



# Sexual harassment in academia

An international research review

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## **Foreword**

One year ago, on 15 October 2017, the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment began in USA. In Sweden, this led to a large number of similar movements in various industries. #Akademiuppropet gathered around 2 500 signatures from persons in academia. Swedish higher education institutions have therefore reinforced their work of counteracting sexual harassment, and the Government has also encouraged higher education institutions to make this work visible.

Since 2003, the Swedish Research Council has had a gender equality strategy, and works for gender equality throughout its area of activity. We have produced this research review, as we realised during last year's #MeToo movement that we were lacking an up-to-date picture of the research that exists into sexual harassment in academia. It is my hope that the research review will contribute to the discussion and may form a basis for urgent work by higher education institutions.

The research review was authored by Fredrik Bondestam and Maja Lundqvist at the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg, and they are also responsible for the discussions and conclusions.

I would like to say a warm thank you to the authors for their work on this research review.

Stockholm, 15 October 2018

Sven Stafström  
*Director General, Swedish Research Council*

## Summary

### Background

The Swedish Research Council has commissioned a research review on sexual harassment in academia from the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, University of Gothenburg. The aim is to provide an overview of current knowledge in international research. The review is based on an analysis of approximately 800 publications out of a total of 5 561 during the period 1966–2018, which were selected through an extensive search process in literature databases.

The report is structured in line with the commission of the Swedish Research Council. In four different chapters, the focus is on (a) existing research reviews on sexual harassment in academia and working life at large, (b) a selection of top-ranked, peer-reviewed research articles on sexual harassment in academia, (c) all Swedish and other Nordic research publications on sexual harassment in academia, as well as (d) the state of knowledge and methodological challenges of research on prevalence of sexual harassment.

### Results

Each chapter present the contents of current research, and summaries of results are made separately in these sections. In addition, compilations of recommendations for practice, policy and research are made in each chapter.

More generally, there are results from the entire international research field that deals with prevalence, consequences and challenges for the research field as such, which in brief are:

### Prevalence

- Gender harassment is the most common form of exposure within academia, according to this research field. Sexual harassment occurs in all disciplines in academia and is reported by all groups (students, doctoral students, employees).
- International studies show a large variation in prevalence; from 2 to 93 per cent depending on a variety of factors. 20 to 25 per cent of female students in the United States have experienced sexual harassment according to several major studies. In top-ranked peer-reviewed articles, the prevalence of sexual harassment in academia varies between 11 and 73 per cent for women, and between 3 and 26 per cent for men. In Swedish surveys, 4 to 26 per cent of females and 2 to 6 per cent of males report experiences of sexual harassment.
- Studies based on a large and wide selection of respondents, which include detailed questions on experiences of sexual harassment and/or focus groups with

limited influence over their situation, result in a higher reported incidence of sexual harassment. The international research field shows that students, younger women, women with insecure employment conditions and certain minorities (ethnicity and sexuality) are more exposed to sexual harassment than other groups.

- There is nothing to suggest that the proportion of university students experiencing sexual harassment in the United States is decreasing over time.

### Consequences

- Exposure to sexual harassment leads to physical, psychological and professional consequences for individuals.
- Evidence-based research confirms that sexual harassment in academia can lead to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, physical pain, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, increased alcohol use, impaired career opportunities, reduced job motivation, and more.
- There is no research available on the consequences of sexual harassment for work teams, work environments and organisational culture in academia.
- Underreporting of experiences of sexual harassment in research on prevalence is a documented and extensive problem.
- More than half of the students and faculty experiencing sexual harassment do not report the events to management.

### The field of research

- Quantitative cross-sectional studies dominate the international research field in general.
- Research on sexual harassment in academia has several challenges concerning inadequate definitions, samples, survey methods and underreporting.
- Research on sexual harassment in academia lacks coherent theoretical perspectives. Instead, research is foremost conducted on the basis of national legal definitions of sexual harassment.
- A majority of the research reviews and the top-ranked peer-reviewed articles are published in English, with empirical data from the United States and, to a certain extent, other English-speaking countries.
- More than half of top-ranked peer-reviewed articles are based on limited and uncontrolled cross-sectional data, lack randomised samples and, to some extent, have inadequate statistical analysis.
- The analysed field of research as a whole is characterised by context-specific empirical studies, inadequate theorisation of research questions and methodology, mainly juridical conceptualisations of sexual harassment, and a simplistic, binary understanding of gender as such.
- The Swedish research field lacks major studies on prevalence of high quality. As a contrast to the research field in general, some of the recent qualitative studies are based on feminist theories on violence, feminist sociology, gender studies and organisational theory.
- Research-based knowledge of sexual harassment in academia in the rest of the Nordic countries is fragmented and unclear.
- Research focusing on intersectional dimensions in relation to sexual harassment in academia is limited.
- Research that focuses mainly on perpetrators is not to be found in the analysed material.

## Sammanfattning

### Bakgrund

Vetenskapsrådet har beställt en forskningsöversikt om sexuella trakasserier i akademien av Nationella sekretariatet för genusforskning, Göteborgs universitet. Syftet är att ge en bild av aktuellt kunskapsläge i internationell forskning. Översikten bygger på en genomgång av närmare 800 publikationer av totalt 5 561 under perioden 1966–2018, vilka selekterats genom en omfattande sökprocess i litteraturlösningsdatabaser.

Rapporten är strukturerad i linje med uppdraget från Vetenskapsrådet. I fyra olika kapitel analyseras (a) befintliga forskningsöversikter om sexuella trakasserier i akademien och arbetslivet i stort, (b) ett urval topprankade, peer-reviewgranskade forskningsartiklar om sexuella trakasserier i akademien, (c) samtlig svensk och övrig nordisk forskning om sexuella trakasserier i akademien, samt (d) kunskapsläget och metodologiska utmaningar när det gäller prevalens, det vill säga förekomsten av utsatthet för sexuella trakasserier i akademien.

### Resultat

Varje kapitel refererar innehållet i aktuell forskning och sammanfattningar av resultat görs separat i dessa delar. Dessutom görs sammanställningar av rekommendationer för praktik, policy och forskning i varje kapitel.

Övergripande finns generella resultat från hela det studerade internationella forskningsfältet som berör prevalens, konsekvenser av utsatthet och utmaningar för forskningsfältet som sådant. Dessa är i korthet:

### Prevalens

- Trakasserier på grund av kön är den vanligaste formen av utsatthet i akademien, enligt det här studerade forskningsfältet. Sexuella trakasserier förekommer inom alla discipliner i akademien och utsatthet rapporteras av alla grupper (studenter, doktorander, anställda).
- Internationella studier visar på stor variation i prevalens när det gäller sexuella trakasserier; från två till 93 procent beroende på en mängd olika faktorer. 20 till 25 procent av studerande kvinnor i USA rapporterar utsatthet i flertalet stora studier. Utsatthet för sexuella trakasserier i akademien i topprankade artiklar varierar mellan elva och 73 procent för kvinnor och mellan tre och 26 procent för män. I svenska kartläggningar uppger fyra till 26 procent kvinnor och två till sex procent män att de har erfarenheter av sexuella trakasserier.
- Generellt sett gäller att studier som bygger på stora och breda urval, innefattar detaljerade frågor om erfarenheter av utsatthet och/eller fokuserar grupper med begränsat inflytande över sin studie- eller arbetssituation, ger högre rap-

porterad förekomst av sexuella trakasserier. Det internationella forskningsfältet klarlägger att studerande, yngre kvinnor, kvinnor med osäkra anställningsvillkor och särskilda minoriteter (etnicitet och sexualitet) är mer utsatta för sexuella trakasserier än andra grupper.

- Det finns inget som tyder på att andelen utsatta högskolestuderande kvinnor och män i USA minskar över tid.

### Konsekvenser

- Utsatthet för sexuella trakasserier leder till fysiska, psykiska och yrkesmässiga konsekvenser för individer.
- Forskningsstöd finns för att sexuella trakasserier i akademien kan leda till depression, ångest, posttraumatiskt stressyndrom, fysisk värk, oönskade graviditeter, sexuellt överförbara sjukdomar, ökad alkoholanvändning, försämrade karriärmöjligheter, minskad arbetsmotivation, uppsägning, med mera för de utsatta individerna.
- Det saknas i princip forskning om konsekvenser av utsatthet för sexuella trakasserier för arbetsgrupper, arbetsmiljö och organisationskultur i akademien.
- Underrapportering av utsatthet i prevalensstudier är ett väl dokumenterat och omfattande problem.
- En majoritet av utsatta för sexuella trakasserier rapporterar inte händelserna.

### Forskningsfältet

- Kvantitativa studier med tvärsnittsdata dominerar det internationella forskningsfältet generellt sett.
- Forskning om sexuella trakasserier i akademien brottas övergripande med utmaningar kring definitioner, urval, mätmetoder och underrapportering.
- Teorianknytning i forskning om sexuella trakasserier i akademien är bristfällig. I huvudsak bedrivs forskning med utgångspunkt från nationella, juridiska definitioner av sexuella trakasserier.
- En majoritet av forskningsöversikterna och de topprankade artiklarna är publicerade på engelska med empiri från USA och i viss utsträckning även andra anglosaxiska språkområden.
- En majoritet av de granskade topprankade studierna bygger på begränsade och okontrollerade tvärsnittsdata, brist på slumpmässiga urval och bortfallsanalyser, samt bristande statistiska analysredskap.
- Det analyserade forskningsfältet som helhet präglas av en ofta oreflekterad kontextbundenhet, bristfällig teoretisering av frågeställningar och metodval, begränsad begreppsförståelse utöver strikt juridiska tillämpningar, samt en alltför ensidig binär könsförståelse.
- Det svenska forskningsfältet saknar större prevalensstudier av hög kvalitet. Från mitten av 00-talet utgörs forskning av ett antal kvalitativa studier utifrån främst feministisk våldsteori, feministisk sociologi, genusvetenskap och organisationsteori.
- Kunskapsläget och forskningsfältet i övriga Norden är splittrat och oklart.
- Forskning som tar hänsyn till utsatthetens diversifiering och fokuserar på intersektionella dimensioner i relation till sexuella trakasserier saknas i stor utsträckning i det analyserade materialet.
- Förövarstudier eller annan forskning som huvudsakligen fokuserar på förövare saknas i det analyserade materialet.

# 1. Introduction

## The assignment

The international #MeToo movement of autumn 2017 has had a major impact in Sweden. It has made visible large-scale exposure to sexual harassment in Swedish working life and also in other parts of society. #Akademiuppropet, a manifesto signed by 2 648 students, doctoral students, employees and others involved, resulted in a number of measures within the higher education sector. More than half of Swedish higher education institutions have intensified their work to prevent sexual harassment in various ways. The Government has also decided that higher education institutions (HEIs) shall highlight and make visible their preventive work to counteract sexual harassment. Simultaneously, the Swedish Council for Higher Education was tasked with mapping how HEIs work preventively and how they handle reports of sexual harassment in academia.

The Swedish Research Council has commissioned a research review on sexual harassment in academia from the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, University of Gothenburg. The overall request from the Swedish Research Council was for a broad, international review of research into sexual harassment in academia, but without any other specific requirements or wishes. Following an initial literature search and a first mapping of the research situation in Sweden, a dialogue was conducted on how the research review best could be designed. It became clear from the preliminary literature searches that both Swedish and Nordic research into sexual harassment in academia is fairly limited, poorly anchored in a larger international research field, and that prevalence studies of satisfactory scientific quality are lacking in Sweden after 2009.

In conjunction with a number of other considerations relating to scope, relevance, knowledge needs and other existing questions, this resulted in a specific assignment formulation, with four different yet linked parts:

1. *Meta-analysis of existing research reviews of sexual harassment in working life as a whole, and, if relevant, limited to just academic organisations. The aim is to draw the contours of the current research field's use of concepts, results, analyses and recommendations as a whole.*
2. *Meta-analysis of a selection of top-ranked, peer-reviewed research articles on sexual harassment in academia, focusing on an overview of results, conclusions, concept understanding and other relevant aspects. The question in this part is about what the most frequently cited research in the entire research field provides by way of knowledge about exposure in academia.*
3. *Meta-analysis of Swedish research into sexual harassment in academia, both with in-depth analyses of existing Swedish quantitative and qualitative studies, and also with the ambition to also provide a joint, brief overview of all existing research in the other Nordic countries.*

4. *Thematic in-depth study* of concepts, experiences or corresponding based on the preliminary results from literature searches and meta-analyses.

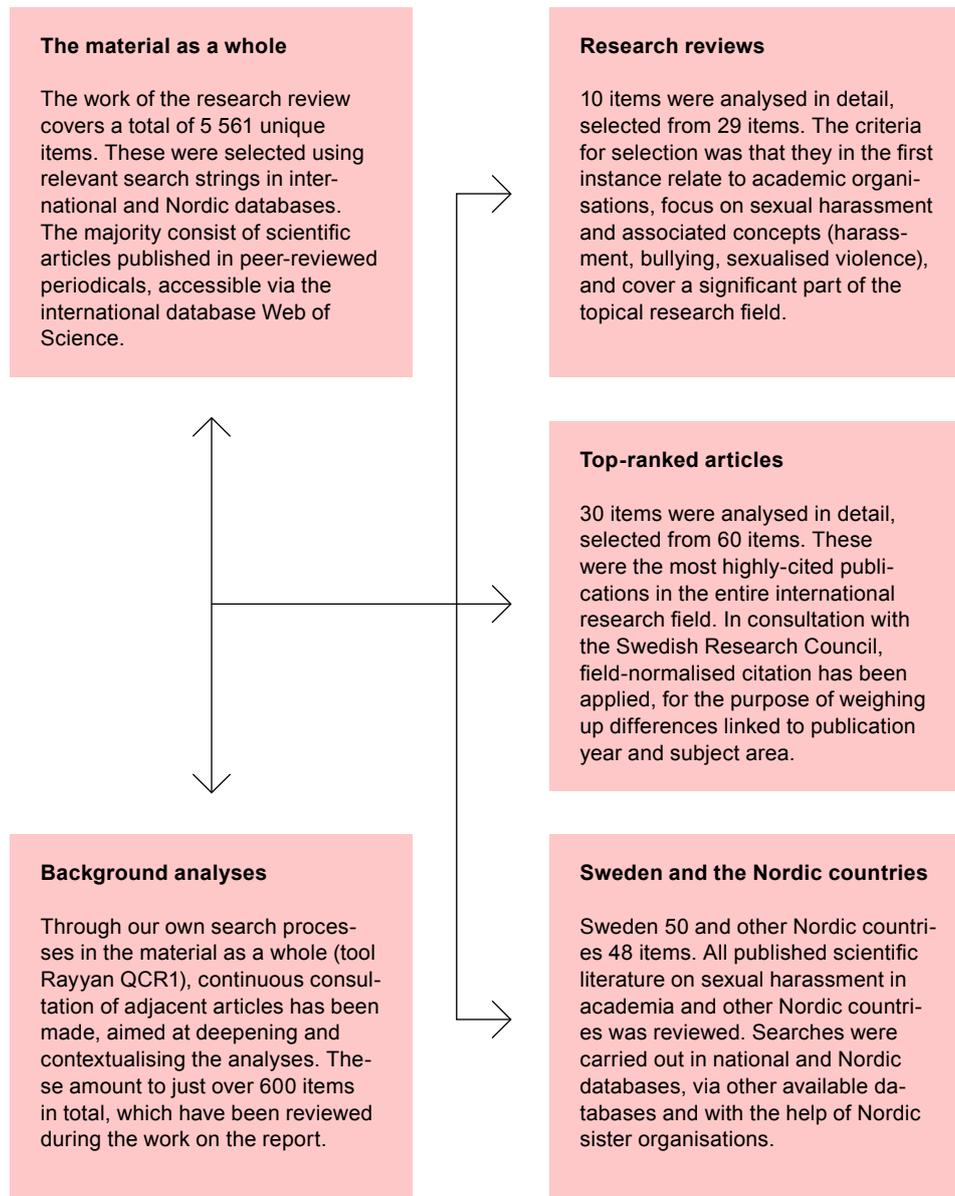
The assignment was carried out by Fredrik Bondestam, PhD in Sociology and research coordinator, and Maja Lundqvist, MA in Gender Science and project coordinator, both active at the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, University of Gothenburg. The report has been peer reviewed by Anna Wahl, Professor of Gender, Organisation and Leadership at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, and Gunilla Carstensen, Senior University Lecturer in Sociology at Dalarna University.

## The search process

The quality of an international research review that is tackling a large and diversified research field, established and expanded over more than 50 years correlates directly with how systematically the literature search is done. Early on in the assignment process, KvinnSam at the University of Gothenburg Library<sup>1</sup> was contracted for the task of assisting the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research with scientifically based search processes. A schematic image of how literature for the research review was summarised is shown below. A detailed description of the entire search process for the research review can be found in Appendix 1.

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<sup>1</sup> KvinnSam is the national resource library for gender studies in Sweden ([www.ub.gu.se/kvinn/](http://www.ub.gu.se/kvinn/)), which manages the women's history collections and a literature database with gender science references from the collection of the University of Gothenburg Library.



## The report

### Disposition

To begin with, the assignment, the search process and a brief background is provided to sexual harassment in academia internationally and in Sweden. The disposition of the report thereafter follows the starting points for the assignment. The four main chapters of the text – Research reviews, Top-ranked articles, Swedish research and Other Nordic research – consist of accounts of the knowledge from each field, summaries of the researchers' recommendations and a number of analytical comments. A more in-depth section analyses issues relating to prevalence and associated themes, such as underreporting, methodology problems, etc. The concluding chapter summarises knowledge and conclusions from the entire research field. References are provided for each chapter in a joint literature list, divided up into current publications and other cited literature. An appendix can be found at the end of the report, with a description of how the literature search for the research review was carried out.

### Definitions and delimitations

The introduction does not present a clear-cut definition of sexual harassment in academia. Instead, a framework is created around the research field by drawing an international and Swedish background to the phenomenon. The concept of sexual harassment has several different political, theoretical and methodological bases, which also vary over time, nationally, subject-wise, legally and also in practice in several ways. In each chapter, it is an open question how sexual harassment is understood in the research referenced. The analysis is therefore not locked in advance in terms of meaning, scope or relevance. The final summary includes both the joint knowledge of sexual harassment in academia of the referenced research fields, and also a more analytical summary of the meanings of the concept.

The Swedish legal definition of sexual harassment is based on *diskrimineringslagen* (Discrimination Act) and *brottsbalken* (Criminal Code).<sup>2</sup> This follows from the fact that sexual harassment can consist of both criminal actions (sexual abuse) and non-criminal actions (sexist comments and insinuations). In this research review, law is mentioned in terms of legal faculties at universities, national legal definitions that emerge from the empirical data of the research review and, in particular, in the analytical sections in the form of discussions about juridification. In this report, juridification is understood as a process where societal problems are increasingly described in legal terms, or where solutions to problems are sought in changes to legislation and legal practice.

The report is based on a review of 187 publications in total, with particular focus on a selection of these for analysis purposes. A further approximately 600 publications have been read closely, with the aim of contextualising the research field. This means that around 14 per cent of the 5 561 texts in the research field constitute the basis for the report. Analyses of Swedish and Nordic research are based on all available publications in relevant literature databases, based on the criteria set for the implementation of the assignment. The search processes used in the assignment means that other relevant research associated with sexual harassment in academia

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 1, Section 4 of the Discrimination Act defines sexual harassment as behaviour of a sexual nature that infringes somebody's dignity. Up until 2009, the definition in *jämställdhetslagen* (Gender Equality Act) was guiding for research, in both policy and practice.

(on discrimination, sexualised violence, etc.) have not been included in the report documentation (see also Appendix 1). In other words, the image of existing international research on sexual harassment in academia given in this rapport is not comprehensive. At the same time, the focus of the assignment on existing research reviews and top-ranked publications constitutes a striving to include, within the timeframe given, the publications central to the research field.

The analysis of the Swedish research field has been conducted mainly by Maja Lundqvist, as Fredrik Bondestam's own research into sexual harassment in academia is part of the referenced and analysed material. Parts of the material from Finland is in Finnish, and has been translated to Swedish as necessary.

## Sexual harassment in academia – a background

The basis for the knowledge field of sexual harassment in working life in general, and in academia in particular, is multi-faceted and sufficiently complex to justify a separate report. At this stage, is it not pertinent either to pre-empt any of the analyses conducted in the various chapters of the report, but only to make some brief observations in some key events internationally and in Sweden. This is done for the purpose of framing the research and knowledge field, and to provide a first overview of the relevant questions and challenges relating to sexual harassment and academia.

### International

Studies of global exposure show that one in every three women in the world is exposed to physical and/or sexual violence from a partner, or sexual violence from another person.<sup>3</sup> More than 2.6 billion women live in countries where rape within marriage is still not considered a crime.<sup>4</sup> High levels of infant and mother mortality, lack of education for girls and women, limited opportunities for financial independence for women, and a number of serious ill health aspects enable, and increase the negative consequences of, men's violence against women.<sup>5</sup> In the EU member states, between 45 and 55 per cent of women (corresponding to around 100 million women) have experienced exposure to sexual harassment during their working lives.<sup>6</sup> Nine out of ten of the world's countries have laws against sexual harassment in working life today, but almost six out of ten lack adequate laws against sexual harassment in higher education and schools.<sup>7</sup>

For a long time, women's movements in a global perspective have highlighted issues about women's bodily vulnerability in relation to other forms of repression. Men's violence in general, men's violence against women, sexualised violence, prostitution, human trafficking (for sexual purpose specifically), rape in close relationships and rape as a means of war, as well as a number of other forms of violence, form a web of potential exposure to violence for a majority of the world's women and girls. It is in this web that sexual harassment of women (and men, and non-binary persons) at work is established and normalised, but also problematised and challenged in various ways. Exposure to violence is today also linked with structural inequality in various ways by public authorities and other organisations

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3 WHO (2013).

4 UN Women (2017).

5 WHO (2011); World Economic Forum (2017).

6 Latcheva (2017).

7 Tavares & Wodon (2018).

in a large proportion of countries in the global north/west. The corresponding processes in countries in the south/east are characterised by a lack of *both* knowledge and opportunities to achieve change, *and* many examples of far-reaching legislation concerning the rights of women and other minorities.

In the international research field concerning sexual harassment, links to other types of violence are clarified in a relatively limited proportion of studies. Instead, a greater focus is placed more specifically on the legal, organisational, psychological and ethnological aspects of exposure.<sup>8</sup> In several studies of sexual harassment in academia from regions other than north/west, other issues are partially in the foreground, such as unwanted pregnancies or HIV prevention, or various direct and indirect consequences of poverty (access issues, support requirements). More direct questions are asked of perpetrators about their use of violence in adjoining studies<sup>9</sup>, and more concrete problems are addressed, such as regular demands from male teachers for sexual services from female students in order for them to receive a valid examination certificate from their studies,<sup>10</sup> etc.

In USA, a broad review of working life<sup>11</sup> and a successful women's movement has meant that women's working conditions have been made visible, at the same time as more general demands have been made linked to bodily integrity and reproductive rights. Studies of sexual harassment in academia in USA, in particular during the 1980s, framed the concept theoretically and at the same time linked this to knowledge about men's violence against women. Knowledge about the prevalence of sexual harassment also relatively quickly became a crucial issue for establishing knowledge about exposure. Ever since then, prevalence studies have in various ways been dominant in the global research field.<sup>12</sup>

To some extent, definition issues and legal processes, as well as measuring methods and testing of scales for factors such as risk, vulnerability and sexuality, replaced the earlier discourse in USA during the latter part of the 1980s.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the consequences of sexual harassment in academia are coming ever more into focus as the field develops, with psychological, epidemiological and organisation theory approaches showing that factors such as ill health, motivation and drop-out rates from studies are impacted, which is also in parallel becoming an important part of research into sexual harassment on the labour market in general.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, a noticeable falling-into-line is occurring in two respects in the global research field. On the one hand, legal definitions are becoming ever more guiding of the research itself, and govern factors such as delimitations and understanding of exposure in academia a priori in many studies, and on the other hand links to knowledge about sexualised violence, power, organisations and unequal gender conditions are being erased and replaced by a strongly individual-centred description and analysis of exposure. To some extent and for these reasons, the research field is becoming a self-generating iteration of its own assumptions. At the same time, a generation change has occurred over the last ten-year period, with new researchers who are contributing new perspectives (not least intersectionality), new forms of exposure are focused on (sexual harassment online), and a recapture of theories about structure and organisation can be discerned.<sup>15</sup>

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8 Pina, Gannon & Saunders (2009).

