

The attitudes to sexual harassment culminates sociology essay

[Sociology](#)



A poststructural analysis of the meanings inherent in the language associated with sexual harassment reveals how it was perceived as the culture that perpetuated the attitudes held by those masculinities at the top of their profession. When the Savile scandal was first exposed, numerous claims that it was the culture went in tandem with the fact that everyone knew about the rumours regarding Jimmy Savile. Raymond Williams argued that 'culture' was one of the top three most complex words in the English language (1983: 87). However, in this context, the definition of 'culture' is understood as a 'way of life' which, it must be argued, creates two very different ways of life; one for the perpetrators and an entirely different intimidating one for the victims (Williams, 1983: 87). The women's narratives reveal that despite working in a hostile environment, it only emerged as a result of Savile. It was clearly a 'way of life' driven by the misogynous attitudes of the BBC's patriarchal elite (Williams, 1983, 87). When considering that not one person dared to turn whistle-blower to protect children from Savile's predatory paedophilia, adult women experiencing sexual harassment are even less of a concern. However, whether this is still the case today forms the focus of this critical evaluation of secondary and primary research. That change has taken place is promising on the one hand. For example, BBC presenter Anne Robinson recently asked photography guru David Bailey during a photo-shoot how they had changed since the 1960s to which Bailey replied, '...in the 60s, I would have had [sex with] you first!' (in Laughland, 2012: 38; Emphasis added). Such a confident response denotes that sexual gratification was somewhat taken-for-granted in the corporate media industry of yesteryear. It is evident that powerful men

were granted *carte blanche* to *quid pro quo* harassment by having access to sex whenever, wherever and with whomever, in return for something such as a photograph shot by Bailey (MacKinnon, 1979: 32; Saul, 2003, 49; Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2002: 143). It also denotes the 'myth' that while attitudes to the culture of sexual harassment was endemic; the culture has since changed (Barthes, 1972 in Hall, 1997: 68). This discussion challenges this assumption because evidence exists that sexual harassment continues to be endemic within the BBC. For example, an article written by an unnamed (to protect her career) BBC TV producer, catalogued numerous accounts of harassment that suggests it is just as rife today – if not worse [See Appendix A]. When she witnessed her boss laughing at her expense, she realised the futility of reporting it (in *The Guardian*, 2012: 34). However, Robinson argues that women in the BBC need stand up to the BBC's elite brigade of men (in Laughland, 2012: 38). Similarly feminists such as Carol Smart claim that the law is not 'monolithic and unitary ...' nor does it present women in 'some predetermined, calculated, powerless form' (1992: 41-1). However, it is not only women who are victims. It is important to note that although sexual harassment is generally understood as being perpetrated by men towards women (Wilson and Thompson, 2001), men, especially young men and gay men, are also victimised (Baker, Terpstra and Larntz, 1990: 315). These will be incorporated wherever possible although the lack of research on sexual harassment is even more lacking in the context of male victims. Nevertheless, to balance this chapter in the context of the BBC and organisational working culture, the recent suicide of BBC news reporter Russell Joslin, aged 50, is alleged to have been the

consequence of sexual harassment perpetrated by his female radio producer and boss (Halliday and Plunkett, 2012: 1). However, this example, as with all the other allegations, has yet to be proven in an ongoing report that is still to be finalised.

1. 1. Rationale The rationale for this paper is to explore the culture and attitudes that perpetuate workplace sexual harassment.

Ultimately the lack of research translates into an inadequate formula to rid the workplace of this behaviour and improve the working way of life for the victims. However, re-wiring the mind-set of the masculinities that dominate the public sphere, that women are not to be objectified, coerced, controlled and abused in the workplace but instead treated as equals is a discursive shift that will take decades to achieve. This is despite the Sexual

Discrimination Act 1975 and the Protection from Harassment Act, 1997 that outlawed sexual harassment in the UK (HM Government, 1997; 1975). This legislation incorporates sexual harassment perpetrated in both its physical and virtual forms which encompasses cyber harassment of a sexual nature including cyber stalking and cyber bullying. Nevertheless, evidently this legislation has had little effect. Instead, it has served to drive sexual harassment underground into an even more accepted norm within the workplace but one in which victims are unable to report. Ultimately, the misogynist attitudes held by some men needs to be changed before any legislation designed to combat sexual harassment at work, is to be at all affective (MacKinnon, 1979: 197).

1. 2. Aims and Objectives The aims are to establish how, to what extent, and in what ways, have attitudes to sexual harassment changed over time. What needs to be done to motivate changes in thinking. In achieving this aim, a number of answers will be sought to

ascertain precisely what actions and behaviours constitute the crime of sexual harassment in the working environment. Chapter I provided an overview of the current situation exposed by women from within the organisational working environment of the BBC which continues to be hostile to many. In contrast, Chapter II provides a literature review that incorporates the theoretical framework underpinning the overall analysis. The literature review encompasses feminist theories in the main, although it is also examined from a historical perspective to illustrate the social construction of sexual harassment. Chapter III details the methodology of both the first half of the discussion and the primary research itself. Ethical considerations are examined before moving on to how the analysis was established. Chapter 4 is a critical evaluation of the theoretical frameworks set out before in the context of the primary research and the responses of its participants. This chapter includes the findings and the analysis and conclusions of this research. Finally, Chapter V concludes the entire paper by drawing together the evidence that ultimately finds that negative attitudes remain rooted in patriarchy and masculinities which are, to lesser extent, supported by the dominant norms associated with the myths surrounding femininity which will only be ameliorated by developing strong mediums through which assailants can be exposed and punished, without fear of reprisals for those targeted.

