SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE:

A FEMINIST ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

by

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B.A., Cornell University
(1973)

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF
MASTER IN CITY PLANNING

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

DECEMBER, 1976

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FEB 4 1977
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace. It is an attempt to explain the phenomenon as an expression of dominance within the context of unequal power relationships between victims and perpetrators. Developed within the context of a feminist group formed to address the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace, the thesis reflects the community organizing process in which the group is engaged. It describes the group and its political philosophy, summarizes the data available on sexual harassment, proposes a theory to explain the problem, and evaluates alternative strategies of social change aimed at eliminating the problem. All of these elements are viewed as the interdependent parts of a long term community organizing process.

Thesis Supervisor: Hubert Jones, M.S.W. Associate Professor, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My appreciation must be extended first to each of the members of the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion. These women all reviewed my work in a critical but supportive way, and used their own time as well as AASC meeting time to discuss the thesis as it progressed. Without the support of this group, the thesis would have been an impossibility.

Secondly, I wish to thank all the members of the other feminist groups I have worked with in the past – the D.C. Rape Crisis Center, the Feminist Alliance Against Rape, and the Women’s School. These women have all shared their feminism and their struggles with me, as well as their knowledge and organizing skills. My experience in these groups has been absolutely invaluable, and was drawn upon throughout the preparation of this thesis.

Next, I wish to point out that few graduate students are fortunate enough to have a live-in thesis advisor to see them through the conceptual blocks and the fits of depression which inevitably strike in the early morning hours. I was. Consequently, very special thanks go to Freda Klein, for her endless ideas, sense of humor, and support. Nancy McDonald and Niki Rockwell also provided me with this kind of support and assistance.

Finally, I would like to thank Hubie Jones and Jon Schon, my other thesis advisors who supported me in exploring a topic which was clearly not in the mainstream of planning. They asked many difficult questions which helped me to put together a more coherent and comprehensive thesis. Equally importantly, they never asked me what sexual harassment at the workplace had to do with planning.
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CHAPTER I

THESIS OBJECTIVES

The Alliance Against Sexual Coercion (AASC) is a feminist organization formed in response to the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace. For the purposes of this preliminary discussion, "sexual harassment" may be defined as persistent sexual interaction which is unwanted by the person to whom it is directed. This interaction may be visual, verbal, or physical in nature. "Sexual" harassment may be distinguished from other forms of harassment in that it only includes behavior which is expressive of sexual attraction, which alludes to sexual acts or organs, and/or which entails physical contact considered to be sexual in nature. The phrase "at the workplace" is used to narrow the definition to include only sexual harassment which occurs within the context of relationships established through work - relationships between co-workers, workers and clients, workers and their employers, etc. While the interaction referred to often occurs at the workplace itself, the place is less important to the definition than the relationships between victims and perpetrators.

At the first meeting of the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion, members decided to use this thesis as a way to stimulate the group's organizational and ideological development. We felt that the thesis and its attendant deadlines and theoretical requirements would help us to complete our research quickly and systematically. Analyzing and writing about the issue we were working on would raise theoretical and strategic questions early in the organization's development, stimulate and provide a context for discussion of those questions, and help us to anticipate difficulties which might arise later in the organizing process. In addition, writing about AASC and the
issue of sexual harassment at the workplace would enable the writer to devote much more of her energy to the project. As with all newly formed and unfunded organizing projects, this energy was badly needed.

Early discussions of the content and format of the thesis elicited several possible foci - analysis of the issue of sexual harassment; comparison of the feminist organizing process with other traditional community organizing and advocacy models; and evaluation of the planner’s role within that process. All of these were considered important, but together they amounted to more material than was manageable for a thesis. AASC members then decided that given the particular skills of the writer and the immediate needs of the group, the thesis should address two major concerns. These included 1) developing a more thorough analysis of the issue of sexual harassment, or "formulating the problem", and 2) evaluating strategies to solve the problem.

Both of these concerns represent elements of a larger organizing process, which will be described in Chapter II. The first was selected as a thesis topic because AASC was newly formed, and was focusing its energies on defining the problem it would address. We felt that it was important to produce a written statement which would articulate our own thoughts and which would be useful as educational material for later organizing activities. The statement would draw together the data we had collected, articulate our analysis of the data, and provide us with the beginnings of a theory of sexual harassment at the workplace. The work "beginnings" is important here. Issues evolve gradually and analyses of those issues must be elaborated and modified as more information becomes available and as experience in working on the issue unfolds. In this sense, defining the
problem is not a discrete or finite step to be taken in the process of organizing, but a continuous element of that process.

The second major concern which the thesis is to address - the evaluation of strategies for social change - was chosen with somewhat different purposes in mind. Our previous organizing experience indicated that all too often, serious strategic analysis and discussion were postponed or forgotten as the pressure to get work done escalated. This is not to say that strategic analysis did not occur, but that it often occurred in a haphazard or crisis oriented fashion, without careful analysis of all of the possible alternatives. And because we were continually responding to crises, there was no time for strategic analysis. For similar reasons, long term organizational planning was often neglected. To avoid the problems that practice without theory or long term planning can generate, we chose to include analysis of strategy alternatives as part of the thesis. Discussion of the thesis as it progressed would then act as a check on the group and its organizing process.

The final and secondary objectives pertain not so much to AASC as to the field of planning in general and social policy in particular. In the past, social policy has virtually ignored those areas which are of particular concern to women. These include specific issues such as day-care, abortion, sexual assault and health care for women, as well as the larger issue of sexism. The failure of social policy to address these issues is quite remarkable, given the fact that so many other fields have eventually responded in some way to these issues. As one writer has put it, "...it is rather striking that despite all the abundance of literature, ideas and research about sexism and women and women's relentless commitment and in-
volvement in social action, there has been no book on social policy." (Safilos-Rothschild, 1974, p. vii)

Since the time that statement was made, a few more written works on women and social policy have appeared. However, concern with the impact of sexism still plays no important role in the training of social policy analysts, or in the social policy literature or practice as a whole. While it is not the purpose of this thesis to attempt to enlighten the field of social policy, a secondary objective is to stimulate concern with, and contribute to the legitimacy of women's issues within the field of social policy.

The final thesis objective pertains to the theory and practice of urban planning. As planning has attempted to carve out for itself a professional domain, some concern over appropriate roles and theories of action for planners has emerged. On the whole, these roles parallel traditional jobs which planners have taken, and the attendant theories of action are mainly restricted to various models for working "within the system". In response to the narrowness of these models, this thesis will attempt to illustrate an alternative model for planning practice. The central premise underlying this last effort is that working within social movements and "outside of the system" is an alternative and viable role for planners to assume.

It is important to point out here that the content of the thesis will not directly address either of the secondary objectives fully. However, if the thesis demonstrates how the alternative model can be practiced, and if it increases the legitimacy of issues concerning women within the field of social policy, the secondary objectives will be met.
The most important implication of the thesis objectives outlined above is that the thesis has multiple "clients" (to put it in the planning vocabulary) each of which places by virtue of its character, differing demands upon the thesis. To prevent serious conflict among these demands, priority has been set upon the needs of the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion. Some degree of conflict, however, is considered by the writer to be both inevitable and healthy. The theoretical and technical rigor demanded by the fields of social policy and planning as a whole will be translated into pressure on the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion to clarify its theory of change, to build its case carefully, and to plan long term strategies. In turn, the demands of feminism will demonstrate an alternative planning model and raise previously unrecognized issues to the field of social policy. This kind of interchange is healthy, since each area has something to gain from the other.

Chapters II and III constitute background material. The former is a discussion of the "theory of action" and the organizing model applied by the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion to its work. The latter is a brief discussion of the contemporary Women's Movement and the feminist anti-rape movement, from which the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion emerged. Together, these sections provide an historical and theoretical framework within which the group's theory and action may become comprehensible to readers who are unfamiliar with the evolution of the contemporary Women's Movement.

Chapter IV includes a presentation of the data which is available on sexual harassment at the workplace, and a discussion of the methodological and political issues raised by use of this data. Chapter V is an attempt
to explain the data through analysis of the unequal power relationships between victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment at the workplace. This part comprises a "theory of sexual harassment" and is the core element of the thesis. In the following chapter, alternative explanations of sexual harassment are reviewed.

Chapter VII is a discussion of alternative strategies for social change which emerge from the theory elaborated in Chapter V, and Chapter VIII is a concluding analysis of the effectiveness of the thesis and a discussion of some of the problems which arose in relationship to the thesis.
CHAPTER II
THEORY OF ACTION

To address the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace, the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion has engaged itself in a long term advocacy and organizing process. As noted above, this thesis is concerned primarily with two elements of that process - formulating the problem and evaluating strategies for social change. But before proceeding, it is important to place those elements within the context of the larger organizing process, and to identify assumptions regarding social change which are implicit in the group's work.

A Model of the Planning and Organizing Process

Several models have been developed to describe community organizing and advocacy processes.¹ The tendency in developing these models, however, has been to neglect the conceptual elements of the process and focus instead on a set of actions or steps taken by the group initiating the process. These steps generally include "entering the community", "finding the local leadership", "raising issues", etc. While it is generally recognized that careful analysis of the issue and conscious strategic planning are crucial to the success of the process, little attention is given to the ways in which groups collect and use information or plan strategies. Because these and other conceptual elements of the organizing process are neglected, the interplay between thinking and doing (or theory and practice) and the role of planning within the organizing process, are not at all clear in these models.

An advocacy model developed by Hubert Jones does include some of these elements, however, and is therefore an improvement over most of the others with which the writer is familiar. Jones' model includes the following components:

- Fact finding, to document the problem and elevate it from the level of a "social condition" to the level of a "social issue",

- Assessing the relative strengths and weaknesses of the "action system" (agent of change) and the "target system" (subject of change), and

- Selecting and implementing action strategies.  

In this model, the role of planning is identified within the process, and the conceptual and action components are better integrated than in most other models. However, certain other conceptual elements of the process, such as analyzing or formulating the problem and evaluating the impact of strategies, are still missing. In addition, the continuous interplay between data collection, analysis and action, which is critical to a successful organizing or advocacy effort, is not clearly reflected in the model. To focus attention on the conceptual elements of the process, and on the continuous interaction among the conceptual and action elements of the process, the model illustrated on page 13 is proposed.

In this model, the problem is identified and formulated before any action is taken. Afterwards, the group is in a position to raise the issue to the public's attention (although this may occur later as a part of the overall strategy for social change.) Through the group's formulation of the

2. Hubert Jones, course entitled "Advocacy for Institutional Change" (MIT, Spring Term, 1976)

3. This model is based on a number of organizing models, and particularly that developed by Hubert Jones. Donald A Schon must also be credited with an important contribution to my thinking in regard to the conceptualization of social problems. (See Schon, 1974)
THE ORGANIZING PROCESS

STATE OF THE ISSUE

IDENTIFY PROBLEM

EVALUATE STRATEGY

FORMULATE PROBLEM

IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

SELECT STRATEGY

RAISE ISSUE

ASSESS TARGET + ACTION SYSTEMS

ASSESS STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES
problem, the target system(s) will be identified. The relative strengths and weaknesses of the target and action systems can then be assessed, which will result in the delineation of a set of possible strategies for change. Comparison and analysis of these strategies can then be used as a basis for selecting the most effective ones.

After the strategy is implemented, its effect on the "state of the issue" (the incidence of the problem, the attitudes and actions of others in regard to the problem, etc.) can be evaluated. At this point, the first cycle will have been completed. If evaluation indicates that the strategy did not produce the desired results, the group may have to reformulate the problem, reassess the target and action systems, and/or reassess alternative strategies and follow the process through a second cycle. Throughout the process, different kinds of information will be collected and analyzed for decision making.

Clearly, this model presents an idealized picture of the organizing process, and one which is difficult to replicate in practice. However, the value it places on consciousness of process, the continuous search for and analysis of data with which to evaluate effectiveness, and on careful planning should prove useful in organizing efforts.

The interplay of all of the elements of the organizing process has important implications for those elements with which this thesis is concerned. That is, that this analysis of the problem and of strategies is only preliminary. As more facts become available and as the organizing process unfolds, the group's analysis of the issue and of strategies should change. Failure to respond to new information and to alter theory and practice accordingly would indicate rigidity in the group, and would probably result
in an unsuccessful organizing effort.

Assumptions Regarding the Nature of Social Change

The fact that AASC has engaged itself in this sort of process indicates that to some extent, members share a set of assumptions or beliefs regarding the nature of social change and the role of individuals and groups within the social change process. Some of these assumptions are shared by all those who organize any kind of group to create any kind of change, while others are more particular to feminists. By virtue of the fact that they are assumptions, they are entirely debatable. This is not to say that they are not based in logic or past experience, but that it is entirely possible to arrive at some very different set of assumptions regarding the nature of social change. The purpose here, however, is not to theorize on the validity of those assumptions, nor is it to present all sides. Rather, the purpose in clarifying these assumptions is to provide a context within which the group's analysis of the issue and strategies for change will become understandable.

The first of these assumptions is that people are capable of recognizing unacceptable or intolerable conditions in their lives, and of envisioning future states in which those conditions are eliminated. The second assumption is that people are also capable of initiating social change in order to eliminate unacceptable conditions and move toward the more agreeable state which they have envisioned. This is not an entirely voluntaristic approach, in that constraints on our ability to create change are recognized. Primary constraints include our relative political power, the amount of resources to which we have access, the way in which
we use those resources, our own organizing abilities, and the extent to which other groups and individuals counteract our efforts. Nevertheless, within these constraints there is a range of freedom in which we can generate social change.

A third assumption is that group action is both preferable to and more effective than individual action in efforts to generate social change. In a social system such as ours, collective action is necessary to enable the individual to act. The presence of an active, established group eases the individual's transition into the sphere of action, provides her with a source of recognition and emotional support, and thereby enables her to become an active participant in social change efforts. Women are particularly in need of this kind of support, since political activism by and for women is not traditionally accepted behavior.

The notion that group action is more effective than individual action is also based on the relative political power of groups versus that of individuals. As a relatively powerless and subordinated group, women can only bring enough power to bear to generate change in the way they operate as a unified body.

However, political expediency and the need for personal support from a group are not the only reasons behind our belief in collective action. Even if we could effect change single-handedly, we would not choose to do so, since collectivity, rather than competitive individual striving is valued in and of itself, and is a central element of the future which we envision.

For the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion, belief in the collective action of all women manifests itself in the group's collective structure, identification with a much larger Women's Movement, and in attempts to link the issue of
sexual harassment at the workplace to the larger realm of women's experience.

A fourth important assumption implicit in AASC's work is that planned, disciplined collective action is most effective. A collective without organization - an unstructured, disorganized collection of individuals - cannot fulfill its potential for action. Organization is essential not just to enable the group to act, but also to facilitate the development of a coherent group philosophy. Planning is essential to organization, in that it provides a forum for setting goals against which progress can be measured, developing strategies, anticipating problems which might arise later so that action can be taken to avoid them, and evaluating previous action.

The fifth major assumption of the group is that the failure of our social system to respond to the needs of women is rooted in the unequal distribution of power and resources inherent in a capitalist and male dominated system. The corollary of this belief is that the redistribution of power and resources is essential in order to end the oppression of women. Reforms are desirable to the extent that they make daily life more tolerable. However, reforms which do not generate a permanent redistribution of power and resources will not ultimately eliminate problems faced by women, since the roots of those problems will remain intact.

This leads to a sixth assumption - that conflict is an inevitable element of effective social change efforts. A redistribution of power and resources requires that those who have a disproportionately large share now must give up part of that which they have. Since this is rarely done voluntarily, conflict between the powerless and the powerful in inevitable.

As noted above, many of these assumptions are shared by many kinds of organizations. The remaining assumptions to be discussed are more particu-
lar to feminists. Feminist ideology varies widely from one group to the next, but the lowest common denominator of feminism is the belief that women comprise a group distinct from, and subordinate to men.4

From this point on, feminists are divided on other assumptions they make in regard to the causes, implications and means of eliminating women's subordination. The Alliance Against Sexual Coercion, however, shares other assumptions stemming from this belief. First, as an oppressed group, women are subject to a particular set of problems which are not fully understood of shared by men. Second, men benefit from the oppression of women, just as whites benefit from the oppression of blacks, and just as capitalists benefit from the oppression of workers. It is not generally in men's immediate self interest to work toward the elimination of women's oppression, since doing so requires that men give up the relative power and privilege they have now. As a result, women cannot rely on men to solve their problems. Instead, they must organize themselves to gain power and end their own oppression. While men may be held accountable for their own attitudes and behavior, men are not viewed by the group as "the enemy". Rather, the enemy is a social system which creates and maintains unequal power relationships.