9 See for example Philpart, Goshu, Gelaye, et al. (2009).

10 Morley (2011).

11 Safran (1976).

12 Gutek (1985); Gutek & Morasch (1982); MacKinnon (1979).

13 Fitzgerald (1988); Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald et al. (1999).

14 Barling, Decker, Loughlin et al. (1996); Chan, Lam, Chow et al. (2008); Harned, Ormerod, Palmieri et al. (2002); Lapierre, Spector & Leck (2005); Willness, Steel & Lee (2007).

15 Acker (1990, 2006) in particular is experiencing something of a renaissance.

## Sweden

In Sweden, exposure to sexual harassment in working life is well documented at an overall level, but in-depth studies are lacking of issues such as prevalence in various sectors, causes of different forms of exposure, consequences for individuals and the work environment, etc. Within the higher education sector, knowledge is even poorer in several ways, due to a lack of national studies, lack of studies at all over the last ten-year period, and a number of other reasons. The prevalence in Swedish working life varies depending on the measuring method and other known factors, but is normally not as high as in other European countries. Around 8 to 26 per cent of women report exposure to sexual harassment in studies carried out over the last twenty-year period, for men this is between 2 to 6 per cent.<sup>16</sup>

The demands of the women's movement in Sweden during post-WW2 years for women's access to education, entry to the labour market, participation in politics, as well as a number of other demands linked to reproductive health, bodily integrity, etc., led the way for both demands for women's right to non-molestation and to the production of knowledge about women's working lives. The emerging women's studies research during the 1960s and 1970s early on aimed a critical eye at women's working conditions, and mapped and analysed various obstacles and injustices in academia and working life as a whole. The first official publication on gender equality in higher education in 1975 – published by the then-extant Office of the Chancellor of the Swedish Universities and written by women's studies researchers (among them Rita Liljeström) – is in many parts a scorching criticism of a dysfunctional organisation based on patriarchal values, nepotism, unequal conditions for education and research, with serious problems regarding gender discrimination of several forms. Several proposals for change were put forward, which have to date not been tested.<sup>17</sup>

Jämställdhetslagen (the Swedish Gender Equality Act) was adopted in 1980, and included legislation on gender discrimination in working life (and to some extent education), but no express definition of sexual harassment is provided. It took a decade before this was done, with the review of the act in 1991 (and later also in *Högskoleförordningen 1993:100* (the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance)), despite the fact that international legislation (in particular in USA) and research<sup>18</sup> had already been noticed in Sweden and the other Nordic countries. The starting point was, among other items, the FRID-A report in 1987, commissioned by the Gender Equality Ombudsman, which was Sweden's first official study of the prevalence of sexual harassment in working life. The foreword to the report states that sexual harassment in "working life is a tragic reality for hundreds of thousands of women in the labour market".<sup>19</sup> It was also noted that "after having considered several alternatives and discussed them with bodies such as the Swedish Language Committee, the Ombudsman decided to use the concept of 'sexual harassment' for the problems that this part of the FRID-A project concerns".<sup>20</sup>

Early on, higher education institutions were producing mappings of the prevalence of sexual harassment, of women in particular<sup>21</sup>, and more than half of the existing Swedish prevalence studies of sexual harassment in academia were then carried out in the 1990s. The prevalence varies between 4 and 26 per cent for wom-

16 Arbetsmiljöverket (2016); SCB (2017).

17 UKÄ (1975:10), see also UHÄ (1977:4).

18 MacKinnon (1979).

19 JämO (1987), fly-leaf.

20 Ibid., p. 5.

21 Börjesson & Gustafsson (1989).

en, and 2 to 6 per cent for men. Most of these studies concern students and doctoral students, and were also carried out by students and doctoral students. Several concrete tools for preventive work were also established during this period, often using Ninni Hagman's<sup>22</sup> "gender harassment steps", which became guidelines for the understanding of sexual harassment in academia, and in working life as a whole. They consist mainly of a concrete description of the various forms of exposure, graduated into "steps", from verbal offences to demands for sexual services. In more recent research, the steps have been criticised for hierarchising different types of exposure, for example, irrespective of how the exposed person experiences the situation.

In the 1990s, an increasing number of demands regarding women's position in academia are established, not least as a result of emerging women's studies research during previous decades, which have continuously developed knowledge about the challenges of academia, and a number of inquiries focused on issues of power and conditions.<sup>23</sup> Swedish research into men's violence against women also emerged during this period within several disciplines.<sup>24</sup> A first major, and in many ways still unsurpassed scope review of men's violence against women saw the light of day after the new millennium: "Slagen dam", 2001. More than 7 000 women here answered concrete questions about exposure to violence in private and public situations. In addition to the great exposure to various forms of sexualised violence in all age groups, one of the facts established was that "one in three women studying have been sexually harassed in the last year".<sup>25</sup> At this stage, there was a clear link made between research into sexualised violence and research into sexual harassment in Sweden, in particular in studies of academia.<sup>26</sup> Three theses were published in the 2000s, which, despite being within different scientific fields and having differing focuses, were all based on feminist knowledge theory, used concepts situated in the feminist violence research field and focused clearly on issues of sexual harassment in academia.<sup>27</sup> The corresponding development was occurring more or less simultaneously in the other Nordic countries, albeit with some variation.<sup>28</sup>

During the corresponding period, legislation is refined in several steps, with increasing demands on employers' liabilities and widened concept definitions. The preventive work at higher education institutions develops, with ever more ambitious policies, intensified educational input and more finely chiselled procedures for case management. The Gender Equality Act is incorporated in a new, joint Diskrimineringslagen (Discrimination Act) in 2009, which later also strengthens the demands on employers to take active measures to prevent discrimination. In practice, the work of preventing sexual harassment in Sweden have gone through the "development phases" that can also be discerned internationally: initiation, establishment, individualisation, juridification. At the same time, continuous invalidation of the experiences of vulnerable women in particular, proceeds.<sup>29</sup>

For the Swedish higher education sector, the last decade has to some extent been characterised by stagnation, in terms of both research and of policy and practice. In parallel, a broader organisation research field, focusing on gender, has steadily grown in scope and made significant contribution towards placing issues about ex-

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22 Hagman (1994, 1995).

23 See in particular SOU (1995:110).

24 Eliasson (1997).

25 Lundgren, Kalliokoski, Heimer et al. (2001), p. 64.

26 Bondestam & Carstensen (2004).

27 Andersson (2007); Bondestam (2004); Carstensen (2004).

28 See for example Husu (2001); see also Egeland (2001) and Søndergaard (1996) who write about neighbouring themes in their theses.

29 Bondestam (2004); Carstensen (2004).

posure into concrete work environment, organisational culture and other structural perspectives.<sup>30</sup> It remains to see whether the #MeToo movement during autumn 2017 leads to a renewed and partly different focus in both research and practice in the Swedish higher education landscape.

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30 See Pettersson (2001); Wahl, Holgersson, Höök et al. (2018).

## Research reviews

The most relevant, peer-reviewed research reviews addressing sexual harassment in academia, but also with examples from wider working life are collected here. After a summary of the main results and knowledge, a more in-depth knowledge section follows, with a summary of the recommendations of the research reviews, and finally some analytical comments.

### About the material

KvinnSam at the University of Gothenburg Library has carried out the relevant search processes (see Appendix 1) on behalf of the research review. For this part of the report, KvinnSam has also screened the hit lists and selected research reviews. Out of a total of 122 items, a selection was made based on title, abstract and subject words, resulting in 29 relevant publications which were ordered as full-text copies. Of the 29 research reviews included in the text scrutinised in the first stage, 10 were selected for primary analysis based on the criteria that they should in the first instance concern academic organisations, only focus on sexual harassment and/or a wider understanding of the concept that may include harassment, bullying and sexualised violence, and cover a significant part of a research field. The criteria for the latter include the number of publication years covered, the number of databases used for searches, the number of respondents in prevalence studies or the number of prevalence studies evaluated.

The other 19 research reviews did not fulfil all the criteria, and therefore function as reference material for the analysis. Of the 10 research reviews that passed the screening process, 7 focus on sexual harassment in academia and 3 on sexual harassment in working life as a whole. The last 3 have been included in the meta-analysis, as the design of the commission includes research into sexual harassment in “working life as a whole”, and these 3 fulfil the other criteria for relevance.

### Analysed articles

**Anderson, L.A. & Whiston, S.C. 2005. Sexual Assault Education Programs: A Meta-Analytic Examination of Their Effectiveness. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29: 374–388.**

Focuses on campuses in USA. Aims to investigate the effectiveness of the universities' educational programmes against sexual harassment and sexual violence (N=69). The result shows that measures and programmes that continue for a longer time period are more effective than shorter ones. The contents of the programmes, who the presenter is, what type of participants and what the gender balance is among participants also impacts on the effectiveness of the programmes in changing attitudes and behaviours related to sexual harassment.

**Fedina, L., Holmes, J.L. & Backes, B.L. 2018. Campus Sexual Assault: A Systematic Review of Prevalence Research From 2000 to 2015. *Trauma Violence & Abuse*, 19: 76–93.**

Focuses on campuses in USA. Aims to provide a systematic overview of the prevalence of sexual violence on campus in USA, through a review of published studies from 2000 to 2015 (N=34). The review focuses on the consequences for students' health, evaluation of the universities' measures, identification of risk factors for being exposed to sexual violence and provides recommendations for future research and preventive work at universities in USA. The review shows that there is great variation in reported exposure to different forms of sexual harassment and sexual violence at the universities. Unwelcome sexual contact and sexual coercion appears to be the most common forms of exposure among students. In the majority of the studies, the sample consists of mostly white, heterosexual female students attending 4-year programmes, and the results are consequently limited to this population. Studies that focus on exposure to sexual violence of minority groups of students are few, but those that exist indicate greater exposure among these groups.

**Fnais, N., Soobiah, C., Chen, M.H., Lillie, E., Perrier, L., Tashkhandi, M., Straus, S.E., Mamdani, M., Al-Omran, M. & Tricco, A.C. 2014. Harassment and discrimination in medical training: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Academic Medicine*, 89: 817–827.**

Empirical study from USA, Canada, Pakistan, United Kingdom, Israel and Japan, consisting of studies conducted between 1987 and 2011 (N=51). The purpose is to provide an overview of exposure to harassment among medical students in order to understand the importance and consequences of exposure, and to research any preventive strategies through a meta-analysis of prevalence, risk factors and sources of harassment and discrimination among medical students. The focus of the study is harassments in a broader sense than sexual harassment, but sexual harassment is highlighted in the overview, for example by more than two thirds of the studies included reporting sexual harassment. The study shows that exposure to discrimination and harassment among medical students has not decreased over time.

**Henning, M.A., Zhou, C., Adams, P., Moir, F., Hobson, J., Hallett, C. & Webster, C.S. 2017. Workplace harassment among staff in higher education: a systematic review. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 18: 521–539.**

Empirical study primarily from USA, consisting of published research articles between 1994 and 2013 (N=51). Aims to conduct a review of research into harassment in academia. A thematic analysis resulted in six identified themes: cause, types of harassment, the various roles of employees, measurement, consequences and corrective measures. The review shows that harassment is a wide-spread problem in academia, and the most common version is harassment due to gender, including sexual harassment. It also points out that most of the research in the area appears to have been conducted in USA, and asks for better global representation in literature of the area.

**Hunt, C.M., Davidson, M.J., Fielden, S.L. & Hoel, H. 2010. Reviewing sexual harassment in the workplace – an intervention model. *Personnel Review*, 39: 655–673.**

The empirical data of the study consist of a literature review conducted by the

Equal Opportunities Commission in 2006. A reference list of 73 articles is included in the study, and it is published in a peer-reviewed journal. It aims to offer a model for measures to organisations and workplaces to implement to counteract sexual harassment. It is based on literature about sexual harassment, focusing on primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, at individual, organisational and societal level. The study discusses the importance of understanding sexual harassment as an issue that needs to be addressed by the organisation, rather than focusing on improving the skills of individuals in handling harassment.

**McDonald, P. 2012. Workplace Sexual Harassment 30 Years on: A Review of the Literature. *International Journal of Management Review*, 14: 1–17.**

The research review summarises and investigates research into sexual harassment in working life in general since the 1970s. It lacks a description of whether, and if so how, a systematic search has been carried out to select empirical material for the study. The reference list covers almost 150 articles, and the study is published in a peer-reviewed journal. The review is structured under five themes: an overall picture of the phenomenon – definition, prevalence, costs; how and why sexual harassment occurs; characteristics of perpetrators and exposed persons, and concepts about sexual harassment; organisational prerequisites for sexual harassment and the handling of complaints and cases; and limitations and knowledge gaps. The study shows that legislation, structural reforms and policy initiatives have increased knowledge about sexual harassment in working life, but sexual harassment continues to occur and requires further research and workplace-related measures to effectively prevent and counteract these.

**Rubin, L.J. & Borgers, S.B. 1990. Sexual Harassment in Universities During the 1980s. *Sex Roles*, 23: 397–411.**

The review focuses on studies conducted in the 1980s investigating sexual harassment between supervisors and students in academia (N=20). The review discusses the definition of sexual harassment, prevalence, reactions of persons exposed, gender differences, and individual differences. The study shows that sexual harassment occurs at all types of universities, that events are rarely reported, that an agreed definition is needed to conduct comparative analyses and that the quality of research in the area needs to be improved.

**Vladutiu, C.J., Martin, S.L. & Macy, R.J. 2011. College- or University-Based Sexual Assault Prevention Programs: A Review of Program Outcomes, Characteristics, and Recommendations. *Trauma Violence & Abuse*, 12: 67–86.**

The empirical data consist of published and reviewed research articles between 1993 and 2005 (N=102). The study aims to investigate the effectiveness of eight different programmes to prevent sexual violence at universities. Focuses on campuses in USA. The review aims to investigate the effectiveness of programmes to prevent sexual violence, and answer questions on what type of programmes are investigated in studies, and what the outcomes of the programmes are. The results show that several different components of a preventive programme impact on its effectiveness, and that personnel should have knowledge and insight into these when choosing programme design. For example, effective preventive programmes should be led by professionals, sometime address single-sex groups and be provided on a number of occasions during the study period. Longer and repeated workshops and/or courses increase the effectiveness of programmes.

**Voth Schrag, R.J. 2017. Campus Based Sexual Assault and Dating Violence: A Review of Study Contexts and Participants. *Affilia Journal of Women and Social Work*, 32: 67–80.**

The empirical data consist of studies of sexual assaults and dating violence at campuses in USA (N=196). The review aims to investigate to what extent existing literature in the area is representative of the diversified student population and the institutional structures that form USA's academia and higher education. The review shows that the sample of respondents in the studies scrutinised consists of persons who are younger and "whiter" than the US student population as a whole. Most of the research has also been conducted at larger rather than smaller universities. An overwhelming majority (91 per cent) of the studies are quantitative, and focus mainly on issues of risk and security, alcohol and drugs, and on attitudes to violence and the perpetration of violence.

**Willness, C.R., Steel, P. & Lee, K. 2007. A meta-analysis of the antecedents and consequences of workplace sexual harassment. *Personnel Psychology*, 60(1): 127–162.**

The empirical data of the study consist of data from published articles on the consequences of, and organisational factors impact on, sexual harassment in working life (N=41). Meta-analyses are made of studies that conduct quantitative measurements of sexual harassment, or are based on respondents with own experiences of sexual harassment. A particular focus is places on various factors that enable, and the actual consequences of, sexual harassment. The review shows that exposure to sexual harassment has negative consequences both for the person exposed and for the organisation, and that organisation cultures can facilitate or counteract the occurrence of sexual harassment.

## State of knowledge – an in-depth picture

### What is sexual harassment?

In the material, sexual harassment is generally understood from two horizons: either as a "psychological construct", that is to say unwanted sex-related behaviour in the workplace that is experienced by the person exposed as offensive or threatening against their wellbeing, or based on a legal definition that varies depending on the legal context.<sup>31</sup> In the research field as a whole (5 561 items), there are also various criminological, sociological, organisation theory-related, ethnological, anthropological, business economics-related and other subject-specific ways of understanding sexual harassment in academia.

In the research reviews, legal definitions of sexual harassment from particularly USA and the United Kingdom dominate. An example of a legal definition from the United Kingdom is reproduced in one of the research reviews:

This act (*Employment Equality Sex Discrimination Regulations, UK/authors' comment*) defines sexual harassment as unwanted conduct (verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature) that has the purpose or effect of violating her/his dignity and/or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.<sup>32</sup>

31 Willness, Stell & Lee (2007)

32 Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010), p. 657.

Similar definitions recur in all reviews analysed, and sexual harassment is understood to include verbal, non-verbal and physical actions or behaviours that are unwelcome by the person exposed, are characterised by some form of sexual nature, and places the person exposed in a hostile and/or threatening situation.

Sexual harassment is a theme that includes numerous behaviours such as unwanted sexual advances and requests for sexual favours which can be of a verbal, psychological, or physical nature.<sup>33</sup>

The definition included behaviours perceived as inappropriate sexual advances, sexist jokes or slurs, the exchange of rewards for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.<sup>34</sup>

Behaviours that define sexual harassment<sup>35</sup> are heterogeneous and variously categorized, but are often presented on a continuum, from requests for socialization or dates, personal insults and ridicule, leering, offensive comments and non-verbal gestures, to sexual propositions and sexual and physical assault.<sup>36</sup>

A definition of sexual harassment that is too unclear and general is highlighted in several of the research reviews as a problem, as this has consequences for research results, comparability and opportunities to draw general conclusions. In some places, the importance is expressed of not locking in sexual harassment too hard into a common definition, as this is considered to increase the risk of missing important knowledge about the phenomenon. Understanding of sexual harassment countermands simplified definitions, and instead rather includes contradictions, ambiguities and both progressive and regressive interpretations.<sup>37</sup>

Research into sexual harassment in academia (academic sexual harassment) has usually referred to sexual harassment aimed at students, and not at or between employees. In the 1980s, sexual harassment in academia in USA was defined in a relatively homogenous way, which is clear not least in referral practices<sup>38</sup>, and the most cited definition is:

the use of authority to emphasize the sexuality or sexual identity of a student in a manner which prevents or impairs the student's full enjoyment of educational benefits, climate or opportunities.<sup>39</sup>

Studies that stand out from the crowd in terms of definitions of sexual harassment are studies that focus on “campus-based sexual assault”, that is to say sexual violence/sexual harassment that students are exposed to at university campuses in USA. These studies use concepts such as “dating violence”, “sexual assault”, “campus-based sexual assault” and “sexual victimisation” (includes various forms of rape, sexual coercion and sexual assaults) to a large extent.<sup>40</sup>

Another way of working on the definition of sexual harassment is to investigate

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33 Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017), p. 529.

34 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014), p. 821.

35 In the original text, the abbreviation SH is used for sexual harassment.

36 McDonald (2012), p. 4.

37 McDonald (2012).

38 Till (1980) is the main source for a majority of different studies during this period.

39 Rubin & Borgers (1990), p. 397.

40 Fedina, Holmes & Backes (2018).

what individuals, such as students and employees in academia, understand as sexual assault or not. A recurrent theme in the material is examples of studies conducted where different definitions or proposals for actions or behaviours are put forward, in order for the respondents themselves to describe which of these are sexual harassment. Studies with this focus have shown that women tend to understand more actions and behaviours as sexual harassment than men do, and that women have lower acceptance of these behaviours than men do.<sup>41</sup>

## Prevalence

Sexual harassment in academia exists at all levels and within all disciplines:

The major highlights of this review indicate that workplace harassment is prevalent in higher education at all levels and among all disciplines. The evidence indicates that harassment appears to be present at all staffing levels – academics, general staff and administrators.<sup>42</sup>

Research into sexual harassment in academia establishes that more research is needed into employees' exposure, as the focus has traditionally been on students, in particular in supervisor- and teacher-led situations. More forms of harassment occur between employees in academia, however, and the most common form is sexual harassment.<sup>43</sup>

The issue of prevalence (the total number of cases in relation to a population) is discussed in more than half the research reviews, and it is established that factors relating to definition, methodology and underreporting affect the possibility of saying anything concrete about prevalence. It can be assumed that these factors apply both in academia and in working life in general.

Overall, prevalence studies (the total number of cases to a population or sub-population) suggests a persistence of sexual harassment<sup>44</sup> in many workplaces. Importantly, however, prevalence estimates diverge markedly according to methodological protocols such as sample size and diversity; whether the surveys targeted random samples from the community or a specific industry or sector; whether sexual harassment<sup>45</sup> was operationalized according to a legal or behavioural definition; and the retrospective time frame specified to participants.<sup>46</sup>

The consequence of these difficulties is that figures for exposure to sexual harassment in working life may vary greatly. According to a review of 74 European studies, for example, the figure varied between 17 and 81 per cent for women.<sup>47</sup> Estimates from USA claims that 40 to 75 per cent of women and 13 to 31 per cent of men have been exposed to sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>48</sup> A similar variation in reported exposure to sexual harassment is stated in studies relating to the situation of medical students, for example. Studies of sexual harassment show a preva-

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41 Rubin & Borgers (1990); McDonald (2012).

42 Ibid., s. 535.

43 Henning, Zhou, Adams m.fl. (2017).

44 I originaltext används förkortningen SH för sexual harassment.

45 I originaltext används förkortningen SH för sexual harassment.

46 McDonald (2012), s. 3.

47 Timmerman & Bajema (1999).

48 Aggarwal & Gupta (2000).

lence between 3 and 93 per cent, while exposure to sex discrimination is stated to be between 19 and 92 per cent of all respondents.<sup>49</sup>

The same challenges arise in investigations of whether exposure to sexual harassment is increasing or decreasing over time. Three large-scale longitudinal studies conducted in USA in 1981, 1988 and 1994 showed that only one of seven types of sexual harassment (“pressure for dates”) had decreased, while the more serious types were at the same level or had increased. At the same time, investigations from Australia showed a decrease in exposure to sexual harassment from 28 to 22 per cent for women and from 7 to 5 per cent for men. These mixed results indicate difficulties of longitudinal studies and the need for caution when it comes to drawing far-reaching conclusions, despite replicable studies using identical methodology. Socio-culturally changed understanding of sexual harassment over time also affects the perception of exposure, both own and that of others.<sup>50</sup>

Underreporting is discussed in a number of research reviews as a fact that needs to be considered in discussions about prevalence. Research shows that only a small proportion of all sexual harassment is reported, as is also the case for other types of sexual violence. Normally, formal reports are not made, either through the internal processes of the workplace or via external structures. It is estimated that only between 5 and 30 per cent of all cases of sexual harassment are reported formally, and fewer than 1 per cent of those who do make a report take part in any legal process.<sup>51</sup> A research review on harassment and discrimination of medical students establishes that underreporting among students may be based on fear of negative consequences of reporting, as it is often a supervisor who exposes a student to harassment. Fear of not being believed, feelings of shame before other students and lack of trust in persons in power positions are also assumed to impact on the propensity to report.<sup>52</sup>

A large number of different analysis tools, among them SEQ (Sexual Experience Questionnaire) and GWA (Generalised Workplace Abuse questionnaire) have been used to investigate the prevalence of harassment and sexual harassment in academia. A common feature of most of the analysis tools is that they are based on self-reporting, and therefore have their limitations. For example, the tools assume the participants are honest, they require participants to be aware of the complexity of the issue, and also entail difficulties linked to taking into account social concepts of desirable behaviours.<sup>53</sup>

As mentioned above, the focus of exposure to sexual harassment in academia has traditionally been on student exposure, in particular in USA, where also most of the research into sexual harassment has been conducted.<sup>54</sup> The prevalence of sexual assaults on students (primarily women) at universities in USA is well-documented.

Data suggest 22% of college women have experienced dating violence<sup>55</sup> and nearly 20% have experienced completed or attempted sexual assault<sup>56</sup> since entering college.<sup>57</sup>

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49 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014).

50 McDonald (2012).

51 Ibid.

52 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014).

53 Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017).