2. Literature Review

1. Women and Work

Feminist commentators such as MacKinnon argue that 'women are sexually harassed by men' because they occupy a position in the public sphere of work which in the 1970s, was in contention with the female role that was dominated by nuclear family 'norms' (1979: 44). Women's roles were predetermined as homemakers and

primary carers which confined them to the oppression and 'unpaid' labour of the private sphere. Within this context, women were economically dependent upon their 'breadwinning' husbands who dominated the public sphere of paid work. Therefore, women in the workplace represented what Mary Douglas conceptualises as a 'matter out of place' (1966: 35).

MacKinnon therefore argues that women rely on 'the exchange of sex for survival' (MacKinnon, 1979: 44). Sexual harassment at work is thus, merely an extension of the 'male sex-role pattern of coercive sexual initiation toward women' as determined by a woman's biological 'sex' (MacKinnon, 1979: 44). She argues that this essentialist, biologically reductive approach dominates the attitudes of men because it serves to justify the abuse of women (MacKinnon, 1979: 44). Foucault (1977) argued that the body is a means of control – a blank page upon which to write. Women's sexuality is discursively rooted in culture and history and is therefore an 'omnipresent signifier' that enables it to be controlled by men who manifestly administer such power through various modes of sexual harassment (1984: 154).

However, this view was adopted by MacKinnon in the 1970s when the working environment was even more dominated by men. Women were largely confined to the private sphere as homemakers and primary carers and wholly dependent upon their breadwinning husbands in economic terms. For example, the recent scandal within the BBC supports the claims by MacKinnon which asserts that while sexual harassment within the workplace is indeed common, it is nevertheless 'sufficiently pervasive ... to be nearly invisible' (1979: 1). Since the 1960s, feminists have struggled to ameliorate the prevalence of work-based sexual harassment. Its legal recognition was a

landmark for feminism (Saul, 1993: 6). Until then, the sacking of an employee for resisting her employers' sexual demands was a personal issue, and not one that fell into the ranks of any legal or economic recourse (Saul, 1993: 45). This is because attitudes to sexual harassment allowed it. The work of MacKinnon and others certainly had an impact on changing legislation in Europe and in America. However, whether it was enough is evaluated throughout the discussion.

2. 2. Definitional Conflict

It is crucial therefore that the conflicting definitional frameworks are understood in terms of this criminal act. However, although the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 in its original form made a huge difference, it did not contain within its remit any real definition of sexual harassment (Hunt, Davidson, Fielden and Hoel, 2007: v; Saul, 2003: 47). Instead, the definition of sexual harassment evolved through case law through the European Parliament which defines 'harassment related to sex' as being '[W]here an unwanted conduct related to the sex of a person occurs with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment' (in Hunt et al. 2007: v). Also, '[W]here any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment' (in Hunt et al. 2007: v). However, these definitions are two of many more definitions (Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2002: 143; MacKinnon, 1979: 135; Saul, 2003: 45). Definitions of sexual harassment are best understood in the context of the two main models that have emerged, albeit to a limited extent, within the discourse of the law and legal

proceedings. These are conceptualised as 'quid quo pro' or the 'hostile environment' (MacKinnon, 1979: 32; Saul, 2003, 49; Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2002: 143). 2. 3. Quid Quo Pro Quid pro quo is sexual harassment that involves employers and /or superiors coercively offering 'benefits' to employees in return for sexual gratification (Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2002: 143; Saul, 2003: 45). Such 'benefits' may include gaining promotions, extra working hours or simply, [and somewhat blatantly] a way of blackmailing staff into keeping their jobs (Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2002: 143). However, this can act as a double-edged sword as while staff may find themselves without a choice due to the loss of income they would suffer should they refuse, it can also be perceived as sleeping with the boss to further their careers. Nevertheless, any act that falls within this model only has to occur once in isolation to qualify as sexual harassment (Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2002: 143). Woodzicka and LaFrance argue that quid quo pro can be implicit or explicit. An example of implicit quid quo pro is given by Anne Robinson who states that following an interview in 1969 for a journalist job at the Sunday Times, she was sent on a trip abroad. However, she states that; '... another senior Sunday Times journalist who was also on the trip and had a stake in my future, made a pass at me... I thought: " Oh golly what am I going to do?" I want that job, I don't want to upset this person. It was difficult to deal with'(in Laughland, 2012: 38) An example of explicit quid pro quo is quite literally a boss verbally demanding sexual favours in return for not getting the sack (Saul, 2003: 46). In this sense, the employee is fired if they refuse to honour their employer's demands. Therefore, the 'quid' is retaining the job in return for the 'pro quo' the sexual gratification (Shuy, 2012: 37).

