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Narrow Prototypes and Neglected Victims: Understanding Perceptions of Sexual Harassment

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Sexual harassment is pervasive and has adverse effects on its victims, yet perceiving sexual harassment is wrought with ambiguity, making harassment difficult to identify and understand. Eleven preregistered, multimethod experiments (total N = 4,065 participants) investigated the nature of perceiving sexual harassment by testing whether perceptions of sexual harassment and its impact are facilitated when harassing behaviors target those who fit with the prototype of women (e.g., those who have feminine features, interests, and characteristics) relative to those who fit less well with this prototype. Studies A1–A5 demonstrate that participants' mental representation of sexual harassment targets overlapped with the prototypes of women as assessed through participant-generated drawings, face selection tasks, reverse correlation, and self-report measures. In Studies B1–B4, participants were less likely to label incidents as sexual harassment when they targeted nonprototypical women compared with prototypical women. In Studies C1 and C2, participants perceived sexual harassment claims to be less credible and the harassment itself to be less psychologically harmful when the victims were nonprototypical women rather than prototypical women. This research offers theoretical and methodological advances to the study of sexual harassment through social cognition and prototypicality perspectives, and it has implications for harassment reporting and litigation as well as the realization of fundamental civil rights. For materials, data, and preregistrations of all studies, see https://osf.io/xehu9/.

Keywords: attributional ambiguity, civil rights, gender, prototype, sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a widespread and urgent social problem with a broad range of harmful consequences, including decreased engagement with and impaired performance in work and school, worse mental and physical health outcomes, and increased economic instability (e.g., Fitzgerald, 1993; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine, 2018; Tenbrunsel et al., 2019). In recognition of these consequences, the #MeToo movement has recently amplified the voices of victims, bringing international attention to the frequency, severity, and harm of sexual harassment while improving individual and institutional responses to allegations of misconduct. Yet, critics of #MeToo have argued that it has largely centered on and benefitted only a narrow subset of women, bringing the most attention to victims who conform to cultural stereotypes of "prototypical" women—such as actresses in Hollywood—while neglecting the many victims who do not conform to this prototype (Burke, 2017). Moreover, sexual harassment remains underreported by both its victims and others in society, and this can cause victims to continue to encounter disbelief, dismissal, and obstacles to legal recourse (Bower, 2019; EEOC, 2017, 2018; Onwuachi-Willig, 2018).

The present investigation offers 11 studies that draw upon theoretical perspectives on prototypes to test whether women with less prototypically feminine physical and psychological features are less likely than more prototypical women to be represented as sexual harassment targets and whether harassment targeting nonprototypical women is therefore more difficult to recognize, perceived as less credible, and discounted as less harmful. Because identifying sexual harassment and perceiving it to be problematic is critical to internal or legal resolution of harassment allegations, understanding the barriers to accurate perception is essential to the realization of legal civil rights for all victims.

Perceptions of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of gender-based discrimination that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) describes as unwelcome sexual conduct and advances that detrimentally affect job performance, employment status, or produce a

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hostile work environment (EEOC, 2017). Psychologists generally describe sexual harassment as comprising three factors: sexual coercion (quid pro quo harassment), unwanted sexual attention (sexual advances without quid pro quo components), and gender harassment (derogatory verbal and nonverbal behaviors that communicate hostile attitudes about gender; Fitzgerald et al., 1988, 1995; Gelfand et al., 1995). Although anyone can experience sexual harassment, women are disproportionately targeted (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2014). Importantly, sexual harassment is not only, or even typically, about sexual desire. Rather, sexual harassment, including unwanted advances, often stems from hostility toward women, the desire to socially dominate women, or backlash against women who violate gender norms (Berdahl, 2007a, 2007b; Cortina & Berdahl, 2008; Leskinen et al., 2011; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Schultz, 1998).

Perceptions are central to realizing that sexual harassment has occurred and that claims are appropriate for adjudication, but these perceptions are wrought with difficulty because potentially harassing incidents might be dismissed as being welcomed by the target or stemming from some benign motive (Crocker & Major, 1989; Pickel & Gentry, 2017). Perceiving sexual harassment involves *noticing a behavior* that might qualify as harassment and *linking that behavior to gender-based group membership* (Major et al., 2002). For example, if one notices that a male boss hugs his female subordinates (potentially harassing behavior), but also hugs his male subordinates, then sexual harassment would be an unlikely interpretation for the behavior as it is not clearly linked to gender. However, if one notices that the boss hugs women and not men, then sexual harassment is a more plausible interpretation as the link between behavior and the female gender group membership is clearer.

Once a potentially harassing behavior has been linked to gender-based group membership, it is important that the behavior be perceived as *harmful for the target*. Legal definitions of sexual harassment require that the potential victim experience either repeated harm over multiple instances or severe harm in one instance (EEOC, 2017). Moreover, perceived harm can shape judgments of credibility—victims who are perceived as more distressed are also perceived as more credible (Klippenstine & Schuller, 2012; Nitschke et al., 2019; Schuller et al., 2010). Perceived harm further plays an important role in punitive and legal judgments, such as shaping the level of punishment assigned to the perpetrator, as well as other judgments like the amount of compensation awarded to victims (EEOC, 2017; Vallano, 2013; van Doorn & Koster, 2019). In the present work, we investigate whether perceptions of sexual harassment—linking potentially harassing behavior to gender-based group membership and perceiving harassment as credible and harmful—are influenced by the prototypicality of targets of sexual harassment.

Prototypicality and Social Perception

People cognitively organize complex social groups and their members according to simpler overarching prototypes (Brewer, 1988; Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Rosch, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). Prototypes embody a set of culturally and contextually determinant "fuzzy" attributes that can include physical appearance, behaviors, interests, traits, beliefs, and attitudes (Hogg, 1993; Medin, 1989; Rosch, 1978). These prototypes are abstract and diffuse and are not defined by a checklist of specific attributes (Fillmore, 1975). When people perceive and evaluate others, they therefore judge these individuals according to the degree to which they fit their group's higher-order prototypical representation (Brewer, 1988; Fiske, 1993; Hogg, 1993; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000).

People evaluate others according to both category-based prototypes and within-category prototypes. Category-based approaches to prototypes assume that all members of a category fit similarly with the prototype and are equally likely targets of potential bias, whereas within-category approaches highlight how variation in fit with prototypes shapes how group members are perceived and treated. Although the former approaches have been widely explored in scholarship on perceiving discrimination (e.g., in studies showing that some categories of people—e.g., women—are perceived to experience more bias than other categories—e.g., men; Inman & Baron, 1996; O'Brien et al., 2008; Rodin et al., 1990), the latter are increasingly recognized as important for understanding stereotype-based inferences and targets' experiences with bias. For example, women with more prototypically female faces, voices, and characteristics are judged by both men and women as less suitable for masculine-typed jobs (Ko et al., 2006; Lammers et al., 2009; Rudman, 1998). Likewise, individual differences in racially prototypic features, such as physical appearance, shape the extent to which racial minorities are stereotyped and subjected to bias (Blair et al., 2004; Eberhardt et al., 2006; Kaiser & Wilkins, 2010; Maddox, 2004; Wilkins et al., 2011, 2010).

Prototypes are culturally transmitted and become collectively shared societal representations (Bailey et al., 2019; Eagly & Kite, 1987; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jost et al., 2004; Turner et al., 1987). This process results in shared prototypes across groups; for example, both men and women share the same image of a prototypical woman (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Accordingly, when women behave in nonprototypical manners or possess nonprototypical attributes, men and women are equally likely to punish these nonprototypical women (Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Gender Prototypicality and Perceptions of Sexual Harassment

Gender is a fundamental social category, with a strong prototype of who can embody the category of women (Brewer, 1988; Fiske, 2017). Prototypical women in modern Western societies are expected to have feminine features and to be interpersonally orientated, caring, social, sympathetic, and nurturing (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Helgeson, 1994; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). At the same time, women are generally perceived as incompetent and weak (Fiske et al., 2002), although this stereotype may be changing to reflect a female advantage in competence (Eagly et al., 2019). Prototypical women are further expected to be attractive, gentle, and tender (Helgeson, 1994; Kite et al., 2008) and to engage in feminine activities or careers that are restricted to traditional gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

Nonprototypical women, in contrast, violate idealized societal expectations of women. Women who diverge from within-category prototypical representations tend to embody stereotypically male characteristics, physical features, and traits such as dominance and competence and engage in masculine activities or

careers (Helgeson, 1994; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Because of their distance from the prototypical group image, nonprototypical women often receive backlash or are rendered invisible as their experiences are dismissed or uncredited (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Rudman & Glick, 2001; Thomas et al., 2014).

Drawing on the research showing that within-category prototypes can play a significant role in social perception, we suggest that gender prototypes are important to understanding perceptions of sexual harassment, both in terms of people's perceptions of potentially harassing behaviors and in terms of people's perceptions of harassment victims' credibility and distress. Accordingly, in the present research, we test five hypotheses about the role of prototypes in perceptions of sexual harassment. First, because sexual harassment is inherently connected to gender-based group membership, we hypothesized that the mental representation of harassment targets overlaps substantially with the prototype of women. Specifically, sexual harassment targets should be envisioned as prototypical women, possessing feminine attributes and physical characteristics (*Hypothesis 1*).

Further, linking potentially harassing behavior to gender-based group membership is central to perceiving that sexual harassment has occurred (e.g., Major et al., 2002). Therefore, we anticipate that the same potentially harassing behavior will be less likely to be labeled as sexual harassment when it targets women who are less (vs. more) prototypical (*Hypothesis 2a*) because nonprototypicality should make it more difficult for participants to link behaviors with targets' gender-based group membership. The effect of target prototypicality may be particularly pronounced when behaviors are ambiguously harassing relative to unambiguously not harassing behaviors (*Hypothesis 2b*). Following this same line of reasoning about weaker connections between behaviors and gender-based group identity, we also expect that nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) women's sexual harassment claims will be perceived to be less credible (*Hypothesis 3*), that nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) women will be perceived to be less harmed by sexual harassment (*Hypothesis 4*), and that perpetrators of sexual harassment thus deserve less punishment when harassment targets a nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) woman (*Hypothesis 5*).

