Contrapower Sexual Harassment of Military Officers

A Thesis Presented by

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Abstract

This study was designed to investigate the experiences of military officers with contrapower sexual harassment (i.e., harassment of superiors by subordinates). Ninety military officers currently stationed at a U.S. service academy were asked to answer questions about their experiences with 10 contrapower harassing behaviors, their perceptions of a subordinate's ability to sexually harass a superior, and how often they had perpetrated any of 10 behaviors against a superior. The impact of contrapower harassing experiences was also investigated. Findings indicated that contrapower harassment may be a significant problem within the military; 74.4% of participants indicated that they have experienced at least one contrapower harassing behavior in their military career. Women officers experienced significantly more contrapower harassment and were significantly more bothered by the harassment experienced than were men officers. Both men and women officers experienced the majority of contrapower harassment from subordinates of the other sex, however men were significantly more likely than were women to be harassed by subordinates of the same sex and by a combination of both sexes. Findings suggest that contrapower harassment may present challenges in a military setting unlike those of the civilian academic settings of previous research.

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Sexual harassment is generally categorized in one of two ways: quid pro quo sexual harassment, where sexual conduct is required to keep or receive a job, promotion, or job related benefits, and hostile environment sexual harassment, where unwelcome sexual conduct interferes with an individual's job performance and creates a hostile and offensive work environment. Most research has focused on subordinate women as the victims of sexual harassment and assumed that sexual harassment can only occur if the offender has formal power or status over the victim (McKinney, 1992). The very definition of quid pro quo sexual harassment generally necessitates a superior harassing a subordinate, as subordinates generally do not possess the organizational power necessary to make sexual conduct a condition of a superior's employment. Some definitions of sexual harassment do not acknowledge that harassment has occurred unless the victim has less organizational power than the perpetrator (Benson, 1984). Despite the assumption that sexual harassment victims are exclusively subordinates, men and women in positions of authority can be subjected to harassment by those with less organizational power (Grauerholz, 1989). This kind of harassment has been labeled "contrapower harassment" (Benson, 1984; DeSouza & Fansler, 2003; McKinney, 1992), and it can have a profound effect on female leaders.

Various researchers have examined the prevalence of contrapower sexual harassment in academic settings, where the victims are men or women professors, and the harassers are students. One of the earliest contrapower sexual harassment studies was conducted by Elizabeth Grauerholz (1989) in response to a comment on university definitions of sexual harassment written by Katherine Benson (1984). Benson first

coined the term "contrapower harassment" to describe sexual harassment that occurs when the victim has formal power over the harasser, and she provided anecdotal accounts of how women professors are harassed by students, often anonymously. Grauerholz surveyed 208 women professors at her university to determine the prevalence of sexual harassment faculty women experienced from students as well as their perceptions of the harassing behavior.

Grauerholz reported participants' experiences of 10 harassing behaviors from students, behaviors that ranged from sexist comments to sexual assault, to be widespread (47.6% experienced at least one behavior). The most common behaviors reported included sexist comments (32%), undue attention (18%), obscene phone calls believed to be from students (17%), verbal sexual comments (15%), body language (e.g., leering, standing too close) (12%), and written sexual comments (8%). Participants indicated that male students exclusively (82%) were much more likely to engage in each of the behaviors studied than were both male and female students (17%) or female students exclusively (1%). Contrary to Benson's suppositions, Grauerholz's findings indicate that contrapower harassment is not necessarily anonymous and is sometimes severe and coercive.

Participants in Grauerholz's study were generally more likely to consider a behavior to be sexual harassment the more severe and the less ambiguous the behavior was. A few participants expressed the belief that professors are incapable of being harassed by students because students have no power over professors. The most common responses reported by participants were to do nothing because the behavior did not seem serious enough (58%), to confront the individual directly (39%), or to avoid the person

(33%). These results indicate that contrapower sexual harassment is a frequent problem experienced by female professors.

In order for an individual to sexually harass another person, he or she generally must have some type of power over that person, and research has shown that power in the workplace is derived largely from both gender and organizational status (Grauerholz, 1989). Those in positions of legitimate power due to their official position in an organization obviously hold power over their subordinates, and are therefore in a position to sexually harass them. Men, as a group, are ascribed more power than women in our society, and they are also in a position to abuse this power through sexual harassment. A male subordinate may have more potential earning power, may be physically stronger, and may have the "general prerogative of male dominance" (Benson, 1984, p. 518), even when he possesses less formal organizational power than women in positions of authority. It is this abuse of power based on one's higher status as a man that forms the basis of contrapower harassment between subordinate men and their female superiors, especially in light of the fact that ascribed statuses, such as gender and race, are often more salient than are achieved statuses (Grauerholz, 1989). Future research is needed to determine if ascribed statuses are also more salient than achieved statuses in a military environment. The emphasis on the formal rank structure in the military through visible symbols of rank worn on military uniforms may make achieved statuses more salient than is the case in civilian work environments.

Leadership has historically been seen as a masculine domain, and, consequently, some people are uncomfortable with, and resent, women in positions of authority. Women in leadership positions often face prejudice in the way they are perceived and

evaluated because the feminine gender role is so dissimilar to the expectations people have about leaders. When women take on leadership roles, especially those in which they must assume more masculine characteristics, observers are forced to evaluate them from the conflicting roles of gender and leadership. Prejudice against women leaders often occurs because people perceive discrepancies between the characteristics they believe women have and the characteristics required for leadership. Service-oriented, communal traits are valued in women and are considered desirable in women by those who adhere to traditional gender roles. Traits that are valued in men and that are considered necessary for successful leadership, such as being self-assertive, tough, and achievement-oriented, conflict with women's prescriptive behaviors and are generally not valued in women (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004). Because "stereotypes about women and men are easily and automatically activated" (Eagly, 2004, p. 84), a woman who occupies a position requiring characteristics that women, as a group, are not perceived to have will receive a lower evaluation as the occupant of that position than will her counterparts who are male.

Women who work in organizations with large numbers of men are most likely to be negatively affected by stereotypes about women and leaders. Schein (2001) found that compared to female managers in the 1970s, female managers of the 1990's no longer gender-typed managerial positions. Unfortunately, this shift of attitudes was not observed in men. Male managers in the 1990s tended to hold attitudes similar to those of their 1970s counterparts: they believed that men are more likely than women to possess the characteristics necessary to be successful managers. Contrapower sexual harassment may be an attempt on the part of a male subordinate to re-assert the dominance he expects

to have based on his gender and to undermine the leadership of individuals (women) believed to be unfit for leadership. Women who hold positions of authority in traditionally male-dominated domains may represent a threat to male subordinates who ascribe to traditional gender roles. (DeSouza & Fansler, 2003).

Another explanation that has been used to describe why contrapower sexual harassment may occur is the gender-role spillover theory, where traditional expectations of how men and women should act in private life are carried over to the workplace (Gutek, 1985). In this case, men who hold traditional views of gender roles may sexually harass women in authority in order to undermine their high organizational status and to remind them that they are merely women and, consequently, sex objects (DeSouza & Fansler, 2003; Grauerholz, 1989). Sometimes subordinates direct hostility toward a female leader in anonymous ways, such as through anonymous evaluations or by destroying or defacing her property to avoid the consequences of harassing a superior. The anonymity of these forms of harassment serves to reverse the formal power relationship because, for example, the professor has no power to punish the acts or to keep them from recurring (Benson, 1984) and also because anonymous evaluations are viewed by higher ranking faculty members and are used as a partial basis for tenure and promotions (Rospenda, Richman, & Nawyn, 1998).

An expression of sexual feelings is another explanation that has been presented for some instances of contrapower harassment. Because of strong sexual scripts in our society, men are socialized to initiate sexual advances toward women, and the relative status of the women may not be taken into account. Contrapower harassment as an expression of sexual feelings is consistent with research that shows that younger female

professors are more likely than older female professors to be sexually harassed by male students (DeSouza & Fansler, 2003). If attraction is in fact a common reason for contrapower harassment, it makes sense that younger professors would experience more contrapower harassment than would older professors, because they are closer to their students' age and because their youth may make them more attractive than older professors to many of their students. DeSouza and Fansler (2003) found no significant differences between the frequency of sexually harassing experiences based on professor tenure status, which indicates that the relative power of professors was not related to the contrapower sexual harassment behaviors directed at him or her. Whatever the particular case of sexual harassment, it serves to manage interactions between men and women according to accepted gender norms in order to maintain male dominance.

One of the first studies to focus on the attitudes of the perpetrators of contrapower sexual harassment was conducted by McKinney and Crittenden (1992). University students were administered a survey that asked them to indicate whether or not they would consider each of 10 behaviors to be sexual harassment if directed at a professor by a student, how often they personally had directed those same behaviors toward a professor and their reasons for doing so, and how often they had witnessed other students directing the behaviors toward a professor. Results indicated that, although18% of participants admitted to having directed one or more of the behaviors toward a professor, none of the participants reported that they had sexually harassed a professor. The most common reason participants gave for engaging in harassing behaviors toward professors was to demonstrate interest or affection (36%). Other common answers included to demonstrate anger (27%) and in response to treatment perceived to be unfair (27%).

Twenty-two percent of participants reported having heard another student talk about directing such behavior toward a professor. Results indicated that women participants were more likely than were men participants to judge reasons for perpetrating these behaviors to be unacceptable.

Consistent with research on the attitudes of professors toward contrapower harassment conducted in previous studies, participants generally considered more severe and less ambiguous behaviors, such as explicit sexual propositions and sexual bribery, to be contrapower harassment, whereas behaviors such as undue attention and sexist comments were less likely to be considered contrapower harassment. Women participants were more likely than men to consider a behavior to be sexual harassment, believed that women professors experienced more contrapower harassment than men did, and were generally less tolerant of sexual harassment than were men participants.

Research shows that victims of contrapower sexual harassment, like victims of other forms of harassment, are hesitant to report the harassing behavior because they fear repercussions such as rumors, poor evaluations, destruction of property, or, in some cases, physical assault. One study showed that 9% of professors reported doing nothing in response to contrapower harassment because of feared repercussions (Grauerholz, 1989). Contrapower harassment is rarely reported to formal authorities (McKinney, 1992), and, in some cases, women at the top of an organization may not have anyone above them to whom to report the harassment. These factors may explain why the majority of women who experience contrapower harassment prefer to do nothing or to take care of the problem themselves by avoiding or confronting the harasser. Fortunately for female leaders, their formal authority over harassers generally allows them to take

care of the problem more effectively than is true for lower status women who experience other types of sexual harassment. Women leaders may use various mechanisms to cope with or dismiss the contrapower sexual harassment they experience. DeSouza and Fansler (2003) identified several coping mechanisms used by female professors in response to contrapower sexual harassment including avoidance, assertion, seeking social support, and reporting the harasser. Women also cope with the contrapower sexual harassment directed at them by redefining the harassing behavior as ignorance, stupidity, or awkwardness on the part of the harasser (Grauerholz, 1989).

