**PREPRINT: #HeToo? Men trivialize cases of sexual harassment by a female aggressor
toward a male victim, but women do not**

Mads Nordmo Arnestad¹

Anna Studzinska²

Magnus Nordmo³

Stig Berge Matthiesen¹

¹BI Norwegian Business School, Campus Bergen, Department of Leadership and Organizational Behavior

²University of Economics and Human Sciences in Warsaw, Department of Psychology

³Magnus Nordmo University of Oslo, Department of Psychology

Corresponding Author: Mads Nordmo Arnestad

mads.n.arnestad@bi.no

Abstract

The #MeToo movement spurred a handful of corresponding #HeToo cases, in which men voiced their experiences of sexual harassment by female aggressors. The general public seemed to respond differently to #HeToo cases compared to the #MeToo cases. As the #HeToo and #MeToo cases differed in morally relevant ways, a direct comparison of public reactions cannot comprehensively explore whether peoples' evaluation of sexual harassment is influenced by the gender of the aggressor and victim. We performed two experiments (total $N = 260$), in which participants read a description of sexual harassment from a manager toward an employee. For half of the participants, the manager was referred to as a man, and the employee was described as a woman; for the other half, the manager was described as a woman, and the employee was referred to as a man. We expected participants to judge the case as significantly more harmful and repugnant when the aggressor was a man and the victim was a woman compared to the opposite scenario. However, our analyses revealed a pattern of gender differences. Female participants perceived the case as equally bad whether the aggressor was male or female. Male participants reacted equally strongly to the case of sexual harassment performed by a male aggressor. By contrast, male participants viewed the case as far less serious and warranting milder reactions when the aggressor was female and the victim was male. This suggests the trivialization of sexual harassment of male victims by female aggressors is largely driven by men.

The #MeToo campaign, which launched in 2017 as a movement expressing solidarity for sexual violations experienced by women all over the world, actualized sexual harassment in cultural awareness (Atwater et al., 2019). Initiated by civil rights activist Tarana Burke in 2006, the movement quickly gained traction when actress Alyssa Milano encouraged victims of sexual assault and harassment to reply “me too” on Twitter. Within 24 hours, the hashtag was used over 12 million times, as 4.7 million people associated with different professions reported their experiences of unwanted sexual attention, physical offense, and more drastic forms of abuse such as rape. The wake of the #MeToo movement has resulted in high-profile resignations and litigations, as well as an ongoing debate about addressing sexual harassment in general.

The #MeToo campaign may also have inspired a much narrower set of related cases of sexual harassment, wherein the whistleblowing victim is a man and the alleged aggressor is a woman. For instance, in the summer of 2018, New York University Professor of literature Avital Ronell was accused of sexually harassing a male student. The allegations prompted a host of female colleagues to write an open letter discrediting the victim and defending the alleged aggressor. Some commentators noted how the defense of the aggressor was ironically similar to the ones made on behalf of the men accused by the #MeToo movement (Greenberg, 2018). The case of Professor Ronell represents one of a few cases in which women have been publicly accused of sexual misconduct. In some online outlets, these few but noticeable instances have been communally referred to as #HeToo cases. Other #HeToo examples include Cristina García, a California state Assembly member, who has been accused of multiple cases of groping or unwanted advances, leading to her removal from legislative committees and a public apology. Another case involved Andrea Ramsey, a former congressional candidate from Kentucky, who dropped out of her race after allegations surfaced that she had harassed a male employee. In

Europe and elsewhere, a few but noticeable public allegations of sexual harassment have implicated a female superior. However, public reactions in these instances have been noticeably smaller than the corresponding #MeToo cases.

One reason for this difference in public reactions involves the difference in scope and magnitude. The #MeToo movement shed light on what may be described as a pervasive and systemic form of harassment that is disproportionately suffered by women. By contrast, the few #HeToo cases do not qualify as a systemic form of oppression. Another reason why the #HeToo cases caused less outrage may be differences in context and relevant details. The reported details surrounding the most notorious cases of the #MeToo movement were considerably more egregious than any case reported within the #HeToo movement to date. The details regarding the duration, number of victims, level of aggression and coercion, asymmetry in power, form of sexual exploitation, and many other relevant features also differ. These disparities render a direct comparison of the public's reaction to the #MeToo and #HeToo cases invalid. Nevertheless, these recent instances inspired us to perform an exploratory study, in which we pose this research question: *How are the judgments of sexual harassment affected by the gender of the aggressor, victim, and observer?*

In pursuing this question, our goal was to explore how a single hypothetical case of sexual harassment would be perceived and reacted to by non-involved organizational members when all factors except the gender of the aggressor and victim were held constant. We also wanted to explore whether the differences in immediate reactions would translate into differences in judgments about the appropriateness of different reactions to the specific transgression.

