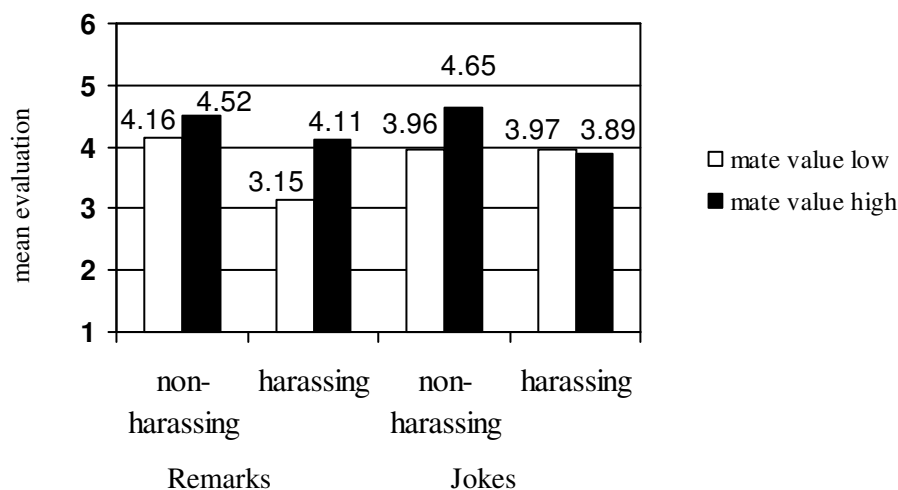


Figure 1. Mean *evaluation* of critical items in experimental conditions vs. neutral items at same position in control conditions as a function of *Mate Value*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate a more positive evaluation (Study 1).

In line with predictions in hypothesis 1.1, presence vs. absence of *sexual harassment* had a significant main effect on evaluations. Sexually harassing behavior was rated more negatively than non-harassing behavior ( $M = 3.79, SD = 1.12$  vs.  $M = 4.32, SD = 0.96$ ),  $F(1, 137) = 10.97, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .07$ . Only one (out of 77, 1.3 percent) participant in the harassing conditions evaluated each of the six harassing item with the worst possible mark, resulting in a mean of 1.00; the most extreme negative response possible. This could be seen as a proxy for a lack of assertive response with the rest of the participants, because participants believed their partner received this feedback.

The predicted main effect of *mate value* (hypothesis 1.2) also occurred. Behavior of a man high in mate value was rated more positively than behavior of a man low in mate value ( $M = 4.28, SD = 0.99$  vs.  $M = 3.82, SD = 1.10$ ),  $F(1, 139) = 8.78, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .06$ .

The significant three-way interaction *sexual harassment* x *mate value* x *type of behavior*,  $F(1, 139) = 4.22, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , was decomposed by analyzing simple main and interaction effects separately within the jokes and remarks conditions. For jokes, there was a tendency for more positive evaluations of non-harassing behavior by a man with high mate value, but not for harassing behavior by a man with low mate value, shown by a marginally significant simple interaction of *sexual harassment* x *mate value*,  $F(1, 144) = 2.78, p < .10, \eta_p^2 = .02$ . For remarks, evaluations were more negative for harassing behavior, and more positive for men with high mate value, showing in significant simple main effects of *sexual harassment*,  $F(1, 144) = 9.28, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .06$ , and *mate value*,  $F(1, 144) = 8.02, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$ . Results indicate that harassing behavior amenable to a favorable reinterpretation (i.e., remarks) is judged more positively when the harasser has high mate value, therefore supporting hypothesis 1.3.

Taken together, hypotheses 1.1 to 1.3 were supported: Non-harassing behavior was evaluated more positively, behavior of men with high mate value was evaluated more positively, and harassing remarks, but not derogatory jokes, were rated more positively when the harasser had high mate value.

### 10.3.2 Immediate emotional response toward behavior

The second dependent variable was the mean *emotional response* toward items on the critical positions during the exchange. Means are depicted in Figure 2.

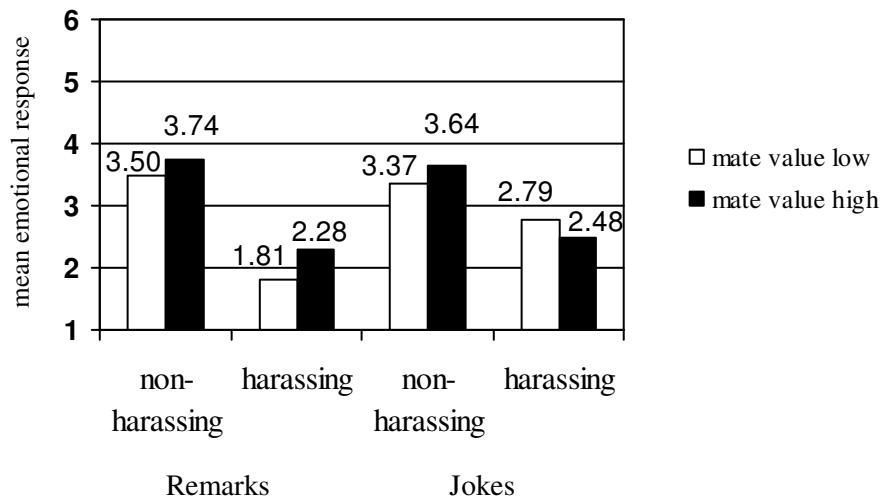


Figure 2. Mean *emotional response* to critical items in experimental conditions vs. neutral items at same position in control conditions as a function of *Mate Value*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate a more positive emotional response (Study 1).

Again, the predicted main effect for *sexual harassment* (hypothesis 1.1) occurred. Participants felt more negatively about sexually harassing than non-harassing behavior ( $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD = 1.08$  vs.  $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 52.37$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .27$ . Compared with evaluations, a larger proportion of participants indicated the most negative mark on the emotional response scale after receiving each of the six harassing item, resulting in a mean of 1.00. Eleven out of 77 participants (14.3 %) chose that most extreme negative response which they believed their partner received as feedback.

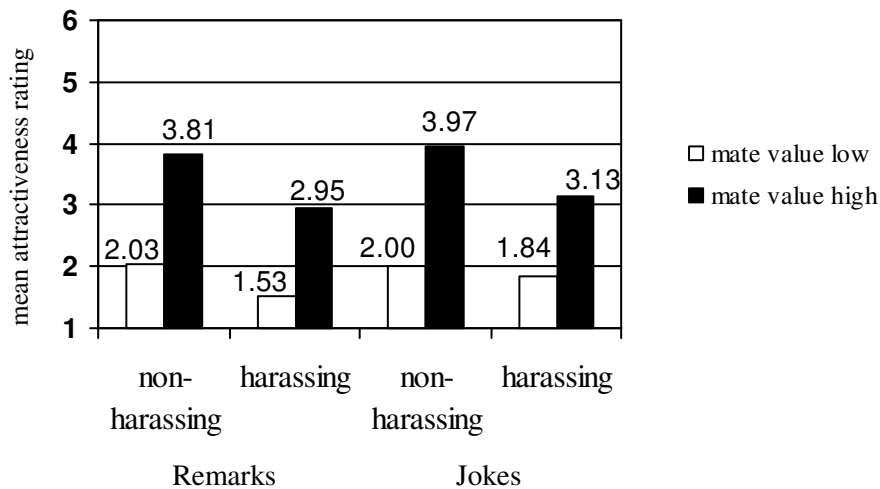
The significant interaction of *sexual harassment* x *type of behavior*,  $F(1, 144) = 4.37$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ , was again decomposed for type of behavior. The simple main effect of *sexual harassment* was significant for jokes,  $F(1, 144) = 13.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .09$ , as well as remarks,  $F(1, 144) = 42.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .23$ , but was larger for remarks. Participants expressed more extreme feelings toward non-harassing ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) and harassing remarks ( $M = 2.05$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ) than toward non-harassing ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ), and harassing jokes ( $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ).

A tendency for better feelings toward remarks sent by a man high in *mate value*, compared with a man low in *mate value* was not significant,  $F(1, 144) = 2.20$ ,  $p < .15$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ . However, it is in the direction predicted in hypothesis 1.3 on the descriptive level (see Figure 2).

Compared with the effect of harasser's mate value on evaluations, as reported above, the effect of harasser's mate value on feelings was smaller: With regard to emotional responses, presence or absence of sexual harassment was the crucial factor, whereas mate value played a lesser role. Nevertheless, although the three-way interaction of all experimental factors was not significant, its pattern is similar to the pattern for behavior evaluation.

### 10.3.3 Evaluation of chat partner: Overall attractiveness

The third dependent variable was the chat partner's *overall attractiveness*, which was the mean of the ratings of partner's *physical attractiveness*, *niceness*, *attractiveness as a relationship partner*, and *desire to meet the chat partner*. Means are depicted in Figure 3.



*Figure 3.* Rating of chat partner's *overall attractiveness* (collapsed mean rating on the dimensions *physical attractiveness*, *niceness*, *attractiveness as a relationship partner*, and *desire to meet*) as a function of *Mate Value*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate higher overall attractiveness (Study 1).

Participants rated *harassers* as less attractive than *non-harassers* ( $M = 2.39$ ,  $SD = 1.16$  vs.  $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 14.61$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .09$ . Thus, hypothesis 1.1 received support.

Men designed to convey high *mate value* were rated as more attractive than men designed to convey low *mate value*, as predicted in hypothesis 1.2 ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 1.11$  vs.  $M = 1.86$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 109.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .43$ . The higher attractiveness rating for men high in mate value indicates a successful manipulation of physical attractiveness and personal resources.

A marginally significant two-way interaction of *sexual harassment* x *mate value*,  $F(1, 144) = 2.90$ ,  $p < .10$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ , was decomposed for each level of sexual harassment. The simple main effect of *mate value* was significant for both sexual harassment,  $F(1, 144) = 38.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .21$ , and non-harassment,  $F(1, 144) = 72.88$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .34$ , but larger for non-harassment. Therefore, even a harasser was rated as more attractive when he was high in mate value, but the non-harasser high in mate value was still rated as most attractive. Results overall support hypotheses 1.1 and 1.2, but not 1.3: The *mate value* effect was not more pronounced for remarks than for jokes.

### 10.3.4 Evaluation of behavior: Insult

Ratings of the behavior as *insult* were the dependent variable in the next ANOVA. Means are depicted in Figure 4.

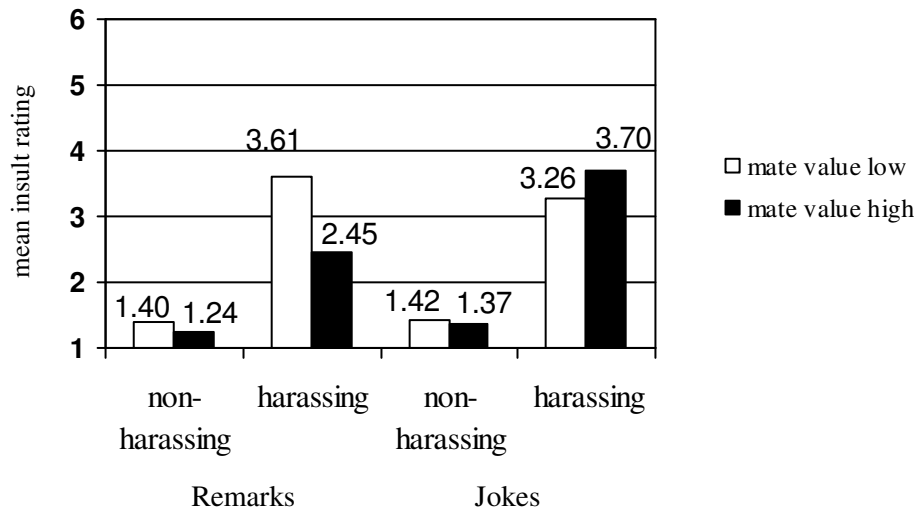


Figure 4. Rating of the material as *insult* as a function of *Mate Value*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate more insult (Study 1).

*Sexually harassing* behavior was rated as more insulting than *non-harassing* behavior ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = 1.49$  vs.  $M = 1.36$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 97.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .40$ . Therefore, hypothesis 1.1 was supported.

A significant *mate value* x *type of behavior* interaction,  $F(1, 144) = 4.94$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ , and a marginally significant three-way interaction with *sexual harassment*,  $F(1, 144) = 3.73$ ,  $p < .06$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ , were decomposed by type of behavior. For jokes, only the *sexual harassment* simple main effect was significant,  $F(1, 144) = 59.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .29$ . For remarks, both the *sexual harassment* and *mate value* simple main effects were significant,  $F(1, 144) = 39.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .21$ , and  $F(1, 144) = 5.84$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ , respectively. The simple interaction was marginally significant,  $F(1, 144) = 3.30$ ,  $p < .08$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ . Therefore, support for hypothesis 1.3 is mixed: In the tendency, ambiguous remarks are rated as less insulting when the harasser has high mate value, as predicted, but for jokes, the pattern is reversed.

### 10.3.5 Evaluation of behavior: Compliment

Ratings of the behavior as *compliment* were the next dependent variable. Means are depicted in Figure 5.



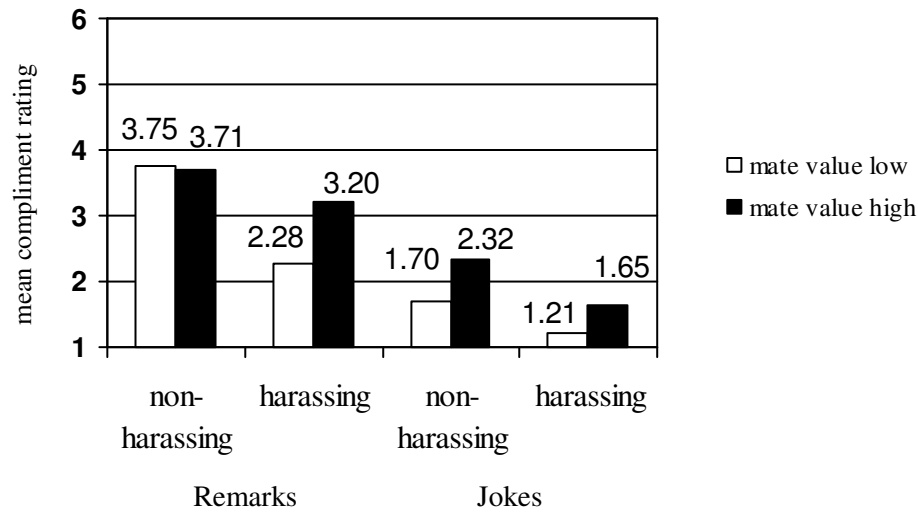


Figure 5. Rating of the material as *compliment* as a function of *Mate Value*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate better compliment. (Study 1)

Significant main effects occurred for all experimental factors as predicted. *Harassing* behavior was rated as less of a compliment than *non-harassing* behavior ( $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = 1.43$  vs.  $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 1.62$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 14.22$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .09$ , behavior of a man with high *mate value* was rated as more of a compliment than behavior of a man with low *mate value* ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.55$  vs.  $M = 2.28$ ,  $SD = 1.57$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 4.66$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ , and *remarks* were rated as more of a compliment than *jokes* ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 1.59$  vs.  $M = 1.74$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 48.76$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .25$ .

Although the three-way interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 144) = 1.52$ ,  $p < .23$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ , the pattern mirrored results for insult and I therefore looked at the types of behavior separately again. The simple main effect of *sexual harassment* tended to be larger for remarks,  $F(1, 144) = 10.55$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ , than for jokes,  $F(1, 144) = 4.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ . Furthermore, the simple interaction effect *sexual harassment*  $\times$  *mate value* also tended to be larger for remarks, albeit not significant,  $F(1, 144) = 2.52$ ,  $p < .12$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ , whereas for jokes, it was virtually non-existent,  $F(1, 144) = .02$ ,  $p < .89$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .00$ . For harassing remarks, the advantage of a man with high mate value over a man with low mate value is particularly evident.

Results in the tendency support hypotheses 1.1 to 1.3: Sexually harassing behavior is rated as less of a compliment, behavior shown by a man with high mate value is rated more as a compliment, and the latter effect is somewhat more pronounced for the remarks that are reinterpretable more favorably.

According to the correlational analyses reported in Table 5, insult and compliment ratings were negatively and significantly correlated. The direction of the correlation suggests that there is a tendency to see the concepts of insult and compliment as antonyms. Because the pattern of results in the ANOVA for both seemed to mirror each other, I conducted a repeated measures

analysis with insult and compliment as within-participants factor. A significant four-way interaction with all experimental factors,  $F(1, 144) = 4.21, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , was due to a reversed effect of *mate value* within the harassing remarks conditions. The behavior of a harasser high (vs. low) in mate value was rated higher on the compliment dimension ( $M = 3.20, SD = 1.64$  vs.  $M = 2.28, SD = 1.57, p < .05$ ), whereas the behavior of a harasser low (vs. high) in mate value was rated higher on the insult dimension ( $M = 3.61, SD = 1.61$  vs.  $M = 2.45, SD = 1.54, p < .01$ ). Mean differences between mate value levels for all other cells of the design were not significant, all differences  $< 0.63$ , all  $p > .21$ .

Harassers with high mate value thus seem to get away more lightly, as women interpret their remarks more favorably, which supports hypothesis 1.3. Results for both behaviors support hypothesis 1.1, because the behavior of a non-harasser is rated better than the behavior of a harasser.

### 10.3.6 Evaluation of behavior: Sexually harassing

In the final analysis, behavior ratings as *sexually harassing* were the dependent variable. Means are depicted in Figure 6.

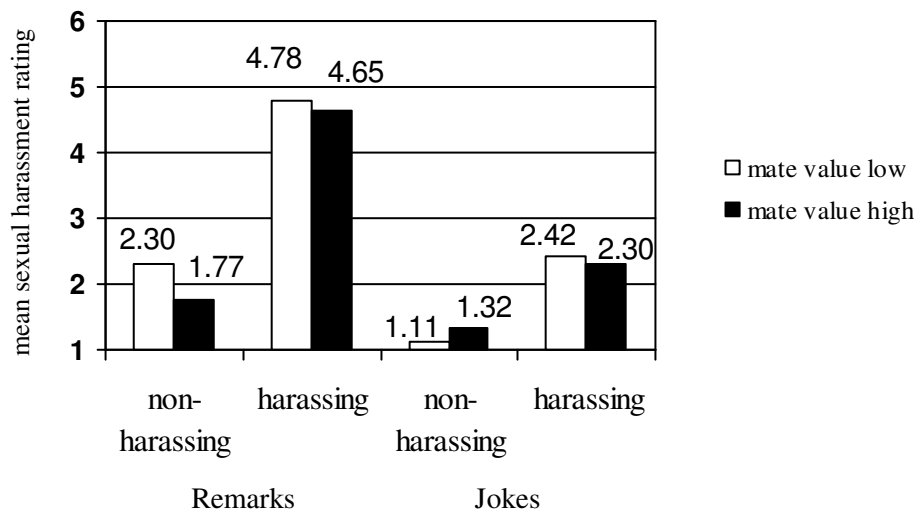


Figure 6. Rating of the material as *sexually harassing* as a function of *Mate Value*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate higher ratings of the behavior as sexual harassment (Study 1).

The *mate value* main effect, which was highly consistent so far, disappeared when participants were asked directly how they rated their chat partner's behavior on the dimension *sexually harassing*,  $F(1, 144) = 0.54, p > .46, \eta_p^2 = .00$ . The main effects of *sexual harassment* and *type of behavior*, however, were significant. Harassing behavior was rated more negatively than non-harassing behavior ( $M = 3.52, SD = 1.75$  vs.  $M = 1.63, SD = 1.29$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 77.01, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .35$ .

Contradicting previous results for *type of behavior*, ambiguous remarks were rated more negatively than misogynist jokes ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.82$  vs.  $M = 1.79$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ),  $F(1, 144) = 51.78$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .26$ . Therefore, hypothesis 1.3 was not supported.

The significant interaction of *sexual harassment* x *type of behavior*,  $F(1, 144) = 17.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .11$ , was decomposed by type of behavior. For both remarks and jokes, the *sexual harassment* simple main effect was significant,  $F(1, 144) = 81.99$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .36$ , and  $F(1, 144) = 10.97$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ , but was much more pronounced for remarks, again in contrast to hypothesis 1.3.

Therefore, when asked directly after sexual harassment, participants did not exonerate the harasser with high mate value any more. This is in contrast to scenario studies cited above, where physically attractive harassers and harassers with good personal resources are judged more leniently.

### 10.3.7 Other behavioral reactions

One participant in the harassing remarks condition (out of 78 participants in the harassing conditions, 1.3 percent of the sample) left the cubicle to complain about “inappropriate behavior of the chat partner”, and terminated participation. Her data were not saved because data saving took place after regular termination of the program. This participant was immediately debriefed, had the opportunity to ask questions and received full allowance and the information package. Although demand characteristics might have played a role, this participant (as well as virtually all of the others who finished the experiment) expressed an interest to know more about harassment and wished to learn about the results of the study.

## 10.4 Discussion

Three research questions were investigated in Study 1: First, do women rate sexually harassing behavior and harassers more negatively than non-harassing behavior and non-harassers? Second, do women rate both harassers and non-harassers and their behavior more positively when the man has desirable mate characteristics, i.e., is physically attractive (vs. unattractive) and has good (vs. bad) financial prospects? And third, is the latter effect more pronounced when the harassing behavior is amenable to a more favorable interpretation, i.e. ambiguously harassing, but also flirtatious, remarks vs. misogynist jokes? Overall, the answers are “yes”, “yes” and “a little”, but they depend on the response dimension.

In Study 1, presence vs. absence of actual, moderate harassment, a male harasser’s or a male non-harasser’s mate value, and type of behavior was varied. Female participants allegedly tested a new online dating agency for students. In one phase of the “test run”, participants believed to be connected online to a real, but in fact computer simulated, man. This man had either high or low mate value (physically attractive picture and description depicting good financial prospects versus physically unattractive picture and description depicting bad financial prospects). During a chat phase, the man sent either remarks or jokes to which the participant was

asked to give feedback to the man: The participant evaluated each remark or joke, and indicated her feeling after being sent each remark or joke. The man's behavior was either harassing or non-harassing. In the harassing conditions, the remarks represented unwanted sexual attention, with the stimulus array (pretested as sexually harassing) sufficiently ambiguous to be interpretable as attempts at sexual contact, but also as attempt at a flirt, and the jokes representing gender harassment in the form of misogynist jokes that derogated women. In the non-harassing conditions, remarks and jokes had no harassing content. This study is one of the very few to investigate perceptions of actual harassment (compared with scenario studies) under controlled laboratory conditions. To do so, I further developed a new methodology, the CHP) (Siebler et al., 2008), where research participant originally had the opportunity to send harassing materials online to an allegedly real chat partner. In order to be able to study perceptions and interpretations of actual harassment under full experimental control, I reversed the paradigm, so that the participants received materials from an allegedly real, but in fact computer simulated male chat partner, thus providing full control over the critical behaviors while at the same time limiting contact to the "man" to an exchange via computer.

All three hypotheses generally received support in Study 1. First, women rated non-harassing behavior and non-harassers more positively than harassing behaviors and harassers. These results lend support to hypothesis 1.1. Furthermore, they confirm that the R-CHP is a suitable way to study a moderate form of actual sexual harassment. Second, a physically attractive man with good financial prospects, and his behavior, was judged more positively than a physically unattractive man with bad financial prospects, and his behavior, which supports hypothesis 1.2. Third, however, because these effects were most pronounced when the behavior was interpretable as sexual attention, but not to the same degree when it was derogatory, results do not generalize to all types of harassment, and do support hypothesis 1.3. Because physical attractiveness and financial prospects were varied together, it remains unclear whether either of the man's features alone would have been sufficient to produce the effects found.

Taking a more specific look at the dependent variables, mean evaluations of the materials sent during the chat phase, ratings of the man's overall attractiveness, and ratings of his behavior as compliment and insult, all supported the notion that at least some types of sexual harassment, initiated by men with certain characteristics, may be reinterpreted as "normal" male dating behavior by women. However, this more favorable interpretation, in line with hypothesis 1.2, depends largely on the incentive offered by harasser's high physical attractiveness and good financial prospects. This is in line with some previous scenario studies of harassment perceptions (e.g., Cartar et al., 1996), which found comparable results, at least in the absence of a power differential and in the absence of force, which was also the case in Study 1. Results also support premises of an evolutionary (e.g., Buss et al., 1990) as well as a socio-structural (Eagly & Wood, 1999) perspective on human attraction.

When feelings toward the harasser's behavior were concerned, however, the mate value effect diminished, whereas the sexual harassment effect remained stable. Harasser's physical attractiveness and good financial prospects did not make participants feel better when they experienced a moderate form of actual harassment. Moreover, when participants judged the behavior regarding its sexually harassing quality, the mate value effect disappeared completely. When

participants could use this response dimension, they took the opportunity and rated the behavior independent of the man's attractiveness, that is, harassing behaviors were rated as more harassing, regardless of the harasser. On the rating dimension *sexually harassing*, ambiguous remarks were also judged more negatively than misogynist jokes, thus reversing results compared with the other rating dimensions, were in general, ratings for remarks were more positively than ratings for jokes.