Sexually harassed women may experience a variety of problems that range from minor discomfort to anxiety or depression and even PTSD (Fitzgerald, Buchanan, Collinsworth, Magley, & Ramos, 1999). Contrapower sexual harassment may have negative effects distinct from traditional forms of harassment in that the harassment contests the victim's stature and authority, may interfere with her work, and may undermine her self-image, feelings of integrity, and confidence (Benson, 1984). These consequences are compounded by the fact that society often tends to blame the victim of sexual harassment and assault (Benson, 1984) and because it is not widely understood or acknowledged that a woman might experience harassment from a subordinate. Women who experience harassment from subordinates may believe that they should be able to prevent it because of their higher organizational status, and may feel especially guilty and responsible for what has happened to them. Anonymous harassment may cause women to be suspicious of all of their subordinates, and thus erode relationships and impair the woman's ability to connect with, lead, or teach subordinates. This lack of connection, or inadequate connection, between the woman and her subordinates can be detrimental for

subordinates, who do not get the full benefit of an appropriate relationship with their teacher or leader, as well as for the woman herself, whose career may suffer. Benson (1984) gave the example of one professor who, in order to avoid sexual harassment, never read her student evaluations. Never reading student evaluations prevented her from receiving the benefit of responsible feedback and inadvertently eliminated a forum through which well-meaning students could voice their opinions. Other consequences of sexual harassment include decreased job satisfaction, job loss, career interruption (Gutek, 1985), higher levels of absenteeism, stronger turnover intentions, and increased psychological problems (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997).

Men professors appear to experience many of the behaviors considered to be contrapower sexual harassment as frequently or more frequently than do women. One study of faculty attitudes toward sexual harassment conducted by Carroll and Ellis (1989) showed that 30% of men respondents and 24% of women respondents reported that they had experienced uninvited sexual teasing, jokes, or remarks one to four times per month; 27% of men and 10% of women indicated that they had experienced uninvited sexually suggestive looks and/or seductive body language one to four times per month. A greater percentage of men than women respondents reported having received uninvited requests for dates once a month; having been the recipient of uninvited gifts, letters, or calls of a sexual nature once a month; and having been offered sexual favors in exchange for preferential treatment. McKinney (1990) found that men professors experienced significantly more body language, physical advances, and explicit sexual propositions from students than did women professors. A study conducted by Fitzgerald, Weitzman, Gold, and Ormerod (1988), which was focused on social and sexual relationships among

students and faculty, showed that 6% of men respondents actually labeled behaviors they had experienced from women students as sexual harassment. Some of these men wrote that they felt taken advantage of and manipulated by women students who had expressed sexual interest in them.

Although some researchers have found that men may experience contrapower harassing behaviors as frequently or more frequently than do women, a study conducted by Matchen and DeSouza (2000) showed that female faculty received significantly more unwanted sexual attention from students than did male faculty, and the women were significantly more bothered by sexual attention from students than were the men. These apparent mixed results may indicate that, although men experience many of the behaviors considered to be contrapower sexual harassment, they do not see them as unwanted or offensive at the same rate that women do. A study conducted by DeSouza and Fansler (2003) showed that, although men and women experienced similar levels of contrapower harassment, women reported having experienced significantly worse mental health outcomes than did men. Another intriguing finding of that study was that men and women defined sexual harassment similarly when asked about specific behaviors, however women were more bothered than were men by all types of sexual harassment when more contextual information, such as the sex and organizational power of the perpetrator, was provided.

Although both men and women report having experienced behaviors considered to be contrapower harassment, women generally report more negative and less tolerant attitudes toward it, have experienced harassment more frequently, and report more adverse effects of harassment than do men (McKinney, 1990, 1992). In a study

conducted by Lott, Reilly, and Howard (1982), men were found to be significantly more accepting of sexually harassing behavior than women were, and younger men and women were generally more tolerant of sexual harassment than were older men and women. Women generally consider a wider spectrum of behaviors to be sexually harassing, and, consequently, they are more likely to label behavior as sexually harassing than men are (McKinney & Crittenden, 1992; Valentine-French & Radtke, 1989). Specifically, women are more likely than men to view as harassing less explicitly coercive situations, such as sexism and offensive and suggestive jokes, which are generally considered "less serious" (and more common) forms of harassment (Fitzgerald & Ormerod, 1991). Women are generally more likely to perceive harassing behaviors as more threatening, inappropriate, and distressing than men do, and in one study men reported that their most serious sexual harassment experiences had little emotional impact on them (Waldo, Berdahl, & Fitzgerald, 1998).

These differences in how men and women perceive harassing behavior may be due to the fact that women and men tend to have different amounts of unwanted sexual behavior directed toward them, and, as a result, women may be more likely than men to consider sexual attention to be harassment (Powell, 1986). In addition, sexual harassment presents a potential threat to the safety, authority, and credibility of women that is not often experienced by men. Because of men's (generally) greater physical strength, along with their traditionally greater organizational and social power, it is less likely that a man would have a reason to feel threatened by sexual harassment, whereas women may routinely feel threatened. Finally, there is a sexual double standard for men and women, whereby sexually active men are viewed favorably and sexually active

women are degraded as "sluts" (Kilmartin, 2007). For women leaders, even the perception that they might be involved in sexual activity, especially in an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate, could have devastating effects on their leadership credibility. Overall, contrapower harassment appears to have much more serious effects on women, and differences between men's and women's definitions of sexual harassment, along with men's lack of distress in response to harassing behavior, could make it difficult for men to understand that contrapower harassment might be threatening to women.

Traditional conceptions of femininity include the assumption that women should be attractive sex objects and exclude women from positions in society associated with competence. Women are often thought to be either feminine or competent, but not both (Heilman et al., 2004). Research has shown that men are perceived to be more qualified as managers than women are, especially by men (Carli & Eagly, 2001). Male subordinates tend to react more negatively than do female subordinates to female leaders, and men favor competent men over equally competent women, whereas women tend to respond similarly to equal competence regardless of gender (Carli, 1999). Part of the reason for this difference may be that men are less likely than women to have had a female manager, and are therefore less likely than women to see leadership as an androgynous role (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Another potential explanation for men's greater prejudice against female leaders lies in the threat female leaders present to men's position and to their views of their own masculinity. For example, research has shown that when a female superior gives a male subordinate a negative evaluation, he is likely to see her as less competent than a

similarly critical male boss (Sinclair & Kunda, 2000). A poor evaluation by a female leader emphasizes the superior position she has over male subordinates, who then prefer to view her as incompetent rather than to accept responsibility for their poor performance. Men devalue a female leader's competence by attributing her achievements to luck or effort (Lyness & Thompson, 1997) and by defaulting to stereotypes of incompetence in ambiguous situations where cognitive distortion can easily occur (Heilman et al., 2004). Women who occupy positions that establish them as competent individuals, especially if their competence is thought to undermine the men who interact with them, are violating their traditional gender role and the traditional power dynamic between men and women in society. Male subordinates who sexually harass women by treating them as sex objects rather than competent professionals often may do so in an attempt to re-establish this power dynamic. Contrapower harassment can be threatening to a woman's dominant position in the relationship between her and her male subordinates, and, if the harassment is not successfully dealt with, the victim's sense of self-worth, sense of control, and even sense of safety could be affected.

Whereas a male subordinate's harassment of a female superior can realistically be perceived as a threat (both as a physical and psychological threat), a female subordinate's harassment of a male superior is not likely to be viewed as a threat to him either physically or psychologically. A female subordinate has no power base from which to work, either through her gender status or her legitimate position, and men have little reason to feel threatened by her. Because men, on average, have more social, physical, and organizational power than women do, the power differential is smaller between men and their harasser, regardless of the sex or status of the harasser, and men are therefore

less likely to feel threatened or bothered by the harassment (Waldo et al., 1998). Men are also socialized to believe that they should always want, need, and be ready for sex (Kilmartin, 2007), and thus they tend to view sexual advances of any kind from women as confirmation of their masculinity. On the other hand, women are socialized to believe that they should resist sexual advances and repress their sexual feelings (Crawford & Unger, 2004; Kilmartin, 2007). Gutek (1985) found that men do not generally feel sexually "harassed" by women in the workplace; instead they may experience positive outcomes of women's sexual interest in them. Because there is no potential abuse of power, and often no distress, it is questionable whether or not sexual behaviors directed at male superiors from female subordinates can really be considered harassment in the majority of cases.

It should be acknowledged that men can be sexually harassed by other men as well as by women (Waldo et al., 1998) and that men might experience threatening contrapower sexual harassment from male subordinates. In one study (Waldo et al., 1998), male participants identified a unique form of gender harassment, the enforcement of the traditional heterosexual masculine gender role, in which men are ridiculed by either men or women for acting too "feminine" and are pressured to engage in stereotypical forms of "masculine" behavior. In 1995, the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board reported that 21% of male targets of sexual harassment identified other men as the perpetrators, 65% identified women as the perpetrators, and 14% identified both men and women as the perpetrators. The same report showed that only 1% of female targets identified other women as the perpetrators of their sexual harassment. A study conducted by Waldo et al. (1998) showed that male-to-male harassment was at least as common as

female-to-male harassment. This difference between the sex of the harassers of men and the sex of the harassers of women is due in part to the harassment that men receive from other men who want them to conform to the traditional masculine gender role. Men in the military may be especially likely to experience this type of harassment from other men due to the traditional "macho" culture of the military and also to the particularly homophobic environment that exists within military culture, in part because it is still illegal in the United States to be openly homosexual and to serve in the military. According to the Armed Forces 2002 Sexual Harassment Survey (Defense Manpower Data Center, November, 2003), 51% of men indicated that perpetrators of the "one situation" that had occurred in the previous year that had the greatest effect on them were other men.

An additional threat men experience related to sexual harassment was revealed in a study conducted by Carroll and Ellis (1989), who noted that men respondents reported concerns that they were susceptible to threats from women subordinates who could falsely accuse them of sexual harassment if the subordinate were unhappy with them, however this type of manipulation does not necessarily fit definitions of contrapower sexual harassment unless it is used as a form of sexual bribery.

The majority of research on contrapower harassment has focused on student harassment of faculty members in various academic settings, and it is possible that contrapower harassment may have different implications for men and women in different types of jobs. More research is needed on all aspects of contrapower harassment in settings outside of the academic realm.

Sexual Harassment in the Military

The rigid nature of the military's rank structure, along with its mission and traditional masculine orientation makes women subordinates particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment. In addition, a variety of differences between military employment and civilian employment, such as living on bases, extended duty hours, a focus on unit cohesion, and reliance on the military community, make sexual harassment a particularly prominent issue for members of the military (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2006). In recent years, efforts have been made to acknowledge and address this vulnerability, largely because of public sexual assault and harassment scandals involving all services. The Navy Tailhook Association scandal of 1991, in which U.S. Navy aviators sexually assaulted women at their annual convention in Las Vegas, was one of the earliest and largest scandals, and it caused an initial wave of changes throughout the military regarding sexual assault awareness, education, and policies. Further changes were implemented after a public sexual assault scandal at the U.S. Air Force Academy in 2003, followed by similar (though on a somewhat smaller scale) incidents reported at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 2006. Most recently, the *New York Times Magazine* (Corbett, 2007) featured stories of Army women who have been assaulted and harassed by their fellow soldiers while deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Department of Defense conducted sexual harassment surveys of active-duty members of the military in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard in 1988, 1995, and 2002. A single-stage, stratified random sample of 60,415 service members was used for the 2002 sexual harassment survey, and usable data were obtained from 19,960 service members (DMDC, November 2003). The survey assessed several

areas including the types, frequency, and effects of unprofessional, gender-related behavior and sexual harassment; the circumstances under which experiences occurred; and the perceptions of discriminatory behaviors. The Defense Manpower Data Center report on the Armed Forces 2002 Sexual Harassment Survey (DMDC, November 2003) disclosed survey results that indicate that in the 12 months prior to the survey, 50% of women and 17% of men participants had experienced sexist behavior, 45% of women and 23% of men had experienced crude/offensive behavior, 27% of women and 5% of men had experienced unwanted sexual attention, 8% of women and 1% of men had experienced sexual coercion, 3% of women and 1% of men had experienced sexual assault, and 24% of women and 3% of men had experienced sexual harassment (a harassment rate nearly one-half of that reported in the 1995 survey; DMDC, 1996). Clearly the attention paid to this problem and the efforts made by all of the services to protect women service members from traditional forms of sexual harassment is warranted and has already led to a decrease in the reported incidents of sexual harassment. Even so, the incidence and effects of contrapower sexual harassment in the military are potentially different from other types of harassment and have yet to be investigated, despite survey results that 24.6% of women and 28.6% of men reported that offenders of the "one situation" that had occurred in the previous 12 months that had the greatest effect on them were military subordinates (3.5% of men and 2.5% of women reported that offenders were civilian subordinates; DMDC, August 2003).