Sexual Harassment

Despite an increase in public attention and condemnation, sexual harassment remains a pervasive and common experience for many women (Latcheva, 2017). Sexual harassment can be defined as unwanted sexual attention that is perceived as humiliating or troublesome for those whose bodily rights are being infringed. Several conditions determine whether actions can be denoted as sexual harassment. According to Einarsen et al. (1993), the behavior must 1) be interpreted as sexual, 2) be undesirable, 3) be perceived as negative, 4) repeatedly occur over a certain period, and/or 5) yield negative consequences over time. According to a meta-analysis (Ilies et al., 2003) in the United States, 20 percent of female employees have experienced some form of work-related sexual harassment. Similar levels of prevalence are reported in European samples (Nielsen et al., 2010).

Sexual harassment is often characterized by hierarchical power relations and status differences—for example, superior and subordinate relationships (Blumenthal, 1998; McDonald, 2012). However, the power aspect may also be informal. This means that a person who conducts sexual harassment and inflicts humiliation or infringement applies power. It is worth noting that sexual harassment chiefly takes place in workplaces that are dominated by men (Einarsen et al., 1993). Organizational culture—the attitudes and values that dominate within an organization—also seem to confer significance in terms of sexual harassment (Timmerman & Bajema, 2000).

Current research literature has distinguished between different types of sexual harassment. Rotundo et al. (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 62 studies, with the goal of exploring whether women and men interpret sexual harassment differently, depending on the type of harassment that was carried out. The categories of harassment in this study included derogatory attitudes of sexual nature that were general or aimed at a particular person, including intense pressure to date, sexual suggestions, physical contact of a sexual or non-sexual kind, and

sexual coercion. The meta-analysis revealed that women, when compared with men, perceived more social-sexual events as sexual harassment (effect size $d = 0.30$). Gender differences were more pronounced for “milder” forms of sexual harassment, such as derogatory attitudes. Clearer violations such as physical non-sexual contact and sexual coercion were perceived relatively similar by men and women.

Another meta-analysis found modest differences between men and women regarding their assessment of sexual harassment (Ilies et al., 2003). In this study, the authors found that the differences in social status between the two counterparts had a more significant effect. With major status differences, respondents were more inclined to consider the perceived behavior as sexual harassment.

Theory Development and Hypotheses

After careful consideration, we have chosen to share openly that our predictions at the outset of Study 1 did not correspond with our findings. Our general expectation was that all participants would tend to trivialize the sexual harassment suffered by a male victim by a female aggressor and that perhaps this effect would be moderated by the participant's gender. Instead, we found the expected trivialization was driven almost uniquely by male participants. As a result, we have opted against writing our hypothesis after the fact but rather share our general expectations and their theoretical foundations as they were formulated before we performed the first study.

At the outset of our study, we predicted that people would be more likely to trivialize a case of workplace sexual harassment if the victim was male and the aggressor was female. Our predictions were rooted in the theory of dyadic morality (Gray et al., 2012; Gray & Wegner, 2009). This theory posits that in any situation that can evoke moral judgments, two entities

interact with each other: a moral agent and a moral patient (i.e., a moral dyad). Moral agents have the capacity to do right or wrong, while moral patients have the capacity to be the objects of those good or bad deeds. Importantly, these two roles are separate and inversely related: if a person is perceived to occupy one role, they are less likely to be perceived to occupy the other one. Thus, once a person is seen as a moral agent, they will be ascribed more agency and more responsibility but less capacity to experience suffering. Studies show that our ascription of people and entities into moral typecasts is fairly stable, even if the situation around the actors changes (Gray & Wegner, 2009; Gray et al., 2012).

While the person's behavior influences in which role they are cast, the specific content of particular behaviors is not important, especially in matters related to morality. Rather, it seems that the prototype of an immoral act consists of the notion of intentional harm perpetrated by a moral agent on a moral patient (Gray et al., 2012). While it would be impossible to provide an exhaustive list of such acts, those fitting the prototype and perceived as the most deplorable include murder, rape or assault, physical and emotional abuse, and sexual impropriety (Gray et al., 2012). Furthermore, the perceived immorality of an act is linked to the perceived harm it caused (Gray et al., 2014), but the perceived harm also drives the evaluation of the acts themselves as morally good or bad (Gino et al., 2009; Schein & Gray 2017). Perceived harm is also positively related to suggested punishments (Berg-Cross, 1975; Gino et al., 2010; Gino et al., 2009).

The role of a moral patient or moral agent influences how they are perceived, which relates directly to two dimensions of mind perception, namely experience and agency (Gray et al., 2007). Experience is the ability to feel such states as hunger, pain, pride, or embarrassment but also to have personality and consciousness. For example, people perceive children and

animals as having high experience, while they see robots and God as having low experience. However, agency is the ability to think, communicate, plan, recognize the emotions of other people, and act morally. Adults and God are seen as agentic, while babies, fetuses, and animals are seen as having less agency.