This reversal could be due to the fact that remarks were directed personally at the participant, whereas jokes were directed at women in general. According to Gruber's (1992) typology of harassing behaviors, the more personal harassment is, the more severe it is perceived to be, although this proposition seems debatable. In addition, the critical remarks expressed sexual interest, whereas the critical jokes were misogynist, but had no sexual content. Ratings of the remarks as more sexually harassing could therefore reflect the participant's specific concept of what constitutes sexual harassment. Previous research has established that women tend to judge experiences of gender harassment as less likely to constitute harassment than experiences of unwanted sexual attention (Holzbecher et al., 1991, see also Stockdale et al., 1995). Of course, considering the current German legal definition of harassment in the AGG (2006) as well as common typologies of harassment (e.g., Fitzgerald, Gelfand, et al., 1995), participants were perfectly correct in their ratings. The respective rating scale was labeled *sexually harassing*, and not *harassing*, which would have included both gender harassment and sexual harassment. However, a general label *harassing* would also have included other forms of harassment (e.g., racial, age-based, based on physical disabilities, etc.), which would have made the measure too global. Neither was the response scale differentiated in *sexual* harassment and *gender* harassment. Given that, among female students at Bielefeld University, where the study was conducted, the terms *gender harassment* and *harassment* are even less commonly known, and understood as intended, than the term *sexual harassment*, the scale label was used nevertheless<sup>15</sup>. Because in my experience, female students at Bielefeld University in general tend not to differentiate between sexual and gender harassment, it is unlikely, however, that critical remarks were rated as more harassing (compared with critical jokes) because of these semantic issues.

Together, ratings on the dimension *sexually harassing* as well as emotional responses toward harassing behavior contradict effects of physical attractiveness in particular, and some status effects found in previous scenario studies also, where advances from individuals with high status were perceived more favorably (e.g., Black & Gold, 2003; Golden et al., 2001). The virtual absence of a mate value effect found on the dimension *sexually harassing* also is not in line with the evolutionary perspective, because even very good mate characteristics did not exonerate harassers. However, the absence of the mate value effect may offer tentative support for the

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<sup>15</sup> This impression stems from four seminars I held at Bielefeld University (two of which dealt exclusively with the topic of sexual and gender harassment, two of which dealt with a number of topics, among these the aforementioned), with almost exclusively female students, and from three studies I conducted on the influence of previous experience on perceptions of harassment scenarios. In the studies, I tried to develop an experimental manipulation varying the perceived frequency of prior experiences of harassment. Because the experimental manipulations did not work as planned, the studies are not included in this dissertation.

socio-structural perspective: Apparently, women were able to detect the attempt at subduing them.

Interestingly, and despite the rather consistent effects of attitude measures on perceptions of harassing behavior reported in the literature on scenario-based and retrospective studies, in this study of actual harassment, attitudes had virtually no influence on the dependent variables. A possible explanation for this lack of attitude effects might lie in the difference between scenario-based or retrospective studies and studies of actual harassment. Possibly, attitudes are more influential when participants are presented with scenarios of harassment and have time to deliberate about the scenarios' content. Likewise, when participants are asked retrospectively about their harassment experiences, the reconstruction and interpretation of behaviors while looking back might be more heavily influenced by attitudes, compared with experiencing a behavior and judging it more or less immediately. The unexpected general lack of attitude effects in Study 1 highlights the importance of conducting studies on actual harassment under controlled laboratory conditions. The by now quite firmly established view that attitudes do indeed influence harassment perceptions might only be justified for the perception of harassment scenarios, and at least partly false when it comes to the role of attitudes for the perceptions of actual harassment. Unfortunately, the only other study on women's actual harassment experiences in the published literature did not apply attitude measures (Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001, 2005). While Study 1 can offer only a first glimpse at the role of attitudes for actual harassment, it is nevertheless an important starting point for this vein of research.

That only one participant in the harassing conditions left her cubicle and complained about her chat partner's behavior is another contrast to analog studies. In the latter, most participants imagine responding assertively, which is often operationalized as filing a complaint or speaking to a supervisor (e.g., USMSPB, 1995; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001). The lack of this response in the present study is particularly interesting because during the informed consent procedure and the R-CHP's first stage, participants were repeatedly encouraged to contact the experimenter should any question arise. Furthermore, only one of the remaining participants in the harassing conditions (1.3%) sent her chat partner the most negative evaluation after each harassing item, and a still slight proportion of participants (14.3%) sent their chat partner the most negative emotional response after each harassing item. Therefore, in addition to not choosing the proxy to "report to supervisor" or "file an official complaint", they also "confronted the harasser" only to a minimal extent. This lack of open resistance is nevertheless in line with retrospective surveys on harassment victims (EC, 1998; Holzbecher et al., 1991; USMSPB, 1988, 1995), and will be the focus of Study 2.

## 11. Study 2

### 11.1 Introduction

How do women think they would react if, during a test run of a new online dating agency for students, their male chat partner sent them misogynist jokes or sexualized remarks? Based on previous research (e.g., Gutek & Koss, 1993; Koss et al., 1994, Sigal et al., 2003; USMSPB, 1995; see also section 7.2), the majority probably imagines to abandon the test run immediately, complain to the webmaster, or tell the harasser off, with whatever means they possess during the chat, and also thinks that this is the most appropriate way to react. However, as we have seen in Study 1, in the actual situation, only one in 78 participants left her cubicle and complained to the experimenter about her chat partner's behavior. This is in line with retrospective studies that establish the percentages of victims who ignore the harassment and avoid the harassers to be at least as large as percentages of victims that tell or request the harasser to stop, and only a small proportion of actual victims seek the help of others or file an official complaint (EC, 1998; Holzbecher et al., 1991; USMSPB, 1988, 1995; see also Table 2). A few experiments replicate this phenomenon in the laboratory (Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001, 2005), but these are extremely scarce. The present Study 2 as a complement of Study 1 considerably adds to the so far meager body of comparisons between actual and imagined responses to harassment under controlled laboratory conditions. Study 2 focuses on the behavioral reactions that were virtually absent in Study 1, namely, *complain to the experimenter* and *abandon the experiment*.

The main purpose of Study 2 was to find out what kind of response participants imagined to give, based purely on the behavior itself. Therefore, information about harasser's physical attractiveness and financial prospects as incentive to reinterpret behavior was not provided. In line with previous research, I expected a large proportion of imagined assertive responses, i.e., complaining to the experimenter or abandoning the study, as well as a large proportion of solely the most negative evaluations and most negative emotional responses. Because previous research is so scarce, the magnitude of this proportion is hard to estimate, but it should exceed fifty percent. For type of behavior, several directions of results are possible. First, in the absence of mate value, there is no incentive for participants to interpret the ambiguous remarks more favorably than the derogatory jokes. However, the ambiguous nature of the remarks might be sufficient to produce more favorable ratings, compared with jokes. Second, due to the more personal nature of remarks, compared with jokes, ratings could also be more negative for remarks than for jokes<sup>16</sup>. Third, jokes could be rated as worse than remarks because jokes are derogatory, but, fourth, this effect could also be offset by the jokes' funniness. In all, analysis for type of behavior was exploratory.

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<sup>16</sup> I am indebted to a reader of a previous draft for pointing out the first two aspects.

## 11.2 Method

### 11.2.1 Participants

Forty-two female students of the University of Bielefeld participated in groups. Data from seven participants were excluded from analyses (due to too many missing data, and, to provide comparability with Study 1, lesbian orientation). Mean age of the remaining 35 participants (19 randomly assigned to the remarks, 16 to the jokes condition) was 25.29 years ( $SD = 6.12$  years, range 20 to 54 years).

### 11.2.2 Procedure

Participants volunteered individually for a “study on behavioral options”. After informed consent was obtained, up to six participants completed their questionnaires simultaneously at individual tables in the laboratory. Afterwards, participants were debriefed and received 2 Euros or course credit and a chocolate bar; they also received information about sexual harassment and contact information.

### 11.2.3 Materials

Participants in Study 2 received a written scenario (paper-and-pencil format) of the cover story and first stages of Study 1. In the instruction, participants were asked to put themselves in the situation described. The German originals of the instruction and the scenario are presented in appendix B.

On individual pages, one joke or remark from the harassing conditions of Study 1 was presented with response scales labeled “*You can give your chat partner feedback about your evaluation/feeling*”, followed by the respective response scale for *evaluation* and *emotional response* (both anchored 1 = *very good* to 6 = *very bad*). Before analyses, evaluations and emotional responses to critical items were averaged and recoded so that higher values indicated better evaluation or feeling, respectively, in order to make these variables comparable between Studies 1 and 2 (*evaluation*: Cronbach’s alpha = .94, *feeling*: Cronbach’s alpha = .86).

Under the heading “*Would you do anything else?*”, four behavioral options were presented: (1) “*I go outside, inform the experimenter that my chat partner sends strange things, and continue the chat*”, (2) “*I go outside, inform the experimenter that my chat partner sends strange things, ask them to tell him he shall stop doing so, and continue the chat*”, (3) “*I go outside, inform the experimenter that my chat partner sends strange things, and abandon the study*”, and in addition (4) “*I go outside and leave without further comment*” (each anchored 1 = *definitely not* to 6 = *definitely*). Response options like these are usually used in scenario studies, and to keep Study 2 comparable to previous research, this response format was preferred over an open format. I counted as complain responses to the first two behavioral options and as abandon responses to the last two options that were four or higher on at least one of the respective scales, coded with



one, indicating that participants imagined to rather definitely react that way<sup>17</sup>. Responses that were lower than four on both scales were coded with zero.

## 11.3 Results

### 11.3.1 Imagined behavioral reactions

Responding to critical items, 62.5 % of participants (19 out of 32<sup>18</sup>) imagined complaining to the experimenter, and 62.9 %<sup>19</sup> of participants (22 out of 35) imagined abandoning the study. Compared with only one (1.3 percent) participant in Study 1 who actually complained and abandoned the experiment, more than half of participants responded assertively, which is in line with predictions and with previous research comparing actual and imagined responses to sexual harassment. However, these data are not easily interpreted, because 41.2 % of participants (14 out of 34) imagined to complain to the experimenter even after receiving neutral items, and 32.4 % of participants (11 out of 34) imagined abandoning the study altogether after receiving neutral items. To further explore these data, I conducted a repeated measures mixed model ANOVA in the GLM, with the mean number of complaints after receiving neutral versus harassing materials as the first within-participants factor, the mean number of abandoning the experiment after receiving neutral versus harassing materials as the second within-participants factor, and type of behavior (jokes versus remarks) as between-participants factor<sup>20</sup>. Participants imagined abandoning the experiment altogether more frequently after receiving harassing items ( $M = .24$ ,  $SD 0.31$ ) than after receiving non-harassing items, ( $M = 0.09$ ,  $SD 0.15$ )  $F(1, 30) = 29.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .49$ . For the behavioral option “*complain*”, the difference was not significant between harassing and non-harassing items, and type of behavior also had no significant effect on the imagined reactions.

### 11.3.2 Evaluations of materials

To compare responses between studies, I created a combined dataset by including the 77 cases of harassing conditions who completed Study 1 into the dataset of Study 2 (total  $N = 112$ ) and conducted ANOVAs of the 2 (group: real vs. imagined harassment) x 2 (material: jokes vs. remarks) between-participants design. For real (vs. imagined) harassment, mean evaluation was more positive ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD 1.12$  vs.  $M = 1.99$ ,  $SD 0.84$ ),  $F(1, 108) = 71.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .40$ .

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<sup>17</sup> I realize that different codings and analyses are also possible, but decided to use a rather conservative method.

<sup>18</sup> Differing sample sizes are due to some missing data.

<sup>19</sup> Some participants indicated they would complain as well as abandon the study, therefore, reported percentages exceed 100%.

<sup>20</sup> Due to the coding of “*complain*” and “*abandon*”, the maximum mean value was one, and the minimum mean value was zero.

Therefore, participants in the scenario gave the harasser more negative feedback than participants actually experiencing the behavior had done. Looking at the most extreme individual ratings, seven out of 35 participants (20 percent) in the imagined-harassment group evaluated each of the six harassing items with the worst possible mark, also a considerable difference to participants in Study 1, where only one out of 77 (1.3 percent) did this.

### 11.3.3 Emotional responses

The mean *emotional response* toward critical items was the dependent variable in the next analysis. *Group* had a marginally significant main effect: Participants who only imagined being harassed indicated less negative affect than participants who were actually harassed ( $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD 1.08$  vs.  $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD 1.08$ ),  $F(1, 108) = 3.67$ ,  $p < .06$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ . On the level of the most extreme individual ratings, this reversal compared with actual harassment was also found: Only one out of 35 participants (2.9 percent) in Study 2 imagined to send the chat partner the worst possible feedback, compared to 11 participants (14.3 percent) in Study 1. Furthermore, participants indicated imagining to feel less bad after receiving jokes than remarks ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD 1.21$  vs.  $M = 2.21$ ,  $SD 0.90$ ),  $F(1, 108) = 5.80$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .05$ , which is in contrast to findings in Study 1 and not in line with our hypothesis, which predicted no differences between behaviors.

## 11.4 Discussion

Are the responses of women actually experiencing harassment different from the responses that women imagine to give if they were harassed? A large number of survey respondents already told researchers that the respective responses are indeed dramatically different, but to date, only a very few studies under controlled laboratory conditions support these field data (see Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001; 2005, for an exception). Study 2, together with Study 1 reported previously, doubles this body of experimental research. In Study 2, women imagined themselves to be in an online chat situation, testing a new online dating agency for students, where they received harassing materials (either jokes or remarks, depending on experimental condition) by a male chat partner. Reading scenarios of the respective situations of Study 1, participants indicated what evaluation of the material and what feeling they would send to their chat partner as feedback. In addition, participants indicated with what likelihood they would complain to the experimenter if they were in that situation, and with what likelihood they would abandon the experiment. Therefore, Study 2 was a scenario replication in parts of Study 1 (the role of chat partner's mate value was not the focus of Study 2; hence, this information was not provided).

Overall, participants in Study 2 imagined sending more negative evaluative feedback than their counterparts in the actual situation. This result mirrors previous analog studies as well as field surveys, where participants usually imagine confronting the harasser (USMSPB, 1995; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001). Participant's (marginally significantly) better feelings in the scenario study, compared with the study of actual harassment, reflect another problem surrounding analog research on effects of sexual harassment: Negative impact is underestimated. In one rare

example (Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001), participants actually experiencing harassment reported more fear, whereas participants imagining the same situation reported more anger. Although the emotional response scale in Study 2 does not differentiate between emotions, the underestimation of negative impact is also in line with previous research.

In Study 1, only one participant actually abandoned the experiment and told the experimenters that her chat partner was behaving in a way she did not like. In stark contrast, a large proportion of participants in Study 2 imagined to complain to the experimenter and/or abandon the experiment completely after they received one or more harassing items. This dramatic difference between actual and imagined responses to harassment is fully in line with previous research. Surprisingly, however, a still sizable, but significantly smaller proportion of participants indicated abandoning the experiment also after receiving non-harassing items that were interspersed with the harassing items. The difference between complaining after receiving harassing items and after receiving neutral items was not significant. It might be that participants in the scenario study experienced an accumulation of imagined negative impact that led to a spillover of negativity from the critical items to the neutral items. What process exactly was in play, however, cannot be deduced from this data.

Different effects of type of harassing behavior were deemed possible in Study 2. In contrast to Study 1, where remarks sent by a chat partner with high mate value were actually evaluated better than jokes, participants in Study 2 imagined feeling better after receiving harassing jokes. This effect might reflect the jokes' funniness. Another possibility is that better ratings do not reflect a property of the jokes, but instead hint at a different meaning of the remarks, compared with results of Study 1: The remarks, formulated to express sexual interest and directed at the receiver, might lose their offensiveness when participants only read about them instead of actually receiving them as directed at themselves. However, the nature of the data presented here does not allow for a firm conclusion.

In Study 2, no information about the harasser's mate value was given, because the focus of this study was different than the focus of Study 1: The main object was to contrast actual and imagined responses between Study 1 and Study 2, in a manner comparable with the very few previous studies that had a similar focus. Therefore, the relative importance of physical attractiveness and quality of financial resources could not be ascertained in Study 2. To achieve this goal, I conducted Study 3.



## 12. Study 3<sup>21</sup>

### 12.1 Introduction

Whom would a woman choose as her romantic partner: A Brad Pitt-lookalike or rich but nerdy Bill Gates? The question whether physical attractiveness or quality of financial resources of a future mate are more important for women has already been answered by psychological research: Although they appreciate good looks, women generally prefer money over looks. By evolutionary psychology's account, this preference for good resources can be traced back to the greater investment of women (and other female mammals), compared with men (and other male mammals) in the production of offspring, as laid out in section 8.1 (e.g., Buss et al., 1990; Trivers, 1972). Socio-structural accounts, on the other hand, attribute this preference to the patriarchal makeup of virtually all current societies. With the lion's share of economic and political power in the hands of men (United Nations, 2007/2008), and women only able to make their own way in the world since the last half century, and only in industrialized societies, getting a rich and powerful male companion has long been a viable way for women to access resources and power themselves (e.g., Eagly & Wood, 1999, see also section 8.2)<sup>22</sup>.

Both approaches predict that women should be more inclined to interpret harassing behaviors expressing sexual or romantic interest as more positive when the initiator is physically attractive and/or has good resources at his disposal. Previous scenario research of harassment has provided ample support for this effect of physical attractiveness (see section 9.3), and, although with qualifications, also provided support for the effect of resources (see section 9.4).

In Study 3, one aim is to gather more information about the virtues of the socio-structural and the evolutionary psychological approach, respectively. The second aim is to ascertain the relative importance of physical attractiveness and quality of financial resources by varying these factors separately. Regarding the first aim, disentangling the predictions made by the evolutionary approach and the socio-structural approach is not easy, because both perspectives, as we have seen, are greatly similar with regard to the hypotheses derived from them.

However, the notion of inclusive fitness or kin fitness (Hamilton, 1964; Williams & Williams, 1957) allows for testing specific predictions made by the evolutionary perspective by in-

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<sup>21</sup> Study 3 was conducted in a course on experimental methods in psychology, which I convened. I am indebted to the students Jennifer Bernartz, Julia Bullik, Inka Jockheck, and Bernadette Kramer (in alphabetical order) for their input in developing experimental materials and data collection.

<sup>22</sup> A third approach, the biosocial or sociobiological models, combines both perspectives: Whereas certain physical characteristics of the two sexes (foremost, the ability of women to bear children and breast feed infants, but also men's greater upper body strength, size, and speed), contribute to a division of labor by sex, and thus to men and women occupying different social roles, societies develop structures and cultural practices that reinforce this division (see, e.g., Bohner & Wänke, 2004; Wood & Eagly, 2002, for examples of this type of model). However, in order to disentangle the perspectives, the pure forms provide a better starting point.

investigating reactions to the behavior toward *others*, and varying the degree of genetic relationship to the target in a scenario. Several studies have used such a paradigm to investigate helping behavior (Burnstein, Crandall, & Kitayama, 1994), or reactions to infidelity (Bohner, Echterhoff, Glass, Patrzek, & Lampridis, 2009). In contrast to the original concept of Darwinian fitness (the number of offspring produced by an individual), the notion of inclusive fitness refers to the number of offspring produced by an individual *plus the number of offspring produced by that individual's genetic relations*: Because we share genetic material with our kin, reproduction of kin reproduces our own genes.

Therefore, if one's sister receives sexual advances by a very well-off man, one's own genes might have a better chance of reproduction than when that sister receives advances by a man of average wealth or even a poor man. Thus, the advances of the well-off man should be interpreted more favorably when a sister is the target, *in contrast to when a genetically unrelated target receives the advances*. The socio-structural perspective would propose no difference between perceptions of sexual advances to a sister compared with sexual advances to a close female friend. For both, access to a rich man's good resources should be valued by the participant. The crucial control for comparing the evolutionary psychological and the socio-structural approach is varying not only genetic relatedness, but also keeping social relationship constant over degrees of genetic relationship (Burnstein et al., 1994; Bohner et al., 2009). This design is based on the assumption that levels of psychological or social closeness are comparable between siblings and between close friends, thus holding the degree of social relationship constant between the two targets.

In the present study, I adapted the inclusive fitness design to study the effects of male harasser resources and attractiveness on perceptions of his behavior toward targets differing in genetic and social closeness to the research participant. In addition to a sister and a close female friend as target, I introduced a third target for control purposes: A female stranger. Instead of conducting a second study on actual harassment experiences, I used harassment scenarios. Because the aim of Study 3 was to assess how participants perceived behaviors toward others, not toward themselves, use of scenarios was much more feasible than setting up an experimental situation including a participant, her sister, her close female friend, and a female stranger. Nevertheless, this also means that conclusions about actual harassment, based on results of Study 3, have to be preliminary.

To gauge the relative ratings that participants assigned to the harassing behavior, according to the target person, I varied degree of relationship as within-participants factor, as was done previously. Harasser's physical attractiveness was operationalized by presenting pictures of differently attractive men and harasser's quality of resources was varied by written descriptions depicting these men's occupational status and mode of living. Degree of relationship was operationalized by asking the participants to imagine the target behavior was directed at their sister, a close female friend and a female stranger. Type of harassment was held constant: Only ambiguous forms of sexual attention were applied.

In the resulting 2 (physical attractiveness: high vs. low) x 2 (quality of resources: high vs. low) x 3 (relationship: genetic and social vs. non-genetic and social vs. non-genetic and non-

social) mixed design with attractiveness and resources as between- and degree of relationship as within-participants factor, I tested the following hypotheses.

For the first two hypotheses, both the evolutionary and the socio-structural perspective make the same predictions:

Hypothesis 3.1: Harassing behavior in the form of sexual attention is perceived as less harassing when shown by a physically attractive man than when shown by a physically unattractive man.

Hypothesis 3.2: Harassing behavior in the form of sexual attention is perceived as less harassing when shown by a man with good resources than when shown by a man with bad resources.

With regard to the relative importance of physical attractiveness and quality of resources, analyses were exploratory. Similarly, it is unclear whether effects of harasser unattractiveness and bad resources would mirror the effects stated in hypothesis 3.2; therefore, these analyses were also exploratory.

With regard to type of relationship, the socio-structural perspective would be subsumed under the first two hypotheses. Only the evolutionary perspective allows for a third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3.3: Harassing behavior in the form of sexual attention by an attractive man / a man with good resources is perceived as less harassing when directed at a sister than when directed at a female friend or a female stranger.

## 12.2 Method

### 12.2.1 Participants

A total of 151 female students participated in the study. Participants' mean age 23.84 years (range 19 to 49 years, *SD* 5.49 years), and 34 % were psychology students<sup>23</sup>.

### 12.2.2 Procedure

Participants were recruited on campus and asked to participate in a „study on interpersonal behavior in the workplace“. After completing an informed consent procedure, participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions. Then they filled in the materials while seated in individual cubicles. After completion, participants were fully debriefed and received one Euro,

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<sup>23</sup> The comparatively large proportion of participants who studied psychology in Study 3 is probably due to the fact that the study was conducted as part of one of several parallel courses in experimental methods in psychology, for which students helped each other out in data collection by participating also in studies of others conducted at the same time. I repeated the analyses without psychology students: The direction of results was unchanged, although significance levels were not always retained. Because the latter might well be due to reduced power because of the reduction of sample size, I retained the data of psychology students for the analyses reported here.

course credit or a token for a lottery on book vouchers, depending on choice. All participants received a chocolate bar before they were thanked and dismissed.

### 12.2.3 Materials

The complete material for each experimental condition of the main study consisted of the picture of a man (physical attractiveness: high vs. low), a description of the man (quality of financial resources: good vs. bad), and a separate questionnaire describing the harassing, but ambiguous behavior of the man toward female colleagues at work, with the female colleagues being a (imagined) sister and a (imagined) female friend of the participant, and a (imagined) third woman who was a stranger to the participant. Picture and descriptions were presented below a general introduction to the study, which read:

*We introduce you to an employee of a company who behaves in a certain way towards colleagues. Subsequently, you are asked to rate these behaviors shown towards three different persons. Please imagine these three persons to be your sister, a woman who is a stranger to you, and a close female friend, who are between 27 and 30 years old. If you do not have a sister/friend of the right age, please imagine having one. The three women work in different departments than the employee presented to you. All are neither superior nor subordinate to each other, and there are no personal relationships between them. All encounter each other from time to time in the office building.*

Age of sister and friend (and also harasser, see below) was chosen to be close to the typical age of couples at first marriage in Germany (29.6 years, Statistisches Bundesamt, 2008). Materials were developed and pretested as described below. Following the introduction, picture and description were presented in a booklet. Below the booklet, the separate questionnaire for behavior ratings was positioned. On the first page, participants were again reminded that they should acquaint themselves with the employee's picture and description, demographic data were collected, and participants were asked to complete the questionnaire page by page. On the last page, participants were asked to indicate the number of sisters they had, each sister's age, whether they imagined their sister to be the target person while rating the behaviors, and whether they thought about a particular female friend while rating the behavior along with the age of that friend. Behaviors were presented in fixed order, and order of judgments for sister, friend and stranger was varied between participants, so that each target was rated first, second, or last, resulting in six order conditions. Order of target had no significant effects, therefore, analyses are reported across order conditions below.

#### 12.2.3.1. Pictures

Thirty frontal pictures of men were downloaded from three scientific databases: PAL Face Database (Minear & Park, 2004), A-Face (McKimmie & Chalmers, 2002), and Beautycheck (Braun, Gründl, Marberger & Scherber, 2001). Pictures showed men with neutral facial expressions, without glasses and visible disfigurements, and all showed head, neck, and shoulders. The pictures were printed out on white paper using a high-quality color-printer, numbered and pre-



sented as a booklet<sup>24</sup>. Pictures were rated by 30 female students of Bielefeld University. Participants' mean age was 23.33 years (range 21 to 34 years,  $SD$  2.99 years), and 33 percent were psychology students. Participants were recruited on campus, and filled in the material in group sessions after an informed consent procedure. Each picture was rated on the dimensions *attractiveness*, *sexiness*, and *attractiveness as a partner in a romantic relationship* (all on six-point scales, from 1 (*not at all attractive/sexy*, respectively), to 6 (*very attractive/sexy*, respectively), and an age estimate of each man was also collected.