Undoubtedly, members of the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion make countless other assumptions regarding the nature of social change. Those which have not yet been articulated and which affect the group's work, how-

4. Due to the many different concepts of "feminism", it is impossible to define the term fully, except in reference to one of the particular forms it may take. And even that is not easy. The use of the term in this analysis refers only to that variety of feminism which is practiced by the writer and by AASC. Many of the concepts behind this form of feminism are described below.
ever, will probably emerge as the organizing process progresses. The extent to which members share all such assumptions is also uncertain. However, consensus has been reached by the group with regard to the beliefs described above. In our discussions, they appeared to be primary, and to constitute the foundation of a shared political philosophy which enables AASC members to work collectively.

The Planner's Role: Professionalism and the Contemporary Women's Movement

Before describing my own role as a "professional planner" within AASC and the Women’s Movement as a whole, it is necessary to provide some background on the feminist view of professionalism. In general, feminists take a rather dim view of professionalism - it is viewed as one of the forces which perpetuates the unequal power relationships between men and women. Furthermore, feminists have little faith in the expertise commonly attributed to professionals. These views are often well-justified, and shared by the writer.

Before explaining the reasons behind these views, it is important to distinguish between two elements of the term "professionalism". On the one hand, the term signifies competence, detailed knowledge of a body of information, and the application of a set of standards of quality to one's work. On the other hand, professionalism implies superior status which extends beyond one's work itself, and which is used to legitimate unequal power relationships between professionals and non-professionals. It is this superior status and power which feminists question, and not the value of competence or standards of quality per se. Competence may be achieved in relation to any kind of work, and not just those kinds of work which are called professions. Competence, then, is independent of professional credentials.
or status. In the following discussion, the term professionalism will be used in reference to the more negative aspects of professionalism as a source of power, and not in reference to competence.

Feminists have recognized that with professional status, one gains access to a set of benefits — information, contacts with other powerful individuals, material rewards, and legitimacy — which are less often available to non-professionals. These benefits confer special power upon professionals, and reduce the relative power of non-professionals. Furthermore, professional status is not equally available to everyone. It is obtained through higher education, which is more readily available to those who already have relatively high socio-economic status. In this sense, professionalism serves to widen and perpetuate the gap between the powerful and the powerless. Women are a relatively powerless group, so professionalism often operates against their interests. In efforts to equalize the relative powers of men and women, professionalism as a means of dominance is something to be organized against.

Feminists, however, have not organized against professionalism just because it perpetuates the unequal power relationships between men and women. They have also recognized that the "expertise" commonly attributed to professionals is largely mythical. Because professional training is at worst biased against, and at best unconcerned with the interests and needs of women, professionals (and especially male professionals) are by no means uniquely equipped to solve problems faced by women. This recognition has made many women less willing to defer to or to rely upon professional judgement.

As this unwillingness to rely on professionals for the solution to
problem, the target system(s) will be identified. The relative strengths and weaknesses of the target and action systems can then be assessed, which will result in the delineation of a set of possible strategies for change. Comparison and analysis of these strategies can then be used as a basis for selecting the most effective ones.

After the strategy is implemented, its effect on the "state of the issue" (the incidence of the problem, the attitudes and actions of others in regard to the problem, etc.) can be evaluated. At this point, the first cycle will have been completed. If evaluation indicates that the strategy did not produce the desired results, the group may have to reformulate the problem, reassess the target and action systems, and/or reassess alternative strategies and follow the process through a second cycle. Throughout the process, different kinds of information will be collected and analyzed for decision making.

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women's problems permeated the Women's Movement, activists began to develop a self-help philosophy which was manifested in the creation of new services organized and run by non-professional women. Their success in these efforts heightened women's sense of their own competence to define and work toward the fulfillment of their own needs, and further eroded their dependence upon professionals.

The issue of professionalism, then, is not a new one to the Women's Movement. Presently, however, there is renewed concern over professionalism within the Women's Movement. This time it has taken a slightly different form—it is concern with the impact of women professionals on the Women's Movement.

Early feminist organizing efforts focused on the concept of "universal sisterhood", emphasizing the shared interests of all women. This concept has remained central to feminist ideology, but it has proved somewhat naive in its failure to recognize the potential for conflict between the individual and the collective interests of women. This conflict has emerged in relation to professional women. Those who call themselves feminists, but who operate as independent professionals, have often had a destructive impact on the movement as a whole and on other women. Many professional women have used the successes of the Women's Movement and the skills they have acquired through participation in the movement to advance their own interests, which are at times in opposition to the interests of other women. This obviously creates resentment among those women whose interests were neglected by their professional "sisters".

The criticism leveled at professional women who act in opposition to the collective interests of most women is not founded on the argument that
women should not become professionals or that they should not use their skills to advance themselves. Rather, the argument is that if one is a professional, and particularly if she calls herself a feminist, she has a responsibility to use her skills and the benefits of professional status to the advantage of other women. This, however, is not entirely easy to do, since the rewards of professionalism are highly cooptive.

Given this rather negative experience with professionalism within the Women's Movement, my own professional status as a planner is as much a liability as an asset. My participation in the Women's Movement began prior to my professional training, and is based on something other than professional expertise. However, as the organizing model described above illustrates, planning is integral to the process which the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion is engaged in, and access to planning skills is therefore useful.

My participation in AASC is based not on my professional status as a planner, but on my commitment to working with other women toward the elimination of problems which women face. This commitment is the primary determinant of everyone's membership in the group, which places the particular skills of individual women in a secondary position. Because it is this commitment and a shared political philosophy which are the basis of membership, the roles that members play within the group are not professional in nature.

The collective structure of the group enables every member to participate to some extent in all decisions and activities. This tends to diffuse functional specialization even more. Values placed on full participation by each member, and on the sharing of skills and knowledge underlie this structure.
This is not to say that each person’s role within the group is identical to all the others. Roles are determined by personality, training, political perspective, experience in feminist and other kinds of organizing, and on time commitment to the group’s work. My role, although it is not defined as "AASC Planner" is therefore affected by the training I have had in planning, among other things. My training influences my vision of the process we are engaged in, the concerns I raise to the group, and the ways I might encourage the group to do things. Furthermore, my skills, which are to some extent a result of my training, partly determine the tasks I take on. Because I have experience in fundraising and in program planning and evaluation, for example, I will be most fully involved in these kinds of group activities. But as noted above, these and all other functions are shared by the group as a whole, and are not entirely my responsibility.

Because "planning roles" take countless forms, it is difficult to distinguish the similarities and differences between my role in the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion and other planning roles. However, the similarities I perceive include concern with process, concern with integrating theory and action, and the recognition that one’s work is political in nature. The differences which distinguish my work from that of most other planners are that 1) I work in a collective rather than a hierarchical organization, 2) functional specialization is minimized so that there is no separate planning function, 3) as a full member of the group I have no "client" whose interests are in any way separate from mine, 4) I work "outside of the system" rather than in traditional institutions, and 5) I identify with a social movement rather than with a profession.
CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

The History of the Anti-Rape Organizing Movement

Early American feminists made no documented attempts to organize around the issue of rape formally, but their awareness of the problem is evidenced in indirect references to rape in their writings. Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935) for example, wrote the following in her autobiography:

A stalwart man once sharply contested my claim to the freedom to go out alone. "Any true man", he said with a fervor, "is ready to go with a woman at night. He is her natural protector." "Against what?" I inquired. As a matter of fact, the thing a woman is most afraid to meet on a dark street is her natural protector. Singular. (Gilman, 1935, p. 72)

This indirect reference to the fear of rape and to the dual role of men as women's assailant and protector is closely paralleled in the more explicit, modern feminist analysis of rape:

The male role dictates that men have a dual function. They are the rapists and the protectors of women. This dual role mystifies our own thinking and tends to make us emphasize their good-guy protector role leaving us as easy prey when they assert their right to rape. Adding to this confusion is the male association between sex and violence. Movies, television and novels as well as everyday life find sexual relationships existing on the same level as street violence. (Detroit Women Against Rape, 1971, p. 9)

These and other similarities in the writings of both early and modern American feminists indicate that some level of awareness of the role played by rape in male-female relationships has been a growing part of feminist consciousness for some time. However, it was not until the 1970's that
women were able to speak openly about rape, and to organize themselves to address the problem. Anti-rape organizing, as one writer has put it, is a "women's movement invention." (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 397)

The anti-rape movement began in 1971, when feminist groups began to discuss and plan for the opening of the first rape crisis centers. These centers were established in 1972, on both the East and West coasts. They were organized with two primary objectives in mind: to assist women who had been sexually assaulted, and to sensitize institutions such as the police, hospitals, and the courts to the rights and needs of rape victims. Their long term goal, however, was to eliminate rape.

The underlying philosophy of these early feminist anti-rape groups was one of self-help. Their work was based on the premise that women, by virtue of the fact that they were women, had the necessary understanding and skills to assist each other in resolving issues which affected them. Furthermore, women had to help each other, since traditional, male-dominated institutions had historically failed to respond to their needs.

Along with this self-help philosophy, there emerged a new, feminist analysis of the causes and implications of rape. Feminists viewed rape not as a primarily sexual act, but as an act of violence against women. They argued strongly against "blaming the victim", and placed rape in the larger context of sexism and the unequal power relationships between men and women. The following statement illustrates this analysis:

We view rape as any unwanted sexual activity. We feel that rape is a violent, aggressive, and controlling act motivated by the desire to humiliate women. Since masculinity has become dependent upon sexual prowess, re-assertion of male control is taken through
sexual humiliation. Rape serves to perpetuate the unequal power arrangement between men and women in our society, and serves to keep all women in fear and thus-dependent upon men. The traditional structure of woman's roles is enforced by the threat of rape. All men benefit from the existence of rape; all women suffer from it. (D.C. Rape Crisis Center, 1974, p. 1)

As anti-rape organizing progressed, this analysis was elaborated and refined. Rape was linked with other feminist issues such as pornography and domestic violence, which together revealed even more pervasive cultural patterns of violence against women. Similarly, an understanding of the relationships among sexism (as it was manifested in rape) and the issues of racism and class were developed.

Within a few years of the opening of the first rape crisis centers, approximately 200 new centers had been opened independently by women's groups throughout the United States. In 1974 a national network of rape crisis centers - the Feminist Alliance Against Rape - was formed by the founders of the D.C. Rape Crisis Center. Innovative programs in counseling, self-defense, and community education had been developed; changes in police, medical and court procedures had been proposed; and countless reforms had been made through the pressure rape crisis centers had brought to bear on their local institutions. The statement below recaptures the spirit and success with which the early centers were organized.

Within two years the world out there had stopped laughing, and the movement had progressed beyond the organizational forms of speakouts and conferences, our internal consciousness-raising, to community out-reach programs that were imaginative, original and unprecedented: Rape crisis centers with a telephone hotline staffed twenty-four hours a day to provide counseling, procedural information and sisterly solidarity
to recent rape victims and even to those whose assaults had taken place years ago but who never had the chance to talk it out with other women and release their suppressed rage; rape legislation study groups to work up model codes based on a fresh approach to the law and to work with legislators to get new laws adopted; anti-rape projects in conjunction with the emergency ward of a city hospital, in close association with police women staffing newly formed sex crime analysis squads and investigative units. With pamphlets, newsletters, bumper stickers, "wanted" posters, combative slogans - "STOP RAPE"; "WAR-WOMEN AGAINST RAPE"; "SMASH SEXISM, DISARM RAPISTS" - and with classes in self-defense, women turned around and seized the offensive. (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 397)

Eventually, the mass media became interested in the issue of rape as well. Media coverage was usually more sensational than feminist in nature, but it did serve to draw more public attention to the issue, and to generate additional pressure for institutional reform.

By 1974, rape was widely considered to be a serious social problem. Besides the reforms made in the policies and practices of local institutions, state and federal legislative bodies had begun to discuss the issue. State rape statutes were modified, and federal funding for research and action projects was made available first through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and later through the National Institute of Mental Health.

This wide response marked the success of the early anti-rape movement. In many communities, the issue of rape had been raised forcefully and successfully, rape victims had been provided with alternative sources of support and assistance, and institutions had been forced to change some of their sexist and inhuman practices. Reforms, through often incomplete and inconsistent from one place to another, were widespread. In this re-
spect, many of the immediate objectives of rape crisis centers had been met. Their long term goal of eliminating rape, however, has by no means been attained: a great deal of work remains to be done. This comes as no surprise, since the feminist analysis of rape recognized from the beginning that rape was very deeply embedded in our social system. The fact that rape continues, despite all the work that has been done to combat it, is more a testimonial to the accuracy of the feminist analysis than it is a measure of the effectiveness of the anti-rape movement.

Apart from the difficulty of the issue which the movement has addressed, it has met with other problems as well. Perhaps the major problem now is the difficulty women face in maintaining a uniform position regarding the way in which the issue of rape should be handled. Divergences in analysis and strategy among anti-rape groups have splintered the movement so that a good deal of energy is now spent in conflict among groups. This has drained energy away from organizing efforts, and weakened the movement as a whole.

The inability of rape crisis centers to maintain a uniform position regarding the issue is the result of many forces, some of which have probably not yet been identified. However, the absence of a solid financial base, the funding difficulties experienced by anti-rape groups, professionalization of the issue, the inability of feminists to develop a powerful national network of rape crisis centers, and the nature of the early anti-rape movement seem to be primary.

The absence of a sound financial base was an immediate problem for all rape crisis centers. Their desire to serve all women, and their use of hot-lines for counseling precluded fees for direct service to rape victims.
Other services such as public speaking, professional training, and the development and sale of literature on rape were eventually used to bring in money to support victim services. These mechanisms rarely brought in enough money to pay full time staff members or to cover overhead costs. Thus, centers were rarely self-sufficient, and many eventually turned to traditional public and private funding sources for financial support.

As soon as rape became widely accepted as a serious problem, however, a number of individuals and institutions began to compete with anti-rape groups for the few public and private funds which were available to support anti-rape pre-jects. Because those institutions and individuals were better credentialled, paraprofessional feminist groups were at a serious disadvantage in their funding efforts. They were left with only two options — to become or at least to try to appear as professional as those with whom they competed, or to try to subsist on some form of alternative funding. Some of those which followed the first option were eventually funded and co-opted. Their feminist founders were in many places replaced by professional counselors and their self-help philosophy and feminist analysis were distorted and diluted. Those which opted instead for alternative funding could only operate at a subsistence level, and energy for organizing remained limited. While some groups have maintained a strong feminist approach, others operate no differently today than traditional social service agencies. This process, by the way, is by no means unique to the anti-rape movement. Nearly every social issue raised by activist, political groups is eventually absorbed to some extent by the appropriate profession, institutionalized and de-politicized in order to reduce the threat it presents.
to the status quo.

The absence of a strong, national feminist network of anti-rape groups probably hastened the rate at which some centers were professionalized and coopted. The feminist Alliance Against Rape (FAAR) was formed with the intention of asserting feminist control over, and preventing the professionalization and cooptation of the issue. However, it has not been entirely successful for two primary reasons: the nature of the early anti-rape organizing process and the same lack of resources from which all other feminist anti-rape groups suffered.

The nature of the early part of the contemporary Women's Movement was such that the issue of rape was arrived at almost inevitably.

Rape, as an issue, did not arise because certain leaders viewed it as "the issue" nor did it arise because it was a designated topic on a consciousness-raising list. Instead, rape became an issue when women began to compare their experiences as children, teenagers, students, workers and wives and to realize that sexual assault, in one form or another, was common. (Connell and Wilson, 1974, p. 3)

Consciousness-raising groups provided early Women's Movement activists with a crucial tool - a forum in which intensely personal experiences could be openly discussed for the first time. And once those experiences had been shared, women discovered that what they had previously considered to be "individual problems" were in fact common to many women. In this way, women's shared "personal problems" became identifiable as social and political issues. Rape was one of those common experiences, which was eventually identified as a feminist issue through the consciousness-raising process. Consciousness-raising groups proliferated just prior to the emergence of the anti-rape movement, which partly accounts for the fact that
rape crisis centers sprang up independently and simultaneously throughout the United States.

This form of evolution hastened progress in developing the issue in many places at once, but weakened feminist control over the issue. Because so many centers opened at once, there was little time to develop a clear feminist model for rape crisis centers, to share organizing experiences and learn from the successes and failures of other groups. Even if there had been time to establish a uniform feminist position on rape, it would have been extremely difficult to build a national coalition. This would have required the establishment of regional and national organizations. And regional or national organizing would have required structures similar to those which early movement activists found repressive and antagonistic to the interests of women. Thus, even if some groups had tried to build a larger, more cohesive movement early on, their efforts would have been strongly resisted by others.