The Present Research

In a series of 11 studies, we explored whether people hold mental representations that link sexual harassment with prototypical womanhood, and whether this association makes it more difficult to label potentially sexually harassing behaviors as such, to believe the victim, and to perceive the harassment as harmful when it targets nonprototypical women. These studies adopt a within-category approach to prototypes because sexual harassment is most commonly experienced by women, and as such it is important to identify which subsets of women are likely to have their claims of sexual harassment overlooked or minimized.

Study Series A tested Hypothesis 1 and comprised five multimethod experiments examining people's mental representation of sexual harassment victims. Participants read descriptions of sexual harassment work incidents (or control nonharassment incidents) and their mental representation of the victim was captured via drawings, face perception tasks, noise-based reverse correlation, and impression ratings. Study Series B examined Hypotheses 2a and 2b—participants read about a prototypical or a nonprototypical woman who experienced the same potentially harassing work incidents and then drew inferences about whether the behavior was sexual harassment. Study Series C (Hypotheses 3–5) included two experiments testing the effects of prototypicality on dependent variables with direct legal implications in sexual harassment cases: perceived credibility, perceived psychological harm, and punishment assigned to perpetrators. See Table 1 for participant demographics and study characteristics across all 11 studies.

Together, these studies offer significant theoretical and methodological contributions to the literature on sexual harassment. First, our studies integrate social–cognitive theoretical perspectives on prototypes with theory on perceptions of bias to understand mental representations of sexual harassment targets and the role of these representations in perceptions of sexual harassment. Basic experimental work on this topic is sparse because most sexual harassment scholarship occurs in the field, typically with correlational, survey approaches (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine, 2018). Second, our studies advance a within-category approach to the study of sexual harassment, which has significant potential to provide insight into why claims of harassment by some women are more likely to be believed and acted upon than others. Third, our studies vary in their methodological approaches, with more than 4,000 total participants across a variety of sexual harassment contexts, and investigate perceptions with important implications for the reporting of harassment, as well as legal outcomes of such reports. Thus, our studies

Table 1
Participant Demographic Information and Study Characteristics

Study	Sample	Design	Total *N*	Women %	*M* age	White %	Black %	Asian %	Latino %	Native %	Other %
A1	Student	2 between	155	59.4	19.25	13.5	1.9	76.8	5.2	0.0	2.6
A2	MTurk	2 between	401	47.6	37.57	77.1	9.5	6.7	3.2	0.7	2.7
A3	Student	2 between	303	63.4	19.15	29.0	5.9	50.5	6.6	0.0	7.9
A4	MTurk	2 between	283	42.4	35.51	70.3	9.9	8.8	5.3	1.1	4.6
A5	MTurk	2 within	141	44.7	35.29	79.4	10.6	3.5	3.5	0.0	2.8
B1	MTurk	2 between	329	43.8	35.98	75.7	9.1	8.5	4.6	0.6	1.5
B2	MTurk	2 × 2 between	545	45.7	36.99	78.7	7.3	5.1	6.8	0.4	1.7
B3	MTurk	2 × 2 between	562	45.7	37.14	76.3	9.4	5.9	5.3	0.9	2.0
B4	Student	2 × 2 between	484	59.5	18.92	36.8	6.0	52.1	10.1	1.7	5.9
C1	MTurk	2 within	272	50.0	35.88	70.6	11.4	8.1	6.6	0.7	2.6
C2	MTurk	2 between	590	49.3	39.13	73.7	8.5	7.5	5.6	0.7	4.1

Note. Percentage for racial demographics could exceed 100% because participants were allowed to select more than one race.

contribute both to theoretical understandings of perceptions of sexual harassment and to social justice efforts more broadly, given that perceptions of sexual harassment serve as the critical catalyst to remedying sexual harassment and realizing the protections offered by civil rights laws.

All studies were preregistered, and all materials and data are openly available through the Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/xehu9. All studies met at least 80% power for a medium effect size (see Appendix A for sample size justification and power analyses for each study).

Study Series A: Mental Representations of Sexual Harassment Targets

Experiments A1–A5 explore the overlap between sexual harassment targets and prototypes of women. Participants in these studies read about women who experienced sexual harassment or who experienced negative or neutral nonsexually harassing events. Participants then provided assessments of the extent to which these women fit with the prototype of women.

We varied the types of sexual harassment across these studies to generalize to sexual harassment comprising unwanted sexual attention and gender harassment. Harassment contexts included inappropriate physical contact (Studies A1 and A2), unwanted romantic interest (Study A3), and exposure to crude, pornographic content (Study A4). Study A5 did not describe the precise nature of the sexual harassment (see Appendix B for all stimuli).

To probe participants' mental representation of sexual harassment targets, we used a rich variety of measures (e.g., drawings, face perception tasks) alongside impression ratings. Hypothesis 1 predicted that participants would mentally represent a target of sexual harassment as a more prototypical woman than someone who did not experience sexual harassment. As such, participants in the sexual harassment condition (compared with the control condition) should draw a more prototypical woman, select faces with more feminine features to represent the victim, and subjectively rate the target as more prototypical. We first present the methods and procedures for each of the five Series A studies and then present the overall results through internal meta-analysis; all meta-analyses herein used a fixed-effect approach (Goh et al., 2016).[1] Results from each individual study in Series A are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Given that prototypes are widely shared within society, we did not expect to find an interaction between experimental conditions and participant gender across all studies. We report participant gender results after the meta-analyses.

Table 2
Perceived Prototypicality Ratings in Studies A1–A5

	Harassment		Control			
Studies	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t* (*df*)	*d*
A1	5.10	0.68	4.87	0.72	2.04 (153)*	0.33
A2	5.40	0.81	5.07	0.81	3.99 (399)***	0.40
A3	4.84	0.67	4.16	0.72	8.60 (301)***	0.99
A4	5.33	0.87	4.99	0.81	3.34 (281)***	0.40
A5	5.41	1.07	3.74	1.28	14.07 (140)***	1.18

Note. Studies A1–A4 were between-subject design, and Study A5 was within-subject design.
* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3
Perceived Prototypicality Based on Drawings (A1) and Photo Selections (A3 and A4)

	Harassment		Control			
Studies	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t* (*df*)	*d*
A1	5.28	1.08	4.77	1.21	2.75 (153)**	0.44
A3	15.01	4.01	13.53	4.72	2.95 (292.71)**	0.34
A4	14.75	4.66	13.06	5.18	2.89 (281)**	0.34

Note. Study A1 drawings were rated on 7-point scale, with higher scores meaning more prototypical; A3 and A4 photo selection task could range from 0–20, with higher scores indicating greater preference for more prototypical faces.
** $p < .01$.

Study A1 Method

Participants generated their own representations of sexual harassment targets by drawing a woman who was (or was not) sexually harassed. These drawings were then independently coded with respect to their fit with prototypes of women. This was further supplemented by participants' own ratings of the prototypicality of the woman they read about.

Procedure

Participants (N = 155 students; see Table 1) read about a woman named Sara whose boss either groped her (sexual harassment condition) or bumped into her (control condition). Both incidents involved a male supervisor inflicting a negative action onto Sara.

Afterward, the experimenter gave participants drawing materials (i.e., a piece of paper, a box of colored pencils, and an eraser) and instructed them to spend seven minutes drawing Sara. Participants then completed measures assessing the extent to which Sara was a prototypical woman, reported their demographic information, and were debriefed.

Drawing

To code gender prototypicality in participants' drawings, three trained research assistants blind to the experimental condition rated the prototypicality of the drawings using four items: (a) Sara has a lot in common with other women; (b) Sara is similar to other women; (c) Sara is feminine; and (d) Sara is masculine (reverse). Coders rated each drawing using the four items on 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). These items were adapted from Leach et al. (2008) and Ma et al. (2017). We then averaged the prototypicality scores for each coder. Interitem reli-

[1] We also measured secondary trait impressions in these five studies (e.g., attractiveness, warmth, and competence). Although prototypes are generally abstract and encompass a fuzzy set of traits and features (Hogg, 1993; Medin, 1989; Rosch, 1978), we included well-studied attributes that comprise the prototypes of women. These self-report measures serve as further tests for Hypothesis 1. These secondary prototypicality measures were meta-analyzed and they are provided as supplementary analyses on OSF: https://osf.io/q9xrt/.

ability for each coder was good (αs for coder 1 = .96, coder 2 = .92, coder 3 = .89). We averaged the scores across coders (α = .77); therefore, each drawing received an averaged score, with higher scores indicating greater prototypicality.

Prototypicality Ratings

Participants also completed a gender prototypicality rating of Sara. These were the same four items rated by the independent coders, with the addition of a fifth item: Sara looks like a typical woman (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). We averaged the five items to form one prototypicality rating (Cronbach's alpha = .68).

Study A2 Method

Study A2 used a different dependent measure of prototypicality. Participants saw photos of six women who were digitally morphed to be more masculine or feminine, and they selected one of these six photos that best represented the woman they read about.

Procedure

Participants (N = 401 Mechanical Turk (MTurk) workers) read either the sexual harassment or control scenario from Study A1. Afterward, participants completed ratings of the targets as in Study A1; prototypicality was rated using the same four items that were used by the coders in Study A1 (α = .77). Participants then saw an array of six female faces. They picked one photo that they perceived to best resemble the woman in the scenario. Finally, participants reported their demographic information and were debriefed.

Photo Selection Task

Photos were taken from a database of manipulated facial images (DeBruine & Jones, 2017). The database contains 20 female faces; each original photo has a version that was digitally transformed to be more feminine as well as one that was transformed to be more masculine. We randomly selected six unique faces: three feminized photos and three masculinized photos (we counterbalanced the feminized or masculinized version of each face), and all six faces were presented on a single screen simultaneously. Participants selected a single face from this screen to best represent the target. This task was presented last to avoid influencing participants' self-report ratings of the target.

Study A3 Method

The third study generalized the type of sexual harassment beyond inappropriate physical contact by instead manipulating unwanted romantic interest. We also used a different measure of prototypicality that was adapted from Fraccaro et al. (2010) and Jones et al. (2007).

Procedure

Participants (N = 303 students) read a description of a female student named Jennifer whose supervisor showed unwanted romantic interest in her (sexual harassment condition) or asked her to work on meaningless tasks (control condition). Afterward, participants completed ratings used in prior studies (prototypicality rating α = .68). Participants then completed a modified photo selection.

