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Men, Women, and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED

In a 1995 U.S. Department of Defense survey of active-duty men and women in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, 70.9 percent of female personnel and 35.8 percent of male personnel said that they had experienced sexually harassing behavior(s) in the previous 12 months. Furthermore, military personnel experiencing sexual harassment reported lower levels of overall job satisfaction and were more likely to report that they intend to leave the military.

Introduction

Sexual harassment in the workplace has increasingly become a matter of concern for employers and their employees. Reports of sexual harassment on the job are common among both public- and private-sector employees, with some estimates suggesting that as many as one in two women may experience sexual harassment at some point in their work lives. Furthermore, there is growing evidence that sexual harassment imposes substantial costs on workers and firms through increased job turnover, higher absenteeism, reduced job satisfaction, lower productivity, and adverse health outcomes.¹ The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (USMSPB), for example, estimates that between 1992 and 1994 sexual harassment in Federal agencies cost the Federal Government \$327 million (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (USMSPB), 1995).

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In 1995, approximately 195,000 women—13 percent of the total force—were on active duty in the U.S. military. This represented a six-fold increase since 1973 when the all-volunteer force was established (Department of Defense News Briefing, July 2, 1996). Sexual harassment is likely to be a particularly acute issue for the U.S. military because of the intrinsic differences between military and civilian employment. Military personnel—particularly young enlisted men and women—frequently live on military bases and are on duty 24 hours a day. This high level of proximity and the blurring of professional and personal relationships may increase both the incidence and subsequent psychological costs of sexual harassment (Department of Defense News Briefing, July 2, 1996). To the extent that sexual harassment results in men and women choosing to end their military careers, the monetary costs of sexual harassment in the military are also likely to be substantial because of the relatively large amount of job-specific training involved in military jobs.

The U.S. military is not blind to the growing concern about sexual harassment. Several well-publicized events—for example, the Navy's Tailhook Convention scandal and the Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground incident—and internal reports have served to heighten awareness of the issue (Towell, 1997). The military has responded by becoming the first large organization to implement sexual harassment prevention programs and it continues to be a model for both private and public sector employers (O'Donohue, 1997).

This article examines the relationship between sexual harassment and the job satisfaction of active-duty men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces. It first documents the extent of sexual harassment in the military and then focuses on how those individuals reporting sexual harassment differ from those who did not. Detailed information about the circumstances—in particular, location, characteristics of the harasser, etc.—surrounding specific incidents of sexual harassment shed light on the qualitative nature of sexual harassment in the military. Finally, the relationship between sexual harassment and overall job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the military is assessed.

The Data

The data come from the 1995 Status of the Armed Forces Surveys: Form B—Gender Issues conducted by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and generalize to men and women in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard² with at least six months of active-duty service who were not flag rank officers. Non-proportional, stratified random sampling was used to ensure that there were adequate numbers of women and minorities available for analysis.³ Questionnaires

were mailed to sample members between February and September of 1995. From an initial sample of 49,003 individuals, usable questionnaires were returned from 22,372 women and 5,924 men for an overall response rate of 58 percent (Department of Defense News Briefing, July 2, 1996 and Hay and Elig, 1999).

In Form B of the 1995 DoD survey men and women were asked to identify which of 24 separate unwanted gender-related behaviors they had experienced in the previous year. These behaviors ranged from being subjected to offensive sexist remarks and being told sex jokes to experiencing unwanted physical contact and sex without consent. Individuals reporting that they had experienced one or more of these behaviors were then asked to provide more detailed information about the circumstances surrounding the particular situation that had had the greatest impact on them. Finally, individuals were asked whether or not they considered these behaviors to be sexual harassment.

Data from the 24 separate items in Form B can be combined into five broad categories: sexist behavior, crude/offensive behavior, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, and sexual assault. Given our interest in sexual harassment, this article focuses on the incidence and outcomes of crude/offensive behavior, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion, and it is important to note that this definition of “sexual harassment” does not necessarily fit with legal definitions.⁴ Finally, following previous work in this area, we count individuals as having been the victim of sexual harassment whenever they report experiencing one or more of the specific behaviors we are considering—not whether or not they themselves considered the behavior to in fact be sexual harassment.⁵ We have adopted this strategy in part because previous research suggests that there is no difference in outcomes for those who label their experiences as sexual harassment and those who do not (Magley, 1995).

How Widespread is Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military?