Finally, organizers had had limited experience and could not anticipate the ways in which the issue might be handled by others. As a result of all of these difficulties, feminist control was not established quickly enough.

The second primary reason for FAAR's inability to build a strong national network was its lack of resources. Because there are few funding sources available to projects such as FAAR, the group has never been

5. Use of the term "feminist model" raises the same issues as the term "feminist" does. Here the term is used in reference to organizational structures which are collective, controlled by women, and informed by the self-help and other principles outlined in Chapter II.
able to provide its staff with salaries. Instead, they must support themselves through other work, which places severe limitations on the energy available for building a network.

When FAAR members realized that building a network required far more resources than were likely to become available in the near future, they decided to focus their energies instead on publishing the FAAR Newsletter. This paper is now the only continuous feminist periodical which addresses the issue of rape and which is informed by direct organizing experience. The scope of the Newsletter has broadened to include material on all forms of violence against women (e.g. domestic violence, sexual harassment at the workplace, pornography and violence against women in other media, etc.). FAAR's editorial staff has found that recently, response to the paper has increased, which is an encouraging trend.

While the prospects for rebuilding an effective, feminist anti-rape movement are now uncertain, the commitment with which anti-rape organizing began is still alive. As noted above, FAAR continues to publish its Newsletter, and in many cities feminist activists continue to strive toward the original goals of the anti-rape movement. Furthermore, new groups are continually forming to work on related issues such as domestic violence, and to carry on the larger feminist struggle against violence against women.

The Alliance Against Sexual Coercion, in fact, is part of this continued struggle, and a very direct outgrowth of the anti-rape movement. Founding members shared experience in anti-rape organizing, as well as the feminist ideology developed throughout the experience. It was clearly this participation in the anti-rape movement which enabled the group to
identify the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace, and which informs the group's approach to the problem in innumerable ways. Thus, some understanding of the anti-rape movement is crucial to an understanding of the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion.

The Formation of the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion

The organization was formed in June of 1976, with the purpose of addressing the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace. The objectives adopted by the group shortly after its founding include the following:

- To document and assess the scope of the problem of sexual coercion at the workplace, and to act as a clearinghouse for information related to the issue.

- To develop a more thorough analysis of the issue.

- To educate the community to the issue.

- To develop legal and emotional resources and additional long range options for women who are subject to sexual coercion at the workplace. (AASC, 1976, p.6)

These objectives were viewed as relatively short term measures, which, if successful, would make sexual coercion somewhat easier for women to deal with. However, the ultimate goal of the group was to work toward the elimination of the problem.

AASC had many reasons for selecting the issue of sexual harassment as a focus for its work. First, experience in staffing rape crisis centers had convinced the group that it was a serious problem for women. There had been many calls from women who had been raped by their bosses and co-workers, and who were unable to do anything about it for fear of losing their jobs.
And there were few ways of helping these women. The usual steps could be taken to support or assist them, but not with any assurance that both the women themselves and their jobs could be protected. If the women were to be protected from further abuse, those who victimized them would have to change. Yet any action taken to change the assailants would endanger women's jobs, since there was nothing to prevent the assailants from firing their victims. Alternatively, if no action was taken (in order to protect the women's jobs) the women themselves could not be protected, since there was nothing to prevent continued abuse.

It was also known by the group that few anti-rape or workplace organizations had focused their attention on the issue in the past. Therefore, sexual harassment at the workplace seemed to be a problem in need of attention. Attention to the issue at this time was appropriate for several reasons. First, feminist organizing around the issue of domestic violence had begun within the past few years and had taken hold quickly. Thus, there appeared to be some degree of public readiness to address issues similar to sexual harassment at the workplace. Second, articles about sexual harassment at the workplace had begun to appear during the summer of 1976, which indicated that it was an issue of growing concern to women, and that women were beginning to be ready to speak out about it publicly. Third, during 1975 and 1976, the organizing of clerical and other women workers had increased significantly. This focused public attention on women in the workplace, and provided AASC with other women's groups through which organizing might be accomplished more easily.

Finally, AASC recognized the issue as one which was important to the development of the Women's Movement as a whole. The issue was strategic—
ally located at the crossroads of two important organizing trends - anti-rape organizing and women's workplace organizing. Consequently the issue provided women with an important organizing tool. It was a means of bringing the experience and skills of women active in workplace organizing to anti-rape organizing, and vice versa, through collective work on a shared concern.

Most importantly, working on the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace was a means of responding to a major criticism of the Women's Movement, which had been made from both inside and outside of the movement. The criticism was that the movement was elitist, and unable to respond to the needs of, and draw in minority and working class women. Because sexual harassment victimized working women of all classes, it was an issue which had the potential for drawing working class women into the movement, responding to their needs, and uniting different classes of working women.

In a recent article, Jean Tepperman describes the current clerical workers movement as one which "fuses women's and workers consciousness in a way which taps tremendous sources of strength and militance within people - and also brings out and develops powerful feelings of solidarity and sisterhood." (Tepperman, 1976, p. 19) Because the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace also provides a means of raising women's consciousness both as women and as workers, it has a similar potential. This is not to say that organizing will be easy. Rather, it is to say that if it is effective, it can have important implications for the future of the Women's Movement.
CHAPTER IV
ASSESSING THE AVAILABLE DATA

There is very little data pertaining to sexual harassment at the workplace. Most is in the form of case histories, although there is some survey data as well. Apart from several methodological problems which will be discussed below, there are also serious political problems in using individual case histories to prove that a problem exists. Feminists have encountered these problems in organizing around other issues similar to sexual harassment at the workplace, such as rape and domestic violence.

First, no single case can illustrate the depth or the complexity of a social problem. Focusing on a single case tends to reduce a social issue affecting countless people to the "personal problem" of some unfortunate victim. Second, the handling of these cases (particularly by the mass media) tends to sensationalize the problem, by reducing it to a series of gory or provocative details. Finally, the use of individual cases is in some ways exploitative of the individuals who are subject to the problem in question. Public exposure of their victimization is not something which is pleasant or easy to endure, particularly when the victims are likely to be blamed. Thus, using cases to raise an issue contributes to the victimization of those who have already been subjected to the problem.

Individual case records, then, are not the kind of data feminists would choose to employ in raising the issue of sexual harassment, if there were any choice. But at this point, these cases constitute the major source of data. At the same time, it is recognized that the public often responds more actively to "human interest stories" about victimized indi-
viduals than to survey data. Thus, some use of case histories is necessary in order to mobilize people to do something about a problem.

The use of this data presents a dilemma to the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion, in that further exploitation of women is almost necessary to raise the issue to the public's attention, and to convince others that sexual harassment at the workplace is in fact a serious problem. Feminists have recognized this dilemma in the past, and have attempted to resolve it through careful handling of the stories made available to them, and through strict confidentiality procedures. The cases described below were also chosen with this concern in mind. Only cases which have already been made public were used, on the assumption that the women involved had already agreed to public exposure of their victimization.

As noted above, the case histories also raise certain methodological problems. The stories came from a wide range of sources: books on the lives of working women, newspapers, and magazine articles. The cases are based on interviews with women who have experienced sexual harassment at the workplace, and are written by numerous authors. Cases were selected on the basis of the degree of detail with which each was originally recorded, and the different dimensions of sexual harassment which each one reveals. They were transcribed verbatim from the original sources, to prevent further filtering through the bias of this writer.5

The major methodological problems inherent in using this data for analysis of the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace include the

5. The names of the victims of sexual harassment in these cases have been changed by this author, since it is not clear whether the names were changed by the original writers or not. Again, this is done to protect the women who told their stories from further exposure.
following:

- the effect of the biases of various writers,

- the fact that the data reveals only one perspective on the problem (i.e., the perspective of women victimized by sexual harassment), and

- the fact that cases were not compiled in an entirely systematic fashion.

The biases of the interviewers/writers are unknown, impossible to ascertain at this point, and mixed. Because the interviewing was informal and not part of a "scientific" survey, there is no way to examine the accuracy or the methodological soundness of the data. Given this situation, there may be some advantage in drawing cases from multiple sources: at least they are not subject to a single, overriding bias. The cases were written from feminist and non-feminist perspectives, by professional and non-professional journalists writing for very different kinds of publications, and by both men and women. Thus, the cases cannot possibly be subject to a single, overriding bias.

A second methodological problem is that the cases reflect only one side of the problem: the side of women who have been victimized by sexual harassment. This, however, is a function of the nature of the problem. Those who commit sexual harassment are extremely unlikely to discuss the problem for two reasons. First, since they are not victimized by sexual harassment, it is not "a problem" for them. Second, to talk about their experience with sexual harassment would be self-incriminating. The nature of the problem, particularly in its most extreme forms, is such that it is not always observed by third parties either, who might otherwise be able to provide another perspective on the problem. For these reasons, the
possibility of exploring the "other sides" of sexual harassment is minimal, at least for the time being.

However, the bias which might be attributed to women's accounts of their own victimization by sexual harassment is not as problematic as it may seem at first glance. The likelihood that women would falsify or fabricate stories of sexual harassment is minimized by women's socialization (to be discussed below) and by the fact that women have little to gain through such falsification. Victims of sexual assault of any kind are often blamed for bringing it upon themselves, so it is not in their own self interest to fabricate stories of sexual harassment. In testimony before the New York State Commission on Human Rights, one speaker noted that most women have been unable or unwilling to discuss sexual harassment at the workplace openly. She stated that women who did speak out had been humiliated and intimidated, and that they had watched the "ridicule and condescension" heaped on women who had complained. She said:

"Most male superiors see it as a joke. At best, its 'not serious'. Even more frightening, the woman who speaks out against her tormentors runs the risk of suddenly being seen as crazy, a wierdo or, even worse, a loose woman." (Nemy, 1975, p. 38c)

If women receive this kind of negative reaction for reporting their victimization to others, then reporting becomes self incriminating to them, as well as to those who commit sexual harassment. Consequently, false reporting is unlikely: victims have more to lose than to gain from it.

These kinds of dynamics which influence reporting rates for certain kinds of crimes have been officially recognized, particularly in regard to rape. As a result, studies based on self reporting of crimes are gaining
in research circles, since they are one of the few ways that any kind of information can be collected on some crimes. The Department of Justice has recently undertaken several victimization studies for this reason. Another study carried out through the President's Commission on the Enforcement and Administration of Justice used the following rationale:

A brief note as to the background and limitations of the survey is appropriate here. It stemmed from the well-known difficulties with police statistics. These include the lack of comparability of criminal statistics in different cities, the fact that "crime waves" can be made to appear and disappear with changes in the system of reporting, the failure to include some kinds of criminal activities in statistical reports or to differentially report certain types of crime and, not the least important, the impossibility of estimating how much crime is not reported to the police.

The excellent work of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports repairs only some of the difficulties because the reports still draw on local police reports. Is there another way to measure crime that does not rely on the police? Can the survey method do the job?...After considerable experimentation and negotiation, NORC felt that the answer was yes — a survey of individual victims of crime could probably give national estimates of crime, and moreover, such estimates were now imperative. (Ennis, 1967, p. 2,3)

The third and final methodological problem with the case histories to be presented below is that it has not been collected in a very systematic fashion, and therefore cannot be said to represent all of the data of its kind which may be available. The cases were collected as AASC became aware of their existence through members' regular reading, and through others who found articles which they thought would be of interest to the group. But no systematic efforts have been made to thoroughly cover some
predetermined body of literature. There are two reasons for this. First, the group had insufficient time and resources to do this kind of research. Second, even if there had been resources to support a systematic search, it would have been all but impossible to identify the appropriate body of literature to examine. Since the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace has hardly even been identified as an issue, no particular field has undertaken efforts to document or analyze it. Thus, there is no clear body of academic or even non-academic literature to search.

Case Studies

Jane, 24, used to drive for Cambridge Yellow because she 'needed the money'. She considered driving a cab more exciting than waitressing... She would make about $25 a night, and work five nights a week. She did not know any other women cab drivers, and 'was mostly ignored' by fellow workers...

Jane said that men would get off on scaring her about the dangers of her job. Some women got a kick out of it too, but it was mostly men.

One of those dangers became a reality when she was asked to drive from Cambridge to Malden by three men one evening. She said she was getting bad vibes from them, but kept telling herself she was being silly. She was raped after driving them to a park in Malden. She referred to them as 'guys out for a good time'. She said she was left in the back seat of the cab while they went into a house, tied up in such a manner that she was able to free herself and drive away. She reported the incident to the police but was not able to press charges because the man weren't found. (Gerwicz, 1976, p.7)

Mary drives for Town Taxi...Her daughter 'warns their [other male cab drivers'] hearts' — taking away some of the tension that could exist between Mary and them. Old timers from other
companies don't think that any of the cab companies should let women drive at night. Most of the cabbies think it 'strange' to see a woman cab driver; especially the old timers, since there were no 'ladies' driving when they all started out...

She says there's such a variety that she can't generalize about men cabbies. Of course, there are always groups that make 'a play' for all the women drivers, and then there are those who are 'generally obnoxious' — those of the ilk that 'hoot and howl'. (Genwicz, 1976, p. 7)

Sharon is 27, and she's a construction worker. For the last 16 months she's worked in Alaska as a crane operator... During the next year she expects to earn more than $56,000 working 12-hour days and seven-day weeks, and somehow, when she thinks about the money, the verbal abuse just doesn't seem so bad...

"I always wear jeans, three shirts, no make-up", she said. "I de-emphasize my femininity. I have to. The first three weeks on the job, every man I saw tried to gross me out. Dirty stories. Snickers. Propositions. They totally resented me, they totally resented the thought of any woman making as much money as a man." (Raymer, 1976, p. 10c)

Miss Graves, 24, has been a pipeline construction worker for two years. She is a University of Arizona medical student who decided to take a few years off between her studies and her internship... She's the only woman on a 30-man crew and, now that the men accept her, she has few hassles. "But," she noted, "it all depends upon the crew you're on, and your foreman. A lot of the foremen resent you, they just see you as a trouble maker, and they don't need any more problems. So they work you to death, give you more than you could possibly do in a day. They try to drive you out, they want to make life so miserable for you that you'll quit." (Raymer, 1976, p. 10c)

Karen Smith, of East Lansing Michigan, a traveling representative for the Health Care Division
of Johnson & Johnson, selling products from bath oils and powders to band aides, jokingly distinguishes between two types of male buyers she's encountered. "There are the father figures," she says, "and there are the dirty old men. I make it a hard rule never to date clients or salesmen; I tell them I don't mix business and pleasure. But a couple of times I've been caught in a warehouse and cornered. Once it got down to physical force, a real free-for-all. I put my hands up and pushed the guy away. Finally I threatened to tell his boss. That worked. Later I found out he'd done the same thing to other saleswomen.'

'It's a particularly blatant example of the double standard, because when salesmen flirt with clerks and women buyers, sometimes it increases their sales. For them it's the thing to do. For a woman it can be disastrous." (Rhodes, 1976, p. 76)

One thing made me [a legal secretary] vaguely nervous during the interview [at a law firm]. The personnel director, a woman, read my resume and asked some cursory questions about my experience and typing and dictation skills...she kept taking these long looks at my body, and at one point she asked me to walk to another desk and dial information and ask for a number. She said she wanted to hear how I sounded on the phone, which is okay. But I felt uncomfortable, as if she was really interested in a closer look at my body...

Thursday afternoon Harvey [the woman's boss] told me to be prepared to stay a bit late the next night. 'We're having a Friday conference,' he said. 'They start in the mid-afternoon and sometimes run into the evening.' I asked what they were all about and he said 'Oh, some office routine, you'll enjoy yourself...'

What they had in mind was an orgy involving four of the lawyers, including Harvey, and five secretaries, including me. The conference room was set up like a bar, and Sally - she's the woman who interviewed me - locked the door and said 'All right kiddies, it's Friday, lets whoopee.' I'm naive. It took me another half an hour to catch on, and by that time Harvey was all over me, and another guy - a man in his late forties who has four kids and looks real.
straight - had a girl on the couch and she wasn't resisting.

Well I was, and Harvey just wasn't listening to me saying no...

I went home physically ill, and I had to tell my mother I had a bug. I stayed in bed most of the weekend, and Monday I called and said I wasn't coming back.

What shook me the most was when I learned later that this firm was notorious for these 'Friday Conferences', and that any women who worked there was assumed to be part of it. I felt cheap. (Goulden, 1976, p. 45)

Miss Sheperd, who is 32, said she encountered her most clear case of sexual harassment eight years ago in San Francisco. She had been in the training program of a commercial real estate firm, and her immediate superior had made it clear that he didn't approve of women working outside of the home.