A meta-analysis of 76 studies of leadership effectiveness conducted by Eagly, Karau, and Makhijani (1995) showed that military organizations were the *only* organizations in which men were perceived to be more effective leaders than were

women. There are a variety of reasons for this. The role of a military officer has been defined in extremely masculine terms (Eagly et al., 1995), and, unlike most organizations, women are legally excluded from certain roles that men fill, such as in combat, the primary task that contributes to the ultimate organizational goal of the military. Women officers in the military are a minority in every service; their numbers range from 5.8% (Marine Corps) to 18.2% (Air Force) of the officer corps (Department of Defense Statistical Information Analysis Division, 2006). Further, research has demonstrated that women who work in male-dominated groups are more likely to report having experienced sexually harassing behavior than are women who work in groups with relatively equal numbers of men and women (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2006; Fitzgerald et al., 1997). Fitzgerald et al. (1997) found that sexual harassment in organizations is a function of both organizational climate and job gender context. Unlike previous researchers, they found that the presence of a large number of male workers, but not necessarily a skewed ratio, in combination with traditionally male-oriented tasks, leads to high levels of sexual harassment. The military combines both of these factors. Women officers are constantly surrounded by a large number of men, and they perform a job that is nontraditional for women.

The role *contrapower* sexual harassment might have in undermining the effectiveness of women officers has yet to be explored, but it is a potential barrier to successful leadership for military women. Military men also may be affected by contrapower sexual harassment, perhaps even more so than by traditional sexual harassment, as a way to manipulate and influence them toward favoring certain subordinates. Thus, the present study was designed to provide a starting point for future

research on the ways in which contrapower sexual harassment might influence the leadership of both military men and women.

Consequences of Sexual Harassment in the Military

Many of the consequences of contrapower sexual harassment experienced by women professors may also apply to military officers. Former Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Edwin Dorn noted in a Department of Defense news briefing that military personnel often live on base, are on duty 24 hours a day, and have both an intensity and constancy of contact that can make it difficult to separate personal and professional relationships, which increases both the opportunities for sexual harassment to occur and the psychological costs of sexual harassment (Department of Defense, 1996). One of the most important consequences of all kinds of sexual harassment, for the military as a whole, is the overall decreased effectiveness and degradation of a substantial portion of its officer corps, which ultimately results in decreased morale, reduced unit cohesion, reduced combat readiness (Rosen & Martin, 1997), and higher attrition rates among women officers. In a study conduced by Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2006) a positive relationship was found between experiences of sexually harassing behaviors and dissatisfaction with military employment and intention to leave the military. Low job satisfaction has also been associated with increased absenteeism (Clegg, 1983), lower worker productivity (Mangione & Quinn, 1975), and increased incidence of mental and physical health problems (Locke, 1976). Research (Valentine-French & Radtke, 1989) has also shown that individuals with more traditional beliefs about the roles of women and men attribute more responsibility to the victim of sexual harassment, especially when the victim is female, than do individuals with less

traditional attitudes. Women in the military may be especially vulnerable to this attribution, as military men tend to have more traditional attitudes about the roles of men and women than civilian men do (Firestone, 1987).

It is currently unknown whether or not contrapower sexual harassment has these same negative effects on job satisfaction and attrition rates within the military as do traditional forms of sexual harassment experienced from superiors and peers. In one study conducted by Laband and Lentz (1998), female lawyers were more than 25% more likely to intend to leave their jobs if they had experienced sexual harassment from their supervisors or colleagues than were female lawyers who had not experienced sexual harassment, however sexual harassment by clients did not affect overall job satisfaction or intentions to quit. On the other hand, Pryor (1985) found that behaviors are more likely to be labeled as harassing the more they are considered to be inappropriate for the normal expectations of the harasser's social role. It can certainly be said that it is more "out of role" for a subordinate to harass a superior than vice versa if traditional concepts of sexual harassment along with the behavior normally expected from a subordinate are taken into account. Research is needed to examine the nature and consequences of contrapower sexual harassment within the military, as it does not always appear to have the same or similar effects as traditional forms of harassment on the women and men who experience the behaviors.

The Present Study

Previous researchers (Carroll & Ellis, 1989; DeSouza & Fansler, 2003; Grauerholz, 1989; Matchen & DeSouza, 2000; McKinney, 1990, 1992) have found contrapower sexual harassment to be a serious social phenomenon in higher education,

however research has yet to be conducted on contrapower sexual harassment outside of an academic setting. The goal of the present study was to conduct exploratory research on the experiences of military officers with contrapower sexual harassment.

Several hypotheses were proposed:

1. Women officers would report having experienced more potentially sexually harassing behaviors from subordinates than would men officers.
2. Both men and women officers would experience potentially sexually harassing behaviors primarily from subordinates of the other sex. This hypothesis is consistent with some previous research on sexual harassment (USMSPB, 1995), however it is not consistent with the reported sexual harassment experienced by male service personnel throughout the U.S. Department of Defense. In that study (DMDC, November, 2003) the majority of both women (85%) and men (51%) indicated that the perpetrators of the "one situation" that occurred in the previous year that had the greatest effect on them were men. It was hypothesized that military officers who participated in the present study would report having experienced harassing behaviors primarily from the other sex because the focus of the present study is the sex of harassers for all harassing behaviors experienced, not just the situation with the greatest impact. It is likely that men are generally more bothered when they experience sexual harassment from other men than they are when they experience sexual harassment from women, which would account for the inflated percentage of men harassers in the "one situation" with the greatest impact on participants.

Results of one study (Carroll & Ellis, 1989) showed that both men and women are significantly less tolerant of same-sex sexual harassment than of sexual harassment experienced from the other sex. Sexual attention from women is more likely than sexual attention from other men to be wanted by most men.

3. Women officers would be more bothered by gender harassment and by unwanted sexual attention than would men officers.
4. Women officers would define a broader spectrum of behaviors as sexual harassment than would men officers.
5. Men officers would report having engaged in more potentially sexually harassing behaviors than would women officers.

Method

Participants

Participants in the present study were 90 active duty military officers currently stationed at a U.S. service academy. All participants were recruited via email to participate in an online survey. Of the 90 participants, 78 completed the entire survey, and 12 completed the survey to various degrees but did not choose to disclose any demographic information. Women comprised 25.6% of those surveyed, men comprised 61.1%, and 13.3% did not disclose their gender. This sample was relatively representative of officers in the military, as women comprise approximately 15.3 % of the military officers across the Department of Defense (Department of Defense, 2006). All services in the military have 10 different officer ranks, which range from the least experienced and lowest ranking (O-1) to the highest-ranking general officer (O-10). Officers are split into three categories: O-1 – O-3 (company grade officers), O-4 – O-6 (field grade officers), and general officers (O-7 – O-10). The majority of officers surveyed in this study were field grade officers: O-4 (52.2%), O-5 (14.4%), and O-6 and above (11.1%). Company grade officers were largely unrepresented; only 8.9% of participants reported a rank of O-3, and no participants reported ranks of O-1 or O-2. Company grade officers were likely underrepresented because teaching at a service academy requires education and qualifications most junior officers do not have (and, consequently, service academies tend to have a disproportionate number of high ranking officers compared to the rest of the military). A total of 13.3% of participants did not disclose their rank. To prevent possible identification of participants based on small group membership (for example, there are few high ranking officers, and particularly few

high ranking women officers within any given military organization), the Institutional Review Board requested that questions that asked participants for additional demographic information, such as race and age, not be included in the survey.

Materials

A substantial part of the survey used in the current study included items adopted from previous studies (DeSouza & Fansler, 2003; Grauerholz, 1989; McKinney & Crittenden, 1992) conducted on contrapower harassment in academic settings. The original content of measures used in those studies was changed only slightly when necessary to account for the differences between the civilian participants of previous studies and the military participants in the current study.

The first section of the survey asked participants to indicate their experiences with 10 behaviors directed at them from subordinates, including sexist comments (e.g., jokes or remarks that are stereotypical or derogatory to members of your sex), undue attention (e.g., flirtation, touching, being overly friendly), verbal sexual comments (e.g., inquiries of sexual values, remarks about dress or body, but not a sexual proposition), and written sexual comments (e.g., comments about sexual behavior or values, dress, or body written on instructor feedback forms or other subordinate feedback assessments of you). The more serious contrapower harassment behaviors in this section included obscene phone calls (e.g., of a sexual nature, believed to be from subordinates), inappropriate/suggestive body language (e.g., leering, standing too close), physical advances (e.g., kissing, hugging, pinching, fondling), explicit sexual propositions (e.g., a clear invitation for a sexual encounter but no threat stated), sexual bribery (e.g., explicit sexual propositions that include or strongly imply promises of rewards for complying or punishment for

refusing), and sexual assault (e.g., rape or attempted rape). Participants were also asked to indicate if they had experienced any other behavior they considered to be harassing that was not explicitly addressed. A subordinate was defined as any enlisted service member, cadet, officer, or civilian of a lower rank than the participant. These 10 behaviors were taken from a study conducted by Grauerholz (1989), who asked if participants had ever experienced each behavior from a student, as well as the sex of the student. DeSouza and Fansler (2003) asked participants to indicate how much past experiences with sexual harassment from students bothered them. In the current study, participants were asked if they had experienced any of these behaviors, and, if so, the number of times they had experienced them ("Never," "Only Once," "2-5 times," "More than 5 times") both in their entire military career and in the past 12 months. Although past research (DeSouza & Fansler, 2003) on contrapower harassment has asked participants about their experiences in the previous 24 months, 12 months was used as the time frame for the current study because that was the time frame used in both the 1995 and 2002 sexual harassment surveys conducted throughout the Department of Defense (DMDC, 1996, November, 2003). Participants were also asked, if they had experienced a particular behavior at least once, to report the sex of the offending subordinate(s) (male, female, or both) and to indicate how much the experience bothered them (on a 5-point scale that ranged from "Not at all" to "Extremely").