How pervasive is sexual harassment in the U.S. Armed Forces? How does the incidence of sexual harassment differ for active-duty men and women? Table 1 presents detailed information about the extent of sexual harassment experienced by U.S. military personnel between 1994 and 1995.

Not surprisingly, reports of sexual harassing behavior(s) were much more common among women than among men. While a third (35.8 percent) of male active-duty personnel reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment, almost three-quarters (70.9 percent) of female active-duty personnel said that they had experienced one or more sexually harassing behaviors in the previous 12 months. This incidence

Table 1
The Incidence of Sexual Harassment

| | Proportion Reporting | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | Male | Female |
| Crude Offensive Behavior | 0.3513 | 0.6921 |
| Been Told Often Sex Jokes | 0.2219 | 0.4906 |
| Whistled at in Sexual Way | 0.0786 | 0.3884 |
| Unwelcome Sex Discussions | 0.1682 | 0.3980 |
| Sexual Remarks Pub or Priv | 0.1833 | 0.3997 |
| Remarks re Body/Sex Acts | 0.1185 | 0.3669 |
| Offensive Sexual Gestures | 0.0994 | 0.3334 |
| Stared at in a Sexual Way | 0.0473 | 0.3938 |
| Harasser Exposed Self | 0.0246 | 0.0489 |
| Unwanted Sexual Attention | 0.0763 | 0.4066 |
| Attempts to Estab Sex Relation | 0.0424 | 0.2829 |
| Ask 4 Dates After You Say No | 0.0296 | 0.2680 |
| Touch Made You Uncomfortable | 0.0429 | 0.2320 |
| Unwanted Attempts to Kiss You | 0.0271 | 0.1569 |
| Sexual Coercion | 0.0232 | 0.1237 |
| Imply Reward if Have Sex | 0.0139 | 0.0769 |
| Scared if not Sex Cooperate | 0.0121 | 0.0557 |
| Treated You Bad b/c Refuse Sex | 0.0114 | 0.0703 |
| Imply Faster Promotion for Sex | 0.0088 | 0.0346 |
| Fear Treated Bad if No Sex | 0.0065 | 0.0434 |
| Offer Sex2You in Return4Favor | 0.0106 | 0.0234 |
| No Behavior Reported | 0.6417 | 0.2912 |
| Number of Observations | 5381 | 20622 |

of sexual harassment among military personnel appears high relative to the rates reported by the civilian workforce, though differences in survey design and the specific behaviors considered to be sexual harassment make it difficult to make direct comparisons. Most importantly, the time frame differs. While the DoD data reflect experiences over the previous 12 months, most surveys of the civilian workforce ask about sexual harassment over the previous two years. For example, in a 1994 survey of Federal Government employees conducted by USMSPB, 44 percent of

women and 19 percent of men employed in the Federal Government reported experiencing unwanted sexual attention in the previous 24 months. Sexual harassment also appears pervasive in the private sector with one study revealing that 68 percent of women employed at a large private-sector organization in the northwest and 63 percent of women employed in a mid-western university had experienced sexual harassment in the previous two years (Schneider, Swan, and Fitzgerald, 1997). Similarly, over a two-year period, 65.7 percent of female lawyers in private practice and 45.5 percent of female lawyers employed in a corporation or public agency were sexually harassed by their supervisors, colleagues, or clients (Laband and Lentz, 1998).

Crude and offensive behavior is the most frequently reported form of sexual harassment among both male and female active-duty military personnel. One in two women (49.1 percent) and almost one in four men (22.2 percent) said that they had often been told jokes about sex. In addition almost 40 percent of female active-duty personnel reported that in the previous year they had been whistled or stared at in a sexual way, experienced unwelcome sex discussions, or had been subjected to sexual remarks. Men experienced these incidents at a much lower rate. Overall, 69.2 percent of women and 35.1 percent of men reported experiencing some form of crude or offensive behavior in the past 12 months.