54 Ibid.

55 In the original text, the abbreviation DV is used for dating violence.

56 In the original text, the abbreviation SA is used for sexual assault.

57 Voth Schrag (2017), p. 67.

Sexual violence victimization is very common among college and university students in the United States. Research estimates that 20–25% of female undergraduates experience attempted or completed rape during their college careers.<sup>58</sup>

The issue of the importance of the sample for the study result is highlighted also in relation to intersectional dimensions. It is established that nearly all studies included in a review focused on white, heterosexual studying female students' exposure and experiences of sexual harassment ("campus sexual assault"), while only few studies investigate exposure to sexual harassment among minority groups of students. The few studies that did investigate groups that might run a greater risk of being exposed to sexual harassment due to being already in a marginalised position, such as lesbian and bisexual women, students with functional disabilities, students race-typed as non-white, and students with previous experiences of sexual violence, indicated a higher degree of exposure among these groups.<sup>59</sup>

### Consequences of sexual harassment

There is great agreement in the research reviews that the consequences of sexual harassment are manifold and serious, irrespective of whether the focus of research is students, employees in working life, or employees in academia specifically.

Hence the cost of harassment harmfully impacts the individual in terms of well-being factors, but also has major implications for the organisations and the communities that they serve.<sup>60</sup>

At individual level, exposure to sexual harassment has a number of different psychological, health-related and job-related consequences. Examples such as irritation and anger to anxiety, feelings of powerlessness and degradation, depression and post-traumatic stress syndrome are given in the literature. Job-related factors include absence, decreased job satisfaction, engagement and productivity, decreased self-confidence and self-image, and persons giving notice from their jobs. Even observing or hearing about a colleague's exposure to sexual harassment can generate "bystander stress" and cause conflicts in the work team.<sup>61</sup>

Sheehan and colleagues found that trainees who were frequently harassed were less likely to complete assignments or provide optimal patient care. In addition, trainees who were harassed had more emotional health problems and family life and social responsibility disruptions compared with nonharassed trainees.<sup>62</sup>

Adverse consequences relating to discrimination for women tends to occur due to reduced opportunities for career advancement, adversely impacted work and family life balance, and the issues associated with sexual harassment.<sup>63</sup>

Alcohol and drug use is discussed in the majority of research reviews, both as a possible contributory factor to one person sexually harassing a colleague, and as

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58 Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011), p. 67.

59 Fedina, Holmes & Backes (2018); Voth Schrag (2017).

60 Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017), p. 533.

61 McDonald (2012); Willness, Steel & Lee (2007).

62 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014), p. 817.

63 Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017), p. 533.

an attempt by the person exposed to handle the situation.<sup>64</sup> Alcohol and drugs is a recurring theme, not least among the research reviews focusing on students:

Also, college students who have been sexually assaulted are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as binge drinking and drug use, have lower academic achievement and may be at greater risk for revictimisation.<sup>65</sup>

As mentioned before, the literature that focuses on students/campuses in USA, an understanding is used of sexual harassment as part of a continuum that also includes other types of sexual assault and rape. This definition means that documented consequences from this field also includes sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.<sup>66</sup>

Direct costs to organisations are well-documented in the form of, for example, high personnel turnover resulting in a need for expensive recruitment, introduction and induction of new employees, as well as time and resources spent on investigating incidents. Specifically for USA, a consequence is also possible high legal costs for court cases if incidents are reported to the police. More indirect costs for organisations are consequences such as reduced workplace morale and job motivation among employees, and “poor reputation” for the workplace.<sup>67</sup>

### Explanation models of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a complex phenomenon that generates a number of different explanation models. The focus of the literature surrounding sexual harassment has been on the definition issue, at the cost of theoretical development of understanding of sexual harassment, and through this a possibly improved development of preventive and changing work. A number of different theoretical perspectives dominate research into sexual harassment and affect the understanding of the phenomenon:<sup>68</sup>

- a biological model, which is based on concepts of natural, biological differences between men and women as the explanation for the occurrence of sexual harassment;
- socio-cultural explanations, where sexual harassment is understood as a manifestation of unequal power distribution between women and men;
- theories of legal consciousness, where the focus is on investigating how and when actions are perceived as sexual harassment and what leads to formal accusations; and
- organisational perspectives that explain and understand sexual harassment in relation to specific organisational/workplace contexts.

What is known as “power models” are also noticed in the literature, and feminist models for understanding power are highlighted as important for understanding sexual harassment.<sup>69</sup> In academia, unequal power relationships are identified, for example both within a research team and between different professional categories within a specific higher education institution. Gender emerges as a clearly contributory factor to exposure to harassment in academia.

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64 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014); Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017).

65 Fedina, Holmes & Backes (2018), p. 76.

66 See for example Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011).

67 Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017); McDonald (2012).

68 After McDonald (2012).

69 See Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017); McDonald (2012).

Gender is clearly a major contributing factor to the incidence of harassment in higher education settings [...] Furthermore, this finding (...) seems likely to be linked to aspects of power such that power inequity contributes to gender discrimination as women are often in less powerful workplace positions than men.<sup>70</sup>

This is something that also impacts on which professional groups in academia are the most exposed. Harassment among researching and teaching personnel is often carried out by personnel who have been employed over a long period, and administrative personnel emerges as a particularly exposed group in the material.

The relatively high levels of workplace harassment reported by managerial, administrative and professional personnel in higher education compared with faculty harassment can be linked with gender issues.<sup>71</sup>

The research shows how different structures in academia creates and maintains unequal power relationships between women and men, for example through differing reward and punishment structures, where men tend to enjoy greater rewards for their efforts, or through greater teaching pressures on women. Similar structures can be found to an even higher degree when it comes to women in academia who are race-typed as non-white.

For example, the findings of our review suggest that women may be allocated larger teaching loads in universities, thus creating barriers to engagement in research and publication on which most universities base their promotion decisions – thus making gender and power inequalities self-perpetuating.<sup>72</sup>

The gender composition in workplaces and its possible impact on the incidence of sexual harassment is discussed in several of the research reviews. Sexual harassment is more common in workplaces that are dominated by men, and in particular in such workplaces that are characterised by a sexualised and masculinised work environment, where femininity is undervalued.<sup>73</sup>

organizational norms and cultures, such as the level of sensitivity to the problem of balancing work and personal obligations, and the extent to which the culture is employee-rather than job-oriented, are more important in predicting the frequency of sexual harassment<sup>74</sup> than organizational sex ratios.<sup>75</sup>

The material shows a consensus that sexual harassment is more frequent in workplaces with great power imbalance between different levels of the organisation. This is also something that is assumed to explain the increased exposure that women with insecure tenure report, as this situation places the person at a further power disadvantage compared to their colleagues.<sup>76</sup>

Recurrent themes in the research reviews are discussions about organisation, management and workplace culture. Organisation, gender and power operate in acade-

70 Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017), p. 530.

71 Ibid., p. 531.

72 Ibid., p. 531.

73 Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010).

74 In the original text, the abbreviation SH is used for sexual harassment.

75 McDonald (2012), p. 9.

76 See for example Rubin & Borgers (1990); McDonald (2012).

mia as well, and harassment can be found between employees, between employees and students and between students. Already in 1980, it was established that sexual harassment is not limited to any specific type of educational institution, but can be found within large and small public institutions, private institutions, vocational colleges and religiously affiliated schools.<sup>77</sup> There is a consensus in the literature that workplace culture plays a role in the incidence of sexual harassment. Expressed non-acceptance of certain behaviours, policies and clarity from the management of what is expected of employees is highlighted as central for an organisation that wishes to counteract sexual harassment.<sup>78</sup> In a corresponding way, certain workplace cultures and certain types of leadership and organisation facilitate sexual harassment. For example, two type of leadership style are associated with the occurrence of harassment: authoritarian and “laissez faire”.<sup>79</sup>

There is a strong research foundation in this literature regarding respondents’ perceptions of organizational tolerance, policies and procedures, and implementation practices, and it is quite clear that the organizational climate and workplace environment are central to understanding the conditions under which harassment is more likely to occur and how the victims are affected.<sup>80</sup>

A large part of the research discussed in the research reviews concerns who is exposed to sexual harassment, and in what situations. Although it is assumed to be important to understand risk situations and risk behaviour (of persons exposed) in order to design and develop well-functioning policies and preventive work, this literature is also criticised due to a tendency to lay blame on those exposed.<sup>81</sup> Overall, gender or gender discrimination is stated to be a risk factor, for example under headings such as “Causes of harassment”<sup>82</sup> or “Risk factors for harassment and discrimination”.<sup>83</sup> These sections do not refer to the gender of the perpetrator, but on that of the victim. Also, marginalised groups, in particular HBTQ persons, ethnic minorities, persons with functional disabilities, persons with previous experience of sexual violence and women with insecure employment, are highlighted as groups at increased risk of being exposed to sexual harassment.<sup>84</sup>

Research focusing on perpetrators, that is persons who are exposing others to sexual harassment, is lacking in the material analysed. Around 85 per cent of all those who report sexual harassment are women, 15 per cent are men, and in both cases the perpetrator is usually a man. Individualised and psychological explanations exist in the material, for example that men who expose others to sexual harassment have naive conceptions of social interaction and heterosexuality, or use too much alcohol.<sup>85</sup> None of the studies analysed focus on perpetrators, few studies categorise the perpetrators’ age, gender or ethnicity, but more often their position, job title or status in various ways.<sup>86</sup>

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77 Rubin & Borgers (1990).

78 Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017); Willness, Steel & Lee (2007).

79 Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010).

80 Willness, Steel & Lee (2007), p. 143.

81 McDonald (2012).

82 Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017), p. 528.

83 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014), p. 819.

84 See for example Fedina, Holmes & Backes (2018).

85 McDonald (2012).

86 See for example Rubin & Borgers (1990).

## Prevention – preventive measures against sexual harassment

A recurrent important part of the work to counteract sexual harassment mentioned is a well-established organisation culture throughout the organisations, aimed at displaying intolerance against sexual harassment.<sup>87</sup> Strategies and measures at organisational level can counteract and prevent sexual harassment if they focus on creating a respectful and welcoming work environment that does not undervalue employees due to their gender.<sup>88</sup> Organisational factors, such as having decided on and implemented a policy, are highlighted as being central to preventing sexual harassment in many of the research reviews. At the same time, empirical research showing that policies are effective in preventing and reducing the prevalence of sexual harassment is insufficient.<sup>89</sup> Policies risk filling the function of protecting the organisation rather than protecting employees and students. For example, “zero tolerance” of sexual harassment can constitute part of an organisation’s “identity” and reputation, and experiences that go against this supposed zero tolerance can be perceived as threatening the organisation. Policies can also be something that the management point to so as to avoid having to take responsibility when harassment actually occurs.

However, much less research has been focused on the specific policies and procedures themselves in terms of how to successfully implement prevention strategies, incorporate education and training, increase awareness of organizational policies and procedures, and conduct general program evaluation and efficacy assessment (see Williams et al., 1999, for one such exception). Put simply, we know that organizational factors are fundamental, and therefore, we should move toward identifying the organizational policies and procedures that are most critical for preventing the conditions that create a favorable organizational climate for sexual harassment.<sup>90</sup>

Most cases of sexual harassment are not reported at all, but are instead handled privately by the person exposed. When a report is made, most never reach the public, but are handled within organisations.<sup>91</sup> It is possible to make it easier for persons exposed to report sexual harassment, for example by enabling reporting to an external body outside the organisation directly involved. There is also research showing that women exposed to sexual harassment find it easier to make the report to another woman.<sup>92</sup>

One way of considering prevention includes primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. In workplaces, primary prevention may for example mean that organisations have implemented policies and processes that are well-established throughout the organisation, that personnel are educated on what sexual harassment entails, and that the management makes it clear that sexual harassment is not accepted. Secondary prevention focuses on the process when an employee reports sexual harassment, for example by employing external, trained advisers. This is considered extra important in cases where an employee is harassed by a superior, such as a manager or supervisor. Tertiary prevention is about the help and support the person exposed to sexual harassment should receive in the form of rehabilitation and follow-up.<sup>93</sup> At the same time, there is a lack of clear research support for such measures having the intended effects:

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87 Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010).

88 McDonald (2012).

89 Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010).

90 Willness, Steel & Lee (2007), p. 143–144. In the original text, the abbreviation SH is used for sexual harassment.

91 See t.ex. McDonald (2012); Rubin & Borgers (1990).

92 Rubin & Borgers (1990).

93 Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that there appears to be an absence of empirical evidence examining the effectiveness of many of these strategies.<sup>94</sup>

Measures to prevent and handle harassment in academia focus in particular on organisation, management and unequal power relationships. Examples are development of communicative skills and organisational awareness. When the management understands power relationships within the organisation and has the right competence, this enables support and clear, rather than complicit, leadership.<sup>95</sup>

The internationalisation of academia, with a globalised workforce and use of electronic communications, impacts on how, where and when harassment occurs. While internationalisation, classrooms online and electronic communications enable greater diversity among both students and employees, it also entails an increased risk of marginalisation of minority groups, and reduced insight, leadership and direction. Measures and preventive work that consider a globalised workforce and that include the handling of online harassment are requested.<sup>96</sup>

A recurring theme in the research reviews is the understanding that a central way of preventing sexual harassment consists of education and training. Students, employees and managers should all be educated about what constitutes sexual harassment, and how to handle it, for example with the help of training days, films, workshops and case studies. Within the large research field that focuses on students on campuses in USA, there is research into preventive programmes against sexual harassment and assault, known as “sexual assault prevention programs”. As a result of the Clery Act of 1990, all colleges and universities that receive government funding in USA shall inform students and employees about crime statistics at the college or university in question, as well as the policies and procedures that exist to prevent crimes, including sexual violence. These policies must include a comment on prevention of sexual assaults on campus.<sup>98</sup>

“Sexual assault prevention programs” focus on educating students and aim to change attitudes and behaviour relating to sexual violence. The programmes form the basis for a large research field in USA, but little has been established about the general effectiveness of these programmes, and whether they create long-term attitude and behaviour changes.<sup>99</sup> Evaluations of the programmes discuss how the outcome is affected depending on whether the person managing the courses is a professional or another student, whether a longer or shorter time is more effective (everything from hours to whole academic years is discussed), whether the result is affected by the groups being “single-sex” or mixed, and which attitudes and behaviours that are changed. The results are context-specific and not clear-cut.

## Summary

- Sexual harassment occurs within all disciplines in academia, and affects students, doctoral students and employees.
- The perpetrators are usually men. Both women and men are exposed, but women to a much greater extent.

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94 Ibid., p. 667.

95 Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017).

96 Ibid.

97 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014); Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017); Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010).

98 Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011).

99 Anderson & Whiston (2015).

- Already marginalised groups, in particular younger women, women with insecure employment conditions and minorities (ethnic and gender), are more exposed.
- Exposure to sexual harassment leads to physical, psychological and professional consequences for individuals, in the form of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress syndrome, pain, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, increased alcohol use, impaired career opportunities, reduced work motivation and engagement, and termination, for example.
- The focus is on organisation culture to counteract sexual harassment; however, it is not clarified how, what and when produces actual results that reduce prevalence.
- Correctly designed and implemented policies are assumed to prevent sexual harassment. What such a policy should include is not established, however.
- The opportunities of educational programmes to contribute to reduced occurrence of sexual harassment cannot be established from an analysis of this material.
- More than half of the studies referred to in the research reviews are published in English, with empirical results from USA and to some extent also from other Anglo-Saxon language areas.
- Quantitative cross-sectional studies dominate the research field in general.
- There is a lack of peer-reviewed meta-analyses of research into sexual harassment in academia<sup>100</sup>, also where sexual harassment is seen as a part of a wider concept that includes harassment, bullying and exposure. Meta-analyses of research reviews of research into sexual harassment in academia are also lacking.
- Links to other neighbouring discourses are noticeable, where some studies have sociological theories of sexualised violence as an umbrella term, while others place sexual harassment within the framework of strictly criminological or jurisprudential discourses.
- There is no clear-cut joint definition of sexual harassment within the research field. The smallest common denominator is an idea that it consists of unwelcome actions of a “sexual nature”, and includes verbal, non-verbal and physical actions.
- The definition problem is one of the reasons it is difficult to make comparison and to draw overall conclusions from prevalence studies. Other difficulties are differing methodological starting points and underreporting. This leads to prevalence varying greatly, from 2 to 93 per cent. For female students in USA, the prevalence of exposure is, however, often in the interval 20–25 per cent.

## Recommendations

The more detailed recommendations from the research reviews are shown below. The next section contains an analytical comment.

## Practice

- Educational programmes aimed at students to prevent sexual harassment should be given over a longer period, with opportunities for various types of

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100 Except Rubin & Borgers (1990).

learning formats, such as lectures, courses, workshops, films and discussions. Training should also be given to employees in academia, and to persons outside academia who are responsible for fieldwork and practice periods. These programmes should include information and knowledge about what sexual harassment is, about students' rights and about how a person can handle sexual harassment if it should occur.<sup>101</sup>

- The reporting process should be clarified, for example through information on how and when a report should be made, setting up of units or specially trained advisers, and guarantee anonymity for the person making a report. Knowledge about the fact that women exposed to sexual harassment prefer to report this to a woman than to a man should be considered.<sup>102</sup>
- Individuals' opportunities to handle sexual harassment should be reinforced while waiting for institutions to change.<sup>103</sup>

## Policy

- To succeed in the implementation of policies, action plans and measures, they should be well-established throughout the university hierarchy, the occurrence of sexual harassment should be noted and programmes implemented should be research-based.<sup>104</sup>
- The diversification of exposure, relating both to exposure to different types of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and also the exposure of various minority groups, should guide the universities' work of preventing and handling sexual harassment and providing support to those exposed. A more detailed understanding of the specific needs that exist at a university needs to be the starting point for interventions and preventive work.<sup>105</sup>
- Higher education institutions need to investigate their procedures and evaluate their effectiveness. Institutions need to be aware of any abuse of power and status within the institution.<sup>106</sup>
- Higher education institutions that are carrying on functioning preventive work against sexual violence/harassment should be noticed.<sup>107</sup>

## Research

- Intersectional perspectives that include minority groups and the experiences of these are recommended, both in relation to assessing the effectiveness of preventive measures, and in relation to the prevalence of exposure. This also impinges on questions of methodology, where more attention should be paid to ensuring the selection for studies of sexual harassment and sexual violence corresponds to the diversity that exists within the higher education institutions today. Strategic selection techniques should be used to ensure studies reflect the population they aim to represent.<sup>108</sup>

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101 Ibid.; Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014); Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010); Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011).

102 Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010); Rubin & Borgers (1990).

103 Rubin & Borgers (1990).

104 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014); Hunt, Davidson, Fielden et al. (2010); Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011).

105 Fedina, Holmes & Backes (2018); Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011).

106 Rubin & Borgers (1990).

107 Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011).

108 Anderson & Whiston (2015); Fedina, Holmes & Backes (2018); McDonald (2012); Voth Schrag (2017); Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011); Willness, Steel & Lee (2007).

- A broader global representation is recommended. Examples are more research from non-English-speaking parts of the world, comparative studies of different countries, and development of inter-cultural research projects involving different regions.<sup>109</sup>
- The focus of future research should be more on preventive work and on changes in behaviour as the outcome of preventive work. Researchers should investigate the effectiveness of other preventive measures, such as “bystander prevention intervention”. A critical factor for developing effective preventive strategies is studying the underlying processes of sexual harassment, including the characteristics and incentives of perpetrators.<sup>110</sup>
- Survey studies should be combined with qualitative studies to include more nuanced perspectives on sexual harassment. Long-term studies are needed to investigate how exposure to sexual harassment impacts on a person over a lifetime. Researchers need to reinforce the methodological quality of their research, in particular using random sampling, control groups and longer follow-up periods.<sup>111</sup>
- Empirical studies of sexual harassment should be combined with research that investigates other destructive behaviours in a workplace, in particular bullying, racism and gender discrimination. Investigations should be made into what combination of policies, education and reporting procedures leads to reduced incidence of sexual harassment.<sup>112</sup>
- Standardised definitions of different types of sexual harassment and sexual violence may facilitate the understanding of prevalence and differences in prevalence, and the design of suitable preventive measures.<sup>113</sup>

The recommendations should be read with consideration for the time aspect. While earlier texts state that individuals should be trained to handle sexual harassment, as the institutional support is so weak and institutional change is so slow<sup>114</sup>, later texts focus more on changes at organisation and management level. Another important fact to remember is that several of the studies were conducted at university campuses in USA, with the specific context this entails. In relation to education, reporting and policy, it should also be considered that few of these recommendations are based on evaluated outcomes and research-based knowledge of what has real impact on reducing the incidence of sexual harassment.<sup>115</sup>

### Analytical comment

Sexual harassment in academia emerges as an ambivalent field, where the diversification of exposure (in particular in relation to gender, race/ethnicity, age, religion, function, subject, university, region, form of exposure) is highlighted in the majority of studies. At the same time, proposals for and evaluated forms of preventive work and other interventions are, in principle, not diversified at all, and there is a lack of actual studies that go beyond a binary gender understanding, heterosexuality as a norm, and gender as the only variable for exposure.

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109 Henning, Zhou, Adams m.fl. (2017); McDonald (2012); Willness, Steel & Lee (2007).

110 Anderson & Whiston (2015); McDonald (2012); Voth Schrag (2017); Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011).

111 Anderson & Whiston (2015); McDonald (2012).

112 McDonald (2012); Willness, Steel & Lee (2007).

113 Fedina, Holmes & Backes (2018); Rubin & Borgers (1990).

114 T.ex. Rubin & Borgers (1990).

115 Se vidare i Bondestam & Lundqvist (2019) för en utförlig genomgång av forskning om preventiva åtgärder.

An increasing number of studies concerning in particular ethnicity, sexuality and gender identity are, however, being published, and research focusing on minority groups and a broader global representation is requested by the field, which could have consequences both for the content of research and for questions of methodology and design of studies. Much of the material has traces of the feminist and power-critical perspective that constitutes the core of the field, and sections relating to unequal power are included in most of the research reviews, however very seldom as more than one of several possible frameworks for understanding. What a feminist or power-critical perspective could do with legal definitions or individualised explanation models, for example, is not investigated.

Several studies discuss, assume, problematise, establish and/or theorise underreporting as a major problem in general, but do not address underreporting as the main focus for methodology considerations or as the starting point in itself for conducting research into sexual harassment. In other words, there is a clear tendency in the analysed research reviews, both in terms of the studies analysed in the reviews and the conclusions of the reviews themselves, to point out underreporting as an important (sometimes entirely crucial) prevalence issue, but without giving any concrete examples of how this can be dealt with methodologically.

In general, one overall conclusion is that exposure in academia is an extremely complex phenomenon, and the more detailed, inclusive and experience-proximate a study of prevalence is, the higher the reported incidence. However, there are few or no studies that strive to, or do, report any relevant measurements of exposure that are not self-defined, even if some attempts have been made.

## Top-ranked publications

The purpose of the review of publications in this part of the research field is to provide an overall picture of the state of knowledge in the research that is most frequently cited internationally. After abstracts of the publications in question, a summary is made of the main results, the publications' recommendations for practice, policy and research are reported, and finally a longer analytical comment on the studies in question is provided.

### About the material

Here we summarise and analyse concept use, results and recommendations of the scientific studies that have made the greatest impact globally. Impact refers to field-normalised citation in the database Web of Science (WoS). The articles were searched from the period 1966–2018 based on given search strings that include all research into sexual harassment and academia (total 5 561 items).

In total, 30 peer-reviewed articles were scrutinised in detail. The selection is based on contents from a list of 60 publications (total search in Web of Science using Scopus as the reference base), arranged according to field-normalised citation by KvinnSam in line with the Swedish Research Council's recommendations. The criteria for inclusion based on content analysis are: (a) sexual harassment shall be the main focus, but comparison with other issues of exposure is permitted, and (b) academia/higher education shall be in focus, but comparison with other sectors is permitted.