"The man who was second in command to my boss asked me out and I fielded it. I was charming but I said no. He said that I'd be sorry," she related. "Later on, my boss said he had evidence of my inefficiency on which he could fire me and when I said it wasn't possible, he said he would make evidence. He was supported by the man who had asked me out. That man then said to me, 'I told you you'd be sorry.'"

"I had pored myself into that job," Miss Sheperd said. "It was just devastating to me that it could be pulled out from under me for no apparent reason. For several years after that, I had no ambition. I had the frightened feeling that it could all be taken away again."
(Nemy, 1975, p. 38c)

Carol Jones, a nurse at George Washington University Hospital in Washington, termed sexual harassment "a working condition between doctors and nurses."

"It happens so frequently and so much, that you accept it as an everyday thing and learn to work with it," she said.

She recalled one occasion where a surgeon, who had just come from the operating room, "grabbed me from behind, and around the neck, and dragged me playfully around the room. Patients
were there, and doctors and nurses. It was his playful way of relaxing. I couldn't make a scene."

She said that resident physicians were more difficult to deal with than interns.

"Through the years, the resident physicians develop airs and some of them think they are God's gift to patients and nurses. Certain men convey a feeling to you that you are subservient, and you take what they dish out and you do what they tell you to do." (Nemy, 1975, p. 38c)

"When I think about it, I get real worked up... men thinking they have a right to touch me, or proposition me because I'm a waitress," said Debby Smith, who has supported her studies in sociology, at Cornell with long periods of working in restaurant-bars.

"This sort of harassment is crucial when it's job related," added the 24-year old Miss Smith. "Why do women have to put up with this sort of thing, anyway? You aren't in any position to say 'get your crummy hands off me' because you need the tips, that's what a waitress job is all about. Women are the ones who are punished. They have to leave a job because of a man's behavior and the man is left there, sitting pretty. It's totally ridiculous."

"The man I was working for thought he could pinch me," she recalled. "When I told him to stop, he just continued but when I gave notice, he stopped. Then he propositioned me and I gave notice again. He finally understood, but it was six months of pure hell. I was a wreck but I needed the money. He said I was taking it too seriously, and it was all a joke. What made him think he had a right to do it?" (Nemy, 1975, p. 38c)

"The majority of passengers do make passes. The ones that do make passes are married and are business people. When I tell them I'm married, they say 'I'm married and you're married and you're away from home and so am I and nobody's gonna find out.' The majority of those who make passes at you, you wouldn't accept a date with it they were friends of yours at home..."

"I've never had the nerve to speak up to
anybody that's pinched me or said something dirty. Because I've always been afraid of these onion letters. These are bad letters. If you get a certain amount of bad letters, you're fired. When you get a bad letter you have to go in and talk to the supervisor. Other girls now, there are many of 'em that are coming around and telling them what they feel. The passenger reacts: She's telling me off! He doesn't believe it. Sometimes the passenger needs it..."

"Even when they pinch us or say dirty things, we're supposed to smile at them. That's the one thing they taught us at stew school. Like he's rubbing your body somewhere, you're supposed to just put his hand down and not say anything and smile at him. That's the main thing, smile." (Terkel, 1972, p. 74-79)

Sherry Coles was 23 at the time, recently divorced and the sole support of her infant son. She was employed as a public information aide in the Justice Department, and sexual advances from the bosses were common practice within the agency...But Williams wasn't interested and was soon in deep trouble on her job. "A simple no just didn't work. It became an affront, a matter of ego and who was going to triumph..."

She was harassed and threatened, denied job training, lost a promised promotion. After six months, she was suddenly bombarded with memos attacking her job performance: soon afterwards, she was fired with 25 minutes notice on a Friday. There was no hearing and the allegations against her were never proven.

She didn't take the situation lying down—"There I was, 23 years old and looking forward to working until I was 62. I couldn't afford that kind of a black mark on my record." Coles filed a suit charging the Justice Department with sex discrimination under the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

She won. In a landmark case, U.S. District Court Judge Charles Richey not only ruled in her favor but also established the precedent that sexual harassment of women at work is bona fide sex discrimination...

"At first, I couldn't talk about it to anyone. I was too humiliated. Her voice changes,
becomes harsher. "I was unemployed for 13 months, and then all I could find was a part-time job at a lower salary." And she notes the irony of suing the Justice Department which is supposed to be enforcing the nation's Civil Rights Laws. (Farley, 1976, p.10)

Clara Johnson's case turned out less happily. The 45 year-old Ithace, New York woman who is the sole support of her five children, started working when she was 17, and, while employed as a waitress, taught herself bookkeeping. Eventually she became head account clerk at Cornell University. After eight years on that job her outstanding work record resulted in her appointment as the first woman administrative assistant in one of the Cornell laboratories...

It was just then that the sexual harassment started at her job. Victimized by a well placed Cornell official, Johnson said her life became one long effort to avoid being alone with this man who "wouldn't keep his hands off me." She complained to one of her immediate supervisors whose response was: "Mature women should know how to handle situations like these."

After trying to transfer on four separate occasions without success, Johnson gave up trying to "handle" things. So nerve-wracking had the situation become that she wound up with a paralyzed right arm and pain in her neck severe enough to warrant traction for at least 20 minutes per day. "It was all from tension," she recalls with disgust. There was, finally, nothing left to do but quit. Six months later she still hadn't found another job and applied for unemployment - and was found ineligible. She had made a bad mistake on her first application form. She had not stated the real reason for quitting. (Farley, 1976, p. 10)

Survey Data

Apart from case histories similar to those detailed above, there is little additional data on sexual harassment at the workplace. Some surveys have been done, and some historical material is available. The Women's
Section of the Human Affairs Program at Cornell University conducted a random survey of 155 women in upstate New York during 1975. Defining sexual harassment as "repeated and unwanted physical, verbal, or visual attention, including: leering or ogling a woman’s body; forcing a woman to submit to squeezing or pinching; catching a woman alone for forced sexual intimacies; outright propositions backed by the threat of losing her job; and finally, forced sexual relations," the research produced the following results:

-92% of the women surveyed believed sexual harassment was a serious problem,

-70% said they had personally experienced sexual harassment, and more than half of those women had experienced it more than once,

-33% of those subjected to sexual harassment said that they ignored it or tried to pretend it had not happened, and in 75% of those cases the behavior continued or worsened,

-of those who had been sexually harassed, 18% complained through the channels available to them, but nothing was done in response to more than half of the complaints. (Farley, 1976, p. 10 and Bernstein, 1976, p. 12)

In a similar poll carried out by Women Office Workers in New York City in 1975, 30% of the respondents stated that they had been "objects of direct sexual harassment", and 60% said they "did not get the respect they deserved." (Bernstein, 1976, p. 12)

Redbook Magazine carried out a third survey, this one nationwide and with approximately 9000 respondents. The respondents were characterized as follows:
The majority of women who responded are married and in their 20s and early 30s, working at white collar jobs and earning between $5,000 and $10,000 a year. Yet we also received answers from sizeable groups of women who are single or formerly married, who range in age all the way from their teens to their 50s, who work at blue-collar jobs or professional or managerial ones, who earn less than $5,000 or more than $25,000. (Safran, 1976, p. 149)

This survey produced the following statistics, all of which are similar to the findings of the other surveys:

-92% of the respondents indicated that unwanted sexual attention is "a problem" at work, and the majority of those describe it as a "serious" problem.

-88% of the respondents reported that they have experienced one or more forms of unwanted attentions on the job. (These include visual, verbal, and physical forms of sexual attention.)

-75% of the respondents said that they find these unwanted attentions "embarrassing", "demeaning" or "intimidating", while only 15% describe them as "flattering".

Sexual harassment occurs in many different kinds of workplaces. "...there is scarcely any difference in the amount of sexual harassment that goes on in the executive suite, in the steno pool or in the assembly line. Our survey shows that it happens everywhere, to almost the same degree, though it may be gross in some places, subtle in others."

-Of those who were sexually harassed, "only 1 out of 4 expect that the man would be asked to stop - or else. Most think there'd be a negative reaction, that a supervisor would treat it as trivial, do nothing about it, or even label the woman a 'troublemaker'". (Safran, 1976, p. 217,218)

The primary methodological problem with this survey is that the respondents may be considered a non-random and "self-selected" sample. That
is, that bias would be introduced by virtue of the fact that those who feel strongly about the subject would be more likely to respond than those who did not. However, the same questionnaire was used on a smaller, random sample of women at a naval base in California, and the results were similar. In the smaller survey, for example, 81% (compared to 88% of the larger sample) said that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment. (Safran, 1976, p. 218) As noted above, the other random sample carried out in New York produced a figure of 70%, so in comparison the Redbook figures do not seem grossly inaccurate.

The final source of data known to the writer is the New York State Division of Human Rights. In 1976, approximately 45 complaints were filed through the division, in which sexual harassment was the primary component. In addition, many other cases of discrimination on the basis of sex were filed in which sexual harassment was a lesser component. While the staff is unable to comment on the merits of these cases, their review of the complaints produced the following generalizations:

- All of the complainants were women.
- The complainants held a wide range of jobs — in business, industry, finance and services, in blue- and white-collar occupations, and in both traditional and non-traditional jobs for women.7
- The complainants were of different races and national origins.
- Many complaints alleged that sexual activity had been made a condition of continued employment, and that some complainants had been fired for refusing sexual advances of co-workers.

7. "Non-traditional" jobs are those which have traditionally been occupied only by men (e.g. construction, plumbing, high level management positions, etc.)
Thus, the New York State Division of Human Rights' information supports the conclusions drawn from the other surveys.8

The Scarcity of Data

Before proceeding to analysis of the data which is available, it is important first to discuss the reasons for the scarcity of data. These reasons have been revealed through the Women's Movement in general, and particularly through anti-rape organizing experiences. The reasons include 1) the socialization of women, 2) the "sexual" nature of the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace, and 3) the dominance of males in institutions which define, analyze and seek solutions to social problems.

The socialization of women into traditional female roles tends to generate a relatively low sense of self-esteem among women, as well as a strong tendency toward nurturant attitudes and behavior. One of the results of this socialization is a tendency for women to focus on the problems and needs of others, and to consider their own problems trivial. Thus, women are often hesitant to "bother" others with the problems they face. Furthermore, even when women do recognize their own problems as being important, they often do not discuss them because of an additional tendency to blame themselves for the problems they encounter. When people hold themselves accountable for the conditions they experience, complaints about those conditions become self-incriminating, as described above.

All of these dynamics of women's socialization reduce the likelihood that women will talk about the problems they encounter, which in turn re-

8. Information obtained through a telephone conversation with a public information officer at the New York State Division of Human Rights.
duces the likelihood that those problems will be identified as issues.

Second, problems which have any form of sexual content are even more difficult to raise, because of the taboos which have been traditionally placed on public discussion of women's sexuality. These taboos make it embarrassing for women to talk about any kind of problem which might be considered sexual in nature.

Finally, as mentioned above, attitudes toward women are such that women are likely to be blamed for being sexually harassed. This creates an expectation among women that negative sanctions will be imposed if they report sexual harassment to others. And in many cases, these expectations are well justified. In this way, the sexual nature of the problem further reduces the likelihood that it will be discussed, which partially accounts for the lack of data pertaining to the problem. If victims cannot discuss their victimization openly, then the primary source of data is lost. As explained above, the others involved - those who commit sexual harassment - are even less likely to discuss it openly since for them it is not a problem, and since reporting would be self-incriminating.

The third major reason for the absence of data concerning sexual harassment of women is the general lack of concern over issues affecting women among public and private agencies which collect data and do research pertaining to social problems. To the extent that these agencies are male dominated, problems which primarily affect women will not be identified as such, nor will they be selected as research questions, since those who decide what to research are not victimized by those problems. In this way, male dominance further contributes to the lack of data on problems such as sexual harassment. Furthermore, the failure of institutions to identify
and act upon problems faced by women reinforces women's view that these problems are trivial. Thus, a cycle is created which militates against identification, information collection, and action with regard to problems which primarily affect women.

This widespread failure to identify problems facing women, however, does not constitute proof that the problems do not exist. In many cases, action must be taken first in order to create a forum in which awareness of issues can be raised. This recognition is one of the most important lessons learned through the contemporary Women's Movement, and one which is shared by activists in other social movements as well. Consciousness-raising was the first vehicle used in the contemporary Women's Movement to identify shared problems, and further organizing was often necessary to enable other women to act in order to solve the problems they faced. When anti-rape organizing began, for example, there was almost no information on rape. However, immediately after the issue became public, a great deal of information became available. Hundreds of women began to report their rapes to crisis centers. Many of these women had been raped as long as ten or fifteen years earlier, but had never told anyone of their experience until hotlines were opened and a sympathetic ear was guaranteed.

As more pressure to respond to the issue was brought to bear on public agencies, they began to monitor and collect more information as well. Finally, both public and private funding was made available for additional research. Although we still know very little about many aspects of rape, more and more information is gradually becoming available through various research efforts.

Thus, the lack of data pertaining to sexual harassment at the work-
place can be explained. However, the fact that there is little information available which could be used to document the problem, does create another dilemma for organizing. On the one hand, AASC needs data before acting to inform itself on the issue more thoroughly, to build a stronger case for addressing the problem publicly, and to select the appropriate strategies for solving the problem. At the same time, AASC recognizes that some public action must be taken before more information will become available. Acting in the absence of complete information obviously entails some risk to the group - the public is likely to respond with skepticism, and some individuals are likely to attempt to discredit the group and its actions. However, the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion has chosen to take this risk on the basis on the information which is available, and on the assumption that action will elicit information which justifies the action retrospectively.
CHAPTER V

TOWARD A THEORY OF

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

It is the belief of the Alliance Against Sexual Coercion that sexual harassment at the workplace is both an expression of and a means of perpetuating the unequal power relationships between men and women and between employers and employees. To clarify this position, it is necessary to develop a "theory of sexual harassment" which accounts for the data available, and which explains the dynamics through which sexual harassment occurs. The following is an attempt to begin to set forth that theory. Alternative explanations of sexual harassment have also been proposed, and these will be reviewed in the following chapter.

Power and Dominance: A Feminist Definition

Traditionally, power has been viewed as "the ability of an individual or group to carry out its wishes or policies, and to control, manipulate or influence the behavior of others, whether they wish to cooperate or not." (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969, p. 307) Implicit in this definition is a notion of scarcity; that there is a fixed quantity of power to be divided, and that if one group or individual gains power, others lose it.

...within society there is a limited amount of power available to be manipulated. If one group increases its advantages and power, this immediately entails some other group's giving up or losing power. In the same way, if one group seems to be losing its authority or power, then we must expect some other group to be gaining power...Talcott Parsons refers to this idea as the zero-sum concept of power, employing the concept of the zero-sum relationship developed in
game theory to refer to a particular type of relationship in which an increase in the power of, or improvement in the position of one participant in regard to a certain factor necessarily results in a corresponding decrease in the power of the position of one of more other participants. (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969, p. 308)

Also implicit in the traditional definition of power is the notion that groups continually compete for power over each other, and that power continually changes hands through the process of competition. Thus, power operates as money. Talcott Parsons used this analogy, in fact, in describing power as "a circulating medium, analogous to money, within what is called the political system." (Hartsock, 1974, p. 10)

This view of power has important ramifications for oppressed or powerless groups. If power is a limited resource for which groups continually compete, if power continually changes hands, and if gains on the part of one group constitute losses on the part of others, then a stable state in which power is equally divided is all but impossible to maintain. Consequently, there must always be relatively powerful, and relatively powerless or oppressed groups. If it is the nature of power which creates these dynamics, and not some other cause, then there is little hope for equality. By diminishing the hope for equality, this definition of power itself acts as an instrument of power, supporting the inequality of the status quo.

Also implicit in the traditional definition of power is the idea that power is exercised against or over others; that power is inevitably used to dominate others, sometimes against their will, in order to serve the interests of those who hold power.

They [most social scientists] link this definition with Bertrand Russell's statement that power is the production of intended effects, and add that power must be power over someone—something possessed, a property of an actor such that he can alter the will or actions of others in a way which produces re-
sults in conformity with his own will. Effects on the actions of others are fundamental to this understanding of power. (Hartsock, 1974, p. 10)

The concept that power is exercised over, and against the will of others gives power an unnecessarily negative quality. While it is true that power can be, and often is used to harm others, it need not be used in this way. Power itself is not "bad", though its use by particular individuals or groups may be destructive. It is important, however, to distinguish between power as a neutral or even positive force or process, and the constructive or destructive uses to which it may be put.