2. 4. Hostile Environment In contrast, repeated counts of sexual harassment are required for victims of 'hostile environment harassment' (Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2002: 143; MacKinnon, 1979: 135). The most commonly applied forms of this type of harassment in order are: 'sexual teasing, jokes, remarks or questions; pressure for dates; letters, emails, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature; sexual looks or gestures; deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering or pinching; pressure for sexual favours; and actual or attempted rape or sexual assault' (Rutter, 1996 in Hunt et al. 2007: 8-9). Other examples include repeated exposure to lewd and suggestive remarks of a sexual nature; pornographic pin ups on workplace walls; discussions of sexual antics; repeatedly pestering colleagues; inappropriately commenting on the physique of colleagues; repeatedly commenting on the attire of colleagues; touching; and groping to mention just some. One infamous extreme of this type of sexual harassment occurred in the US where women were employed at Stroh's brewery. The male dominated working environment of this brewery was far from welcoming which is evidenced by the female employees being identified as; '...bitch and squaw... one woman was grabbed... on her rear end... a male co-worker displayed his pubic hair and grabbed her [another woman] head and pushed it into his crotch ... another male co-worker drove his forklift toward another woman ... in addition the women were subjected to a barrage of sexual comments, graffiti and pin ups' (Saul, 2003: 46). This examples what MacKinnon conceptualises as 'dominance theory' in which she argues excludes women from the workplace. MacKinnon's dominance theory argues that sexual harassment is perpetuated by the political structures that permit: [i] male dominance over

women and; [ii] employer domination over employees (1979: 1). This arrangement produces a somewhat toxic cocktail of policies that promotes and perpetuates male superiority while subordinating women to the point where they consider themselves as inferior. This, in turn, places limitations on a woman's career prospects and economic independence (MacKinnon, 1979: 230). Meanwhile, men safeguard their jobs within the public sphere of paid work (MacKinnon, 1979: 230). Indeed the women at the Stroh Brewery were told to 'go home and get women's work' (Saul, 2003: 46). 2. 5.

Historical Evidence Women's work has typically and historically been in the service industry in many differing forms. There are some accounts of sexual harassment that transcend centuries and continents which are valuable to how sexual harassment can be understood in contemporary times. As the American Psychological Association argued '[S]exual harassment is a problem with a long past but a short history' (1993: 3). For example, the historiographical research conducted by Segrave (1994) documents numerous accounts of sexual harassment such as that noted by Germany study in 1898 which observed anything from mild verbal suggestions to physical beatings to outright rape (Dromm, 2012: 22; Segrave, 1994: 45). Another form of sexual harassment following the American Civil War involved African-American domestic servants being forced into concubine relationships with their masters as a condition of their employment (Dromm, 2012: 21). In Britain, domestic servitude was often the only form of work available to women and girls, particularly in the seventeenth century (Dromm, 2012: 21). Segrave however, finds one example where a domestic servant who was caught drinking wine belonging to her master, was forced

into gratifying him sexually to escape a prison sentence (Segrave, 1994: 24). This was a normalised approach to dealing with domestic staff because the dominant attitudes held that members of this particular social group were inherently 'promiscuous' and thus it was argued that they only had themselves to blame for the treatment that they received as a result of their errant ways (Dromm, 2012: 21). This is a clear example of the quid pro quo model of sexual harassment in action long before it was ever defined as such. The servant was to meet his sexual demands in return for enabling her liberty. While MacKinnon's dominance theory is not relevant here insofar as the domestic servant was, after all, a 'woman' doing what was [and still is] widely understood to be 'women's work', it does however support Stanko's theory of 'respectability' (1985: 2). Stanko argues that sexual harassment is linked to the perceived degree of 'respectability' a woman possesses (1985: 2). Where the perception of respectability is low, as within this context of domestic servitude, 'victims' are considered to be deserving of such intimidation by men (1985: 4).

2. 6. Occupation Other working environments that assert this theory include public houses, factories, restaurants, call centres, retail outlets and the sex industry to mention some. For example, in the controversial Mass-Observation study undertaken in the 1950s, the evidence produced what Hey argues to be 'a complex perspective in which class is both counted and discounted' when the middle class male researchers recorded their observations of a barmaid at work as being '... a daughter of the "workers" but she is after all a women!' and therefore '[A]ttractive in a coarse way' (Hey, 1986: 41). Hey argues that this study represents a 'sociological voyeurism' that reduces individuals to 'the status

of objects' whereby the ' objectification of women is also secured by the ability of the male observers to both share and collude in the male chauvinism of pub cultures that cuts across social class' (Hey, 1986: 42). The stereotype of ' being a barmaid involves the performance of a sexualized and flirtatious heterosexuality'(Adkins, 1995 in Hemmings, Silva and Thompson, 2004, 195). As a victim herself, Stanko (1997) argues that it is not just perpetrators that hold this attitude, but also the police and other institutions, as evidenced by trivialising sexual harassment. It must be argued that women who are victimised are the re-victimised by the complaints procedure. . This is also historically specific. For example, Segrave's research draws on a popular piece of literature from 1935 aimed at a target audience of female clerks and secretaries which asserted that ' attractive' female employees can expect ' masculine attention' which is ' quite harmless' and ' not intended to be taken seriously' (Segrave, 1994: 112). However, it then goes to state that if it goes beyond this, then the female employee must resign from their post stating that '...the one thing a girl absolutely cannot do is to carry troubles of this sort to anybody higher up. Unjust? Yes. But that is the way it is' (Segrave, 1994: 113). In contemporary society the employer has a ' duty of care' to its staff to ensure that they are safe and not placed in precarious situations (UNISON, 2008: 10). Evidently, the BBC is somewhat negligible in terms of its duty of care. This is a global issue however, and not confined to the UK. Furthermore its impact is on the careers of women is global too. For example, research conducted in Malaysia reveals that sexual harassment prevents or places blocks on promotions, pay increases and working hours as well as ' tangible