Intercorrelations of the three attractiveness ratings per picture were all larger than  $r = .60$ , and Cronbach's alpha for these three-item scales were all larger than  $.73$ ; therefore, these ratings were collapsed for each picture. The two pictures with the highest and the lowest attractiveness ratings, whose age estimates were closest together, were retained for the main study to provide a stimulus replication. Mean attractiveness ratings of the two attractive and the two unattractive pictures were  $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD$  1.04, and  $M = 1.19$ ,  $SD$  0.49, respectively, which differed significantly,  $t(29) = 10.62$ ,  $p < .001$  (two-tailed), Cohen's  $d = 2.52$ . Mean age ratings of the attractive and unattractive pictures were  $M = 25.35$  years,  $SD$  2.38, and  $M = 25.90$ ,  $SD$  3.03, respectively, which did not differ significantly,  $t(29) = -1.27$ ,  $p > .21$  (two-tailed), Cohen's  $d = -0.21$ .

### 12.2.3.2. Harassing behavior

To develop a stimulus array that was clearly harassing, but at the same time also interpretable more favorably (i.e., as a compliment or flirtation), participants in the picture pretest also received a questionnaire listing 33 different behaviors of a man toward a woman. In this pretest, the remarks from Study 1 were presented along with new material. Behaviors were rated on the dimensions *insult*, *compliment*, and *sexually harassing*, all on six-point scales anchored 1 = *totally disagree* to 6 = *totally agree*. To create an ambiguous but clearly sexually harassing stimulus array for the main study, five behaviors were retained that had ratings of sexually harassing above the scale midpoint,  $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD$  1.13, two of which also had high insult and low compliment ratings ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD$  1.20 and  $M = 1.83$ ,  $SD$  0.91, respectively) and three of which also had lower insult and higher compliment ratings ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD$  1.20 and  $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD$  1.18, respectively). The collapsed ratings for all five behaviors were all significantly different from the scale endpoint of 1, all  $t(29) > 9.86$ , all  $p < .001$  (two-tailed). Pretest results for the single behaviors are presented in the German original in Table 6.

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<sup>24</sup> Half of participants rated the pictures in a fixed random order, and the other half rated the pictures in reversed order. Order had no effect on ratings, therefore, results are presented collapsed over order conditions.

Table 6: Pretest results of harassing behaviors, Study 3.

Behavior	sexually harassing	insult	compliment
Matthias begegnet am Kopierer einer der Frauen und sagt: „Mir wird ja ganz warm, wenn ich dich sehe.“	4.00 <i>1.58</i>	3.23 <i>1.83</i>	3.17 <i>1.70</i>
Als Matthias aus einer Besprechung kommt, schaut er eine der Frauen an und leckt sich die Lippen.	4.63 <i>1.47</i>	4.40 <i>1.75</i>	1.93 <i>1.29</i>
Matthias ist auf dem Weg in die Kantine, trifft eine der Frauen und schaut sich intensiv ihre Beine an	4.10 <i>1.49</i>	3.27 <i>1.44</i>	3.23 <i>1.50</i>
Matthias trifft eine der Frauen auf dem Flur und sagt zu ihr: „Dein Rock sitzt ganz schön knapp.“	3.37 <i>1.61</i>	4.33 <i>1.45</i>	1.73 <i>1.11</i>
Matthias kommt in der Kantine am Tisch einer der Frauen vorbei und sagt zu ihr: „Du siehst so süß aus wie die Schokolade, die ich gleich vernaschen werde.“	4.13 <i>1.61</i>	3.60 <i>1.57</i>	3.17 <i>1.51</i>

Note: Behaviors are listed as used in the main study. In the pretest, harasser name and context were not mentioned (pretest example: Der Mann sagt zu der Frau: “Mir wird ja ganz warm, wenn ich dich sehe”); sexually harassing = mean on the dimension *sexually harassing*, insult = mean on the dimension *insult*, compliment = mean on the dimension *compliment*; response scales from 1 = *totally disagree* to 6 = *totally agree*; standard deviations in italics.

### 12.2.3.3. Harasser description

Descriptions of a man with either good or bad financial resources at his disposal were pretested in a second pretest with 39 female students of Bielefeld University (mean age = 24.44 years, *SD* 5.10 years, range 18 to 45 years). Half of participants were randomly assigned to receive the description of good, half of bad resources. For both descriptions, the man was introduced as “Matthias”, a German male first name chosen because it evokes associations of a man about 30 years old, of medium attractiveness and intelligence (Rudolph et al., 2007). Age was given as 32 years, chosen to be close to the mean age of men at first marriage in Germany (32.6 years, Statistisches Bundesamt, 2008). The other characteristics were chosen for their assumed associations with good or bad financial resources. The description of *good (bad)* resources read:

Matthias is 32 years old and graduated in biology. For five years, he has been working in *Munich (Oldenburg)* and is well liked in his team. He likes his job, not least because the working climate is so good. *In addition, the pay is very well (For that, he puts up with the bad pay)*. He regularly attends off-the-job training, e.g., in *New York and Florence (Essen and Dresden)*, and *often combines that with a short trip which he can easily afford financially (would like to combine that with a short trip, which he can, however, not afford financially)*. On fine mornings, he rides his *new racing bike (old town bike)* to work. On rainy days, he takes his *BMW (the bus)*. To recreate, he *does barbecues with friends on the patio of his condo (cooks with friends in his shared flat)*, or *stays in his holiday home at the Starnberger See (goes swimming in a nearby flooded gravel-pit)*. He spends his holidays *diving in the Maldiv Islands (camping at the North Sea)*.

In the original materials in German, both descriptions had the same length of 124 words. Participants were asked to evaluate “Matthias” on the following dimensions: *success of career so far, ability to be the main bread winner of a family now/later in life, niceness as a platonic friend, attractiveness as a partner in a romantic relationship, and desire to go out with Matthias*, all on

six-point scales from 1 (*very good/attractive/much*, respectively) to 6 (*very bad/not at all attractive/not at all*, respectively). The first three items intercorrelated  $r = .55$  or higher, and Cronbach's alpha was .84, therefore, they were combined into a *finances* variable. Attractiveness as a partner and desire to go out intercorrelated  $r = .79$ , and Cronbach's alpha was .89, therefore, they were combined into an *attractiveness* variable. *Finances* were rated significantly better in the good financial resources condition,  $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD 0.79$ , than in the bad financial resources condition,  $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD 0.83$ ,  $F(1,37) = 115.01$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .95$ , and *attractiveness* likewise,  $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD 1.37$ , vs.  $M = 4.65$ ,  $SD 1.50$ , respectively,  $F(1,37) = 5.68$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .13$ . On a descriptive level, the man with good resources was rated as nicer than the man with bad resources,  $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD 1.08$ , and  $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD 1.48$ , but not significantly so,  $F(1,75) = 2.82$ ,  $p < .10$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ .

To sum up, participants in the main study were presented with a picture and a description of a man either high or low in physical attractiveness and with either good or bad financial resources at his disposal, who behaved toward a (imagined) sister and a (imagined) female friend of the participant, and toward a female stranger to the participant, in a way that was clearly harassing, but, as a whole, also ambiguous and interpretable in a more favorable way. Behavior of the harasser was rated for each target person along scales headed with "behavior is.." and on the dimensions *...an insult*, *...contributes to a good working climate*, *...is a compliment*, and *...is sexually harassing*, each measured on a six-point scale anchored 1 = *totally disagree* to 6 = *totally agree*, so that higher values indicate stronger insult, more of a compliment, and more sexual harassment. The working-climate item was added as filler and results are not reported here<sup>25</sup>.

## 12.3 Results<sup>26</sup>

Intercorrelations of ratings within each rating dimension, and within sister, friend and stranger, respectively, were all significant and positive, albeit usually only moderate in effect size, and Cronbach's alpha was acceptable or satisfactory for each scale. Therefore, ratings on the dimension insult, compliment, and sexually harassing, could be collapsed over the five behaviors, resulting in mean insult, compliment, and sexual harassment ratings for behavior toward a sister, a female friend, and a female stranger, respectively. Means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha for each scale can be seen in Table 7.

<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, results for the working climate item were in the same direction as results for the critical dimensions.

<sup>26</sup> To check whether results differed for those participants who actually had a sister of roughly suitable age, or for those who reported having actually thought about a close female friend of roughly suitable age, I repeated all analyses. First, I included only the data of those participants ( $N = 76$ ) who had a sister between 18 and 40 years, and second, I included only the data of those participants ( $N = 92$ ) who had thought about a female friend between 18 and 40 years (for an analysis were both parameters applied,  $N$  was too small). Overall, results retained their pattern, but some lost their level of significance. Given the considerably smaller  $N$  for both analyses, compared to the analyses of the complete dataset, loss of significance is not surprising, and the fact that the overall effect pattern was retained is encouraging.

Table 7: Properties of the insult, compliment, and sexual harassment scale, Study 3.

	Sister			Friend			Stranger		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's alpha	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's alpha	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's alpha
Insult	3.59	1.05	.75	3.50	1.02	.72	3.37	0.94	.68
Compliment	2.67	0.86	.69	2.73	0.84	.67	2.74	0.81	.69
Sexual harassment	3.94	1.01	.75	3.88	1.02	.75	3.82	0.94	.71

Note: The insult, compliment, and sexual harassment scales consist of the collapsed ratings on the respective dimension over all five behaviors. *M* = scale mean, *SD* = standard deviation.

Within sister, friend and stranger, respectively, and across rating dimensions, the four collapsed means were differently intercorrelated (some moderate or large positive correlations, some small, moderate or large negative correlations); therefore, I conducted separate mixed ANOVAs with *type of relationship* (genetic and social vs. non-genetic and social vs. non-genetic and non-social) as within-participants factor and *physical attractiveness* and quality of *financial resources* as between-participants factors<sup>27</sup>.

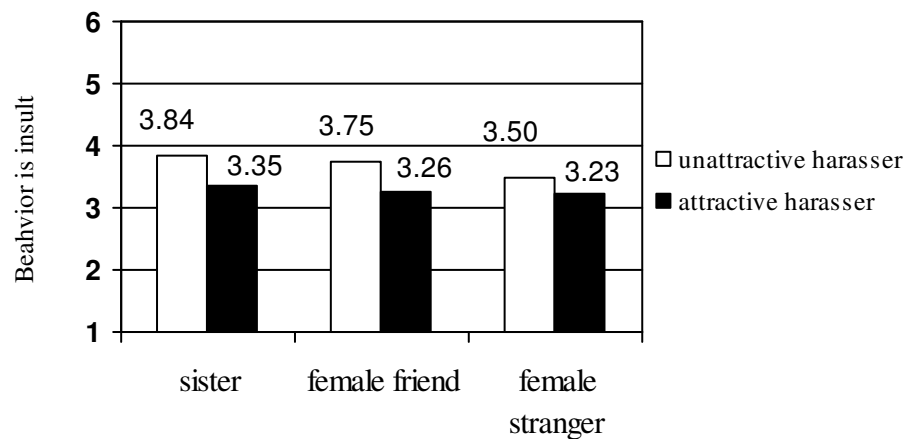
### 12.3.1 Evaluation of behavior: Insult

*Type of relationship* to the target person of harassing behavior significantly influenced ratings of the behavior as insulting: Behavior toward sister was rated as most insulting ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD 1.05$ ), followed by behavior toward female friend ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD 1.02$ ), and behavior toward female stranger was rated as least insulting ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD 0.94$ ). Because Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated,  $\chi^2(2) = 44.54$ ,  $p < .001$ , degrees of freedom for the main effect of *type of relationship* were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ( $\epsilon = .79$ ),  $F(1.586, 234.658) = 12.92$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .80$ . To further explore the effect, contrasts were performed with friend as the reference category. Contrasts indicated that ratings for sister and female stranger each significantly differed from ratings for female friend,  $F(1, 147) = 7.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .05$ , and  $F(1, 147) = 7.88$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .05$ , respectively. Put another way, with decreasing closeness, harassing behavior was rated as less insulting.

*Physical attractiveness* of the harasser also significantly influenced insult ratings of his behavior over types of relationship: The attractive man's behavior toward sister, female friend, and female stranger was rated as less insulting than the unattractive man's behavior toward sister,

<sup>27</sup> All analyses were repeated with order of target person (sister, female friend, female stranger) for the behavior rating as additional between-participants factor. Order had no effect, and effects of the other factors did not change in direction or significance when order was included as factor. Therefore, all analyses are reported collapsed over order conditions.

female friend, and female stranger,  $F(1, 148) = 6.59, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$ . Individual means can be seen in Figure 7, *SDs* ranged from 0.83 to 0.96 for the attractive man and from 1.02 to 1.09 for the unattractive man. Overall mean for the attractive man was 3.28, standard error 0.11 and overall mean for the unattractive man was 3.70, standard error 0.11.



*Figure 7.* Mean rating of the behavior as *insult* as a function of *type of relationship* and harasser's *physical attractiveness*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate stronger insult (Study 3).

The interaction *type of relationship*  $\times$  *attractiveness* was also significant,  $F(1.586, 234.658) = 4.13, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ . This indicates that behavior ratings of insult for differently attractive harassers differed across (imagined) types of relationship of the participant to the target person in the scenario (means can be seen in Figure 7). Contrasts with female friend as reference category revealed that the attractiveness effect was not different from the attractiveness effect for behavior toward a sister, but different from behavior toward a female stranger,  $F(1, 148) = 5.14, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ . Accordingly, when sister was the reference category, contrasts comparing sister with female stranger also showed a significant difference,  $F(1, 148) = 4.76, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ .

The behavior of the man with good resources was not rated differently from the behavior of the man with bad resources, overall  $M = 3.47$ , standard error 0.11, and  $M = 3.51$ , standard error 0.11, respectively,  $F(1, 148) = 0.8, p < .79, \eta_p^2 = .00$ .

In all, hypothesis 3.1 received support, in that the behavior of a physically attractive harasser was rated as more positive than the behavior of a physically unattractive harasser, but hypothesis 3.2, predicting a similar effect for quality of financial resources, was not supported. Likewise, the prediction made by the evolutionary psychological perspective, that participants would tend to interpret the behavior of a physically attractive man with good resources more favorably when it was directed toward their (imagined) sister than when it was directed toward a female friend or a female stranger, was not supported: First, the direction of the valence of be-

havior ratings was reversed, with *less* favorable behavior interpretations when a sister was the target, even with an attractive man, but also, the difference between ratings for sister and female friend was not significant, whereas the difference between the former two categories and female stranger was significant.

### 12.3.2 Evaluation of behavior: Compliment

The attractive man's behavior toward sister, female friend, and female stranger was rated as more of a compliment than the unattractive man's behavior toward sister, female friend, and female stranger,  $F(1, 148) = 19.32, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .12$ . Individual means can be seen in Figure 8, *SDs* ranged from 0.85 to 0.86 for the attractive man and from 0.71 to 0.77 for the unattractive man. Overall mean for the attractive man was 2.98, standard error 0.07 and overall mean for the unattractive man was 2.33, standard error 0.07.

For the significant interaction effect of *type of relationship* x *attractiveness*,  $F(1.765, 261.202) = 3.23, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$ , Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated,  $\chi^2(2) = 21.02, p < .001$ . Therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ( $\epsilon = .88$ ). Contrasts with female friend as reference category revealed no significant difference between ratings for a female friend and a sister, but a tendency for a more pronounced attractiveness effect for behavior toward a friend than a female stranger,  $F(1, 148) = 3.38, p = .068, \eta_p^2 = .02$ . Means are depicted in Figure 8. Accordingly, with sister as reference category, contrasts revealed that the attractiveness effect was more pronounced when the target person was a sister than when she was a female stranger,  $F(1, 148) = 4.70, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ .

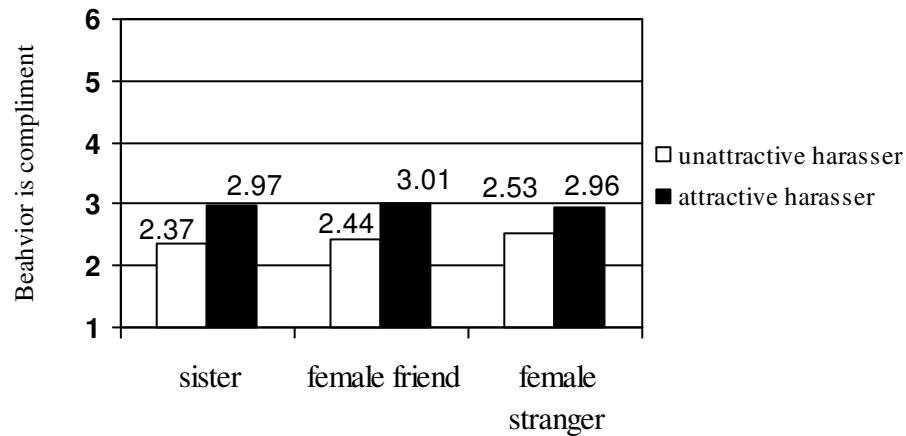


Figure 8. Mean rating of the behavior as *compliment* as a function of *type of relationship* and harasser's *physical attractiveness*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate better compliment (Study 3).

Quality of resources had no effect on the ratings of the behavior as a compliment. Behavior of a man with good resources was not rated differently from the behavior of the man with bad resources, overall  $M = 2.80$ , standard error 0.09, and  $M = 2.62$ , standard error 0.09, respectively,  $F(1, 148) = 2.15$ ,  $p < .14$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ .

Again, hypothesis 3.1 was supported, but hypothesis 3.2 was not. The attractive harasser's behavior was interpreted more favorably, but the same was not true for the behavior of a man with better financial resources. The evolutionary perspective's prediction for more favorable behavior interpretations when the behavior of an attractive harasser with good financial resources directed at a sister, compared with the other targets, as formulated in hypothesis 3.3, was not clearly supported: The attractiveness effect did not differ between sister and female friend, but only between sister and female stranger, and marginally significantly so between female friend and female stranger.

### 12.3.3 Evaluation of behavior: Sexually harassing

On ratings of the behavior as sexually harassing, *type of relationship* to the target person had a significant influence,  $F(1.806, 267.233) = 6.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ . Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated,  $\chi^2(2) = 16.74$ ,  $p < .001$ , therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ( $\epsilon = .90$ ). Contrasts with female friend as reference category revealed that both the difference between ratings of behavior toward a sister ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD 1.01$ ) and toward a female stranger ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD 0.93$ ) were marginally different from ratings of behavior toward a female friend ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD 1.02$ ),  $F(1, 148) = 3.82$ ,  $p = .053$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$  for the contrast with sister, and  $F(1, 148) = 3.36$ ,  $p = .069$ ,

$\eta_p^2 = .02$  for the contrast with stranger, respectively. Accordingly, with sister as reference category, ratings for sister significantly differed from ratings for female stranger,  $F(1, 148) = 10.06$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .06$ . Again, this first result does not support the prediction in hypothesis 3.3, that behaviors should be interpreted *more* favorably for the sister than for the other two targets.

The attractive man's behavior toward sister, female friend, and female stranger was rated as less harassing than the unattractive man's behavior toward sister, female friend, and female stranger,  $F(1, 148) = 11.97$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ . Individual means can be seen in Figure 9, *SDs* ranged from 0.89 to 1.02 for the attractive man and from 0.94 to 0.97 for the unattractive man. Overall mean for the attractive man was 3.63, standard error 0.11 and overall mean for the unattractive man was 4.14, standard error 0.11.

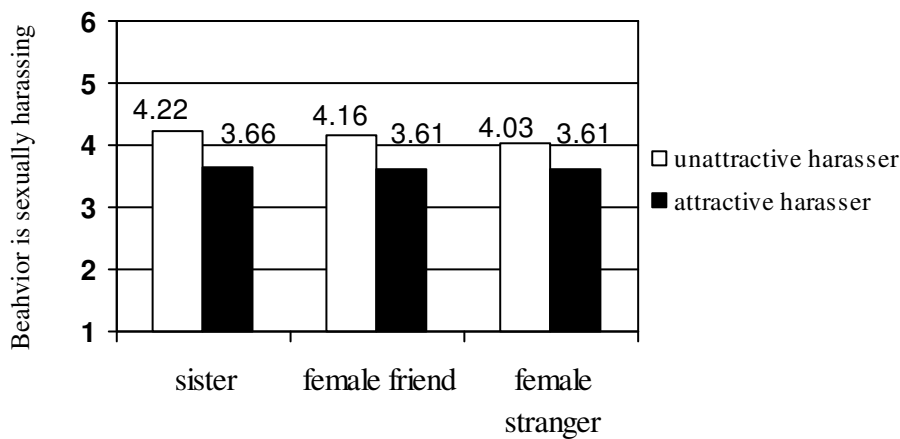


Figure 9. Mean rating of the behavior as *sexually harassing* as a function of *type of relationship* and harasser's *physical attractiveness*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate more sexual harassment (Study 3).

The interaction *type of relationship* x *attractiveness* was marginally significant,  $F(1.806, 267.233) = 2.84$ ,  $p = .066$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ . Means are depicted in Figure 9 and show that, across all types of relationship, behavior of an attractive harasser was generally rated as less harassing than behavior of an unattractive harasser. Contrasts with female friend as reference category showed a tendency for a more pronounced attractiveness effect for the comparison with female stranger,  $F(1,148) = 3.36$ ,  $p = .069$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ , but not for the comparison with sister. A similar tendency was found when sister was the reference category, with a more pronounced attractiveness effect for sister than for female stranger,  $F(1, 148) = 3.89$ ,  $p = .051$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ .

Quality of resources had no effect on the ratings of the behavior as sexually harassing. Behavior of a man with good resources was not rated differently from the behavior of the man with bad resources, overall  $M = 3.77$ , standard error 0.11, and  $M = 3.99$ , standard error 0.11, respectively,  $F(1, 148) = 2.09$ ,  $p < .15$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ .



Therefore, evolutionary psychology's notion that ratings for the behavior of an attractive harasser with good financial resources toward a sister should be *more* favorable than for behavior of an attractive harasser with good financial resources toward a sister, as formulated in hypothesis 3.3, was not supported. Although there were tendencies for different attractiveness effects between types of relationships to the target, they were in the opposite direction, with less favorable ratings for sister than for friend, and for friend than for stranger.

## 12.4 Discussion

Whose behavior is judged more leniently: That of an attractive harasser, or that of a rich harasser? Evolutionary and socio-structural theory on sexual harassment alike would predict that, with a male harasser-female harassee constellation, the behavior of both men should be judged more leniently than the behavior by an unattractive or poor man. These predictions, however, do hold only as long as the behavior offers some leeway for a more favorable interpretation, i.e., as bold flirtation, and as long as the harasser has no power over the harassee.

In Study 3, using a scenario, female participants rated the behavior of either an attractive or unattractive harasser, varied by pictures, with either good or bad financial resources, varied by descriptions. Behavior was pretested to represent ambiguously expressed, but clearly harassing, sexual attention.

Results indicate that good looks alone matter: Attractive harasser's behavior was rated more favorably than unattractive harasser's behavior, whereas quality of financial resources had no effect. The attractiveness effect found in Study 3 mirrors similar effects found previously (e.g., Cartar et al., 1996; Golden et al., 2001, LaRocca & Kromrey, 1999). The non-effect of financial resources, however, is not easily put in a broader empirical context, because previous research found mixed results. Published studies report either an increase in negative ratings, or an increase in positive ratings, but few find null effects, as in the study presented here. High economic status of the harasser, as well as features of the harasser that suggest prosperity (e.g., quality of clothing) usually leads to more favorable behavior interpretations (e.g., Mazzella & Feingold, 1994; Black & Gold, 2003). When the harasser has higher status than the victim, however, research participants are more likely to detect harassment, or imagine to be more upset by it (e.g., Bourgeois & Perkins, 2003; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). The absence of null effects for status in the published literature might of course reflect a publication bias against null effects rather than the actual absence of null effects. In one meta-analysis, harasser status moderated harassment perceptions (Blumenthal, 1998), but published articles (71) outweighed unpublished sources (12).

From the perspective of inclusive fitness (Hamilton, 1964), behavior toward others should be perceived differently, depending on the degree of genetic relatedness to the target person. Previous studies have already successfully studied helping behavior (Burnstein et al., 1994) and reactions to infidelity (Bohner et al., 2009) by applying an inclusive fitness design. In the case of sexual harassment, this design is useful because here, the evolutionary perspective and the socio-structural perspective differ in their predictions. In Study 3, the relationship of the perceiver (i.e.,

the participant) to the targets in the scenario was varied within participants as being a sister, a close female friend, or a female stranger.

Contrary to a corollary derived from the evolutionary informed sexual strategies theory (Buss & Schmitt, 1993), ambiguous behavior of a man with high mate value was not interpreted more favorably when the target was genetically related to the perceiver. In general, behavior interpretations did not differ between the targets *sister* vs. *female friend*, but between both the former and a *female stranger* as target, which is more in line with a socio-structural perspective. If effects of type of relationship were found, their valence was in a direction opposite to what was expected, with less favorable ratings for behavior toward genetically related targets, and more favorable ratings for behavior toward genetically unrelated targets. More importantly, when quality of the social relationship was comparable (as was the case for sister and close female friend), behavior ratings generally did not differ between levels of relationship. Those effects of type of relationship that were found, showed a tendency toward participants not differentiating between sister and close female friend, but between the former two targets and a female stranger. Therefore, it was not the genetic relationship that influenced behavior ratings, but social relationship – provided that, as was intended, sisters and close female friends were of comparable closeness to participants. Because degree of subjective emotional closeness to the targets was not measured in the present study, no firm conclusions can be drawn in that respect.