All articles concern primarily academia and sexual harassment. In some cases, other forms of exposure are also analysed, and there are some examples of comparative approaches (nationally and internationally with other organisations, both private and public sector). The texts were published from 1982 to 2016, with emphasis on studies published before 1993 (12 items) and after 2014 (10 items) in medical, legal, psychological, criminological and gender science journals. Only one article was found in a journal with clear focus on higher education.<sup>116</sup> Empirically, all studies are situated in USA, with the exception of one study from Italy.<sup>117</sup> A few articles also include comparative approaches, with empirical data from Japan and Brazil for example. Most of the studies relate to prevalence investigations in various student groups, often campus-based exposure in various forms, with emphasis on binary gender, but sexuality and race/ethnicity/skin colour are also analysed exceptionally. Medicine and STEM are the subject areas covered more specifically, but the majority of the publications include multi-disciplinary studies of a certain campus or higher education institution.

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<sup>116</sup> Schneider (1987).

<sup>117</sup> Magnavita & Heponiemi (2011).

The review of the research field in this section has been conducted in several ways. The primary hubs for reading the articles have been concept, theory, method, empirical data, context and result. Furthermore, the articles' relationship with the themes and focuses of the research field overall have served as guidance, in particular in comparison with the analysis of research reviews in the previous section. To provide an overview, and also to guide the reader around individual articles, the presentation in this section is initially of a thematic, descriptive character. The reason for this is, in particular, that such a large majority of the articles in question focus exclusively on prevalence in various respects (22 out of 30).

The themes in question, with corresponding sub-headings below, are:

- Prevalence, multi-disciplinary (12 items)
- Prevalence, healthcare and medicine (5 items)
- Prevalence, bystander (2 items)
- Prevalence, other (3 items)
- Other studies (8 items)

The articles are summarised briefly, with focus on context, method and results. Thereafter follows an overall summary of the results from all the articles, and a summary of the recommendations for research, policy and practice given in the studies. Finally, more in-depth discussion is presented in selected parts in a couple of analytical comments.

## Analysed articles

### Prevalence, multi-disciplinary

**Adams, J., Kottke, J. & Padgitt, J. 1983. Sexual Harassment of University-Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 24: 484–490.**

Empirical data from USA, Iowa State University. Cross-section study of students and doctoral students via a survey with questions on exposure. Eight categories are investigated, from sexist comments to demands for sexual services, built up in line with established definitions.<sup>118</sup> N=372, of which 65 per cent women and 35 per cent men. Response rate 37 per cent. The focus of the study is partly how students define sexual harassment, partly prevalence. The results indicate clearly that women define all categories as sexual harassment to a greater extent than men do. Moreover, women have themselves experienced all forms of exposure to a greater extent than men, with sexist comments being the most common (women 65.1 per cent, men 26.5 per cent). The perpetrators are professors, teachers or teacher assistants in more than 75 per cent of all cases for women, and for men the ratio is in principle the same. Half of the women state that the perpetrator exposes them to sexual harassment within the framework of the course they are reading. No student has reported exposure in the form of unwelcome physical approaches, explicit proposals for sex or demands for sexual services.

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<sup>118</sup> See an influential article by Till (1980), which Hagman (1994) also uses as background for their "sex harassment steps", which becomes the guideline in Sweden. See also further below, and the summary of Fitzgerald, Schullman, Bailey et al. (1988).

**Benson, D. & Thomson, G. 1982. Sexual Harassment on a University Campus. The Confluence of Authority Relations, Sexual Interest and Gender Stratification. *Social Problems*, 29: 236–251.**

Empirical data from USA, Berkeley. Cross-sectional study of female students. N=269. Response rate 67 per cent. 29.7 per cent of the respondents have been exposed to sexual harassment at some time during the last four-year period by a teacher who is a man, primarily in the form of unwelcome sexual attention. The type of exposure varies considerably, from comments and questions to physical touch and proposals to buy sexual services. The analysis indicates that the experiences of exposure undermines trust in teachers that are men, and that sexual harassment should be seen as part of an accumulative exposure and in relation to other types of sexualised violence.

**Clancy, K.B.H., Nelson, R.G., Rutherford, J.N. & Hinde, K. 2014. Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault. *Plos One*, 9(7): 1–9.**

Empirical data from USA. Comparative analysis of partial empirical data from around 30 different countries. Cross-section study (online survey), with exclusive focus on exposure during fieldwork. Students, field assistants and researchers responded, in particular archaeologists, anthropologists, biologists and zoologists. N=666. Response rate unclear due to the online format. 72.4 per cent of the respondents knew about others exposed to sexual harassment. 64 per cent of women had themselves experienced sexual harassment, and exposure is 3.5 times more common among women than men. Students (58 per cent of the respondents) report the greatest exposure. 26 per cent of the women respondents are exposed to sexual assaults (overall answer to several survey questions about “sexual assault”), and the corresponding prevalence among men is 9.6 per cent. Women are primarily exposed by superiors, men by colleagues. Fundamental statistics on sexuality and ethnicity show that these variables reinforce exposure. Fewer than half know the existing policy on sexual harassment at the field site. The perpetrators are almost exclusively from the own organisation; very seldom someone from the local community or other organisations.

**Cortina, L.M., Swan, S., Fitzgerald, L.F. & Waldo, C. 1998. Sexual harassment and assault - chilling the climate for women in academia. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 22: 419–441.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-sectional study of female students at a major university. N=1 037. Sexuality and race/ethnicity are in focus throughout, in addition to gender. Response rate 48 per cent (students) and 60 per cent (doctoral students) respectively. 49 per cent of students and 53 per cent of doctoral students report exposure to sexual harassment during their time at the university. Exposure during the first year as student was 40 per cent. No difference in exposure depending of study subject. Afro-American and Latin American students are more exposed than other groups. Non-heterosexual students run a 1.6 times greater risk as heterosexuals of experiencing exposure. 7 per cent of the students experience both sexual harassment and sexual assault. Groups with the highest perceived exposure perceive their study environment as more hostile and excluding than those who do not perceive any exposure. It is notable that the high rates of exposure only relate to harassment from teachers/professors.

**D’augelli, A. 1992. Lesbian and Gay Male Undergraduates Experiences of Harassment and Fear. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 7: 383–395.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study among non-heterosexual male and female students at a minor university in the countryside. N=121. Response rate unknown, as the total population was not determined. Some comparison made with a similar study.<sup>119</sup> Great variation in prevalence depending on type of exposure. Verbal exposure affects more than three quarters of the respondents; other types of violence and threats form a web of exposure. A majority (69 per cent) of the respondents avoid actively displaying their sexuality, but there is a clear improvement between 1987 and 1990 (when both the studies were carried out).

**Finn, J. 2004. A survey of online harassment at a university campus. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 19: 468–483.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study of online harassment of students at a particular campus. N=339, of which 67 per cent women and 27 per cent men. Survey study with random sample, response rate uncontrolled. More than half of the respondents have received unwelcome pornographic material, and 10 to 15 per cent of the respondents receive repeated messages with harassing contents. No clear gender differences in prevalence in the study. Around 5 per cent of the respondents define themselves as non-heterosexual, and their exposure is generally greater than for heterosexual students in the study. A few reports have been made by students. The study develops a discussion in particular about problems of defining online harassment methodologically and comparatively.

**Martin-Storey, A. & August, E.G. 2016. Harassment Due to Gender Non-conformity Mediates the Association Between Sexual Minority Identity and Depressive Symptoms. *Journal of Sex Research*, 53: 85–97.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study with students at two different higher education institutions, focus on sexual minorities (homo-, bi-, trans-) and links between depression (BDI-II scale) and exposure to harassment. N=252, non-randomised selection, response rate unclear. Variance analysis and regression analysis. The results show that sexual harassment is more common than for the control group with heterosexual students. Harassment is linked both to non-conformity to binary gender and sexual minority status. Non-conformity is also correlated to depression in the study. This study is perhaps the best executed consequence analysis of sexual harassment of students in the entire research field, in particular in terms of design and analysis of empirical data.

**Reilly, M., Lott, B. & Gallogly, S. 1986. Sexual Harassment of University-Students. *Sex Roles*, 15: 333–358.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study with students at all levels and within all subjects. N=393, of which 56 per cent women and 44 per cent men. Response rate 33 per cent. Survey with large set of questions. A theoretical model as foundation (TSHI – Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory), variance analyses and chi2 of results, certain questions stand out as observed behaviour among employed lecturers and professors divided up by gender (that is, an express perpetrator perspective), otherwise similar prevalence and differences between women and men as in other studies from USA in the 1980s. Age is analysed specifically and shows that

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119 D’augelli (1987), unpublished manuscript supplied by the author.

tolerance to sexual harassment is significantly greater in younger age groups than in older. In this study, as in many other North American studies (referenced here), selective avoidance is women's primary strategy for avoiding exposure to sexual harassment.

**Robnett, R.D. 2016. Gender Bias in STEM Fields: Variation in Prevalence and Links to STEM Self-Concept. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 40: 65–79.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study focusing on STEM, with particular analysis of differences between life sciences subjects and other areas. The ambition is to clarify the effects of exposure on self-perception and subject area. Survey with students from all levels, including doctoral students (and high school students). N=226, of which 52 per cent women and 48 per cent men. Response rate 26 to 38 per cent dependent on group. 61 per cent of the high school students report exposure, meaning informal discrimination in a wide sense, not sexual harassment specifically. ANCOVA analyses of two statistical documents (non-parametric) result in finding that the greater exposure occurs within mathematics, and affects first cycle students more than doctoral students. There are clear links between experiences of exposure among first cycle female students and a negative view of their own ability to perform well within the framework for subject area in STEM areas, even if the practical consequences of such a link cannot be clarified with this type of study.

**Schneider, B. 1987. Graduate Women, Sexual Harassment, and University Policy. *Journal of Higher Education*, 58: 46–65.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study with first-cycle higher education graduates and employees at a higher education institution. N=376, women only. Response rate 44 per cent. Survey focusing on exposure in line with accepted definitions in the North-American discourse.<sup>120</sup> Exposure to sexual harassment amounts to 60 per cent at some stage of the study period for first-cycle higher education graduates. Most of the other results are entirely in line with similar North American studies from the 1980s. The author also makes good comparisons with existing research from other sample groups, and shows that prevalence, independent of higher education institution and question batteries, is around 60 per cent for female students.

**Selkie, E.M., Kota, R., Chan, Y.-F. & Moreno, M. 2015. Cyberbullying, Depression, and Problem Alcohol Use in Female College Students: A Multisite Study. *Cyberpsychology Behavior and Social Networking*, 18: 79–86.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study covering four higher education institutions, four different subjects and various educational levels. Survey with students, however unclear overall population and response rate. N=376, women only. Investigates various dimensions of offences and bullying online (cyberbullying), where part of the contents expressly focuses on sexual harassment. Regression analyses and bi-variate analyses. Particular vulnerability to exposure in the form of online sexual harassment is established for first-cycle higher education graduate women (prevalence above 60 per cent). Gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity and perpetrator perspectives are partially tried in the study, but without clear results. The clearest correlation is between exposure to sexual harassment, drug and alcohol abuse and depression. The link is strongest for those exposed to unwelcome sexual invites and demands. This correlation is also established for all participant groups, and is also

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120 See Till (1980).

shown in several studies from educational levels corresponding to lower secondary and upper secondary.

**Settles, I.H., Cortina, L.M., Malley, J. & Stewart, A.J. 2006. The climate for women in academic science: The good, the bad, and the changeable. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30: 47–58.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study with employees from two faculties (social sciences/natural sciences) at one higher education institutions, focus on work satisfaction. N=208, women only. Response rate 49 per cent. Several different models and scales are tried to build up analytical factors. Multi-variate analysis (Manova) and variance analysis (Anova). Links between exposure to sexual harassment (and also discrimination) and negative work satisfaction are clear for women. No measurable effect on productivity, however. Actively supportive institutional structure (resources and organisation aimed at both handling exposed individuals and preventing exposure in the work environment) result in clear correlation with positive work satisfaction for women. Overall, this study replicates earlier corresponding studies, in particular several of Fitzgerald's studies from the 1990s.

Prevalence, healthcare and medicine

**Bruce, A.N., Battista, A., Plankey, M.W., Johnson, L.B. & Marshall, M.B. 2015. Perceptions of gender-based discrimination during surgical training and practice. *Medical Education Online*, 20: 1–10.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study within medicine, focusing on students, practicing students and employees (respondents were recruited via the Association of Women Surgeons). N=334, women only. Response rate 31 per cent. Survey focusing on own, with observation of others' exposure to discrimination and sexual harassment. 87 per cent were exposed to "gender-based discrimination" (both direct and indirect expressions of discrimination, including sexual harassment according to the standard legal definition). Own experiences of exposure are as common as observed exposure of others, which makes this study stand out in the research field as a whole (observation of others in general always produces a higher value). Exposure to sexual harassment specifically amounts to 11 per cent (during the last year) and 10 per cent (last month); a common value for the whole group surveyed. Practising students are more exposed to various forms of sexual harassment and discrimination than employees and other students. Very few students report actual exposure. The conclusion is that prevalence is high, varied and complex, and that preventive work must be carried out continuously within all parts of medical and healthcare education programmes, and be completed equally regularly during practice periods and in actual workplaces within the area.

**Fnais, N., Soobiah, C., Chen, M.H., Lillie, E., Perrier, L., Tashkhandi, M., Straus, S.E., Mamdani, M., Al-Omran, M. & Tricco, A.C. 2014. Harassment and Discrimination in Medical Training: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Academic Medicine*, 89: 817–27.**

Empirical data from USA. Also, comparative empirical data from analysed studies in Canada, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Israel and Japan. N=38 353. Meta-analysis of prevalence studies of sexual harassment among medical students. A total of 57 cross-section and 2 longitudinal studies were scrutinised in the analysis. A content analysis was made in the previous section about research reviews in this report. Overall, the study shows that 60 per cent of women medical students are exposed to

some form of sexual harassment, where verbal harassment is the most common type (63 per cent).

**Komaromy, M., Bindman, A., Haber, R. & Sande, M. 1993. Sexual Harassment in Medical-Training. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 328: 322–326.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study within medicine, focus on students on specific educational programme at a higher education institution. N=82, of which 33 women and 49 men. Response rate 62 per cent. Survey with descriptive statistics. 73 per cent women and 23 per cent men are exposed to sexual harassment at some time during their time as students. Exposure for women assumes a more physical character, and the perpetrators are primarily in a superior position (professor/teacher). Women describe to a significantly higher degree than men that the exposure creates impaired conditions for completing the studies. Markedly few reports.

**Magnavita, N. & Heponiemi, T. 2011. Workplace Violence Against Nursing Students and Nurses: An Italian Experience. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 43: 203–210.**

Empirical data from Italy. Cross-section study focusing on violence, discrimination and sexual harassment aimed at nurses and students on nursing programmes at three different higher education institutions. N=621. 99 per cent response rate for students (349 completed a survey after completion of a lesson), 94.2 per cent for nurses at a general hospital. Survey study with data processing in SPSS, Chi2 and Mann-Whitney U test. Overall, nurses are more exposed than students, including to sexual harassment. Nurses are exposed to violence primarily from patients and relatives, students experience exposure to sexual harassment from teachers and supervisors mainly. Statistical link between exposure to sexual harassment, ill health and other factors (high workload, weak support structure, lack of trust in organisation) clarified via GHQ scale, in particular for students. Causes of the latter are assumed to be double exposure (as unwaged trainees who are also dependent on supervisors during their practical training).

**Nora, L.M., McLaughlin, M.A., Fosson, S.E., Stratton, T.D., Murphy-Spencer, A., Fincher, R.M.E., German, D.C., Seiden, D. & Witzke, D.B. 2002. Gender discrimination and sexual harassment in medical education: Perspectives gained by a 14-school study. *Academic Medicine*, 77: 1226–1234.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study with students from 14 different public and private medical training programmes. N=1 314, of which 522 women and 662 men (130 respondents have stated their gender). Response rate 69 per cent. Survey with questions on discrimination and sexual harassment, the results are summarised throughout. Anova and descriptive statistics. In general, women's exposure is double that of men (overall 83 per cent for women, 41 per cent for men). More than one in four students, irrespective of gender, has heard about other students discriminated against or exposed to sexual harassment. 82 per cent women and 70 per cent men have themselves observed others being exposed to discrimination or sexual harassment.

**Wolf, T., Randall, H., Vonalmen, K. & Tynes, L. 1991. Perceived Mistreatment and Attitude-Change by Graduating Medical-Students: A Retrospective Study. *Medical Education*, 25: 182–190.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study with medical students during the last year of their training, answering a questionnaire on exposure in a wide sense, including sexual harassment, during their four years of training. N=87, of which

26 women and 61 men. Response rate 63 per cent. Focus on experienced exposure, own attitude change, and own motivation and ability to complete studies. In principle all students report exposure during their training. The most common type is experiencing verbal threats/corrections. 51.7 per cent experience sexual harassment during their time in training in general, women at double the extent of men. The most common perpetrators are teachers and other students. The study shows that there is a link between exposure in a wide sense and a gradually growing cynicism about the training and the profession in question. There is no correlation between exposure and motivation to complete studies in this investigation.

#### Prevalence, bystander

**Coker, A.L., Bush, H.M., Fisher, B.S., Swan, S.C., Williams, C.M., Clear, E.R. & DeGue, S. 2016. Multi-College Bystander Intervention Evaluation for Violence Prevention. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 50: 295–302.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study (and to some extent longitudinal data 2010–2013), with students, multi-disciplinary, with special focus on bystander effects (ability to address/counteract observed sexual harassment). N=7 111, of which 62 per cent women and 38 per cent men. Total response rate 45.5 per cent. Comparative study between one higher education institution with and two higher education institutions without current training programme (“Green Dot”) to prevent exposure through bystander interventions. The article includes a comprehensive literature review of earlier studies. Variance and multi-factorial analyses and also multiple regression analysis. In this – the largest in terms of respondents – survey study of sexual harassment in academia in the 2010s, 24.1 per cent of women and 10.2 per cent of men state that they have been exposed to sexual harassment. Overall exposure to sexualised violence in the survey study (in addition to sexual harassment, stalking, psychological and physical violence when dating, sexual coercion and sex without consent are included): 55.6 per cent for women and 38.8 per cent for men. An overall conclusion in relation to the intervention programme itself is that campuses that have introduced bystander programmes have fewer students exposed and fewer perpetrators, which is a pattern that lasts over time. Sexual harassment and stalking in particular decrease significantly. The results apply for both men and women in all dimensions.

**Coker, A.L., Fisher, B.S., Bush, H.M., Swan, S.C., Williams, C.M., Clear, E.R. & DeGue, S. 2015. Evaluation of the Green Dot Bystander Intervention to Reduce Interpersonal Violence Among College Students Across Three Campuses. *Violence Against Women*, 21: 1507–1527.**

In principle identical to the preceding study, but with greater focus on longitudinal data for 2010–2013 as the basis. N=7 026. Slightly increased prevalence and more detailed statistical analyses, but the conclusions are the same.

#### Prevalence, other

**Herek, G. 1993. Documenting Prejudice Against Lesbians and Gay Men on Campus - the Yale Sexual Orientation Survey. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 25: 15–30.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study of students at Yale, focus on non-heterosexual women and men. N=215, of which 93 women and 117 men (5 do not state gender). Response rate unclear, voluntary survey without analysed total population. Survey without foundation in existing theory, to some extent exploratory.

65 per cent exposed to verbal offences, 42 per cent to physical offences. More than 15 per cent have also experienced other violent acts against themselves and their property. Exposure is evenly distributed among women and men in the study. 76 per cent of the respondents have knowledge of others' exposure. 39 per cent of the respondents act in concrete terms to avoid exposure in various ways.

**Schneider, K.T., Swan, S. & Fitzgerald, L.F. 1997. Job-related and psychological effects of sexual harassment in the workplace: Empirical evidence from two organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82: 401–415.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study that uses the SEQ scale and has a comparative approach. Survey with focus on employees in academia (N=300) and in private sector (N=447), all women. Response rate 76 per cent and 91 per cent respectively. 63 per cent of the university employees had experiences of sexual harassment during their time as employees (medium-sized higher education institution, 115 teachers/researchers, 185 technical/administrative personnel). The corresponding prevalence for privately employed is 68 per cent (large, private company in north-western USA). A total of 83 per cent of the women exposed in academia consider themselves forced to relate to the perpetrator in the future within the framework for their current employment. Only 6 per cent of the academics exposed have made a formal report. Overall, there is a clear correlation between exposure to sexual harassment and work-related and psychological consequences in both groups. Underreporting is established as being considerable by analysing differences between express questions about exposure and answers to the SEQ instrument.

### Other studies

**Cantalupo, N.C. 2014. Institution-Specific Victimization Surveys: Addressing Legal and Practical Disincentives to Gender-Based Violence Reporting on College Campuses. *Trauma Violence & Abuse*, 15: 227–241.**

Literature analysis of prevalence studies in USA, focusing on legal processes, but also arguments for the implementation of prevalence studies in themselves, through analysis of national and institution-specific initiatives (15 higher education institutions in focus, mainly students on campus). Good literature review showing various ways universities in USA have adopted knowledge about exposure in legal terms. Interesting reasoning about how increased reportability through other measures than traditional policy with procedures for case handling gives an image of the university as characterised by violence (as the number of reports rises sharply with other tools), while simple and in principle non-obligating surveys tone down that particular image. Both forms often exist at a specific university. The conclusion is that a sector-wide, national prevalence study is to be preferred, with identical legal and theoretical background that establishes a consensus on the scope of exposure and inter-university variations, breaks down different types of exposure and also analyses the perpetrators' intentions, propensity for violence and understanding of their own responsibility.

**Fitzgerald, L., Shullman, S., Bailey, N., Richards, M., Swecker, J., Gold, Y., Ormerod, M. & Weitzman, L., 1988. The Incidence and Dimensions of Sexual Harassment in Academia and the Workplace. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 32: 152–175.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study of students at two higher education institutions. This study lays the foundation for SEQ (Sexual Experiences Question-

naire), which is used in many other studies, in particular in the 1990s. N=2 599. Response rate 40 per cent. Very detailed description of how definitions of concepts are built up, and well substantiated statistically. This first “model study” then forms the basis for study 2 in the article that tests the SEQ scale on employees at one university and one public workplace. N=642 in this study. 94 per cent white persons, median age 39 years. Comparisons are made statistically between all studies and between all levels, in order to safeguard reliability. An important point is that SEQ results in not using the concept of “sexual harassment”, but instead use indirect formulations linked to concrete experiences. It also indicates that with this solution, it is also clear that few men have experienced sexual harassment, compared to more general studies that use a legal definition of sexual harassment as the starting point. The authors also bring up a lot of different contextual limitations of their study and SEQ, among them the specific type of higher education institutions that forms the basis for the scale, subject areas (they weight in female students from STEM areas in order to get a sufficient number of women to secure a basis for analysis, which in itself gives rise to skewness), ethnicity, class and age.

**Gelfand, M., Fitzgerald, L. & Drasgow, F. 1995. The Structure of Sexual Harassment – a Confirmatory Analysis Across Cultures and Settings. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 47: 164–177.**

Concept study in USA, comparing with Brazil, with data from Fitzgerald’s various studies with SEQ as the basis. Here too, one academic organisation is compared with another public organisation. N=2 442. Tries to link together legal and research-based definitions into a model and tests sexual harassment as consisting of three parts: gender-based harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion. The conclusion is that sexual harassment can be defined within the framework for a behaviour psychology model, using the SEQ as basis. A psychometric basis is considered to provide stronger evidence than a normal prevalence study with traditional “checklist” questions.

**Gersen, J. & Suk, J. 2016. The Sex Bureaucracy. *California Law Review*, 104: 881– 948.**

A long article (60 pages) using USA’s legal system as the starting point, and with a main thesis that bureaucratisation of sex has gone too far. A melding of prohibitions against sexual assaults and sexual harassment and “sound sex” is occurring, which according to the author means that harmless, normal, voluntary sex becomes an administrative matter that infringes constitutional freedoms. The text forms a peculiar exception in the analysed material as a whole, and can in parts be read as a right-wing populist, anti-feminist critique of supranationality<sup>121</sup>, and at the same time as a text that makes some important analytical points about where the limits of bureaucratic control of behaviour can or should be drawn (in the spirit of Weber).