job benefits' such as holidays, overtime and sickness (Sabitha, 2008: 1-2). For those whose working environment is hostile to women, psychological stress overtakes, the target's working performance decreases which can result in the victim being sacked (Sabitha, 2008: 3). Psychiatric issues such as anxiety resulting from sexual harassment are legally understood in the UK and cover the subsequent losses caused to employees in case of absenteeism as a result (Unison, 2008: 10). Feminists argue that sexual harassment is implemented by men to subordinate and control female co-workers (Stanko, 1988). This also applies to women occupying managerial posts where they have a history of sex-orientated harassment (Wilson, 2000). Indeed, research by Woodzicka and LaFrance (2002) found that women can be misinterpreted by their employers based solely upon their smile. However many feminist beliefs have been challenged (Uggan and Blackstone, 2005: 69). For example, the case of the BBC reporter's suicide, it can be argued that not only does MacKinnon's (1979) 'dominance theory' still apply, but that it also applies to female dominance over men. However, it is argued that the dominance approach has little bearing in legalistic terms (Crouch, 2001: 47). Evidently, the process of reporting sexual harassment is equally problematic within organisational culture owing to their patriarchal structures that dominates the public sphere. Patriarchy is evidently abundant as the narratives of the female employees have argued above. It is not solely linked to sexual harassment however. Women have been subordinated in many other aspects of work, not least, the 'sexual division of labour' in terms of pay (Bradley, 1886 in Janes, 2004: 146). In addition, women are not only the bearer of biological but also social reproduction thus they are forced

to negotiate issues such as maternity leave to ensure their job still exists for when they return, time off when their children are sick, flexible working hours that cater to children's schooling and so on. Thus entering the workplace is a domain that represents the presence of a 'public patriarchy' that subordinates women in similar ways as the 'private' patriarchy that subordinates them within the private sphere (Walby, 1993: 87–8). These represent the paternalist controls which treated women employees differently from men in the distinction that was forced between ideas masculinity and femininity (Bradley, 1996 in Janes, 2004: 147). Sexual harassment is thus a by-product of patriarchy.

2. 7. Organisational Workplace Research by Hunt, Davidson, Fielden and Hoel found that found that some organisational workplace structures allow or rather, enable, the bullying, harassment and intimidation of employees by means of what they conceptualise as processes of 'organisational violation' (2007: v). The police force is an organisation that, as Stanko (1997) argues, harbours the trivialisation of sexual harassment. Indeed, Campbell argues that the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act was a turning point in terms of gender in the police force although it meant that WPCs were integrated into the 'most masculinised enclave in civil society' (1993: 20). Drew (1999) argues that the prevalence of sexual harassment within the police force can be reduced to the masculinised police culture which is based on male values.

2. 8. Masculinity Connell's (2005) 'hegemonic masculinity' and gender socialisation theories reveals that men who reject the heterosexual masculine discourse are subject to harassment. Men are more likely than women to have a pornographic pinup on the wall. MacKinnon (1997) argues

that pornography is the sole factor that drives men to sexual violence. However, other feminists argue that this is much less the case than MacKinnon claims. Segal's (1990) research into male violence and masculinities found that sex offenders had had less exposure to pornography than men in general (1990: 33). The gender-imbalance is also addressed by Uggan and Blackstone's qualitative approach, which illustrates that men and adolescents often fail to recognise sexual harassment and as such, it is vastly under-reported (2005: 65). Nevertheless, its prevalence is argued to affect between 42 and 90 per cent of working women (Baker, Terpstra, & Larntz, 1990 in Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2002: 143). Although this is a wide margin, the degree by which women perceive themselves as victims or report such incidents varies wildly as revealed by the women at the BBC. Holder, Nee and Ellis argue that a 'mediational perspective' identifies that the absence of feminine power leads to more marginalising and discriminatory practices which makes minority groups such as single women and other minority groups more susceptible to sexual harassment (1999: 69). Indeed, it is argued by numerous commentators that the gender imbalance in any working environment where women are the minority leads to a much stronger culture of harassment (Goward, 2002; Simpson, 2000; Adams, 2001). This however, fails to encompass targets of race and ethnicity whereas the 'moderational perspective' does albeit, not exclusively (Murrell, 1996: 56). This is a crucial factor as in addition to sexism, the police force in Britain is also considered one of the most racist whereby WPCs from Black and Asian backgrounds suffer 'triple jeopardy' in terms of sexual harassment (Holder, Nee and Ellis, 1999: 68). As one black female police

officer stated ' sometimes I couldn't tell if what I faced was racial or sexual or both' (Martin, 1994: 393). Similarly, justice is equally problematic as revealed by the research by Wuensh, Campbell, Kesler and Moore which enacted mock sexual harassment cases with mock litigants and jurors from various ethnic backgrounds to find that white male jurors were the most racially bias (2002: 587). In all cases, mock jurors favoured petitioners of their own race. Not all harassment is physical or spoken however, as messages are transmitted in non-verbal ways that are argued to contribute the prevalence of sexual harassment.