The effect of harasser's attractiveness found in Study 3 was stable across all types of relationship: The behavior of an attractive harasser was rated as more favorably than the behavior of an unattractive harasser.

Taking a closer look at results, for behavior ratings as insulting, the valence of ratings was reversed from the predicted valence, with participants finding more evidence for insult toward the sister than toward the other two targets, but with insult ratings toward friend being also significantly worse than toward stranger. The interaction effect with physical attractiveness was in the predicted direction, with behavior by an attractive harasser being judged more positively, but this was equally the case for sister and friend, where the attractiveness effect was larger than for a female stranger.

For behavior ratings as compliment, a significant type of relationship x attractiveness interaction was found again, with more positive behavior ratings when the harasser was attractive. But as before, this effect did not differ between sister and friend. Instead, the attractiveness effect was more pronounced for sister than for female stranger, and marginally significantly more pronounced for female friend than for female stranger.

On the most crucial rating dimension, sexually harassing quality of the behavior, the pattern of results for type of relationship was similar to the pattern of results for ratings as insult: The valence of ratings was reversed, compare to the effect expected from an evolutionary perspective, with worst ratings for sister, followed by friend, and comparatively best ratings for female stranger. Ratings for female friend and sister, as well as for female friend and stranger, were marginally different. A significant type of relationship x attractiveness showed again that the behavior of an attractive harasser was rated more positively, that is less harassing, but that this attractiveness effect was only significantly different between female friend and female

stranger, but not between female friend and sister, thus not supporting an evolutionary perspective on sexual harassment.

An alternative explanation for the reversal of actual, compared with predicted, effects for targets differently related to the participant is, of course, that the harassing behavior was not ambiguous enough to allow for a more favorable interpretation. In addition, because the behavior of the harasser was directed at three different targets, it might be perceived as non-distinct. This could hinder an interpretation of the behavior as initiating a romantic relationship, where it is likely to assume that such behavior would be directed at only one woman. Although behavior was pretested to be moderately harassing, and at the same time also a compliment to the receiver, the harassing quality might have been too pronounced still. Then, differences in ratings for the targets *sister* and *female friend* would have been expected also from an evolutionary basis: More readiness to perceive and acknowledge the negative quality of a behavior could lead to more helping, and helping is more likely among those who are genetically related (e.g., Neyer & Lang, 2003, Korchmaros & Kenny, 2001) However, a corollary of that same reasoning could be applied to explaining the *absence* of a difference between sister and close female friend: Those aspects of human behavior that have an evolutionary basis are postulated to have developed in a time when the social group in which one lived was usually more or less genetically interrelated. Therefore, close friends (if those existed then) would also have been next of kin. It follows that, even today, behavior toward close friends might not much differ from behavior toward one's siblings or cousins. However, like many assumptions derived from evolutionary psychology, this one as well is hardly verifiable or falsifiable. Tentative support for this assumption stems from Neyer and Lang's (2003) study, who found that subjective closeness was generally more pronounced toward people with closer genetic relation (e.g., more pronounced for children or parents, less pronounced for cousins). Nevertheless, received support was not as closely related to genetic relationship, and for only loosely genetically related people even less pronounced than for friends and other non-kin. The highest degrees of both subjective closeness and received support was toward marital or romantic partners, to whom participants were obviously not genetically related. An even clearer picture of the important role of subjective closeness stems from Korchmaros and Kenny (2001), who tested and found that emotional closeness partially mediated willingness to act altruistically under personal risk.

Taken together, results offer insights into the relative role of physical attractiveness and socioeconomic status for the interpretation of sexually harassing behavior between a male harasser and a female victim. Apparently, high socioeconomic status of the harasser in the present experiment offered no incentive for participants to interpret his behavior more favorable, and low socioeconomic status did not lead to more negative behavior interpretations, despite results of previous research (e.g., Buss, 1994; 1999; Littler-Bishop et al., 1982). Because in the present study, it was taken care that there was no power differential between the initiator and the target of sexual harassment, and no force was part of the interactions in the scenario, the financial opportunities of the harasser were the only indicator of his status and the power that usually goes with it. When power and force are controlled, therefore, richness or (comparable) poverty alone might not be sufficient to produce the status or power effects found elsewhere, as some previous studies have also found (e.g., Black & Gold, 2003; Bourgeois & Perkins, 2003, Expt. 3). One

qualification with regard to the *target's* status has to be made: In the scenarios, it was made explicit that all targets were on the same hierarchical level within the organization as the harasser. Therefore, in the good resources condition, higher status of the targets was also implied, and vice versa in the bad resources condition, and with it the financial resources that go with the respective status level. It might be that, for a woman who is comparatively rich, the good resources of a potential mate or of a harasser are irrelevant, which could explain the absence of an effect of resource quality. For a woman who is comparatively poor, sexual advances from an equally poor potential mate or harasser could be perceived as still more disturbing, because in the event of common offspring, the children would have no resources whatsoever. On the other hand, a man with bad resources and low organizational status might be perceived as not dangerous, and therefore his behavior as more favorable. Investigating these possibilities could be a direction for future research.

The lack of an effect of socioeconomic status was in stark contrast to the pronounced effect harasser's physical attractiveness had on behavior ratings: On all rating dimensions, an attractive harasser's behavior was interpreted more favorably. One possible explanation for the differing impact of the two factors could lie in the different mode of operationalization: Harasser attractiveness was varied by pictures, whereas harasser's economic conditions were varied by short descriptions of the man and his circumstances (e.g., differing accommodation, preferred holiday destination, etc.). The visual impression might have been more powerful than the impression derived from reading the paragraph. Although a previous study found an operationalization of socioeconomic status by descriptions to be sufficient (Black & Gold, 2003), the direct comparability of the two modes might have worked against the description and in favor of the picture. In order to clarify this assumption, further studies could present both types of information in identical mode: Harasser's socioeconomic status could be varied by presenting pictures of men in clothing of different quality, or in different domestic interiors, and harasser's attractiveness could be presented in brief descriptions (the latter has been done successfully before, e.g., Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1994; 1997).

For future research, a replication of the study with type of relationship to the target as between-participants factor could exclude the possibility that the present design had suggested to participants that a differentiation between targets was either wanted or unwanted, and had aroused a certain response direction. In addition, subjective closeness should be measured in order to control for its effects and test for possible mediational power of that variable.

Taken together, results of Study 3 support an attractiveness stereotype in favor of harassers. They also hint at a possible discrimination tendency toward victims of harassment that are neither genetically nor socially related to the perceiver: When a female stranger is target of harassing behavior, it is apparently not seen as so very bad. Here, a possible intervention pathway opens, e.g., for harassment trainings with supervisors: If there is a lack of understanding for the seriousness of the problem, the abstract, hypothetical harassment target could be replaced with imagining that certain behaviors are directed at people's mothers, wives, sisters, or friends.

The data collected here do not allow for conclusions about interpretations of harassing behavior directed at male victims. This is a profound shortcoming of harassment research in gen-

eral: Male victims, and also harasser-victim constellations other than male-female, are clearly underresearched. The following two studies aim to contribute to filling that research gap.



## 13. Study 4

### 13.1 Preliminary remarks

Do harassment experiences of male harassees differ from harassment experiences of female harassees? Apparently, this is the case. Fewer men than women become a target of sexual harassment. Large scale surveys establish that, on average, 14.5% of men (19% in the United States over two years, USMSPB, 1995, and 10% in the European Union, EC, 1998) experience one or more forms of sexual harassment once or more often during their working life. In contrast, about one in two to three women become a victim (44% in the United States, USMSPB, 1995, and between 30% to 50% in Europe, EC, 1998). In general, men can experience the same forms of harassment as do women, although there also seems to be evidence pointing at the existence of harassment experiences specific for men. The enforcement of the male gender role, according to an ideal of hypermasculinity, seems to be a type of harassing frequently experienced by men (e.g., Berdahl et al., 1996; Stockdale et al, 1999; Stockdale et al, 2004; Waldo et al., 1998).

The body of evidence on male harassment experiences in general, however, is still slender. Researchers in the past have focused on harassment experiences of women, because most harassees are women. Nevertheless, it is important to broaden the knowledge base on male targets of harassment for several reasons. First, research that shuts out the experiences of half of humankind is incomplete at best, if not seriously at fault<sup>28</sup>. Whereas during the history of science, male experiences were set as the norm, this pattern is reversed for the history of harassment research. From the harassee's perspective, men who are harassed deserve the same degree of scientific effort at understanding and ameliorating their predicament as do women who are harassed. Sociopolitically speaking, the construction of harassment as a "women's problem" is reinforced when research focuses on women's experiences. This has at least two consequences. First, harassment in itself might be belittled because it is experienced "only" by women (cf. work showing that occupations thought to require "masculine" personality traits have more prestige and higher wages, compared with occupations thought to require "feminine" personality traits, Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Glick, 1991; Glick, Wilk, & Perreault, 1995). Second, victimized men might find it hard to be believed, because their experiences do not conform to the schema of harassment. Another consideration is that intervention strategies against harassment might gain momentum when they include information about male experiences. Potential perpetrators as well as organizations that apply interventions (and that are, on the upper echelons, still dominated by men) could find such interventions more convincing.

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<sup>28</sup> Ironically, this is exactly what mainstream science has done, but the part that was shut out was experiences of the other half of humankind, see Hyde, 2007, p. 10, for an overview of biases against including female experiences in the process of conducting psychological research; see also Carroll, 1998, for an account of a positive bias toward research reinforcing traditional gender roles.

All in all, harassment research shedding light on harassment experiences of men is clearly needed. In contrast to research on women's harassment experiences, which has considerable breadth (with one of the few notably meager areas being experiences of actual harassment), there is no aspect of harassment targeted at men on which a similar breadth has already been achieved. Therefore, almost any particular part of the total harassment experience is worthwhile investigating. For the sake of comparison between the genders, I chose to conduct two experiments similar to Study 1 and Study 2, but with a reversed gender constellation. In Study 4, a male participant was made to believe to be connected online with a female chat partner. That female chat partner allegedly sent harassing or neutral materials via a chat line to the participant, therefore behaving in a harassing or non-harassing way. Because the published research on men as targets of harassment is so scarce, the theoretical basis for experimental variations is limited, and Studies 4 and 5, presented below, are therefore starting points from which further research can set off.

The focus of Study 4 is perceptions of different types of harassing behaviors, namely, remarks interpretable as sexual attention and sexist jokes that derogate men. Type of behavior, presence and absence of harassment and physical attractiveness of the female chat partner are experimentally varied. In Study 5, a scenario of Study 4 is presented, and actual and imagined responses are compared between the two studies. In addition, a more differentiated measure of imagined feeling than was the case in Study 2 is administered in Study 5.

## 13.2 Introduction

There is a considerable gender gap in perceptions of potentially harassing behaviors. In general, women identify more behaviors as harassing than do men, and identical behaviors are perceived as more harassing by women than by men. However, this gender difference is smaller for more overt behaviors, such as sexual physical contact, and larger for more subtle behaviors, such as sexual remarks (e.g., Frazier et al., 1995; Rotundo et al., 2001; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). One explanation for this difference is men consciously denying that the more subtle behaviors are a problem. In more current measures of sexual harassment myth acceptance, some items are based on this idea (Lonsway, Cortina, & Magley, 2008). Secondly, due to whatever inherent or socialized reason, men might be less likely to perceive harassing behaviors as something negative. A third explanation is that men conceptualize these behaviors in a genuinely different way than do women – a good candidate for a concept is flirtation. Of course, although the gender difference in perceptions of harassment is found quite consistently, individual differences and variations in perceptions exist. These might well prove as more powerful than the general gender difference, but because research on men as targets of harassment is still scarce, knowledge about the conditions under which the gender difference becomes more or less pronounced is limited. In the published literature, to my knowledge, no experimental study exists that investigates *actual* harassment with men as targets. Therefore, Study 4 represents the first attempt to study actual harassment of men under controlled laboratory conditions. Two main experimental factors, in addition to presence and absence of harassment, are varied in Study 4: harasser attractiveness and type of behavior.



Men in general seek more sexual partners, and wish to have sexual intercourse after a shorter period of time, than do women (e.g., Buss et al., 1990; Clark & Hatfield, 1989; Schmitt, 2005). Therefore, men should initiate flirtation with the aim of a (sexual) relationship more often, and heterosexual men should be more open to (sexual) advances by women (Buss et al.; Clark & Hatfield; Schmitt, 2005). When men are the targets of harassment, they could therefore be inclined to react differently toward different types of harassment, namely, sexual attention versus derogation of men as a group. Study 1 has shown a tendency of women to rate ambiguous sexually harassing remarks that could also be interpreted as flirtation as more positively than harassing jokes, but only when the harasser had high, rather than low mate value (except when they rated the remarks on the dimension *sexually harassing*). According to evolutionary accounts of human mating behavior (e.g., Buss et al.), but also according to socio-cultural norms of men as the sexually initiating gender (see Muehlenhard & McCoy, 1991), this tendency to interpret harassing, but ambiguous, remarks more favorably should be even more pronounced for men. For men, it might not even be necessary for the perpetrator to have high mate value to produce this effect, but sexual advances coming from any woman might be interpreted positively. Men and women differ in what constitutes high mate value of a partner for them. To a greater extent than women, men prefer partners with good looks, or more specifically, women whose physical features indicate fertility and health (e.g., youth, clear, unblemished skin, full lips, a waist-to-hip ratio of 0.7 (e.g., Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Furnham, Tan & McManus, 1997; Henss, 1995; Singh, 1993). Status and quality of other resources of a potential partner are less important for men than for women. Therefore, the mate value of a woman is largely determined by her looks<sup>29</sup>, and information of resources should not be necessary to produce a mate value effect similar to the one found in Study 1.

Unlike remarks expressing sexual attention, sexist jokes with men as the target group, and furthermore, sexist jokes that derogate men, are hardly interpretable more favorably. However, even with these behaviors, attractiveness of the initiator might ameliorate perception: The general “what is beautiful is good”-stereotype (Dion et al., 1972) might also apply to this situation. As with scenario studies varying harasser attractiveness in a male perpetrator-female victim constellation, (e.g., Golden et al., 2001), there also exist scenario studies varying harasser attractiveness in the reverse constellation (e.g., LaRocca & Kromrey, 1999). These studies show that men, as well as women, tend to interpret behavior of attractive female harassers more favorably than behavior of unattractive female harassers (LaRocca & Kromrey (1999); Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1994; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1997).

The following hypotheses were tested in Study 4, using a 2 (Female Harasser’s Physical Attractiveness: high vs. low) x 2 (Type of Behavior: sexual attention vs. derogating men) x 2 (Harassment: present vs. absent) between-participants design:

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<sup>29</sup> Although physical attractiveness, i.e. indicators of fertility, constitutes an important part of mate value in women, the emphasis men put on their partner’s attractiveness shifts somewhat depending on whether they seek a short-term or a long-term mate (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Because attractiveness remains a stable part of what men prefer in either mate, however, the subtlety of these changes lies beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Hypothesis 4.1: Men rate harassing behavior and harassers, respectively, as more negative than non-harassing behavior and non-harassers, respectively.

Hypothesis 4.2: Men rate both harassing and non-harassing behavior and both harassers and non-harassers as more positive when the harasser is physically attractive.

Hypothesis 4.3: Men rate remarks more positively than jokes.

Despite the prediction of a generally negative effect of harassing behavior (Hypothesis 4.1), the single condition producing the most positive ratings is with harassing remarks sent by an attractive woman, because here, the incentive to interpret behaviors more positively is greatest. Therefore, the final hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 4.4: A three-way interaction is expected in that men rate harassing remarks sent by an attractive woman most positively.

In Study 4, I studied men's responses to women's actual behavior in an online chat with an allegedly real, but actually computer-simulated woman. Pictures of attractive vs. unattractive women and first names conveying high vs. medium attractiveness and intelligence (Rudolph et al., 2007) varied women's mate value.

## 13.3 Method

### 13.3.1 Participants

In the main study, 151 male students participated. The data of 10 participants were excluded from analyses because they either correctly guessed the true or indicated a homosexual orientation. The remaining 141 participants' age was  $M = 22.73$  years ( $SD 2.91$  years, range 17 to 36 years). Twelve percent of participants in the final sample studied psychology, the rest was enrolled in a variety of courses.

### 13.3.2 Procedure

The procedure was very similar to that applied in Study 1. Recruitment took place on campus under the cover story of "*testing a new online dating agency for students, Campus\_LoveLink*", with always at least one male experimenter present<sup>30</sup>. The informed consent information was presented both written and orally, with the express assurance that participants could end the study at any time.

Following the informed consent procedure, picture taking was staged and then, random assignment took place when the participant was allegedly "logged on" to the computer network by

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<sup>30</sup> presence of a male experimenter was deemed necessary because I thought complaining to another man would be easier than complaining to a woman, should participant felt uncomfortable during the study,

the experimenter as in Study 1. The experimenter then left the cubicle and the participant proceeded with the R-CHP (see below).

After the R-CHP was run, participants were fully debriefed in a separate room, had the opportunity to ask questions, and received an information package on harassment of men in academic settings. Unlike in Study 1, information regarding a harassment counseling service at the university could not be provided, because this service is tailored to women. Instead, participants received contact information on a community counseling service for men and 2 Euros or course credit as well as a chocolate bar.

### 13.3.3 Materials

#### 13.3.3.1. R-CHP

The R-CHP of Study 1 was adapted for studying male participants interacting with a female alleged chat partner. As in Study 1, the R-CHP proceeded in five stages, with collection of demographic data, administration of filler scales, interspersed with scales intended to serve as covariates, “choice” of best fitting partner by the “Campus\_LoveLink program” (in reality, this was of course predetermined) along with provision of information about her, chat phase during which the “chat partner” sent either harassing or non-harassing remarks or jokes and the participant evaluated these, and last, collection of additional ratings. Compared with Study 1, two alterations were made in the R-CHP, aside from the obvious change in stimulus person and material: the chat phase was abridged to 11 items sent (12 items in Study 1), and the number of filler scales was also slightly reduced, in order to lessen time demands on participants. All materials (except filler scales) are described below. The visual appearance of Study 4 was the same as that of Study 1 (for screenshots of the R-CHP in Study 1, see appendix A).

#### 13.3.3.2. Independent variables

##### Sexist and neutral jokes

Based on a pretest, I selected four sexist jokes that derogate men for the harassing conditions and four neutral jokes for the control conditions. The pairs of jokes at critical positions during the exchange were interspersed with the neutral jokes serving the same function in Study 1. An initial pool of 90 jokes was rated as to how sexist (targeted at men) and funny they were by 30 students (12 female, 18 male, mean age 23.63 years,  $SD$  3.91, range 19 to 35 years). Ratings were given on seven-point scales from 1 (*not at all sexist/funny*, respectively) to 7 (*very sexist/funny*, respectively).

The critical set of jokes was rated as more sexist than the neutral set of jokes,  $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = 1.28$  and  $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ , respectively,  $t(29) = 4.45$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.77$ . At the same time, the critical and the neutral set of jokes were equal in funniness,  $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 1.40$  and  $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ , respectively,  $t(29) = -1.60$ ,  $p < .13$ , Cohen's  $d = -0.32$ .

The complete list of jokes in the harassing and the non-harassing conditions, their pretest results, and their position during the chat phase, can be seen in Table 8 in the German original.

Table 8: Pretest results of jokes in the harassing and non-harassing conditions, Study 4.

Position during chat	Sexually harassing	s	f	Non-harassing	s	f
1	Worin besteht der Unterschied zwischen einem Chemiker und einer Hebamme? Der Chemiker sagt „H <sub>2</sub> O“ und die Hebamme sagt „OH <sub>2</sub> “!	see pretest results for funniness in Table 3				
2	Was tut ein Beamter zuerst, nachdem er hingefallen ist? Er nimmt die Hände aus der Hosentasche!	see pretest results for funniness in Table 3				
3	<b>Was ist schlimm daran, wenn 2 Männer in einem Ford Fiesta mit 150 km/h gegen eine Betonmauer fahren? Das ist Platzverschwendung – da hätten 5 reingepasst..</b>	4.70 <i>1.75</i>	3.57 <i>1.87</i>	Was bekommt man, wenn man einen Pitbull und einen Collie kreuzt? Einen Hund, der dir das Bein abbeißt und dann Hilfe holt.	3.27 <i>1.87</i>	3.63 <i>1.50</i>
4	Sagt der Kannibalenjunge zu seiner Mutter: „Nein, meine Sippe esse ich nicht...“	see pretest results for funniness in Table 3				
5	„Herr Ober, wie nennen Sie dieses Gericht?“ „Hüttenkäse...“ „Dann habe ich eben auf ein Stückchen Tür gebissen.“	see pretest results for funniness in Table 3				
6	<b>Ein anständiger Mann stirbt mit 40, damit seine Frau noch was vom Leben hat.</b>	5.10 <i>1.56</i>	2.77 <i>1.74</i>	„Herr Doktor, können Sie mir helfen?“ „Hmm, ich verschreibe Ihnen erst mal ein paar Moorbäder.“ „Und die helfen mir?“ „Nein, aber Sie gewöhnen sich schon mal an die feuchte Erde.“	3.27 <i>1.60</i>	3.47 <i>1.63</i>
7	Prüfer zum Prüfling: „Mit dem, was Sie nicht wissen, können noch zwei andere durchfallen!“	see pretest results for funniness in Table 3				
8	<b>Was ist ein Mann im Knast? Artgerechte Haltung.</b>	4.87 <i>1.57</i>	2.37 <i>1.56</i>	„Meister, wie steht's mit meinem Auto?“ „Sagen wir es einmal so: Wenn Ihr Auto ein Pferd wäre, müssten wir es erschießen.“	4.17 <i>1.76</i>	3.90 <i>1.90</i>
9	<b>Was passiert, wenn man in den Hobbykeller eines Mannes eine Handgranate wirft? Das Chaos bleibt das gleiche, aber das saudumme Gelabere hört auf!</b>	4.37 <i>1.83</i>	3.00 <i>2.07</i>	„Herr Ober, was macht meine Leber?“ „Bin ich Arzt?“	4.17 <i>1.82</i>	2.33 <i>1.49</i>
10	Wer hat den Namen des Handys erfunden? Die Schwaben: Hen die koi Schnur?	see pretest results for funniness in Table 3				
11	Notruf bei der Bahndirektion: „Auf dem Bahndamm liegt ein Gleis!“ Der Bahnbeamte: „Das ist auch gut so!“ Er legt auf. Nach fünf Minuten ruft der Japaner wieder an und sagt: „Jetzt haben sie den almen alten Mann übefahren!“	see pretest results for funniness in Table 3				

Note: Critical items in bold typeface, standard deviation in italics; s = mean on the dimension sexist toward men, f = mean on the dimension funniness, response scales from 1 = *not at all sexist toward men/funny* to 7 = *very sexist toward men/funny*. The neutral pairs of jokes were not pretested on the dimension *sexist toward men* but directly taken from Study 1 to keep materials as equal as possible between studies.

### Remarks expressing sexual attention and non-harassing remarks

Based on a second pretest, I selected four sexually harassing remarks, pairing them with four non-harassing remarks interspersed with the same six further non-harassing filler remarks that were used in Study 1 to make up the harassing and non-harassing remarks conditions. I piloted a total of 17 remarks that were designed to be neutral, clearly sexually harassing, or ambiguous. Fortysix students (19 female, 27 male, mean age 23.74 years,  $SD$  2.22, range 19 to 29 years) rated the remarks on the following dimensions: *The remark is* (a) *a compliment*, (b) *sexually harassing*, (c) *neutral*, and (d) *meant to be a flirt*, all rating scales from 1 (*does not apply*) to 7 (*does apply*). Participants were instructed to imagine that remarks were made by a woman to a man. Gender had no significant effect on ratings of the final stimulus array.

For the harassing conditions, I chose four remarks in total. These remarks were rated as significantly more harassing than their neutral counterparts,  $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 1.75$ , and  $M = 1.91$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ , respectively,  $t(45) = 9.63$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 1.82$ , and as significantly less neutral than their neutral counterparts,  $M = 1.43$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ , and  $M = 2.54$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ , respectively,  $t(45) = -11.54$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = -1.34$ . Although the set of harassing remarks was also rated as *compliment*  $M = 4.61$ ,  $SD$  1.37, their neutral counterparts were rated as more of a compliment  $M = 5.48$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ,  $t(45) = -6.06$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = -0.76$ . On the dimension *flirt*, the harassing remarks were not rated as more flirtatious than the neutral remarks,  $M = 5.30$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ , and  $M = 5.38$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ , respectively,  $t(45) = -0.43$ ,  $p < .68$ , Cohen's  $d = -0.07$ .

In sum, the critical stimulus array was sexually harassing, but also open to a more favorable interpretation due to its ambiguity. As neutral fillers, the six neutral remarks from Study 1 were retained. A complete list of harassing remarks in the German original, their pretest results, and their position during the chat phase, can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9: Pretest results of remarks in the harassing and non-harassing conditions, Study 4.