Having criticized the traditional definitions of power, feminists and others have begun to develop alternative definitions. The feminist definition draws attention to the expression of power in all social interaction, excludes the scarcity notion of power, distinguishes between dominance and power, and gives power a positive, rather than a negative connotation. Finally, the feminist definition is aligned with the interests of relatively powerless groups, rather than the interests of those groups which currently dominate.

In the feminist definition, power is viewed as "energy" or "the ability to interact effectively with one's environment". Various feminist writers have set forth this definition in slightly different terms, but the central concepts are the same. Examples of these definitions follow:

From a healthy fusion of these two great human capacities [to love and to work] will come power, not in the traditional sense as ascendency or control over others but rather power as energy, emanating from the individual, a source of inner renewal that generates outward and returns to the individual. (Moffat and Painter, 1975, p. 7)

...the new space in which women are free to be-
come who we are...communicates power
which, paradoxically, is experienced both
as power of presence and power of absence.
It is not political power in the usual sense
but rather a flow of healing energy which is
participation in the power of being. (Daly,
1973, p. 41)

According to these definitions, power is a positive force which is in-
herent in life and which may be developed in everyone. It is therefore not
a scarce resource which must be divided among individuals and groups. This
is not to deny that some individuals and groups are presently more powerful
than others. Rather, it is to suggest a different reason for the unequal
distribution of power among individuals and groups. Some are powerless not
because there is not enough power to go around, but because they are unable
to develop and express their power fully. Thus, the power of the "powerless"
remains in a latent or potential form. This is the case for women, who,
because of their socialization (and sexism in general) are unable to inter-
act as effectively in their environment as they might otherwise. Thus,
sexism, racism, classism, and other forms of oppression create disparities
in the degree of power realized by different individuals and groups. It is
not the nature of power which creates these disparities, but the suppression
of some individual's and group's full development and expression of the
power which resides within them.

Unlike the traditional view of power, the feminist definition draws a
careful distinction between power and dominance. While dominance entails
control over the actions of others (as well as the ideas, feelings, and
attitudes of others), power as energy does not. Both the feminist defini-
tions cited above emphasize this distinction, which is further developed
in other feminist writings such as the following:
Significantly, these understandings of power do not require domination of others; energy and accomplishment are understood to be satisfying in themselves. This kind of power is much closer to what the women's movement has sought, yet this aspect of power is denied to all but a few women: the common female experience of being treated as though we were invisible can scarcely be characterized as effective interaction with the environment. (Hartsock, 1974, p. 15)

In the feminist definition, it is not power per se, but dominance or control over others which is the destructive force to be combatted.

Finally, the feminist view of power diverges from traditional concepts in that feminists perceive the expression of power and dominance not just in certain spheres, but in all social interaction. As one writer has described this concept, "Every social act is an expression of power, every social relationship is a power equation, and every social group or system is an organization of power." (Hawley, 1970, p. 10)

Mary Daly describes the way in which power has been separated from love, and attributed to the political sphere alone. As she notes, this separation is both artificial and misleading:

The theory of the "two kingdoms", according to which "love" holds a prominent place in the private order whereas power reigns in the political order, has been a common idea in Lutheran theology. Expressed in other "language systems" than that of the "two kingdoms", this is a common idea in our whole culture. The idea that these two realities can be separated and still be real is, of course, a mirage. Women's movement theorists have shown that "the personal is political", that the power structures get into the fabric of one's psyche and personal relationships: this is "sexual politics". (Daly, 1973, p. 127)

This view that power pervades everyday life, and affects women and other subordinated groups strongly, has generated and been supported through research into the dynamics of unequal power relationships.
Nancy Henley, for example, has found that both verbal and non-verbal communication between dominant and subordinate individuals is expressive of, and serves to reinforce unequal power relationships. In her review and analysis of non-verbal communication between men and women, she states that:

In front of, and defending, the larger political-economic structure that determines our lives and defines the context of human relationships, there is a micropolitical structure that helps maintain it. The "trivia" of everyday life - using "sir" or first name, touching others, dropping the eyes, smiling, interrupting and so on - that characterize these micropolitics are commonly understood as facilitators of social intercourse, but are not recognized as defenders of the status quo - of the state, the wealthy, of authority, of those whose power may be challenged. Nevertheless, these minutiae find their place on a continuum of social control which extends from internalized socialization (the colonization of the mind) at the one end to sheer physical force (guns, clubs, incarceration) at the other. (Henley, 1975, p. 184)

The redefinition of power is central to the feminist vision of the future. The dilemma for feminists is that in order to realize that future, we must begin to implement, and operate according to that vision. However, power itself currently operates according to the traditional definition of power: because the power (energy) of some is suppressed while that of others is nurtured, power operates as if it were a scarce resource. For feminists to operate only according to their vision of the future would be to deny their current reality and to seriously diminish their chances of success. Consequently, feminists must recognize and to some extent act according to the traditional view, while attempting to change the traditional use of power and to eliminate dominance.
...we must nevertheless recognize and confront the world of traditional politics in which money and power function in similar ways. Thus, creating political change involves setting up organizations based on power as energy and strength, groups which are structured and not tied to the personality of one individual, groups whose structures do not permit the use of power as a tool for domination of others in the group. At the same time, our organizations must deal with the society in which we live on its own terms—that is, terms of power as control, power as a means of making others do what they do not wish to do. Our strategies must grow out of the tension between taking and transforming power understood as domination, and using our organizations to build models for a new society based on power understood as energy and initiative. (Hartsock, 1974, p. 16,23)

For the purposes of this analysis, the term "power" will be used according to the feminist definition. That is, that power will be viewed as a positive force which can be realized by all, and which need not be used to control others. The term "dominance" will be used to signify control over the actions of others, at times against their will, as in the traditional definition of "power".

It is not enough, however, to arrive at definitions of power and dominance. Some discussion of the ways in which power and dominance develop is also prerequisite to thorough understanding of the terminology, and of sexual harassment at the workplace.

Instruments of power provide a basis for power. And access to the instruments of power is necessary to realize power: without this access power remains in its potential or latent form. The instruments of power include a wide range of resources and assets such as money, material goods, space, information, certain physical traits such as strength and certain personality characteristics such as self-esteem and assertiveness. The number and kinds of instruments of power available to the individual determine her/his degree of power, or the
extent to which s/he is able to interact effectively in the environment. As the number and kinds of instruments of power available to the individual increase, the degree of power realized by the individual increases.

The number and kinds of instruments of power available to the individual are determined partly on the basis of achieved and ascribed characteristics. Ascribed characteristics include those which are inherited, such as race, sex, and age. Achieved characteristics are those which are acquired through the efforts of the individual. The distinction between the two types of traits is often useful, although the categories are by no means mutually exclusive. Through the operation of phenomena such as sexism and racism, for example, ascribed characteristics such as sex and race become determinants of the probability that certain individuals will achieve characteristics which increase access to the instruments of power. For example, white men are more likely to attain a high level of education and occupational status than black women, because they are white and male. As a result, white men are more likely than black women to have access to instruments of power such as money, information, material goods, etc. In addition, individual efforts are often necessary to maintain, or useful in altering characteristics which are present at birth. Physical strength is one such attribute. While it may be more or less present at birth, it may also be enhanced or diminished through the actions of the individual. Thus, achieved and ascribed characteristics are highly interdependent. The important point to be made here, however, is that because of the impact of sexism and racism and other such phenomena, groups and individuals having different ascribed and achieved characteristics have different degrees of access to the instruments of power, and consequently, different levels of realized power.
Dominance on the part of of one participant in a social relationship requires access to instruments of power which are not equally available to the other participant in the relationship, and which may be manipulated (i.e. offered, given, withheld, withdrawn) in order to enforce the compliance of the other participant. When both participants in a relationship have equal degrees of power, neither can dominate the other because there is no basis for dominance.

Conditions for Dominance in Male-Female and Employer-Worker Relationships

If sexual harassment at the workplace is to be explained as an expression of dominance, then this minimum condition of unequal access to the instruments of power must be present in the relationship between victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment. The data indicates that this condition is present. In fact, it will be argued that the relationships between victims and perpetrators are highly unequal, which enables perpetrators to exercise an especially high degree of dominance over their victims.

One primary attribute of the relationship between perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment at the workplace is that they are male-female relationships, and a second attribute is that they are often employer-worker relationships. A prominent feature of male-female and employer-worker relationships is that both types are characterized by unequal access to the instruments of power. Women generally have less access to these instruments than men, and workers have less access than their employers.

Men achieve characteristics which increase access to the instruments
of power far more frequently than women achieve these characteristics, because of previously established male dominance and the present impact of continued sexism. Male-female disparities in the levels of education received and occupational status, for example, have been well documented. These disparities are reflected and reinforced through differences in income, material goods, information, space, etc. Consequently, men generally have a greater degree of power than women, and the material basis for male dominance of women is usually present in relationships between men and women.

It is important to point out here that the statements above are generalizations which are accurate only in reference to men as a group and women as a group. That is, that they may not accurately describe the relationships between individual men and women, particularly when one individual's degree of power is strongly influenced by other important variables such as race or class. Thus, a black man may not be able to dominate a white woman, regardless of whatever other instruments of power are available to him, just as a working class man may not be able to dominate a woman of much higher class status. Nevertheless, the generalizations hold up within classes and races. That is, that black men are generally dominant over black women, and working class men are generally dominant over working class women. John Stuart Mill described the pervasiveness of male dominance in all social classes in his essay "The Subjection of Women" in the following way:

Whatever gratification of pride there is in the possession of power, and whatever personal interest in its exercise, is in this case not confined to a limited class, but common
to the whole male sex... The clodhopper exercises, or is to exercise, his share of the power equally with the highest nobleman...
In the case of women, each individual of the subject-class is in a chronic state of bribery and intimidation combined. (Mill, 1969, p. 136-137)

The final point to be made here with regard to the difference in the power of men and women is that it is not just a difference in degree. There are qualitative differences in the power held by men and women as well, and the power realized by women is less effective than that realized by men. This qualitative discrepancy has been described in terms of the common distinction between legitimate and illegitimate power:

To understand this paradox of women's history - apparent universal male dominance but some real female power - it is necessary to make a distinction between "power" and "authority". While power [read dominance] is the simple ability to elicit from another person a behavior not necessarily of her/his own choosing, authority is legitimate power, power which is accepted and valid by those subjected to it. Non-legitimate power - the kind usually exercised by women - is uncertain, disjointed, and often disguised; legitimate power or authority is continuous and formalized, institutionalized in power arrangements and also thought patterns. (Phelps, 1975, p. 38)

The dominance of the employer over the worker is of a slightly different sort than that of men over women. Here, dominance is legitimated through hierarchical structures of work, and grounded in the "achieved" characteristic of occupational status rather than in ascribed traits. (Although, as noted above, ascribed characteristics operate as determinants of who will and who will not achieve high occupational status.) While the number and kinds of instrument of power available to employers and not to workers vary from one workplace to another, employers
may be able to manipulate information, material goods, and space in the workplace, as well as the level of wages and benefits received by the worker. Furthermore, employers may manipulate the entire income of workers through their ability to hire and fire. Since workers do not have equal access to these instruments of power at the workplace, the relationships between employers and workers and clearly unequal, and the conditions for dominance over workers are present.

A return to the data is crucial at this point for two reasons: to explain those cases in which the perpetrator is not the employer of his victim, and to detail the ways in which the instruments of power are manipulated by the perpetrators of sexual harassment to enforce the compliance of their victims.

In the cases described above, those who commit sexual harassment include employers, co-workers of equal or greater occupational status, and clients of the victims. While co-workers and clients may not have the direct economic power over the victim (i.e. the power to hire and fire) that employers have, they do have other forms of direct and indirect economic power. Clients (of the cab drivers, the waitress and the travelling saleswoman, for example) have direct control over the income of their victims through their ability to manipulate their victims' tips or commissions. The passengers of the stewardess and the co-worker of the realtor exercise economic control indirectly, by influencing the victims' employers to exercise their power to hire and fire. Other co-workers who have job status roughly equal to that of their victims (e.g. in the cases of the cab driver harassed by other drivers, and the construction workers harassed by other crew members) exercise dominance through even more indirect economic control. That
is, that through verbal and other abuses they could make the working
environment so intolerable that the victim might eventually be forced to
give up her job. Employers could also exercise this indirect control
through manipulation of information, materials, space, and work itself
so that they might not even need to rely on use of the direct economic
controls at their disposal. This form of harassment was used by the
construction foreman, who could overwork his victim in order to force
her to quit. Finally, as men, (who are generally larger and stronger
than their victims) the perpetrators of sexual harassment could resort
to physical force or the threat of force to dominate their victims,
whether or not any other instruments of power were available to them.
This occurred in the case of the first cab driver and the nurse.

This analysis introduces further refinements into conceptualization
of the ways in which dominance may be exercised. The data suggests that
to dominate, one need not have direct access to the instruments of power,
as long as one can influence others who do have such access. Secondly,
the data suggest that manipulation of non-economic instruments of power
— other elements of the working environment — is as effective as manipula-
tion of the economic instruments of power in controlling the behavior of
workers, since it has eventual economic implications as well.

Given the fact that the conditions for dominance are present in male-
female and employer-worker relationships, it is clear that the conditions
for dominance are present in the relationships between victims and per-
petrators of sexual harassment at the workplace, particularly when the
victim is a woman worker and the perpetrator is a male employer. In
such cases, the ability to dominate is particularly high. Perpetrators
derive access to many instruments of power both from their position as
men and from their position as employers, co-workers, and clients, while victims derive few instruments of power from their position as women or from their position as workers. Thus, the relationship is highly unequal in terms of power, and the conditions for an especially high degree of dominance are present. On the basis of this conclusion, one might predict that powers would be somewhat balanced in the relationships between women employers and male workers, and that the incidence of sexual harassment would decline accordingly. The data, though limited, support this contention.

The Exercise of Dominance

Showing that the conditions for dominance are present in the relationships between the victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment, however, does not provide a thorough explanation of the phenomenon, since the ability to dominate is not always exercised. Some male employers do not sexually harass their female employees; women employers do not sexually harass their employees as frequently as male employers do, though these women may have substantial economic control over their employees; and male employees are less often victimized by sexual harassment than women employees, although male and female employers, as well as women co-workers or clients, could conceivably make their working conditions intolerable. Explaining these aspects of the data requires further elaboration of the theory of dominance.

The extent to which dominance is exercised or expressed seems to depend upon three sets of interrelated factors, as follow:

1) Social Conditions: when social conditions encourage or support the exercise or expression
of dominance, it will occur more often.

2) Personal choice: when the dominant participant wishes of "needs" to remain dominant, s/he will exercise dominance more often.

3) Threats to Dominance: when dominance is threatened, it will be exercised more often.

Socialization and Other Conditions Encouraging the Exercise of Dominance

There are several social conditions which encourage the dominance of men more than the dominance of women, and which help to explain why male employers would sexually harass their employees more often than women employers would, all other powers of male and female employers being equal. The most important of these conditions is the differential socialization of men and women in this social system.

Differences in the socialization of males and females have been well documented. The literature indicates that males emerge from early socialization processes with higher levels of self-esteem, aggressiveness, independence and need achievement, and lower levels of emotional expressiveness, nurturance, submissiveness and dependence than females. (See Maccoby, 1966) The characteristics developed in males are associated with, and provide men with a predisposition to the expression of dominance in social relationships. The characteristics instilled in women, however, are antagonistic to the expression of dominance, and simultaneously supportive of submissiveness in the face of the dominance of others. Thus, socialization may be viewed as a primary social condition which encourages the exercise of dominance in men, while it discourages the exercise of dominance in women.

The fact that men have both greater access to the instruments of power and a greater predisposition to express dominance than women is by no means coincidental. Kate Millet had described the relationship between
the two in the following way:

Sexual politics obtains consent through the "socialization" of both sexes to patriarchal politics with regard to temperament, role, and status. As to status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of male superiority guarantees superior status in the male, inferior in the female. The first item, temperament, involves the formation of human personality along stereotyped lines of sex category ("masculine" and "feminine"), based on the needs and values of the dominant group and dictated by what its members cherish in themselves and find convenient in subordinates: aggression, intelligence, force and efficacy in the male; passivity, ignorance, docility, "virtue" and ineffectuality in the female. This complemented by a second factor, sex role, which decrees a consonant and highly elaborate code of conduct, gesture and attitude for each sex... Were one to analyze the three categories one might designate status as the political component, role as the sociological, and temperament as the psychological - yet their interdependence is unquestionable and they form a chain. Those awarded higher status tend to adopt rules of mastery, largely because they are first encouraged to develop temperaments of dominance. That this is true of caste and class as well is self-evident. (Millet, 1969, p.46-47)

Thus, socialization is a process which instills dominance in the dominant, submissiveness in the subordinate, and which thereby reinforces the status quo. This view of socialization goes a long way in explaining why men most often commit sexual harassment, and why women are most often victimized by it. Women are less likely to harass their employees than male employers are, even when all other powers of male and female employers are equal, partly because women are not trained to dominate. Similarly, women workers are more likely to be victimized by sexual harassment than male workers are, all other powers of male and female workers being equal, since women are more likely than men to passively submit to the assaults of men rather than to react against those assaults.
Again, the data supports this analysis. The victims of sexual harassment are most often women, and the perpetrators are most often men. Sexual harassment entails aggressive behavior on the part of the perpetrator, whether the form is visual (e.g. staring), verbal (e.g. the use of abusive language, propositions or threats) or physical (e.g. touching, pinching, rape or attempted rape). And finally, victims of sexual harassment usually accept it rather passively: there is little they can do, or think they can do to end it, so they must either accept it as a condition of employment or avoid it by quitting their jobs.