Photo Selection Task

Participants saw 20 trials of photos taken from the same face database in Study A2 (Fraccaro et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2007). In each trial, participants saw two faces: one face that had been morphed to be more feminine and the same face that had been morphed to be more masculine. Participants selected which of the two faces best resembled Jennifer, and they completed 20 trials of this forced-choice task. Prototypicality score was the sum of the trials in which participants selected feminized faces over masculinized faces (possible range = 0 to 20; α = .85). This task was presented last to avoid influencing self-report ratings.

Study A4 Method

Study A4 built on our previous studies by focusing on gender harassment rather than harassment driven by unwanted sexual (Studies A1 and A2) or romantic (Study A3) intention.

Participants (N = 283 MTurk workers) read about a woman named Brenda whose manager showed her a picture of a penis as a crude joke (sexual harassment) or a picture of the new company logo (control). Participants then completed the same ratings as previous studies (prototypicality α = .72) and the same photo selection task as Study A3 (α = .88).

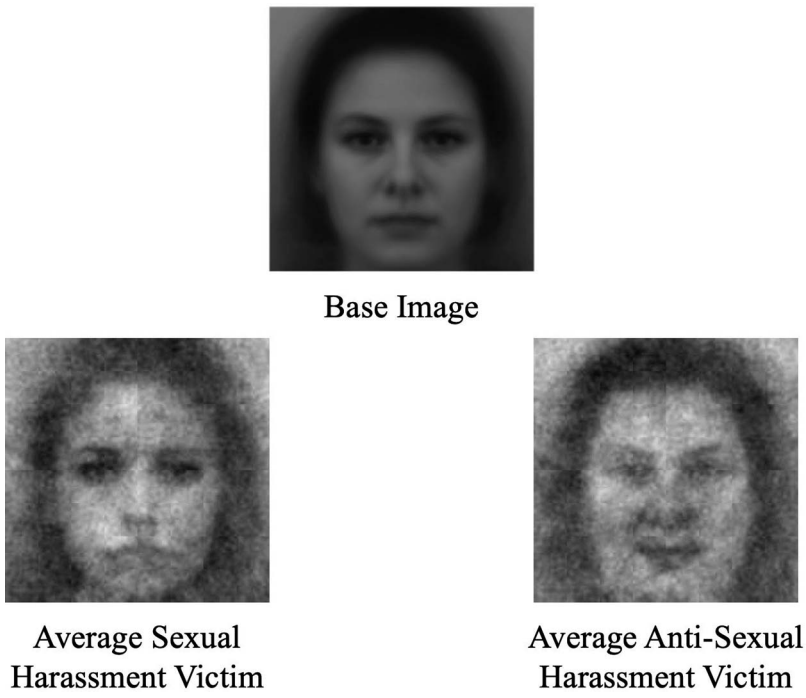
Study A5 Method

We used noise-based reverse correlation to examine whether people mentally represent sexual harassment victims as prototypical women. Reverse correlation is a perceptual task that generates visualizations of people's mental images (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2017; Dotsch & Todorov, 2012; Gundersen & Kunst, 2019; Imhoff & Dotsch, 2013; Imhoff et al., 2013). This study was conducted in two phases: the image-generation phase and the image-rating phase. In the image-generation phase, participants completed a reverse-correlation task, which allowed us to generate visualizations of their mental images of sexual harassment victims and nonsexual harassment victims. In the image-rating phase, a new sample of participants rated the prototypicality of the generated images.

Image Generation Phase Procedure

To generate the mental representation of a sexual harassment victim and antisexual harassment victim, we used the average gray scale image of White women from the Karolinska Face Database as the base image (Gundersen & Kunst, 2019; Lundqvist et al., 1998; see Figure 1 top panel), onto which random noise-patterns were superimposed to create 1000 variants of the image (R package rcicr 0.3.4.1; Dotsch, 2016). The noise consisted of truncated two-cycle sinusoid patches with random contrasts. Participants (N = 165 MTurk workers) completed 500 trials of the reverse-correlation task. On each trial, two images were presented side by side. One image in each pair had a random noise pattern superimposed on the base face, and the other image had the inverse noise pattern superimposed on the base face. Participants were instructed to select the face that looks most like a sexual harassment victim for each pair of images. The pairs of images were presented in a

Figure 1
Base Image and Participant-Generated Composite Images in Reverse Correlation Task



random order. The mental representations were then created by superimposing the average noise-pattern of the selected images (sexual harassment victim) and average noise-pattern of the unselected images (antisexual harassment victim) on the base image (R package rcicr 0.3.4.1; Dotsch, 2016). The resulting average images are displayed in Figure 1.

Image-Rating Phase Procedure

To quantify the properties of the generated images, a separate group of participants (N = 141 MTurk workers) rated the prototypicality of the sexual harassment victim image and antisexual harassment victim image. Participants were told that they would be shown four "fuzzy" pictures of people and were asked to make a series of impression ratings. Participants viewed both the sexual harassment victim and the nonsexual harassment victim images from that were generated using reverse correlation. Participants also rated two filler images of White men so that the comparison between sexual harassment victim and antisexual harassment victim images would be less salient to participants. The images were presented in randomized order. Participants rated all images on the same prototypicality items from the previous studies (sexual harassment victim α = .83, antisexual harassment victim α = .84).

Meta-Analytic Results of Series A

We present the Study Series A results meta-analytically; meta-analyses were conducted using the metafor R package (Viechtbauer, 2010). The sexual harassment manipulation in Studies A1–A4 was assessed with a single-item measuring the likelihood that sexual harassment occurred (1 = *extremely unlikely*; 7 = *extremely likely*). The meta-analysis of the manipulation check showed a strong effect, confirming that the manipulations were effective across studies, Hedges' g = 1.83, Z = 25.44, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.69, 1.97].

For our main analyses, we first meta-analyzed the results of subjective, global prototypicality ratings of the targets (measured in all five studies). Confirming Hypothesis 1, participants perceived targets of harassment as more prototypical than those who did not experience harassment, g = 0.68, Z = 12.90, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.58, 0.79]. Results of each individual study were all significant in the predicted direction and are presented in Table 2.

For our drawing and photo-selection tasks, we meta-analyzed results from Studies A1, A3, and A4 because they used continuous variables (A2 used a chi-square design and A5 only used subjective rating presented above). Confirming Hypothesis 1, participants drew more prototypical women and selected more feminized photos to represent targets of sexual harassment than nonharassed targets, g = 0.36, Z = 4.87, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.22, 0.51]. Individual studies were all significant in the predicted direction (see Table 3). As for Study A2, a 2 (sexual harassment vs. control condition) $\times$ 2 (selected a masculinized or feminized photo) Chi-Square test showed a predicted significant difference in the overall frequency from expected values, χ^2 = 8.20, p = .004, φ = .14. Participants in the sexual harassment condition (78.50%) were more likely to select a feminized photo over a masculinized photo compared with those in the control condition (65.67%).

Using a variety of measures to capture mental representations, we found robust evidence that there is an overlap between repre-

sentations of sexual harassment targets and the prototypes of women. Participants consistently perceived sexual harassment targets as more prototypical of women than nonharassed targets.

Series A: Gender as Moderator

Because participants' gender could potentially moderate the effects observed in these studies (for a meta-analysis of gender differences in perceptions of sexual harassment targets see Rotundo et al., 2001), we preregistered gender as a potential moderator in our secondary analysis. In all five studies, participant gender did not moderate the experimental conditions (sexual harassment vs. nonharassment contexts) for the prototypicality rating, Fs < 1.11, ps $> .293$, η_p^2s $< .006$. This was also the case for the corresponding drawing/photo selection measures that used continuous variables (Study A1, A3, and A4) that allowed for factorial ANOVAs, Fs < 0.137, ps $> .712$, η_p^2s $< .001$. Although our null hypothesis significance testing approach cannot technically provide evidence of a lack of gender difference, these results suggest that both men and women perceive sexual harassment targets to be prototypical women. This finding aligns with research that demonstrates gender does not moderate cultural representations and prototypes (Bailey et al., 2019) and suggests that both men and women are influenced by the prototype of women and the prototype of sexual harassment victims.

Series A Discussion

Five experiments provided converging evidence that people mentally represent sexual harassment targets as prototypical women. This was consistent across a variety of manifestations of sexual harassment, including unwanted sexual attention, advances, and gender harassment. This effect was observed among a diverse array of dependent measures, including participants' spontaneous physical drawings, selections of subtly morphed photos, and subjective ratings. Further, participant gender did not moderate these effects, suggesting that the prototype of sexual harassment targets is shared broadly in society.

In the next series of studies, we examined the potential consequences of mentally representing targets of sexual harassment as prototypes of women. Specifically, we examined whether people would have greater difficulty perceiving the same harassing incident as harassment when it was directed at women who deviate from (vs. fit) prototypes of women. In addition, we explored whether this labeling difficulty would be moderated by the type of incident, hypothesizing that prototypicality might have a greater influence on labeling judgments when behaviors were potentially harassing than when behaviors were more clearly benign.

Study Series B: Prototypicality and Identifying Sexual Harassment

Studies B1–B4 built on the A-Series studies by examining whether narrow prototypes of women make it more difficult to label harassment when it targets women who deviate from (vs. fit with) this prototype. These studies test whether the same sexually harassing behaviors will be less likely to be labeled as harassment when they target nonprototypical relative to prototypical women (*Hypothesis 2a*). We did not expect participant gender to moderate this effect.

We also included a test of moderation as a function of the ambiguity of sexually harassing behaviors. Research on discrimination attribution suggests that moderators, such as target prototypicality, have greater influence on perceptions of bias in contexts in which discrimination is ambiguous (Major et al., 2002). In contrast, moderators will have little influence on perceptions of bias when discrimination is unambiguous, such as when it is clearly present or absent. Therefore, in Studies B2–B4, we explored whether target prototypicality (the moderator) would have a larger effect when the context was potentially harassing (ambiguous) versus clearly nonharassing (unambiguous). Specifically, we predicted that participants who read about ambiguous potential harassment would find it more difficult to label potentially harassing behaviors as such when it targeted a nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) woman, whereas those who read about clearly absent sexual harassment would show a weaker prototypicality effect (*Hypothesis 2b*).