Though other forms of sexual harassment were less frequent, women were more than five times as likely as men to report experiencing unwanted sexual attention or sexual coercion. Less than five percent of men on active duty reported that they had repeatedly been asked for dates after declining or touched in a way that made them uncomfortable, yet these experiences were reported by approximately one in four women. In addition, 7.7 percent of active-duty women said that it had been implied that they would be rewarded if they had sex while 7.0 percent responded that they had been badly treated because they had refused to have sex with someone. Overall, it appears that women in the U.S. military experience high rates of both unwanted sexual attention (40.7 percent) and sexual coercion (12.4 percent).⁶

The Targets of Sexual Harassment

Who are the targets of sexual harassment? How does the likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment vary with an individual's characteristics and job situation? Previous studies of civilian employees have identified factors such as education, marital status, the gender of one's supervisor, and the gender composition of one's workplace as important predictors of the likelihood of experiencing sexual

Table 2
Demographic and Job Characteristics by Gender

| | Male | | Female | |
|-----------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| | Mean | Std. Err. | Mean | Std. Err. |
| Age | | | | |
| 20-35 | 0.7400 | (0.0060) | 0.7839 | (0.0029) |
| 36-50 | 0.2600 | (0.0060) | 0.2161 | (0.0029) |
| Education | | | | |
| Less Than College | 0.2942 | (0.0062) | 0.2079 | (0.0028) |
| Less Than BA | 0.4923 | (0.0068) | 0.5523 | (0.0035) |
| BA | 0.0872 | (0.0038) | 0.1034 | (0.0021) |
| Greater than BA | 0.1263 | (0.0045) | 0.1365 | (0.0024) |
| Race | | | | |
| White | 0.7397 | (0.0060) | 0.6217 | (0.0034) |
| Black | 0.1726 | (0.0052) | 0.2904 | (0.0032) |
| Hispanic | 0.0393 | (0.0026) | 0.0379 | (0.0013) |
| Other | 0.0484 | (0.0029) | 0.0499 | (0.0015) |
| Marital Status | | | | |
| Married | 0.6739 | (0.0064) | 0.5083 | (0.0035) |
| Service | | | | |
| Army | 0.3256 | (0.0064) | 0.3513 | (0.0033) |
| Navy | 0.2847 | (0.0062) | 0.2604 | (0.0031) |
| Marines | 0.1087 | (0.0042) | 0.0390 | (0.0013) |
| Airforce | 0.2573 | (0.0060) | 0.3342 | (0.0033) |
| Coast Guard | 0.0237 | (0.0021) | 0.0151 | (0.0008) |
| Pay Grade | | | | |
| E1-E3 | 0.1276 | (0.0045) | 0.1774 | (0.0027) |
| E4 | 0.2171 | (0.0056) | 0.2502 | (0.0030) |
| E5-E6 | 0.3285 | (0.0064) | 0.2971 | (0.0032) |
| E7-E9 | 0.1505 | (0.0049) | 0.0954 | (0.0020) |
| W1-W5 | 0.0115 | (0.0015) | 0.0058 | (0.0005) |
| O1-O3 | 0.0915 | (0.0039) | 0.1112 | (0.0022) |
| O4-O6 | 0.0732 | (0.0036) | 0.0628 | (0.0017) |
| Years on Active Duty | | | | |
| 0-4 | 0.3216 | (0.0064) | 0.4011 | (0.0034) |
| 5-9 | 0.2218 | (0.0057) | 0.2520 | (0.0030) |
| 10-14 | 0.1953 | (0.0054) | 0.1738 | (0.0026) |
| 15-19 | 0.1805 | (0.0052) | 0.1439 | (0.0024) |
| 20-24 | 0.0607 | (0.0033) | 0.0277 | (0.0011) |
| 25+ | 0.0201 | (0.0019) | 0.0015 | (0.0003) |
| Gender of Supervisor | | | | |
| Male | 0.9090 | (0.0039) | 0.7698 | (0.0029) |

harassment. Victims of sexual harassment are more likely than others to be unmarried, to have attended college, and to work exclusively with and be supervised by members of the opposite sex (See Schneider, Swan, and Fitzgerald, 1997; Laband and Lentz, 1998; USMSPB, 1995). This suggests that the gender differences in the rate of sexual harassment discussed above may be driven, to some extent, by variation in the relative demographic characteristics and job situations of male and female personnel.

Table 2 compares both the demographic characteristics and job situations of male and female military personnel. Female personnel are somewhat younger and are more likely to have attended college (24.0 percent) than are men (21.4 percent). In addition, marriage rates are lower among women with 67.4 percent of men, but only 50.8 percent of women, reporting being married. Finally, there are important differences in the racial composition of active-duty men and women. While 17.3 percent of men in the U.S. military are black, this proportion is almost doubled (29.0 percent) among women.