Position during chat	Sexually harassing	sh	f	c	n	Non-harassing	sh	f	c	n
1	Ups, musste gerade mein Handy ausmachen	see pretest results in Table 4								
2	In meinem Raum liegt ganz schön viel Zeug rum	see pretest results in Table 4								
3	<b>Du siehst geil aus</b>	3.65 <i>2.05</i>	5.57 <i>1.31</i>	5.20 <i>1.66</i>	1.44 <i>0.72</i>	Du siehst sportlich aus	1.54 <i>1.03</i>	5.07 <i>1.57</i>	6.44 <i>1.09</i>	3.28 <i>1.85</i>
4	Dieser Stuhl ist nicht gerade bequem auf Dauer	see pretest results in Table 4								
5	Die Internetverbindung scheint nicht die schnellste zu sein	see pretest results in Table 4								
6	<b>Du siehst aus als wärest du gut im Bett</b>	4.46 <i>2.21</i>	5.28 <i>1.59</i>	5.17 <i>1.77</i>	1.41 <i>1.07</i>	An deine breiten Schultern würde ich mich gerne mal anlehnen.	1.85 <i>1.07</i>	5.80 <i>1.36</i>	6.26 <i>0.86</i>	2.26 <i>1.32</i>
7	Ich glaube ich brauche gleich mal einen Kaffee	see pretest results in Table 4								
8	<b>Bei deinem Anblick werde ich ja ganz feucht</b>	4.65 <i>2.26</i>	5.13 <i>1.70</i>	5.11 <i>1.73</i>	1.33 <i>0.73</i>	Du siehst aus wie ein richtiger Schmusekater	1.91 <i>1.46</i>	4.72 <i>1.33</i>	4.83 <i>1.77</i>	2.35 <i>1.20</i>
9	<b>Schade dass ich dir nicht meine Unterwäsche zeigen kann</b>	4.80 <i>1.87</i>	5.24 <i>1.72</i>	2.98 <i>1.90</i>	1.57 <i>1.05</i>	Wenn ich die Wahl habe zwischen Schokolade und dir, nehme ich lieber dich	2.35 <i>1.61</i>	5.83 <i>1.32</i>	5.85 <i>1.62</i>	2.26 <i>1.39</i>
10	Bin gespannt, ob ich gleich noch rechtzeitig in mein Seminar komme	see pretest results in Table 4								
11	Dieser Raum ist stickig	see pretest results in Table 4								

Note: Critical items in bold typeface, standard deviations in *italics*, sh = mean on the dimension *sexually harassing*, f = mean on the dimension *flirtatious*, c = mean on the dimension *compliment*, n = mean on the dimension *neutral*. Response scales from 1 = *does not apply* to 7 = *does apply*.

### Chat partner characteristics

Two pictures already pretested as representing high vs. low physical attractiveness (see Siebler et al., 2008, Expt. 2), were used for Study 4. In addition, the woman on the picture was introduced as *Katrin*, aged 22 years, studying sociology at Bielefeld. The name *Katrin* was chosen because it is associated with a woman of 20 to 30 years, with a medium level of attractiveness and intelligence (Rudolph et al., 2007). The age of 22 years was chosen because it is slightly lower than the expected average age of male student participants, and with the typical heterosexual German couple, the man is slightly older than the woman (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2008).

Sociology as subject of study was chosen because at Bielefeld University, the proportion of men and women enrolled are about equal.

### 13.3.3.3. Covariates

Similarly to Study 1, a number of attitude measures potentially related to harassment scenario perceptions were added. Similar measures as in Study 1 were administered: ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), AMI (Glick & Fiske, 1999), and SOI-R (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). To control for a tendency for socially desirable responding, the SES-17 (Stöber, 1999) was added.

### 13.3.3.4. Dependent variables

The dependent variables are described in order of collection during the R-CHP. Intercorrelations between variables, means, and standard deviations are depicted in Table 10.

#### Immediate evaluations and immediate emotional responses

Participants were asked to “send feedback” to the partner after each remark/joke by indicating their *evaluation* and current *feeling* on two six-point scales with the endpoints anchored 1 = *very good* to 6 = *very bad*. The header was “*The joke/remark was...*” and “*I feel*”. Internal consistency across critical items was satisfactory for both evaluative and emotional responses (Cronbach’s alpha = .93 and .85, respectively); therefore, the ratings were averaged and recoded, so that higher scores indicated more positive evaluations and feelings, respectively.

#### Evaluation of chat partner after chat

When the chatline was allegedly disconnected after the exchange, participants rated their partner regarding *attractiveness*, *niceness*, *attractiveness as a relationship partner*, and *desire to meet* on scales from 1 (*not at all attractive/nice*, etc. respectively) to 6 (*very attractive/nice*, etc., respectively). Responses were averaged to create an overall attractiveness measure (Cronbach’s alpha = .90), with higher scores indicating a higher attractiveness rating.

#### Evaluation of behavior after chat

Participants rated the woman’s behavior on the dimensions *sexually harassing*, *insult* and *compliment*, all from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much*). These ratings were retained as separate variables, with the original coding, so that higher values represent more sexual harassment, stronger insult, and more of a compliment, respectively.

#### Suspicion checks: Perceived reality of chat partner and aim of the study

At the end of the study, participants were asked to describe their chat partner and the probability to meet such a person in open ended format. To check whether participants had believed to be connected to a real person, these responses were analyzed by one male rater. On a response scale from 1 (*completely real*) to 6 (*not at all real*), the rater indicated whether participants wrote about their partner as if she was a real person. The mean rating of 1.27 ( $SD = 0.97$ ), shows that overall, participants believed to chat with a real person. Participants who guessed the study’s aim were excluded from analyses.

### Other behavioral reactions

As in Study 1, immediate debriefings were prepared for any participant who left his cubicle during the chat in order to report sexist behavior of the chat partner. Because of its scarcity, previous research does not allow for a firm conclusion about the most likely responses of men to harassment. However, the informed consent procedure could have encouraged assertive reactions.

## 13.4 Results

ANOVAs were conducted for the full experimental design, with Sexual Harassment (yes vs. no), Attractiveness (high vs. low) and Type of Behavior (remarks vs. jokes) as between-participants factors. Before the analyses reported below, I conducted the respective analysis with the four different pictures representing the two levels of physical attractiveness instead of combining the two pictures representing each level into the factor Attractiveness. The few effects of individual picture were always in line with the attractiveness level they represented. Therefore, all analyses are reported collapsed over the two respective pictures. I also inspected correlations of the potential covariates with the dependent variables. Similarly to Study 1, there were very few and only small significant correlations. Out of the 48 correlations of the BS and HS subscales of the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), the BM and the HM subscales of the AMI (Glick & Fiske, 1999), the behavior, attitude, and affect subscales of the SOI (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008), and the SES-17 (Stöber, 1999) with the six dependent variables, only five were (marginally) significant. Immediate evaluations were correlated with the SES-17,  $r = .15$ ,  $p < .09$ , and immediate emotional responses correlated with the affect subscale of the SOI,  $r = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ . Overall attractiveness ratings of the chat partner correlated with SES-17 and the affect subscale of the SOI,  $r = .15$ ,  $p < .08$  and  $r = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ . Finally, behavior ratings as sexually harassing correlated with BS,  $r = .20$ ,  $p < .05$ . Nevertheless, all analyses were first performed with covariates included. However, results of ANCOVAs mirrored the correlational analyses in that covariates had only very few, inconsistent, and small effects, thus mirroring results of Study 1. In addition, and also similar to Study 1, both the direction and significance level of effects were the same overall with and without covariates. Because of the overall few and very small effects, I do not report ANCOVA results here. Intercorrelations and descriptive statistics of the dependent variables are presented in Table 10.



Table 10: Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between dependent variables, Study 4.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Mean Immediate Evaluation of Behavior	4.51	1.09	-	.59**	.37**	-.24**	.33**	-.30**
2. Mean Immediate Emotional Response Toward Behavior	3.78	1.29		-	.35**	-.23**	.33**	-.24**
3. Attractiveness of Chat Partner	3.18	1.34			-	-.13	.13	-.32**
4. Behavior is Insult	1.88	1.25				-	-.18**	.37**
5. Behavior is Compliment	3.04	1.62					-	.11
6. Behavior is Sexually Harassing	2.02	1.49						-

Note: *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$  (two-tailed). Dependent variables were measured on six-point scales, coded so that higher values indicate a more positive evaluation/feeling (1. and 2.), higher Attractiveness (3.), or a more pronounced rating of the target concept (4. to 6., e.g., higher values indicate stronger insult).

### 13.4.1 Immediate evaluation of behavior

The first dependent variable was the mean *evaluation* of items on the critical positions during the exchange. Means are depicted in Figure 10.

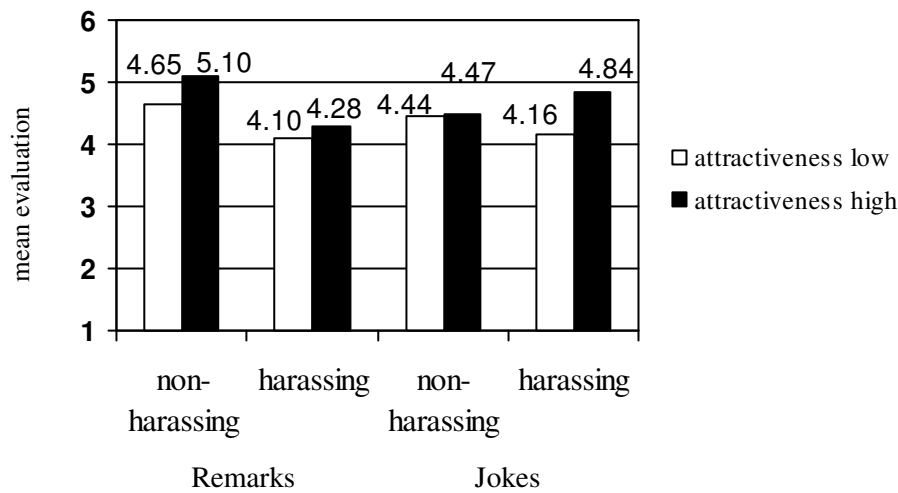


Figure 10. Mean evaluation of critical items in experimental conditions vs. neutral items at same position in control conditions as a function of *Attractiveness*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate a more positive evaluation (Study 4).

*Harassment* and *attractiveness* of chat partner had marginally significant main effects,  $F(1, 133) = 3.13, p = .079, \eta_p^2 = .02$ , and  $F(1, 133) = 3.53, p = .063, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , respectively. As a trend, harassing behavior was evaluated more negatively than non-harassing behavior ( $M = 4.36, SD = 1.12$ , and  $M = 4.66, SD = 1.05$ , respectively), and behavior of an attractive chat partner was evaluated better than behavior of an unattractive chat partner ( $M = 4.69, SD = 0.93$ , and  $M = 4.34, SD = 1.21$ , respectively). Furthermore, the interaction *sexual harassment*  $\times$  *type of behavior* was significant,  $F(1, 133) = 4.06, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , and was further examined separately for type of behavior. Only for remarks, the simple main effect of sexual harassment was still significant, with  $F(1, 133) = 6.99, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$ : Sexually harassing remarks were rated more negatively than non-harassing remarks ( $M = 4.18, SD = 1.17$ , and  $M = 4.86, SD = 0.92$ , respectively).

Taken together, men tended to perceive harassing behavior directed at them as more negative than non-harassing behavior, which was particularly true for remarks. Thus, hypothesis 4.1 received tentative support. Likewise, on a descriptive level, but only marginally significant, hypothesis 4.2 received support: Independent of type of behavior and presence or absence of harassment, participants evaluated the behavior of an attractive partner more favorably than the behavior of an unattractive partner. Contrary to expectations, remarks were not rated better than jokes, and participants did not rate behavior of an attractive harasser that expressed sexual attention as better than behavior of an attractive harasser that derogated men, thus not supporting hypotheses 4.3 and 4.4. Three participants in the harassing conditions (out of 69; 4.3 percent) gave the worst possible evaluation, that is, the worst mark for all critical items.

### 13.4.2 Immediate emotional response toward behavior

Again, an ANOVA was conducted with the full experimental design and the mean emotional response toward items at critical positions during the exchange (i.e. harassing remarks in the critical conditions and their neutral counterparts in the non-harassing conditions) as the dependent variable. Means can be seen in Figure 11.

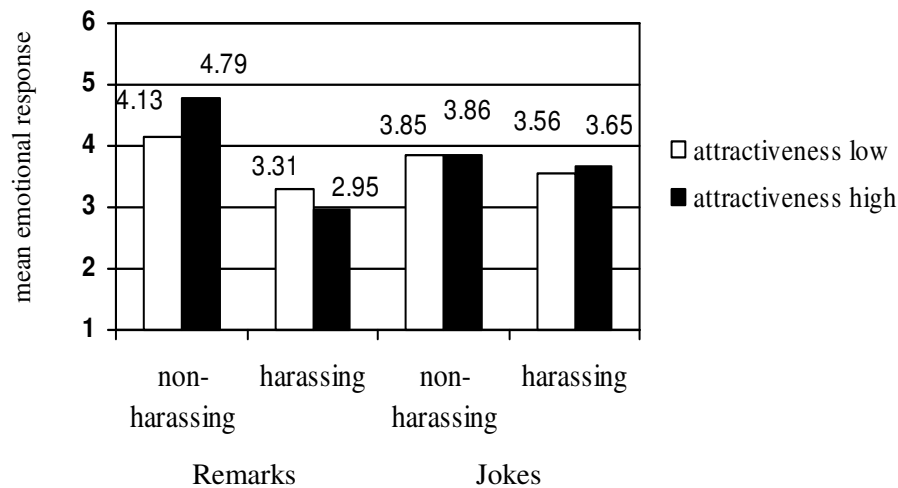


Figure 11. Mean *emotional response* toward critical items in experimental conditions vs. neutral items at same position in control conditions as a function of *Attractiveness*, *Type of Behavior* and *Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate a more positive feeling (Study 4).

*Harassment* had a significant main effect on immediate emotional responses toward items at critical positions,  $F(1, 133) = 15.02, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10$ : Participants felt better after receiving non-harassing materials ( $M = 4.15, SD = 1.09$ ), than after receiving harassing materials ( $M = 3.38, SD = 1.36$ ), thus supporting hypothesis 4.1. The interaction *harassment* x *behavior* was also significant,  $F(1, 133) = 6.99, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$ , and was further analyzed by type of behavior. As with the previous dependent variable, the sexual harassment main effect was significant only for remarks,  $F(1, 133) = 20.76, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$ : Participants felt better after receiving non-harassing remarks ( $M = 4.44, SD = 1.02$ ) than after receiving harassing remarks ( $M = 3.14, SD = 1.36$ ), which did not even partly support hypothesis 4.4. *Attractiveness* had no significant main or interaction effects on immediate emotional response, and participants did not feel differently after experiencing remarks vs. jokes; thus, hypotheses 4.2 and 4.3 were not supported by the data. Two out of 69 participants in the harassing conditions (2.9 percent) gave the worst possible feedback, that is, gave the worst mark for all critical items.

### 13.4.3 Evaluation of chat partner: Overall attractiveness

The third dependent variable was the evaluation of the chat partner's *overall attractiveness*, which was the mean of the ratings of partner's physical attractiveness, niceness, attractiveness as a relationship partner, and desire to meet the chat partner. Means are depicted in Figure 12.

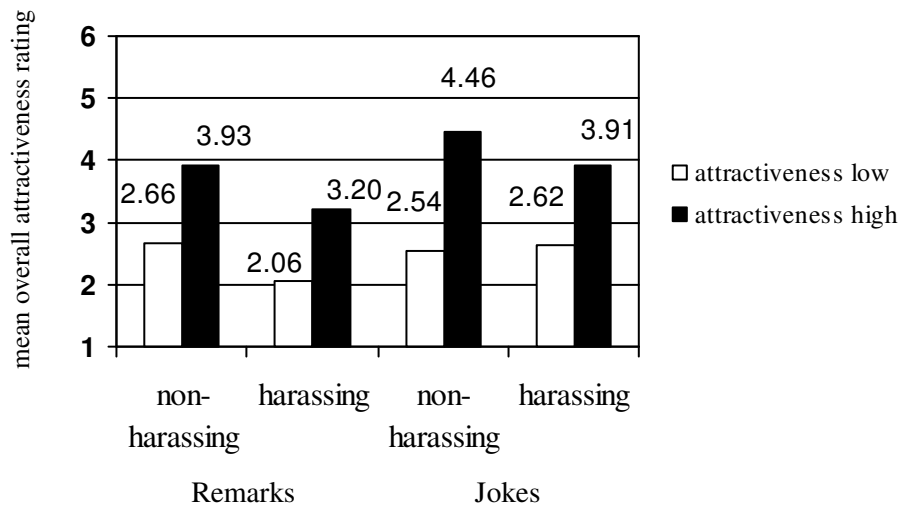
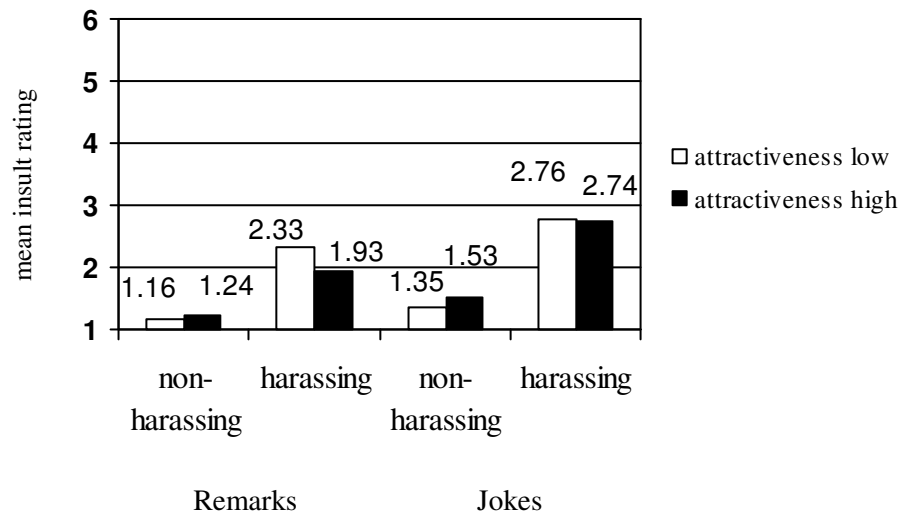


Figure 12. Mean overall attractiveness of chat partner in harassing vs. non-harassing conditions as a function of *Attractiveness*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate rating of higher overall attractiveness (Study 4).

*Harassment* had a significant main effect on ratings of the chat partners overall attractiveness,  $F(1, 133) = 5.93, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$ , with the non-harasser rated as more attractive than the harasser ( $M = 3.41, SD = 1.38$  vs.  $M = 2.95, SD = 1.27$ ). This supported hypothesis 4.1. In addition, the sender of jokes was rated as more attractive than the sender of remarks,  $M = 3.43 (SD 1.37)$  vs.  $M = 2.93 (SD 1.27)$ ,  $F(1, 133) = 5.19, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$ , with this main effect of *type of behavior* being the first support for hypothesis 4.3. Showing that the experimental variation of *attractiveness* was successful, chat partners intended to represent high physical attractiveness were rated as more attractive overall than chat partner intended to represent low physical attractiveness ( $M = 3.91, SD = 1.34$  vs.  $M = 2.47, SD = 1.08$ ),  $F(1, 133) = 57.34, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .30$ , supporting hypothesis 4.2. There was no support for hypothesis 4.4, which had predicted the highest rating for harassing remarks sent by an attractive woman.

### 13.4.4 Evaluation of behavior: Insult

The next dependent variables were ratings of the behavior as insult, collected after the chat phase. Means are depicted in Figure 13.



*Figure 13.* Rating of chat partner's behavior as insult in harassing vs. non-harassing conditions as a function of *Attractiveness*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Possible range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate stronger insult (Study 4).

Presence or absence of *harassment* had a significant main effect on ratings of the behavior as insult,  $F(1, 133) = 35.93, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .21$ . Non-harassing behavior was rated as less of an insult than harassing behavior ( $M = 1.32, SD = 0.75$  vs.  $M = 2.46, SD = 1.34$ ). Thus, hypothesis 4.1 was again supported. In addition, jokes were rated more of an insult than remarks ( $M = 2.10, SD = 1.25$  vs.  $M = 1.65, SD = 1.10$ ),  $F(1, 133) = 5.26, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$ , offering support for hypothesis 4.3. Attractiveness of the chat partner had neither main nor interaction effects on ratings of the chat partners' behavior as insult, which did not support hypotheses 4.2 and 4.4.

### 13.4.5 Evaluation of behavior: Compliment

Ratings of the chat partners' behavior as compliment were the next dependent variable. Means are depicted in Figure 14.

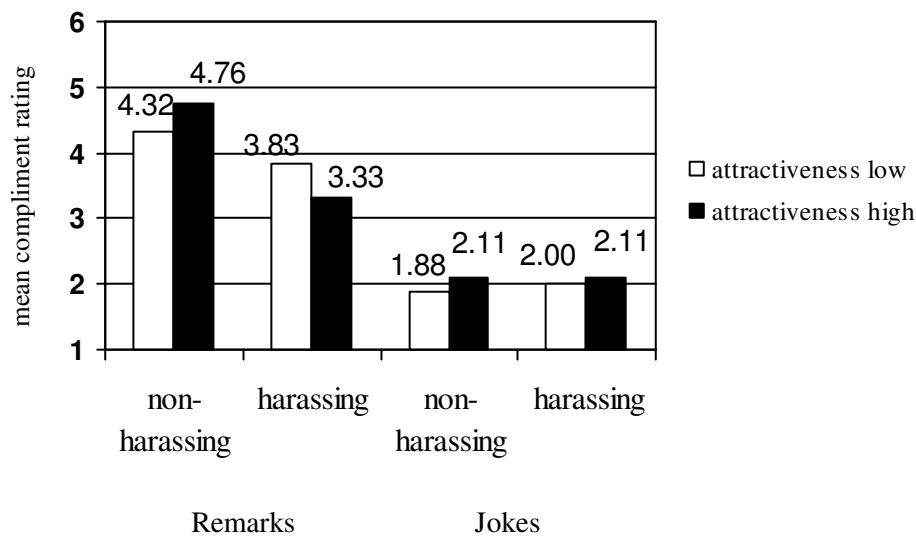


Figure 14. Rating of chat partner's behavior as compliment in harassing vs. non-harassing conditions as a function of *Attractiveness*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate rating of better compliment (Study 4).

Again, presence or absence of *harassment* had a significant influence on ratings of the behavior as compliment, and hypothesis 4.1 was supported,  $F(1, 133) = 4.69, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ . Non-harassing behavior was rated as more of a compliment than harassing behavior ( $M = 3.26, SD = 1.74$  vs.  $M = 2.80, SD = 1.47$ ). In addition, remarks were rated as more of a compliment than jokes ( $M = 4.09, SD = 1.38$  vs.  $M = 2.03, SD = 1.13$ ),  $F(1, 133) = 96.68, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .42$ , supporting hypothesis 4.3. The interaction effect *harassment* x *behavior* was also significant,  $F(1, 133) = 6.00, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$ . This interaction was further decomposed by type of behavior. Only for remarks, the simple main effect of sexual harassment was significant,  $F(1, 133) = 10.41, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .07$ , with non-harassing remarks rated as more of a compliment than harassing remarks,  $M = 4.53 (SD 1.21)$  vs.  $M = 3.61 (SD 1.41)$ , respectively, which was not even partly supporting hypothesis 4.4. Attractiveness had no influence on behavior ratings as compliment, thus not supporting hypothesis 4.2.

### 13.4.6 Evaluation of behavior: Sexually harassing

Finally, ratings of the behavior as sexually harassing were the dependent variable in the last analysis. Means are depicted in Figure 16.

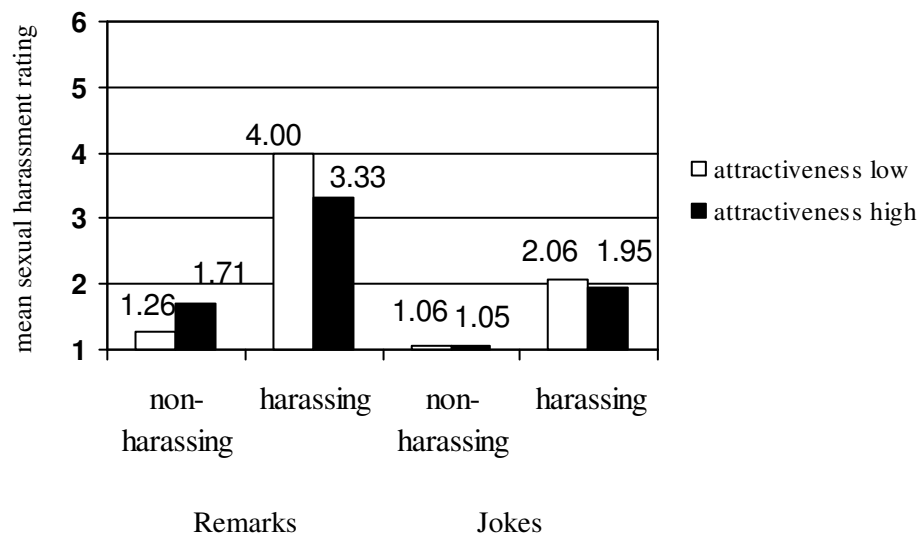


Figure 16. Rating of chat partner's behavior as sexually harassing in harassing vs. non-harassing conditions as a function of *Attractiveness*, *Type of Behavior* and *Sexual Harassment*. Range of means from 1 to 6, higher values indicate more sexual harassment (Study 4).