**Kenig, S. & Ryan, J. 1986. Sex-Differences in Levels of Tolerance and Attribution of Blame for Sexual Harassment on a University Campus. *Sex Roles*, 15: 535–549.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study with students with clear links to perceptions of studying environments. N=215, half women and half men. Survey questions, primarily about behaviours with a second-person approach. Response

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121 Compare with Eisenman (2001) for example.

rate 57 per cent, unclear size of overall population. Seven out of eight categories show significant differences between women and men in terms of what is perceived as sexual harassment or not. The more “grey zone behaviours”, the greater the differences in perception between the groups, where women see more behaviours generally as sexual harassment than men do. Attribution theory (tendency to overestimate the counterpart’s responsibility) is launched as an explanation model.

**Ong, M. 2005. Body projects of young women of color in physics: Intersections of gender, race, and science. *Social Problems*, 52: 593–617.**

Empirical data from USA. Longitudinal, qualitative interview study with ten women, selected from a larger population of 400 students. The study subject for all of them is physics, focus on relationships between exposure, physicality, gender, whiteness/race/ethnicity, with special emphasis on skin colour and questions about becoming a knowledge subject and being in a scientific field in itself. Interesting analyses of how intersectionality is conducted, among them about passing or not as an academic, woman, Latina, Afro-American in academia, and effects of accepting and holding superior positions and identities. Several analytical themes are linked indirectly to exposure and sexual harassment, but of course throughout as a minor part of a greater exposure that is of process character and includes identity-creation as an academic in relation to physicality, gender and other power structures.

**Padgitt, S. & Padgitt, J. 1986. Cognitive Structure of Sexual Harassment – Implications for University Policy. *Journal of College Student Development*, 27: 34–39.**

Empirical data from USA. Cross-section study with students, focus on analysis of the students’ interpretation of whether actions and situations are to be considered as sexual harassment. N=372, of which 241 women and 126 men (5 do not state gender). Stratified selection of 1 000 students at a major higher education institution, response rate thus 37 per cent. Survey with questions based on legal cases and judgements relating to sexual harassment. The analyses are primarily descriptive, and establishes confidence intervals using “Guttman’s scalogram analysis”. In general, women make more frequent and direct links between “offensive” and “harassing” behaviour than men in the cases tried in the survey. In particular, men tend to consider sexual actions as less offensive than women do.

**Somers, A. 1982. Sexual Harassment in Academe: Legal Issues and Definitions. *Journal of Social Issues*, 38: 23–32.**

USA. Early article that summarises legal definitions of sexual harassment and policies for preventing sexual harassment in academia. Also includes a research review of existing, North American research into sexual harassment in academia (however not exhaustive). The overall conclusion is that despite the variation in definitions over time legally, as well as variations between and within higher education institutions in terms of definitions of concepts and the existence of policies, there is strong evidence that sexual harassment is a considerable work environment problem that affects a majority of female students (and a considerable proportion of male students) at higher education institutions in USA. It is also noted that developed analytical and statistical studies are needed to clarify factors such as prevalence, variations in exposure, and consequences for individuals and organisations with greater scientific focus. It also requests studies to evaluate policies and other interventions aimed at working preventively.

## Summary

### Prevalence

- Exposure to sexual harassment in academia in the top-ranked articles (22 out of 30) varies between 11 and 73 per cent for heterosexual women (median 49 per cent) and between 3 and 26 per cent for heterosexual men (median 15 per cent). Men make up just over one in three of the respondents, and in several studies only women are asked about exposure to sexual harassment.
- In these studies, exposure to sexual harassment is generally highest for female students at lower levels of education.
- In the studies where other forms of exposure are studied simultaneously (direct and indirect discrimination, other forms of offences and harassment, threats of violence, physical and psychological violence, sexual assaults, other forms of sexualised violence, etc.), the total exposure is significantly higher, and never below 60 per cent for women.
- Particularly high exposure is noted for women within healthcare and medical education, and for non-white and non-heterosexual women and men (often above 60 per cent). The two latter groups also suffer more comprehensive exposure, linked to threats, hate and physical and psychological violence in several forms. Links to depression, alcohol and drug abuse, and other ill-health consequences and impacts on social behaviours are also significantly clearer for non-heterosexuals.<sup>122</sup>
- The response rate varies between 26 and 99 per cent (median 58 per cent). Smaller studies have a relatively high response rate, while larger studies have response rates of 40 per cent or lower.

### Forms of exposure

- A general tendency is that prevalence in equivalent studies does not change significantly in terms of scope or content over the entire time period the articles cover (1982–2016). That means that to date, there is no sign that, in particular, the proportion of women and men studying at universities in USA who are exposed is decreasing over time.
- Exposure to sexual assault and threats of sexualised violence is decreasing over time in the studies analysed, at the same time as exposure to sexual harassment remains relatively constant. This might be partly explained by sexual harassment being gradually separated out from (and excludes direct questions about) sexualised violence in later prevalence studies.
- New types of exposure become established in later studies compared to earlier ones, and they relate in particular to digital exposure (online harassment) of various types. The prevalence is alarmingly high in the studies that analyse this within the research field as a whole.<sup>123</sup>
- Some tendencies exist that may possibly reflect a major change. The perpetrators indicated in the studies analysed are shifting from teachers to co-students (and from managers to colleagues). To what extent this is an actual shift over

122 A part-explanation why the focus of the top-ranked articles relates to medicine and healthcare education and non-heterosexual students respectively is to do with the delimitations of the systematic literature review, and is to some extent also a consequence of the choice of databases for the research review.

123 See more, for example in Megan, Booth, Messing et al. (2016); Poland (2016).

time in terms of who the perpetrators are, whether it instead reflects a changed view of the forms and meaning of exposure, or if it is a consequence of increasingly non-hierarchical organisation cultures at North American higher education institutions (or other reasons or a combination of several reasons) is an open question.

### Scientific quality

- Theoretically and methodologically, only a few studies in this part of the research field<sup>124</sup> have
  - a robust design (purpose, theory and method being well connected and motivated, that is to say good validity);
  - broad and large samples with high response rates (and solid drop-out analyses);
  - statistical analyses that go significantly beyond descriptive approaches (in some cases, reliability is also ensured through comparative approaches and control groups); and
  - analytical interpretations that are clearly based on empirical data and are well-situated theoretically.
- A majority of the studies scrutinised are instead based on
  - relatively limited and often uncontrolled cross-section data;
  - lack of random samples and necessary drop-out analyses;
  - shortage of statistical analysis tools (applies in particular to the descriptive studies in the 1980s);
  - strong and sometimes non-considered context-specificity;
  - weak theorising of questions and method choice;
  - limited concept understanding over and above strictly legal applications; and
  - too one-sided binary gender understanding that underestimates the diversity of exposure.

### Recommendations

More detailed recommendations from the top-ranked articles are shown below, and the section after that contains an analytical comment.

#### Practice

- Implementation of higher education institution-wide “bystander programmes” have evidence-based effects on the incidence of exposure to sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based exposure, which justifies the development of such programmes in national higher education systems.<sup>125</sup>
- The need to develop inclusive work and study environment, as part of continuing and strategic work environment work, is recommended as a direct consequence of the fact that even limited experiences of sexual harassment impact greatly, both on individuals’ experiences of their own exposure and also the way in which work teams can function effectively.<sup>126</sup>

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124 See in particular Coker, Bush, Fisher et al. (2016); Coker, Fisher, Bush et al. (2015); Nora, McLaughlin, Fosson et al. (2002).

125 Coker, Bush, Fisher et al. (2016); Coker, Fisher, Bush et al. (2015).

126 Schneider, Swan & Fitzgerald (1997).

- Within healthcare and medicine programmes, there is a need for knowledge about verbal and physical exposure among healthcare personnel, both in conjunction with workplace-based practice and also as important reflexive knowledge about the profession as such in their future working lives. For this reason, various proposals are made for integrating violence-preventive measures and knowledge development more generally in these programmes.<sup>127</sup> Overall, healthcare and medicine programmes are pointed out in particular as needing reinforced preventive measures in several ways, with emphasis on support structures during the training period, integration of knowledge about gender and sexualised violence, mentorship and a number of different recommendations about strengthened ethical knowledge and attitudes among teaching personnel.<sup>128</sup>
- Concrete preventive interventions during various forms of fieldwork are strongly justified, among them targeted educational inputs for managers and scientific leaders on location, local work environment regulations (in particular when guiding policy from principals is lacking), and independent functions that can receive and process reports from persons exposed during fieldwork.<sup>129</sup>

## Policy

- When it comes to prevalence, the main recommendations are for research, but the material also has concrete proposals linked to policy. Examples of these are implementing obligatory, regularly recurring surveys of sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based exposure among students at all education institutions, with options of adding institution-specific questions about specific variables. A proposal is to use internet-based instruments with a separate principal for collection of data, based outside the higher education sector. Indicators are also proposed, such as changes over time in terms of prevalence, to guide resource allocation.<sup>130</sup>
- The vulnerability of non-heterosexual students is an expected normality, and measures to reinforce their rights (policies and broad educational interventions focused on knowledge about non-heterosexuals) are of particularly great importance for those students who have not yet come out as non-heterosexual.<sup>131</sup> There is also strong evidence that policy should take into particular consideration vulnerability and risk factors linked to non-heterosexual students' life situations (primarily increased risk of depression), which places specific demands on support structures (psychologists, administrators, healthcare personnel) to work with relevant knowledge and respectful treatment.<sup>132</sup> Corresponding vulnerability analyses are linked to relationships between online harassment, depression and alcohol consumption among female students, which gives rise to recommendations to also include these aspects in the preventive work.<sup>133</sup>
- A corresponding need for policy development is identified for online harass-

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127 Magnivita & Heponiemi (2011).

128 Komaromy, Bindman, Haber et al. (1993); Wolf, Randall, Vonalmen et al. (1991).

129 Clancy, Nelson, Rutherford et al. (2004).

130 Cantalupo (2014).

131 D'augelli (1992); Herek (1993).

132 Martin-Storey & August (2016).

133 Selkie, Kota, Chan, et al. (2015).

ment also in other ways, with particular emphasis on security-creating mechanisms in educational environments (filters for email, development of apps for reporting exposure, user contracts for digital learning platforms, etc.), as well as review of policies aimed at more clearly identifying and covering online exposure in several ways.<sup>134</sup>

- Intersections between gender, class and race and experiences of exposure to sexual harassment places particular demands on review of policies in several ways: recruitment (aimed at creating a critical mass of students and employees who are not normative in these respects), financial support structures (for various minority groups), knowledge about unconscious bias among managers, supervisors and teachers, and generally to upgrade teaching and students as the core of the organisation in various ways.<sup>135</sup>

## Research

- Demands are made for more theory-driven studies of sexual harassment that are clearly de-coupled from national legal frameworks. Analyses of the latter, and of the importance of how sexual harassment is understood in research, policy and practice are also requested. There are also proposals for more multi-disciplinary studies of sexual harassment that are able to address gender-based exposure as a composite phenomenon with various variables, factors and contexts. In general, theory development is requested, with the aim of “catching up” on the large amounts of empirical data created in the research field of sexual harassment in academia.<sup>136</sup>
- Evaluation of “bystander programmes” require more research-based methods, clearer concept definitions and stronger links to existing theories of sexualised violence, victim-creation, promotion strategies and other similar phenomena. The importance of using comparative cohorts and organisations, including international, is underlined.<sup>137</sup>
- More in-depth, subject-specific studies of the effects exposure to sexual harassment (and gender discrimination) has on women and their career paths are requested, in particular within medical training and research (but also other fields). Long-term effects of constantly decreasing job satisfaction among women who study and make careers within healthcare and medicine are indicated as a work environment-related subsidiary problem linked to sexual harassment, and needs further investigation.<sup>138</sup>
- In-depth studies of online harassment among students are strongly demanded, in particular with focus on the consequences for participation in education and learning, the experiences of non-heterosexuals, borderlines between broader social media and online platforms for learning, the effects of consumption and dissemination of pornography in study environments and various forms of “cyberstalking” and online hate. The use of concepts and theory, as well as methods for measuring prevalence and effects of online harassment are still in the inception phase, and the need for development is assessed as great.

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134 Finn (2004).

135 Ong (2005).

136 Gelfand, Fitzgerald, Drasgow et al. (1995).

137 Coker, Bush, Fisher et al. (2016); Coker, Fisher, Bush et al. (2015).

138 Bruce, Battista, Plankey et al. (2015).

Overall, a majority of the studies referenced here argue in particular that review and development of existing policy or procedures for case handling are insufficient measures for counteracting the existence of sexual harassment in academia. For this reason, they conclude primarily in demands or requests for organisational change to varying extents, and for systematic and long-term work to transform academic culture as such.<sup>139</sup> The conclusion from a study carried out in parallel with this study, commissioned by the Swedish Council for Higher Education and with special focus on evidence-based preventive methods, confirms relatively unequivocally a lack of established effects of policies, procedures for case handling and also individual educational initiatives when it comes to prevalence and underreporting in academia.<sup>140</sup> The corresponding picture in relation to legal systems and policies is also confirmed by the results of other contemporary knowledge reviews of sexual harassment in academia.<sup>141</sup>

It is notable that most of the publications, on a more-or-less routine basis, highlight issues about problems with prevalence and measurability, underreporting, failing systems for case handling, needs for basic knowledge about sexual harassment in several ways, etc. That is to say, despite the top-ranked articles spanning a period of almost 30 years, they argue in the same words about gaps in knowledge and implementation needs. One explanation may, of course, be that they are part of markedly context-specific (USA, campus, social science perspective) citation and referencing practices, which can tend to homogenise normative claims for how sexual harassment shall be described and understood. At the same time, it can also be seen as a reflection of the actual preventive practices at the higher education institutions in question, as well as the challenges of the research field in question, not having changed in any significant way during the period in question. However, it is clear that online harassment and a stronger focus on the experiences of non-heterosexuals constitutes a shift over time in the focus of research and recommendations. To some extent, it is also possible to discern a method development in the publications in question, in particular after the attempts in the 1990s to use tests, parametric scales and strive for a common concept definition to seek a consensus in the research field on what sexual harassment is.

## Analytical comment

The analysed studies constitute top-ranked, peer-reviewed research, and can in this way be assumed to have great scientific impact when it comes to understanding of sexual harassment in academia. In other words, it is possible to read these studies as normative for the choice of concept use, theoretical approaches and design of study objects, selections and delimitations, etc. in a scientific field. An overall focus on USA, prevalence, legal approaches to the understanding of concepts for sexually-connoted exposure and a very strong focus on students is in itself significant, as this establishes forms for how questions about sexual harassment shall be understood (where, what, who), and how the phenomenon can be counteracted. Little will therefore be known about phenomena such as perpetrator, risk and vulnerability, primary and secondary prevention, the situations of employees, experiences from the global

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139 See for example Fitzgerald, Schullman, Bailey et al. (1988); Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014); Kenig & Ryan (1986); Settles, Cortina, Malley et al. (2006); see also Gersen & Suk (2016) for a critique of the bureaucratisation of exposure.

140 Bondestam & Lundqvist (2019).

141 Johnson, Widnall & Frazier (2018), p. 118.

south/east, and not least effects and consequences of exposure on various “external” factors (such as work environment, efficiency, ill health). These are just a handful of examples of the demarcation lines being strict for the scientific field in question.

The fact that the overwhelming majority of top-ranked publications consist of studies from USA is explained by the concept of sexual harassment having been coined there relatively early (1960s), that legislation was introduced at a comparatively early stage (for students and employees in academia this happened in 1972 in USA, compared with Swedish legislation which was established in *Jämställhetslagen* in 1991 and protection for students in *Högskoleförordningen* in 1993), and of course a number of different aspects linked to the establishment of databases for research, the structure of the academic journal market, the research volumes of various national and scientific fields, scientific status hierarchies between north/west and east/south, etc. The corresponding effects can be seen in the overweight of studies that exist within medicine, which also applies to the research field of sexual harassment as a whole. In the latter case, an added factor is the tendency to over-representation of medical journals that characterises Web of Science to some extent.

The medical emphasis in particular needs to be explained in greater detail – as a composite picture consisting of the journals included in Web of Science, publication frequency and size of the various scientific field, an established critical discourse about medical science in itself,<sup>142</sup> but also the fact that a not inconsiderable proportion of feminist, American researchers have a subject background in psychology, anthropology, medicine and various natural sciences. As a whole, this could also be the subject of a longer and more in-depth discussion that also includes more principle-based questions about knowledge claims, reach, epistemological poverty, etc., and how they contribute to turning diversified, complex reality into statistical, measurable, reduced, delimited, homogenised “pseudo-experience” and the consequences (both positive and negative) this entails for preventive work and the recognition of actual exposure at various discursive levels.

One tendency that is striking when reading this part of the research field is that the proportion is so high of prevalence studies that are top-ranked in a research field that spans more than 40 years. That is to say, the need to establish time and time again that sexual harassment is a problem appears to be as never-ending as it is urgent. In Sweden and the Nordic countries too, prevalence studies form the majority of the existing published research. Another tendency in these studies is that the prevalence reports is high in comparison with the prevalence studies of the entire research field, which instead report average exposure of female students at around 20 to 25 per cent (this is not a checked figure, but rather an estimated one, following a summary reading of abstracts for prevalence studies in the entire research field, around 650 publications).

It is relatively easy to see the absence of theoretically proximate fields. Research into sexualised violence is linked in to a very limited extent, and then delimited to context-specific discourses on dating violence and sexual assault. Moreover, mono-disciplinary studies within limited subject area traditions dominate – sociology, politics, multi-disciplinary approaches as well as large parts of humanities research are, for example, entirely absent in what must be called as constituting a dominating positivistic/medical discourse – which further contributes to a clear homogeneity in the understanding of sexual harassment.

A majority of the studies in this section situate knowledge about exposure

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142 Wennerås & Wold (1997).

indirectly in relation to consequences for individuals (and, to a lesser extent, for organisations), but this material is lacking independent analyses of the actual links between prevalence and various consequences. Instead, it is usual to refer to major meta-analyses of consequences of exposure in order to make clear the importance of studying sexual harassment in academia per se, that is to say studies that summarise other studies and make renewed, joint statistical analyses, using in some cases upwards of 10 000 respondents as the base data. These do indeed clearly and uniformly point out major and multifactorial effects, usually on several different levels.<sup>143</sup> At the same time, it is clear from searches of the larger research field, which covers 5 561 studies searched from Web of Science, that when it comes to consequences of exposure in academia, there is strong, often clinically founded, evidence-based research support (primarily psychological, medical and occupational health-related research) for sexual harassment impacting on individuals in terms of:<sup>144</sup>

- (a) job motivation, sickness absence, reduced efficiency;
- (b) reduced self-esteem, anxiety, stress, depression and similar effects;
- (c) increase in various risk behaviours, in particular (ab)use of alcohol/drugs; and that
- (d) experience of sexual harassment encourages post-traumatic stress syndrome to a greater extent than in comparable control groups.

The picture can be expanded with corresponding studies of exposure within the framework for the wider understanding of sexualised violence (sexual assault, rape, with or without physical coercion), which in one of the research reviews is described as impacting on 20 to 25 per cent of female students in USA at some stage of their time in education.<sup>145</sup> Then other consequences emerge for individuals that are more context- and culture-specific, including evidence-based ones, in the form of chronic illness, eating disorders, aggressive extroverted behaviour, self-harming, venereal disease, serious sleep disruption, concentration difficulties, unwanted pregnancies, dysfunctional sexual behaviour, increased suicide frequency, etc.<sup>146</sup> These wider effects of consequences of exposure in academia form an interesting background to what the Swedish/Nordic research field's understanding is, that is to say, how “we” choose to address the consequences of exposure in relation to knowledge in a global research field can provide clues to the dignity and relevance “we” assign to these experiences. What is it that “we” “allow” and “do not accept” as consequences of sexual harassment existing and creating effects at several levels in our academic organisations (see also the section on Swedish research in this report)?

The corresponding closing-down of reach and relevance exists over time in the international research field on sexual harassment. This emerges clearly in the top-ranked peer-reviewed articles in question. A gradual reduction of the distance between emerging legal definitions and the scientific definitions is occurring. This is done expressly, and is seen as a desirable development also in terms of an indirect effect. The latter means, in short, that the research-based approaches, by gradually subordinating themselves to legal demands for “usefulness” and other realistic demands, become ever more repetitive instead of being explorative, constructive,

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143 Chan, Lam, Chow et al. (2008); Hershcovis & Barling (2010).

144 See in particular the previously referenced research review, Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017).

145 Vladutiu, Martin & Macy (2011).

146 See in particular Voth Schrag (2017).

challenging and curiously asking, which of course primarily characterises the initial and often expansive phase of a scientific field. Quite simply, it is an expression of well-known principles for how scientific fields establish a normative legitimacy for a specific view of knowledge.<sup>147</sup>

Another tendency seen over time in the material analysed here is a wish to establish a common understanding of sexual harassment. This applies in particular the ambition to reach a consensus around a common concept definition of sexual harassment, irrespective of situation, and form of exposure, and also with an equivalent meaning for other sectors outside academia. This is done primarily by producing, testing and developing various models, tests and scales. In particular, the emergence and importance of the SEQ test for the North American discourse could be worth an analytical section by itself. What is striking to follow is how a normative scale emerges in practice and becomes established, with a strong leaning towards several traditional constituents of a positivistic epistemology. Here, there is a “contest” in the intersection between feminist, theory of science claims for power criticism on the one hand, and the wish to claim legitimacy-creating, normal science objectivity forms to give sexual harassment validity on the other, particularly clearly expressed in the articles published during the period 1985 to 1995.

The increasingly established idea during the 1990s of testing how subjects *relate to understandings* of harassing situations, rather than *asking about actual exposure*,<sup>148</sup> becomes a way of trying to challenge the norm-scientific reach, stability and generalisability. By shifting the ambition to “scientify” the multi-faceted, lived experience into a conceptual homogenous object that can be manipulated and measured the latter has achieved a gradual “de-radicalisation” of discourses about violence and exposure. When fully relevant criticism of cross-section studies and non-parametric tests on non-randomised samples are put forward, this can thus just as well be read as a science theory battle, where the conditions themselves are seldom in the limelight.

At the same time, the top-ranked articles from the last few years can be read as a counter-movement, or a recapture of multi-disciplinary and theory-driven research into exposure, that gains renewed attention through several different strategies in the field. The broadening of exposure from dating violence and sexual assault on campus between heterosexual students into sexuality and race/ethnicity/skin colour, online exposure and in other arenas is taking place in parallel, but are also becoming ever clearer signal words and also actual components of various analyses, in the selection of respondents, in the promulgation of theoretic pre-understanding of the diversity of exposure. Apparently, these concepts and approaches are gaining ground in the research field, as they are actually part of the top-ranked segment that is analysed here. It would be interesting to make a wider, concept theory meta-study of the entire material in this sense, for which there is unfortunately no space within the assignment set.

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147 Kuhn (1962).

148 See in particular Gelfand (1995); the manifest-latent narrative is stronger here than in any other study in the material.

## Swedish research

This section gives an overview of all published Swedish research into sexual harassment in academia, in line with the criteria set for literature searches. The section begins with a description of the material, followed by abstracts from the research field's quantitative and qualitative studies. An in-depth analysis is also made of parts of the qualitative material. Finally, the results of the publications are summarised, and recommendations and a brief analytical comment are provided.

### About the material

The search process of Swedish research into sexual harassment in academia resulted in a list of 50 items in total. From this list, a selection was made based on the criteria that the studies shall focus on academia and sexual harassment, and/or a wider understanding of the concept that may include harassment, bullying or sexualised violence for example. 30 items were included for closer reading and analysis, and of these 18 are quantitative mappings and 12 are qualitative studies. For this part of the review, KvinnSam has done searches in national library catalogues, journal databases, SuperSök (University of Gothenburg's overall search service), international databases such as WoS, Scopus, Gender Studies, and Google Scholar. Swedish material was sought in the databases LIBRIS, KVINNSAM, SwePub, Diva and ArtikelSök. For a detailed description of the search process, see Appendix 1.

### Analysed articles

#### Mappings from academia

**Adrianson, L. 1993. *Ett högt pris: kartläggning av sexuella trakasserier vid Göteborgs universitet*. Göteborg: Jämställdhetskommittén vid Göteborgs universitet.**

A mapping of sexual harassment at all workplaces at the University of Gothenburg and the joint sections at Chalmers University of Technology. A questionnaire was distributed to all employees and doctoral students, 5 117 persons in total. The response rate was 85 per cent for women and 67 per cent for men. The mapping shows that a total of 15 per cent of the responding women had been exposed to sexual harassment, and the corresponding figure for men was 4 per cent. In the conclusion of the study, the harassment is understood as a consequence of power and competition relationships in the workplace, and as a way of keeping women in more subsidiary positions. Doctoral students were highlighted as a vulnerable group, through their dependency on supervisors.