The relative job positions—in particular pay grade and service—of men and women in the U.S. military differ as well. Women in the U.S. Armed Forces have less tenure than their male counterparts with 40.1 percent (versus 32.2 percent of men) reporting less than five years of active-duty service in 1995. This lack of active-duty service among women is reflected in differences in the pay grades in which they are employed. Although the proportions of men (16.5 percent) and women (17.4 percent) paid on an officer's scale are similar, women are concentrated in the lower pay grades. In particular, 11.1 percent of women are in pay grades O1 – O3, with only 6.3 percent in pay grades O4 – O6. Similarly, 42.8 percent of women compared to 34.5 percent of men are at the bottom of the enlisted pay scale in grades E1 – E4. Furthermore, the gender ratio varies considerably across the various branches of the Armed Forces with women slightly over-represented in the Army and Air Force and under-represented in other branches of the military. Although 10.9 percent of all men are in the Marines, this is true of only 3.9 percent of women. Finally, although the number of women employed by the U.S. military is relatively small, active-duty women are far less likely than men to have a male supervisor, that is, 77.0 percent of women have a male supervisor while 90.9 percent of men have a male supervisor. These differences in the relative positions of men and women are important because they can contribute to differences in the likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment.

Table 3 shows how the likelihood of military personnel experiencing different forms of sexual harassment varies with the demographic, human capital, and job characteristics of men and women. Younger personnel—those aged less than 35—

Table 3
Sexual Harassment Measures by Demographic/Job Characteristics

| | Male | | | Female | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| | Crude Behavior (1) | Unwanted Sexual Attention (2) | Sexual Coercion (3) | Crude Behavior (4) | Unwanted Sexual Attention (5) | Sexual Coercion (6) |
| Age | | | | | | |
| 20-35 | 0.3605 | 0.0806 | 0.0231 | 0.7249 | 0.4504 | 0.1387 |
| 36-50 | 0.3250 | 0.0641 | 0.0237 | 0.5732 | 0.2477 | 0.0692 |
| Education | | | | | | |
| Less Than College | 0.3682 | 0.0930 | 0.0296 | 0.7133 | 0.4651 | 0.1668 |
| Less Than BA | 0.3616 | 0.0759 | 0.0235 | 0.7167 | 0.4361 | 0.1403 |
| BA | 0.2975 | 0.0497 | 0.0160 | 0.6655 | 0.3569 | 0.0617 |
| Greater than BA | 0.3086 | 0.0578 | 0.0123 | 0.5802 | 0.2356 | 0.0376 |
| Race | | | | | | |
| White | 0.3351 | 0.0714 | 0.0195 | 0.6910 | 0.3878 | 0.1085 |
| Black | 0.4183 | 0.0946 | 0.0383 | 0.6838 | 0.4326 | 0.1516 |
| Hispanic | 0.3374 | 0.0823 | 0.0179 | 0.7303 | 0.4574 | 0.1189 |
| Other | 0.3705 | 0.0815 | 0.0304 | 0.7247 | 0.4509 | 0.1545 |
| Marital Status | | | | | | |
| Not Married | 0.4032 | 0.1085 | 0.0319 | 0.7397 | 0.4981 | 0.1629 |
| Married | 0.3262 | 0.0608 | 0.0191 | 0.6460 | 0.3180 | 0.0857 |
| Service | | | | | | |
| Army | 0.3478 | 0.0803 | 0.0347 | 0.7379 | 0.4628 | 0.1688 |
| Navy | 0.3681 | 0.0806 | 0.0168 | 0.6758 | 0.3930 | 0.1103 |
| Marines | 0.3559 | 0.0871 | 0.0290 | 0.7757 | 0.5172 | 0.1566 |
| Airforce | 0.3361 | 0.0646 | 0.0147 | 0.6478 | 0.3476 | 0.0847 |
| Coast Guard | 0.3416 | 0.0487 | 0.0091 | 0.6698 | 0.3531 | 0.0841 |
| Pay Grade | | | | | | |
| E1-E3 | 0.4088 | 0.1051 | 0.0299 | 0.7802 | 0.5452 | 0.2072 |
| E4 | 0.4033 | 0.0967 | 0.0320 | 0.7711 | 0.5113 | 0.1767 |
| E5-E6 | 0.3512 | 0.0769 | 0.0216 | 0.6624 | 0.3657 | 0.1004 |
| E7-E9 | 0.2941 | 0.0437 | 0.0200 | 0.5861 | 0.2808 | 0.0720 |
| W1-W5 | 0.3222 | 0.0769 | 0.0232 | 0.6408 | 0.2916 | 0.0658 |
| O1-O3 | 0.2985 | 0.0547 | 0.0099 | 0.6478 | 0.3097 | 0.0375 |
| O4-O6 | 0.2852 | 0.0574 | 0.0165 | 0.5128 | 0.1649 | 0.0240 |
| Years on Active Duty | | | | | | |
| 0-4 | 0.3928 | 0.0957 | 0.0267 | 0.7775 | 0.5243 | 0.1752 |
| 5-9 | 0.3492 | 0.0709 | 0.0209 | 0.6874 | 0.3925 | 0.1147 |
| 10-14 | 0.3126 | 0.0681 | 0.0182 | 0.6262 | 0.3046 | 0.0774 |
| 15-19 | 0.3391 | 0.0705 | 0.0239 | 0.5733 | 0.2663 | 0.0638 |
| 20-24 | 0.3154 | 0.0496 | 0.0139 | 0.5357 | 0.2123 | 0.0668 |
| 25+ | 0.3046 | 0.0405 | 0.0649 | 0.5522 | 0.1646 | 0.0358 |
| Gender of Supervisor | | | | | | |
| Male | 0.3504 | 0.0727 | 0.0223 | 0.7034 | 0.4140 | 0.1273 |
| Female | 0.3600 | 0.1127 | 0.0328 | 0.6543 | 0.3817 | 0.1118 |