Participants who answered "yes" to having experienced any of the behaviors in the first section were then asked to indicate what actions they took in response to the behavior. Responses included: 1) "nothing, it did not seem serious enough"; 2) "nothing, was concerned about possible repercussions"; 3) "tried to ignore it, avoided person(s)";

4) "spoke to subordinate's direct supervisor about behavior"; 5) "confronted the individual directly"; 6) "filed an informal complaint"; 7) "filed a formal complaint"; 8) "contacted my chain of command"; 9) "took disciplinary action against subordinate"; or 10) "other" (with space given to describe the action). Participants were then asked if the actions they took stopped the behavior to the participant's satisfaction (yes or no). These questions concerning participants' responses to harassing behaviors were adapted from Grauerholz's (1989) original study with the addition of two choices (i.e., "I contacted my chain of command," "I took disciplinary action against the subordinate") in order to make the question more relevant to the military. Participants who answered "yes" to having experienced any of the behaviors in the first section were also asked to rate (on a 5-point scale that ranged from "Not at all" to "Extremely") and to describe how the behavior they had experienced affected their confidence, credibility, and effectiveness as a leader. This original measure was added to the survey and did not relate to any previous research on contrapower sexual harassment. The measure was intended to explore the ways in which contrapower sexual harassment may influence military leadership. To gather information about the unique situations of contrapower harassment that military officers might experience, participants were asked to describe their worst gender-related experience with subordinates. This open-ended question was adapted from a study conducted by DeSouza and Fansler (2003), who asked this question in a different format.

The next section of the survey asked participants whether or not they would consider each of the 10 behaviors (sexist comments through sexual assault) to be sexual harassment if directed at an officer by a subordinate. For each behavior, if participants responded "no" or "depends/unsure" they were asked to describe the circumstances in

which they would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment. Participants who answered "yes" were directed to the next question. This section of the survey was taken from Grauerholz's (1989) original study, and questions in this section evaluate the extent to which military officers adhere to traditional concepts of sexual harassment (i.e., that individuals with less organizational power are harassed by individuals with greater organizational power).

The next section of the survey asked participants if they had ever directed any of the 10 behaviors (sexist comments through sexual assault) toward a superior and, if so, to give their reasons for doing so. Response choices included: 1) "to gain some benefit from the superior"; 2) "to demonstrate interest/affection"; 3) "to demonstrate disrespect"; 4) "to demonstrate anger"; 5) "in response to treatment that is perceived to be unfair"; 6) or "other" (with space given to describe the reason). Participants who responded affirmatively to having directed any of the 10 behaviors toward a superior were then asked to indicate and describe how they think that their behavior affected the superior's confidence, credibility, and effectiveness as a leader. Finally, participants were asked if, in their opinion, they had ever sexually harassed a superior. This section was adapted from a study conducted by McKinney and Crittenden (1992) to examine the attitudes of offending students with the exception of the question that asked participants to indicate how their behavior affected the confidence, credibility, and effectiveness of the superior's leadership. This original measure was intended to explore the potential influence of contrapower harassment on military leadership. Lastly, participants were asked to disclose their sex, military rank, and branch of service, and they were provided with space to make any additional comments.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through email and were provided with a link to an online survey administered through the internet service www.surveymonkey.com. An online survey was chosen because it allowed participants to complete the survey at the time and place of their choosing; paper surveys were not made available. A follow-up email was sent out approximately 1 week after the initial recruitment email was sent out in order to maximize responses. Participants were asked to read an online consent form (see Appendix A) and to check a box to indicate their consent to participate. The survey took approximately 10-20 minutes to complete, depending on the experiences of the individual participants and how much (if anything) they chose to write in response to the various open-ended questions throughout the survey. The last page of the survey was an online debriefing form that included information about the purpose of the study (see Appendix B). No incentives were offered for participation.

Results

Overall, 74.4% of participants (91.3% of women and 69.1% of men) reported having experienced at least 1 of the 10 behaviors from a subordinate at least once in their military career, and 35.6% of participants (43.5% of women and 32.5% of men) reported having experienced at least 1 of the 10 behaviors at least once in the past 12 months.

Hypothesis 1: Women officers would report having experienced more potentially sexually harassing behaviors from subordinates than would men officers

A series of independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to compare the frequency of reported experiences of men and women participants on each of the 10 behaviors (sexist comments through sexual assault) for two different time frames: in the participant's entire military career (see Table 1) and in the past 12 months (see Table 2). The significance level was adjusted using a Bonferonni correction that resulted in a corrected significance level of .005, which maintained the family wise error rate at 5%. After this adjustment, significant differences were found between the experiences of men and women officers throughout their entire careers for 6 of the 10 contrapower harassment behaviors surveyed: sexist comments, undue attention, verbal sexual comments, obscene phone calls, inappropriate/suggestive body language, and explicit sexual propositions. Women participants reported having experienced these behaviors significantly more often than men participants did. Table 1 summarizes the means and standard deviations for both men and women participants for each of these behaviors. Tests could not be conducted for sexual bribery or sexual assault, as no participants reported having experienced sexual bribery from a subordinate, and only one participant, who chose not to report his or her sex, reported having experienced sexual assault from a

Table 1.

Gender Differences in Experience of Contrapower Harassment Behaviors (Entire Military Career)

Behavior	Women	Men	*t*	*p*
Sexist Comments				
Mean	3.13	2.20	3.07	.003*
SD	1.14	1.25		
Undue Attention				
Mean	2.70	1.58	4.73	<.0001*
SD	1.11	0.87		
Verbal Sexual Comments				
Mean	2.48	1.58	3.54	.001*
SD	1.12	0.97		
Written Sexual Comments				
Mean	1.13	1.00	2.13	.036
SD	0.46	0.00		
Obscene Phone Calls				
Mean	1.26	1.02	3.13	.002*
SD	0.54	0.13		
Inappropriate/Suggestive Body Language				
Mean	2.13	1.36	3.62	.001*
SD	1.14	0.70		

Physical Advances				
Mean	1.61	1.24	2.20	.031
SD	0.84	0.61		
Explicit Sexual Propositions				
Mean	1.47	1.04	4.20	.0001*
SD	0.73	0.19		
Sexual Bribery				
Mean	0.00	0.00	--	--
SD	0.00	0.00		
Sexual Assault				
Mean	0.00	0.00	--	--
SD	0.00	0.00		

Table 2.

Gender Differences in Experience of Contrapower Harassment Behaviors (Past 12 Months)

Behavior	Women	Men	*t*	*p*
Sexist Comments				
Mean	1.76	1.46	1.33	.187
SD	0.99	0.81		
Undue Attention				
Mean	1.30	1.17	0.86	.394
SD	0.66	0.49		
Verbal Sexual Comments				
Mean	1.26	1.13	1.00	.321
SD	0.56	0.41		
Written Sexual Comments				
Mean	1.06	1.00	1.45	.153
SD	0.25	0.00		
Obscene Phone Calls				
Mean	1.00	1.00	--	--
SD	0.00	0.00		
Inappropriate/Suggestive Body Language				
Mean	1.35	1.14	1.38	.174
SD	0.70	0.42		

Physical Advances				
Mean	1.00	1.09	0.69	.491
SD	0.00	0.51		
Explicit Sexual Propositions				
Mean	1.06	1.00	1.34	.187
SD	0.24	0.00		
Sexual Bribery				
Mean	0.00	0.00	--	--
SD	0.00	0.00		
Sexual Assault				
Mean	0.00	0.00	--	--
SD	0.00	0.00		

subordinate. Women participants also reported having experienced contrapower harassment behaviors multiple times significantly more often than men participants did. Table 3 summarizes the percentages of men and women participants who reported having experienced each of the 10 harassing behaviors from a subordinate twice or more often.

No significant differences were found between the experiences of men and women officers for any of the 10 behaviors experienced in the past 12 months, and both men and women officers reported having experienced fewer behaviors in the past 12 months than in their entire military careers. The overall lower incidence of harassing behaviors experienced and the lack of significance between the experiences of men and women officers is not surprising due to the shorter time frame in which harassing behaviors could have been experienced. It is also likely that the majority (though not all) of the officers surveyed had been teaching at the service academy for the previous 12 months, a special assignment outside of the duties of their normal career field that might not result in rates of contrapower sexual harassment similar to those in their normal career field. Additional research is necessary to examine this potential difference. Overall, the hypothesis that women officers would report having experienced more potentially sexually harassing behaviors from subordinates than would men officers was supported when participants' entire military career was considered.

Participants' responses to the contrapower harassment behaviors experienced were also noted. A total of 19 women, 36 men, and 2 participants who did not report their gender reported their responses to the sexually harassing behavior(s) that they had experienced from subordinates. The most common overall responses included "I confronted the individual directly" (58.6%) and "nothing, it did not seem serious

Table 3.

Percentage of Participants Who Had Experienced Contrapower Harassment Behaviors Twice or More Often

Behavior	Women (N=23)	Men (N=55)	All Participants (N=90)	χ^2
Sexist Comments	78.3%	49.1%	57.8%	5.66*
Undue Attention	65.2%	21.8%	33.7%	13.50***
Verbal Sexual Comments	60.9%	23.7%	35.6%	9.94**
Written Sexual Comments	4.3%	0.0%	3.4%	2.48
Obscene Phone Calls	4.3%	0.0%	1.1%	2.48
Inappropriate/Suggestive Body Language	43.4%	12.7%	24.1%	9.01**
Physical Advances	21.7%	5.4%	9.3%	4.67*
Explicit Sexual Propositions	13.0%	0.0%	3.5%	7.51**
Sexual Bribery	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	--
Sexual Assault	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	--

* Indicates difference significant at the .05 level

** Indicates difference significant at the .01 level

*** Indicates difference significant at the .001 level

enough" (48.3%). Chi-square analyses were conducted to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the frequency with which men and women participants took various actions in response to contrapower sexual harassment. Test results show that there is a significant difference between the frequency in which men and women participants did "nothing, it did not seem serious enough," $\chi^2(1, N = 55) = 7.02, p < .01$; men were more likely than women to choose this response. Significant differences were also found for the response "I filed a formal complaint," $\chi^2(1, N = 55) = 3.94, p < .05$; women were more likely than men to choose this response. Table 4 summarizes the actions taken and the percentage of men and women participants who took each action. "Other" responses reported included talking to a chaplain, talking to peers, starting an investigation, and trying to use the behavior to the participant's own advantage. Of the 55 participants who indicated the effectiveness of their response, the majority (94.6%) indicated that their response stopped the harassment to their satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Grauerholz's (1989) observation that it may be easier for women to deal effectively with contrapower harassment than to deal effectively with other forms of harassment because they have formal power over the harasser.

Hypothesis 2: Both men and women officers would experience potentially sexually harassing behaviors primarily from subordinates of the other sex

The 55 men participants reported having experienced a total of 89 contrapower harassment behaviors, and the 23 women participants reported having experienced a total of 90 contrapower harassing behaviors throughout their entire military career. These totals do not necessarily reflect unique incidents, and they only indicate different types of

Table 4.