2. 9. Nonverbal Communication

From a social psychological perspective, Woodzicka and La France argue that the ' smile' has much to do with nonverbal communication in the workplace and its connections with the sexual nature of the gendered roles (2005: 141). Similarly, Deutsch, Le Baron & Fryer (1987) argue that when under any form of scrutiny, women are more likely than men to smile because smiling is a positive aspect of the feminine disposition (in Woodzicka and La France, 2005: 139). Women often smile more when under considerable pressure or emotional strain. In stark contrast, men are expected not to smile in keeping with the masculine persona (Woodzicka and La France, 2005: 139). Not surprisingly therefore, confusion can arise insofar as a woman's smile can communicate mixed or confused messages to men who tend to misinterpret the real meanings behind the female smile mistaking them instead for communicating sexual meanings (Abbey, 1982, in Woodzicka and La France, 2005: 140). Thus women's subordinate status initiates smiling as a survival technique in order to convey themselves to their [male] superiors in non-offensive ways (Denmark, 1977; Deutsch, 1990; in Woodzicka and La France,

2005: 142). The greater their subordination, the less power they hold and therefore the more they smile (Denmark, 1977; Deutsch, 1990). However, such claims have been contested as other research has found that those with a great deal of power smile more (Halberstadt, Dovidio & Davidson, 1988). Woodzicka and La France (2005) argue that studies with same sex interactions at differing power levels found that those with less power smiled because they were eager to please whereas those with more power positively smiled more. The way that women dress for work is another non-verbal transmitter of sexual harassment. 2. 10. Sexy Dressing Beiner argues that despite feminist attention to women's dress codes increasing since the 1990s, there is nevertheless much in the way of mixed results that identify the tensions between whether women are dressing autonomously or whether they are instead 'buying into their own objectification' (2007: 125). Either way, the 'target dress' that women wear can be both the cause of sexual harassment or, it can protect them from sexual harassment. For example, in one instance, a compulsory dress code was set by a supervisor which banned women from wearing trousers at work so that he could ogle their legs is another example of the hostile environment of sexual harassment (Hunt et al. 2007: 8). The prohibition on women wearing trousers to work was seemingly standard practise in the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Robinson recalls how her first journalism job at the Daily Mail was fraught with the repeated humiliation by her boss who used to call her to 'the back bench' to bring her work whereupon '[H]e would take it, drop it on the floor, so that you would bend over and pick it up, so that all the guys could have a look at your knickers' (in Laughland, 2012: 38). Again, a 'duty of care' is

severely lacking back in the 1960s (UNISON, 2008: 9). Saul argues that the definitional conflicts surrounding sexual harassment in terms of a hostile environment are problematized by two very different legal approaches. The first is that legislation has led to concerns about sexual harassment whereby women are becoming 'infantilised' in ways that protect women from workplace romances and all manner of sexual actions and sexual language (2003: 45). This is argued to be overbearing. Others however, argue that this is not the case. Ultimately, the most all round definition of sexual harassment is: '...unwanted sexual attention ... including: visual (leering); verbal (sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions); unwanted pressure for sexual favours or dates; unwanted touching... or with implied threats of job related consequences for non-cooperation; physical assault; sexual assault and rape. The behavioural manifestation may be a singular event or continuous series of events' (Stanko, 1988: 91). No 'special' laws are provided to protect women specifically and romances derived from the workplace should be able to blossom (Saul, 2003: 45). This becomes evident in the primary research which follows on from the methodology.

3. Methodology

The methodological approaches of the first two chapters have taken two distinct qualitative approaches to convey sexual harassment in the workplace. The first drew on differing forms of media containing narratives of famous victims of sexual assault within the organisational working culture of the BBC. The reason for this was to firstly, convey the prevalence of sexual harassment as a culture in the past, and to bring the debates concerning sexual harassment into the twenty-first century. This was necessary because of the absolute lack of current studies on sexual harassment in recent years. The BBC was

an option that was deemed to be both interesting, relevant and ultimately, very current to this study. Care was taken to meet validity by using only the spoken word of the victims who were either interviewed on radio, television or who actually authored articles in the press. The literature review drew on a range of secondary research on sexual harassment to uncover the concepts and theories that underpin sexual harassment and why it is perpetuated. In doing so, the literature was drawn from books, the media, peer-reviewed journal articles as well as research and guidance papers from some non-government organisations such as UNISON. However, secondary research sources must be approached with care to ensure the validity of the claims that are made. This is also especially crucial when conducting any kind of primary research.

3. 1. Primary Research Methods

This research shall approach the study by adopting a qualitative methodology to the primary method to explore sexual harassment in the workplace. It will use the interpretative approach to analysing the data to gain a more meaningful insight into the issue of sexual harassment (Weber, 1922: 4). The main research will consist of a qualitative evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data derived from an online cross-sectional survey using GoogleDocs (Bryman, 2008: 5). While some questions will be structured to determine gender, age-group and participants' consent, others will be multiple choice questions, whereby participants will choose from two or more options. The sample will consist of the researcher's friends list on the popular online social networking site Facebook which allows users to make contacts in a virtual environment. This approach is appropriate insofar as it will be an anonymous survey. It also covers a wide demographic area in terms of age

and gender and it is a widely available platform that can be accessed via numerous devices such as mobile phones, tablet PCs and laptops to mention just some. Furthermore, Facebook can be accessed from anywhere in the world and, if desired, can provide a diverse sample that produces numerous variables such as nationality, language and geography and race. However, because within this context, the primary research is designed to measure the shift in attitudes to sexual harassment in the workplace, the demographic variables are limited to age and gender only. Furthermore, data can be conveniently uploaded on a spreadsheet that can only be seen by the researcher. Secondary quantitative data will also be used to support or discredit the findings from the survey in order to give the research more validity and reliability as the sample response is relatively small (De Vaus, 1996: 86). The analysis will be thematic, thus deploying an interpretative yet reflexive approach to minimise any subjective influence, including any preconceived ideas and bias held by the researcher (Silva and Parr, 2004: 63). Although many of the questions on the survey will be quantitative in essence, there will also be some 'open' boxes for additional dialogue in case anyone wished to elaborate which indeed, a few respondents did. This has provided some raw qualitative data. Some questions give examples of sexual harassment cases to provide context. For example, one such question details the high profile example of four female employees who sued Chevron Oil for £2.2 million in damages from following their claims of sexual harassment after receiving an email listing '25 reasons why beer is better than women' (Flynn, 2001: 1). This is then followed by a repeat of question 3 which asked if the respondents felt they had been sexually harassed. Questions were

deliberately subtle so as not to put anyone off taking part. The sensitive nature of the topic could have included far more intrusive questions concerning groping or even rape thus, to be considerate and avoid causing distress by forcing the participants to address issues they may not want to revisit, subtle questions seemed the best way forward. The open box provides the means for anyone who deemed it appropriate to convey such issues should they wish to. This is all essential to meeting the ethical considerations of such research.