Presence or absence of *harassment* had a significant influence on ratings of the behavior as sexually harassing,  $F(1, 133) = 68.61, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .34$ . Harassing behavior was rated as more sexually harassing than non-harassing behavior ( $M = 2.81, SD = 1.69$  vs.  $M = 1.36, SD = 0.65$ ), which supported hypothesis 4.1. In addition, remarks were rated as more sexually harassing than jokes ( $M = 2.54, SD = 1.72$  vs.  $M = 1.53, SD = 1.01$ ),  $F(1, 133) = 30.67, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .19$ . This main effect of *type of behavior* thus contradicted hypothesis 4.3. The interaction of *harassment*  $\times$  *type of behavior* was also significant,  $F(1, 133) = 10.68, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .07$ , and was again decomposed by type of behavior. For jokes, only the simple main effect of harassment was significant,  $F(1, 133) = 12.88, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$ . Sexist jokes were rated as more harassing than neutral jokes ( $M = 2.00, SD = 1.22$  vs.  $M = 1.06, SD = 0.23$ ). For remarks, both the simple main effect of sexual harassment and the simple interaction *harassment*  $\times$  *attractiveness* were significant,  $F(1, 133) = 4.21, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , and  $F(1, 133) = 65.18, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .33$ , respectively. Harassing remarks were rated as more harassing than non-harassing remarks ( $M = 3.70, SD = 1.69$  vs.  $M = 1.47, SD = 0.85$ ), and harassing remarks by an unattractive woman were rated as more harassing than harassing remarks by an attractive woman ( $M = 4.00, SD = 1.53$  vs.  $M = 3.33, SD = 1.84$ ), respectively. Again, this was not in line with hypothesis 4.4.

## 13.5 Discussion

According to empirical data and evolutionary psychological reasoning, men react more favorably to the expression of sexual interest than women. But does it follow that men do not care whether they are sexually harassed? Apparently, men do care, because they evaluate and emo-

tionally react to non-harassing behavior more favorably than toward moderately harassing behavior, even if harassment takes on the form of remarks expressing sexual interest.

In Study 4, men's perceptions of a woman's actual harassing or non-harassing behavior were studied using the R-CHP. Male participants were allegedly connected to a real woman via an online chat. Men received either moderately harassing or non-harassing jokes or remarks from the either attractive or unattractive female chat partner. All experimental factors were varied between participants. Under the cover story of testing a new online dating agency for students, male participants were asked to give their female chat partner feedback on her behavior, and evaluate her behavior and herself after the chat line was allegedly disconnected. The critical jokes derogated men as a group, thus representing *gender harassment*, whereas the critical remarks commented on the attractiveness of the participant as a sexual partner, thus representing (potentially) *unwanted sexual attention*. This study is, to my knowledge, the first in the published literature on men's perceptions of actual harassment (compared with scenario studies) under controlled laboratory conditions.

In general, two hypotheses were fully or partly supported by data, whereas support for the third was scarce and support for the fourth was virtually absent. In line with hypothesis 4.1, men judged harassing behavior to be more negative than non-harassing behavior. Partly supporting hypothesis 4.2, on two out of six rating dimensions, ratings were (marginally significant) more positive when the alleged chat partner was attractive: Immediate evaluations of the behavior were marginally more positive for attractive chat partners, and the successful manipulation of chat partner's attractiveness was shown in a significant main effect of this factor on ratings of overall attractiveness. No main effects of attractiveness occurred for *immediate emotional response* toward the behavior, ratings of the behavior as *insult*, *compliment*, and *sexually harassing*. Contrary to expectations, men in general did not evaluate remarks or remark senders more favorably than jokes or jokes senders. Rather, results were mixed. Either there was no main effect for type of behavior (as with the dependent variables *immediate behavior evaluations* and *immediate emotional response*), or evaluations for jokes were more favorable (as with the dependent variables *overall attractiveness* of the chat partner and behavior ratings as *sexually harassing*), or remarks were evaluated better than jokes, as predicted (as with behavior ratings as *insult* and as *compliment*). The most complex hypothesis, predicting the most positive ratings for harassing behavior expressing sexual interest and sent by an attractive partner, did also receive no support.

Results of Study 4 show that the new methodology to study a moderate form of actual harassment, the R-CHP, is suitable for use with male participants. The new methodology offers a promising pathway to enrich the limited data on harassment of men. Laboratory studies on men's actual experiences are possible under full experimental control, while limiting "contact" to the harasser to an online exchange. Moreover, this first study on actual harassment of men already offers useful insights into the phenomenon as a whole. From a men-as-harassees perspective, and despite empirical data and evolutionary psychological theorizing (e.g. Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Clark & Hatfield, 1989), the male participants in this study did not seem to value the expression of sexual interest toward them, let alone receiving male sexist jokes. Instead, they rated non-harassing behavior and non-harassers better. For all but one response dimensions, this main effect of harassment was significant, and on the remaining response dimension, it was marginally



significant. This result calls for a consequent inclusion of male harassment experiences in harassment awareness programs. Turning to a men-as-perpetrators perspective, Study 4 shows that men are able to recognize actual harassment directed at them. This speaks against an explanation of harassment that draws on the mitigating circumstance of men simply not recognizing that their behavior might be offensive. When men can detect the negative quality of others' behavior toward them, then the assumption that they are blind toward the negative quality of their own behavior toward others does not seem convincing.

The comparatively limited support in Study 4 for a general attractiveness stereotype at work (Dion et al., 1972) is in contrast to results of Study 1 on women's perceptions of actual harassment: With a similar design, women's ratings on virtually all response dimensions were more favorable for attractive male chat partners. In Study 4, results for type of behavior were mixed: Whereas the sender of jokes was rated as more *attractive* overall than the sender of remarks, and jokes were rated as less *sexually harassing* than remarks, remarks were rated more positively on the dimensions *insult* and *compliment*. These mixed effects might be interpreted together with some interaction effects of harassment and type of behavior, and together with recent theorizing about harassment of men. Stockdale and her colleagues (Stockdale et al., 2004) find men less likely to perceive rejection-based harassment as harassing than approach-based harassment. This is similar to effects of type of behavior found in the present study on the response dimension *sexually harassing*. The use of derogating jokes as a form of gender harassment is akin to rejection-based harassment, and remarks expressing sexual attention are akin to approach-based harassment. Despite the rather violent content of the critical jokes (e.g., suggesting that as many men as possible should have severe car accidents), participants rated harassing jokes as much less harassing than harassing remarks. Furthermore, they did not much differ in their ratings of harassing vs. non-harassing jokes, but did differ in their ratings of harassing vs. non-harassing remarks, with harassing remarks being generally rated significantly worse than non-harassing remarks. This is surprising given the nature of the material as rather bluntly expressing sexual interest, and men's (compared with women's) inclination to react favorably to sexual offers (Clark & Hatfield, 1989).

However, these results could reflect that most people have a clearly delineated, and limited, concept of what constitutes harassment. In many studies, gender harassment is identified to a lesser degree as being sexually harassing than other forms of harassment (e.g., in the studies of the EC, 1998), and the gender gap in identifying certain behaviors as sexually harassing is larger for hostile work environment harassment and derogatory attitudes toward women (Rotundo et al., 2001). This reflects that men might have a concept of harassment as having explicit *sexual* connotations, instead of *gender* connotations. Because men in Study 4 were asked to what extent they found the behavior of their chat partner *sexually* harassing, the sexual content of the critical remarks might have driven the high ratings on this dimension, compared with ratings of critical jokes. In total, results for the rating dimension *sexually harassing* are comparable to results of Study 1, with a similar experimental setup, but a gender-reversed constellation of chat partner and participant. This is interesting in the light of previous research that found women to be almost four times more likely than men to acknowledge being harassed (Stockdale et al., 1995).

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Based on previous research on perceptions of harassment scenarios, a significant influence of several attitude measures, such as the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), was expected, but not found. In general, attitudes did not influence any of the dependent variables, and in cases where there was a (marginally) significant influence, covariates (measured before experimental manipulations took place) were not independent of experimental factors. Despite being unexpected, this lack of results for attitudes in Study 4 was in line with similar results of Study 1.

Taken together, results of these studies on perceptions of actual harassment, as compared with studies on perceptions of harassment scenarios, underline the importance of studying actual harassment, as explicated in the introduction. Because there are serious ethical considerations to observe when confronting research participants with even moderately harassing behavior, the R-CHP is a useful tool for this type of research: It allows for a careful selection of behaviors, thus controlling the severity of the harassment experience, limits “contact” to an exchange via a chat line, thus also limiting severity, and enables the researcher to adapt the cover story to a variety of experimental settings.

None of the participants in Study 4 interrupted or abandoned the experiment: All finished the study. This is not very different from Study 1, where only one participant abandoned the experiment. Nevertheless, no study exists in the published literature (at least none that I am aware of) that directly compares men’s experiences of actual harassment with those imagined when reading a scenario of the same situation. Therefore, I conducted Study 5, where I presented male participants with a scenario of Study 4.

## 14. Study 5

### 14.1 Introduction

How do men imagine reacting to remarks bluntly expressing sexual interest or jokes that derogate men in general, sent by a woman over a chat line? Previous research on imagined versus actual responses to harassment has almost exclusively focused on female recipients of harassment. Generally, women react with avoidance of the harasser or ignoring the harassment, but imagine reacting more assertively and telling him to stop (Gutek & Koss, 1993; Koss et al., 1994, Sigal et al., 2003; USMSPB, 1995; see also section 7.2). In Studies 1 and 2, both with female participants who either actually experienced a moderate form of harassment or imagined this experience, this pattern of results was also found. Transferring these results of previous research, and of Studies 1 and 2, to male harassees, however, would be premature: To date, research on male harassment experiences is scarce, and research comparing men's actual and imagined responses to harassment that is conducted under controlled laboratory conditions is, to my knowledge, non-existent in the published literature. Unfortunately, even those large, retrospective surveys that are a very reliable source of information do not report responses differentiated by gender (e.g., EC, 1998; USMSPB, 1995). Given that, traditionally, for men, traits such as assertiveness, dominance, and forcefulness are held to be desirable (see the research using the Bem Sex Role Inventory, Bem, 1974; e.g., Snellman, Ekehammar, & Akrami, 2009), men should at least be aware that behavior reflecting such traits is expected of them, even if, actually, men and women do not differ (as much) on such traits (as they did when Bem's measure was published; see Ballard-Reisch & Elton, 1992; Holt & Ellis, 1998; Wilcox & Francis, 1997; Wippermann & Wippermann, 2007). From these deliberations follow two opposite directions of possible results. First, men could imagine acting more assertively than do women, i.e. giving the most negative feedback more often than do women, and imagine complaining to the experimenter or abandoning the experiment more often than do women. Second, men could imagine not caring about what happens to them, and therefore imagine not giving the most negative feedback more often than do women, and not complaining to the experimenter or abandon the experiment more often than do women. However, the underlying processes of these alternative outcomes can only be speculated about, and other causes are imaginable. Therefore, and because previous research on men's reactions to harassment is too scarce to allow for directed hypotheses, all analyses in Study 5 are exploratory.

## 14.2 Method

### 14.2.1 Participants

A total of 50 participants were recruited for Study 5. The data of nine participants had to be excluded from analyses (incomplete questionnaires, participants commented they took the perspective of a woman). The remaining 41 participants (no psychology students) had a mean age of 26.83 years (SD 7.43, range from 18 to 54 years); 19 were randomly assigned to the sexual attention condition, 22 to the derogating jokes condition.

### 14.2.2 Procedure

Participants were recruited on campus for a study on “behavioral options”. After informed consent was obtained, they completed the experimental materials in group sessions of up to six participants, individually seated in a large laboratory. Participants worked in silence on the materials. After completion, participants were fully debriefed and received contact information, information about sexual harassment, 2 Euros or course credit, and a chocolate bar.

### 14.2.3 Materials

Participants in Study 5 received a written scenario (paper-and-pencil format) of the cover story and first stages of Study 4. The questionnaire started with the instruction that participants put themselves in the situation described (see appendix C). Each joke or remark from the harassing conditions of Study 4 was presented on an individual page and followed by response scales labeled with “*You can give your chat partner feedback about your evaluation/feeling*”, followed by the respective response scale for *evaluation* and *emotional response* (both anchored 1 = *very good* to 6 = *very bad*). The response scales were labeled *what evaluation would you send to your chat partner?* and *what feedback would you give about your feeling?*, respectively. Before analyses, evaluations and emotional responses to critical items were averaged and recoded so that higher values indicated better evaluation or feeling, respectively, in order to make these variables comparable between Studies 4 and 5 (*evaluation*: Cronbach’s alpha = .87, *feeling*: Cronbach’s alpha = .84). These scales were followed by four scales designed to tap into more specific emotions and labeled *how would you feel?*, followed by scales measuring feeling *angry*, *afraid*, *hurt*, and *flattered*, respectively, each presented with a six-point scale from 1 (*very much*) to 6 (*not at all*). Three types of behavioral reactions were measured after that, preceded by the question *with what likelihood would you do the following?*, followed by the options *I just continue with the chat*, *I go out, inform the experimenter that my chat partner sends strange things*, and *I go out, inform the experimenter that my chat partner sends strange things, and abandon the study*. The first option was only added as filler scale to reduce demand characteristics and results are not reported here. Each option was presented with a six-point-scale from 1 (*definitely yes*) to 6 (*definitely not*). Responses to the behavioral options were recoded to make them comparable to Study

2, so that higher values indicate greater imagined likelihood to act out that behavior. I counted as *complain* responses to the second behavioral option and as *abandon* responses to the third option that were four or higher, respectively, indicating that participants imagined to rather definitely react that way<sup>5</sup>. After all 11 items were presented and all the measures described above collected, the questionnaire concluded with four items measuring the evaluation of the jokes or remarks as a whole, on the dimensions *compliment*, *insult*, and *sexually harassing*, all measured with six-point scales from 1 (*does not apply*) to 6 (*does apply very much*), and a last item measuring desire to meet the chat partner, labeled *would you like to meet your chat partner?* and measured on a six-point scale from 1 (*absolutely not*) to 6 (*very much*).

## 14.3 Results

### 14.3.1 Imagined behavioral reactions

Over all critical items, 19.5 percent of participants (eight out of 41) imagined complaining to the experimenter, and 14.6 percent of participants (six out of 41) imagined abandoning the study. In contrast, 73.2 percent<sup>30</sup> of participants (30 out of 41) imagined just continuing with the study after receiving one or more harassing items. These data can only be interpreted as tendencies, however, because a number of participants imagined to react that way even with non-harassing materials: 12.2 % of participants (five out of 41) imagined complaining to the experimenter after receiving neutral items, and 4.9 % (two out of 41) imagined to abandon the experiment after receiving neutral items. In contrast, 92.7 % of participants (38 out of 41) imagined to just continue with the study after receiving neutral items. I conducted two ANOVAs with *harassment* (harassing vs. neutral items) as within-participants factor and *type of behavior* (jokes vs. remarks) as between-participants factor<sup>31</sup>, and the response “complain” and “abandon” as the dependent variable, respectively. Only the imagined response of abandoning the experiment altogether differed between harassing and non-harassing items: Participants imagined to abandon the experiment more frequently when they received harassing, rather than non-harassing items ( $M = .17, SD = 0.33$  vs.  $M = 0.8, SD = 0.22$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 4.94, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .11$ .

### 14.3.2 Evaluations of materials

To compare responses between Studies 4 and 5, I created a combined dataset including all participants in the harassing conditions of Study 4 (total  $N = 110$ ) and conducted an ANOVA of the 2 (group: real vs. imagined harassment) x 2 (behavior: jokes vs. remarks) between-

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<sup>30</sup> Participants could indicate more than one behavioural option; therefore, cumulated percentages can exceed 100 percent.

<sup>31</sup> Due to the coding of “complain” and “abandon”, the maximum mean value was one, and the minimum mean value was zero.

participants design. For imagined (vs. real) harassment, mean evaluation of the critical items was more negative ( $M = 3.88$   $SD = 1.33$  vs.  $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ),  $F(1, 106) = 4.46$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ . Therefore, participants in the scenario gave the harasser more negative feedback than participants actually experiencing the behavior had done. The most extreme ratings, with the worst possible mark for each harassing item, were more equally distributed, with 4.3 % of participants (three out of 69) in the real harassment group and 4.9 % of participants (two out of 41) in the imagined harassment group assigning this worst rating to each harassing item. In addition, harassing jokes were evaluated better than harassing remarks ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 1.06$  vs.  $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ),  $F(1, 106) = 4.88$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ .

### 14.3.3 Global emotional response

Participants's emotional responses did not differ between real and imagined harassment ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 1.35$  vs.  $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ), and type of behavior also had no significant influence (jokes:  $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ; remarks:  $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ), all  $F < 2.06$ , all  $p > .15$ . On the level of the most extreme individual ratings, this lack of difference between emotional responses to real as compared to imagined harassment is also reflected in the roughly equal frequency with which participants gave the worst possible feedback about their feeling after receiving each harassing item. With real harassment, two out of 69 participants (2.9 percent) in the harassing conditions did this, with imagined harassment, one out of 41 participants (2.4 percent) did this.

#### 14.3.3.1. Specific emotional responses

Returning to the original dataset of Study 5, the four more differentiated emotions were the dependent variable in the following mixed ANOVAs, with presence or absence of *harassment* as within-participants factor, *type of behavior* (derogating jokes vs. remarks expressing sexual attention) as between-participants factor, and the specific emotion as dependent variable (lower values indicate more pronounced emotion).

#### Feeling angry

Participants imagined to feel more angry after receiving harassing materials than non-harassing materials ( $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = 1.30$  vs.  $M = 5.04$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 6.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .14$ . The interaction *harassment* x *type of behavior* was also significant,  $F(1, 39) = 5.88$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .13$ . Pairwise comparisons revealed that participants imagined to feel more angry after receiving non-harassing remarks than non-harassing jokes ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 1.26$  vs.  $M = 5.39$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 5.51$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .12$ , and that participants imagined to feel more angry after receiving harassing than non-harassing jokes ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 1.22$  vs.  $M = 5.39$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 12.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .25$ . *Type of behavior* had no main effect on feeling angry,  $F(1, 39) = 0.72$ ,  $p < .41$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ .

### Feeling afraid

*Type of behavior* had a significant influence on how afraid participants imagined to feel: Participants imagined more fear after receiving remarks than after receiving jokes (harassing remarks:  $M = 4.87$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ; non-harassing remarks:  $M = 5.36$ ,  $SD = 0.82$  vs. harassing jokes:  $M = 5.65$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ; non-harassing jokes:  $M = 5.64$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 4.71$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .11$ . All other effects were non-significant, all  $F < 2.40$ , all  $p > .12$ .

### Feeling hurt

Only the interaction *harassment* x *type of behavior* was marginally significant,  $F(1, 39) = 3.93$ ,  $p = .055$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .09$ . Pairwise comparisons showed a tendency for participants to imagine feeling less hurt after receiving non-harassing jokes than after receiving non-harassing remarks ( $M = 5.64$ ,  $SD = 0.75$  vs.  $M = 5.01$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 4.84$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .11$ . They also imagined to feel more hurt after receiving harassing jokes than after receiving non-harassing jokes ( $M = 4.98$ ,  $SD = 1.09$  vs.  $M = 5.64$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ), respectively,  $F(1, 39) = 7.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .15$ . To be thorough, the remaining mean of harassing remarks was  $M = 5.07$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ . All other effects were non-significant, all  $F < 2.76$ , all  $p > .10$ .

### Feeling flattered

On the extent to which participants imagined to feel flattered, each factor and the interaction had significant influence. Participants imagined feeling more flattered after receiving harassing than non-harassing material ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = 1.59$  vs.  $M = 5.22$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 21.92$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .36$ . They also imagined feeling more flattered after receiving remarks than jokes (harassing remarks:  $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ; non-harassing remarks:  $M = 5.36$ ,  $SD = 0.99$  vs. harassing jokes:  $M = 5.61$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ; non-harassing jokes:  $M = 5.42$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 27.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .42$ . Pairwise comparisons of the significant interaction,  $F(1, 39) = 34.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .47$ , revealed that participants felt more flattered after receiving harassing remarks, both as compared to harassing jokes,  $F(1, 39) = 50.90$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .57$ , and as compared to non-harassing remarks,  $F(1, 39) = 51.96$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .57$ . All other effects were non-significant, all  $F < 2.10$ , all  $p > .15$ .

## 14.3.4 Evaluations of materials and of chat partner for imagined harassment

Ratings of the behavior as a whole, on the dimensions compliment, insult, and sexually harassing, and of a desire to meet the chat partner (higher values indicate more pronounced target concept), were dependent variables of the next ANOVAs with *type of behavior* (derogating jokes vs. remarks expressing sexual attention) as single between-participants factor.

### 14.3.4.1. Insult

Participants in the jokes condition rated the behavior as a whole as more of an insult, compared to participants in the remarks condition ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 1.36$  vs.  $M = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 1.57$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 5.73$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .13$ .

#### 14.3.4.2. Compliment

Remarks were, as a whole, rated as more of a compliment than jokes ( $M = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 1.39$  vs.  $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 6.58$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .14$ .

#### 14.3.4.3. Sexual harassment

Participants rated remarks as more harassing than jokes ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.55$  vs.  $M = 1.68$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 40.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .51$ .

#### 14.3.4.4. Desire to meet the chat partner

The imagined desire to meet the chat partner was not different between materials,  $F(1, 39) = 0.41$ ,  $p < .531$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ .

### 14.3.5 Comparison of behavior ratings and desire to meet the chat partner between Study 4 and Study 5

The rating dimensions *insult*, *compliment*, *sexually harassing*, and *desire to meet the chat partner* were applied in both Study 5 and Study 4. As before, further analyses were done on the combined dataset to compare these ratings between studies. Results mirrored those of the analyses of the imagined harassment only, with *type of behavior* having a significant effect on all rating dimensions, and in the same direction, except desire to meet the chat partner, where there were no significant effects. Real vs. imagined harassment had no influence on ratings, all  $F < 2.19$ , all  $p > .14$ .

#### 14.3.5.1. Compliment ratings between real and imagined harassment

Remarks were rated as more of a compliment than jokes in the combined dataset ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 1.41$  vs.  $M = 2.12$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ),  $F(1, 106) = 24.62$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .19$ .

#### 14.3.5.2. Insult ratings between real and imagined harassment

Jokes were rated as more insulting than remarks ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.42$  vs.  $M = 2.21$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ),  $F(1, 106) = 9.26$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .08$ .

#### 14.3.5.3. Sexual harassment ratings between real and imagined harassment

Remarks were rated as more sexually harassing than jokes ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 1.64$  vs.  $M = 1.93$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ),  $F(1, 106) = 53.88$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .34$ .

## 14.4 Discussion

Do men's imagined behavioral responses to being harassed differ as markedly from their actual responses as women's do? Apparently, that is the case. Reading a scenario in which a woman alternately sent harassing and non-harassing remarks or jokes to her male chat partner



via a chat line, a considerable proportion of male participants in Study 5 imagined to complain to the experimenter, or to abandon participation in the experiment entirely. In contrast, in Study 4, where this situation actually happened, not one participant reacted that way.

Looking at dependent variables that were directly comparable between studies, immediate evaluation of harassing materials was significantly worse for imagined, than for actual harassment, whereas immediate emotional response did not differ between imagined and actual harassment.

On the level of more differentiated emotional responses specific of Study 5, participants imagined feeling angrier, but also more flattered, after receiving harassing items, compared to non-harassing items. Regardless of harassing or neutral quality of the material, participants also felt more afraid when they received remarks, compared to jokes. Other results for type of behavior were rather inconsistent.

For behavior ratings as a whole, that is, as compliment, insult, and sexually harassing, no differences occurred between imagined and actual responses. Instead, for imagined responses, type of harassment was more influential: Remarks expressing sexual attention were rated as more of a compliment, but also as more sexually harassing, and jokes derogating men were rated as more of an insult. The desire to meet the chat partner was independent of type of behavior.

Previous retrospective studies and very few experiments comparing responses to actual and imagined harassment have focused primarily on female respondents and female participants. These studies have established that, while most people think that reacting assertively to harassment (e.g., telling the harasser to stop, filing an official complaint) is a common and proper way to respond, the majority of those who are harassed reacts quite differently: Most do nothing, ignore the harassment, or avoid the harasser (e.g., USMSPB, 1995). Research on the actual or imagined responses of women is scarce (for an example, see Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001), and in the published literature, to my knowledge, there is not one study that compares actual and imagined responses of men. Therefore, Studies 4 and 5 of this dissertation together constitute the whole body of available research on that topic.

Results for the behavioral options (complain to the experimenter and abandon the experiment altogether) share a problem often encountered in scenario research of harassment: Their demand characteristic. For a research participant in a scenario study, being presented with a list of behavioral options, it is arguably very easy to just tick one (or more) box and to imagine that reacting that way in a real situation is easily done. Using an open response format does not necessarily reduce this problem, because this still might invite participants to think about what they would do. In retrospective surveys, respondents often report doubting their own interpretations of the incident the moment it happens, and being unable to react in any way (e.g., USMSPB, 1995). This gives rise to a number of problems for harassed, because chances are that they, too, think that an assertive reaction is in the power of anyone who encounters harassment. At the same time, adding behavioral options to studies of actual harassment (in case of the studies presented here, adding response scales labeled “would you like to inform the experimenter?” or

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“would you like to abandon the test run?”<sup>32</sup>) is not a realistic operationalization of actual harassment: When harassment occurs, there is often no easy exit from the situation available. Study 5 shows that for studies with men, as with studies of women, these basic methodological problems also apply. Therefore, it makes a good case for conducting studies of actual harassment, and comparing results of these with scenarios. Even if studying actual harassment under controlled laboratory conditions is faced with problems, and a comprehensive informed consent procedure as well as a careful tailoring of experimental materials is an absolute necessity, results of such studies are indispensable to get a full view on the phenomenon of harassment and to do those people justice that are harassed.

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<sup>32</sup> Despite the fact that the informed consent procedure in Study 5 (as well as in Study 2 with female participants) explicitly stated that informing the experimenter and abandoning the experiment at any time was perfectly acceptable, none of the participants in Study 4 did that.