Owing to methodological similarities across all four B-Series studies, we report the specific procedures and methods for each study and then report the meta-analytic effects. We report participant gender results after detailing the meta-analytic test of Hypotheses 2a and 2b. See Table 4 for results from each individual Series B study.[2]

Participants read about (Study B1) or saw a photo of (Studies B2–B4) a nonprototypical or prototypical woman who experienced an ambiguous work incident that could potentially be construed as sexual harassment. Afterward, they rated their perception of how likely it was that the behavior was sexual harassment. In the latter three studies, we also varied the type of behavior participants read about: participants either read about an ambiguous work incident that could be harassment or an incident that was intended to be unambiguously nonharassing. In the B-Series studies, we focused on behaviors that fall under the unwanted sexual behavior category. See Appendix B for full descriptions of the manipulations.

To ensure the effectiveness of our prototypicality manipulations in Series B, we used the four prototypicality items from Series A as our manipulation check in Series B. Because we manipulated harassment context in Series B, the perceived prototypicality ratings used as manipulation checks further allowed us to conduct an exploratory test of whether harassment context influences perceptions of women's prototypicality. If this is the case, it would further support that labeling a woman as a victim of sexual harassment shifts perceptions of her prototypicality (Hypothesis 1).

[2] In Series B, we included measures of secondary impression ratings that capture more specific components of the woman prototype (warmth, competence, attractiveness, and thinness). These measures allow us to determine whether certain inferences from the manipulation were more or less responsible for the effects of the fuzzy prototype. Study B1 additionally included ratings of age and SES, but these showed the weakest correlations with prototypicality and were dropped for Studies B2–B4 to conserve time (see Table 2). We report and discuss analyses using these ratings as covariates at the end of Series B. We also controlled for secondary impression ratings (e.g., attractiveness, warmth) in all the analyses and they are on OSF: https://osf.io/q9xrt/.

Table 4
Perceived Harassment Likelihood as a Function of Prototypicality and Harassment Context in Studies B1–B4

	Prototypicality main effect			Harassment main effect			
Studies	Prototypical *M* (*SD*)	Nonprototypical *M* (*SD*)	*t* or *F* (*df*)	Harassed *M* (*SD*)	Control *M* (*SD*)	*F* (*df*)	Interaction *F* (*df*)
B1	4.39 (1.51)	3.62 (1.55)	4.57 (327)***	—	—	—	—
B2	3.83 (1.98)	3.54 (1.89)	6.32 (1, 541)*	5.02 (1.36)	2.41 (1.50)	455.54 (1, 541)***	0.71 (1, 541)
B3	3.05 (1.58)	2.97 (1.67)	0.29 (1, 558)	3.53 (1.56)	2.48 (1.52)	65.12 (1, 558)***	0.01 (1, 558)
B4	3.15 (1.45)	2.98 (1.48)	2.91 (1, 480)†	3.84 (1.31)	2.27 (1.17)	194.00 (1, 480)***	0.12 (1, 480)

Note. Study B1 did not have a nonharassment control condition and was compared using independent *t* test.
† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Study B1 Method

Study B1 examined whether it is more difficult to label potentially sexually harassing behaviors as such when they target nonprototypical women relative to prototypical women. Participants read about a woman with prototypical or nonprototypical female characteristics who experienced an ambiguously harassing work incident.

Procedure

Participants ($N = 329$ MTurk workers) read a description of a woman named Jessica who either embodied prototypical female attributes (e.g., art teacher with stereotypically feminine personality traits and interests) or nonprototypical attributes (e.g., physical education teacher with stereotypically masculine personality traits and interests). We adopted an approach of broad prototypic features including personality, cognitive, and physical traits (Diekman & Eagly, 2000). We pilot tested the prototypical and nonprototypical descriptors to ensure that they differed only in the broad prototypical impression ratings, and ensured that the prototypical and nonprototypical descriptions did not differ in specific secondary impressions such as attractiveness.[3] Participants learned that Jessica's principal complimented her appearance and inquired as to whether she was still dating her boyfriend. The boyfriend was mentioned to avoid confounding presumed sexual orientation with prototypicality. Afterward, participants rated the likelihood that Jessica was sexually harassed and then completed impression ratings.

Likelihood of Sexual Harassment

Participants rated their perception of sexual harassment with three items ($\alpha = .83$; 1 = *extremely unlikely*; 7 = *extremely likely*): (a) "In your opinion, how likely was it that the principal sexually harassed Jessica"; (b) "In your opinion, how likely was it that the principal showed inappropriate sexual interest in Jessica"; (c) "In your opinion, how likely was it that the principal was simply being friendly toward Jessica (reverse)".

Study B2 Method

Study B1 included only a description of ambiguous behavior that had the potential to be sexual harassment, leaving open the question of victim prototypicality's effect in situations with behaviors that do not obviously have the potential to be harassing. A more precise test of our hypotheses about the importance of linking potentially harassing behaviors to victims' gender-based group identity would involve testing whether gender prototypicality matters more strongly when sexual harassment has potentially occurred, relative to when it has unambiguously not occurred. Theories of discrimination attributions (Major et al., 2002) would predict that we should see a stronger effect of prototypicality for labeling of ambiguous, potentially harassing behaviors than for labeling of unambiguously benign behaviors. Moreover, from a civil rights perspective, judgments about sexual harassment are made in the context of plausible harassment, and not in the clear absence of harassment, as these latter cases are especially likely to drop out of the legal system (Nielsen & Nelson, 2005). Accordingly, Study B2 provides a more specific test of whether this same pattern occurs only when sexual harassment is more plausible.

Additionally, Study B2 further tests the generality of the prototypicality construct by manipulating it with photos rather than trait descriptions. Participants saw either a face that was subtly morphed to be more feminine (in the prototypical condition) or more masculine (in the nonprototypical condition). This was a 2 (Work Incident: harassment or control) × 2 (Prototypicality: prototypical or nonprototypical face) design. We predicted a main effect of prototypicality qualified by a Work Incident × Prototypicality interaction. In the harassment condition, we expected that participants would rate the target as more likely to have experienced sexual harassment when she was depicted as prototypical compared with nonprototypical. In the control condition, we expected that participants would not rate nonprototypical versus prototypical depiction differently (or that the effect would be attenuated).

Procedure

Participants ($N = 545$ MTurk workers) read about a woman named Jane who consulted her supervisor on a problem she was facing. Jane was depicted with either one of three feminized faces (prototypical condition) or one of three masculinized faces (nonprototypical condition). Participants read that the supervisor put his hand on Jane's waist (harassment condition) or in his pocket

[3] Attractiveness was strongly associated with perception of prototypicality and harassment targets (see https://osf.io/q9xrt/), so we piloted the vignettes in Study B1 to ensure they did not differ on this. In Study B1, nonprototypical target ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.18$) and prototypical target ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.21$) did not differ on attractiveness, $t(327) = 1.41$, $p = .159$.

(control condition). Afterward, participants rated the likelihood that Jane was sexually harassed.

Likelihood of Sexual Harassment

The perceived likelihood of sexual harassment was assessed with three items (α = .95; 1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*): (a) "In my opinion, Jane experienced sexual harassment from her supervisor"; (b) "In my opinion, Jane's supervisor treated her inappropriately because of her gender"; and (c) "In my opinion, Jane's supervisor made a sexual advance toward her."

Study B3 Method

Study B3 (N = 562 MTurk workers) conceptually replicated B2 using a different harassment context. The procedures were identical to Study B2 with the exception that the sexual harassment manipulation involved the supervisor placing his arm around Jane's shoulder (harassment) or placing his hand in his pocket (control). We used the same three items as Study B2 to assess likelihood of sexual harassment (α = .93; 1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*).

Study B4 Method

Procedure

Study B4 used the composite images from the reverse correlation method in Study A5. This manipulation has the benefit of being more overt than the morphed face manipulation of prototypicality in Studies B2 and B3.

Participants (N = 484 students) were randomly assigned to read about a teacher named Anna whose principal inquired about her dating life (harassment condition) or preparedness for a conference presentation (control condition). The description was paired with either a prototypical or nonprototypical face generated from reverse correlation (see Figure 1). Afterward, participants rated the likelihood that Anna was sexually harassed.

Likelihood of Sexual Harassment.

Three items measured perceived likelihood of sexual harassment (α = .90; 1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*): (a) "In my opinion, Anna experienced sexual harassment from the principal;" (b) "In my opinion, the principal showed inappropriately sexual interest in Anna;" and (c) "In my opinion, the principal did not sexually harass Anna (reverse)."

Primary Meta-Analytic Results of Series B

A meta-analysis of our prototypicality manipulation checks (αs = .75–.77) reveals that we successfully manipulated prototypicality across studies: g = 0.42, Z = 9.11, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.33, 0.51].

We first examined the meta-analytic main effect of prototypical versus nonprototypical conditions across Studies B1–B4 on perceptions of harassment (collapsing across control vs. harassment context). This yielded a significant effect, g = 0.17, Z = 3.70, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.26]. Supporting Hypothesis 2a, a prototypical target was generally seen as more likely to experience harassment than a nonprototypical target, even though they experienced the same exact incident. The evidence in the individual studies was modest and mixed, with Studies B1 and B2 producing the significant effect, B3 producing no effect, and B4 producing a marginal effect (see Table 4). Somewhat surprisingly, we did not observe any interactions between prototypicality manipulation and harassment (vs. unambiguous) contexts in the individual studies (Studies B2–B4). However, attenuating interactions like the one we expected require high statistical power, which an individual study may lack (for simulations and explication, see Blake & Gangestad, 2020; Giner-Sorolla, 2018; Simonsohn, 2014). To gain the statistical power necessary to more accurately test the interaction between victim prototypicality and behavior ambiguity, we meta-analyzed the interactions by converting the interaction term into Cohen's d for each study (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001).[4] Looking meta-analytically across studies, the interaction between prototypicality and harassment conditions was small and significant, d = 0.10, Z = 2.05, p = .040, 95% CI [0.00, 0.20].