**Bildt, C. 2005. *Sexual harassment: Relation to other forms of discrimination and to health among women and men. Work, 24: 251–259.***

The study aims to investigate the relationship between sexual harassment, gender discrimination, bullying, conflicts and informal power structures. The study also aims to investigate the consequences for women's and men's health. Sexual harassment at work is defined as unwelcome actions or verbal expressions with sexual content, which impacts on women's and men's integrity in the workplace. A questionnaire was distributed to doctoral students and employees at a university in northern Sweden, 2 049 persons in total. Response rate 68 per cent (of which 599 women and 796 men). The study shows that exposure to sexual harassment is more common for women (9 per cent) than for men (2 per cent). This applies also to gender discrimination, which is reported in the survey by almost half of all women (42 per cent; the corresponding figure for men is 15 per cent). Lack of equality/gender equality and conflicts correlates clearly with exposure to sexual harassment among women. Faculty and position play a lesser role than gender in terms of risk of being exposed to sexual harassment. The results from this study support earlier studies, which indicate that the design and content of the work environment co-vary with the incidence of harassment generally and sexual harassment of women specifically. This may be a particular factor to consider when planning measures against sexual harassment, which often focus on the individual exposed rather than organisational factors.

**Bodén, A. 1991. *Handlar det om kärlek? Sexuella trakasserier riktade mot kvinnliga studenter tillhörande Lantbrukshögskolans studentkår. Uppsala: Studentkåren, Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet.***

The study aims to map the incidence of sexual harassment against female students who are part of the student corps of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. A questionnaire was distributed to 319 persons in total. Response rate 75 per cent. The result show that 21 per cent of the responding women have been exposed to some form of sexual harassment during their study programme, both during practical periods and during academic periods at Ultuna/Alnarp. Most have not contacted an employee for help, and of the five persons who did so, the situation was improved for only one of them. The study recommends the university to implement programmes for counteracting sexual harassment, and that the guidelines for workplace-based practical periods state that the university repudiates all forms of sexual harassment.

**Borgblad, M. 1992. *Sexuella trakasserier på Stockholms universitet. Rapport från en kartläggning. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet.***

The report aims to investigate the incidence of sexual harassment at Stockholm University and to contribute to ways of addressing the problem. A questionnaire was distributed to doctoral students and women employees at Stockholm University, 1 316 persons in total. Response rate 55.8 per cent. 12 per cent report exposure to sexual harassment, 16 per cent report they know others who have been exposed to sexual harassment. Research personnel are more exposed than administrative personnel, and those who have worked at the university for more than two years report greater exposure than those who have worked for a shorter time at the university. The concept of sexual harassment is perceived as too coarse for several respondents, and several of the responding women do not recognise their own experiences within the framework for this concept. The conclusion of the study defines sexual harassment as part of gender discrimination, which in itself is understood as a result of an unequal gender power structure that both maintains and reinforces gender differences.

**Börjesson, U. & Gustafsson, A.-C. 1989. *Sexuella trakasserier: en pilotstudie vid Universitetet i Linköping*. Linköping: Forum för kvinnliga forskare och kvinnoforskning, Linköpings universitet.**

The study aims to define and investigate the incidence of sexual harassment at Linköping University. The empirical data consists of a literature study and eight interviews with employees, including doctoral students, at Linköping University. The study shows that sexual harassment of all types does occur. There are a lot of unrecorded statistics, as few women talk about exposure, and at least two rapes are said to have occurred. The underlying reasons why sexual harassment occurs are power-based and gender-specific, and sexual harassment should therefore be understood as a personnel problem and not as a personal problem, according to the authors. The study recommends that more surveys similar to this one are carried out in other workplaces, that the teacher-student relationship is then also included in surveys, and that the universities work for gender equality.

**Eliasson, M. 1998. *“Man mår sämre än man tillåter sig”: trakasserier som kan härledas till kön: en enkätstudie till studerande vid Göteborgs universitet*.**

**Göteborg: Studentkommittén vid Göteborgs universitet.**

The study maps experiences of gender harassment among students and doctoral students at the University of Gothenburg. The concept of sexual harassment is seen as part of a larger problem area, and the study uses the concept of “harassment attributable to gender”, which includes: gender-offending actions (jargon), gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual assault. A questionnaire was distributed to students and doctoral students at the University of Gothenburg, 3 400 persons in total. Response rate 50 per cent. The result from the study showed that 12 per cent of women and 6 per cent of men had been exposed to sexual harassment at one or more times. Students and doctoral students regard themselves primarily as being exposed to gender-offending treatment, in particular negative discrimination, and secondarily to sexual harassment. Doctoral students are more exposed than students. An explanation for the latter is stated as doctoral students having spent longer time at university, and having a closer and more informal relationship with teachers and supervisors. One conclusion is that continued research within the area should consider a broadened understanding of sexual harassment that includes harassment attributable to gender.

**Frisell, A. & Ulmanen, P. 1992. *Sexuella trakasserier riktade mot kvinnliga studerande vid Stockholms universitet*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitets studentkår, Arbetsgruppen för kvinnliga studerande.**

The study aims to map the incidence of sexual harassment against female students, with the aim of increasing knowledge about sexual harassment at Stockholm University. The study includes a survey (500 mailings, response rate 44 per cent) and three interviews. 10 per cent of the respondents state that they have been exposed to sexual harassment, and more than half of these have been exposed by student colleagues who are men. Most have told a close friend or relative; extremely few have told a manager or other person in a supervisory position. The conclusion of the study describes sexual harassment as a threat against the entire life situation of female students. Demands are made for a programme of measures, and for legislation to be changed so that it provides full protection for students as well.

**Gunnarsson, L. 2009. *Gubbar, stress och kaxiga tjejer: En studie av könets betydelse för tiden som doktorand vid Örebro universitet. Örebro: Doktorandsektionen, Örebro studentkår.***

The study aims to raise awareness of gender differences in terms of how doctoral students experience their situation, and to stake out a direction for further analyses and measures. The study uses the concept of “Harassment and gender-offensive treatment”. What is considered as characteristic for gender-offensive treatment is that it is aimed “specifically at a woman because she is a woman”. The empirical data of the study consists of an in-depth analysis from an express gender perspective of a survey already conducted, plus four interviews. To the statement “I have never been offended as a doctoral student for personal reasons”, 18 per cent of the women responded “Do not agree at all”, while 60 per cent agreed totally. For the men, the corresponding figures are 6 and 74 per cent respectively. The study establishes that a work environment where almost one half of the women and one quarter of the men do not feel wholly and fully free from offensive treatment cannot be considered good, and that gender plays a large role in whether a person experiences offense or not. Recommendations in the study is to provide all doctoral students with employment, to invest heavily in recruiting women to senior positions and to arrange seminars about gender, discrimination and organisation culture on a regular basis.

**Hensing, G. & Larsson, C. 2000. *Studiemiljö och kön: en kartläggning av förekomsten av sexuella och könsrelaterade trakasserier bland studenter och doktorander vid Göteborgs universitet. Göteborg: Jämställdhetskommitténs skriftserie. Göteborgs universitet.***

The mapping aims to develop a knowledge basis to support interventions to reduce the incidence of sexual harassment and to improve the study and work environment at the medical faculty at the University of Gothenburg. Sexual and gender-related harassment is the overall term for unwelcome actions, discrimination due to gender and offensive sexual or gender-related comments and jokes. Discrimination due to gender includes ignoring, belittling and not taking persons seriously. A questionnaire was distributed to students on the medical programme, 1 348 mailings in total. Response rate 62 per cent. 11 per cent report exposure to sexual harassment. Those most exposed to serious, unwelcome actions are female students. The most common form of discrimination due to gender stated by women are not being taken seriously (44 per cent), ignoring (43 per cent) and disrespectful behaviour (39 per cent). Men too report gender discrimination, approximately half the incidence compared to women. Exposure exists within the framework for both the university and health-care/medical care, and impacts negatively on the study and work environment. The study requests structurally targeted measures, more information, indication of the employer’s responsibility and attitude, and also increased influence for women at all levels within the faculty.

**Lahtinen, T. 1994. *Sexuella trakasserier vid Högskolan i Karlstad: rapport från en kartläggning. Forskningsrapport. Karlstad: Högskolan i Karlstad.***

The report aims to account for the results of a survey relating to the incidence of sexual harassment at Karlstad University. The survey was sent to all employees, 478 persons in total. Response rate 79 per cent (376 persons, of which 184 women and 192 men). The survey was also sent to a random sample of students, 400 persons in total. Response rate 78 per cent (307 persons, of which 106 men and 201 women). Of the women employees, 9 per cent had experienced sexual harassment, of the men

employees, the corresponding figure is 3 per cent. Of the female students, the figure is 4 per cent and for the male students 3 per cent. The report requests an action programme with clear rules, an official account of the policy, specialist help for persons exposed, disciplinary sanctions for sexual harassment, and education and information.

**Larsson, M. & Tyden, T. 2006. *Increased sexual risk taking behavior among Swedish female university students: repeated cross-sectional surveys. Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavia, 85: 966–970.***

The study aims to investigate the incidence of sexual and gender-related harassment among first-cycle students and doctoral students at the medical faculty at the University of Gothenburg. Sexual and gender-related harassment is understood in a three-dimensional construction, consisting of unwanted sexual activity carried out by someone else and aimed at the respondent, gender-based discrimination and derogatory jokes and comments. A questionnaire was distributed to all registered women and men students at at least first-cycle level and up to third-cycle level, in total 1 348 persons. Response rate 62 per cent. 22 per cent of the respondent stated at least one incidence when they had been exposed to sexual harassment. More serious forms of sexual harassment were reported by 9 per cent of the respondents. Both women and men are exposed to sexual harassment, with the highest prevalence for female students and doctoral students. The occurrences take place both at university and in hospital environments, during lesson time, lab work and breaks. Lecturers, professors, doctoral students and other students are the perpetrators. Female students in particular regard sexual and gender-based harassment as causing a negative effect on their studies and health.

The study recommends that the university should develop action plans to avoid harassment. Students and teachers should be aware of the measures to be taken when harassment occurs, or is expected to occur. It is important to help with adequate support to students who have been harassed, otherwise they will not report events, and the situation can then not be handled. Implementing an action plan at the medical faculty, including measures to prevent harassment from occurring as well as giving support to victims appears to be urgent. Such an action plan should be evaluated systematically, for example through a questionnaire as used in the present study. Requirements should also be set for personnel in leading position at the university and the hospital to collaborate on this.

**Ledje, H. 1994. *Ger du mig rätt att säga nej: om sexuella trakasserier på Lunds universitet: rapport från en kartläggning vårterminen 1994. Pedagogiskt utvecklingsarbete vid Lunds universitet. Lund: Lunds universitet.***

The study aims to map the incidence of sexual harassment among students and doctoral students at Lund University. A questionnaire was distributed to women and men students at the end of the first cycle education, and doctoral students who are studying more than 50 per cent of the time, in total 1 580 persons. Response rate 62 per cent. 15 per cent of female students and 26 per cent of female doctoral students state that they had been exposed to sexual harassment from men, usually in a superior position. One in five of the female students and one in three of the female doctoral students state negative consequences for studies, work or private life. Among the men, the corresponding figure for exposure is 6 per cent, for both students and doctoral students. None of them state negative consequences for studies or work. One of the study conclusions is that a male-dominated institution leadership in combination with a high level of sexual attention appears to increase the incidence of sexual harassment.

**Lottes, I.L. & Weinberg, M.S. 1997. *Sexual coercion among university students: A comparison of the United States and Sweden*. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 34: 67–76.**

The study aims to investigate factors related to, and differences between, the incidence of forced sexual actions (social coercion) among heterosexual university students in Sweden and USA. Sexual coercion is explained as a forced sexual act that takes place against a person's own will. The study includes both sexual violence in a couple relationship (violence in a close relationship) and sexual violence and coercion at chance meetings. In 1992, surveys were mailed to a random selection of students at two universities, one in USA and one in Sweden, 1 296 persons in total. The response rate was 52 per cent in Sweden and 48 per cent in USA.

The result shows that students in USA report higher levels of both exposure to and use of sexual violence and coercion than students in Sweden. Possible explanations of the differences between students' experiences of sexual violence and coercion in USA and Sweden may relate to a higher degree of gender equality in Sweden, stronger "double standards" in USA that reward men's sexual activity and punishes women's, the fact that USA is generally a more violent country than Sweden, and the fact that there is systematic sex and relationship education in schools in Sweden. The study requests more research into socio-cultural explanations such as those above, and that knowledge from other violence research should be included to develop knowledge and understanding of sexual violence and coercion.

**Lundborg, A. & Schönning, K. 2007. *Maskrosfysiker: genusperspektiv på rekrytering, handledning och arbetsmiljö bland Uppsalas fysikdoktorander*. Uppsala: Institutionen för kärn- och partikelfysik, Uppsala universitet.**

The study aims to achieve broad and deep insight into the state of the situation for women doctoral students in physics at Uppsala University. Sexual harassment is defined as all types of unwelcome sexual behaviour in word or action at work or in conjunction with job application, leading to women feeling demeaned, stressed or otherwise ill at ease. A questionnaire was distributed to all doctoral students at the institution of physics, 105 persons in total (of which 85 men and 20 women). Response rate 59 per cent (response rate for women 70 per cent, for men 56 per cent).

Sexual harassment occurs both at the doctoral students' own institutions and in other job-related contexts, such as during conferences, summer schools and workshops. Some women research students state that they avoid being alone at work with certain persons, as this would make them feel insecure. Many women also know of other women exposed, and the incidence of sexual harassment can therefore be said to affect more women than those who have themselves been exposed. The fact that one woman has been exposed can limit the sphere of action of more women. The study requests more seminars on sexual harassment from varying perspectives, and more discussions – both formal (at institution meetings and seminars) and informal (during coffee breaks and around the water cooler).

**Muhonen, T. 2016. *Exploring gender harassment among university teachers and researchers*. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 8: 131–142.**

The article aims to investigate the incidence of harassment due to gender (gender harassment), and how this correlates with organisational factors, ill health and job satisfaction among women and men working as university teachers and researchers. Sex-based harassment or gender harassment are defined as verbal and non-verbal behaviours that entail offensive, hostile and degrading attitudes towards women. A

questionnaire was distributed to employed teachers and researchers at a university, who worked full-time or at least 50 per cent, in total 553 persons. The response rate was 60 per cent.

The results showed that gender harassment was more common among women than among men, and higher among senior lecturers and professors than among lecturers. A majority of the women (66 per cent) had experienced some form of gender harassment at work (from very rarely to very often) during the last year. Sex discrimination was associated with high work demands, unfair leadership from the immediate superior, and dissatisfaction with work among women and men. Sex discrimination was less prevalent when the immediate superior was considered to represent a fair leadership style. The incidence of sex discrimination in the organisation investigated, in particular among women, indicates that quantitative gender equality (even gender balance) does not guarantee qualitative gender equality in the organisation. As the immediate superior's leadership style can be linked to the incidence of sexual harassment, one recommendation from the report is that the university should take this into account in its leadership training.

Another recommendation is that as sex harassment at the university has primarily been investigated among students, there is a need for studies focusing on researchers and teachers in order to see what type of harassment occurs in academia. The study in question opens the door to future research questions that need addressing, such as the importance of the gender of the immediate superior for the prevalence and handling of sexual harassment at universities. There is also a need for intersectional studies that include factors such as ethnicity and age, in addition to gender, in analyses of sexual harassment and offensive behaviour.

**Sjons, J. 2010. *Doktorander vid Matematiska institutionen och Institutionen för informationsteknologi vid Uppsala universitet: en undersökning av upplevelse av arbetsmiljö med fokus på kön och jämställdhet*. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet.**

The study aims to investigate the work environment for doctoral students at the Department of Mathematics and the Department of Information Technology at Uppsala University, with particular focus on gender. Work environment includes recruitment, supervision, treatment/equal treatment, social norms, and sexual harassment and gender harassment. A questionnaire was distributed to doctoral students at the Department of Mathematics and the Department of Information Technology at Uppsala University, 112 persons in total. Response rate 64 per cent. Almost half of the women answering questions on exposure have been exposed to sexual harassment or gender harassment. There are also men who have been exposed to sexual harassment or gender harassment, albeit to a lesser extent. Gender matters to women in particular; being a woman in this context means having to relate to other norms, and therefore being more limited in relation to men; quite simply having to take special measures due to one's gender.

Demands are made for a plan against sexual harassment and offenses due to gender, which is used and is known by all. There shall be clear procedures for how reports are handled. Work should also be carried out in the organisation to analyse the norms that apply, and that also strives for a climate where harassment is not tolerated. Other recommendations related to active work on values, continuously driven by the management and including personnel at all levels. A survey of doctoral students who had terminated doctoral student positions and students who had not applied for these is also requested, as this is considered able to provide a picture of

reasons for not continuing in academia after first-cycle education. Here, a study similar to the current one is proposed, but aimed at all employees and all positions within the university.

**Söderholm, J. 1993. *Sexuella trakasserier: en kvantitativ och kvalitativ undersökning av sexuella trakasserier vid Umeå universitet*. Umeå: Tillämpad psykologi, Umeå universitet.**

The study aims to investigate the incidence of exposure to sexual harassment among female students and to complement and problematise the understanding of sexual harassment. The study consists of a questionnaire, five interviews and one focus group interview. The questionnaire was distributed to female students at first-cycle level at Umeå University, total 290 persons. Response rate 72 per cent. 15 per cent report exposure to sexual harassment, and the most common perpetrator is a man student. Two thirds have told someone close to them, but very rarely a superior or other person in a leading work position at the university. A conclusion in the study is that women take on responsibility for men's actions, men's committing sexualised violence against women is hidden and the male collective protects men from taking responsibility for sexual harassment.

**Tyden, T., Olsson, S.E. & Haggstrom-Nordin, E. 2001. *Improved use of contraceptives, attitudes toward pornography, and sexual harassment among female university students*. *Women's Health Issues*, 11: 87–94.**

A ten-year follow-up study, aimed at investigating the impact of pornography and determining whether exposure to sexual harassment is common among the student population. In the survey, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome behaviour, verbal or physical, related to gender in the workplace, in work or study-related situations, or in recruitment/admission, resulting in offence, uncomfortable situations or insecurity for the individual. A questionnaire was answered by female students at Uppsala when visiting a gynaecology clinic. 12 per cent of the respondents reported exposure to sexual harassment according to the definition given. The majority of these (80 per cent) stated that they had been exposed by male students, 20 per cent stated teachers as perpetrators. In the previous study from 1998, it was established that sexual harassment had both direct and indirect effects on the health of female students. The follow-up study does not aim to determine the consequences of sexual harassment, but instead to investigate their prevalence. The study says nothing about whether exposure to sexual harassment has increased or decreased.

### Qualitative studies – sexual harassment in academia

6 of the 12 qualitative studies have been studied in detail, for the purpose of giving an overall picture of how these discuss sexual harassment in academia. The reading has been done based on questions similar to those in the mappings; that is to say purpose, method, theory and analytical conclusions. In more than half the studies, the empirical data consists of interview studies with women active in academia, as students, doctoral students or employees. Two studies stand out: one survey study has been included, as it differs from other survey studies through its qualitative approach and its scope<sup>149</sup>, and one analytical text on the concept of sexual harassment.<sup>150</sup> The six studies included are:

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149 Pernrud (2004).

150 Bondestam (2004a).

**Andersson, A. 2007. "Vi blev antagligen för många": könskränkande behandling i akademisk miljö. Uppsala: Företagsekonomiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet.**

The thesis is based on two empirical subsidiary studies; one is a summary of case activities based on the author's experience of three years' work as gender equality officer at a higher education institution, and the other consists of deeper case studies in the form of in-depth interviews with persons exposed. The thesis studies gender-offensive behaviour from an organisation theory, feminist perspective. The thesis work covers two main ambitions; one is to understand gender-offensive behaviour empirically and to describe it theoretically, and the other is to propose a model that may be of practical relevance for understanding gender-offensive behaviour in academic environments.

**Bondestam, F. 2004b. *Signing Up for the Status Quo? Semiological Analyses of Sexual Harassment in Higher Education – A Swedish Example*. Higher Education in Europe, 29: 132–145.**

This article is based on empirical data consisting of public policies, legal documents, research reports on sexual harassment in academia, and 14 semi-structured interviews with gender equality officers responsible for implementing jämställdhetslagen (the Swedish gender equality act) at a Swedish university. The article investigates the effect of specific discourses in relation to sexual harassment in academia, and a semiological perspective on the construction of sexual harassment is provided through analysis of public texts and everyday speech.

**Bondestam, F. & Carstensen, G. 2004. *Från sexuella trakasserier till könskränkande processer: Om kön, utsatthet och normalitetens våld*. Uppsala: Sociologiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet.**

A qualitative study with the overall purpose of investigating sexual harassment at a Swedish university. The study focuses on gender offences and gender-offensive processes, places it in relation to wider consequences in terms of time and space. The empirical data consists of written-down stories and interviews with ten women exposed to gender offences and an interview with the university's gender equality officer. Feminist-sociological theory formation within the area of gender and violence, with emphasis on a process perspective, guides the study.

**Carstensen, G. 2012. *Gråzoner och sexuella trakasserier: Reflektioner kring gränsdragningar och jämställdhet i arbetslivet*. Stockholm: KRUS.**

In the article, the author reflects on how the lack of precision in the definition of the concept of sexual harassment leaves a large room for interpretation, which has consequences for how unwelcome actions are understood and described. A discussion is maintained on how the prohibition against sexual harassment paradoxically counteracts its own purpose, and instead maintains inequality in academia.<sup>151</sup>

**Carstensen, G. 2004. *Sexuella trakasserier finns nog i en annan värld: konstruktioner av ett (o)giltigt problem i akademien*. Eslöv: Gondolin Förlags AB.**

The thesis is based on empirical data from interviews with 15 female doctoral students. Sexual harassment is used in the thesis as a perspective on how gender,

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151 Carstensen (2016) utvecklar även liknande tankegångar i en artikel med fokus på arbetslivet i stort.

heterosexuality, gender equality and the researcher position are created and formed in relation to the academic context. The thesis aims to create knowledge about and deepen the understanding of how gender and sexual harassment are made, validated and invalidated on the academic arena. The theoretical framing consists of a constructivist and processual perspective on gender, sexuality and organisation.

**Pernrud, B. 2004. *Genus i akademi. Rapport från en undersökning av sexuella trakasserier vid Karlstads universitet*. Karlstad: Karlstads universitet.**

The report is based on empirical data from a survey of engineering students at Karlstad University. It aims to formulate knowledge about the concepts of sexuality and gender expressed by the occurrence of sexual harassment, with particular consideration for the specific context the university environment entails. The questionnaire was administered to 448 students, and of these 249 responded, 110 women and 139 men (response rate 69 per cent of women, just over 48 per cent of men). A conclusion drawn is that sexual harassment can be seen both as a study environment problem and as a more general gender equality problem.

### Qualitative studies – conditions in academia

The remaining 6 qualitative studies consist of theses, anthologies and reports that do not focus on sexual harassment specifically, but rather on academia as an organisation in relation to gender and equality, where sexual harassment is sometimes included as part of a broader exposure, and sometimes not. These 6 publications do not qualify for closer reading within the framework for this assignment, but brief descriptions of the texts are included as they indicate important knowledge fields where conditions in academia are discussed. If the literature search had included search terms, such as gender equality or discrimination, then more publications of this character would have been found, as sexual harassment is not always, and not by all, seen as a “separate” field of knowledge. Such searches were also tested at the beginning of the search process (see Appendix 1 for a more detailed description), but resulted in a material that was too large for this assignment.<sup>152</sup>

**Bondestam, F. 2000. *Från policy till praktik: om implementeringen av jämställdhet och det lokala jämställdhetsarbetets villkor. Rapportserie från Enheten för utveckling och utvärdering*. Uppsala. Uppsala universitet.**

An investigation aimed at mapping and analysing the local implementation of Uppsala University’s gender equality plan and programme against sexual harassment, and at mapping and analysing the conditions of the local gender equality work. The empirical data consists of answers to two questionnaires; one on gender equality and one on policy issues. The investigation covers 62 contact representatives for gender equality and a total of 157 ordinary, deputy and acting department heads, with a response rate of 87 per cent for the contact representatives and 62 per cent for the department heads.