Responses to Contrapower Harassment Behaviors

Response	Women (n= 19)	Men (n=36)	Total (n=57)	χ^2
Nothing, it did not seem serious enough	17.8%	63.9%	48.3%	7.02**
Nothing, I was concerned about possible repercussions	15.8%	2.8%	6.9%	3.13
I tried to ignore it, avoided person(s)	31.6%	13.9%	19.0%	2.43
I spoke to subordinate's direct supervisor about behavior	10.5%	8.3%	8.6%	0.07
I confronted the individual directly	73.7%	55.6%	58.6%	1.37
I filed an informal complaint	5.3%	0.0%	1.7%	1.88
I contacted my chain of command	15.8%	2.8%	6.9%	3.13
I filed a formal complaint	10.5%	0.0%	3.5%	3.94*
I took disciplinary action against the subordinate	10.5%	2.8%	5.2%	1.43
Other	21.0%	13.9%	15.5%	--

* Indicates difference significant at the 0.05 level

** Indicates difference significant at the 0.01 level

harassment experienced by different participants. For example, if one participant had experienced both sexist comments and undue attention, that response counts as two harassing behaviors experienced, regardless of the number of times that particular participant may have experienced those two behaviors (to see differences in the frequency in which men and women participants' experienced specific harassment behaviors, see Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3). Both men and women participants reported having experienced the majority of contrapower harassing behaviors from subordinates of the other sex. Table 5 summarizes the percentage of incidents perpetrated by members of the same sex, other sex, or members of both sexes directed at both men and women participants.

A chi-square test was conducted to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the frequency with which men and women participants reported having experienced contrapower harassment behaviors from the same sex, the other sex, and both sexes. Test results show that there was a significant difference between the frequency with which men and women participants experienced contrapower harassment behaviors from the same sex, the other sex, and both sexes, $\chi^2(2, N = 179) = 18.25, p < .001$. Men were significantly more likely than women to report having experienced contrapower harassment behaviors from the same sex and from both sexes than were women. This difference appears to be related to men participants' experience of two specific behaviors (i.e., sexist comments and verbal sexual comments), which are more likely to be perpetrated by other men and by members of both sexes. Men participants actually reported that they are more likely to have experienced sexist comments from members of both sexes (42.3%) and from other men (30.8%) than from

Table 5.

Gender Differences in Sex of Harasser: All Harassment Incidents

	f*	Same Sex	Other Sex	Both
Men (N=55)	89	13.5%	67.4%	19.1%
Women (N=23)	90	1.1%	92.2%	6.7%

* This indicates different types of harassment experienced by different participants, not the number of participants or the number of unique incidents.

women (26.9%). Tables 6 and 7 summarize the proportions of each contrapower harassing behavior perpetrated by members of the same sex, the other sex, and both sexes against men and women participants.

Hypothesis 3: Women officers would be more bothered by gender harassment and by unwanted sexual attention than would men officers

Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to compare how bothered men and women participants reported that they were by each of the 10 behaviors (sexist comments through sexual assault) experienced. The significance level was adjusted using a Bonferonni correction that resulted in a corrected significance level of .005, which maintained the family wise error rate at 5%. After this adjustment, significant differences between how bothered men and women were by the behaviors they had experienced were found for 4 of the 10 behaviors: sexist comments, verbal sexual comments, physical advances, and explicit sexual propositions. Women participants reported that they were significantly more bothered than men participants were by each of these four behaviors. Table 8 summarizes the means and standard deviations of how bothered both men and women participants were by each behavior. Once again, tests could not be conducted for sexual bribery or sexual assault, as no participants reported having experienced sexual bribery from a subordinate, and only one participant, who chose not to report his or her gender, reported having experienced sexual assault from a subordinate.

Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to compare how men and women participants believed that contrapower harassing behaviors had influenced their confidence, credibility, and effectiveness as a leader. Significant differences were found between men's and women's beliefs about influences on their leadership. Women

Table 6.

Sex of Harasser as Reported by Men (N=55)

	f*	Same Sex	Other Sex	Both
Sexist Comments	26	30.8%	26.9%	42.3%
Undue Attention	20	5.0%	90.0%	5.0%
Verbal Sexual Comments	15	13.3%	60.0%	26.7%
Written Sexual Comments	1	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Obscene Phone Calls	1	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Inappropriate/Suggestive Body Language	15	6.7%	93.3%	0.0%
Physical Advances	9	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Explicit Sexual Propositions	2	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%

*This indicates the number of men who reported that they had experienced each behavior.

Table 7.

Sex of Harasser as Reported by Women (N=23)

	f*	Same Sex	Other Sex	Both
Sexist Comments	19	0.0%	84.2%	15.8%
Undue Attention	17	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Verbal Sexual Comments	14	0.0%	92.9%	7.1%
Written Sexual Comments	2	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Obscene Phone Calls	5	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%
Inappropriate/Suggestive Body Language	13	0.0%	92.3%	7.7%
Physical Advances	9	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%
Explicit Sexual Propositions	8	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Other Harassing Behavior	3	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%

*This indicates the number of women who reported that they had experienced each behavior.

Table 8.

Gender Differences in how Bothered by Contrapower Harassment Behaviors (Entire Military Career) Respondents Were

Behavior	Women	Men	*t*	*p***
Sexist Comments				
Mean	2.63	1.83	2.77	.004*
SD	1.12	0.89		
Undue Attention				
Mean	2.89	2.00	2.48	.009
SD	1.23	0.97		
Verbal Sexual Comments				
Mean	3.14	1.73	3.45	.001*
SD	1.17	1.03		
Written Sexual Comments				
Mean	3.00	1.00	1.15	.227
SD	1.41	0.00		
Obscene Phone Calls				
Mean	3.80	2.00	1.62	.083
SD	1.30	1.41		
Inappropriate/Suggestive Body Language				
Mean	3.15	2.15	2.04	.026
SD	1.46	0.99		

Physical Advances				
Mean	4.22	2.30	3.89	.0005*
SD	0.97	1.16		
Explicit Sexual Propositions				
Mean	4.13	2.33	3.37	.004*
SD	0.35	1.53		
Sexual Bribery				
Mean	0.00	0.00	--	--
SD	0.00	0.00		
Sexual Assault				
Mean	0.00	0.00	--	--
SD	0.00	0.00		

** One-tailed significance level

reported that contrapower harassment had had a greater negative effect on all three dimensions of their personal leadership (confidence, credibility, and effectiveness) than men did. Table 9 summarizes the means and standard deviations of how both men and women participants believed that harassing behaviors from subordinates had influenced their leadership.

Of the 57 total participants who indicated how the contrapower harassing behavior affected their leadership, 11 participants offered explanations for their responses. A few participants indicated that the contrapower harassing behavior they had experienced actually resulted in increased confidence, credibility, and effectiveness as a leader due to the fact that they were successful in taking care of the inappropriate behavior. Three respondents indicated that their confidence increased because they had dealt successfully with an uncomfortable situation. In addition, two participants indicated that their credibility and effectiveness as leaders increased after other subordinates observed how they responded to the harassing behavior. One participant observed: "My ability to squash the situation right away actually bolstered my credibility as a leader because I established early on that I would not accept this behavior in my unit."

Approximately one-half of the participants who offered explanations for their responses reported negative effects on their confidence, credibility, and effectiveness as a leader. One participant reported that the harassment "made it harder to operate on a daily basis"; another observed that it is "difficult to feel like an effective leader when subordinates are able to make me feel uncomfortable." In reference to how contrapower harassment affects leadership credibility, one participant commented: "Perception is

Table 9.

Gender Differences in Perception of Effect of Contrapower Harassment Behaviors on Leadership

Leadership Dimension	Women	Men	*t*	*p*
Confidence				
Mean	2.00	1.08	5.20	<.0001*
SD	0.97	0.28		
Credibility				
Mean	2.28	1.06	5.19	<.0001*
SD	1.36	0.24		
Effectiveness				
Mean	2.06	1.11	4.34	<.0001*
SD	1.16	0.40		

reality. A subordinate acting in an overtly friendly manner is often perceived by soldiers to be the result of a willingness on the part of the senior leader." Another participant observed that contrapower harassment, when not appropriately addressed, will cause a leader to lose credibility "even more so than when harassed by someone more senior." Consistent with Benson's (1984) anecdotal account of the professor who never read student evaluations in order to avoid harassment, one participant noted that the contrapower harassment he had experienced changed his behavior in a way that had a negative effect on his subordinates. He commented: "I was particularly sensitive about the informal relationship I had with my female subordinates. I may therefore have had a better relationship with my male subordinates, and the females didn't get my full leadership attention."

Hypothesis 4: Women officers would define a broader spectrum of behaviors as sexual harassment than would men officers

A chi-square test was conducted for each of the contrapower harassing behaviors (sexist comments through sexual assault) to determine if there was a difference between the contrapower harassing behaviors that men and women considered to be sexual harassment. No significant difference was found between the proportion of men participants and the proportion of women participants who considered a behavior to be sexual harassment for any of the 10 behaviors. This outcome indicates that the men and women have similar views about what behaviors are considered sexual harassment when directed at an officer from a subordinate. This finding is consistent with previous research (DeSouza & Fansler, 2003), which shows that men and women tend to define

sexual harassment similarly when asked about specific behaviors, despite results that indicate that women are more bothered by all types of harassment than are men.

Hypothesis 5: Men officers would report engaging in more potentially sexually harassing behaviors than would women officers

Chi-square tests were conducted to determine if there was a difference between the proportion of women participants and the proportion of men participants who reported having perpetrated sexually harassing behaviors against a superior. No significant difference was found between men and women participants on sexist comments or undue attention, the only two categories for which enough participants responded affirmatively to conduct statistical analyses. Only 10 participants reported that they had perpetrated any of the 10 harassing behaviors toward a superior, and even those participants (with one exception) exclusively reported making either sexist comments or provided undue attention. These results suggest that officers are not likely perpetrators of contrapower harassment toward superior officers, or perhaps that participants did not feel comfortable disclosing this information on the survey. Future research is necessary to determine the most common perpetrators of contrapower harassment, including officers of a lower rank, enlisted members of the military, cadets, civilian subordinates, or a combination of all categories.

Harassment by Rank

One-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine if there were differences in the amount of contrapower sexual harassment experienced based on participants' rank. Results show significant differences between the experiences of sexist comments, $F(3, 63) = 4.47$, $p < .05$, inappropriate/suggestive body language, $F(3, 49) = 3.99$, $p < .05$, and

explicit sexual propositions, $F(3, 44) = 3.28$, $p < .05$, in the past 12 months based on rank. Follow-up Tukey tests indicate that officers in the lowest ranking group (O-3) had experienced significantly higher rates of sexist comments and explicit sexual propositions in the past 12 months than had officers in either the O-4 or O-5 rank groups. The lowest ranking group (O-3) also had experienced significantly higher rates of inappropriate/suggestive body language in the past 12 months than had officers in the O-4, O-5, and O-6+ rank groups. Table 10 summarizes the means and standard deviations for these three behaviors by rank.

Worst Gender-related Experience

A total of 36 participants chose to describe their worst gender-related experience from a subordinate, and two participants chose to describe more than one experience. This question was exclusively open-ended, and many of the stories included the specific behaviors focused on in this survey (i.e., sexist comments through sexual assault), as well as behaviors that did not fall under any of these categories. The most common theme expressed in the accounts of participants' worst gender-related experience was undue attention (described in 13 of the stories). One male participant, after having described an instance of undue attention from a female subordinate, offered a particularly insightful comment about the way in which this form of contrapower harassment is often overlooked and can be detrimental to the good order and discipline of a military unit:

> My soldiers, being young infantrymen, acted as though they were impressed with the fact that an attractive female soldier took interest in me. Though this did not weigh on my decision to stop the behavior, the fraternal culture which informally rewards male virility and 'conquest' could influence superiors to overlook such flirtations in

> order to reap these intangible 'benefits' from their male subordinates and peers. I felt it was important to immediately act to stop the behavior not only on principle, but due to the fact that the behavior had been so blatant (and noticed by my other subordinates), that I felt it could undermine my authority or foment a feeling of injustice, inequity, or [partiality] amongst my other subordinates.