3. 2. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations must be observed regarding the sensitive nature of the topic. Therefore, any distress that might be experienced by the participants during the research process must be considered (Silva and Parr, 2004: 59). The survey is wholly optional so the power imbalance that derives from interviewing is minimised (Hanson [Student] 2008 in Bryman, 2008: 26). Furthermore, the sample consists solely of adults, thereby avoiding negotiations with gatekeepers. This was assured by directing the research to Facebook friends who were eighteen years old and over. Nevertheless, while this cannot be guaranteed, as it is possible for children to hack into their parents or siblings accounts, it is assumed that even if that were the case, it is unlikely that they would be drawn to filling out a survey on this topic. Ultimately no research can claim to be value free. Participants will be approached by email containing the survey link with a short note attached. The survey informs participants of my rationale and my aims and explains that it is both voluntary and anonymous. A tick box is provided requesting them to provide their informed voluntary consent.

4. Evaluating Changing Attitudes to Workplace Sexual Harassment

This chapter encompasses the

primary research conducted by the author in their attempt to measure whether attitudes to sexual harassment in the working environment has changed over time or whether misogynist assumptions remain the hegemonic norm towards women in the workplace. What follows is a breakdown of the process including the collation of the data, the sample, the methodological approach to the analysis, the findings of the responses which is fundamentally quantitative, the analysis of the findings which is essentially qualitative and a summary of the overall study including its limitations.

4. 1. The Sample

The sample were drawn from the authors Facebook friends list. Although the original request was sent out to 198 people, there was a fairly expected response of consisting 47 per cent of the original amount targeted which amounted to the sum total of 90 participants which included 60 females and 30 males. The topic was expected to attract more females as they are more likely to have been targets themselves or know other females who have been. They fell into four age groups of which the largest was the authors peer group aged 18-34 which was to be expected. The next largest age group consists of 35-49 year-olds followed by 50-64 year olds and finally 65-79 which consisted of women females only.

4. 2. The Method

The method of analysis involved grouping the data by gender and age for easier quantification of the data which makes analysis a little more organised. This is because even with a short two minute survey, the amount of data that is collated can be overwhelming. The analysis undertaken was qualitative and interpretative because quantifying the data alone omits the meanings inherent in the responses (Weber, 1922: 4). This is because as Weber argued, all human activity is meaningful which the natural sciences fail to

include in its analyses of the social world (1922: 4). A process of annotation followed which was approached by colour coding all of the necessary information within several different tables to identify relevant themes, concepts and theories. This enabled the identification of differences and correlations such as, for example, whether male and female respondents perceived women who sleep with their bosses differently or the same. The results were then tested alongside relevant theories inherent in debates on sexual harassment. Thus, for example, MacKinnon's (1979) dominance theory is applicable. Saul's (2003) legal approach was also applicable. It was also apparent that definitional conflicts mask the seriousness of sexual harassment. Stanko's (1985) theory of 'respectability' was also evident. Walby's (1995) private and public patriarchy was relevant as was Beiner's (2007) investigative approach to how women dress in the workplace. Bradley's theory of women's subordination within the workplace was pertinent as was Segal's (1990) theory of masculinities and male violence. Also, there was ample evidence of Stanko's (1985) 'respectability' thesis being relevant to the debate which is rooted in the debates regarding biological 'sex', class and the objectification of women. The use of asking the same question twice asking whether the respondents felt they had experienced sexual harassment proved to be a positive one.

4. 3. Findings

In the first question asking whether participants felt that they had been victims of sexual harassment, 49 of the 90 respondents or 55 per cent stated 'no'. 25 or 28 per cent stated 'yes' and 15 or 17 per cent were 'unsure if it could be defined as sexual harassment'. The remaining respondents who felt that they had been targeted were almost entirely women. 86 per cent of the male

respondents claimed that they had not experienced sexual harassment, 3 were 'unsure' and 2 stated they had. However, these changed when the question was asked again at the end of the survey as will be discussed later. Of the female response, 39 per cent said they had not been victims of sexual harassment, 23 per cent of females 'unsure if it could be defined as sexual harassment' leaving 38 per cent who claimed to have been victimised. However, six of those who said 'no' in the first instance said 'yes' in the second. Furthermore, 3 of the female respondent who were at first 'unsure' said 'yes' to the second time they were asked the question. Thus 33 of the female participants claimed to have experienced sexual harassment. A number of other respondents who stated 'no' in the first instance became 'unsure' by the end of the survey. The order by which the sample viewed behaviours as sexual harassment was as follows: 'banter with sexual connotations' was chosen by 55 per cent of those surveyed. The second behaviour deemed to be harassing was 'being cornered by a colleague bearing mistletoe at the Christmas works do' which was ticked by 50 per cent participants. The third behaviour to constitute sexual harassment was 'sexist banter' according to 41 per cent of the people in the sample. The joint fourth behaviours consisted of 'a colleague "brushing past" you on more than one occasion' and 'receiving emails containing rude or sexist jokes' according to 38 per cent of the participants. Sixth with 31 per cent was the 'topless pin-up on the wall of a building site portacabin' followed in seventh place by 'a hand on your shoulder by a member of the opposite sex' which is problematic for 30 per cent of the sample. In eighth position with 27 per cent was 'a colleague [male or female] talking openly about their sexual