are more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment in the previous year and these age differences are particularly large among women. For both men and women higher levels of formal education are associated with a smaller probability of being the target of sexual harassment. For example, while 16.7 percent of women (3.0 percent of men) with less than a college education report that they experienced sexual coercion over the previous year, only 3.8 percent of women (1.2 percent of men) with more than a college education say the same. This is an interesting contrast to other research that suggests that among civilian Federal Government employees the typical victim of sexual harassment is college educated (See USMSPB, 1995).

Black personnel are more likely to report being subjected to sexual harassment than are whites. For example, 41.8 percent of black enlisted men report one or more incidents of crude behavior in the previous year, while the incidence among white enlisted men is only 33.5 percent. Similarly, while 15.2 percent of black women report being sexually coerced, the rate among white women is almost 50 percent lower (10.9 percent). Consistent with other evidence for civilian employees, rates of sexual harassment among married military personnel are lower than among their unmarried counterparts.

Sexual harassment is pervasive among military personnel, particularly women, in lower ranks with few years of active duty. More than three-quarters of women in pay grades E1 – E3 report experiencing crude behavior and more than half report being the target of some form of unwanted sexual attention. Even more concerning, 20.7 percent—more than one in five—report that they had been subjected to some form of sexual coercion in the previous year.⁷ Similar results occur when we consider years of active duty rather than pay grade. As pay grade and years of active duty increase, reports of all forms of sexual harassment become less frequent. Only 2.4 percent of women at the top of the pay scale in pay grades O4 – O6 report being the target of sexual coercion, a rate that is approximately one-tenth as large as that for women at the bottom of the pay scale.

Previous research indicates gender of the supervisor and gender composition of the workforce are determinants of the probability of being sexually harassed (USMSPB, 1995, pg. 60 and Fitzgerald, Drasgow, and Magley, 1999). Both men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces are more likely to report all forms of sexual harassment when their supervisor is of the opposite gender, though the differences are small in many cases. The incidence of sexual harassment among female military personnel supervised by other women is less than 10 percent lower than it is among women supervised by men. The gender of one's supervisor matters more for the experiences of men in the military as the likelihood of experiencing unwanted sexual

attention and sexual coercion is approximately 50 percent higher among men supervised by women than it is among men supervised by other men.

Finally, there is variation in the incidence of sexual harassment across the various branches of the military. While reports of crude behavior are fairly constant across all the services, men in the Coast Guard and Air Force are less likely to report unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion than other men are. Women on active duty are also less likely to report experiencing all forms of sexual harassment when they are enlisted in the Coast Guard or the Air Force. Interestingly, reports of sexual harassment by women in different branches of the military do not seem to be correlated with their relative representation. Women are slightly over-represented in the Air Force (see Table 2) where reports of sexual harassment by women are relatively low. At the same time, women are also slightly over-represented in the Army where the incidence of sexual harassment is relatively high.

The Nature of Sexual Harassment in the Military

In the DoD survey, those military personnel reporting that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment in the previous year were then asked to describe in more detail the circumstances surrounding the situation that had had the greatest effect on them. In particular, individuals were asked what the situation entailed, where it occurred, who was responsible, and how they responded. This information is presented in Table 4.