## PART THREE

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

#### 15. Discussion of results

Do men perceive women's typical harassment experiences similarly or differently than do women themselves? Previous research has shown that men tend to perceive harassment scenarios as less severe than women, but whether this finding extends to actual experiences of men and women had not been investigated until now. Furthermore, despite a quarter of a century's research into women's experiences of harassment, research comparing women's actual with their imagined harassment experiences is extremely scarce. Virtually the whole body of research on harassment relies on analog studies and retrospective surveys, which have certain methodological shortcomings. When presenting participants with a scenario describing a harassing incident, assertive responses are apparently heavily overestimated. When asking a given population about their past harassment experiences, numerous memory biases are at work, and almost nothing is known about harassers beyond what the respondents know and recall. The present dissertation aimed to help closing some of these research gaps.

In a series of experiments, men's and women's perceptions of and responses to harassing behavior were compared. Type of harassment was varied between either derogating the recipient's gender or expressing a sexual interest, and harasser characteristics were varied between either being attractive or unattractive, and possessing good or bad financial resources. Importantly, both actual harassment and imagined harassment was studied, and differences and similarities in perceiving and interpreting actual and imagined harassing behaviors were compared. Inherent to all studies, two influential theoretical perspectives on harassment, namely, an evolutionary psychological approach and a socio-structural approach, informed research designs and formulation of hypotheses. Results seem to boil down to one notion: Attractive harassers get away more easily. But this general finding is qualified by a number of other, more specific, and maybe also more important, findings.

##### 15.1 Actual harassing versus non-harassing behavior, and actual versus imagined harassment

To compare responses to actual and imagined harassment, I developed a new methodology to study actual harassment experiences from the perspective of the person who is harassed. Re-

versing the newly introduced CHP (Siebler et al., 2008), a method to study actual harassment from the harasser's point of view in an online setting, research participants received various materials from an allegedly real, but in fact computer-simulated chat partner of the opposite sex. Materials were varied between moderately harassing remarks that expressed a sexual interest or had neutral content, and sexist jokes or neutral jokes.

Complementing and extending analog research, results firstly show that male and female participants generally evaluated a non-harasser and his or her behavior as significantly more positively than a harasser and his or her behavior. Apparently, men and women recognize harassment when they see it, and they do not like it. This result is far from trivial, because a common "explanation" of harassment is that the harasser "meant well", and that harassment is normal<sup>33</sup> behavior between men and women. It is also a result in contrast to previous research on a tendency of men to interpret behavior of women as more sexually inviting than do women (e.g., Abbey, 1982; Johnson, Stockdale, & Saal, 1991; Saal, Johnson, & Weber, 1989).

Data from Studies 1 to 5 emphasize that at least the men and women participating in these studies did find non-harassing behavior more "normal", that is, generally more positive, than harassing behavior. In Studies 1 and 2, women's responses to the actually harassing situation were compared with the respective scenario. Women who only imagined to receive harassing materials from a male chat partner indicated to send the harasser worse evaluative feedback than did their counterparts who actually received the materials. In contrast, women who only imagined being harassed indicated better emotional responses than did those who actually received the materials. These results are in line with the one experimental study comparing actual and imagined responses of women to harassment, where participants in the imagined condition overestimated the proportion of assertive responses (Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001). Likening bad evaluative feedback to the harasser with assertive responses to harassment, participants in Study 2 also overestimated this type of response. As was the case with Woodzicka and LaFrance's study, scenario participants also underestimated negativity of emotional impact in Study 2, relative to participants who actually received harassing materials in Study 1.

For male targets in Studies 4 and 5, results for imagined and actual evaluative feedback to the harasser mirror results of female targets. Men imagined giving more negative feedback than did those who actually received the materials. For emotional responses, however, there was no difference between men's imagined and actual reactions. Because in the scenario study with male participants, dimensions for global behavior ratings were the same as with the study of actual harassment, further comparisons were possible. For behavior ratings as insult, compliment and as sexually harassing, results did not differ between imagined and actual harassment. However, results differed with regard to type of behavior, and did so regardless of whether the behavior was only imagined or actually experienced. Jokes were rated as more insulting and less of a compliment than remarks, and remarks were rated as more sexually harassing than jokes.

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<sup>33</sup> The concept of "normality" is used here, of course, to describe behavior commonly accepted to be *appropriate*, not used in the sense that the behavior is ubiquitous, and frequently encountered. The latter concept of normality would well apply to harassment of women at least, given that about half of all working women encounter harassment at least once during their working life.

Taken together, results allow for the tentative conclusion that men and women are more similar than they are different in their ratings of actual harassment experiences. However, women differ in their ratings of imagined versus actual harassment more than do men. Because this is only the second study on actual harassment with female participants, and the first study on actual harassment with male participants, results are of course preliminary. Nevertheless, the fact that with female participants, results from the first study on actual harassment (Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001, 2005) are comparable to results from Studies 1 and 2, is nevertheless encouraging. On a descriptive level, however, a difference between men and women occurs. In spite of the largely stable main effect of harassment for both genders, women's immediate evaluations and emotional responses indicated perceptions of more severe harassment than did men's ratings. This is in line with retrospective surveys (USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995) as well as scenario studies of harassment (e.g., Frazier et al., 1995), and with the gender effect often found in meta-analyses (Blumenthal, 1998; Rotundo et al., 2001): Men usually perceive the same behaviors as less harassing than women. However, as Studies 1 and 4 have shown, both genders perceive harassing behaviors more negatively than non-harassing behaviors.

A further counter argument to the notion of harassment as "normal" behavior between men and women is that it is usually based on the assumption that all harassment takes place between a male initiator and a female recipient. This is a misconception, as has been shown in the introduction: Harassment can and does take place with every gender constellation possible. With the R-CHP, there is now a methodology available that allows for investigating actual harassment perceptions from the perspective of the recipient with all gender constellations.

## 15.2 Harasser attractiveness

A well-established effect of physical attractiveness is more positive trait ascriptions to more attractive individuals, the "what is beautiful is good"-stereotype (Dion et al., 1972; Eagly et al., 1991). A number of scenario studies have replicated this effect for evaluations of harassment and rape scenarios, finding comparable effects. With a number of operationalizations, e.g., presenting participants with written scenarios and written attractiveness description (e.g., Popovich et al., 1996; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1994; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1997) or presenting participants with written scenarios and pictures varying harasser attractiveness (e.g., Gerdes et al., 1988), the commonly found effect is that of a decrease in offence-severity ratings with an increase in perpetrator attractiveness. This attractiveness effect is in line with a concept of harassment as well-intended flirtatious behavior of men toward women that is just misunderstood by the target (Studd, 1996): Even though women place less importance on good looks in a potential male partner, they still value them, and for men, good looks in a potential female partner are very important (Buss et al., 1990). Therefore, the high mate value of a man or a woman should offer some incentive to interpret his or her behavior more favorably.

For actual harassment from the harassee's perspective, to my knowledge, Studies 1 and 4 in the present dissertation are the first attempts to study this attractiveness effect<sup>34</sup>. In Study 3, a scenario design with a variation of the attractiveness manipulation was used. In the studies where harasser attractiveness was varied, differences and similarities by gender occurred. Strong differences were found between experimental methods, in that the attractiveness effect was more pronounced in the scenario study (Study 3) than with actual harassment (Studies 1 and 4). One methodological difference exists between Studies 1 and 4: For female participants experiencing actual harassment in Study 1, their chat partner's physical attractiveness was varied together with quality of financial prospects to create stimuli with high general mate value. For male participants experiencing actual harassment in Study 4, only physical attractiveness of the female chat partner was varied. The mate value variation influenced female participants' ratings of the actual behavior to a broader extent than the attractiveness variation influenced male participants' ratings of the actual behavior. High mate value-men and their behavior were rated more positively on more response dimensions in Study 1 with female participants. In Study 4, a similar attractiveness was found, but on less response dimensions. In Study 1, a mate value effect in the hypothesized direction occurred for more indirect ratings, such as immediate evaluations of the behavior and behavior ratings as a compliment, but not on more direct rating dimensions, such as immediate emotional response and behavior ratings as sexually harassing. Similarities with male participant's ratings in Study 4 were also found: The attractiveness effect was in the same direction for men and women, with more positive ratings for highly attractive chat partners or chat partners of high mate value. In addition, for both genders, the effect was more pronounced for immediate behavior evaluations than for immediate emotional response.

The mixed mate value results with female participants who actually experienced a moderate form of harassing behavior are far from a complete replication of evidence gathered with scenario studies. However, one might argue that this only partial replication is not due to the difference between actual and imagined harassment, but is due to the specific population of German female students of Bielefeld University. This argument gets some strength from the fact that studies of harassment with German populations in general are virtually absent from the published literature: Therefore, despite evidence of intercultural comparability of harassment phenomena in general (e.g., Sigal & Jacobsen, 1999; Sigal, Gibbs, Goodrich, Rashid, Anjum, Hsu, et al., 2005; Wasti, Bergman, Glomb, & Drasgow, 2000), there is the possibility that German female students are a special population with which the highly consistent attractiveness effects found in scenario studies on harassment is not replicable. However, this argument is refuted by results of Study 3, a scenario study with German female students from Bielefeld University as participants. Here, consistent effects of physical attractiveness were found on all response dimensions: Attractive harassers and their behavior were rated more positively than unattractive harassers and their behavior. This is even more meaningful because attractiveness was operationalized with pictures of differently attractive men in both Study 1 and Study 3. In Study 3, quality of financial resources was varied independently of attractiveness and had no influence at all on behavior

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<sup>34</sup> For a variation of the target's attractiveness in a study on harassment from the perpetrator's perspective, see Siebler et al. (2008, study 2).

all on behavior ratings. Therefore, it seems possible that the mate value effects found in Study 1 were entirely due to the physical attractiveness manipulation. However, because physical attractiveness and quality of financial prospects were varied together in Study 1, a final conclusion on that topic is impossible.

The results in total add substantially to the literature on perpetrator-attractiveness effects. First, they show that evidence based on scenario studies is not wholly transferable to actual harassment. Attractiveness effects are limited to more indirect response dimensions, and women seem more prone to rate attractive opposite sex-harassers more favorably, compared with men. Second, men and women show more similarities than differences in their responses to differently attractive harassers. Whereas attractiveness effects seem to extend to more response dimensions with female than with male respondents, direction of effects as well as more pronounced attractiveness effects for evaluations than for emotional responses are similar for both genders. Attractiveness effects in actual harassment, therefore, are in accord with differences and similarities of men and women when it comes to judging harassing versus non-harassing behavior. Here, too, the genders show remarkable similarities.

### 15.3 Type of harassment and participant gender

Type of behavior was varied in order to examine the assumed “normality” of harassment, that is, as “normal” form of flirtation between men and women. It may be correct to assume that some types of behavior are within the normal range of courtship behavior and other interactions between men and women. However, this seems at least very dubious with other types of behavior. Some women might appreciate men’s verbal expression of sexual interest, but it seems hardly plausible that many women appreciate being publicly derogated because of their gender (e.g., as “incompetent chicks”). The same is true, of course, for the reversed gender constellation<sup>35</sup>. One focus of the studies presented here was testing the assumption that some types of behavior are more easily interpreted favorably than others. In Studies 1 and 4, actual harassment between opposite-sex dyads was studied, and Studies 2 and 5 were a replication in parts with the respective scenarios. In all these studies, behavior was varied between remarks expressing sexual interest and jokes that derogated the recipient’s gender. In Study 3, a scenario study with a male harasser and a female harassee, harassment took on the form of verbal and non-verbal behavior expressing sexual interest. All critical behaviors were pretested as being clearly, but only moderately harassing, with the remarks also offering some leeway for an interpretation as flirtation. According to a “harassment as flirtation”-concept, expressions of sexual interest should be perceived more positively, and perhaps not even as harassing, compared with sexist jokes.

However, results are mixed for the two types of behavior. With actual harassment, women rated harassing materials worse than non-harassing materials, and they interpreted remarks to be more of a compliment, but also as more harassing, than jokes. A number of interaction effects

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<sup>35</sup> These deliberations are based on an assumption of heterosexual dyads. For other sexual orientations, the same assumptions should hold.

showed that, for the interpretation of jokes, harassment was usually the most important factor: Harassing jokes were rated more negatively than non-harassing jokes. For remarks, the same effect was present, but an additional effect of mate value was found: Remarks were rated best for non-harassing behavior shown by a man with high mate value (i.e. high physical attractiveness and good financial prospects). Therefore, women do not even find harassment “normal” when it could also be interpreted as bold flirtation by an attractive man.

With men and actual harassment, results were similar to the reversed gender constellation. However, there were also some differences. Men, too, rated harassing materials worse than non-harassing materials, and they rated remarks to be more of a compliment, but also as more harassing, than jokes. Harassing remarks made by an unattractive woman were rated even more harassing than harassing remarks made by an attractive woman. Furthermore, men found a woman who sent jokes more attractive than a woman who sent remarks, but jokes were rated as more insulting than remarks. Overall, therefore, results for different types of harassment experienced by men are mixed, but they clearly show that, men, too, recognize harassment, and that they do not like it when they are the recipients. Assuming that men can put themselves into the situation of another individual’s position, then, they should be aware that harassment is not “normal”, too. However, the tendency of men to interpret “flirtatious” harassment more favorably when the harasser is attractive opens up an avenue for speculation: Are men more willing to put up with some type of harassment when the harasser is an attractive woman, compared with women when the harasser is an attractive man? The data presented here do not allow for a firm conclusion, but this question is of interest in future research, and I will come back to it later.

## 15.4 Attitudes and sociosexual orientation

During the last decade, attitude measures have increasingly been included in scenario studies of harassment (e.g., Wiener et al., 1997). A commonly used measure is the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), which measures ambivalent sexist attitudes toward women. The ASI’s hostile sexism subscale has repeatedly been shown to correlate with harassment judgments, such that more hostile sexism toward women is related to finding less evidence for harassing behavior in scenarios with female harassees and male harassers (e.g., Russel & Trigg, 2004). In the present studies on actual harassment, the ASI as well as its related scale, the AMI that measures ambivalent sexist attitudes toward men (Glick & Fiske, 1999), a measure of sexual strategies (SOI-R, Penke & Asendorpf, 2008), a measure of traditional gender roles (NGRO, Athenstaedt, 2000), and a measure to control for a tendency to respond socially desirable (SES-17, Stöber, 1999), were included. In stark contrast to evidence from scenario studies, virtually no effects of any of these measures occurred. In the case of the SES-17, with only one small, albeit significant correlation with one dependent variable in one study occurred, this is encouraging: It shows that the R-CHP is largely robust against a tendency to socially desirable responding. However, this result must be interpreted with caution because of a lack of independence of the SES-17 of some experimental factors. In the case of the other measures, it is rather disturbing, because the influence of, e.g., hostile sexist attitudes toward women, on perceptions of harassment, has become much of a tru-



ism in the published literature. This result, in addition to those already discussed above, highlights the necessity to conduct studies on actual harassment. Given that interpretations of harassment scenarios might be similar to lay judges' or jury members' interpretations of harassment cases brought to court, the absence of sexism influence for actual behavior interpretations might be an avenue for careful training for those people. If sexist attitudes of individuals are unrelated to their perceptions of harassment directed at themselves, then effects of sexist attitudes that are potentially detrimental to plaintiffs in court might be counteracted by empathy trainings, or even by simply informing the relevant persons about the differences between judging the experiences of others and experiencing a given situation oneself. In a similar manner, the absence of an influence of traditional gender role orientation might be used.

The absence of an influence of sociosexual orientation on perceptions of actual harassment supports the notion that harassing behavior is not part of the normal behavioral repertoire between men and women. Given that individuals with unrestricted sociosexual orientation tend to follow a short term mating strategy, these people should be more inclined to perceive the ambiguous expression of sexual interest as more favorably than individuals with restricted sociosexual orientation. Although the critical remarks in Studies 1 and 4 were carefully pretested to represent a clearly harassing but at the same time also ambiguously flirtatious stimulus array, sociosexual orientation was not meaningfully related to interpretation of these remarks. This is the case even though the cover story of Studies 1 and 4, as testing a new online dating agency for students, might have suggested a more favorable interpretation for those people already predisposed for it. On a correlational level, the SOI-R showed only small correlations with any of the dependent variables, and these were usually not significant. However, because Studies 1 and 4 are only the first studies on actual harassment under rigorous experimental control, attitude measures that have been shown to be related to harassment perceptions in scenario studies should be included in future studies with the R-CHP.

## 15.5 Methodology

After more than a quarter of a century of sophisticated harassment research, is there still need for new methodologies? Because until recently, no method existed to study actual harassment experiences from the harassees's perspective, the answer must be "yes". Scenario studies and retrospective surveys have been shown to overestimate assertive responses, compared with actual harassee's responses (USMSPB, 1995; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001). The present studies show that the well established attractiveness effect found in scenario studies is far from equally stable in actual harassment perceptions. Putting research participants in a face-to-face situation with an investigator's confederate as harasser, as Woodzicka and LaFrance (2001) did, might be more stressful for the participants than an online interaction, as in the R-CHP. Furthermore, even with very well trained actors as "harassers", their performance will always slightly change between participants. With the R-CHP, full control over the experimental materials is easily possible. Therefore, the R-CHP offers an economic, efficient way to study actual harassment with all possible gender constellations under a high degree of experimental control. Cover

stories are easily adapted to new research questions, and a closer similarity to workplace context is also feasible. One could even conduct an R-CHP-study in a firm, although this firm would have to be large enough for employees not to know every other employee. In addition, the R-CHP can be adjusted to investigate perceptions of other forms of discriminatory behavior toward a variety of target groups as well, such as discrimination based on ethnicity. Notwithstanding these virtues, the R-CHP might be criticized because it excludes the study of physical forms of harassment. However, the non-physical forms of harassment that can be investigated with the R-CHP are very common in cyberspace (see Barak, 2005, for an overview) and warrant their investigation. In addition, today's workplaces are characterized by a high degree of virtual communication, and the R-CHP offers the possibility of emulating this part of modern working life. Moreover, that one specific form of harassment cannot be studied with the R-CHP does not necessarily speak against the paradigm, because the full range of actual harassment can simply not be investigated in an ethically appropriate way. In all, the R-CHP seems to be a valuable addition to the harassment researcher's toolbox.

## 15.6 Harassment definitions

Broadening the scope of this general discussion, what inferences do the reported results allow for the other topics raised in the introduction? Regarding the working definition of sexual harassment and gender harassment (see section 1.4), I did indeed investigate harassment in the present studies, because critical behaviors were perceived negatively, relative to control behaviors. Critical behaviors were either sexually connotated or directed at the target person's gender, therefore complying with the behavioral part of my working definition.

Regarding commonly used definitions of harassment, results of Studies 1 and 4 in particular are interesting. For a psychological definition of harassment, the one defining factor is how the harassee perceives the behavior directed at her or him. That is, if a person is negatively affected by a given behavior, be it emotionally or physically, then this behavior constitutes harassment. Because on ethical grounds, materials were carefully chosen to reflect a slight to moderate degree of harassing quality, it was neither expected nor desired that participants should indicate very negative ratings of behavior and harasser. Even less was it desired that participant should indicate a high degree of negative emotional response. Results show that this strategy was successful. Ratings in the harassing conditions were not extremely negative, while at the same time, the consistent and significant main effects of harassment show that, psychologically speaking, operationalization of harassment was successful. Critical behaviors were chosen to represent well-established harassment categories used in behavioral checklists, and they were also consistent with behavioral examples that are part of the currently valid German harassment law. With the exception of Study 3, no study used a workplace context, and Study 3 only used a workplace scenario; therefore, accord with legal definitions is not fully given, a point to which I will come back later.

## 15.7 Typologies of harassment

Most typologies of harassment use overarching categories of behaviors, such as gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion (e.g., Fitzgerald's tripartite model, Fitzgerald et al., 1988). Instead of drawing on more or less abstract categories of harassment, I applied concrete behaviors. These were chosen based on what students of Bielefeld University defined as harassment in a previous, qualitative study (Vanselow, 2006). At the same time, critical behaviors comply with the examples given in the German AGG, with the proviso of not fulfilling the workplace context-requirement stated in that law (AGG, 2006). Nevertheless, the chosen behaviors are representatives of the broad categories gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention. Sexist jokes constitute gender harassment, and remarks expressing sexual interest in the target or sexual arousal in the harasser constitute unwanted sexual attention. Previous research has shown that sexualized forms of harassment are more likely to be defined as harassment than are gender-based forms of harassment (e.g., Frazier et al., 1995; Rotundo et al., 2001). The present results replicate these findings for emotional responses toward harassment, and, to a lesser degree, for overall evaluations of actually harassing behaviors. Women and men alike indicated more negative emotional response after receiving harassing remarks than after receiving sexist jokes, and they tended to evaluate remarks more negatively, too. More importantly, asked whether they found the behavior in general sexually harassing, participants indicated finding the expression of sexual interest to be more harassing than the derogation of their own gender. This is in line with the literature and shows a similarity between results gathered with scenario studies and retrospective surveys on the one hand, and the studies on actual harassment presented here on the other hand. This differentiation might also reflect a common conception of sexual harassment as having to do with sex, rather than with gender. However, another reason for the, in general, more negative ratings of remarks might be the fact that they were formulated as directed at the participant, commenting on one or another characteristic of her or his appearance, or communicating sexual arousal in the harasser as a result of some characteristic of the participant. In contrast, jokes were directed at no particular woman or man, much less at the participant, but derogating women or men in general. That harassing behaviors that are more personal might be more severe, also, was inherent in one of the earlier typologies of harassment (Gruber, 1992).

Despite the more negative harassment ratings for remarks, participants also indicated finding remarks to be more of a compliment than jokes, although men found harassing remarks to be less of a compliment than non-harassing remarks. Results for remarks seem to mirror an ambiguity that was not only intended to reflect in the material itself, but that seems to be inherent to some types of harassment. There might actually be some behaviors, particularly those from the category *unwanted sexual attention*, that are open to a more favorable interpretation, and that some harassers might actually intend to be understood positively. However, intentions of harassers were not the topic of this dissertation, and with the present studies as well as with real life incidents of harassment, as long as behaviors have a negative impact on the targets, harasser's intentions are secondary at the utmost.

## 15.8 Prevalence rates

Could research participants in the present studies already be acquainted with the phenomenon of harassment? And if yes, how might their knowledge have influenced the data derived from the studies? Psychological research has been criticized for its drawing too heavily on college students as research participants (Sears, 1986). Indeed, in much of the published harassment literature, either students or university staff were questioned about their past harassment experiences (e.g., DeSouza & Fansler, 2003), or students participated in scenario research (e.g., Castellow et al., 1990). However, apart from the fact that college populations are rather homogenous with regard to educational background and, with students, age, basic research should be equally possible with them as with other specific populations. More important might be the question whether any preexisting knowledge about harassment might have influenced participant's perceptions of the experimental material.

Unfortunately, a considerable proportion of students do have harassment experiences (e.g., van Roosmalen & McDaniel, 1999). However, these experiences are often not labeled as "harassment" (e.g., Stockdale & Vaux, 1993). One possible source of data distortions would have been participant's awareness of the true aim of the studies, and a resulting tendency in their responses. The fact that very few participants correctly guessed the true topic allows for the assumption that, regardless of any possible previous experiences, participant's responses were not influenced by willingly distorting their answers. Independent of previous experiences, other possibilities of gathering knowledge of harassment exist. At the location of Studies 1 to 5, students might have heard of a rather comprehensive (for Germany) anti-harassment policy. In addition, some psychology students attend seminars on sexism and sexual harassment, and over the years, a considerable number of students have already participated in research on sexual harassment and sexual violence. However, all these factors would have resulted in larger proportions of participants correctly guessing the true research question, which few did. As anecdotal evidence, during the debriefing sessions, the majority of participants reacted quite disbelievingly when informed that behavior in the critical conditions could have represented harassment, depending on their reactions to the behavior. After receiving this information, some expressed their opinion that other experiences encountered on a quite regular basis would then also have to count as harassment. In all, research participants might have had previous experiences with harassment, but this did not seem to influence their responses.

## 15.9 Harassers

Previous research on harassers shows that most are men. In two of the present studies, an unusual harasser was experimentally implemented: A woman. As has already been discussed above, attractiveness of the interaction partner was one of the most influential factors in judging his or her behavior. But were female harassers and their behavior evaluated differently than male harassers and their behavior? In the present studies on actual harassment, on a descriptive level, the male chat partner received worse ratings on all response dimensions, compared with the fe-

male chat partner. Although this result is consistent, it does not allow for firm conclusions about the role of harasser gender. Because in these studies, gender of the receiver of harassing or neutral behavior was held constant, this effect might also reflect a tendency of *women* to evaluate harassment more negatively, compared with *men*, and not something about the harassers. Importantly, the studies presented here do not allow for any conclusions about harasser's intentions and motives in conducting harassment, because harassers were entirely computer-simulated.

## 15.10 Harasseees

Similarly to results for harassers discussed previously, the only data about harasseees that allow for a comparison with previous research is gender of the person who is harassed. As reported above, women in general responded more negatively to harassment than men. However, in general, this was not only true for the critical conditions, but also for the neutral control conditions. It might be that some sexual double standard was also at work with participants, in that women are socialized to be the receiving gender rather than the initiating gender, and men are socialized vice versa. However, this is largely speculative. Furthermore, in societies with a larger degree of gender equality, women's preferred sexual strategy increasingly seems to resemble men's preferred sexual strategy (Schmitt, 2005). Given that in the studies on actual harassment presented here, assignment to critical conditions was random, no conclusions can be drawn regarding characteristics that carry a greater or lesser risk for becoming a target of harassment, because who became target was completely independent of participant characteristics, with the exception of their gender.