These two dimensions (moral agency/moral patiency and agency/experience) overlap, creating a blueprint for the perception of people's states and behaviors. Moral agents are seen as agentic and having less experience, while moral patients are viewed as having more experience and less agency. What follows is that moral agents can be held accountable for their actions, and their behaviors can be judged as morally right or wrong. Contrarily, moral patients have rights and privileges, and right or wrong can be done upon them (Gray et al., 2007). Interestingly, the channel of evaluation is two-way: a person paired with someone experiencing pain or pleasure is perceived as a moral agent, while a person interacting with someone responsible is viewed as a moral patient (Gray & Wegner, 2007). In the context of the studies presented later in this paper, we note that those who are perceived as moral agents are assigned more responsibility or blame for their actions, and those who are perceived as moral patients are seen as more vulnerable and prone to experiencing more pain (Gray & Wegner, 2007).

Research on stereotype content shows that when evaluating self and others, people relate to two dimensions, namely warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002). As highlighted by Gray and Wegner (2011), these two dimensions of social perception correspond to the two dimensions of mind perception: experience to warmth and agency to competence. Research on the relationship between the gender of an observed person and social perception has shown that women tend to be perceived as communal rather than agentic, while men tend to be perceived as agentic rather than communal (Bosak et al., 2008; Eagly & Mladnic, 1994; Spence & Buckner,

2000). As a result, prescriptive stereotypes tell women to be warm and men to be competent (Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

Furthermore, we can expect that in the case of immoral acts, the person perceived by default to be the moral patient (i.e., a woman) will be perceived to suffer more than the moral agent (i.e., a man) and to be less responsible for their situation. At the same time, the moral patient (i.e., a woman) will be perceived as less deserving of punishment than the moral agent (i.e., a man) since moral agents are seen as more resistant to pain and more responsible for their actions.

Numerous studies have shown the actor's gender influences how they are perceived. This phenomenon has been researched in relation to perceptions of working parents (Cuddy et al., 2004; Fuegen & Endicott, 2010; Gaunt, 2013; Rudman & Mescher, 2013), job applications (Phelan et al., 2008; Rudman & Glick, 1999), leadership abilities and skills (Eagly & Karau, 2002), judicial decision-making (Pozzulo et al., 2009; Miller, 2018), or feminine- and masculine-looking robots (Eyssel & Hegel, 2012), among others. It has also been demonstrated in the context of immoral behaviors, such as sexual assault (Davies & Rogers, 2006; Fromuth et al., 2001; Gakhal & Brown, 2011), child sexual abuse (Tozdan et al., 2019; Zack et al., 2018), intimate partner violence (Cormier & Woodworth, 2008; Dutton & White, 2013; Hamby & Jackson, 2010; Jackson Harris & Cook, 1994; Seelau & Seelau, 2003; Seelau & Seelau, 2005), and—as described above—sexual harassment (Bursik & Geftter, 2011; Pina & Gannon, 2010; Studzinska & Hilton, 2017). Frequently, for opposite-gender cases, female victims were viewed as suffering more than male victims, and male perpetrators were regarded as deserving more punishment or being more responsible than female perpetrators.

With regard to the research on moral typecasting and gender perceptions, this relationship was analyzed by Howard et al. (2017) in the context of workplace bullying, work-related gender discrimination, offensive jokes in the workplace, and layoffs. The results support the hypothesis that moral typecasting can be influenced by gendered perceptions of observed actors in such a way that women are cast as the moral patients and men as the moral agents, with all implicated consequences. A more recent study by Reynolds et al. (2020) demonstrated the tendency to see women as moral patients and men as moral agents across a diverse set of behaviors and testing populations. It seems likely that the tendency to perceive a higher impact of immoral behaviors toward women and to ascribe greater responsibility and more stern punishments for men is a human universal. Moral intuitions like these are often catalyzed by relevant positive and negative emotions (Haidt, 2001). Consequently, we expected sexual harassment would elicit more negative and fewer positive emotions when the aggressor is male and the victim is female.

Past research has indicated that people see cases of sexual harassment performed by male aggressors toward female victims as more threatening and severe than all other cases (Kaufling et al., 2018). Russell and Oswald (2016), find that university students trivialize cases of sexual harassment towards men by interpreting the harassment as flirting and minimizing male victimization. Similarly, Russell and Sturgeon (2019) found that police officers see hypothetical cases of intimate partner violence as more severe when the perpetrator is a heterosexual male. Following the line of reasoning from moral typecasting theory, we also predicted that the sexual harassment of a woman would be viewed as more severe and causing the victim more suffering. Therefore, we expected a case of sexual harassment would be judged as more severe and causing the victim more harm when the aggressor was male and the victim was female.