antics?’ followed in ninth place with ‘being asked by a superior to discuss work-related issues in the pub after work’ which earned 19 per cent of the votes. ‘A scantily clad pin up of a pop star’ was tenth chosen by 16 per cent of the respondents. In eleventh and last place was receiving a comment such as ‘you’re looking particularly nice today’ from a colleague of the opposite sex’ which was chosen by 7 per cent of the participants. 22 respondents described women who sleep with the boss as ‘ambitious’, while 34 viewed them as ‘victims’. 9 were ‘unsure’ and 6 had other labels to apply. In terms of men who sleep with the boss to 42 respondents viewed them as ambitious while 18 saw them as a victim. 16 male respondents defined both men and women who sleep with the boss as ‘ambitious’. 8 were undecided and 5 applied other labels to apply which will be discussed below. In contrast, 24 women described men who sleep with the boss as ambitious but only six women defined women as such. Interestingly, women largely described women who sleep with the boss as ‘victims’ although, like the male respondents, they also applied various labels to men and women who find themselves in this compromising situation. In terms of dress codes in the workplace, 81 per cent felt that provocative dress invites sexual harassment. However, only 14 per cent felt that women who are harassed as a result have brought it upon themselves. However, as will become clear in the analysis, this figure changes significantly when examined in the context of gendered responses.

4. 4. Analysis

Evidence of lack of knowledge as to what actually constitutes sexual harassment is clearly present in the findings. In posting the same question twice, at the beginning of the main questions and again at the end, many responses that states they had not, or were unsure in

response to the first time it was asked if they had been targets changed to 'yes' that they had experienced sexual harassment in the second question. As one older female explained, 'I can think of many things that happened but I never really thought of it as sexual harassment to be honest' (Female, 65-80). For example, one respondent defined 'inappropriate touching [and] persistent advances after being told no' as constituting sexual harassment whilst ignoring all the other types of harassment listed (Female, 34-50). In terms of what constitutes sexual harassment, some additional ones were added by respondents. First however, figure 1 is a diagram of the abbreviated questions within a model that defines the questions in terms of verbal, touch and visual. These are included in Stanko's definition of sexual harassment which includes touch and verbal harassment (1988: 91). Analysis of the responses to what defines sexual harassment reveals that 'touch' is experienced far more negatively by the female respondents than male respondents. For example, 7 per cent of males compared to 33 per cent of females chose 'a hand on the shoulder' as sexual harassment. 'A colleague brushing past on several occasions' offends 26 per cent of males but 46 per cent of females in the study while a mistletoe-bearing colleague offends 40 per cent of males and 55 per cent of females. This is also evidenced in some of the qualitative responses such as where a female respondent from the youngest group defined 'uninvited physical contact in areas such as breasts, bottom and genitals' (Female, 18-34). Similarly, another female from the same age group claimed that sexual harassment includes people applying 'nicknames [which] are formed out of sexual connotations' (Female, 18-34). In another example, an older male claimed

that '[H]arassment is only when the act is not wanted. If continued after asking for it to stop' (Male, 50-64). A female aged 35-49 defined sexual harassment as ' inappropriate touching [and] persistent advances after being told no. Similarly, ' continuing the sex jokes after you've told them they've crossed the line' denotes sexual harassment for another female respondent (Female, 35-49). However, for this to be the case, sexual harassment has to be experienced first in order for the victim to tell them to stop. Clearly these definitions support the workplace as being a hostile environment. Again, this response is evidence of a hostile environment as the behaviour was repeatedly carried out which the respondent found intimidating to the point where she felt ' unsafe'. As Stanko's theory of ' respectability' is also evident here as there exists a general stereotype of barmaids are used to sexual banter and sexist remarks. Clearly, this draws on Adkins (1995) argument that a barmaid's role is expected to go in tandem with a ' performance of a sexualized and flirtatious heterosexuality'(in Hemmings, Silva and Thompson, 2004, 195). The sexualised objectification of women is also reinforced in popular culture as barmaids in soap operas support this theory such as the role of ' good time girl' Kat Moon in Eastenders (BBC1, 2013). However, this clearly is not the case in reality as this respondent was genuinely in fear of her safety within the patriarchal hostile environment of the pub (Hey, 1986). Ultimately, as UNISON argues, there is a ' duty of care' of employers to look after the welfare of their staff (2008: 9). When gender and class converge, such environments possibly become more hostile in occupations which include barmaids, waitresses, cleaners, assembly line workers, production line worker, cooks, call centre