Personnel were first asked to identify which of the 24 specific behaviors considered in the survey were involved in that situation having the greatest effect on them. The results indicate that although the exact nature of sexual harassment differs for men and women, sexual harassment is often complex involving many different specific behaviors. Sexist behavior—for example, being treated differently or put down because of one's sex, being subjected to sexist remarks, or exposed to sexist material—is frequently a part of the sexual harassment experiences of female military personnel (48.2 percent), but this is less true for men (19.0 percent). At the same time, crude/offensive behavior is relatively more common to men's experiences. Almost three in four men experiencing sexual harassment in the military reported that the situation that had had the greatest effect on them involved some type of crude or offensive behavior. Unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, and sexual assault were more common to women's experiences. Of those active-duty women reporting that they had experienced sexual harassment in the previous year, 30.6 percent indicated that sexual attention was involved, 6.4 percent reported sexual coercion, and 5.0 percent said their experiences included sexual assault.⁸

Table 4
Circumstances Surrounding the Sexual Harassment Situation
Having the Greatest Effect on the Individual

| | Male | Female |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| Behavior(s) in the Situation¹ | | |
| Sexist Behavior | 0.1896 | 0.4816 |
| Crude Offensive Behavior | 0.7247 | 0.4728 |
| Unwanted Sexual Attention | 0.1414 | 0.3056 |
| Sexual Coercion | 0.0359 | 0.0636 |
| Sexual Assault | 0.0141 | 0.0497 |
| Where/When did the Situation Occur¹ | | |
| Military Installation | 0.8893 | 0.9573 |
| Work/Elsewhere | 0.8181 | 0.8637 |
| During Duty Hours | 0.8392 | 0.9058 |
| Number of People Responsible | | |
| One | 0.4590 | 0.5159 |
| More | 0.5199 | 0.4738 |
| Not Reported | 0.0210 | 0.0103 |
| Who Caused the Situation¹ | | |
| Military Supervisory | 0.1141 | 0.1835 |
| Civilian Supervisory | 0.0126 | 0.0180 |
| Unit Commander | 0.0199 | 0.0342 |
| Military Personnel of Higher Rank | 0.2028 | 0.4263 |
| Civilian Personnel of Higher Rank | 0.0162 | 0.0442 |
| Military Co-worker | 0.5226 | 0.4361 |
| Civilian Co-worker | 0.0801 | 0.0596 |
| Military Subordinate | 0.1566 | 0.1026 |
| Civilian Subordinate | 0.0205 | 0.0091 |
| Military Training Instructor | 0.0101 | 0.0238 |
| Civilian Training Instructor | 0.0027 | 0.0026 |
| Other Military Person | 0.2088 | 0.2456 |
| Other Civilian Person | 0.1129 | 0.0776 |
| Other or Unknown Person | 0.0634 | 0.0624 |
| Response to Situation | | |
| Sought Medical Attention | 0.0101 | 0.0401 |
| Sought Religious Counsel | 0.0279 | 0.0677 |
| Sought Psychological Counsel | 0.0113 | 0.0452 |
| Filed a Formal Complaint | 0.0263 | 0.0879 |
| Gender of Sexual Harasser¹ | | |
| Male | 0.6802 | 0.9748 |
| Female | 0.4432 | 0.0794 |
| Unknown | 0.0076 | 0.0039 |
| Hurt Productivity/Job Performance | | |
| Consider Behavior Sexual Harassment | 0.1915 | 0.4017 |
| Number of Observations | 0.1638 | 0.5211 |
| | 1216 | 12040 |

1. As multiple responses were allowed, the columns do not sum to 1.

The data in Table 4 also reveal a close link between sexual harassment and individuals' military duties. In particular, both men and women overwhelmingly responded that the sexual harassment situation having the greatest effect on them occurred at a military installation during duty hours. Approximately half of all cases involved multiple individuals. The circumstances surrounding incidents of sexual harassment differed between active-duty men and women, however. Women were approximately twice as likely as men to report that the situation had been caused by someone of a higher rank (47.1 percent versus 21.9 percent) or their military or civilian supervisor (20.2 percent versus 12.7 percent). Men, on the other hand, were more likely to say that the situation resulted from the actions of a co-worker (60.3 percent) or a subordinate (17.7 percent). While women almost exclusively reported being harassed by a man, male personnel experiencing sexual harassment indicated that their harassers were both men (68.0 percent) and women (44.3 percent).