We further expected willingness to punish the wrongdoing would be greater when the aggressor was male. Moral typecasting theory (Gray & Wegner, 2009) posits three explanations for why this would occur. Primarily, we expected that participants would see the female victim as suffering greater sexual harassment than the corresponding male victim. Since the perceived suffering of the victim is positively related to willingness to punish the aggressor (Gray et al., 2012), we expected a greater willingness to punish the male aggressor than the equivalent female aggressor. Secondly, because men are perceived as more agentic, they bear a larger responsibility for their failures and shortcomings. If people perceive an aggressor as being more agentic, they will hold that person more accountable for their actions. Thirdly, as men are intuitively perceived as having less capacity for suffering than women (Reynolds et al., 2020), a given level of punishment might be perceived as milder when bestowed upon a male rather than a female aggressor. Taken together, these reasons led us to expect that people would show a higher willingness to punish the male aggressor than the corresponding female aggressor.

Our fourth and final prediction concerned an interaction between the gender of the participant and the genders of the aggressor and victim dyad. As noted previously, women are less tolerant of sexual harassment than men (Russell & Trigg, 2004). This gender difference is explained by differences in attitudes toward social domination, as well as male and female gender roles. Men and women who are relatively similar in their orientation about social dominance and male and female gender roles had the same tolerance level for sexual harassment. In an experimental speed-dating paradigm with only female participants, tolerance for sexual harassment was linked with the perpetrator's status and attractiveness (Angelone et al., 2009). Furthermore, a recent vignette study found that men blamed the female victim of sexual harassment to a larger extent compared to women (Bongiorno et al., 2019). Male respondents

showed greater empathy for men who were accused of sexual harassment. When participants were asked to assess the scenario from the perspective of the male offender, blaming of the victim increased among male and female respondents. For example, recalling episodes of sexual harassment or victims, whether picked from the media from the participant's life at work, uncovered a gender difference. Men had a higher propensity to assess the events of a video clip as sexual harassment if they first had to recall episodes of sexual harassment. Women tended to judge sexual harassment episodes more independently of this availability heuristic (Wiener et al., 2005). In a randomized experiment, Kaufling et al. (2018) found an interaction effect between the gender of participants and the gender in the aggressor-victim dyad on the propensity to label somewhat ambiguous situations as sexual harassment. Russell and Oswald (2016) found the same interaction, whereby men were more likely to tolerate sexual harassment of men. Cohesively, these findings informed our fourth prediction that the tendency to trivialize sexual harassment of a male victim would be greater among male participants.

In order to explore these assumptions, we performed two randomized vignette experiments. The first experiment was designed to test the general effect, while the second experiment sought to replicate the effect from the first experiment and elaborate the differences in behavioral intentions.

Study 1: Judgments of #MeToo vs. #HeToo cases of workplace sexual harassment

In the first experiment, we wanted to explore how a hypothetical case of sexual harassment from a supervisor towards a subordinate would lead to different reactions if the gender of the aggressor and victim varied. We suspected that if a male manager and a female manager perpetrated identical sexual harassment actions under identical circumstances, people

would judge the situation more harshly if the aggressor was male and victim was female. We performed our first experiment to explore this intuition.

In the experiment, we wanted to show the participants a vignette that seemed as realistic as possible, demonstrating an unequivocal act of sexual harassment. We also wanted to exclude numerous confounding variables. Therefore, we carefully constructed a realistic vignette describing unequivocal sexual harassment. The participants were not informed that the episode they read was fictional until after completing the experiment.

Our vignette described how the employees of a company went on a two-day, overnight seminar at a hotel. The manager was described as 44 years old. At the dinner, the manager was seated next to a newly hired employee, described as 29 years old. Initially, the manager behaved politely and professionally towards the employee but gradually steered the conversation toward private and intimate topics. The employee felt awkward about this but tried to maintain a friendly ambiance at the table. After dinner, the manager retired to the hotel room and sent flirty texts to the employee. The employee responded politely that they had gone to bed. The manager then explicitly invited the employee to a sexual encounter. The employee did not respond to the last text. Explicit sexualized language was included in the last part of the vignette to make sure that no participants misunderstood the managers' behavior as non-sexual. We also chose to describe the harassment taking place via text message to minimize the potential confounding variable of gender differences in physical strength. The vignette in its entirety can be found in the Appendix.