Other themes described included verbal sexual comments (described in seven stories), physical advances (described in six stories), sexist comments (described in five stories), and explicit sexual propositions (described in three stories). Among the more serious incidents described was one in which a participant described how her first-sergeant (the chief enlisted member in a unit with whom an officer often works the most closely) punched a car window and threatened her physically if she would not come home with him. Another participant described an incident where, while on deployment, one of her subordinates tried to get into her sleeping bag with her and touch her inappropriately while making comments about sexually satisfying her more than her husband ever could. A third notable incident was described by a female participant, who, while on deployment, was touched inappropriately by a subordinate, which ultimately resulted in her pulling out her 9mm rifle and aiming at him to get him to stop. These three incidents illustrate the serious nature of harassment that women officers have faced from subordinates. It is important to note that these three examples were gathered from a sample of only 23 women, and were not the only examples given by the women participants in the present study that could be considered seriously threatening and harassing incidents from subordinates.

Table 10.

Differences in Harassment Experiences by Rank

Harassing Behavior	Rank	Mean*	*SD*
Sexist Comments			
	O-3	2.43	0.98
	O-4	1.45	0.80
	O-5	1.15	0.38
	O-6 +	1.89	1.17
Inappropriate/Suggestive Body Language			
	O-3	1.83	0.98
	O-4	1.18	0.48
	O-5	1.00	0.00
	O-6 +	1.11	0.33
Explicit Sexual Propositions			
	O-3	1.20	0.45
	O-4	1.00	0.00
	O-5	1.00	0.00
	O-6 +	1.00	0.00

* Mean number of instances

A few incidents described by women officers were not necessarily physically threatening, but nonetheless posed a threat to the woman's ability to lead. One participant related an incident where a drill sergeant who worked for her surveyed the entire platoon (i.e., all of the participant's subordinates) to determine who would sleep with her if given the opportunity. It is not difficult to image how such an action might make it nearly impossible for a woman officer to ensure that her subordinates take her seriously as a credible leader rather than seeing her merely as a sex object.

Two themes that did not fall under the category of any of the specific behaviors previously discussed in the present study (i.e., sexist comments through sexual assault) emerged in multiple stories. The first theme, described in two stories, was contrapower harassment about the perceived sexual orientation of the participant. In one account, a female officer was confronted about her sexual orientation and asked whether or not she hated men. The second story involved a female officer who was confronted by a subordinate with a fabricated story about her involvement in lesbian activities, followed by comments that her rumored lesbian sexual orientation was hurting the reputation of her unit. Although Waldo et al. (1998) identified the enforcement of the traditional heterosexual gender role and pressure to engage in stereotypical forms of "masculine" behavior as a type of gender harassment to which men may be particularly susceptible and by which they may be particularly bothered, women may be similarly harassed, especially in hyper-masculine workplaces and organizations such as the military. Women in the military, because of their nontraditional occupation, may be particularly susceptible to harassment for not conforming to the traditional heterosexual gender role and/or for not engaging in stereotypical "feminine" behavior. This type of harassment

should be included in relation to both men and women in future studies of contrapower harassment.

The second additional theme described by participants involved female subordinates trying to manipulate their superiors by accusing them (or threatening to accuse them) of sexism or sexual harassment. One male participant and one female participant described incidents where they were accused of being sexist in response to punishing female subordinates who had not been performing their job up to standards or who had violated orders (the male participant was accused of being sexist and the female participant was accused of being harder on women because she herself was a woman). Although it is true that women subordinates do experience sexism from maen superiors, and it is also possible that women leaders can be harder on women subordinates, it is certainly possible for women subordinates to perceive falsely (or to fabricate) that this is the case when it works to their advantage. A third (male) participant described an incident where a female subordinate threatened to turn him in as a sexual harasser if he did not do what she wanted him to do. This is a blatant case of a female subordinate fabricating sexism and harassment to her benefit in an attempt to manipulate a superior officer. This threat was echoed by a participant in a study by Carroll and Ellis (1989); he suggested that male professors have no defense against a female student who would falsely accuse him of harassment or assault.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to conduct exploratory research on the experiences of military officers with contrapower sexual harassment. Previous researchers (Carroll & Ellis, 1989; DeSouza & Fansler, 2003; Grauerholz, 1989; Matchen & DeSouza, 2000; McKinney, 1990,1992; McKinney & Crittenden, 1990) studying contrapower sexual harassment in civilian academic settings have concluded that contrapower harassment is a serious phenomenon in higher education. The Department of Defense has conducted several large-scale surveys (e.g., DMDC, 1996, November 2003) to investigate the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in the military. In the present study methods of previous studies were combined to investigate contrapower sexual harassment in the military. Overall, contrapower sexual harassment appears to be a phenomenon frequently experienced by military officers of both sexes, and it has a number of potential effects on both the targeted officers, and on the military units of which they are a part.

The hypothesis that women officers would experience more contrapower harassing behaviors than would men officers was supported; women officers reported having experienced eight different behaviors from subordinates significantly more often than did men officers. This finding makes sense in light of traditional gender roles and sexual scripts within our society that prescribe that men should initiate sexual advances, and these roles and scripts can, and do at times, supersede the rank structure within a military unit. It is not particularly surprising that military women experience contrapower sexual harassment because they are nearly always a minority within their work environment and because they interact primarily with a population of men who

generally adhere to traditional gender roles more than do their civilian counterparts (Firestone, 1987).

The hypothesis that both men and women officers would experience potentially sexually harassing behaviors primarily from subordinates of the other sex was partially supported. Men and women officers did both experience the majority of harassing behaviors from subordinates of the other sex, however, men were much more likely than women to have experienced behaviors from subordinates of the same sex and from subordinates of both sexes. Men were particularly more likely to have experienced sexist comments or verbal sexual comments than to have experienced other harassing behaviors from male subordinates. It is unlikely that men commonly experience sexist comments from male subordinates that are sexist toward men, even though the survey specifically defined sexist comments as comments that are derogatory toward members of the participant's own sex. Instead, it is possible that men participants remembered comments that are sexist toward women to which the participant took offense (or simply noted). It is also possible for sexist comments and verbal sexual comments to be both sexist against women and derogatory toward a particular man, as would be consistent with harassment related to the enforcement of the traditional, heterosexual, masculine gender role. An example of how this might happen was described by one participant who remembered hearing comments such as "you run like a girl" and "hurry up, Nancy" directed at men by other men. These comments were intended to communicate that the male subject of the comments was not meeting standards and to imply that women as a group are physically deficient (and are therefore an appropriate comparison group for physically deficient men, who are considered an aberration). Comparing a man to women in this context is

meant to be degrading to him based on the assumption that women are inadequate and inferior, physically, if not generally. Future research is needed to determine how contrapower harassment experienced from same sex subordinates may be different from contrapower harassment experienced from subordinates of the other sex.

The hypothesis that women officers would be more bothered by gender harassment and by unwanted sexual attention than would men officers was supported. Women were significantly more bothered by sexist comments, undue attention, verbal sexual comments, inappropriate/suggestive body language, physical advances, and explicit sexual propositions than were men. Women participants also reported that contrapower sexual harassment they had experienced had had a significantly greater effect on their leadership confidence, credibility, and effectiveness than did reports of men participants. Contrapower sexual harassment appears to be a frequent phenomenon experienced by women officers in the military, not only with respect to the prevalence with which it is directed against them, but also the extent by which it negatively affects their leadership abilities. This situation is a concern not only for the women who experience the harassment, but also for the military as a whole, as the percentage of women officers in the military continues to grow. Future research is needed to investigate the specific ways in which contrapower sexual harassment negatively affects military leadership.

The hypothesis that women officers would define a broader spectrum of behaviors as sexual harassment than would men officers was not supported, as the results indicate that men and women officers have similar views about what behaviors constitute sexual harassment when directed toward an officer from a subordinate. This finding is not

consistent with past research on the attitudes of men and women about sexual harassment, which has shown women to be more likely than men to label behavior as sexually harassing (McKinney & Crittenden, 1992; Valentine-French & Radtke, 1989). There are a number of reasons for why this hypothesis may not have been supported.

One potential reason for why no significant difference was found between the attitudes of men and women may be that both sexes think about contrapower sexual harassment differently than they do about typical forms of sexual harassment. In her original study, Grauerholz (1989) found that a small proportion of women believed that professors were incapable of being sexually harassed by students because students do not possess formal power over professors. Several participants in the current study indicated that they believe that a subordinate is not capable of sexually harassing a superior, and they went on to express the belief that sexual harassment directed at a leader by a subordinate indicates a failure on the part of the leader. One participant commented that contrapower harassing behaviors should be considered and punished as insubordination, not sexual harassment. Another participant commented: "Good leaders wouldn't tolerate [harassing behaviors] and would make on-the-spot corrections immediately. This is a leadership issue." Several participants noted that they considered sexual assault to be a crime, not harassment, and one participant commented: "Assault is treated differently by [the Uniform Code of Military Justice] than harassment." Another participant noted that sexual assault was "criminal behavior," and a "good leader would prosecute to the full extent of the law." Although these participants brought up relevant points about the ability (and even the responsibility) of leaders to address harassment from subordinates, it is important to consider the finding that 15.8% of women participants in the current study

responded that they did nothing in response to the harassing behaviors they had experienced from subordinates because they feared possible repercussions. This is a slightly higher percentage than the 9% of participants who gave this same response in Grauerholz's (1989) original study. Although future research is necessary to compare contrapower sexual harassment in civilian and military environments, it is possible that military women do face more frequent and serious repercussions than do civilian professors for reporting harassment. Because the military is generally a more masculine and conservative environment than civilian academic institutions, military women may face more hostility from men and sexually harassing behaviors may be seen as more expected and acceptable. These days there is also likely to be more controversy concerning the proper place of women in the military than there is concerning the place of women in academia. Women in more traditionally masculine career fields are likely to experience more harassment and also to receive less support within their organizations when they experience harassment.

Surveys conducted throughout the U.S. military and U.S. government have indicated that women in the U.S. military may be less likely to label specific behaviors as sexual harassment than are their civilian female counterparts in the U.S. Government (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2006). Military women may be less likely than civilian women to label behaviors as sexual harassment in part because the social environments of many units within the military expose military women to more sexually harassing behavior that is generally considered normal or acceptable, and military women may have become desensitized to, or may have developed defenses against, this harassing behavior. Many participants commented that whether or not a behavior is considered sexually harassing

depends on the intent of the harassing subordinate (i.e., the subordinate must have meant the behavior in a malicious and harassing way). This belief is particularly prevalent in response to sexist and verbal sexual comments. Several participants noted that these comments would not be considered sexual harassment if made in a "funny" or joking manner. One participant noted that "emails with jokey sexual stuff" are prevalent and generally not considered sexual harassment. Three participants (of the five who answered this particular question) who indicated that they had ever directed sexually harassing behaviors toward a superior indicated that their actions were meant to be jokes. One participant commented that "I think 'zero tolerance' policies concerning human behavior worsen the work environment rather than strengthening it," which suggests that he or she prefers some level of tolerance for and understanding of sexually suggestive or potentially harassing behaviors. This attitude may be shared among many members of the military and could thus contribute to a general culture of acceptance of certain types of sexual harassment within the military.