This is not to say that women never commit sexual harassment, or that men are never victimized by it. Rather, it is to say that the harassment of men by men, women by women, or men by women is far less probable than harassment of women by men. There are cases, for example, in which men to sexually abuse other men, most notably in prisons. The power relationships in such cases, however, are similar: the rapists are stronger and/or endowed with higher status than the victims within the prison subculture.

In addition to socialization, there are other social conditions which encourage dominance in the form of sexual harassment, as well as in other forms. One of the most obvious of these is the absence of sanctions against sexual harassment. That is, that nothing is done to perpetrators of sexual harassment which might discourage them from doing it - sexual harassment entails little risk to the perpetrator. In only one case, that of the public information aide, was the perpetrator in any way negatively sanctioned for his aggressive behavior toward his victim.

The absence of sanctions against the exercise of dominance is an outgrowth of, and a means of perpetuating male dominance. The laws (or in this case the absence of laws) are designed by, and serve to protect the
dominance of dominant groups.

Other, even larger scale social and economic conditions may also contribute to the frequency and severity of the expression of dominance. One such condition which has been suggested as a factor contributing to sexual harassment at the workplace is the currently high level of unemployment. Because victims cannot find new jobs easily, they cannot simply give up the jobs they have in order to avoid sexual harassment. Thus, they must tolerate greater degrees of all kinds of abuse as a condition of work. Knowing this, employers may feel free to harass workers even more without running the risk of losing workers, spending time and money replacing them, or being unable to replace them.

Another condition suggested as a contributing factor is women’s historically marginal position in the labor market. As marginal workers, they are some of the first to go in times of recession. Furthermore, women often hold the least skilled jobs, which makes them more replaceable than skilled workers. This tenuous position in the labor market, particularly as it is now combined with women’s increasing financial dependence on their own earnings, forces them to resign themselves to working conditions such as sexual harassment which might not be tolerated in other circumstances.

The Choice-to-Exercise Dominance

The second major factor which determines the extent to which dominance will be expressed - personal choice - helps to explain why some male employers do, and others do not sexually harass their female employees. To a large extent, choice is overridden by socialization and other conditions which encourage one form of behavior or another. However, unless one be-
lieves that men are by nature driven to sexual aggression, some element of choice remains. Socialization can, and has been frequently and effectively countered through the efforts of individuals. Just as women have begun to cast off the modes of behavior which perpetuate their subordinate status, men can cast off modes of behavior which perpetuate their dominiance over others. That is, that they can, as some already do, choose not to exercise their ability to dominate. As Nancy Henley has pointed out:

...those reluctantly in positions of power [read "dominance"] like men who wish to divest themselves of "foreskin privilege", can begin to monitor their own acts toward others and their reactions to other's acts, in an attempt to exercise the subtle power indicators from their daily interactions. (Henley, 1975, p. 199)

If the subtleties of dominant behavior can be sought out and eliminated in this way, then certainly the more blatant forms of sexual harassment can be avoided as well. Thus, choice may play some role in the exercise of dominance and consequently in the incidence of sexual harassment at the workplace. The presence of sanctions might also reinforce the choice not to dominate, assuming that one is less likely to do things for which s/he expects to be penalized later.

The Exercise of Dominance in Response to Threat

The choice to dominate, however, may prove relatively unimportant in some cases. That is, that for some, dominance is so certain and so obvious that the active exercise of dominance through manipulation of the instruments of power is unnecessary to maintain dominance. Alternatively, when dominance is expected but uncertain, or when dominant individuals lack self-confidence, their dominance is easily threatened and must be continuously reasserted through manipulation of the instruments of power.
This helps to explain why some male employers (i.e. the most powerful and the most self-assured) do not harass their workers. It also introduces a third condition — threats to dominance — under which the exercise of dominance, and sexual harassment at the workplace become more likely.

Dominance, to the extent that it rests on access to instruments of power which may be lost by the dominant and gained by the subordinate participant in a relationship, is inherently unstable. Thus, one might argue that the maintenance of dominance almost always requires the continuous expression of dominance. If this is so, it helps to explain the pervasiveness of violence against women in the form of rape, wife abuse, pornography, etc. The "micropolitical structure" described by Henley also insures that dominance is continuously exercised to some extent, so that more forceful manipulation of the instruments of power is at times unnecessary to the maintenance of dominance.

When dominance is threatened, however, the likelihood that it will be actively reasserted increases. Threats may be perceived or actual, direct or indirect. They may arise through resistance on the part of the subordinated, or through shifts in access to the instruments of power. And as the severity of the threat increases, the frequency and severity with which dominance is exercised will increase as well.

The presence of an active feminist movement constitutes a threat to male dominance, just as the presence of the Civil Rights Movement constituted a threat to white dominance. These movements provide a channel for active resistance on the part of subordinated groups, and also generate shifts in access to instruments of power. And the threats created through these movements have traditionally been met with aggressive reassertions of control on the part of the dominant groups. In the case of the Civil
Rights Movement, black activists were murdered, jailed, and harassed in countless other ways. And in the case of the Women's Movement, other repressive measures have been taken. Many writers have suggested that re-assertion of male dominance over women in the presence of threats to male dominance take a form which is suited to, and which reflects the nature of the threat. "Just as lynching may be seen as the supreme political act of whites against blacks, so rape may be seen as the supreme political act of men against women." (Russell, 1975, p. 231) In her research on rape, Diana Russell has analyzed the way in which rape is used as a means of re-asserting male dominance, as follows:

Nan Murray's experience illustrates rape as a political act perhaps more vividly than any of the other cases. The masculine ego of her rapist was apparently so threatened by her sexual rejection of him, by her verbal deflations of his sexist assumptions and comments, that he raped her to "put her back in her place"...Since she refused to defer to him as a woman should, he forced her to. And in the short term at least, it was a successful political act. He won the power struggle he had constructed. She was beaten into submission, her confidence was smashed, and another uppity woman had been shoved into her rightful place...He felt put down by her not allowing him to dominate, to have his wishes prevail. If male domination is accepted as the proper relationship between men and women, as it is in our culture, then women's demand for equality becomes a threat. (Russell, 1975, p. 231, 241-242)

The threat to male dominance takes a similarly direct form when instruments of power previously accessible only to men become accessible to women. One such shift which is presently in progress is the entrance of women into "non-traditional" jobs, which in the past were held exclusively by men. These women are perceived as a direct economic threat by many of
the men whose jobs they now share, and as the data illustrate, women in non-traditional jobs are frequently victimized by sexual harassment at the workplace. Examples of women in this position include the construction workers whose experience was described in Chapter IV.

The threat to male dominance, however, need not be as direct as that, nor does the victim herself always create or represent the threat which is countered through sexual harassment. In many cases, the victims of sexual harassment represent little threat themselves, which indicates that threats from other, possibly unrelated sources may result in displays of dominance such as sexual harassment. Once instilled with a propensity to dominate and a generalized felt "need" to be in control, threats to dominance in one sphere may be acted upon in another.

It has been suggested that threats to male dominance at the workplace are associated with domestic violence. Men who feel a need to dominate, and whose need is thwarted by virtue of their subordinate status at work, may reassert dominance through the sexual or non-sexual abuse of their wives at home. Thus, the expression of dominance does not always take a form which reflects the nature of the threat, nor is dominance always reasserted over the particular person who creates or represents the threat. The forceful sexual abuse of women in such cases may then be the "bottom line" of male dominance. That is, that when few instruments of power are available, men cannot select the expression of dominance which is best suited to the nature of the threat. Instead they must use whatever instruments they do have. Thus, male workers dominated by their employers cannot fire their employers. They can, however, and do reassert dominance over women and others who remain even less powerful then they.
Harassment in the Sexual Mode

If the exercise of dominance is as pervasive in daily social interaction as feminist theorists suggest, then acts of dominance undoubtedly take innumerable forms — sexual and non-sexual. Thus, one of the remaining questions with regard to sexual harassment at the workplace as an expression of dominance is why it so often takes a sexual mode. If sexual harassment is an act of dominance rather than a purely sexual act, then the sexual preference of men for women does not adequately answer the question. Dominance could be asserted in numerous other ways.

To some extent, sexual harassment takes a sexual mode because that mode is often suited to the nature of the threat to male dominance which women represent. However, there are other reasons as well. One is the predominant view of women as sexual objects.

Women are commonly viewed as little more than sexual objects by men. To the extent that views of others color modes of interaction with them, and to the extent that patterns of harassment are modelled after general modes of interaction, the harassment of women by men will be sexual in nature. The modelling of "working" relationships between men and women after more intimate, sexual and marital relationships between men and women is self-evident. In her analysis of this modelling, Benet aptly describes secretaries as "substitute wives":

The first thing that comes to many a man's mind when he thinks about secretaries is sex...Men in offices speculate endlessly about the girls, comparing them, picking favorites, teasing them. In fact, most office men will tell you that's why the girls are there.

The sexual roles that women play in "real life" have been transferred to the office, where they are ritualized like all the rest of office behavior...all this reflects the fact that women are still thought of first as sexual beings, not
as workers. No amount of work on their part seems to dispel this assumption. No wonder, for it has been embedded in our thinking...
(Benet, 1972, p.23)

If women are consistently viewed as sexual objects, and if all interaction with them is based on this view, then it is no surprise that the harassment of them is sexual in nature.

Another factor which helps to explain why harassment often takes a sexual mode is the strong cultural associations between dominance, masculinity and sexual prowess. Because males have been dominant for so long, dominance has been incorporated as a central element into the meaning of masculinity.

Berenice Carroll notes Bertrand de Jouvenel's statement that "a man feels himself more of a man when imposing himself and making others an instrument of his will," and adds that "It is no accident that the subject of this assertion is 'a man'. The associative links between ideas of manliness and virility on the one hand, and domination, conquest, and power on the other hand, are strong and pervasive in Western culture." (Hartsock, 1975, p.12)

Given this association between dominance and masculinity, it becomes evident that when dominance is threatened, masculinity is threatened as well, by definition. And another central element of the meaning of masculinity in this culture is sexual virility or prowess.

To win, to be superior, to be successful, to conquer, all demonstrate masculinity to those who subscribe to common cultural notions of masculinity i.e. the masculine mystique. And it would be surprising if these notions of masculinity did not find expression in men's sexual behavior. Indeed, sex may be the arena where these notions of masculinity are most intensely acted out, particularly by men who feel powerless in the rest of their lives, and men whose masculinity is threatened by their sense of powerlessness.
For many men, it seems, aggression and sex are closely related. The unconscious thinking seems to go as follows: being aggressive is masculine; being sexually aggressive is masculine; rape is sexually aggressive behavior; therefore rape is masculine behavior. (Russell, 1975, p. 260, 261)

If threats to male dominance constitute threats to masculinity and to virility, and if masculinity can best be reasserted through sexual activity, then it is logical that male dominance over women will be reasserted through a sexual mode.

A Model of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

The theory of sexual harassment at the workplace as an expression of and a means of perpetuating dominance is modelled on the following page. This model is primarily descriptive, but has some predictive capability as well. On the basis of the model, one might predict that the incidence and severity of sexual harassment would increase:

1) As the pervasiveness of phenomena such as sexism and racism increase;

2) As inequality in access to instruments of power among men and women, employers and workers increases;

3) As disparities in the socialization patterns of different groups increase, fostering submissiveness in subordinate groups and dominance in dominant groups;

4) As the degree of hierarchy in the working environment increases;

5) As threats to male dominance and employer dominance increase; and

6) As other social conditions encouraging the exercise of dominance increase.

These predictions are testable, and provide groundwork for future research pertaining to both sexual and non-sexual harassment, at the workplace
and elsewhere. While further knowledge is useful in effective organizing against sexual harassment at the workplace, research is not the primary concern here. Instead, the primary concern is strategy. However, the model above is also useful to the development of strategy. Just as it delineates some of the conditions which would increase the incidence and severity of sexual harassment, it suggests several means of altering conditions in order to eliminate, or at least decrease the incidence of sexual harassment.
CHAPTER VI

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

There are, of course, alternative explanations of sexual harassment at the workplace which must be discussed and refuted in order to support the theory laid forth above. These explanations, although they have not been articulated with regard to sexual harassment at the workplace per se, are commonly used to explain rape. Because rape and sexual harassment at the workplace exhibit so many similarities (rape being the most extreme or forceful form of sexual harassment at the workplace) it is likely that the alternative explanations for rape will eventually be applied to sexual harassment at the workplace.

These explanations must be countered immediately in the process of raising the issue to the public. They are antagonistic to the needs and rights of women, since in various ways they serve to either minimize the problem or to focus blame on the victim. By doing so, these explanations make it more difficult to bring resources to bear in solving the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace, and operate as obstacles to the organizing process. Consequently, disproving these explanations should be considered a necessary part of a larger strategy to end sexual harassment at the
workplace.

In refuting these alternative explanations, we must rely heavily on research pertaining to rape as well. There has been little analysis of sexual harassment at the workplace per se, and the literature on rape is the most relevant of related material. While there may be some differences between rape and other, less violent forms of sexual harassment, the differences seem to be primarily in degree of force used. Therefore, the data and theory on rape should be appropriate for determining initial assumptions and hypotheses regarding the nature of sexual harassment at the workplace.

Sexual Harassment As A Deviant Act: Seductive Women And Sex-Starved Men

One of the most commonly voiced explanations of sexual harassment is that it is the behavior and personality characteristics of certain individuals which "cause" sexual harassment. This view is most often applied to the women involved, and sometimes to the men, as will be described below. In reference to women victimized by sexual harassment, this view follows the logic that 1) some women are harassed and others are not; 2) it is only "seductive" women (or alternatively, "provocative", "bad", "lower class", or "promiscuous" women) who are sexually harassed; so 3) sexual harassment is primarily a sexual act for which women must
be held accountable. If they did not dress and behave seductively, it would not happen to them. Implicit in this argument is an element of the biological determinism to be described below, since the argument assumes that men's sexual drive is so powerful that men can only respond to "seductive" women through sexual assault. If men cannot control this drive, then they are both helpless and blameless, and it is the woman who is responsible for her own victimization.

A return to the data provides several points from which to refute this explanation. First, all of the data indicates that sexual harassment is not confined to any particular class, race, group, or "type" of women. All kinds of women are victimized by it, regardless of their appearance, age, race, marital status, or socio-economic status. The upstate New York researchers found that victims' "ages ranged from 19 to 61" and that sexual harassment "occurred across all job categories, ages, marital statuses and pay ranges." (Farley, 1976, p. 11) The other data supported these findings. And among these victims there are many who would not be considered "sexually attractive" by common standards, and many who consciously molded their behavior and dress to avoid the appearance of sexual provocativeness. In the Redbook poll, it was found that "To prevent unwanted attentions in the first place, a majority [of the victims] say
they 'adopt a cool, guarded attitude' and 15% 'dress with extreme modesty'". (Safran, 1976, p. 218) This strategy was used by the cabdriver and construction workers as well. Other victims recognized explicitly that it could not be their "seductive" appearance or behavior which elicited sexual attentions of men. One said "I am fat and forty but..." and another reported that "He goes after everyone. He doesn't care what size, shape or age." (Safran, 1976, p. 217)

If women who are not considered to be sexually attractive, and women who do all they can to play down their sexual attractiveness are sexually harassed nonetheless, then it is not "seductive" dress and behavior which elicits sexual harassment, and sexual harassment cannot be a purely sexual act. Thus, the argument is not substantiated by the data. Apart from the fact that the argument is misleading, however, there are other dangers in using it. Most obvious of these is that it results in "blaming the victim" - women - for their own victimization. And blaming the victim is unlikely to prove any more useful in addressing this problem than it has proved in addressing other social problems in the past.