The vignette appeared in two versions, the #MeToo vignette and the #HeToo vignette. Both versions were identical except for indicators of the gender of the manager and employee. In the #HeToo vignette, the employee was named "Helge" (a common male name in Scandinavia), and the manager was referenced by female pronouns. In the contrasting #MeToo vignette, the

employee was named “Heidi,” and the manager was referenced using male pronouns. The choice of names is an homage to the famous “Heidi/Howard” example, in which participants were shown to judge the actions of venture capitalist Heidi Roizin differently if they read an account of her actions in which she is referred to as “Howard” instead of “Heidi” (Merchant, 2013). We only tested perceptions of heterosexual dyads, as public judgments about homosexual harassment in the workplace were outside the scope of our investigation and presumably would require different theoretical frameworks.

Study 1 Methods

Once the vignette was constructed, we recruited 136 Norwegian working adults to participate in the experiment (82 women; mean age 35 years old). The recruitment followed this procedure: We first asked human resource (HR) professionals and managers in different organizations to distribute an invitation to participate in the study via a companywide email. The email contained information about the study and a link to the online experiment. Most of the HR professionals we asked agreed to forward the invitation to their organizations. This allows us to recruit participants from both the public and private sector in fields such as healthcare, education, financial services, industry, construction, and energy.

Individuals who agreed to participate in the experiment were invited to fill out some initial demographic details. Those who proceeded were asked to read the vignette. Based on random assignment, half of the participants completed the #MeToo vignette, describing a male manager who sexually harasses a female employee, while the other half of the participants completed the #HeToo vignette, describing a female manager who sexually harasses a male employee in the same manner. Having read their respective vignettes, each participant was

instructed to fill out an online questionnaire, detailing their judgments regarding the sexual harassment episode they had read.

Since we were unable to find a validated standardized measure of different perceptions of episodes of sexual harassment, we had to construct our own outcome variables. All the items we constructed were statements that were answered on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from *completely disagree* to *completely agree*. We wanted to capture potential differences in emotional reactions, specifically in levels of anger, disgust, sadness, and humorosity. Anger was measured with two statements: *I got angry when reading about this*, and *Incidents like these make me mad*. Disgust was also measured by two statements: *The manager's behavior was disgusting*, and *I felt repulsed by this manager*. Sadness was measured by two items: *I was saddened when I read about this incident*, and *Reading about this incident made me sad*. We also tried to capture differences in how funny the participant's thought the incident was by two statements: *I had to laugh when reading about this incident*, and *This was a rather funny case*.

We also wanted to measure different cognitive evaluations and differences in behavioral intentions produced by the vignettes. The imagined level of unpleasantness experienced by the victim was measured by three items: *It must have been very unpleasant for the employee to have had to endure this*, *I completely understand if the employee felt this was a form of violation*, and *This couldn't have been very unpleasant for the employee* (reversed). Severity judgments were also measured by three items: *This doesn't feel like a serious incident* (reversed), *This was a serious incident*, and *This case of unwanted sexual attention was egregious*. Participants' judgments about punishment were also measured by three items: *The manager should be given some form of punishment for this behavior*, *This should elicit a stern reaction*, and *It would be wrong to punish the manager for something like this* (reversed). The entire experiment was

administered in Norwegian. The translation process used here follows the recommendations of Douglas and Craig (2007).

Study 1 Results

We ensured the outcome variables had adequate internal reliability by measuring Cronbach's Alpha. All the variables were shown to have adequate scores. Table 1 details the reliability for each outcome measure. The outcome questionnaire also included manipulation checks that assessed whether the participants had noted the gender of the aggressor and victim. We confirmed no participants had failed this test.

When analyzing between-group differences, we expected to find signs of trivialization of the #HeToo case compared to the #MeToo case. This effect was substantially weaker than we had anticipated, and our primary predictions were only marginally supported, as shown in Figure 1. However, the exploration of interaction effects revealed a striking pattern: male and female participants' responses did not differ in the #MeToo case. Both men and women found this case to be amoral and abhorrent. Furthermore, female participants did not differ in their responses when the gender of the manager and employee differed. Female participants rated the #HeToo incident as equally amoral and abhorrent as the #MeToo case. Figure 2 displays how similarly the male and female participants rated the #MeToo case.

Figure 1

Evaluation of #MeToo and #HeToo Cases Depending on Participants' Gender (Study 1)

Figure 2*Comparing #HeToo and #MeToo and #MeToo Gender Differences (Study 1)*

These results indicated that male and female participant's responses to the #MeToo case essentially did not differ and that female participants' responses to #MeToo and #HeToo cases did not differ. In contrast, the differences in mean evaluation between groups and cases suggested that male participants' evaluation of the #MeToo and #HeToo cases differed substantially. Based on this pattern of observation, we decided to abandon our initial predictions and instead compare the subgroup of men rating the #HeToo case ($n = 24$) with the rest of the sample ($n = 112$). This combined sample consisted of female participants for the #HeToo and

#MeToo scenarios, as well as male participants for the #MeToo scenario. We chose to forego a moderator analysis due the power requirements (Aguinis, 1995; McClelland & Judd, 1993; Simonsohn, 2015) and apply a linear mean comparison between the groups. Due to the unbalanced design, several variables violated the assumption of equal variances. To solve this problem, we applied a generalized least squares (GLS) analysis that allowed direct modeling of covariance structures (Brown, 2018). This is a recommended tool for managing situations where the ordinary least squares estimator is not the best linear unbiased estimator (Rawlings et al., 1998). Each outcome variable was separately analyzed using a dummy-coded group variable with 1 as the #HeToo – Male Participants condition and 2 for the remaining conditions (#HeToo – Female Participants, #MeToo – Male Participants, #MeToo – Female Participants). Figure 3 shows the statistically significant deviances of male participants' #HeToo ratings. See Table 3 for further details.