staff, and low status roles within the feminised service industry (Hey, 1986). Evidently, attitudes towards certain working roles are stereotyped by constructing the classed and gendered stereotype that typifies certain identities. Another example points to harassment that contains shades of quid quo pro: This response presents problems to the existing theoretical framework of sexual harassment applied here because the victim was unaware that her attacker was her boss until the next day. However, her boss was no doubt aware that she was a newly-hired employee which, had the attack continued, may have suggested the presence of quid pro quo insofar as he was looking for sexual favours (Saul, 2003; MacKinnon, 1979). While this example certainly underpins how a hostile environment has developed rapidly in response to not fulfilling the quid quo pro demands of the duty manager (MacKinnon, 1979: 32; Saul, 2003, 49; Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2002: 143). The inherent lack of visibility lends itself to a culture whereby the dominant attitudes towards sexual harassment are trivialised and normalised within the working environment. To consider sexual harassment harmless 'banter' rather intimidating and predatory is evidently dependent upon the subjectivities of the person on the receiving end of such behaviour. One of the main reasons for the continuance of such relaxed attitudes to sexual harassment is rooted in the weak definitions surrounding such behaviour. For example, in terms of dress sense in the workplace, 40 per cent of the male participants believe that provocative dress in the workplace renders such women as deserving of the sexual harassment they receive. A further eight were undecided. In stark contrast, 50 women [83 per cent] voted that women are not deserving of harassment simply because of

what she wears. This shows just how polarised men and women are over this issue particularly as ultimately, the vast majority of targets are women, thus power has a major role in its occurrence. This is further reinforced in the distinction between the male and female respondents in regard to women who sleep with their bosses. 50 per cent of the female responses perceived them as 'victims' compared with 14 per cent of the male respondents. In addition, none of the male respondents from the 35-49 group perceived women as 'victims' in this context. However, some of the younger generation of males in the sample did, which may reflect a change in attitudes. Evidently, the survey brought to the fore numerous conflicts regarding definitions of sexual harassment. For example, although 25 per cent of the male respondents and 57 per cent of female respondents claimed to have experienced sexual harassment, this was a big increase compared to their responses when the question was asked again at the end of the survey in which just 3 per cent of males and 41 per cent of females claimed to have been sexually harassed. This reveals that attitudes would be more easily changed if definitions were more clearly defined even in the most subtle ways. Ultimately, legal definitions are also problematic which is why Stanko's definition appears to be far more rounded when stating that 'the behavioural manifestation may be a singular event or continuous series of events' (Stanko, 1988: 91). This contrasts sharply with the definitions of others because, for example, any definition of sexual harassment under the remit of a 'hostile environment' has to be a repeated behaviour (Saul, 2003, 49). That asserts that Miriam O'Reilly for example would have had to have been violated by her executive boss more than once in order to qualify as

having been sexually harassed. However, Radio 1 DJ, Liz Kershaw was 'routinely' groped. Despite this, the likelihood of achieving justice within the BBC is superseded by attitudes that protect the patriarchal structures as evidenced by the incredulous responses and interrogations that questioned her sexuality. In terms of whether men and women view sexual harassment differently, it has to be argued that the evidence shows that they do. For example, the selection that they made in terms of what they believed constitutes sexual harassment was in total, fifty-seven separate selection made between the thirty-two men thus averaging at 1.7 selections each. Women viewed many more of the options as sexual harassment than their male counterparts. Two of the options were ignored by all of the male participants. These were emails containing lewd or sexist comments and receiving a compliment from a member of the opposite sex, they are nevertheless two factors that make women uncomfortable. Why sexual harassment occurs however, is rooted in the basic essentialism of the female body and the female sex which is biologically determined by the binary oppositions of male/female, in order to control other dichotomous factors such as the public/private sphere and paid/unpaid work. These, in turn, construct the superior/inferior power relations which contribute to the feminisation of poverty and the feminisation of care. This reduction to biology has to be outmanoeuvred and replaced with other ideas. However as to whether attitudes can change, the answer has to be a positive one, a negative one would stop change from evolving in a brighter future for women in the workplace. The survey asked the same question twice albeit worded slightly differently. The question asked if the participants felt they

had been sexually harassed. Only two of the male respondents claimed they had and two others were undecided. The question was asked once again at the end of the survey. The responses to the second time it was asked was quite alarming because three of the male respondent who ticked 'no' to the first question had changed their minds and ticked 'yes' - that they had experienced sexual harassment. A further two male respondents who were formerly 'undecided' also ticked 'yes' the second time. In addition, four others that formerly ticked no were 'undecided' when reaching the second question.

4. 5. Summary This study has sought to draw together the numerous weak definitions that underpin the lack of understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment in the workplace. Secondly, it sought to examine how, and in what ways, sexual harassment is understood differently by men and women within the working environment. In this context, gender has been cross-examined with the variable of age. Ultimately, this analysis has attempted to determine a greater understanding of the third and main research aim which examined the extent by which the overall attitude to workplace sexual harassment has [if at all] altered over time. The changes in whether the male respondents had experienced sexual harassment reveals that clearly attitudes and ideas regarding sexual harassment can be altered when masculine identities are provided with the tools to do so. A simple survey had some impact because they were required to be subjective for the two minutes that it takes. Those two minutes provides a fresh insight to sexual harassment from a very different perspective - the perspective of the victim.

4. 6. Limitations Numerous limitations are evident. For example, this is only a tiny sample of the population and therefore reflects the opinions of a

handful of people who just happen to be associates of the researcher. It is difficult to speculate whether a survey on sexual harassment according to age and gender carried out across the entire nation would produce the same or similar results. Also, limitations are also evident in the study's exclusion of other variables such as race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, class (in more definitive terms) and religion for example. Similarly, while the whole discussion has included various discussions on occupation, this primary study avoided making any distinction between different occupations or levels of education. Thus, this provides only a taste of the changing attitudes to sexual harassment.