Research has shown that "women who view their experiences as sexual harassment have significantly higher levels of overall job dissatisfaction and heightened intentions to leave the military than women who experience unwanted, gender-related behavior, but who do not believe themselves to have been sexually harassed" (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2006, p. 76). Not only are military women less likely than their civilian counterparts to view their experiences as sexually harassing, it is possible that military women are less likely to view contrapower harassment as sexual harassment partly because they believe that they have more control over the contrapower situation than is the case with typical sexual harassment. Future research is needed to compare

perceptions of contrapower sexual harassment directly to perceptions of typical forms of sexual harassment and to replicate the findings of the present study that military men and women have similar views of what constitutes contrapower sexual harassment.

One consideration that several participants brought up in their explanations of when a particular behavior would be considered contrapower sexual harassment is that sexual harassment depends on the perceptions of the victim. One participant commented that whether or not a behavior is sexually harassing is "in the eye of the beholder," and said that "If the person receiving the behavior doesn't think it's inappropriate behavior, then it's appropriate behavior." One participant commented that "perception has a lot to do with the difference between sexual harassment and personal interest" when the issue of undue attention directed at a superior from a subordinate is considered. This point was addressed by Betz and Fitzgerald (1987; as cited in Fitzgerald, Shullman et al., 1988, p. 172), who observed that "(Some) studies seem to imply that if a behavior is not perceived as harassment, then it is not. Such interpretations are clearly incorrect. Sexual harassment is well defined in legal terms, and the behaviors defined as harassment are just that, whatever one's 'perceptions' may be."

It appears that there are many factors that might prevent participants from considering sexually harassing behaviors directed toward a superior by a subordinate to be sexual harassment. Not only is there an incorrect assumption that sexual harassment (and perhaps also more typical forms of sexual harassment) cannot occur unless an individual *feels* harassed, there also appears to be a belief among some members of the military that sexual harassment cannot occur unless the harasser intends to harass the victim. Further complicating perceptions of contrapower harassment, as compared to

more typical forms of sexual harassment, is the apparent belief among some members of the military that a leader *cannot* be sexually harassed by a subordinate, and, furthermore, if a leader *does* experience sexually harassing behaviors, then she or he is at fault for allowing a climate in which the harassing behaviors could occur.

This study did not specifically address the types of repercussions feared by participants who have experienced contrapower harassment that prevented them from taking action against the harassment. Nevertheless, it is not hard to imagine how the belief that the leader has both the power and responsibility to prevent these behaviors could be detrimental to women who report contrapower sexual harassment. One woman described a situation in which, after she had reported an explicit sexual proposition accompanied by physical advances from a subordinate to her own chain of command, she was told by her superior officer that the subordinate would not be punished and also that she was a failure as a leader for allowing the behavior to go on. Another participant explained how she pursued punishment for a subordinate who had directed inappropriate sexual attention toward her, however he was not punished because she had reported that she was not actually afraid of him. In the latter example, punishment hinged on how harassed and afraid the participant felt, and, because she did not report that she felt harassed or fearful "enough," his behavior alone was not sufficient to result in punishment for her subordinate.

The hypothesis that men officers would report having directed more sexually harassing behaviors toward a superior than would women officers was not supported. Analysis of the data in regard to this hypothesis was difficult due to the small number of participants (11%) who reported that they had directed even one of the behaviors toward

a superior. This finding suggests that military officers are not likely to sexually harass superior officers (and therefore contrapower sexual harassment is most likely to be perpetrated by enlisted military members or civilian subordinates), that officers chosen to teach at a service academy are not representative of military officers as a group, or that the participants did not feel comfortable reporting this information. One participant commented at the end of the survey:

> I hope you're not putting too much faith in self-reporting that people have not sexually harassed anyone. You might get some positive responses, but I would guess most people really don't believe these are really anonymous due to the many, many "anonymous" surveys we fill out for the military.

The concern that "anonymous" surveys may not always be anonymous is not completely unfounded. Although the present study was conducted at only one service academy, other service academies were approached about possible participation. One academy refused to allow the portion of the survey that inquires about the behaviors perpetrated by participants; it was claimed that, if any participants *did* report perpetrating certain behaviors, the military would be obligated to track those individuals down and take appropriate actions against him or her. Future research is needed to determine the type of subordinate most likely to perpetrate contrapower harassment, and measures should be taken to allay fears that information of this nature provided by participants could be used against them in the future. Without future research that takes both of these factors into consideration, it is difficult to determine the true extent and nature of contrapower harassment within the military.

Even though a small percentage of participants reported having perpetrated at least one contrapower harassing behavior, no participants responded that they believed they had ever sexually harassed a superior. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted by McKinney and Crittenden (1992), in which 18% of participants admitted to having been involved in one or more contrapower harassing behaviors, however no participants responded affirmatively to the question "Have you ever sexually harassed a professor?" The various reasons that make many participants hesitant to define harassing behaviors directed toward a superior by a subordinate as actual sexual harassment (including the belief that harassment cannot occur unless the harasser has formal power over the victim and the belief that harassment depends on the perceptions of either the harasser, the victim, or both) may contribute to the participants' belief that they have never sexually harassed a superior, despite the fact that they have directed certain behaviors toward him or her. Subordinates may also justify harassing behaviors in a number of ways.

The most common response given for why participants had directed any of the behaviors toward a superior was to demonstrate interest or affection (indicated by five of the nine participants who responded to this question). Consistent with many of the comments made by participants in response to why particular behaviors may not be sexually harassing when directed toward a superior by a subordinate, participants who directed inappropriate attention toward a superior to demonstrate interest or affection may believe that their lack of malicious intent exempts them from having committed sexual harassment. One participant noted: "'Undue attention' resulted in an authorized mutual relationship—outside of the chain of command." This example is another way in

which participants tend to qualify contrapower sexual harassment based on the outcome of the behavior. Previous research (Fitzgerald, Weitzman et al., 1988) has shown that faculty members appear to evaluate the ethical acceptability of sexual relationships with students partly based on whether or not the relationship was a success. This justification is flawed, as it is impossible to tell beforehand if a relationship will be successful, or if the superior or subordinate will "feel" offended by the behavior directed at her or him. In the military, the success of the relationship or the perception of both the subordinate and targeted superior are often irrelevant, as many cases of relationships that involve a power differential are inappropriate and often punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). In the current study I did not focus extensively on the various ways subordinates justify their harassing behaviors, and my questions about the motivations of harassers garnered few and limited responses. Future research is necessary to examine more fully the motivations and justifications of subordinates who direct potentially sexually harassing behaviors toward their superiors.

Study Limitations

As with most research, the present study has a number of limitations. The participant sample itself was not completely representative of officers within the military, as positions for younger officers at service academies are limited. Past research has shown that younger professors are more likely than are older professors to be harassed (DeSouza & Fansler, 2003) and also that younger participants are significantly more tolerant of sexual harassment than are older participants (Carroll & Ellis, 1989). Because the participant sample did not include any officers of the lowest two ranks (O-1 and O-2) and included very few officers of the O-3 rank, overall findings do not take into account

the potential higher rates of harassment experienced, or different viewpoints about harassment held, by these officer groups. The significant finding that participants in the O-3 rank group had experienced more harassment than officers in other groups, along with some of the comments made by participants, indicates that younger officers may be more susceptible to harassment than older officers are. One participant noted that she believed that her leadership had been particularly affected by contrapower sexual harassment when she was a young officer: "When I was a more junior officer and not as confident in my role in the unit I was assigned to, it was more difficult to bring these issues up and have them resolved." Future research on contrapower harassment in the military that includes a representative proportion of junior officers is necessary to explore these potential differences between junior and more experienced officers.

Women officers were also an underrepresented group within the participant sample. The current study included only a small number of women participants (n=23) due to the small absolute number of women officers currently stationed at the service academy of interest and within the military as a whole. Although the sample was representative, a larger sample of women officers in future research would be beneficial.

An additional limitation of the current study is that results are based on a single organizational sample, and there may be differences between officers selected to teach at a service academy and officers who remain within the primary duties of their career field. There also may be differences between different services and between the different service academies. Results are also based on self-report measures, which rely on participants' memories and perceptions. As previously discussed earlier, this approach is

particularly a problem in an attempt to determine the proportion of officers who have perpetrated contrapower harassment behaviors.

Conclusion

Women currently make up 14.6% of the active duty armed forces in the United States. Changes were implemented in 1993 to open up 90% of all specialties within the military to women, and 80% of all military jobs can now be filled by either men or women (Department of Defense, 1996). If we take into account the percentage of men who may experience contrapower sexual harassment, a substantial proportion of our military leaders in nearly all areas of the military could be affected, to some degree, by contrapower sexual harassment. The results of the current study suggest that contrapower sexual harassment has the potential to undermine the authority and effectiveness of the targeted officers in some of the same ways as more typical sexual harassment does, as well as in ways that are unique. Sexual harassment affects the performance of officers, as well as good order and discipline within military units (Department of Defense, 1996). Even when behavior defined as contrapower sexual harassment is not necessarily offensive or unwanted, it has the potential to disrupt the good order and discipline of the military by usurping the formal rank structure in such a way as to allow for perceptions of favoritism or of weakness on the part of the military leader.

Williams, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1999) found that sexual harassment is related to the extent to which the organization is successful in creating a climate in which sexual harassment is not tolerated. Williams et al. (1999) observed that when members of the military perceived that their organization did not act to follow policies and practices against sexual harassment, they exhibited a reduced commitment to the military and

reduced job satisfaction, which led to reduced unit cohesion and readiness and to overall reduced military effectiveness. One participant in the current study observed that "The best climates were ones in which leaders (especially junior leaders) were not loose with sexual innuendo and joking…I make my position clear, and I never have problems." Fitzgerald et al. (1997) found that higher levels of harassment were experienced by women employees who believed that their organization is tolerant of sexual harassment for such reasons as the organization does not take complaints seriously, it is risky to complain, and perpetrators are unlikely to be punished. In order to create an organizational climate in which sexual harassment is not tolerated, it is important to have a clear and effective method of handling complaints, as well as to provide training to members of the organization. Research (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2006) has shown that sexual harassment training has been associated with fewer reports of sexually harassing behaviors, and training has been implemented throughout the military to educate members about typical forms of sexual harassment and the actions that can be taken against sexual harassers. Former Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Edwin Dorn noted that 200,000 new people from across the country join the military every year, many of whom may not have been exposed to racially-enlightened or sexually-enlightened thinking. He even went so far as to say that some corners of our society are subjected to misogynist ideas, and the military has to be prepared to train individuals to unlearn these detrimental ideas if sexual harassment is to be eliminated (Department of Defense, 1996). It has been suggested that "the equal opportunity climate of [the military's] units is one of its primary criteria of mission effectiveness" (Knouse, 1991, p. 386). Currently, training about sexual harassment does not include information

about contrapower harassment, and members of the military are likely to be uneducated about the possibility that this type of harassment can occur. In the current study I sought to gain an initial glimpse into the prevalence of, and potential issues concerning, contrapower sexual harassment in the military. Future research is needed to understand the implications of contrapower sexual harassment in a military context and to determine the need to include information about contrapower sexual harassment into the current sexual harassment training that is already in place within all branches of the military.

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Appendix A

Consent to Participate in Research

[*Gendered Experiences between Officers and Subordinates*]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES
This research is being conducted to examine the relationship between officers and subordinates in a military setting. Specifically, this study will include questions that may be sensitive in nature about the sexual implications of certain behaviors directed at superiors by subordinates. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an anonymous survey taking no more than 20 minutes to complete, followed by a debriefing form taking no more than 5 minutes to read.