To a large extent, this variation in the nature of the sexual harassment experienced by active-duty men and women may reflect the inherent differences in the relative positions of men and women in the U.S. military (See Table 2). In particular, women are less likely to be in positions of authority. Perhaps because of these differences, women also appear to be more affected by incidents of sexual harassment. While just over half (52.1 percent) of women considered the situation to be sexual harassment, this was true for only 16.4 percent of men. Women were also twice as likely as men (40.2 percent versus 19.2 percent) to report that the incident hurt their productivity. In contrast nine out of 10 Federal Government workers said in a similar survey that experiencing sexual harassment had resulted in no or only a slight loss in productivity (USMSPB, 1995, pg. 25). Female active-duty personnel were much more likely than male personnel to seek medical treatment, religious counseling, or psychological counseling and file a formal complaint as a result of the incident, though the number of cases resulting in formal complaint (8.8 percent) was much lower than the number of cases women considered to be sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment, Job Satisfaction, and Intentions to Remain in the Military

In addition to asking active-duty personnel about the incidence and nature of unwanted gender-related behavior in the military, the DoD survey also collected information about how satisfied individuals were with certain aspects of military life and whether they intended to remain in the military. Specifically, individuals were asked the following questions. First, how satisfied are you with your job as a

Table 5
Job Satisfaction and Intentions to Remain in the Military by Sexual Harassment Measures

| Panel A: Job Satisfaction | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------|
| | Males | | | Females | | |
| | Dissatisfied | Neither | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Neither | Satisfied |
| Total Behavior(s) | 0.1569 | 0.1748 | 0.6683 | 0.1883 | 0.1877 | 0.6240 |
| No Behavior | 0.1394 | 0.1645 | 0.6961 | 0.1269 | 0.1419 | 0.7312 |
| Crude Behavior (no worse) | 0.1896 | 0.1897 | 0.6207 | 0.1790 | 0.1881 | 0.6329 |
| Unwanted Sexual Attention (no worse) | 0.1411 | 0.2173 | 0.6417 | 0.2174 | 0.2029 | 0.5797 |
| Sexual Coercion (no worse) | 0.2123 | 0.1673 | 0.6204 | 0.2707 | 0.2310 | 0.4983 |

| Panel B: Likelihood of Remaining in Service | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Males | | | Females | | |
| | Unlikely | Neither | Likely | Unlikely | Neither | Likely |
| Total Behavior(s) | 0.2755 | 0.1249 | 0.5995 | 0.2808 | 0.1416 | 0.5776 |
| No Behavior | 0.2586 | 0.1185 | 0.6228 | 0.2400 | 0.1174 | 0.6425 |
| Crude Behavior (no worse) | 0.3015 | 0.1311 | 0.5673 | 0.2818 | 0.1248 | 0.5934 |
| Unwanted Sexual Attention (no worse) | 0.3301 | 0.1525 | 0.5174 | 0.2997 | 0.1603 | 0.5400 |
| Sexual Coercion (no worse) | 0.2779 | 0.1636 | 0.5585 | 0.3367 | 0.1776 | 0.4857 |

Note: 1. An individual is assumed to report crude behavior but no worse if they reported crude behavior alone, or crude behavior and sexist behavior. An individual is assumed to report unwanted sexual attention but no worse if they reported unwanted sexual attention alone, or unwanted sexual attention in combination with sexist behavior and/or crude behavior. An individual is assumed to report sexual coercion but no worse if they reported sexual coercion alone, or sexual coercion in combination with sexist behavior, crude behavior, and/or unwanted sexual attention. 2. The total number of males is 5381, of which 3513 report no behavior, 1461 report crude behavior but not worse, 288 report sexual attention but no worse, and 76 report sexual coercion but no worse. The total number of females is 20622, of which 6630 report no behavior, 6572 report crude behavior but no worse, 5229 report sexual attention but no worse, and 1367 report sexual coercion but no worse.

whole? Second, suppose that six months from now you will be faced with the decision about whether to remain in military service. Assuming that you could remain, how likely is it that you would choose to remain in the military?⁹

Table 5 shows the relationship between sexual harassment on the one hand, and job satisfaction and the likelihood of remaining in the service on the other.

Overall, 66.8 percent of male and 62.4 percent of female active-duty personnel report being satisfied or very satisfied with their military jobs. Less than one in five men and women report being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their jobs. The majority of military personnel also indicate that if faced with the decision to leave or stay in the military they would choose to stay. Slightly more than one in four men and women, however, indicate that they would be unlikely or very unlikely to remain in the military.