Figure 3*Deviancy of Men's #HeToo Ratings (Study 1)*

Note. 95% confidence intervals for comparing the deviancy of men's rating of the female aggressor ($n = 24$) with the mean of the three other conditions ($n = 112$) combined and centered on zero.

Table 1

Perception of #HeToo by Male Participants vs #HeToo by Female Participants, #MeToo by Male Participants, and #MeToo by Female Participants (Study 1)

Variable	Estimate	<i>p</i>	Std. Error	Conf. Low	Conf. High
Anger	-1.41	>0.001	0.25	-1.90	-0.90
Disgust	-1.49	>0.001	0.27	-2.03	-0.95
Sadness	-0.93	0.006	0.33	-1.58	-0.27

Funny	0.94	0.003	0.31	0.32	1.55
Unpleasant	-1.09	>0.001	0.24	-1.58	-0.61
Severity	-0.68	>0.001	0.19	-1.06	-0.29
Punished	-0.68	0.002	0.21	-1.10	-0.25

Note. 95 % Confidence Interval

Study 2: How Should Harassment be Handled?

The first experiment had confirmed our intuition that gender affects the interpretation of cases of sexual harassment, albeit in a more complex way than we had anticipated. In the follow-up experiment, we wanted to replicate some of the findings from Study 1 and explore judgments about how the case of sexual harassment should be handled by the organization. With regard to the handling of the case, we reasoned that if the case was regarded as severe, more stern and punitive measures would be warranted. However, if the case was seen as less severe, more discretion and less involvement of third parties would be thought necessary. As in Study 1, and based on the theory of dyadic morality (Gray & Wegner, 2009), we expected participants to consider the case with a male perpetrator and female victim to be more serious than the identical case with the opposite gender composition. As indicated by the findings of our first study, we expected that the male participants would be particularly prone to trivialize the #HeToo case.

We recruited 124 working adults to participate in the experiment (69 female, mean age 42). The recruitment procedure was identical to the one used in Study 1 but involved new organizations. Participants were given identical instructions as in Study 1. The design of the second experiment closely resembled that of Study 1. Participants read the same vignette but with one added passage. According to this passage, in the days after the incident, the victim

decided to refer the issue to the local union representative. The union representative heard the victim's story and was left pondering how to handle this case. Outcome measures were designed to capture variation evaluation of the appropriateness of different ways for the representative to respond to the case. The first outcome measures we added were intended to capture the general degree of discretion that the case warranted, meaning the extent to which the case should be communicated openly. This construct was measured by two items, which were answerable on a seven-point Likert scale: *It would suffice to raise this issue with the accused manager*, and *Nobody but the manager and employee need to be involved in a case like this*. Since sexual harassment is a legal offense in many countries, we also wanted to explore judgments about whether the union representative should involve the police. This construct was measured with two items: *The union representative should consider reporting the case to the police*, and *It is not necessary to involve the police in a matter such as this* (reversed).

The second set of outcome measures were intended to capture variation in what types of reactions the union representative should pursue on behalf of the victim. Two items measured judgments about how *stern* the reaction the union representative should pursue: *The union representative should ensure that the manager faces a stern reaction*, and *It would be wrong for the representative to work toward a stern punishment for the manager* (reversed). Another two items specifically measured the participants' views about demanding the manager be removed from their position: *The union representative should demand that the manager be fired*, and *The representative should work to ensure that the manager loses all managerial positions*. In this study, we also attempted to measure the perceived level of blame attributed to the victim by using three items capturing the extent to which the victim was regarded as responsible for this harassment: *The employee is also responsible for this situation*, *The employee could have averted*

this situation before it became unpleasant, and The manager is solely to blame for the incident (reversed). Each participant's emotional reactions and the perceived severity of the situation were measured using the same items as in Study 1. Because we wanted to include more precise questions, we did not ask about general punishment for the perpetrator this time.

Study 2 Results

Study 2 demonstrated a similar trend of male and female participants rating the #HeToo scenario with equal responses and female participants providing equal responses to both the #HeToo and #MeToo scenarios, as shown in Figures 4 and 5. See Table 2 for details.