RISKS
One minimal risk to you as a participant includes the combination of asking questions about sexual, unethical, and dishonorable behavior along with potential identification of individual participants based on small group membership (specifically, women officers or officers of high rank). This risk is manageable by lumping together upper/uncommon participant ranks. Other identifying information such as your name and social security number will not be asked or associated with survey questions. Additionally, the only individuals who will have access to survey information will have no way of identifying individuals based on small group membership, as names will not be associated with participant surveys and data will be analyzed by an investigator unfamiliar with the individual officers stationed at the U.S. Military Academy who may be surveyed. An additional risk includes psychological discomfort related to recalling past experiences addressed by this survey that may have been distressing or uncomfortable for you

BENEFITS
There are no direct benefits to you as a participant, however your participation will further research examining the relationship between officers and subordinates in the military. This research is exploratory and can serve as a foundation for future research in this area.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The data in this study will be confidential. Names and other identifiers will not be placed on surveys. Consent forms will be collected before surveys are distributed and consequently cannot be associated with your survey responses.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may decline to answer any question. There are no costs to you or any other party. Responses are to be

combined with other participants' data and are not meant to gather information about specific individuals. By

completing this survey you consent to publication of the study results as long as the identity of participants is not revealed.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted 2Lt Sarah K. Clapp, USAF, candidate for an MA degree at Connecticut College. She may be reached at 719-237-3625 for questions or to report a research-related problem. You may contact the Research Coordinator at 845-938-5902 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed and approved according to USMA's procedures governing your participation in this research. This research has also been reviewed and approved according by the Connecticut College Review Board (860) 439-5057.

CONSENT

By clicking I Agree below and completing this survey, you consent to participation. If you do not wish to participate, you may quit now or at any point in the survey.

Appendix B

Debriefing Form

Thank you for participating in this research dealing with contrapower sexual harassment. In this research, I am investigating the experiences and attitudes of both male and female officers with sexual harassment directed at them from *subordinates*. Most research on contrapower sexual harassment has been directed toward university professors and students and has examined the prevalence of contrapower harassment, student and professor attitudes toward contrapower harassment, and the differing experiences and attitudes of male and female professors toward contrapower harassment. To my knowledge, no research has focused on experiences of military officers with contrapower harassment. The purpose of this research is to apply various questions from past research on contrapower harassment to a military population. The importance of maintaining the rank structure of the military to maximize mission effectiveness necessitates the investigation of a social phenomenon, such as contrapower sexual harassment, that has the potential to undermine the authority and effectiveness of military officers.

If you are interested in the results of this study, or are generally interested in this topic and want to read the literature in this area, please contact me, 2Lt Sarah Clapp, at (719) 237-3625.

Listed below are two sources you may want to consult to learn more about this topic:

Grauerholz, E. (1989). Sexual harassment of women professors by students: Exploring the dynamics of power, authority, and gender in a university setting. *Sex Roles, 21*, 789-801.

DeSouza, E., & Fansler, A. G. (2003). Contrapower sexual harassment: A survey of students and faculty members. *Sex Roles, 48*, 529-542.

Appendix C

Contrapower Sexual Harassment Survey

You may have answered questions on other surveys similar to the questions you are about to answer concerning sexual behavior you have experienced from peers or from superiors. This survey is asking you questions about behaviors you have experienced from SUBORDINATES ONLY. A subordinate is defined as ANY enlisted military member, cadet, officer or civilian of a lower rank than you.

Please indicate how often you have experienced the following behaviors from someone who is <u>subordinate</u> to you. Please note the time frame of each question.

1) Sexist Comments (e.g., jokes or remarks that are stereotypical or derogatory to members of your sex) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 2)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

1a) Sexist Comments *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

1b) If you have experienced Sexist Comments from a subordinate, please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

1c) If you have experienced Sexist Comments from a subordinate, please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

2) Undue Attention (e.g., flirtation, touching, being overly friendly) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 3)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

2a) Undue Attention *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

2b) If you have experienced Undue Attention from a subordinate, please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

2c) If you have experienced Undue Attention from a subordinate, please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

3) Verbal Sexual Comments (e.g., inquiries of sexual values, remarks about dress or body, but not a sexual proposition) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 4)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

3a) Verbal Sexual Comments *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

3b) If you have experienced Verbal Sexual Comments from a subordinate, please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

3c) If you have experienced Verbal Sexual Comments from a subordinate, please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

4) Written Sexual Comments (e.g. comments about sexual behavior or values, dress, or body written on instructor feedback forms or other subordinate feedback assessments of you) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 5)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

4a) Written Sexual Comments *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

4b) If you have experienced Written Sexual Comments from a subordinate please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

4c) If you have experienced Written Sexual Comments from a subordinate, please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

5) Obscene Phone Calls (e.g., of a sexual nature, believed to be from subordinates) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 6)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

5a) Obscene Phone Calls *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

5b) If you have received Obscene Phone Calls from a subordinate, please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

5c) If you have experienced Obscene Phone Calls from a subordinate please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

6) Inappropriate or Suggestive Body Language (e.g., leering, standing too close) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 7)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

6a) Inappropriate or Suggestive Body Language *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

6b) If you have experienced Inappropriate or Suggestive Body Language from a subordinate, please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

6c) If you have experienced Inappropriate or Suggestive Body Language from a subordinate, please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

7) Physical Advances (e.g., kissing, hugging, pinching, fondling) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 8)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

7a) Physical Advances *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

7b) If you have experienced Physical Advances from a subordinate, please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

7c) If you have experienced Physical Advances from a subordinate, please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

8) Explicit Sexual Propositions (e.g., a clear invitation for sexual encounter but no threat stated) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 9)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

8a) Explicit Sexual Propositions *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

8b) If you have experienced Explicit Sexual Propositions from a subordinate, please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

8c) If you have experienced Explicit Sexual Propositions from a subordinate, please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

9) Sexual Bribery (e.g., explicit sexual propositions that include or strongly imply promises of rewards for complying or punishment for refusing) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 10)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

9a) Sexual Bribery *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

9b) If you have experienced Sexual Bribery from a subordinate, please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

9c) If you have experienced Sexual Bribery from a subordinate please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

10) Sexual Assault (e.g., rape or attempted rape) *in your entire career as a military officer.* (If Never, please go to question 11)

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

10a) Sexual Assault *in the past 12 months*

☐ Never ☐ Only Once ☐ 2-5 times ☐ More than 5 times

10b) If you have experienced Sexual Assault from a subordinate, please indicate the gender(s) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

10c) If you have experienced Sexual Assault from a subordinate, please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

11) Have you experienced any behavior from a subordinate, excluding behaviors described in question 1-10, that you consider to be sexual harassment *in your entire career as a military officer*? (If No, please go to question 13)

☐ Yes ☐ No

11a) Have you experienced any behavior from a subordinate, excluding behaviors described in question 5-14, that you consider to be sexual harassment *in the past 12 months*?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11b) If you have experienced behavior from a subordinate, excluding behaviors described in questions 1-10, that you consider to be sexual harassment, please indicate the sex(es) of the subordinate(s) below:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Both Male and Female

11c) If you have experienced behavior from a subordinate, excluding behaviors described in questions 1-10, that you consider to be sexual harassment, please indicate how much the experience bothered you

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

12) If you indicated having experienced other gender-related behavior from a subordinate in question 11, please describe the behavior below.

13) If you answered yes to experiencing any of the behaviors described in questions 1-12, please indicate below what actions were taken to deal with the behavior(s) by checking all that apply below. If you did not answer yes to experiencing any of the behaviors, continue to question 16.

☐ Nothing, it did not seem serious enough

☐ Nothing, I was concerned about possible repercussions

☐ I tried to ignore it, avoided person(s)

☐ I spoke to subordinate's direct supervisor about behavior

☐ I confronted the individual directly

☐ I filed an informal complaint (e.g., through Military Equal Opportunity)

☐ I filed contacted my Chain of Command

☐ I filed a formal complaint (e.g., through Military Equal Opportunity or the Inspector General)

☐ I took disciplinary action against the subordinate (please describe) _____

_____

☐ Other (please describe) _____

14) Did these actions stop the behavior(s) to your satisfaction?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15) If you answered yes to experiencing any of the behaviors from a subordinate described in questions 1-12, please indicate and describe below how you believe the behavior(s) affected your

a) Confidence as a leader

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

Describe:

b) Credibility as a leader

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

Describe:

c) Effectiveness as a leader

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

Describe:

16) Describe your worst gender-related experience from subordinates (or more than one, if desired)

If a subordinate engaged in the following behaviors toward a superior would you consider it to be sexual harassment?

17) Sexist Comments

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

17a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

18) Undue Attention

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

18a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

19) Verbal Sexual Comments

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

19a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

20) Written Sexual Comments

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

20a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

21) Obscene Phone Calls

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

21a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

22) Inappropriate or Suggestive Body Language

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

22a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

23) Physical Advances

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

23a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

24) Explicit Sexual Propositions

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

24a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

25) Sexual Bribery

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

25a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

26) Sexual Assault

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Depends/Unsure

26a) If you answered "No" or "Depends/Unsure," please describe under what conditions or circumstances you would consider such behaviors to be sexual harassment:

Have <u>you</u> ever directed any of the following behaviors toward a <u>superior</u>?

27) Sexist Comments

☐ Yes ☐ No

28) Undue Attention

☐ Yes ☐ No

29) Verbal Sexual Comments

☐ Yes ☐ No

30) Written Sexual Comments

☐ Yes ☐ No

31) Obscene Phone Calls

☐ Yes ☐ No

32) Inappropriate or suggestive Body Language

☐ Yes ☐ No

33) Physical Advances

☐ Yes ☐ No

34) Explicit Sexual Propositions

☐ Yes ☐ No

35) Sexual Bribery

☐ Yes ☐ No

36) Sexual Assault

☐ Yes ☐ No

37) If you answered yes to having directed any of the behaviors described in questions 31-40 toward a superior, please indicate your reasons for having engaged in the behavior(s) by checking all that apply below. If you did not answer yes to experiencing any of the behaviors, continue to question 43.

☐ To gain some benefit from the superior (e.g., to gain a desired position or receive a positive evaluation).

☐ To demonstrate interest/affection

☐ To demonstrate disrespect

☐ To demonstrate anger

☐ In response to treatment that is perceived to be unfair

☐ Other (please describe) _____

38) If you answered yes to having directed any of the behaviors described in questions 31-40 toward a superior, please indicate and describe below how you believe your behavior(s) affected your superior's

a) Confidence as a leader

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

Describe:

b) Credibility as a leader

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

Describe:

c) Effectiveness as a leader

☐ Not at all ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Very Much ☐ Extremely

Describe:

39) In your opinion, have you ever sexually harassed a superior?

☐ Yes ☐ No

40) Please use the space below to write any additional comments you would like to make:

Please provide the following information by checking the appropriate boxes. Keep in mind that it will not be possible for researchers to associate you with any of your responses

41) Sex: ☐ Female ☐ Male

42) Rank: ☐ O-1 ☐ O-2 ☐ O-3 ☐ O-4 ☐ O-5 ☐ O-6 and above

43) Service: ☐ US Air Force ☐ US Army ☐ US Navy
☐ US Coast Guard ☐ US Marine Corps