Consistent with previous evidence for civilian workers (in particular, see Laband and Lentz, 1998), overall job satisfaction is lower and potential turnover is higher among those experiencing some form of sexual harassment in the previous 12 months. This is particularly true for women. Furthermore, there is a clear relationship between the severity of the sexual harassment a woman experiences and her satisfaction with the military. Of those women not experiencing sexual harassment, 73.1 percent report being satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs and 64.3 percent indicate that if faced with the decision to remain in the military they would be likely or very likely to stay. In contrast, only 49.8 percent of women experiencing sexual coercion report being satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs and less than half (48.6 percent) indicate that they would stay in the military if faced with the choice. Job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the military are also higher among the group of men who did not report experiencing sexual harassment. The relationship between the severity of sexual harassment and men's job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the military are less clear, however. For example, men experiencing unwanted sexual attention have relatively high rates of job satisfaction, but are least likely to indicate that they are likely or very likely to remain in the military.

Summary

This article uses data from a 1995 U.S. Department of Defense survey of active-duty personnel in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard to assess the relationship between sexual harassment, on the one hand, and overall job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the military on the other. Several important findings have emerged. First, reports of sexually harassing behavior(s) are more common among female military personnel with 70.9 percent of women and 35.8 percent of men saying that they had experienced sexually harassing behavior(s) in the previous 12 months. Crude and offensive behavior was the most frequently reported form of sexual harassment among both male and female personnel and although unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion were less common, women were more than five times as likely as men to report experiencing these behaviors.

Reports of sexual harassment were more common among personnel who were under the age of 35, were unmarried, had less than a college education, and were in a relatively low pay grade with few years of active-duty service.

More detailed information about the circumstances surrounding the sexual harassment situation having the greatest effect on individuals suggests that sexual harassment in the military is complex and involves a number of specific behaviors. Sexist behavior, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, and sexual assault were more common to women's than men's sexual harassment experiences, while crude/offensive behavior was relatively more common to men's experiences.¹⁰ There also appears to be a close link between sexual harassment and individuals' military duties with both men and women overwhelmingly saying that the incident occurred at a military installation during duty hours. Still, the nature of sexual harassment appears to differ between male and female personnel. Women were approximately twice as likely as men to report that the situation had been caused by a man who was of a higher rank, while men were more likely to say that the situation resulted from the actions of male and female co-workers or subordinates. Furthermore, women were more likely than men to label the situation "sexual harassment," to feel that their productivity had been reduced, and to seek help.

Finally, there is a link between sexual harassment and satisfaction with military employment. In particular, overall job satisfaction is lower and intentions to leave the military are higher among those experiencing some form of sexual harassment in the previous 12 months. This is particularly true for women for whom there is a clear relationship between the severity of the sexual harassment and dissatisfaction with military employment.

Notes

1. See Schneider, Swan, and Fitzgerald, 1997 and Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, and Magley, 1997 for reviews of the literature regarding the incidence and consequences of sexual harassment in the workplace.

2. Note that the Coast Guard, in fact, comes under the auspices of the Department of Transportation.

3. The appropriate sampling weights are used throughout the analysis.

4. Sexist behavior includes, for example, being treated differently or put down because of one's sex, while sexual assault includes rape and attempted rape. As such, neither category would usually be considered sexual harassment *per se*.

5. For a discussion of the theoretical issues involved in deciding who has been sexually harassed see USMSPD, 1995 and Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, and Waldo, 1999.

6. Form B also collected information about sexist behavior—including being treated differently or put down because of one's sex and being subjected to offensive sexist remarks—and sexual assault. Although these behaviors fall outside of our definition of sexual harassment, it is interesting to note that 63.3 percent of women and 15.3 percent of men reported that they had experienced some form of sexist behavior. Additionally, 5.2 percent of women and 1.0 percent of men reported being the victim of rape or attempted rape.

7. Sexual assault is also pervasive among this group of women with 12.5 percent reporting that in the previous year they had experienced rape or attempted rape.
8. As multiple responses were allowed, the percentages do not sum to 100 percent.
9. Possible responses to the first question were: very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neither, satisfied, and very satisfied. Possible responses to the second question were: very unlikely, unlikely, neither, likely, and very likely.
10. While we have not included sexist behavior in our definition of sexual harassment, many individuals reported that the sexual harassment experience having the greatest effect on them also included sexist behavior.

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