To decompose the interaction, we conducted separate meta-analyses for the harassment condition from Studies B1–B4 and for the control condition in Studies B2–B4 (B1 did not have a control condition). See Table 5 for the descriptive statistics in each study. Consistent with Hypothesis 2b, participants perceived prototypical targets as more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than nonprototypical targets when these targets experienced potentially harassing work incidents, g = 0.26, Z = 4.27, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.37]. When targets experienced nonharassing events (in the control condition), participants did not significantly perceive prototypical targets as experiencing more sexual harassment than nonprototypical targets, g = 0.12, Z = 1.69, p = .091, 95% CI [−0.02, 0.26], as would be expected from theories of discrimination attributions.

Exploratory Meta-Analysis of Study Series B: Perceived Prototypicality

Within the individual studies, we observed an unexpected but significant effect of harassment context manipulation on the perceived prototypicality of faces in Studies B2 and B4 (but not B3; B1 did not manipulate harassment context). Therefore, we conducted an exploratory meta-analysis to examine this pattern of effects further. Across Studies B2–B4, we meta-analyzed the effect of manipulated harassment context versus control context on perceived prototypicality of the targets, with higher scores indicating that targets experiencing harassment are perceived as more prototypical than the nonvictims. There was a small significant effect, g = 0.19 Z = 3.80, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.09, 0.29]. This unexpected but interesting effect demonstrates the power of labels in shaping social perception (Eberhardt et al., 2003), and it provides a strong test of our theory and Hypothesis 1, such that the same faces could be perceived as more prototypical when labeled as experiencing (vs. not experiencing) sexual harassment.

Series B: Gender as Moderator

In all four studies, participant gender did not interact with the prototypicality conditions (prototypical vs. nonprototypical) and

[4] Conversion was conducted using this website: https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/escalc/html/EffectSizeCalculator-SMD30.php.

Table 5
Perceived Harassment Between Prototypical and Nonprototypical Targets by Harassment Context in Studies B1–B4

	Harassed condition		Control condition	
Studies	Prototypical *M* (*SD*)	Nonprototypical *M* (*SD*)	Prototypical *M* (*SD*)	Nonprototypical *M* (*SD*)
B1	4.39 (1.51)	3.62 (1.55)	—	—
B2	5.22 (1.30)	4.81 (1.39)	2.51 (1.57)	2.30 (1.43)
B3	3.57 (1.54)	3.49 (1.59)	2.51 (1.44)	2.45 (1.59)
B4	3.92 (1.25)	3.77 (1.37)	2.39 (1.22)	2.16 (1.11)

context (harassment vs. control) for the perceived harassment likelihood, $Fs < 2.79$, $ps > .095$, $\eta_p^2 s < .005$. This, again, suggests that prototypes are culturally transmitted, such that men and women hold a similar prototypical image of a sexual harassment target.

Series B Discussion

Across the B-series studies, we investigated whether a potential consequence of holding a narrow mental representation of sexual harassment victims as prototypical women is that people are less likely to think that sexual harassment has occurred when it targets nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) women. We theorize that perceiving a potentially harassing behavior as sexual harassment requires connecting the behavior to the prototypical group representation of women (Major et al., 2002). As such, when targets of harassment deviate from the image of prototypical women, people may have greater difficulty associating the targets with harassment and are therefore less likely to perceive that nonprototypical targets have experienced harassment. Meta-analytic evidence supported this theory and demonstrated a significant small effect that is consistent with Hypothesis 2a, such that participants were less likely to attribute an ambiguous work incident to sexual harassment when it targets nonprototypical women relative to prototypical women, despite the fact that both prototypical and nonprototypical targets experienced the same exact incident. Further supporting Hypothesis 1, our manipulation check and meta-analysis further showed that simply labeling the same face as a victim of harassment shifts participants' perception of its prototypicality. In essence, when participants believed a target was harassed, they are more likely to see the target as prototypical (Eberhardt et al., 2003).

Unexpectedly, interaction terms between prototypicality and harassment contexts were not significant in each individual study, although this is likely attributable at least in part to a lack of statistical power needed to detect attenuating interactions (Blake & Gangestad, 2020; Giner-Sorolla, 2018; Simonsohn, 2014). Our meta-analysis of the interaction between victim prototypicality and behavior ambiguity suggested a small but significant interaction in line with Hypothesis 2b. When a behavior was potentially harassing, the effect of victim prototypicality was more reliable than when a behavior was unambiguously nonharassing. Indeed, in the latter condition, there was only a weak, marginal effect of prototypicality. Thus, although it may be that prototypical women (vs. nonprototypical women) are perceived as more likely to experience harassment across different behavioral contexts, prototypicality is likely to matter more when the behavior is ambiguously harassing—identifying it as harassing requires linking the behavior to gender-based group membership (Major et al., 2002). Future research can further explore the role of behavioral contexts for the effects of prototypicality; for example, people may have a lower threshold for what constitutes harassment when it targets prototypical women compared with nonprototypical women, which could lead people to label a wider range of behaviors as harassment when interactions include prototypical women.

Series B provides support for the notion that the association between sexual harassment and prototypical women can make people less likely to think sexual harassment has occurred when it targets women who fall outside of that prototypical representation.[5] Individuals were less likely to label ambiguous behavior as sexual harassment when it targeted nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) women. Determining whether behavior constitutes harassment is critical to catalyzing myriad psychological and social processes that increase the likelihood that harassing behavior is reported, perpetrators are held accountable, and victims receive a measure of redress. Importantly, however, even when harassing behavior can be identified as such, there is a general tendency in our broader culture and legal system to reflexively discount the credibility of the victim and her account. Doubting the veracity of sexual harassment claims poses an enormous barrier to victims' ability to receive protection and justice (Epstein & Goodman, 2018; Tuerkheimer, 2017). Indeed, in legal and punitive contexts involving sexual harassment, perceptions of the victim's credibility and the level of psychological harm experienced typically increase the likelihood that the allegation is taken seriously, and that verdicts, liability, and damage determinations favor the victim (Epstein & Goodman, 2018; Vallano, 2013). In the next series, we examined whether the association between sexual harassment and prototypical women also disadvantages nonprototypical women when they make sexual harassment claims by biasing perceptions of the credibility of their claims. We also tested how victim prototypicality influences additional outcomes that have clear implications in legal and punitive contexts: the perceived psychological harm of harassment and the punishment assigned to the perpetrator.

Study Series C: Prototypes and the Impact of Sexual Harassment

In Series C, we examined whether nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) women's sexual harassment claims are perceived to be less *credible*, as well as whether sexual harassment of nonprototypical women is less likely to be recognized as *harmful.* Furthermore, we examined whether people are less *punitive* toward per-

[5] We ran a separate series of four studies that examined the effect of prototypicality in evaluating gender-harassing contexts (e.g., exposure to crude sexual jokes or contents). These are presented as Series D in OSF Supplement: https://osf.io/mc94e/. Contrary to Series B, the meta-analytic effect size showed negligible, nonsignificant differences between the prototypical and nonprototypical conditions, $g = 0.07$, $Z = 1.33$, $p = .184$, 95% CI [−0.03, 0.17]. This suggests that when women are victimized by gender harassment (Supplement Series D) that is not on the surface sexually or romantically driven, their prototypicality does not influence perceived harassment.

petrators when sexual harassment targets nonprototypical women compared with prototypical women. B-Series provided preliminary evidence consistent with our theorizing that, because people have greater difficulty associating nonprototypical women with sexual harassment, they are less likely to think that sexual harassment has occurred when it targets nonprototypical women. If this is the case, then in addition to influencing whether individuals label ambiguous behavior as harassment, target prototypicality should also affect the perceived credibility of sexual harassment claims. If people have a narrowed representation of who is sexually harassed, the victim should be perceived to be less credible when she falls outside of that prototypical representation (Hypothesis 3).

We also examined whether an additional consequence of the association between harassment and prototypical women is that it makes it less likely that sexual harassment will be recognized as harmful and problematic when it targets women who deviate (vs. fit with) the narrow prototype. To do so, we tested whether people perceive instances of sexual harassment as less psychologically harmful (Hypothesis 4) and recommend more lenient punishment for perpetrators when harassment targets a nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) victim (Hypothesis 5). As before, we do not expect participant gender to moderate these effects.

Participants saw photos of (Study C1) or read about (Study C2) a nonprototypical and/or prototypical woman who has made a sexual harassment claim against a coworker. Participants then judged the credibility of her claim, evaluated how psychologically harmed the woman would be, and rated the extent to which the perpetrator should be punished if she was sexually harassed.

Study C1 Method

Participants (N = 272 MTurk workers) were told that they would be shown four "fuzzy" pictures of people and asked to make a series of impression ratings. Participants viewed both the Study A5 prototypical woman (the reverse-correlation generated sexual harassment victim) and the nonprototypical woman (the reverse-correlation generated antisexual harassment victim; see Figure 1), as well as two filler images of men. These images were presented in a randomized order.

Participants were told that the people depicted made a sexual harassment claim against a coworker. They then rated how much they believed and how confident they were that each person was sexually harassed by their coworker on a 7-point scale, with higher numbers indicating greater belief and confidence. These two items were averaged to create a composite credibility score (prototypical woman α = .83, nonprototypical woman α = .84).

Next, participants rated how psychologically harmed (upset, distressed, traumatized) each person would be if they were sexually harassed by their coworker on a 7-point scale, with higher numbers indicating stronger emotional reactions. The three items were averaged to create a psychological harm composite (prototypical woman α = .93, nonprototypical woman α = .94).

Participants were then told that company policy has a nine-tiered system of punishment severity that is used to determine appropriate punishment when sexual harassment occurs within the company. They were then asked, "if an investigation concludes that this woman [man] was sexually harassed by her [his] coworker, how should the coworker be punished?" on a 1 (*Level 1: informal warning*) to 9 (*Level 9: termination*) scale.

Finally, as a manipulation check, participants completed the same prototypicality items from the previous studies (prototypical woman α = .81, nonprototypical woman α = .85).

Study C1 Results

Confirming our prototypicality manipulation, participants rated the prototypical woman as appearing significantly more prototypical (M = 5.71, SD = .95) than the nonprototypical woman (M = 4.66, SD = 1.26), $t(271) = 13.95$, $p < .001$, $d_z = 0.85$, 95% CI [0.71, 0.98].