**Bondestam, F. 2004a. *En önskan att skriva abjektet: analyser av akademisk jämställdhet*. Stehag: Gondolin.**

Compilation thesis including four reports on gender equality in academia. In total, the thesis analyses 25 interviews, corresponding to 1 500 A4 pages of transcribed

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<sup>152</sup> The fact that sexual harassment has more often been included as a component of exposure due to gender than as a separate field of knowledge among researchers interested in the question was also highlighted by expert reviewers for the research review (meeting with expert reviewers Gunilla Carstensen and Anna Wahl on 8 May 2018).

text, 152 extensive questionnaires out of 219 sent out, policy programmes for gender equality and sexual harassment for Swedish higher education institutions, as well as “public” publications on gender equality relating to academia from 1970 to 2000, plus all available documentation relating to the appointment of 61 research assistant positions.

**De los Reyes, P. 2007. *Att segla i motvind: en kvalitativ undersökning om strukturell diskriminering och vardagsrasism inom universitetsvärlden*. Stockholm: Arbetslivsinstitutet.**

This study investigates the incidence of structural discrimination due to ethnicity within the higher education world. An important premise for this study is that discrimination is a gendered practice, which means among other things that the consequences differ for women and men. The study makes topical the need for a theoretical perspective that can problematise the simultaneous effect of different grounds for discrimination.

**Lönnerskog Nilsson, H. 2011. *Projekt Storytelling: kvinnliga forskares och forskarstuderandes berättelser om hur det är att vara kvinna i akademien och vid Umeå universitet*. Umeå: Umeå universitet.**

Projekt Storytelling relates and highlights the stories of researchers and research students of what it is like to be a woman in academia. The aim is to increase awareness of women’s prerequisites for contributing to changes in academia in the long term. The project is based on fundamental ideas from “Corporate Storytelling”, a method based on the idea that existing stories in an organisation are important resources that can be used to develop the organisation.

**Mählck, P. 2018. *Förkroppsligade diskursiva geografier: en intersektionell studie av sexism och rasism i akademien, i Hübinette, T. & Wasniowski, A. (red). Studier om rasism: Tvärvetenskapliga perspektiv på ras, vithet och diskriminering*. Malmö: Arx Förlag AB.**

The book chapter deals with how intersectionally gendered and racified inequality is construed through everyday academic work relationships and transnational academic mobility. The chapter aims to investigate how experiences of discrimination are expressed at three different universities, whether these differing experiences are gendered, and to develop and investigate how the theoretical concept embodies discursive geographies.

**Sarrimo, C. 2006. *Professorn och kärleken: sexuella trakasserier i fiktion och verklighet*. *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift*, 6: 29–51.**

A comparative discourse analysis based on Coetzee’s novel *Disgrace* and an authentic case of sexual harassment at a Swedish university by a professor against his student. In this article, reality meets fiction in order to provide new approach angles on the accusation and confession discourses that surround the issue of sexual harassment at universities.

## State of knowledge – an in-depth picture

Some of the quantitative studies were conducted at an individual institution with a sample as small as just over 100 respondents, while others are aimed at a more

general group of students, doctoral students or employees, where the empirical basis consists of around 5 000 respondents. Despite this difference, all studies can be said to be limited, both in relation to the number of respondents and in terms of their foundation in a scientific field, and also because they were conducted at a specific point in time (cross-section studies). They could thus be said to constitute momentary pictures of specific situations. At the same time, it can be established that a majority of the survey investigations have relatively high response rates in comparison with the international research field. This may possibly be a consequence of a majority of them being pioneer studies in the field, and that gender equality was a frequently debated issue, based on a number of different reforms and inquiries in the Swedish higher education sector in the 1990s.<sup>153</sup>

A majority of the mappings in this summary were produced before 2010; the oldest is from 1989. Several of the older studies, for example, describe how “the term sexual harassment may be felt to be too strong, and give associations to physical violence or events of a very serious character”.<sup>154</sup> Resistance against surveys on sexual harassment in academia, witnessed in early mappings in the form of, for example, invalidation of the problem, prejudice against what studies would result in and personal attacks against researchers, also indicate how controversial it was to study and ask about exposure: “There appears also to exist a wide-spread fear and anger about this problem. These different reactions to the subject can be found in some of the comments made in conjunction with the questionnaires and some of the letters received during the course of the study.”<sup>155</sup>

When it comes to prevalence, the same problem exists of comparability between these studies as in the international research field as a whole. Issues of definition, methodology and selection make direct comparison difficult, and generalisability is low. However, it does seem that exposure to sexual harassment does exist at all the institutions and universities examined. When exposure to other, associated forms of harassment and discrimination due to gender is included in studies, the prevalence is even higher. Women are generally more exposed than men are, but men also state exposure in the studies where they are asked. In those studies where sexual harassment has been delimited most clearly in relation to legislation (the then-current definition of the Swedish gender equality act), exposure for women is around 15 per cent.

The qualitative studies scrutinised do not aim to determine whether sexual harassment exists in academia, and if so, to what extent. Instead, the texts investigate what sexual harassment is, and what talk about sexual harassment does to the understanding of gender, exposure and conditions in academia. Thus, they aim to develop, deepen and problematise the knowledge about sexual harassment in academia, and to contribute to improved work against sexual harassment; sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. Theoretical perspectives that guide much of this research consists primarily of feminist violence theory, feminist sociology, gender studies theories and organisation theory.

## Concepts, definitions and language

To exemplify the difficulties of defining and ringing in the exposure investigated in a way that is relevant to the studies, the various concepts used in the mappings are listed here:

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153 See also Bondestam (2003); Törnqvist (2006).

154 Lahtinen (1994), p. 10.

155 Eliasson (1998), p. 7.

- Gender-offensive behaviour
- Sexual harassment (based in particular on definitions from the Swedish gender equality act)
- Sex based harassment
- Gender harassment
- Sexual and gender related harassment
- Sexual coercion
- Harassment due to gender
- Harassment attributable to gender
- Gender discrimination
- Gender-offensive behaviour
- Sexual and gender-related harassment

Furthermore, all these concepts and terms are filled with different actions and content in the various studies, through the questions posed in the questionnaires. It is clear that many studies wrestle with the need to include actions of a “sexual nature”, for example by differentiating between sexual harassment and gender-offensive discrimination, where the latter includes phenomena such as ignoring and disrespectful behaviour linked to gender. This indicates not least the limitations of language in describing and setting the prerequisites for investigating a phenomenon such as exposure. For corresponding reasons, the degree of comparability between studies becomes limited.

A recurring feature is how the stories and experiences of exposure in academia of those interviewed often directs the analysis away from pre-constructed definitions of sexual harassment and towards investigation of issues relating to the character, consequences and functions of exposure in academia. “There was a tension between my observations and the theory that seemed to demand problematising and further development.”<sup>156</sup>

This tension becomes clear in a majority of the studies, and results in the construction of other concepts and descriptions. For example, Anneli Andersson tries out “gender-offensive behaviour” as a third addition to sexual harassment and discrimination. Andersson considers that these three concepts together provide an overall expression for the same structure, which is the gender power structure in academia. Andersson analyses gender-offensive behaviour based on an adapted version of violence theory that considers the fact that the actions take place in public and not within the four walls of home, which has traditionally been the focus for developing theories about violence in close relationships.<sup>157</sup>

Bondestam and Carstensen also work on the concepts, and to some extent abandon “sexual harassment” in favour of “gender-offensive processes”, which they consider include both sexual harassment and a process perspective on negative experiences linked to gender in workplace-related environments and in environments associated with higher education.<sup>158</sup> In their cases, the analysis leads to concept development in itself when “sexual harassment” is translated into “gender-offensive processes”, and in the concluding reasoning is instead called “the violence of normality”. In a corresponding manner, Carstensen uses the concept of “sexual harassment” in her thesis as “a perspective on how gender, heterosexuality, gender equality and the researcher position are created and formed in relation to the academic context”.<sup>159</sup>

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156 Andersson (2007), p. 7.

157 Andersson (2007).

158 Bondestam & Carstensen (2004).

159 Carstensen (2004), p. 25.

The complexity that accompanies the concept of sexual harassment is partly to do with its link to the legal context, which demands matter-of-factness and objectivity in relation to the recognition of the exposed person's experience. "The lack of clarity thus opens the door to an understanding or perception of that everything can constitute sexual harassment, all behaviours that an individual perceive as harassment is harassment, at the same time as this might mean that nothing is sexual harassment if no individual perceives it in this way."<sup>160</sup>

Using empirical material in the form of texts from policies and guidelines, and excerpts from interviews with gender equality officers in academia, Bondestam shows how the understanding of sexual harassment is often based on a number of pre-set assumptions relating to what sexual harassment is, and which strategies can prevent its occurrence. Bondestam makes a post-structuralist analysis showing how the concept of sexual harassment is disengaged from its meaning and therefore becomes an open "sign", which is filled with differing meanings (or drained of the same) through various ideological and discursive shifts. The analysis points out in particular how the establishment of preventive work in academia paradoxically enough both underrates and maintains the occurrence of exposure.<sup>161</sup>

### Why does sexual harassment occur?

The more quantitatively focused and individualised prevalence studies describe consequences of exposure to sexual harassment in the form of psychological and physical ill health, and also impaired work quality for the individual exposed. In the qualitative part of the research field, several studies instead focus on how sexual harassment can occur, and what "function" it fills. Some of the studies show that sexual harassment relates to gender structuring in academia, in accordance with a heteronormative order.<sup>162</sup> "Against this background, sexual harassment, gender discrimination and other forms of discrimination have a gender-structuring function on the labour market, and in organisations with a relationship to the same."<sup>163</sup> Based on this, it could therefore be said that sexual harassment does fulfil a function in academia, for example through structural ordering of gender<sup>164</sup> and through the marginalisation and exclusion of women and femininity that follows from exposure due to gender.<sup>165</sup>

A recurring feature of several studies is that they describe how exposure to sexual harassment is invalidated and underrated as a real problem, and that women's stories bear witness of a commonplaceness and normality.<sup>166</sup> "From the survey results, in this way sexual harassment does not emerge as anything exceptional, but as something commonplace – as an accepted and unproblematic component of the environment the students dwell in, are part of, and create."<sup>167</sup> There is here thus a clear dividing line between the prevalence generated by cross-section studies and theory-driven qualitative research respectively into sexual harassment in academia.

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160 Carstensen (2012), p. 124.

161 Bondestam (2004b).

162 Andersson (2007); Pernrud (2004).

163 Pernrud (2004), p. 6.

164 Andersson (2007).

165 Pernrud (2004).

166 Bondestam & Carstensen (2004); Carstensen (2004); Pernrud (2004).

167 Pernrud (2004), p. 39.

## Summary

- The respondents in the mappings state exposure rates from 4 to 26 per cent for women, and from 2 to 6 per cent for men. Exposure is reported within all groups active in academia, that is students, doctoral students and employees.
- More than half of those exposed to sexual harassment are women, while the majority of perpetrators are men. Because of failings in the studies, it is not possible to quote a more specific figure for the gender distribution related to exposed/perpetrators based on the mappings analysed.
- The 18 mappings carried out within academia in Sweden were carried out at specific universities and institutions. They were published from 1989 to 2016, with more than half conducted during the 1990s and early 2000s.
- The mappings were made using surveys, of which two make a deeper knowledge acquisition with the help of a number of interviews. They vary in size, with sample groups from 112 to 5 117 persons, and with response rates between 44 per cent and 85 per cent. The earliest mappings were only distributed to women, while later mappings include both women and men.
- The samples for the mappings focus either on specific disciplines, in particular physic, mathematics and medicine, or different groups, such as students, doctoral students and/or employees.
- The mappings that include recommendations request clearer policies, organisational development focusing on leadership, internal training courses, better support for those exposed, more secure employment for doctoral students and clarification of employer responsibility.
- The concept of sexual harassment is perceived as insufficient, and too narrow to capture experiences of exposure due to gender in academia.
- By using a legal definition as the starting point for investigating sexual harassment, there is a risk that the range of experiences of exposure that persons in academia have is being disregarded.
- Sexual harassment relates to gender structuring in academia, in line with a gender power structure or corresponding structural understandings of causes.
- When experiences and stories guide the investigation of exposure in academia, a picture is drawn of a very complex phenomenon.
- Exposure to sexual harassment is often invalidated and underrated as a real problem, at the same time as women's stories bear witness of exposure as normality.

## Recommendations

More detailed recommendations from the Swedish material are shown below, and the section after that contains an analytical comment. The summary of the mappings above also states more detailed recommendations from each publication.

### Practice

- Education and information, for example internal training courses on what sexual harassment is, what a person who is exposed to it can do, and what rights students have.<sup>168</sup>
- Increased support to exposed persons, for example via subject experts and special advisers, and disciplinary sanctions for sexual harassment.<sup>169</sup>

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168 Gunnarsson (2009); Pernrud (2004); Sjons (2010).

169 Hensing & Larsson (2000); Lahtinen (1994).

## Policy

- Clearer policies related to the university's attitude to sexual harassment. Zero tolerance of sexual harassment and updated action plans for the university's work against sexual harassment.<sup>170</sup>
- Recommendations for increasing gender equality in academia, for example by investing heavily in recruiting women to senior positions, working for increased influence for women at all levels within various faculties, and offering more secure employment for doctoral students.<sup>171</sup>
- Leadership is regarded as filling a central role in the work against sexual harassment, and the recommendations are for organisational development focusing on leadership, demands for collaboration on action plans against sexual harassment between management and personnel, and for gender harassment being considered in the universities' leadership training courses.<sup>172</sup>

## Research

- In general, the Swedish research field recommends more studies overall. Examples are studies of sexual harassment in more workplaces, studies of the teacher/student relationship, research focusing on researchers and teachers in academia, interview studies with men who harass (perpetrator studies) and studies among doctoral students and students who have dropped out of their studies. The need for broader studies is also highlighted, for example intersectional studies that include factors such as age and ethnicity, and research that considers a broadened understanding of sexual harassment that includes harassment attributable to gender.<sup>173</sup>
- Studies and methods specifically focused on the actions and reasoning of the surrounding environment are recommended, research into the focus shift from exposed person to perpetrator are requested, as is continued theory and analysis development.<sup>174</sup>

The Swedish research field is small, and this is reflected here. Nor do the qualitative studies formulate recommendations in a way that is easily transferrable into a bullet point list in the same way that the quantitative studies do. There is consequently an overweight of recommendation from the quantitative mappings, primarily published in the 1990s, in this context. The fact that some of these earlier studies recommended more studies can be understood in the light of sexual harassment in academia recently having risen up the agenda, and because the number of studies was small. Later studies continue to demand more research, but here we also include recommendations for a broader content of these studies, related to method choice, selection and conceptual understanding.

## Analytical comment

The Swedish research field is small, and knowledge about the incidence of sexual harassment in academia in Sweden is based on a number of older cross-section studies. What the consequences of exposure to sexual harassment are, both for indivi-

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170 Hensing & Larsson (1992); Lahtinen (1994).

171 Gunnarsson (2009); Hensing & Larsson (2000).

172 Hensing & Larsson (2000); Muhonen (2016).

173 Andersson (2007); Börjesson & Gustafsson (1989); Muhonen (2016); Sjons (2010).

174 Andersson (2007); Bondestam & Carstensen (2004).

duals and for academia as a whole, has not been studied sufficiently. Psychological, physiological and work-related consequences of being exposed to sexual harassment are well-documented in international research, and can be assumed to be relevant also for persons active in academia in Sweden.

At the same time, there are differences between Swedish and international contexts, for example in relation to work environment legislation, gender equality norms, conditions in academia and the organisation of academia, which require special consideration. There are also questions that emanate from the Swedish research field that are not as clearly expressed in the international comparison. What does sexual harassment mean for academia as an organisation culture? What does it do to work teams and the work environment, student groups and the study environment – not just for the person exposed, but for all persons included in an academic context?

International research indicates that many are aware when colleagues and fellow students are exposed to sexual harassment; something that can lead to “bystander stress”, for example. But what is the impact on the quality of the research and education, on the through-put of students, gender-bound study choices and career paths of the occurrence of sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector? How individuals, organisations and management handle sexual harassment recurs in stories in the qualitative studies analysed for this chapter. They indicate invalidation of the exposure, and inability by the work organisation to deal with incidences of sexual harassment in a way that does not risk entailing negative consequences for the person exposed.

Higher education institutions in Sweden have almost half a million employees and students, and form by far the largest public sector. Both quantitative and qualitative studies indicate an everyday life with exposure to offence due to gender in this environment. An overall picture that includes experiences of discrimination or harassment due to gender shows greater exposure (up to 66 per cent of women and up to 25 per cent of men) than when only sexual harassment is included. Considering the difficult delimitations between different forms of exposure that the material in this report bears witness to, this is something that should be considered in discussions about exposure in academia. What the exposure is actually like in detail, how sexual harassment is established as normality in academia, and the consequences this has for both the opportunities of individuals to have a professional life in academia, and for academia as a knowledge organisation, educational organisation and guarantor of high-quality research, are questions that the Swedish research field cannot answer today.

## Other Nordic research

In line with the assignment given, this section of the research review makes a more summary presentation of Nordic research into sexual harassment in academia (excluding Swedish research). The section begins with a description of literature searches, and thereafter short abstracts of each publication are given. A summary of main tendencies in the research field in question follows. The section concludes with some analytical comments.

### About the material

The search for publications from the other Nordic countries resulted in a total of 48 items. KvinnSam at the University of Gothenburg Library, which was contracted for the task of assisting the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research with scientifically based search processes (see Appendix 1), carried out searches of Nordic databases for this section of the review, in addition to searches of international databases. These are, specifically, Bibliotek.dk, GEGNIR, ORIA, Norart, MELINDA and HELKA. A request for specific help with searching was also sent to Denmark (KVINFO), Finland (Centre for Gender Equality Information/National Institute for Health and Welfare), Iceland ((Jafnréttisstofa/Centre for Gender Equality) and Norway (Kilden, Research Council of Norway).

The same selection criteria were used for this material as for the Swedish, namely studies that focus on academia and sexual harassment, and/or a wider understanding of the concept that may include harassment, bullying or sexualised violence for example. This resulted in 18 items for analysis.

Many of the Finnish items are published in Finnish, and help was therefore obtained from a Finnish-speaking colleague, who translated titles, subject words and, as applicable, abstracts into Swedish to enable a first selection. This selection resulted in four texts being included in the close reading, and read in full-text versions by the colleague in question, as a contribution to the analysis below.

### Analysed articles

**Björklund, K., Häkkänen-Nyholm, H., Sheridan, L. & Roberts, K., 2010a. Coping With Stalking Among University Students. *Violence and Victims*, 25: 395–408.**

A survey about experiences of stalking among Finnish students and their way of handling this exposure showed that exposure to stalking with violent features was more often handled using threats to report and legal consequences for the perpetrator than stalking without violent features. Any difference in the proportion of actual reports could not be found, however. Those exposed to stalking handled their exposure in various ways, which was established as something that needs to be taken into consideration when developing professional help and support.

**Björklund, K., Häkkänen-Nyholm, H., Sheridan, L. & Roberts, K. 2010b. The Prevalence of Stalking Among Finnish University Students. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25: 684–698.**

615 Finnish students took part in a survey of the prevalence of exposure to stalking. Almost one in four of the participants had been exposed to stalking on one occasion, and just over one in four had been exposed at a number of occasions. Of those exposed, 55 per cent had been exposed by an acquaintance, 25 per cent by a former partner, and 19 per cent by a person unknown. The study shows a high incidence of stalking among Finnish students, which often continues over a long period and involves aspects of violence and threats.

**Fasting, K., Brackenridge, C.H., Miller, K.E. & Sabo, D. 2008. Participation in College Sports and Protection from Sexual Victimization. *International Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 6: 427–441.**

The study investigates whether sports form a particularly risk-filled environment for being exposed to sexual harassment, compared to the educational environment at higher education institutions. The empirical data consists of answers to a questionnaire sent out to 616 female students in the Czech Republic, Greece and Norway. The result shows that the students had experienced more sexual harassment in an educational context than in a sporting one.

**Fogelberg, P. 1999. *Hard work in the academy: research and interventions on gender inequalities in higher education*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.**

An anthology with contributions from 30 different researchers discussing the conditions in academia, from the perspectives of Politics and policy; Students; Academic work and career; Management; Sexualities; Women's studies; and Strategies and measures for change. A majority of the contributions to the anthology relate to different European countries, but it also includes contributions from USA, Canada and Russia.

**Gressgård, R. 2014. Å stange hodet i veggen: Mikroagresjon i akademia. *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift*, 31: 17–29.**

Using examples from Norwegian universities, micro-aggression and institutional racism in western academia are discussed. The focus of the article is on informal power relationships between students, between employees and between employees and students. The article aims to make visible academic norms that contribute to the marginalisation of women and minority groups in academia.

**Heikkinen, M. 2012. *Sexist harassment as an issue of gender equality politics and policies at university, Acta Universitatis Ouluensis*. Oulu: University of Oulu.**

The empirical data consists of a selection from nine studies conducted at Oulu University between 1990 and 2010, where writings about sexual harassment are lifted from the studies and form the first section of the data collection. Section two consists of Oulu University's policy documents relating to gender equality, such as gender equality plans and guidelines. Using case study methodology, the analysis aims to provide a deeper understanding of sexual harassment within the framework for further gender equality policy discourses. A conclusion of the article is that several different concepts are used to describe the same phenomenon, something that indicates how the phenomenon is understood and also how it should be handled. Arguments are also made for developing the understanding of exposure to sexual harassment from individual to organisational level.

**Heikkinen, M. 2003. Gender and sexual harassment and coercion at the University of Oulu – challenges for measures. *Gendered and Sexualised Violence in Educational Environments*. Oulu: Oulu University Press.**

The article constitutes a continuation of the discussion about gender discrimination and sexual harassment at Oulu University. The empirical data consists of seven stories from students and employees at the university, collected during spring 2002. The stories circulate around questions such as: Does gender discrimination, sexual harassment and coercion continue to exist at the university, despite the focus on gender equality that characterised the 1990s? Is there a need to discuss the subject further? If harassment occurs, where does it occur?

**Husu, L. 2005. *Dold könsdiskriminering på akademiska arenor: osynligt, synligt, subtilt*. Högskoleverkets rapportserie. Stockholm: Högskoleverket.**

The article discusses gender discrimination in academia from a Nordic perspective and poses question about why no major changes are occurring, despite relatively good gender equality, and how gender inequality is reproduced. The empirical data consists of letters and interviews with female academics in Finland.<sup>175</sup> The author applies both a historical and an international perspective, and reflects on the academic culture, recruitment processes, formal and informal work distribution and sexual harassment.

**Husu, L. 2001. *Sexism, support and survival in academia: academic women and hidden discrimination in Finland*, *Social psychological studies*. Helsinki: Dept. of Social Psychology, University of Helsinki.**

The empirical data is from more than 100 semi-structured interviews and stories from women active in academia in Finland. Eleven universities and all main disciplines are represented in the study. The study focuses on women in academia and their experiences of gender discrimination, and how these women respond to and handle this discrimination. Specific questions raised in the study are sexual harassment and motherhood in academia, support in career development and survival strategies.

**Husu, L. 2000. *Gender Discrimination in the Promised Land of Gender Equality*. *Higher Education in Europe*, 25: 221–228.**

The article makes three different referenced descents into research on gender equality, sexism and academia, with particular focus on the situation in Finnish higher education. Sexual harassment forms a subsidiary theme in the article, which particularly highlights specific results in one of the first studies of sexual harassment in academia in Finland. The conclusions indicate that discrimination is a phenomenon that is based, in part, on excluding, male-coded networks and unconscious bias in the recruitment of professors.