A second alternative explanation parallels the first in viewing sexual harassment as a primarily sexual and "deviant" act. The only real distinction between this view

9. Here, the term "deviance" is used in reference to the traditional definition of deviance as a form of behavior inconsistent with norms assumed to be universal.
and the first is that in this case, it is deviance on the part of men rather than promiscuity on the part of women which is at the root of sexual harassment. This argument runs the following course: 1) some men commit sexual harassment and others do not; 2) those who do are of a certain type - "lower class","sexually deprived", "psychotic" or "deviant" in some other way; 3) only some men are of this type; so 4) sexual harassment is merely an expression deviance, not of dominance; and 5) by definition deviance is not widespread; so 6) sexual harassment at the workplace is not a serious problem.

Unfortunately, the data we have pertaining to the perpetrators of sexual harassment is relatively incomplete. What we do know is that men in many occupations commit sexual harassment. Because of the interrelationships between occupational status, educational background, income and other indicators of socio-economic status, it is probably safe to say that perpetrators of sexual harassment have different positions with regard to these indicators as well.

The data on rape support this conjecture: men of all different ages, races, marital and socio-economic status commit rape. And among these men, there are many who can be considered neither "lower class", "sexually deprived", "psychotic", or "deviant". It is, however, these types who are most frequently reported to the police, arrested, con-
victed and imprisoned for rape. Thus, they are the ones who are represented in most official rape statistics.

Secondly, incidents of sexual harassment seem to be so frequent that by definition, they could not be perpetrated only by "deviants". Sexual harassment appears to be far more than a "deviant" act. As Diana Russell has argued, sexual harassment is better viewed as overconformity to culturally defined masculine roles than as deviance:

One function of the myth that rape is only perpetrated by society's freaks is that rape then appears to have no further implications for the rest of society...Yet rape is not exclusively the act of sadistic psychopaths and is much more widespread than most people realize. Indeed the view that emerges from this study is that rape is not so much a deviant act as an overconforming act. Rape may be understood as an extreme acting out of qualities that are regarded as supermasculine in this and many other societies: aggression, force, power, strength, toughness, dominance, competitiveness. (Russell 1975, p. 260)

Much of the other research on rape supports this view. For example:

A recent study showed that convicted rapists were indistinguishable from ordinary men in psychological tests. Some of them showed a slight tendency to express anger more openly, but sexually, and in all other ways, they were average. In this they differed from other sex offenders, such as exhibitionists, who did show a significant difference from both rapists and ordinary men. With the exception of
about 3 percent, rapists seem to be sexually and psychologically normal. (Medea and Thompson, 1974, pp. 29-30)

Given the data on both rape and sexual harassment at the workplace, the view that such phenomena are acts of deviance - on the part of men or women - does not provide an adequate explanation. And as noted above, it also serves to minimize the severity of a problem which seriously affects a sizable portion of the population.

Sexual Harassment As Biologically Determined

Another common explanation of sexual abuse is that it is an outgrowth of strong, biological, and uncontrollable sex drives between men and women. The conclusion of the argument is that it is therefore "natural", "inevitable", and that nothing can or should be done to eliminate it. There are a number of fallacies in this argument. First, to argue that the causes of sexual harassment are biological, and to explain why men commit sexual assault so much more frequently than women, one would have to make an additional assumption - that the male sex drive is biologically stronger than that of the female. Empirical evidence, however, indicates that this is not the case. Henley states that "It can hardly be claimed any longer that men have greater "sex drives", and therefore a lesser expression of sex must be attributed to an inhibition on the part of women to display sexual interest in this manner." (Henley, 1975, p. 193) A psychiatrist, Mary Jane
Sherfey, has in fact suggested that women's biological sex drives are actually stronger than men's, but that they have been repressed in order to maintain stable families. She writes,

"...it is conceivable that the forceful suppression of women's inordinate sexual demands was a prerequisite to the dawn of every modern civilization and almost every living culture. Primitive woman's sexual drive was too strong...to withstand the disciplined requirements of a settled family life..." (Sherfey, 1970, p. 224)

Thus, a biologically stronger male sex drive probably does not even exist, and can therefore not explain sexual harassment at the workplace.

Second, if the sexual assault of women were the result of uncontrollable sexual drives, it would have to be viewed as impulsive, unpremeditated behavior. This, however, is not usually the case. In one of the most important pieces of research on rape, Menachem Amir found that "of 646 rape events, 71 percent are planned rapes; 11 percent are partially planned; and in 16 percent of the cases the offense is an explosive event." (Amir, 1971, p. 142) 82 percent is a significant majority by any standards, so most rapes can hardly be viewed as impulsive acts.

Finally, if sexual assault were a response to "sexual need" alone, the perpetrator would have to be in some way
"sexually deprived." This, however, is not true of most rapists either. As Medea and Thompson have pointed out:

If that were true, one would expect most rapists to be unmarried men with no other form of sexual release. They aren't. Rapists are neither permanently insane nor temporarily insane with sexual frustration.

There is plenty of support for this view. Human history is filled with rapists who have been neither sick not overcome with lust. (Medea and Thompson, 1974, p. 32)

Thus, the view that rape and other forms of sexual abuse are biologically determined holds little promise as a thorough explanation of sexual harassment at the workplace.

Sexual Harassment As Fun Or Bribery

Another view of sexual harassment is that it does not really exist, so that it is not really a problem at all. This view takes several forms. One is that since women seem to "go along" with sexual harassment, they must like it, and it is not really "harassment" at all. This constitutes little more than a simplistic denial of all we know about the ways in which socialization and economic dependency foster submissiveness and override free choice. Secondly, those women who are able to speak out about sexual harassment use terms such as "humiliating", "intimidating", "frightening", "financially damaging", "embarrassing", "nerve-wracking", "awful", and "frustrating" to describe it. These words are hardly those used to describe a situation which one "likes".
A variation of this view that sexual harassment is not really a problem for women, suggests that women are not sexually harassed at all: instead, they falsify stories of sexual harassment in order to obtain benefits from, or harm their employers. It is unlikely that this form of bribery is widespread, given the negative responses which women are likely to receive after reporting incidents of sexual harassment. Women's subordinate position insures that in most cases, women are less likely to be believed than the men they accuse of sexual harassment. That women's word is less highly valued than men's is proven by the fact that this theory is still proposed frequently, despite all of the evidence on rape and other forms of sexual abuse which has already been collected.

A final point to be made with regard to this view is that even the few falsified stories which do arise are a direct result of male dominance. If women had equal and legitimate access to the instruments of power, there would be no need to resort to bribery in order to obtain them. Thus, equalization of power would also eliminate this "problem", if it indeed exists.

Sexual Harassment As A Transitional Phenomenon

The final alternative explanation of sexual harassment at the workplace is that since many of its victims are
women in non-traditional jobs, and since it has only recently been discussed as a problem, sexual harassment is merely a transitional phenomenon. As such, it will disappear as soon as men become accustomed to sharing their jobs and other instruments of power equally with women.

While it may be true that phenomena such as sexual harassment becomes more frequent and severe in transitional periods such as the present, it is not limited to transitional periods, or even to places in which the transition is most evident.

Second, this explanation cannot account for the fact that women in jobs which have a long time been relegated to women - waitressing, clerical work, etc. - are also frequently victimized by sexual harassment at the workplace. It would be difficult to argue convincingly that men are just "not used to" seeing women in these lines of work. Third, there are several reasons (explained in Chapter IV) why women would not have been able to speak out about sexual harassment until recently. It might be argued, in fact, that all social problems exist long before they are publicly recognized as such. Just as poverty in the United States was not "discovered" until the sixties, rape was not "discovered" until the seventies - after action had been taken to collect information and raise the issues.
Finally, there is some historical evidence of sexual harassment at the workplace. The earliest American references to it may be found in descriptions of indentured servitude during the 1700s. During this period, sexual harassment was considered a problem, since it could result in economic losses to the masters of indentured women.

It was the master's economic interest to keep his women servants from marriage and to prevent their having illicit sexual relations, very likely to result in childbearing with consequent interruption of work and impairment of health and stamina. As a practical matter the guarding of this interest was most difficult. Work in the fields brought women into intimate contact with the menservants. Household duties exposed them to the advances of members of the master's household, perhaps even the master himself. (Italics added) (Morris, 1946, pp. 26, 27)

Another discussion of women's working conditions during the late 1800s indicated that the system through which seamstresses did their work, their poverty, and their resultant economic dependence upon the men who paid them, sharply increased their vulnerability to the sexual advances of those men.

This may seem a very simple course, but one feature in it gives rather a sinister aspect. The person who delivers the materials, receives the work, and pronounces on its execution, is almost invariably a man, and upon
his decision rests the question whether the operative shall be paid her full wages, or whether any portion of her miserable earnings shall be deducted because the work is not done to his satisfaction. In many cases he wields a power the determinations of which amount to this: "shall I have any food to-day, or shall I starve?" (Sanger, 1858, p. 96)

Another example of sexual harassment at the workplace, which has only recently been well documented, is the massive rape of black women under slavery. In her history of black women in the United States, Gerda Lerner writes:

The pattern of exploitative sex relations was set during slavery when black women were used both as unpaid workers and as breeders of slaves. Their free availability as sex objects to any white man was enshrined in tradition, upheld by the laws forbidding intermarriage, enforced by terror against black men and women and, though frowned upon by white community opinion, tolerated both in its clandestine and open manifestations...the sexual exploitation of women of a subservient class is as old as class society and...the sexual use of slave women by their masters antedates class society and can be found in every culture without regard to race. It is, in fact, one of the very definitions of female enslavement. (Lerner, 1973, pp. 149, 150)

Each of these examples illustrates the ways in which men have sexually abused women through male dominance and economic control. In the case of black women, white dominance is
an additional factor contributing to the inequality of the relationship between victim and perpetrator. While the relationships between victims and perpetrators have shifted slightly over time, their relative positions have remained much the same: female submissiveness and economic dependence on the one hand, male dominance and economic control on the other. Sexual harassment of working women, then, is not a transitional phenomenon, but an historical condition of women's work.
CHAPTER VII
STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Sexual harassment has a wide range of negative implications for its victims. These may be emotional, physical, and/or economic in nature. Victims' emotional responses range from varying degrees of discomfort - feelings of anger, frustration, embarrassment, and humiliation - to severe emotional trauma. The latter has been well documented with regard to rape. Physical illness or disability enters in as a result of stressful situations in some cases, and direct physical trauma is especially likely to occur when sexual harassment takes the form of forcible rape. There is an equally broad range of economic implications for victims of sexual harassment at the workplace. If they refuse to tolerate it, they may be fired, demoted, denied jobs or advancement, or forced to quit. If they submit to sexual harassment in order to protect their jobs, they must suffer the continued emotional or physical trauma described above. The tradeoff, then, is a choice between financial security or emotional and physical well-being. This clearly is not a happy choice, and one which no one should be forced to make.

It is the position of the Alliance Against Sexual
Coercion that conditions as destructive as sexual harassment at the workplace should be eliminated, and that the way to eliminate them is to attack them at their roots. If the analysis proposed above is correct, then the root of sexual harassment is the unequal power relationships between victims and perpetrators. Unequal power relationships are in turn rooted in racism, sexism, classism, and other bases of dominance. To eliminate sexual harassment, then, all these other conditions must be removed as well.

Assessment of Strategies

The theoretical model developed in Chapter V suggests several points of intervention which might be used to eliminate, or at least to reduce the frequency and severity of sexual harassment at the workplace. To end sexual harassment, its roots would have to be destroyed. The strategy imperative would then become the elimination of racism, sexism and other bases of unequal access to the instruments of power. This would help to equalize power relationships, and remove some of the bases of dominance. In addition, the associated cultural and social supports of this dominance hierarchy, the socialization of men to dominate and the socialization of women to submit - would also have to be altered.

Apart from these strategies, the model suggests other interventions which might diminish sexual harassment at the workplace, although they would not eliminate it since they
do not address its roots. These include minimizing the choice to dominate, eliminating threats to dominance, and minimizing other social and economic conditions (i.e. women's marginal position in the labor force, and employment, and the absence of sanctions against sexual harassment) which foster the expression of dominance.

Finally, there are some additional strategies which are not indicated in the model, but which have been suggested by others. These include segregating men and women in the workplace, keeping women or men out of the labor force altogether, or establishing support systems for victims. The latter is similar to establishing sanctions against perpetrators, and the two will be considered simultaneously in the following analysis.

Some of these strategies are impossible, others are absurd, and none are specific enough at this point to be of much use in organizing efforts. However, strategies should not be categorically discarded or adopted on this basis alone. Thorough strategic analysis requires the development of a set of criteria against which each option can be systematically evaluated. Otherwise the advantages and disadvantages of each may go unrecognized, inadequate strategies may be adopted, and potentially useful strategies may be eliminated from the beginning.
Before proceeding with the development of criteria, however, a few additional points are worth noting. First, strategies should be designed not just to create social change leading to the reduction of the problem at hand, but also to generate support for the organization so that it can function effectively enough to participate in change efforts. That is, strategies must include some resource-acquisition mechanism, and they must be agreeable to the group's members and others who will participate in their implementation. Secondly, it is often useful to group strategies into short and long-range categories. The former may be linked to immediate objectives and activities which, when completed, provide the organization with a sense of accomplishment or progress. The latter, when linked to overarching, long term goals, provide the organization with a higher sense of purpose and a means of evaluating short-term strategies and activities.

With these considerations in mind, the ideal set of strategies would be one which:

1) is consistent with the organization's political philosophy, goals and analysis of the issue;

2) is feasible and efficient, given the resources and skills available to the group;

3) is responsive to the needs of those who are victimized by sexual harassment at the workplace;
4) does not duplicate or interfere with other progressive organizing efforts;

5) has no foreseeable negative side effects;

6) incorporates both long and short term elements;

7) addresses the organization's support needs; and

8) results in some balance between theoretical analysis and concrete action.

Before turning to evaluation of particular strategies on the basis of these criteria, it must be noted that no single strategy is likely to fulfill all of the criteria. Problems with multiple causes require multiple strategies. Furthermore, some strategies will fulfill some criteria while counteracting the fulfillment of other criteria. In cases such as these, the advantages and disadvantages must be carefully weighed. If such strategies are selected, others which will neutralize their negative side effects must also be used. Finally, no strategy - even if it appears to fulfill all of the requirements listed above - is foolproof. Negative repercussions may appear where they are least expected; certain strategies may simply not take hold; and the unpredictable actions of others may interfere with implementation at any point along the way. Strategy design, like most other elements of the organizing process, takes place under conditions of uncertainty. Furthermore, external conditions continually change, so strategies must be contin-
ually reappraised and refined to be effective.

Those strategies which are highly contrary to the fulfillment of the criteria outlined above may now be eliminated. These include 1) segregating men and women in the workplace, 2) keeping women or men out of the workforce altogether, and 3) eliminating threats to male dominance. In one way or another, each of these strategies contradicts nearly all of the criteria. None of them in any way addresses the roots of sexual harassment at the workplace; all negate the human right to work, and to work in jobs of one's own choosing; and all contradict other goals of the Women's Movement and other progressive movements. Thus, these strategies are grossly inconsistent with the analysis, philosophy, goals and of AASC, and they interfere with other progressive organizing efforts as well. Furthermore, they are neither efficient nor feasible, they have countless negative implications, and they provide no source of organizational support. Therefore, they merit no further consideration here.

A fourth strategy - eliminating racism, sexism, classism, in order to remove the bases of dominance - cannot be dismissed as easily. As a solution, this strategy would be one of the most effective, since it directly attacks the roots of sexual harassment at the workplace. As such it is a logical derivative of, and a necessary conclusion to the group's political philosophy and analysis of the issue.
Furthermore, AASC's ultimate goal is to work toward the elimination of sexual harassment. As noted above, doing so demands such efforts. On the basis of the first criterion, then, this strategy is extremely compelling.

At the same time, this strategy opposes fulfillment of other criteria. It is obviously far more than AASC can reasonably hope to accomplish, no matter how effective the group's organizing might become. Thus, the strategy is not feasible. Furthermore, when stated as "eliminating sexism", for example, it provides us with few clues as to what we should do by way of organizing. There are innumerable ways in which we might attempt to reduce sexism.

Despite its infeasibility, this strategy cannot be dismissed, because it is so highly consistent with the first criterion. Instead, it should be considered part of a long term strategy, and transformed into more concrete tasks which are feasible, given the resources available to AASC. Since there are entire movements and countless organizations whose aims include the elimination of sexism and racism, AASC need not take on such tasks alone. Instead, part of AASC's overall strategy should be to carry out concrete activities which support these movements and groups, in this way contributing to larger efforts already underway. Finally, AASC should evaluate all of its activities partially in terms of the extent to which they enhance or impede the progress of
these larger movements.