Primary Analyses

Confirming Hypotheses 3–5, participants rated the nonprototypical woman as being significantly less credible (M = 4.24, SD = 1.47) than the prototypical woman (M = 4.92, SD = 1.31), $t(271) = 8.45$, $p < .001$, $d_z = 0.51$, 95% CI [0.39, 0.64]. Participants also rated the nonprototypical woman as being significantly less psychologically harmed by sexual harassment (M = 5.49, SD = 1.37) than the prototypical woman (M = 5.76, SD = 1.12), $t(271) = 4.04$, $p < .001$, $d_z = 0.25$, 95% CI [0.12, 0.37]. Similarly, people gave more lenient punishment recommendations for the perpetrator when the target was the nonprototypical woman (M = 6.53, SD = 2.63) compared with the prototypical woman, (M = 6.74, SD = 2.51), $t(271) = 3.00$, $p = .003$, $d_z = 0.18$, 95% CI [0.06, 0.30].

Gender as a Moderator

Participant gender did not moderate the effect of prototypicality on perceived credibility, $F(1, 269) = .11$, $p = .743$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.01], psychological harm $F(1, 269) = .95$, $p = .330$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.02], or punishment, $F(1, 269) = 3.83$, $p = .058$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.05].[6]

Study C2 Method

Participants evaluated a woman with prototypical (i.e., art teacher with stereotypically feminine personality traits and interests) or nonprototypical (i.e., physical education teacher with stereotypically masculine personality traits and interests) female characteristics who claimed to have experienced sexual harassment at work. All other measures remained the same as in Study C1.

Participants (N = 590 MTurk workers) read about a woman named Jessica who was either described with prototypical characteristics or nonprototypical characteristics. Afterward, participants completed the same credibility (α = .91), psychological harm

[6] The interaction was marginally significant on punishment. We conducted simple effect tests but interpretation should be drawn cautiously: Women gave significantly more lenient punishment recommendations when harassment targeted the nonprototypical victim (M = 6.35, SD = 2.73) versus prototypical victim (M = 6.68, SD = 2.50; F (1, 269) = 12.09, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$). There was no significant difference for men evaluating prototypical victim (M = 6.81, SD = 2.54) compared with nonprototypical victim (M = 6.73, SD = 2.53), F (1, 269) = .601, p = .439, $\eta_p^2 = .00$.

(α = .92), punishment, and prototypicality ratings (α = .88) as in Study C1.

Study C2 Results

Confirming our manipulation, participants rated the prototypical woman as appearing significantly more prototypical (M = 5.89, SD = .79) than the nonprototypical woman (M = 3.93, SD = 1.25), $t(588) = 23.01$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.90$, 95% CI [1.71, 2.10].

Primary Analyses

Confirming our hypotheses, participants perceived the nonprototypical woman as significantly less credible (M = 4.84, SD = 1.53) than the prototypical woman (M = 5.14, SD = 1.28), $t(588) = 2.59$, $p = .010$, $d = 0.22$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.38]. Participants also perceived the nonprototypical woman as significantly less psychologically harmed by sexual harassment (M = 5.46, SD = 1.35) than the prototypical woman (M = 5.94, SD = 1.08), $t(588) = 4.72$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.39$, 95% CI [0.23, 0.55].

Contrary to our hypothesis, people did not recommend more lenient punishment for the perpetrator when the target was nonprototypical (M = 6.37, SD = 2.63) compared with prototypical, (M = 6.44, SD = 2.59), $t(588) = 0.32$, $p = .752$, $d = 0.03$, 95% CI [−0.14, 0.19].

Gender as a Moderator

As in study C1, participant gender did not moderate the effect of prototypicality on perceived credibility, $F(1, 588) = 1.33$, $p = .249$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.01], psychological harm, $F(1, 588) = .41$, $p = .525$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.01], or punishment, $F(1, 588) = .18$, $p = .671$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.01].

Series C Discussion

People have a narrow representation of who is sexually harassed (Series A), and they are less likely to think that sexual harassment targets women who fall outside of that prototypical representation (Series B). Consequently, prototypicality could affect the perceived credibility of sexual harassment claims and the perceived psychological harm caused by harassment. Two studies found that nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) women were perceived to be less credible and less harmed by harassment, which suggests that the sexual harassment-prototypical woman association could have severe downstream consequences for nonprototypical women in legal and punitive contexts.

Victim credibility is central to the treatment of sexual harassment allegations that occur internally or through legal action, and discrediting victims is a robust obstacle to victims' efforts to obtain safety and justice (Epstein & Goodman, 2018; Tuerkheimer, 2017). Even when a claim is deemed credible, the sexually harassing behavior must be considered sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile work environment for it to violate Title VII (EEOC, 2017). A critical factor that can influence these determinations is whether the conduct was patently offensive and caused the victim psychological harm.

In addition to informing whether the behavior violates Title VII, perceptions of psychological harm is oftentimes central to how people evaluate perpetrators and consider liability and damage determinations for the victim (Vallano, 2013; van Doorn & Koster, 2019). Indeed, we found some evidence that people may assign less severe punishments to perpetrators against nonprototypical victims, though more research is needed to better understand why we found this effect in Study C1 but not Study C2. Nonetheless, the fact that participants in Study C1 assigned a less severe punishment to a perpetrator of harassment in a within-subjects design, where the behavior experienced by both victims is clearly identical, is striking and underlines the importance of further examining the role of prototypicality in downstream judgments about sexual harassment.

General Discussion

Despite the pervasiveness of and considerable harm caused by sexual harassment, countless women are denied protection, fairness, and justice, and are made vulnerable to further victimization and harm under the U.S. legal system. Although #MeToo has recalibrated cultural awareness and responsiveness to sexual harassment, it seems the movement has largely amplified, credited, and addressed the voices and needs of a narrow subset of victims (Burke, 2017; Leung & Williams, 2019). Indeed, there are still myriad barriers to enforcement of sexual harassment law for many women who are victimized. Sexual harassment remains underreported by both its targets and witnesses, and credibility discounting is endemic. Even when women are believed, the harm caused by the harassment (which is critical to the legal treatment of sexual harassment under Title VII) is often minimized, allowing perpetrators to avoid being held accountable (Leung & Williams, 2019). The present investigation aimed to understand perceptions of sexual harassment and how such narrow perceptions can bias key legal determinants of harassment and inhibit the realization of civil rights for all women.

Drawing from perspectives on prototypes and perceptions of discrimination, we proposed that gender prototypes can fundamentally shape perceptions of sexual harassment. We theorized that, because sexual harassment is inherently connected to gender-based group membership, people mentally represent sexual harassment victims as prototypical women. Further, perceiving a behavior as sexual harassment requires connecting the harassing behavior to the target's gender-group membership, such that sexual harassment becomes more difficult to recognize (both in terms of labeling sexual harassment and perceiving sexual harassment claims to be credible) when targets deviate from the prototype of women (Major et al., 2002). Additionally, when there is evidence that sexual harassment occurred, features of nonprototypicality may lead individuals to minimize the severity of nonprototypical women's experiences.

We tested the effect of gender prototypes on these perceptions of sexual harassment across 11 highly powered experiments that included over 4,000 participants and integrated a variety of measures such as physical drawings, face perception tasks, and survey ratings. Because sexual harassment is defined in relation to gender-based group membership, in the Series A studies we examined whether people's mental representation of sexual harassment targets overlapped with the prototype of women (Hypothesis 1). Across an unconstrained drawing task (Study A1), photo selection tasks with transformed images (Studies A2–A4), and reverse correlation methods (Study A5), we consistently found that women who experienced sexual harassment were mentally represented as more gender prototypical than women who did not experience

harassment. Studies A1–A5 thus supported Hypothesis 1, although the link between prototypicality and sexual harassment was perhaps most strongly observed in the exploratory meta-analysis in the B-Series studies showing that the exact same faces were perceived as more prototypical when labeled with experiences of sexual harassment rather than other control, nonharassing behaviors.

Because recognizing sexual harassment requires noticing a potentially harassing behavior and linking it to gender-based group membership (Major et al., 2002), we tested the hypothesis that people would be less likely to label a potentially harassing behavior as harassment when the victim was nonprototypical rather than prototypical. Across four studies in B-Series, we manipulated prototypicality through textual descriptions that controlled for attractiveness or through face images, while sampling a variety of different sexually harassing scenarios that included unwanted romantic interest and inappropriate physical touch. Meta-analyses of the four studies revealed that participants were less likely to label potentially harassing behaviors as such when victims were nonprototypical (vs. prototypical) women. Moreover, the effect of prototypicality on labeling was moderated by behavior ambiguity, such that prototypicality had a slightly greater effect on participants' judgments when behaviors were ambiguously harassing than when behaviors were unlikely to constitute harassment.

In Series C, we predicted and found that a claim was deemed less credible and sexual harassment was perceived to be less psychologically harmful when it targeted nonprototypical women. Participants in Study C1 recommended less severe punishment for the perpetrator of harassment against a nonprototypical woman, but this effect did not emerge in Study C2. Thus, nonprototypicality not only impedes the identification of sexual harassment (Studies B1–B4), but also creates further barriers after harassment claims are made. Our results suggest that nonprototypical women's claims are less likely to be believed, and even when believed, nonprototypical women will face additional barriers to legal redress due to biased perceptions of harm and potential leniency in punishment recommendations for perpetrators (although this effect was less robust across Series C).

Theoretical and Applied Implications

The present research provides several contributions to the social psychological literature on gender and sexual harassment. First, although psychologists have been studying sexual harassment for over three decades (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1988), there remains a dearth of theory to explain when and why some victims of harassment are neglected relative to others. Much of the social science literature examines other aspects of sexual harassment, such as its prevalence, causes, and consequences (e.g., Cortina & Berdahl, 2008; O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2009), whereas studies that do examine perceptions of harassment remain relatively disconnected rather than unified around a shared framework or approach. Some early work reported that participants believed that women who wear more cosmetics and are more attractive face greater risk of harassment (Golden et al., 2001; Madera et al., 2007; Seiter & Dunn, 2000; Workman & Johnson, 1991), but these studies have largely remained independent from each other and typically explicate the potential effects of specific victim characteristics on a limited range of judgments. Further, experimental work is particularly lacking as most sexual harassment research has relied on correlational approaches (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine, 2018).