Table 2

Perception of #HeToo by Male Participants vs #HeToo by Female Participants, #MeToo by Male Participants, and #MeToo by Female Participants (Study 2)

Variable	Estimate	<i>p</i>	Std. Error	Conf. Low	Conf. High
Anger	-1.42	>0.001	0.32	-2.07	-0.78
Disgust	-1.23	>0.001	0.29	-1.82	-0.64
Sadness	-0.99	0.005	0.34	-1.67	-0.30
Funny	0.81	0.014	0.32	0.17	1.4
Unpleasant	-1.04	>0.001	0.29	-1.63	-0.46
Discretion	0.86	0.03	0.39	0.08	1.64
Police	-0.72	0.012	0.28	-1.28	-0.16

Stern	-0.76	0.014	0.30	-1.37	-0.15
Removal	-1.06	>0.001	0.33	-1.72	-0.40
Victim-blaming	0.50	0.020	0.21	0.08	0.92

Note. 95% confidence interval

Figure 4

Evaluation of #MeToo and #HeToo Cases Depending on Participant Gender (Study 2)

Figure 5*Comparing #HeToo and #MeToo and #MeToo Gender Differences (Study 2)*

As with Study 1, we compared male participants' #HeToo ratings ($n = 26$) to the other three groups combined ($n = 98$). We applied and GLS analysis comparing the means of each outcome variable to account for the unbalanced design. The same overall pattern of trivialization emerged as seen in Figures 5 and 6. See Table 2 for further details.

Figure 6*Deviancy of Men's #HeToo Ratings (Study 2)*

Note. 95% confidence interval for comparing deviancy of men's rating of female aggressor ($n = 26$) with the mean of the three other conditions ($n = 98$) combined and centered on zero.

Discussion

The moral typecasting theory posits that in a situation that can be perceived from a moral standpoint, one of its actors is seen as the moral agent, and the other is regarded as the moral patient. A moral agent does things, while a moral patient experiences them. As noted previously, based on what we know about the agent/patient perception and how it overlaps with the agency/communion dimension of social interaction perceptions, we can surmise that men are usually cast in the role of moral agents and that women occupy the role of moral patients. Thus,

we hypothesized the #HeToo cases presented in our study would be perceived as less serious than the #MeToo cases. Because moral typecasting would be attached to the gender of the actors of the interaction, we expected that participants would experience more negative emotions when reading about sexual harassment of a woman (a default moral patient) by a man (a default moral agent) and that they would perceive such harassment in a more negative way than sexual harassment of a man by a woman. More precisely, we suspected that scenarios in which a woman experienced sexual harassment would cause more anger, sadness, and disgust among participants and be regarded as less funny (based on Studies 1 and 2). Furthermore, sexual harassment for the female victim would seem more unpleasant, more serious, and deserving a higher punishment (Study 1). Finally, participants would recommend less discretion, more involvement from the police, a sterner reaction, and removal from the office for the harasser (Study 2).

Based on our findings from male participants who evaluated the case of a man harassed by a woman, the moral typecasting explanation was supported. The situation in which a woman was harassed was perceived by male participants as worse than when a man was harassed. Thus, it is possible that men view women, categorically speaking, as moral patients, even if their actions suggest they are being agentic. Possibly, because of their function as default moral patients, women were perceived as less likely to cause suffering, so their actions were seen as less harmful (less unpleasant, less serious, less deserving of punishment, etc.).

Interestingly, our analyses showed female participants evaluated the #MeToo cases as equally bad as the #HeToo cases. This suggests women did not base their evaluations on the gender of the actors, implying they did not typecast the women in these scenarios as patients and men as agents in both harassment situations but rather let their evaluations be guided by the harassing behaviors alone. A possible explanation for this is that women are less attached to

gender roles than men (Brewster & Padavic, 2000; Larsen & Long, 1988), making them more likely to base their evaluations on factors other than just gender. This result could also happen because women see themselves as quite agentic; in certain areas of agency, they evaluate themselves as equally agentic to men (Hentschel et al., 2019), which makes it easier for them to view a woman as an immoral agent and to evaluate her actions appropriately. Moreover, it seems that women are more likely to apply ethics of care rather than justice-based ethical reasoning even though those differences are small (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000). Thus, women may perceive a harasser as a harasser and a victim as a victim regardless of gender, and their moral typecasting process concentrates on the moral agent (i.e., the harasser) and the moral patient (i.e., the harassed person), causing them to evaluate these persons as such.