A fifth strategy - altering the socialization of men and women so that they would be less predisposed to dominance and submissiveness, respectively - raises similar problems. If, as the theory suggests, socialization patterns are a primary contributing factor to sexual harassment, then the first criterion requires that socialization be addressed through AASC's strategy. Second, if dominance threatened in one sphere is commonly reasserted in another as the theory suggests, then attitudinal change through resocialization is critical. If, for example, other changes come about so that strong sanctions are eventually brought to bear against perpetrators of sexual harassment at the workplace alone, and if their desire or need to dominate is not also diminished, then dominance thwarted at the workplace will be expressed elsewhere. Without attitudinal change, a reduction of sexual harassment at the workplace could result in a higher incidence of sexual or non-sexual abuse in the home and other spheres. Resocialization and other efforts to reduce the expression of dominance, then, must be attempted to avoid the negative repurcussion of increased harassment outside of the workplace.

Changing socialization requires massive efforts, and doing this alone would probably not end sexual harassment. Men might choose not to express dominance so often, and
women might tolerate the dominance of others less often, but to some extent, perpetrators and victims would still have unequal access to the instruments of power, and the potential for dominance would remain intact.

Nevertheless, there are concrete ways in which AASC can and should attempt to alter the socialization of men and women, particularly with regard to their perceptions of sexual harassment at the workplace. One important strategy would be to educate the community to the problem, and more specifically, to educate potential victims and perpetrators to the problem. Such educational efforts would, if successful, resocialize people so that they would be less likely to commit or submit to sexual harassment. Since the workplace is the locus of AASC's concern, it should be the locus of such resocialization efforts. Thus, workplace education programs might be a major element of AASC's strategy. Its purposes would be 1) to raise the issue, 2) to provide a forum in which victims could discuss the problem and a mechanism through which additional information would be gathered, 3) to educate perpetrators to the negative implications of their actions, and 4) to educate victims to their rights and sources of support.

There are, of course, countless additional questions which would have to be answered before attempting to implement this strategy. The group would have to ascertain how it could
best present itself, which channels could be used to enter the workplace, how the information could best be presented, and which kinds of workplaces are most in need of and most responsive to such efforts. Consequently, the strategy requires considerable elaboration.

Another strategy - eliminating hierarchy at the workplace - has also been suggested. This strategy directly addresses one element of the basis of dominance which results in sexual harassment at the workplace. That is the authority instilled in higher positions to control the earnings, benefits, and working conditions of those who occupy lower positions in the hierarchy. If there were no hierarchy, if all workers had equal input into the decisions now made by a few, then those few would have fewer instruments of power to manipulate in order to enforce the compliance of the others. The basis of dominance would be undercut, and the severity and incidence of sexual harassment at the workplace and other expressions of dominance might be diminished.

There are, however, difficulties with this strategy also. First, it would address only one element of the power relationship (employer dominance) and leave the other (male dominance) intact. It would be interesting to look at collectively structured workplaces to see if sexual harassment were less frequent, as a means of exploring the potential of the strategy. However, without alterations in the socialization of men and in other
inequalities of male-female relationships, it is unlikely that this solution would be effective in eliminating sexual harassment.

Furthermore, it is not a very feasible strategy, since we have little control over the structuring of workplaces other than our own. And hierarchy is so deeply embedded in capitalist systems that nothing short of a socialist revolution could eradicate it. This is not to say that AASC cannot support the elimination of hierarchy. Rather, it is to say that focusing all of the group's energy on eliminating hierarchy would be self-defeating at this time.

Minimizing other conditions which encourage the expression of dominance might also reduce the severity and incidence of sexual harassment at the workplace. But once again, many of these conditions (e.g. women's marginal position in the labor market and high levels of unemployment) are so pervasive and deeply rooted that they could not be effectively altered by AASC alone. In addition, focusing on these conditions would detract from AASC's more specific objectives pertaining to sexual harassment at the workplace. Thus, AASC's strategies must be supportive of larger efforts to address these conditions, without focusing exclusively on them.

The final point of intervention suggested by the model involves the creation of sanctions against perpetrators of
sexual harassment, and support systems for its victims. This strategy is consistent with the short term objectives of AASC, and to some extent, with the group's overall analysis of the issue. Developing sanctions and support systems is feasible, given the resources available to the group; it is responsive to the immediate needs of those who are victimized by sexual harassment; and it is consistent with other feminist and workplace organizing efforts. Therefore, it fulfills many of the strategy selection criteria.

The development of sanctions and supports has two crucial limitations though, which must be recognized from the start. The first is that there is a certain danger in creating sanctions. Sanctions, as they have been employed in the criminal justice system, are often more destructive than therapeutic. Furthermore, they are often imposed discriminatorily, again on the basis of sex, race and class. Our experience with the criminal justice system in cases of rape indicates first that incarceration does not often deter rapists - instead they continue to rape in prison, or outside after their release. Secondly, sanctions such as arrests, prosecution, and imprisonment are far more frequently imposed on minority and/or lower class rapists than on white rapists of high socio-economic status. As long as the criminal justice system is discriminatory in its imposition of sanctions, new sanctions created to deal with sexual harassment at the workplace are
likely to be misused in the same ways. Consequently, our efforts to develop sanctions within the context of the existent criminal justice system may be viewed as participation in a racist, sexist, and classist system which we cannot endorse conscientiously. Furthermore, punishment of perpetrators of sexual harassment is not our objective – elimination of the phenomenon is. We can only support the development of sanctions to the extent that they are necessary to protect victims until sexual harassment is eradicated, and then, only those sanctions which are humane and fairly imposed.

The second limitation of the strategy of creating sanctions and support systems is that it only addresses the roots of sexual harassment in very indirect ways. The strategy focuses not so much on eliminating the problem as on ameliorating the problem after the fact. Sanctions and support systems can only be viewed as reforms which may improve victims' working conditions, but which do not in and of themselves fundamentally alter the primary conditions in which sexual harassment is rooted. Consequently, this strategy must remain in the domain of short term strategies, and it must be combined with other, long term strategies aimed at the elimination of sexual harassment in order to remain consistent with the group's political philosophy and analysis of the issue.
There are countless forms which sanctions and support systems might take. These include legislative changes, the formation of new or the alteration of existent workplace organizations, the development of support and sanctions through groups working outside of the workplace, and possibly others.

Some legal channels are already in existence, but their effectiveness in protecting and compensating victims, and in deterring perpetrators of sexual harassment have not yet been well tested. As noted above, the New York State Division of Human Rights is currently processing some cases, and similar agencies in other states might also be useful for this purpose.

At least two cases of sexual harassment have been tried in federal district courts, under the sex discrimination provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In a Washington, D.C. case the court ruled that "the supervisor's conduct constituted illegal sex discrimination within the meaning of the Civil Rights Act." (Lissy, 1976, p. 13) The victim, who had been fired for her refusal to meet the sexual demands of her employer, was then reinstated in her job.

The other case, tried in Arizona, was dismissed on the grounds that the case had not been brought through the appropriate state channels (E.E.O.C.). The judge ruled that the conduct complained of was "nothing more than a personal proclivity, peculiarity, or mannerism" and not a "company directed policy which deprived women of employment opportun-
ities." As such, it could not be litigated under the Civil Rights Act. (Federal Supplement, 1975, p. 163)

Another difficulty with the use of sex discrimination provisions is that if the employer harasses employees of both sexes, his/her actions may no longer be considered "discriminatory". Thus, the Arizona judge found that:

> It would be ludicrous to hold that the sort of activity involved here was contemplated by the (Civil Rights) Act because to do so would mean that if the conduct complained of were directed equally to males there would be no basis for suit. (Federal Supplement, 1975, p. 163)

These two cases set contradictory precedents, so that now the question of whether the Civil Rights Act will provide protection from sexual harassment at the workplace can only be determined in higher courts. Thus, it is not at all clear that it will provide sexual harassment victims with the needed legal leverage.

Another area of law which might provide victims of sexual harassment with some leverage is labor law. Occupational health and safety codes might prove to be a fertile ground for exploration, assuming that sexual harassment could be designated as an occupational hazard. One way of defining it as such is through use of the concept of stress. The Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety defines stress in a way which is extremely useful for this purpose;
Stress, in the occupational health context, is a broad term covering biological and psychological reactions to environmental influences... Heat and cold, noise and vibrations, accidents and hunger may all be stressors which call for adaptation both psychologically and biologically. The stressors mentioned above all represent physical influences, but our nature is such that we also react to symbols of such influences and consequently, a demanding employer or supervisor, fear of losing one's job, lack of friends and thoughts of failure may also be stressors... A stressor is defined when a situation is interpreted as a threat to the goals, integrity or well-being of the individual... A very large number of stressors in working life develop in the social relationships that are a (necessary) feature of practically all work. (International Labor Office, 1972, pp. 1359-1360)

Sexual harassment creates threats similar to those mentioned above. Thus, occupational health and safety regulations might eventually provide victims with additional legal leverage.

A second way of using labor law would be to include clauses pertaining to sexual harassment of workers in union contracts. As more women become organized through efforts such as the contemporary clerical workers movement, the importance of this strategy increase. Complaints of sexual harassment might then be brought against employers through usual grievance procedures, and the victim's job could be protected.
When sexual harassment takes the form of rape, state rape statutes could be used. However, in many states rape is narrowly defined as "forced vaginal penetration" and any form of sexual abuse other than that could not be litigated under rape laws. Furthermore, the legal proceedings are long and distressing, and there is no guarantee that the victim will not lose her job in the process. As a result, state rape statutes are probably not terribly useful to victims of sexual harassment at the workplace. Assault charges might also be brought to criminal courts where sexual harassment involves forceful physical contact. This legislation, however, shares many of the problems described above with reference to rape and the criminal justice system as a whole.

Other areas of law, including equal opportunity and affirmative action legislation, and the Equal Rights Amendment might also be used. However, to the writer's knowledge none of these have been tested with regard to sexual harassment at the workplace.

For any of these channels to become useful to victims of sexual harassment at the workplace, they must be more thoroughly researched and compared. Before recommending them, we must know about each option: 1) the details of the entire process victims would have to go through; 2) the kind of documentation required; 3) the resources necessary (e.g.
legal counsel, money, time, etc.); 4) the characteristics of the agencies or agents which carry out the process; and 5) the accessibility of each option to women of differing occupations, working environments, resources, etc. With this knowledge, the various options could be assessed and compared to identify the most useful ones. Strategy would then be developed accordingly.

**Strategy Recommendations**

On the basis of this analysis, the broad outlines of an effective set of strategies can be delineated. Preliminary strategy recommendations are as follows:

1) Work toward the elimination of sexism, classism, racism and other bases of dominance, so that sexual harassment at the workplace might eventually be eliminated. This may be done by providing support to other groups working toward similar goals, by further developing an analysis which takes these factors into account, and by using that analysis in discussion of sexual harassment at the workplace.

2) Develop an educational program on sexual harassment to inform the community as a whole, and particularly the workforce of the problem. This program should attempt to alter attitudes of dominance and submission, to educate victims to their rights, sources of emotional support and the legal leverage available to them.

3) Improve and/or create legal channels and support systems which will provide protection for those subjected to sexual harassment at the workplace, and which will act as a humane deterrent to those who commit sexual harassment.
4) Carry out further research which will explore the parameters of the problem itself, and the means of eliminating it. This research should result in the collection of information useful in informing the public of the problem, targeting other strategies where they are most needed, and providing a basis for further refinement of theory and strategy. Finally, research may be funded in order to financially support the organization's activity.

Together, the five elements of the strategy fulfill most of the minimum requirements set forth above. They are consistent with AASC's political philosophy, goals and analysis; they address both long and short term objectives; they address organizational support requirements; they constitute a reasonable balance between theory and action; and they do not appear to duplicate or interfere with other progressive organizing efforts. As noted above, some individual elements of the strategy have potentially harmful side-effects. However, other elements should help to counterbalance these effects.
CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION

From the writer's perspective, the most useful aspect of this thesis was the opportunity it created for observation and analysis of analytical processes within the context of a feminist organizing effort. As the thesis progressed, the relationships among AASC's political philosophy, analysis of the issue, and strategies for change became increasingly clear. Political philosophy provided a basis for a particular kind of issue analysis, which determined the parameters of effective and acceptable strategies for social change. While some consistency among these three elements is probably desired and achieved to some extent in any organizing effort, their interdependence is far less obvious when they are not carefully analyzed and articulated.

To the extent that the thesis facilitated AASC's analysis of its own politics, of the issue, and of strategies for social change, the thesis served the needs of the group as well. Reviewing the thesis stimulated discussion within the group which might not have happened, or at least not as soon, had the thesis not been written.

It is important to point out, however, that this discussion was simultaneously necessary and threatening to the cohesiveness of the group. Without such discussion, it is easy
enough to assume or pretend that there is basic agreement among group members as to the assumptions according to which the group operates. However, once these assumptions are more clearly articulated, they are inevitably questioned and disparities in the politics of individual members become more evident. These disparities may constitute a very serious threat to the cohesiveness of the group, and subsequently, to members' ability to work together.

Fortunately, the disparities which became recognizable to AASC through critique of the thesis were discussed and resolved satisfactorily. Because the disparities were resolved, the discussions resulted in greater solidarity than that which was present before. Differences which we had anticipated previously turned out to be less serious than we had expected, so discussion served to reaffirm rather than to threaten the group's solidarity. The risk involved in the process was evident nonetheless.

This analytical process, however, would have occurred at some level with or without the thesis. The contribution of the thesis was to bring the process to a more conscious level, and to hasten its progress. And bringing analytical, problem solving processes to a conscious level is one of the major contributions which social policy analysis has made to this work. In this way, the field of social policy analysis provided the writer, and indirectly, the group with an
important analytical tool.

From the perspective of social policy analysis, the central question which this thesis raises pertains to the use of data. A criticism made repeatedly to the writer (by all non-members of AASC with whom the thesis was discussed) was that the data available was inadequate as a basis for the formulation of a theoretical explanation of sexual harassment at the workplace. Furthermore, it was often suggested that the data was so suspect and meager that it was inadequate even to prove that sexual harassment was a problem serious enough to merit attention. Inevitably followed by the injunction to "do more research", these criticisms became the primary problem of the thesis from an academic perspective.

This problem suggests two contradictions inherent in a project such as this. One is a contradiction between simultaneous concern with theory and practice, and the other is a contradiction between feminist and non-feminist theory and practice. Without seeming anti-intellectual, as activists we must recognize that at some point we must move away from full time theorizing and toward concrete action. This move might occur at any point, and the time selected might be somewhat arbitrary, but the longer we wait the more difficult and the less likely the move becomes. If the move is not made, then in fact we are not activists but theorists. There are risks
involved in moving into the sphere of action too soon, but waiting too long entails even greater risk — the risk that nothing will ever be done about the problem at hand.

As an activist in an activist group, I feel compelled now to move toward concrete actions which address the problem at hand, and I have little patience with demands to do more research first. This, I expect, is a frustration shared by many other students who are as concerned with practice as with theory.

The second contradiction concerns the centrality of solid, "scientific" data in the process of identifying and analyzing an issue. As a feminist, I have learned to intuit problems which affect women, to check those intuitions with other women, and to trust them. AASC did not "discover" the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace by looking for research on it. Instead, the group identified the problem through our experience in rape crisis centers, and through our individual but common experiences as women subjected to various forms of sexual harassment almost daily. Before launching the project, we checked our intuitions and our experiences against those of other women, and found that our belief that the problem was serious was widely shared. Nearly every woman we spoke with agreed that sexual harassment at the workplace was a serious problem, and provided accounts of her own or her friends' experiences with sexual
harassment at the workplace.

In a larger and more formal effort to obtain others' sense of the problem, AASC mailed questionnaires to over 200 rape crisis centers and similar organizations across the country. In this questionnaire, we asked whether there was a need for this kind of a project, what data they had pertaining to sexual harassment at the workplace, and what additional resources they knew of which might be of use to us. To date, we have received approximately twenty replies. Almost none of the groups were able to provide us with significant amounts of statistical data, but all agreed there was a need for the project, despite the absence of statistical evidence of the problem. This information validates AASC's position and raises questions concerning the centrality of statistical data in social policy analysis. Heavy reliance on statistical data may in many cases serve to obscure widespread social problems, which results in the perpetuation of those problems. In this sense, the continued demand for more data before action constitutes a conservative position antagonistic to the rights and needs of those who are victimized by "hidden" social problems.

The feminist issue identification process which relies as much on intuition and shared experience as on statistical data, might be of use to social policy analysis in the future.
It suggests that we would be wise not to categorically dismiss what we only intuit or experience to be the truth, and not to immobilize ourselves over the absence of "adequate" data.
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