We have advanced an integrative theoretical framework for studying perceptions of sexual harassment, which not only unifies previously disconnected findings but also generates clear predictions for how narrow mental representations of victims can lead to the neglect of nonprototypical victims in legal and punitive contexts. By connecting perceptions of harassment to prototype theories (Medin, 1989; Rosch, 1978) and theories of discrimination attribution (Major et al., 2002), our framework explains and demonstrates how deviation from the prototype of a sexual harassment victim (a gender-prototypical woman) can influence labeling of sexual harassment (Series B) and perceived credibility and harm of victims (Series C).

Our framework also highlights the importance of considering within-category variation in social perception and provides insights into potential gender differences in harassment perceptions. First, the present research joins the literature on the importance of within-category variation in prototypicality (e.g., Blair et al., 2004; Eberhardt et al., 2006; Kaiser & Wilkins, 2010; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004), underlining that social perception is shaped not only by broad categorizations between different social groups (e.g., do people think women are more affected by sexual harassment than men), but also by variation in within-category features (e.g., do people think feminine women are more affected by sexual harassment than those who are less feminine). With respect to the sexual harassment literature, this approach expands beyond studying how perceptions of victims and perpetrators differ based on between-category differences in gender (e.g., Castillo et al., 2011; Madera et al., 2007) or race (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008), resulting in a more nuanced theoretical perspective. But importantly, our framework allows integration of both within and between-groups variations in prototypicality. According to our framework, between-groups variation in victim prototypicality should also shape perceptions of and judgments about sexual harassment.

The harassment literature has also focused on gender *differences* in perceptions of harassment (Rotundo et al., 2001), but our perspective reveals contexts in which one would not necessarily expect perceiver gender to moderate perceptions. Namely, because gender prototypes are socially propagated and shared (Bailey et al., 2019; Turner et al., 1987), women and men will often share and be equally influenced by prototypes of women and of sexual harassment victims (as we found across our studies). This dovetails with literature on how both men and women perpetuate the status quo and similarly punish individuals who deviate from their group-prototype (Jost et al., 2004; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Our prototype perspective also bridges research on perceptions of harassment with research on actual experiences of harassment in the workplace. Specifically, we showed that people believe prototypical women are more likely to experience harassment, whereas applied research consistently shows that *less* prototypical women are at greater risk of harassment (e.g., Berdahl, 2007a, 2007b). This bias emerges, we propose, because understandings of sexual harassment are related to beliefs about gender-based group membership, resulting in a flawed and consequential overlap between social prototypes of women and of harassment victims. Indeed, our data are consistent with the proposal that reasoning about group-based membership is an important aspect of sexual harassment

perception, though future research can more directly test the specific mechanism of gender group categorization.

From a more applied perspective, our results fit with and bolster critiques of the #MeToo movement as centering on a narrow subset of prototypical women (e.g., attractive, White, affluent women; Burke, 2017). Future research should examine whether cultural shifts in perceptions of the credibility and suffering of harassment victims catalyzed by the #MeToo movement only favor prototypical women. If this is the case, countless women will continue to be silenced and left without protection, fair treatment, or recourse (Epstein & Goodman, 2018; Tuerkheimer, 2017). When credibility discounting occurs, the majority of accusations are dropped and do not reach an investigative body or jury (Epstein, 2020; Tuerkheimer, 2017). Therefore, this inclination to discount the credibility of nonprototypical women, especially when the majority of women fall outside of narrow prototypical representations, could lead to unjust and discriminatory treatment. In addition to barring many women from accessing legal protection, credibility discounts further perpetuate harms related to psychological well-being and can leave women vulnerable to revictimization and retaliatory treatment, creating a formidable obstacle to women's safety and healing (Epstein, 2020).

Importantly, our results also suggest that even when nonprototypical women overcome this barrier, are perceived as credible, and reach an investigative body or jury, nonprototypicality can then bias perceptions of the harm victims have endured. Evaluations of the psychological harm caused by harassment is the critical component of legal responses to victims under Title VII (EEOC, 2017). To meet the legal definition of sexual harassment and bring forth an actionable claim, the plaintiff (harassment victim) must demonstrate that the conduct caused repeated harm over multiple instances or severe harm in one instance (EEOC, 2017). Further, determinations of harm are critical to judgments of whether employers and harassers are liable for compensatory or punitive damages and the extent to which the harasser should be punished (EEOC, 2017; Vallano, 2013). Therefore, biased assessments of the psychological harm experienced by nonprototypical women who are sexually harassed has the potential to meaningfully disrupt nonprototypical women's ability to receive protection and justice under the law. Taken together, if women's nonprototypicality biases perceptions of both credibility and harm, as our results suggest, it could prevent nonprototypical women who are sexually harassed from receiving the civil rights protections afforded to them.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our studies explored prototypicality using within-categorical traits, characteristics, and attributes that varied within women. We did not explore between-categorical variation among women, such as race, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Black women are perceived as less gender prototypical than White women (Crenshaw, 1992; Lei et al., 2020; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Sesko & Biernat, 2010; Thomas et al., 2014) and people may thus more readily recognize sexual harassment when it targets White (vs. Black) women, in addition to perceiving Black women as less credible and less harmed by sexual harassment. The redeployment of Tarana Burke's initial movement by White, feminine women, as well as the exclusion of women of color from the mainstream movement, is consistent with this possibility (Burke, 2017).

The current studies conceptualize prototypicality as a reflection of distance from group membership, and we argue that this mechanism drives the downstream effects on credibility and harm. However, because group prototypes are "fuzzy" and can encompass physical appearance and various behaviors and traits (Hogg, 1993; Medin, 1989; Rosch, 1978), there could be numerous and potentially overlapping specific aspects of prototypes of women that facilitate the disbelief and devaluation of nonprototypical women's experiences to different degrees. For example, physical attractiveness, an important feature of prototypical women, may heavily influence credibility and harm determinations. In terms of credibility, attractive (vs. unattractive) women who are sexually harassed are more believable victims (Madera et al., 2007). Further, from a legal perspective, determinations of harm in sexual harassment cases are heavily dependent on perceptions that the harassing behavior is *unwanted* (EEOC, 2017), and people may think sexual conduct is not unwelcomed by (and therefore not harmful and perhaps even flattering to) unattractive women (Giuffrida, 2019). Indeed, our initial evidence showed that impressions of warmth and attractiveness are particularly relevant to impressions of prototypicality (see supplementary Analyses on OSF: https://osf.io/xehu9/). We note that even when using manipulations of prototypicality that controlled for attractiveness (Studies B1 and C2), we still found prototypicality affecting perceptions of credibility and harm. Future research should examine how these specific components of prototypicality lead individuals to minimize the credibility and severity of sexual harassment when it targets nonprototypical women.

Additionally, the current studies did not examine whether people's mental representations of a harassment victim are partially informed by the perception that sexual harassment stems from sexual intent. Perceiving sexual harassment as being driven by sexual interest in the target may contribute to dismissive reactions to nonprototypical sexual harassment victims. Yet, when participants in Study A4 read about a victim who was shown a crude image (i.e., harassment reflecting derogation or control rather than sexual interest), they still perceived the victim to be more like a prototypical woman than the nonvictim. This finding suggests that our results are not solely driven by beliefs about sexual interest. Future research should explore the extent to which beliefs about sexual harassment and sexual intent contribute to people's perceptions of who is victimized, who is believed, and who is harmed by sexual harassment.

In Study A5, the images generated from noise-based reverse correlation may have slightly inflated the magnitude of the prototypicality effect. The generated victim image and antivictim image were created by superimposing the average noise-pattern of the images that were selected as resembling a sexual harassment victim and the average noise-pattern of the unselected images onto the base image, respectively. The antivictim image does represent the opposite social category of a sexual harassment victim (a nonsexual harassment victim), but because the antivictim image is the exact inverse of the victim image, the differences in prototypicality between the images may be larger than if we had compared the victim image with an image that was generated by asking participants to select the woman who does *not* resemble a sexual harassment victim. To examine this possibility, we ran an addi-

tional reverse correlation task ($N = 165$) using this question and generated people's mental representations of a nonsexual harassment victim. We then had a separate sample of participants ($N = 109$) rate the prototypicality of the victim image from A5 and the new image of a nonsexual harassment victim. The prototypicality difference was slightly smaller ($d = 1.04$) compared with the effect found in A5 ($d = 1.19$), but was still large (see OSF data at https://osf.io/xehu9/ for generated image and analyses). This suggests that the effect size in A5 was somewhat larger than if we had used a more conservative method, which may have somewhat inflated the Series A meta-analytic effect (though not to such an extent that the effect would otherwise be nonsignificant or trivially small).

Further, in A5 we did not randomly generate a control image of a woman for comparison, so our results can only speak to the relative difference in prototypicality of a sexual harassment victim and antisexual harassment victim. Therefore, it is unclear whether the difference in prototypicality in the generated images is due to heightened prototypicality of people's mental representation of a sexual harassment victim, decreased prototypicality of people's mental representation of a nonsexual harassment victim, or a combination. Importantly, because harassment victims are actually *more* likely to have characteristics of nonprototypical women (Berdahl, 2007), this relative difference in prototypicality still demonstrates a theoretically and practically meaningful bias in perceptions of who is victimized by sexual harassment.

Additionally, the evidence for the expected interaction between prototypicality and harassment context in Series B was weaker than expected. Although we had powered our studies to meet 80% power for a medium effect size, the interaction was only significant in the meta-analysis with a small effect size. The expected interaction may be too small to be detected with our sample size (Blake & Gangestad, 2020), or our manipulations may not have been strong enough. People may also simply have a lower threshold for what is considered sexual harassment for prototypical women, particularly when mixed-gender intergroup dynamics are made salient as in our studies. As a result, participants may perceive behaviors to be more potentially harassing for prototypical woman relative to nonprototypical women even when those behaviors appear relatively benign. Although Series B did not find strong evidence of an interaction between prototypicality and behavior ambiguity, there was robust evidence that sexual harassment is less likely to be labeled as such when a woman is nonprototypical (vs. prototypical). Further the results of Series C demonstrate that a victim's prototypicality can bias perceptions of outcomes that are critical to the legal interpretation and response to sexual harassment under Title VII.