## 15.11 Consequences on harasseees and organizations

If harassment experiences emulated in the studies presented here would have taken place in the participant's usual workplace or study context, would their performance have suffered from the experience? This question cannot be answered with the present data. Nevertheless, results show that, with actual harassment, participants' reactions were more negative, both to the behavior itself as to the person showing this behavior, compared with non-harassing behavior and non-harassment. It is probable, therefore, that in a real life incident, performance as well as co-worker-relations could have suffered. Few studies so far have investigated negative work-related consequences immediately after the event. The data from Satterfield and Muehlenhard (1997) indicated that women felt less satisfied with their creativity on a task after experiencing a flirtatious situation. Likewise, Woodzicka and LaFrance (2005) showed that the performance in a job interview was worse when the interviewee was asked harassing questions. For retrospective studies, evidence is firmly established that performance and other job-related outcomes suffer when employees are harassed (e.g., Topa Cantisano et al., 2008). In any case, the more positive responses to neutral, as compared to harassing, behavior, make a strong case in favor of every attempt at the level of an organization to prevent harassment.

## 15.12 Evolutionary versus socio-structural perspectives on harassment

Are men naturally inclined to harass women? And are women genetically preprogrammed to perceive normal sexual advances of men as harassing? These provocative questions have been raised in a discussion between proponents of an evolutionary psychological and a socio-structural concept of sexual harassment. In the present studies, results for both harasser attractiveness and behavior interpretable as flirtation are more in line with a feminist, or socio-structural, approach to harassment as an abuse of power. Apparently, female participants detected the negative quality of the harasser's behavior. However, male participants were also aware of the negative quality of the harasser's behavior. These results were found even though the cover story of Studies 1, 2, 4, and 5 was deliberately chosen to work against the feminist approach. Working against this approach was chosen for strategic reasons, because even today, feminist thinking is not much appreciated in mainstream science (see Carroll, 1998). Therefore, making it harder to find evidence in the direction proposed by a feminist approach might render the still found evidence more valuable in the eyes of sceptics. Thus, a more favorable interpretation of the harassing behavior was actually suggested by the cover story of testing an online dating agency. Even in this context, that was inductive to more positive perceptions of attractive people and their "saucy flirtation", presence of harassment virtually always led to significantly more negative interpretations. From a socio-structural perspective, harassment and sexual violence are means to police women as the subordinate group. Nevertheless, there seems to be an absolute negative quality of harassment that is independent of the recipient's gender. This is in contrast to evolutionary accounts of harassment. Based on sexual strategies theory (Buss & Schmitt, 1993), men should be inclined to interpret expressions of sexual interest of female interaction partners favorably. However, compared to non-harassing behavior, expressions of sexual interest were interpreted more negatively by men. This is in contrast to both sexual strategies theory as well as to an early field study where men reacted very favorably toward an offer of sexual intercourse made by a female confederate (Clark & Hatfield, 1989).

Although the notion that harassment is something negative for women and for men might seem trivial, it is not. To date, all studies on harassment of men, and almost all studies on harassment of women, have been either retrospective surveys or analog studies. Study 4 presented here is, to my knowledge, the first to show that men interpret actual harassing behavior more negatively, compared with non-harassing behavior, under controlled laboratory conditions. Similarly, Study 1 of women's perception of actual harassment is the first under such a high degree of experimental control. Again, results make a case against notions of harassment as being within the range of "normal" between men and women.

### 15.13 Evaluating harassment of others: The role of closeness to the target

Beyond harasser attractiveness, type of harassment, and gender of the harassee, another influential factor for behavior interpretations is closeness to the target. Based on evolutionary psychology, behavior expressing sexual interest should be interpreted more favorably when the harasser had good genetic and financial resources (e.g., Buss & Schmitt, 1993). For reasons of inclusive fitness (Hamilton, 1964; Williams & Williams, 1957), this effect of resources should be more pronounced for a target genetically related to the perceiver, as compared to a target only socially related to the perceiver, and as compared to a target unrelated to the perceiver. These degrees of closeness can be operationalized by asking participants to imagine the behavior was directed at a sister, a close female friend, and a female stranger (see Bohner et al., 2009, for a similar design in a study of sex differences in jealousy). In contrast to that theorizing, in a scenario study, I found the opposite results. Female participants interpreted the ambiguous behavior (flirtatious as well as harassing) of a harasser as more *negative*, not positive, as closeness to the target increased. Furthermore, on most rating dimensions, participants' ratings were similar, regardless whether they judged behavior toward a sister or toward a close female friend, but differed between these two targets and a female stranger as a target. This closeness-effect held for both attractive and unattractive harassers and did not become differentiated when the harasser was attractive, which can be an indicator of good genetic material (Gangestad et al., 1994). Instead, the familiar attractiveness effect occurred again, in that behavior of an attractive harasser was rated more negatively than behavior of an unattractive harasser, but this was independent of degree of closeness to the target.

Quality of the male harasser's financial resources did not influence interpretations of behavior at all. This zero result unfortunately does not contribute meaningfully to other published studies that varied harasser resources or status in scenarios. Usually, results of such studies show either more severe harassment perceptions with increasing status, especially when a power differential between harasser and harassee exists (e.g., Bourgeois & Perkins, 2003), or less severe harassment perceptions with increasing status (e.g., Black & Gold, 2003).

The direction of results was reversed from what was expected by a socio-structural as well as an evolutionary approach to harassment, and differences between the critical target categories for the evolutionary approach, *sister* and *close female friend*, were usually small, and nonsignificant. In all, results are inconclusive with regard to either perspective. Apart from this less than satisfying result, one aspect of the data on closeness is worrying. People who deal professionally with individuals who are harassed are usually not siblings or close friends to their clients. Moreover, many supervisors, personnel managers, and other professionals in organizations, at least in Germany, have never been trained in matters surrounding harassment and dealing with alleged harassment victims. Implications of these and other results are discussed below.

## 16. Implications and applications of results

Based on the results presented here, prospects seem grim for harassees without close ties to the people they seek help from. In other countries where harassment cases can be heard before juries, a similar problem exists. Prevention practitioner's advice is sound, then, when they counsel their clients to imagine whether their mother or child would be pleased with the clients' behavior, before it is acted out. Examples for this strategy can be seen in the sexual harassment awareness and prevention programs of the state of Pennsylvania, Equal Employment Opportunity, and in therapy transcripts published in Brunswig and O'Donohue (2002). A similar recommendation could be made to all those who deal with individuals with harassment experiences, especially those who decide about initiating or rejecting support for those who claim to be harassed.

In addition to results regarding closeness to the target of harassment, the totality of results has implications for harassment awareness programs as well as prevention trainings. Men and women apparently have a lot in common regarding their perceptions and interpretations of harassing behavior, and harassment is not only a problem of women. Drawing on these results, it might become easier for both genders to work together to create a discrimination-free work environment. Changing the concept of harassment from being a problem of only women to being a potential problem for all members of an organization could help implement awareness programs and prevention trainings. Because decision making positions in large organizations and enterprises are more likely held by men than by women, convincing men that they are dealing with a problem concerning them, too, might facilitate getting funding for such interventions.

Furthermore, the concept of harassment itself broadens and differentiates simultaneously when actual experiences of both genders are the focus of research. Research can only profit from comprehending more aspects of harassment, and thus benefit practitioners who work with harassment victims, design and conduct prevention programs, and counsel organizations on how to effectively deal with harassment.

Regarding intervention strategies, the total disappearance of the mate value effect when female participants were directly asked about the harassing quality of the behavior suggests an avenue for interventions targeted at several groups. First, attractive men with good personal resources might sometimes receive even less open rejection for their (maybe not ill-intended) harassing behavior than other, less attractive and less well-off men. Thus, they might never learn that their behaviour can be offensive to some recipients. Prevention trainings against sexual harassment could explicitly address this attractiveness bias and alert men to be more sensitive to subtle rejection. Second, we have already seen that women often tend to reinterpret a behavior as friendly, or do not trust their own feeling, even though they suffer negative consequences (see section 7.1). This effect might be even more pronounced when a man with good looks and good resources behaves in a degrading or transgressing manner. Therefore, women could be alerted and trained to judge the behavior itself, rather than the person who shows it. A third target group for interventions are people who review harassment cases, e.g., confidential counselors, supervisors, or even judges and jury members. If a harasser is physically attractive and maybe also has



good resources, then the person reviewing the case might be more inclined to believe the more attractive and well-off harasser over the harassee. Although an attractiveness bias in favor of the harasser has been established firmly by scenario studies, the study presented here is the first, to my knowledge, to show the effect with actual harassment. With financial endowment or prospects, a proxy for status, however, some previous research rather tends to find a bias in favor of the harassee. When the harasser has higher status and/or power over the harassee, research participants as well as survey respondents sometimes perceive more severe harassment, or define more behaviors as harassment (e.g., Bourgeois & Perkins, 2003; USMSPB, 1981, 1988, 1995). However, for actual harassment by men toward women, the present data do not allow for disentangling the effects of physical attractiveness and financial prospects.

For applied settings, results of Study 4 can be used both for interventions with male harassers and prevention trainings for mixed gender groups and male-only groups. Now we know that at least a population of male students recognizes, and does not like, actual harassing behavior directed at them, compared to non-harassing behavior. This could be informative for men who see their own behavior toward women as perfectly acceptable, and are not aware of its offensive nature. Beyond educating men who are genuinely not aware of their problematic behavior, this result could also disarm any attempt at “explaining away” harassing behavior as being simply misunderstood. Similarly, male participants in prevention trainings might be encouraged to share their harassment experiences when they learn that other men identify harassing behavior and provide more negative feedback about their emotional responses after experiencing a moderate form of harassment. Also, for women, it might be helpful to learn that it is not only women who are targets of harassment, and that men can experience less good feelings after being targets of harassing behavior as well. Although, as mentioned above, absolute effects for negative feelings are not very large, as was intended in order not to stress participants too much, knowledge about the mere existence of these effects can be helpful in reframing one’s own experiences as something everybody can suffer from, not only women.

## 17. Limitations

An important limitation of the findings is shared with the majority of psychological research. Participants in Studies 1 to 5 were students of one university in Germany, not regular employees. Legal definitions of sexual and gender harassment usually make the occurrence of behaviors in the workplace a defining element of harassment. This also applies to legal definitions currently valid in Germany. Therefore, legally speaking, the studies presented here do not investigate harassment, with the exception of Study 3, where a workplace context was part of the experimental scenario.

Regarding sample specifics, psychological research has been criticized for drawing too heavily on college students as participants (Sears, 1986). Nevertheless, students in Germany are, in some respects, similar to the general population. For one, most tend to have at least some work experience. In addition, from previous studies conducted at the same university, we know that at least male students’ work experience is considerable (Vanselow et al., 2009). Furthermore,

drawing on psychological definitions of harassment (Fitzgerald, Swan, et al., 1997), the impact of harassment on the recipient is the defining element. Results confirm that I actually investigated harassment. Ratings on all rating dimensions were generally more negative for harassing behavior than for non-harassing behavior. Although ratings were not in all cases above or below the respective scale midpoint, relatively speaking, virtually all relevant differences were significant between conditions with or without harassment (the only exception was for *immediate evaluations* in Study 4, where the main effect of harassment was in the right direction, but only marginally significant). Importantly, the immediate emotional response, also, was more negative for harassing than for non-harassing behavior, thus fulfilling the prerequisite of psychological harassment definitions.

A qualification to results is that I did not conduct the studies on actual harassment in the workplace, and did not include a workplace context in their scenario replications, whereas most legal definitions make this context a defining element of harassment. Psychological and legal definitions alike, however, emphasize the consequences for the victim (see Fitzgerald, Swan, et al., 1997), which I assessed using emotional responses and the more indirect ratings of the behavior as insult and compliment. Research on severity judgments of harassment scenarios embedded in a work or study context versus a leisure time context, moreover, has found only very small differences (Vanselow & Bohner, 2006, 2007). Given the problems with running an experimental harassment study in an actual workplace, however, and considering that the R-CHP is easily adaptable to a “workplace” cover story, the paradigm is a useful tool.

## 18. Further research

In future research with the R-CHP, one factor that is to be monitored closely is degree of participant stress. In the present studies, in order to limit participant stress, it was not even desired for the harassing conditions to produce extremely negative ratings. Results show that, while the critical behaviors were sufficiently negative to produce clear results, ratings were usually not very extreme. It seems that participants were not under much stress, therefore. However, previous research has shown, and present results have confirmed, that participants tend to underestimate negative impact when they only imagine experiencing harassment, compared to actually experiencing it. Therefore, it is desirable to continue with calibrating critical materials carefully. Researchers might develop materials they think to produce the intended level of negative experience, and when pretest participants rate some representation of that material, they might confirm that with their ratings; but for people actually experiencing that material in the study proper, the experience can be expected to be always a little more negative. Therefore, researchers should develop materials so that it is always a little less harassing than intended to be. In addition, future studies with the R-CHP need to continue with monitoring the degree of participant stress closely. Including physiological indicators of stress as well as explicit measures seems advisable, because then, implicit effects on the participants that might not show in their explicit behavior- and harasser ratings can be measured and monitored.

I have already discussed the more pronounced harassment ratings for remarks, compared to jokes, in that remarks were directed at the participant, whereas jokes were directed at women or men in general. In future studies, gender harassment could be operationalized to make it appear more personal (e.g., derogating a particular woman or man)<sup>36</sup>. In addition, more impersonal forms of sexual attention could be developed. Both strategies could help ascertain whether being the specific aim of harassing behavior was the crucial factor in determining how negatively a behavior was rated.

Interestingly, men seemed even more likely than women to interpret “flirtatious” harassment more favorably when the harasser was attractive. The question whether men are more willing to put up with specific types of harassment, given that the harasser offers an incentive to do so, should be further investigated in future research. Importantly, measures of sociosexual orientation should also be included to control for their effects. Although in the present studies, effects of the preferred sexual strategy were virtually nonexistent, this result is puzzling and warrants further investigation.

Extending the R-CHP to perceptions of other forms of discriminatory behavior is another, potentially fruitful, direction for future research. The R-CHP is easily adaptable to research on other expressions of intergroup discrimination beyond sexual and gender harassment. Its predecessor, the CHP, is currently adapted already to study racial discrimination from the perpetrator perspective. With other target groups as well as with further research on harassment experiences, the same ethical considerations regarding participant stress naturally apply.

Further studies comparing results gathered with the R-CHP and with the respective analog studies might help bridging the gap between actual and imagined responses to harassment. Identifying causal factors leading to differing perceptions of sexual harassment, and identifying barriers to assertive responses to harassers, might help developing more successful prevention strategies. A first target of new interventions could be the widespread belief that all victims should respond assertively to sexual harassment, and that all victims can stop harassment if they “just make an effort”. This could contribute to diminishing victim- and self-blame of the many who do not confront their harassers. In addition, comparing harassment with other forms of discrimination might shed light on possible common causes of differing perceptions. Thus, interventions targeted at reduction of one form of discrimination might be able to reduce other forms as well. Results and methodology applied in the studies presented here open up avenues of promising research in these directions.

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<sup>36</sup> This was pointed out by a reader of a previous draft.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGG .....	Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz
AMI.....	Ambivalence Toward Men Inventory
ASI .....	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory
BM.....	Benevolence Toward Men subscale of the AMI
BS .....	Benevolent Sexism subscale of the ASI
BSRI.....	Bem Sex Role Inventory
EC.....	European Commission
EEOC .....	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EU.....	European Union
HM .....	Hostility Toward Men subscale of the AMI
HS.....	Hostile Sexism subscale of the ASI
HWE.....	hostile work environment
LSH .....	likelihood to sexually harass
QPQ.....	quid pro quo
SES-17.....	Soziale-Erwünschtheits-Skala-17
SOI-R .....	Sociosexual Orientation Inventory-Revised
USMSPB .....	United States Merit Systems Protection Board





# APPENDIXES

## Appendix A

**Campus\_LoveLink\_Testlauf**

Bitte machen Sie nun einige Angaben zu Ihrer Person.  
Diese Angaben werden später für die Person sichtbar  
sein, mit der Sie im Internet verbunden werden.

Bitte geben Sie Ihren Vornamen an:

Bitte geben Sie Ihr Geschlecht an (m/w):

Bitte geben Sie Ihr Alter an:  Jahre

Bitte geben Sie Ihren Studienort an:

Bitte geben Sie ihr Studienfach an:

Erläutern Sie bitte kurz, weshalb Sie sich für dieses Studienfach  
entschieden haben und wie Ihre beruflichen Pläne aussehen:

R-CHP screenshot, Study 1, collection of participant demographic data.

**Campus\_LoveLink\_Testlauf**

Kooperationspartner	PC-Nr.	Status
Bielefeld - FH	1	Jana
	2	Michael
Bielefeld - Uni	3	wartend
	4	Olaf
	5	participant name
	6	wartend
	7	Lukas
Detmold - FH Lippe und Höxter	8	wartend
	9	Maria
	10	Andreas
Herford - FH Lippe und Höxter	11	Matthias
	12	wartend
	13	Torsten
Höxter - FH Lippe und Höxter	14	Susanne
	15	Claudia
Paderborn - Uni	16	Paul
	17	wartend
	18	Sylvia
	19	Niklas
	20	Uwe

R-CHP screenshot, Study 1, apparent selection of best fitting partner among all currently online.

**Campus\_LoveLink\_Testlauf**

picture  
of chat  
partner

Vorname:

Alter:  Jahre

Studienort:

Studienfach:

**Studienmotivation und Zukunftspläne:**

Ich habe BWL studiert (werde im Herbst fertig), weil man mit diesem Studienfach vielfältige Möglichkeiten hat, im Beruf Verantwortung zu tragen und auch gut zu verdienen. Dass das Fach nicht zu trocken ist, habe ich schon während des Studiums erfahren, weil ich in den Semesterferien regelmäßig in großen Betrieben gearbeitet habe. Das habe ich gemacht, weil ich schnell in den Beruf einsteigen möchte und nach einem geeigneten Arbeitgeber gesucht habe. Den habe ich jetzt auch schon gefunden. Im Frühjahr fange ich bei einer Firma in Gütersloh an, bei der ich in einem internen Trainingsprogramm auf Führungsaufgaben vorbereitet werde. Ich freue mich schon darauf, auch weil das Betriebsklima dort super ist.

R-CHP screenshot, Study 1, introduction of allegedly real, but in fact computer simulated chat partner (picture blacked out).

**Campus\_LoveLink\_Testlauf**

picture  
of chat  
partner

**Lukas** sendet: Was ist positiv daran, wenn eine Frau die Kellertreppe herunterfällt? Sie kann gleich eine Flasche Bier mitbringen.

**participant**

urteilt:  
Der Witz ist ...

1  
sehr  
gut

2

3

4

5

6  
sehr  
schlecht

Ich fühle mich ...

1  
sehr  
gut

2

3

4

5

6  
sehr  
schlecht

R-CHP screenshot, Study 1, chat phase (experimental condition: harassing jokes, picture blacked out).

## Appendix B

Liebe Teilnehmerin,

Ihre Aufgabe in der folgenden Studie wird sein, sich in eine bestimmte Situation hineinzusetzen und anzugeben, wie Sie sich Ihrer Ansicht nach verhalten würden. Es gibt kein „richtiges“ oder „falsches“ Verhalten, sondern es ist uns wichtig zu erfahren, wie Sie persönlich sich in dieser Situation verhalten würden. Vielleicht sind Sie sich auch nicht ganz sicher, wie Sie sich verhalten würden; dann geben Sie bitte das Verhalten an, das Ihnen am wahrscheinlichsten scheint.

Bitte blättern Sie jetzt um und lesen Sie die folgende Situationsbeschreibung aufmerksam durch.

Bitte stellen Sie sich die folgende Situation genau vor:

Sie werden an der Universität Bielefeld für eine Studie zur Testung einer neuen Online-Partnerbörse für Studierende angeworben. Die Studie ist voll computerisiert und wird in Einzeltestungen vor dem PC durchgeführt. Dabei sitzen Sie alleine in einem kleinen Laborraum, während die Versuchsleitung draußen vor der Tür wartet, bis Sie mit der Bearbeitung fertig sind. Nachdem Sie eine Anzahl von Fragebögen zu Beziehungen, Interessen und Persönlichkeitsmerkmalen ausgefüllt haben, wählt das Partnerbörsen-Programm unter allen derzeit an der Universität Bielefeld und anderen Universitäten und Fachhochschulen Eingeloggten Test-Teilnehmenden den für Sie am besten geeigneten potenziellen Partner aus.

Dieser Partner wird Ihnen mit Bild und einer kurzen Selbstbeschreibung vorgestellt. Ein kurzer Begleittext informiert dann, dass viele Leute beim Kennenlernen **Humor** *Small Talk* schätzen. **Daher würde nun einer/eine von Ihnen für den/die andere/n aus einer großen Auswahl an Witzen zu verschiedenen Themen einige Witze auswählen und dem/der anderen zuschicken können. Der/die andere würde dann die Witze jeweils bewerten sowie angeben, ob er/sie sich nach Erhalt dieses Witzes eher gut oder eher schlecht fühlt. Diese Bewertungen/Gefühle werden an den Partner zurückgeschickt. Das Programm wählt dann Ihren Partner als den „Sender“ aus.**

*Daher kann nun einer/eine von Ihnen dem/der anderen kurze Bemerkungen zuschicken, die der/die andere jeweils bewertet sowie angibt, ob er/sie sich nach Erhalt dieser Bemerkung eher gut oder eher schlecht fühlt. Diese Bewertungen/Gefühle werden an den Partner zurückgeschickt. Das Programm wählt dann Ihren Partner als den „Sender“ aus, und Sie können ihm auf jede der Bemerkungen eine Bewertung und Ihr Gefühl dazu zurückschicken)*

Ihre Aufgabe ist jetzt, für **jeden jede** dieser **Witze Bemerkungen** anzugeben, wie sie reagieren würden.

Haben Sie noch Fragen zu der Aufgabe? Dann wenden Sie sich bitte an die Versuchsleitung.

Sie haben keine Fragen mehr? Dann blättern Sie bitte um und fangen Sie mit der Bearbeitung an.

Note: Instruction and presentation of the cover story for the **jokes condition** are presented in bold typeface, for the *remarks condition* in italics.



## Appendix C

Lieber Teilnehmer,

Ihre Aufgabe in der folgenden Studie wird sein, sich in eine bestimmte Situation hineinzusetzen und anzugeben, wie Sie sich Ihrer Ansicht nach verhalten würden. Es gibt kein „richtiges“ oder „falsches“ Verhalten, sondern es ist uns wichtig zu erfahren, wie Sie persönlich sich in dieser Situation verhalten würden. Vielleicht sind Sie sich auch nicht ganz sicher, wie Sie sich verhalten würden; dann geben Sie bitte das Verhalten an, das Ihnen am wahrscheinlichsten scheint.

Bitte blättern Sie jetzt um und lesen Sie die folgende Situationsbeschreibung aufmerksam durch.

Bitte stellen Sie sich folgende Situation genau vor:

Sie werden an der Universität Bielefeld für eine Studie zur Testung einer neuen Online-Partnerbörse für Studierende angeworben. Die Studie ist voll computerisiert und wird in Einzeltestungen vor dem PC durchgeführt. Dabei sitzen Sie alleine in einem kleinen Laborraum, während die Versuchsleitung draußen vor der Tür wartet, bis Sie mit der Bearbeitung fertig sind. Nachdem Sie eine Anzahl von Fragebögen zu Beziehungen, Interessen und Persönlichkeitsmerkmalen ausgefüllt haben, wählt das Partnerbörsen-Programm unter allen derzeit an der Universität Bielefeld und anderen Universitäten und Fachhochschulen Eingeloggten Test-Teilnehmenden die für Sie am besten geeignete potenzielle Partnerin aus.

Diese Partnerin wird Ihnen mit Bild und einer kurzen Selbstbeschreibung vorgestellt. Ein kurzer Begleittext informiert dann, dass viele Leute beim Kennenlernen **Humor** *Small Talk* schätzen. **Daher würde nun einer/eine von Ihnen für den/die andere/n aus einer großen Auswahl an Witzen zu verschiedenen Themen einige Witze auswählen und dem/der anderen zuschicken können. Der/die andere würde dann die Witze jeweils bewerten sowie angeben, ob er/sie sich nach Erhalt dieses Witzes eher gut oder eher schlecht fühlt. Diese Bewertungen/Gefühle werden an die Partnerin zurückgeschickt. Das Programm wählt dann Ihre Partnerin als den „Sender“ aus.**

*Daher kann nun einer/eine von Ihnen dem/der anderen kurze Bemerkungen zuschicken, die der/die andere jeweils bewertet sowie angibt, ob er/sie sich nach Erhalt dieser Bemerkung eher gut oder eher schlecht fühlt. Diese Bewertungen/Gefühle werden an den Partner zurückgeschickt. Das Programm wählt dann Ihre Partnerin als den „Sender“ aus, und Sie können ihr auf jede der Bemerkungen eine Bewertung und Ihr Gefühl dazu zurückschicken.*

Ihre Aufgabe ist jetzt, für **jeden jede** dieser **Witze** *Bemerkungen* anzugeben, wie sie reagieren würden.

Haben Sie noch Fragen zu der Aufgabe? Dann wenden Sie sich bitte an die Versuchsleitung.

Sie haben keine Fragen mehr? Dann blättern Sie bitte um und fangen Sie mit der Bearbeitung an.

# Erklärung

Die vorliegende Dissertation wurde weder in der gegenwärtigen noch in einer anderen Fassung an einer anderen Fakultät eingereicht. Ich versichere, dass ich die Dissertation selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt sowie Zitate gekennzeichnet habe.