Our findings offer some implications for policy and managerial practice. Firstly, men and women differed substantially in their moral evaluations of some but not all of these cases, which supports the idea that ethical review boards and other institutions can benefit from pursuing representational heterogeneity in terms of gender. Secondly, men trivialized sexual harassment of other men, which further underlines the importance of having a gender-balanced ethics board to which employees can voice their concerns. Perhaps the low level of reported incidences of sexual harassment of men can be partially attributed to male victims not speaking up because they expect that male superiors will trivialize the incident. Lastly, our findings provide indirect support for women generally viewing other women as more agentic than men do. This adds to the list of reasons why recruitment committees, performance review boards, and other corporate institutions whose mandates entail evaluating people should not be monotonically male-dominated.

While the present findings offer useful insights, our research is not without limitations. One notable limitation is that the vignettes used were written stories, which may not cause the same reactions as real-life scenarios with vivid depictions and experiences. Furthermore, the measurement items were all designed for the purposes of these studies and have not been validated by behavioral data. Another limitation is that the sample was all Scandinavian. Scandinavian culture places a high emphasis on gender equality. As a result, the present findings may not generalize to other cultures, especially cultures with drastically different views on women and gender equality. Future research should attempt to explore these dynamics using vivid and realistic methods, rigorous measurements, and heterogeneous samples from different cultures.

Conclusion

The few #HeToo cases of sexual harassment of males have generated a different public reaction than the infamous #MeToo cases. This disparity could be due to the many differences between the cases. However, little has been shown concretely about how people would respond to an identical case of sexual harassment if the gender of the aggressor and victim varied. Moral typecasting theory posits that men are viewed more intuitively as aggressors and women as victims, rather than the opposite construction. To test this theoretical prediction within the domain of workplace sexual harassment, we performed two randomized controlled experiments and varied the gender of the aggressor and victim in a sexual harassment scenario. We expected participants to judge the case as significantly worse when the aggressor was described as male and the victim as female, rather than the opposite. However, our analyses revealed a pattern of gender differences between groups. Female participants saw the case as equally bad whether the aggressor was male or female, and male participants reacted equally strongly to the case of

sexual harassment performed by a male aggressor. In contrast, male participants regarded the case as far less serious and warranting milder reactions when the aggressor was female and the victim was male. Thus, we conclude men trivialize cases of sexual harassment of male victims by female aggressors, whereas women's evaluation of such cases is not affected by the gender of the aggressor and the victim.

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Appendix

Study 1 Measurement Model

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard deviation
Anger	0.898	5.14	1.48
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I got angry when reading about this</i> <i>Incidents like these make me mad</i> 			
Disgust	0.888	5.53	1.23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The manager's behavior was disgusting</i> <i>I felt repulsed by this manager</i> 			
Sadness	0.878	4.60	1.55
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I was saddened when I read about this incident</i> <i>Reading about this incident made me sad</i> 			
Funny	0.741	1.87	1.17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I had to laugh when reading about this incident</i> <i>This was a rather funny case</i> 			
Unpleasant for victim	0.807	6.14	0.986
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It must have been very unpleasant for the employee to have had to endure this</i> <i>I completely understand if the employee felt this as a form of violation</i> <i>This couldn't have been very unpleasant for the employee (R)</i> 			

All items answered on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 = Completely disagree to 7 =

Completely agree. (R) = item was reverse coded.

Study 2 Measurement Model

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard deviation
Anger	0.901	5.59	1.48
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I got angry when reading about this</i> <i>Incidents like these make me mad</i> 			

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard deviation
Disgust	0.804	5.92	1.19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The managers behavior was disgusting</i> <i>I felt repulsed by this manager</i> 			
Sadness	0.928	4.98	1.56
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I was saddened when I read about this incident</i> <i>Reading about this incident made me sad</i> 			
Funny	0.724	1.91	1.25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I had to laugh when reading about this incident</i> <i>This was a rather funny case</i> 			
Unpleasant for victim	0.854	6.33	.969
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It must have been very unpleasant for the employee to have had to endure this</i> <i>I completely understand if the employee felt this as a form of violation</i> <i>This couldn't have been very unpleasant for the employee (R)</i> 			
Discretion	0.852	2.66	1.54
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It would suffice to raise this issue with the accused manager</i> <i>Nobody but the manager and employee need to be involved in a case like this</i> 			
Police	0.912	3.00	1.53
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The union representative should consider reporting the case to the police</i> <i>It is not necessary to involve the police in a matter such as this (R)</i> 			
Sternness	0.700	5.28	1.27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The union representative should ensure that the manager faces a stern reaction</i> <i>It would be wrong for the representative to work toward a stern punishment for the manager (R)</i> 			
Removal from office	0.852	4.06	1.60
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The union representative should demand that the manager be fired</i> <i>The representative should work to ensure that the manager loses their managerial position</i> 			
Victim blaming	0.850	1.87	0.980
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The employee is also responsible for this situation</i> <i>The employee could have averted this situation before it became unpleasant</i> <i>The manager is solely to blame for the incident (R)</i> 			