Finally, future research should also attempt to generalize our findings beyond the specific designs, participant samples, and stimuli used in the present investigation. For example, we relied heavily on vignettes. Although they allowed us to carefully control our experimental manipulations, they may differ from how people often witness sexual harassment in the workplace. There was also a lack of stimulus sampling in Series C. Although we varied stimuli across studies and used stimulus sampling across Series A and B, the Studies C1 and C2 had a stimulus sample size of one. To examine whether these results can generalize across multiple stimuli, future designs should manipulate gender prototypicality with multiple photos that vary between participants and treat stimuli as a random factor. Our samples were also limited to American undergraduate or MTurk participants, but there may be cultural differences in perceptions of sexual harassment (e.g., Merkin, 2008; Tang et al., 1995), or effects of age group (e.g., Loredo et al., 1995) or political ideology (e.g., Kunst et al., 2019; van der Linden & Panagopoulos, 2019) that can moderate our findings in meaningful ways. Additionally, prototypes are socially determined and context-dependent, and societies or generations that do not share the same prototype of women as those in our samples would likely require other forms of prototypicality manipulations.

Conclusion

Sexual harassment is a systemic and pervasive problem that causes considerable psychological, physical, and economic harm to its targets (for reviews see Pryor & Fitzgerald, 2003; Willness et al., 2007). Accordingly, it is important to identify factors that can shape people's perception of and judgments about sexual harassment victims. Because people associate sexual harassment victims with gender prototypical women, sexual harassment can go unrecognized, women may not be believed, and harassment may not be considered harmful when victims deviate from the prototypical image of women. Given that nonprototypical women are disproportionately targeted by sexual harassment (Berdahl, 2007a, 2007b; Schultz, 1998), it is especially concerning that their experiences are less likely to be labeled as harassment and more likely to be discredited and minimized. When the perception of sexual harassment relies on victims' resemblance to narrow prototypes of women, many women will experience difficulty attaining civil rights protections offered under the law. Understanding the misperceptions we hold about victims of sexual harassment is crucial in recognizing the barriers to legal rights and bringing about successful resolutions for all women targeted by sexual harassment.

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(*Appendices follow*)

Appendix A

Power Analysis and Sample Size Justification

Study A1

Participants were 155 undergraduate students from a large public university. The recruitment goal was at least 120 participants by the end of an academic quarter. Although the preregistration did not indicate any exclusion criteria, one participant was excluded for clicking through every page quickly and missing the manipulation; this person was not included in the count of 155 participants.

Study A2

Power analysis of the prototypicality rating in Study A1 (d = .33, α = .05, power = .80, two-sided independent t test) revealed that Study A2 required 145 participants per condition. We planned to run 200 participants per condition (400 total), anticipating exclusions for those who failed attention check (Oppenheimer et al., 2009). We recruited 410 participants from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), and nine failed an attention check. Thus, our usable sample consisted of 401 participants.

Study A3

Meta-analysis of the prototypicality rating effect in Studies A1 (d = .33) and A2 (d = .40) yielded d = .38. Power analysis (d = .38, α = .05, power = .80, two-sided independent t test) showed that Study A3 would require 110 participants per condition. We preregistered to run 150 per condition (300 total), anticipating exclusions of individuals for failing attention check. We recruited 323 participants from the university subject pool, and 19 failed an attention check. One person was further excluded due to computer malfunction. Thus, the final sample consisted of 303 participants.

Study A4

Meta-analysis of the prototypicality rating from Studies A1-A3 showed a d = .58. Power analysis (d = .58, α = .05, power = .80, two-sided independent t test) showed that Study A4 would require 47 participants per condition. Because we generalized to a new form of sexual harassment, we preregistered to run 150 per condition (300 total). Initially, 299 MTurk workers participated, with 16 failing an attention check. Study A4 had 283 final participants.

Study A5

We preregistered to run 150 MTurk participants with the goal of achieving a sample size of at least 128, anticipating exclusions for those who failed the attention check or indicated that they responded randomly (with N = 128, we can detect d = .25 with 80% power, α = .05, paired sample t test, two-tailed test). To be included in analyses, participants had to pass an attention check and indicate that they did not respond randomly; 141 participants met these criteria and were included in analyses.

Study B1

We aimed to recruit at least 300 MTurk participants, and power analysis (α = .05, power = .80, two-sided independent t test) showed that this would allow us to detect effect size of d = .32. We set a goal to 350 participants in total, anticipating exclusion of individuals who failed attention check. Originally, 355 MTurk workers participated but 26 failed the attention check, leaving 329 participants.

Study B2

Study B1 had an effect size d = .50, and power analysis indicated that 512 participants for a 2 × 2 factorial between-design would be needed to achieve 80% power to detect an interaction (Giner-Sorolla, 2018). On MTurk, we set our goal to 600 in total, anticipating to exclude individuals who failed attention check. Originally, 604 MTurk workers participated but 59 failed the attention check. The final sample for Study B2 was 545 participants.

Study B3

Similar to Study B2, we aimed to recruit at least 512 participants to achieve 80% power for a 2 × 2 factorial between-design to detect an interaction (d = .50). Originally, 603 MTurk workers participated but 41 failed the attention check, leaving a total of 562 participants.

Study B4

We preregistered to run 600 participants from the university subject pool to achieve 80% power for a 2 × 2 factorial between-design for an interaction with a medium effect size (d = .50). We ended data collection with 555 participants because the academic term had ended then; 71 participants were removed for not passing attention check, leaving 484 participants.

(*Appendices continue*)

Study C1

We aimed to run 300 participants with the goal of achieving a sample size of at least 271 after exclusions (with $N = 271$, we can detect $d = .22$ with 95% power, $\alpha = .05$, two-tailed paired sample t test). A pilot ($N = 208$ MTurkers) was used to determine the effect size of $d = .22$.

Study C2

We aimed to run 730 participants with the goal of achieving a sample size of at least 700 after exclusions (with $N = 700$, we can detect $d = .21$ with 80% power, $\alpha = .05$, independent samples t test, two-tailed test).

Appendix B

Manipulations of Independent Variables in Series A to C

Manipulations using photographs and all materials can be found on OSF (manipulations shown in bold): https://osf.io/xehu9/.

Study A1: Manipulation of Victimization Shown Before Nonvictimization

Sara is a product manager at a finance firm Smith & Simon Co., where she has been working since 2015. At a recent company event, Sara's supervisor walked behind her and **[he discreetly groped her/he accidentally tripped and knocked her over.]**

Study A2: Manipulation of Victimization Shown Before Nonvictimization

Sara is a product manager at a finance firm Smith & Simon Co., where she has been working since 2015. At a recent company event, Sara's supervisor walked behind her and **[he discreetly groped her/he accidentally tripped and knocked her over.]**

Study A3: Manipulation of Victimization Shown Before Nonvictimization

Jennifer is a college student majoring in business. Last summer, she interned at a consulting firm called Smith & Simon Co. The firm gave Jennifer an offer to return for another internship next summer, but she rejected the offer. When asked why she rejected the offer, Jennifer said that **[her supervisor repeatedly asked her about her dating life/her supervisor repeatedly asked her to work on meaningless tasks.]**

Study A4: Manipulation of Victimization Shown Before Nonvictimization

Brenda works at a marketing firm in a midsized city, where she has worked since moving to the city five years ago. Brenda was originally attracted to the small startup firm because of its size, and she thought the work was interesting and important. Brenda regularly eats lunch with coworkers in the breakroom. Last week during lunch, Brenda's manager called her over to his table and asked her to provide her opinion on something. He then showed Brenda a picture of **[a penis/the new company logo]** on his phone and asked what she thought.

Study A5 did not Manipulate Victimization

Study B1: Prototypical Description Shown Before Nonprototypical Manipulation

Jessica is a **[high school art teacher and coach of the girls' cheerleading team/high school physical education (P.E.) teacher and coach of the girls' ice hockey team]**. She recently had a meeting with the principal that left her confused. **[He complimented her skirt and noted that it reflected her tender and caring personality/He complimented her jersey and noted that it reflected her tough and dominant personality]**. Later in the day, the principal inquired about her weekend plans. Jessica told him that she was going on a **[weekend getaway with friends/ weekend fishing trip with friends]**. At the end of their conversation, the principal asked her if she was still dating her boyfriend. She was unsure whether the principal was simply being friendly or whether this might be sexual harassment.

Study B2: Harassment Context Shown Before Control Context (Prototypicality Was Manipulated Using Photos; See OSF)

Jane (pictured here) works at a marketing firm. She recently had a meeting with her supervisor that left her confused. She consulted him on a problem she was facing. **[He put his hand on her waist/He put his hand in his pocket]** and told her not to worry too much. He said he was confident that she will figure out the problem eventually without giving her any feedback. She was unsure how to interpret the interaction and wondered what was going on.

(*Appendices continue*)

Study B3: Harassment Context Shown Before Control Context (Prototypicality Was Manipulated Using Photos; See OSF)

Jane (pictured here) works at a marketing firm. She recently had a meeting with her supervisor that left her confused. She consulted him on a problem she was facing. **[He put his arm around her shoulder/He put his hand in his pocket]** and told her not to worry too much. He said he was confident that she will figure out the problem eventually without giving her any feedback. She was unsure how to interpret the interaction and wondered what was going on.

Study B4: Harassment Context Shown Before Control Context (Prototypicality Was Manipulated Using Photos; See OSF)

Anna (pictured here) is a high school teacher. She recently had a meeting with the principal that left her confused. They discussed her recent course evaluation, and he told her there was room for improvement. At the end of their meeting, the principal asked her **[if she was still dating her boyfriend/if she was still prepared for the conference presentation next week]**. She was unsure how to interpret the interaction.

Study C1

Participants were shown images of a prototypical and a nonprototypical woman (see OSF). Participants were then told that the woman has made a sexual harassment claim against a coworker. No other descriptions were provided

Study C2

Participants read either the prototypical or nonprototypical description. Participants were then told that the woman has made a sexual harassment claim against a coworker. No other descriptions were provided.

Prototypical

Jessica is a high school art teacher and coach of the girls' cheerleading team. She has a tender and caring personality, likes to wear skirts and dresses, and spends time with friends and her boyfriend on the weekends.

Nonprototypical

Jessica is a high school physical education (P.E.) teacher and coach of the girls' ice hockey team. She has a tough and dominant personality, likes to wear jerseys and athletic clothes, and spends time with fishing with her boyfriend on the weekends.

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