**Korsvik, T.R. & Linnet, G.B. 2017. *Juss og kjønn: En rapport om kjønnsbalanse blant de fast vitenskapelig ansatte ved Det juridiske fakultet og om integrering av kjønnsperspektiver på masterstudiet i rettsvitenskap*. Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo. Det juridiske fakultet.**

The article investigates under-representation of women among the employees at a law faculty. The empirical data consists of 40 in-depth interviews with employees,

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<sup>175</sup> See also Mankinen (1995), which is the text referenced by Husu.

half of them women and half men. The under-representation is explained as the result of a combination of structural factors and faculty culture. A number of gender equality challenges are identified in the article, among them sexual harassment in terms of unwanted sexual attention.

**Mankkinen, T. & Helsingin, yliopisto, 1995. *Akateemista nuorallatanssia: sukupuolinen häirintä ja ahdistelu Helsingin yliopistossa*. Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, tasa-arvotoimikunta.**

Report aimed at mapping the scope of sexual harassment, the various forms of sexual harassment that occur and the measures that can be taken. The empirical data consists of the answers to a questionnaire sent to 1 000 students and 1 002 employees at Helsinki University. The material results in both scope figures and a qualitative analysis of the open-ended answers. The qualitative analysis suggests that there are more serious cases of sexual harassment than the quantitative analysis shows. The results show a prevalence of 11 per cent among employees and 6 per cent among students on the question of exposure to sexual harassment during their time as employees at the university, or during their study time.<sup>176</sup>

**Pasanen, J. 2003. ”Sitä ei voi enää nimittää pelkäksi vitsailuksi”. *Selvitys sukupuolisesta häirinnästä ja ahdistelusta Tampereen yliopistossa [En utredning om sexuella trakasserier vid Tammerfors universitet]*. Tampere: University of Tampere.**

Investigation into the prevalence of sexual harassment at Tampere University. The empirical data consists of answers to questions on sexual harassment in work environment surveys and material collected from personnel and students, specifically related to sexual harassment. The investigation shows that the prevalence over the last five years is 15 percent, and the consequences are described as serious, for example interrupted or delayed studies, change of workplace and mental ill health. The study shows that women who are professors, and women within finance/administration are particularly exposed, and that students are most exposed when beginning and ending their studies.

**Pétursdóttir, G.M. 2017. Fire-raising feminists: Embodied experience and activism in academia. *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 24: 85–99.**

The article discusses a recruitment in 2013 to the University of Iceland of a man who was accused of sex crimes in 2012. The article analyses media’s role in and view of the recruitment, and the author’s own understanding, based on theories of patriarchal homosociality and feminist standpoint theory, among others. The discussion results in a reflection on the maintenance of patriarchal power and status quo in academia and society as a whole.

**Rautio, A., Sunnari, V., Nuutinen, M. & Laitala, M. 2005. Mistreatment of university students most common during medical studies. *BMC Medical Education*, 5: 36.**

The article is based on a study investigating exposure to various forms of offensive discrimination among students at five faculties at Oulu University.<sup>177</sup> The empirical

<sup>176</sup> The report is summarised and also discussed briefly in English in the chapter Walking the academic tightrope: sexual harassment at the University of Helsinki, see Fogelberg (1999).

<sup>177</sup> The study the article is based on is also included in this review: Rautio, Väyrynen, Nuutinen et al. (1999).

data consists of the responses to a questionnaire distributed to 665 students. Almost half of those who responded to the questionnaire state that they have been exposed to one or more forms of offensive discrimination by employees, of which 17 per cent state exposure to sexual harassment and gender discrimination. Students at the medical faculty reported a higher prevalence of exposure to every form of offensive discrimination than students at the other faculties.

**Rautio, A., Väyrynen, M., Nuutinen, M. & Nuutinen, E.M. 1999. *Oulun yliopisto opiskelijoiden työyhteisönä: kyselytutkimus opiskelijoiden kokemasta huonosta kohtelusta*. Acta Universitatis Ouluensis. Series F, Scripta academica. Oulu: Oulun yliopisto.**

Report from a study investigating exposure to various forms of offensive discrimination among students at five faculties at Oulu University. The empirical data consists of the responses to a questionnaire distributed to 665 students. Almost half of those who responded to the questionnaire state that they have been exposed to one or more forms of offensive discrimination by employees, of which 17 per cent state exposure to sexual harassment and gender discrimination. The exposure of students is greater than expected, and female students report higher rate of exposure than male students. The study questions the university's ability to implement its educational mandate in a satisfactory way, and requests measures.

**Sinkkonen, M. 1997. *Tasa-arvo Kuopion yliopistossa, Kuopion yliopiston julkaisuja*. Kuopio: Kuopion yliopiston kirjasto.**

The study aims to investigate employees' and students' perception of equality if they have experienced sexual harassment during their time at the university. A questionnaire was distributed to all employees, 1 113 persons in total, and 25 per cent of the students, 992 persons in total. The response rate was 60 per cent among employees and 50 per cent among students. The result of the survey showed that a total of 34 per cent of the employees and 28 per cent of the students had experienced sexual harassment in the last two years. A conclusion of the study is that the consequences for those exposed are always negative, and that the incidence of sexual harassment has consequences both for the individual exposed and for the work or study environment.

**Varjus, T. (Ed.). 1997. *Pihlajanmarjoja ja tiiliseiniä akateemisessa maisemassa: katsaus tasa-arvoon Joensuun yliopistossa*. Yhteiskuntapolitiikan tutkimuksia. Joensuun yliopiston yhteiskuntapolitiikan ja filosofian laitos, Joensuu.**

The study reports the result of a survey at Joensuu University, aimed at producing documentation for a gender equality plan. Students, doctoral students and employees responded to the survey with questions about experienced harassment and knowledge of harassment. 3.1 per cent of the students state exposure to sexual harassment, the corresponding figure among doctoral students is 5.5 per cent and among employees 3.4 per cent.

## Summary

Prevalence studies in the Nordic material consist primarily of Finnish cross-section studies. As with the other material in this research review, the figures show great variation, but the highest figures are generally slightly lower than in the rest of the

material in the review, from 3 to 34 per cent. The Nordic material also includes qualitative studies, focusing on the conditions in academia in relation to gender and gender discrimination, both at Nordic level and comparatively at European level. Here too, the Finnish material dominates. A recurring feature in these studies is discussion about how discrimination due to gender is hidden in structures and cultures in academia and impact negatively on the academic life of women. Questions are also raised about how, despite a high level of gender equality between women and men from an international perspective, structures are still reproduced that counteract gender equality in academia.

The material in part poses other questions than have emerged in the other material in this research review, such as whether students active within sport are exposed to sexual harassment to a greater extent within their sports than during education, or how common it is for students to be exposed to stalking. No specific subject disciplines stand out in the material, apart from one article about a law faculty.<sup>178</sup> In the international material in this review in particular, medical education is a recurring arena for studies of students' exposure to sexual harassment, which is not possible to discern in the Nordic material.

## Analytical comment

Research into sexual harassment in academia forms a very limited research field in the Nordic countries, even if Sweden is foremost in comparison with the other Nordic countries in terms of scope. The Finnish research field stands out in the Nordic context, with a greater number of texts in the form of published mappings from Finnish universities, primarily from the 1990s, and a number of qualitative studies concerning exposure in academia. Just as in the Swedish material, the phenomenon of sexual harassment in these qualitative studies seldom forms the core of the studies; instead, it is more often included as part of a broader understanding of exposure and gendered conditions in academia.

One aspect that recurs in several of the Nordic studies included is how gender equality shall be understood in relation to the incidence of sexual harassment in academia. All the Nordic countries have the reputation of being “world-leaders in gender equality”, there is strong legal protection against harassment and discrimination in all Nordic countries, and gender equality is part of the political agenda in the Nordic countries in several ways. But the question of how the gender equality political discourse contributes to, or possibly hampers, the work against sexual harassment in academia is still unanswered in Nordic research into sexual harassment. At the same time, there are of course broader studies of Nordic welfare policy, gender equality and discrimination<sup>179</sup>, as well as ongoing research programmes about gender equality in academia in the Nordic countries<sup>180</sup>, that in various ways touch on this question tangentially.

Two of the texts included discuss the experiences of exposure to stalking among Finnish students. Even if this to some extent goes beyond the framework of this research review, the issue of stalking makes topical the discussion of where the border should be drawn between sexual harassment in academia and exposure to violence and sexual violence, for example by a former partner. What happens if the

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178 Korsvik & Linnet (2017).

179 See for example Bacchi & Eveline (2010); Melby, Carlsson Wetterberg, Ravn, (2008).

180 Among them Nordforsk's programme “Gender in the Nordic Research and Innovation Area”.

former partner is also a colleague? Or if the exposure means that the student cannot complete their studies due to the psychological ill health that follows from exposure to violence by a former partner?

In general, it can be said that Swedish and Nordic research is not internationally recognised or published. There is thus a shortage of scientifically reviewed studies, both in Sweden and in the other Nordic countries. Material such as reports, conference and working papers, as well as action plans and governmental inquiries, known as “grey literature”, has not been included in the analysis in this research review more than exceptionally, and as a consequence of failings in databases and delimitations in the literature searches made.<sup>181</sup>

Considering that the research field is as limited as this research review shows, any such material should be included more systematically in future studies, in order to provide a better picture of the state of knowledge about sexual harassment in academia in the Nordic countries. At the same time, this means that a stricter research review focusing on scientific results would be partially abandoned in favour of a broader research review, which will of course place other demands on factors such as selection and validation. Notwithstanding this, the overall impression from the work with both the Swedish and the other Nordic research fields is that they are limited and lack scientific establishment in terms of peer reviewed publications and referencing and citation practices that show that they form part of the larger international research field in the area.

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181 See for example Hasse, Trentemøller, Bjerregaard Sinding et al. (2008); Højgaard & Søndergaard (2002); Husu (1998).

## Prevalence – thematic analysis

Prevalence, or incidence and spread, of sexual harassment in academia is a main theme for this research field. There are a number of different challenges associated with achieving robust knowledge of prevalence, linked to factors such as the choice of definition and theoretical pre-understanding, selection, method and various contextual factors. This is also a recurring reflection in a majority of the studies that approach the question of exposure to sexual harassment in academia from an empirical angle:

Overall, prevalence studies (the total number of cases to a population or sub-population) suggests a persistence of sexual harassment<sup>182</sup> in many workplaces. Importantly, however, prevalence estimates diverge markedly according to methodological protocols such as sample size and diversity; whether the surveys targeted random samples from the community or a specific industry or sector; whether sexual harassment<sup>183</sup> was operationalized according to a legal or behavioural definition; and the retrospective time frame specified to participants.<sup>184</sup>

In this deeper analysis, some of these challenges will be discussed in more detail.

### What does research know?

In international research, of which an absolute majority are North American publications, prevalence studies show that around 20–25 per cent of all women are exposed to sexual harassment during their time as students at higher education institutions. A majority of the studies analysed in this report show that other forms of exposure – sexualised violence (rape and other sexual assaults), gender discrimination, gender offences, harassment and offences linked to sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, functional variation, age, etc. – exist in parallel.

In Sweden, a number of minor mappings form the documentation that describes prevalence. Most of these were conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s, with greatly varying scope and scientific quality. The prevalence among first-cycle and third-cycle students and employees in these mappings averages 15 per cent. Exposure to other forms of gender-offensive and/or discriminating actions – in particular verbal and non-verbal behaviour that expresses insulting, demeaning and hostile attitudes towards women – is significantly greater, with studies that show a prevalence of over 50 per cent.<sup>185</sup>

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182 I originaltexten används förkortningen SH för sexual harassment.

183 I originaltexten används förkortningen SH för sexual harassment.

184 McDonald (2012), s. 3.

185 Bildt (2005); Muhonen (2016).

It is particularly women who are exposed to sexual harassment, primarily by men, but exposure can also be of other types, both in terms of victim and of perpetrator. International studies into prevalence of sexual harassment have been conducted in all subject areas, and for all types of professional and student groups. However, Swedish, Nordic and also international research focuses primarily on sexual harassment of students. North American studies show that administrators are more exposed to sexual harassment than other professional groups in academia<sup>186</sup>, while Swedish studies show the opposite result.<sup>187</sup> Prevalence of sexual harassment among employees in academia is generally considered to be under-researched.<sup>188</sup>

## Definitions and knowledge claims

Several research studies request a uniform definition of sexual harassment, not least for the purpose of enabling comparative studies and to facilitate the work of establishing preventive policies and practices. This research review shows that it still appears difficult to address the challenges of quantifiability, comparability and generalisability in relation to the prevalence of exposure to sexual harassment. One reason for this may be that legal definitions are used in too unreflected a way as the starting point for many studies. These are definitions that often include the exposed person's subjective experience as an important requisite, but at the same time they mean that everything and nothing can constitute sexual harassment.<sup>189</sup> Another explanation is that individuals' experience of sexual harassment and their interest in talking about exposure is dependent on many other factors than which definition is used.

Definition, method, selection and design impact in various ways on the knowledge that is enabled, and how prevalence is perceived. Epistemological starting points contribute in turn to sexual harassment differing from study to study, in terms of both content and prevalence. A legal, criminological and psychological individual-centred starting point dominates in the international research field, which is shown clearly in the analysis of research reviews and top-ranked publications in this report. In other words, this means that special epistemological prerequisites apply for how exposure in academia is described and understood.

The opportunity to have comparable and generalisable knowledge of the experiences and exposure that exists is something that is highlighted early on in the research field.<sup>190</sup> A number of the Swedish mappings, for example, describe that many respondents write comments on situations and events that they do not feel fit into the framework of the questions asked in the questionnaire, but which they themselves think are important to talk about. A too strictly predefined version of sexual harassment therefore always risks excluding experiences and events.<sup>191</sup>

## The double nature of underreporting

In the documentation for this report, that is to say research reviews, top-ranked articles and Swedish and Nordic literature, underreporting is a problem addressed by several researchers. This applies particularly in relation to how results from preva-

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186 Henning, Zhou, Adams m.fl. (2017).

187 Muhonen (2016).

188 Bildt (2005); Henning, Zhou, Adams et al. (2017).

189 Carstensen (2012).

190 Arvey & Cavanaugh (1995).

191 See for example Adrianson (1993); Borgblad (1992).

lence studies are to be interpreted, questions of generalisability and not least when it comes to discussion about the preventive measures by workplaces against sexual harassment. It is striking how often underreporting is stated, more or less by rote, as a real problem for a particular study, but without this leading to any methodological development or theoretical reflection. Few studies also aim directly at trying to solve the two basic problems of underreporting: the propensity to respond to empirical studies of various types and the propensity to report among persons exposed to sexual harassment. Underreporting thus refers both to respondents who do not state in surveys that they have been exposed to sexual harassment, and to persons who are exposed to sexual harassment but do not report the event. Both these forms of underreporting have consequences for practice, policy and research in various ways.

A majority of the persons exposed to sexual harassment do not make a formal report. Here, international research is unequivocal. Instead, exposure to sexual harassment is dealt with alone and in silence, or with the help of friends and close colleagues. Actual knowledge and awareness of exposure to sexual harassment, in particular among managers and leaders in academic organisations, is directly related to this form of underreporting. Individuals exposed often learn to tolerate the perpetrator's behaviour, or to avoid the perpetrator. Other strategies for handling exposure are to choose to change work tasks or work team, or alternatively to leave the workplace or organisation entirely.<sup>192</sup>

In addition to the strategies mentioned above, the research field has an abundance of documented reasons for why persons exposed do not report sexual harassment. Reasons mentioned particularly are fear of negative consequences for career opportunities, pay, grades or termination. This applies not least when the perpetrator is a superior manager, teacher or supervisor. Another aspect is unwillingness to see oneself as a victim and "weak", or worry whether colleagues or fellow students will understand and give support or not. Other generally occurring questions are about lack of faith in managers, organisations and legal systems, and the ability of these to offer redress in various ways. Several studies also indicate that worry about negative consequences is not unfounded, as reporting sexual harassment rarely improves, and sometimes directly worsens, the situation of the person exposed.<sup>193</sup>

"Students often voice fears that airing an incident may harm them more than the incident itself"<sup>194</sup>

Overall, the situation of persons exposed is characterised by various forms of invalidation and underrating of their experiences. This is in direct contrast to how both theoretical perspectives on violence and exposure and legislation on sexual harassment (not least in Sweden) often make it clear that it is the person who is exposed to sexual harassment who "proves" that it has occurred.<sup>195</sup>

From the point of view of principle, it is often assumed a priori in the research field that the person reporting can get support and help, and that the harassment will therefore cease through various measures. A further discussion subject is that reporting enables addressing, which in turn can counteract negative consequences for organisations. However, in practice, and based on what the empirical data from the area show, reporting instead risks harming the person exposed further, for example

192 McDonald (2012).

193 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014); McDonald (2012).

194 Vohlídalová (2015), p. 309.

195 See for example Carstensen (2004).

by triggering “revenge” and contributing to lower job satisfaction, continued exposure and greater psychological stress.<sup>196</sup> In this perspective, the fact that underreporting is highlighted as a problem in itself, and that it is just this problem that must be solved in order for organisations to know how to work to prevent sexual harassment, appears to be back-to-front. Encouraging persons exposed to report, so that the organisation can “become better” does, to some extent, entail a shift in responsibility from the organisation and the management to the individual exposed. It is far less common to discuss how organisations, independent of any (under) reporting, can “become better” in order to enable individuals exposed to make a report under secure conditions, followed by redress.

## Method as problem

Methodological challenges are discussed relatively often in a majority of the prevalence studies included in the research field. The primary challenges involved are definitions, selection issues, knowledge claims of quantitative or qualitative methods, and the time period and context of the study. A few studies address methodological difficulties in depth, and do not just discuss the opportunity to say something concrete about prevalence, but instead investigate how methodological choices and problems form the understanding of both sexual harassment and preventive measures in themselves.<sup>197</sup>

A majority of the existing prevalence studies in the research field in question are based on existing legal definitions in their understanding of what sexual harassment is. But questions about exposure to sexual harassment in questionnaires, which are based on legally pre-determined definitions, usually lead to substantially lower estimates of prevalence than studies that list qualitatively various behaviours that may constitute sexual harassment from a theoretical perspective.<sup>198</sup> A meta-analysis of studies of exposure to bullying (including sexual harassment) in the workplace shows correspondingly that self-estimated exposure based on a given definition results in a low prevalence compared to studies without a similar starting point.<sup>199</sup> In this way, prevalence is in direct relation to the concept definition selected, which in turn guides the method choice.

Issues about selection and design impact on the type of persons who constitute the respondents in a study. A review of research into sexual harassment and sexualised violence on campus in USA shows how several studies succeed neither in representing the student population, nor the students’ academic reality in their samples. For example, it emerges that the students in the surveys are both younger and “whiter” compared with the student population in USA. The studies are also almost exclusively conducted at larger universities, and two-year programmes are rarely included.<sup>200</sup> Existing research into sexual harassment in academia in Sweden probably lacks representativity in a corresponding way between sample, respondents and the student population and/or various categories or employees nationally.

Another example of how selection and design influence the exposure that may emerge is made visible in a study covering among others black female students in

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196 See for example Bergman (2002).

197 See for example Neall & Tuckey (2014).

198 McDonald (2012).

199 Nielsen, Bjørkelo, Notelaers et al. (2010).

200 Voth Schrag (2017).

USA. These respondents, for example, perceive race-stereotyped comments on their appearance as sexual harassment, which is something that is rarely included as an option in surveys into sexual harassment.<sup>201</sup> A few studies involving intersectional dimensions of exposure in academia in Sweden have been conducted, primarily linked to gender, race and ethnicity.<sup>202</sup> These do not, however, include discussions on sexual harassment specifically, and knowledge about intersectional dimensions of the understanding of the prevalence of and exposure to sexual harassment is generally lacking.

## Diversified exposure

Investigations of prevalence tend to be delimited in time and space, which provides knowledge about the risks of individual locations, but experiences of exposure also impact across existing time and space limits. Students and employees move between spaces, positions and processes in a way that is difficult to capture in individual prevalence studies. In addition to a multitude of different physical spaces for education and research at higher education institutions, there is also workplace-based education, field work, internet seminars, etc. For example, there are studies that look specifically at exposure to sexual harassment during field work for ethnologists, and how this affects the opportunities for women to carry out ethnographic field work in itself.<sup>203</sup> Other examples are the studies that investigate exposure among medical students, both future doctors and nurses, and their situation during longer and shorter mandatory practice periods.<sup>204</sup>

With such a wide diversity in types of institutions and students identities, it is important to recognize that there is not a single "college experience" that is shared by all, nor an appropriate "one-size-fits-all" response to the challenges facing higher education, including the epidemic of sexual assault and dating violence.<sup>205</sup>

Throughout all the individual studies in the research field, prevalence is reduced unconsciously, often to a delimited place and experience, and is not seen as a web of spatial, interlinked experiences of exposure.<sup>206</sup> To this is added various power structures that permeate structures, organisations and institutions in a more general way<sup>207</sup>, and which relate to concepts about gender, ethnicity/race, sexuality, class, functionality and religion, and impact on the conditions for individuals in academia.

## What does research need to know?

Overall, several challenges can be established when it comes to conducting prevalence studies into sexual harassment in academia at all. Definitions, epistemological limits, underreporting, method choice, the diversity of exposure in itself and issues

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201 Kalof (2001).

202 See for example De los Reyes (2007); Mählck (2018).

203 Hanson & Richards (2017).

204 Fnais, Soobiah, Chen et al. (2014); Larsson, Hensing, Allebeck et al. (2003).

205 Voth Schrag (2017), p. 69. In the original text, the abbreviation SA is used for sexual assault and DV for dating violence.

206 Bondestam & Carstensen (2004).

of generalisability pose hard-hitting questions about the meaning of prevalence. The conclusion of this should not be that it is impossible or uninteresting to investigate and study the prevalence of sexual harassment in academia, but it highlights the importance of considering the knowledge that exists within the field about various challenges and their consequences. At the same time, the picture is relatively uniform: sexual harassment does occur in academia as well as in other workplaces.

In view of the contextuality that emerges in many studies, knowledge from other countries is not directly transferrable to Swedish or Nordic circumstances. So what knowledge can Swedish research still use from the international field to develop and research the knowledge about sexual harassment in Sweden? In international research from mainly USA, Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, knowledge about prevalence is relatively high, as this has been the focus for much of the research in the field. The consequences of exposure for both individuals and workplaces also appears to be relatively well researched. When it comes to prevalence of exposure to sexual harassment among HBTQ persons, women from ethnic minority groups and women with previous experience of exposure to sexual violence, these form specific research questions in the North American material, albeit to a limited extent.<sup>208</sup> In Sweden and the other Nordic countries, knowledge about prevalence of exposure to sexual harassment in academia in these respects is small, and in some respects non-existent. There is room here for more research approaches and comparative perspectives.

Overall, the research-based knowledge about prevalence is poor in several ways internationally too. This applies perhaps primarily to in-depth knowledge about perpetrators, long-term effects on individuals, work environments and organisations, and the impact on qualification, career paths, scientific quality and academic organisation culture, etc. There is also a lack of studies with a clear theoretic concept understanding and developed comparative approaches. Another shortcoming is that empirical research into prevalence rarely contributes more than marginally to the necessary method development aimed, for example, at solving the problems linked with underreporting. In Sweden and the Nordic countries, these shortcomings are particularly evident, and there are great opportunities here to fill existing gaps in knowledge with relatively simple means, including internationally.

Finally, there are all the questions about prevalence that are not posed in the international research field into sexual harassment in academia. Prevalence studies tend, in principle, to focus exclusively on incidence of exposure. How many are exposed to sexual harassment, what does it consist of, how is it done, when does it occur, what are the consequences of exposure? Furthermore, in several Swedish studies it is only women who are asked about their experiences of sexual harassment. The question of who exposes others to sexual harassment in academia is very rarely asked in research into prevalence, other than as an individual question, which is then summarised in table format, stating gender and position, and usually without leading to any analysis of relevance to research, policy and practice. There is a great need here to turn the picture round, and ask research questions that investigate how violence is exercised and enabled in academic organisations.

A number of other relevant research questions with a perpetrator perspective follow from the analyses conducted of the prevalence studies in this research field: What percentage of students and employees at a university expose their collea-

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207 Acker (2006).

208 Fedina, Holmes & Backes (2018); Ong (2005).

gues and fellow students to sexual harassment? What similarities and differences characterise sexist behaviour in perpetrators depending on whether it is a manager, a researcher, a supervisor or a student? Is it possible to counteract the risk factors in the work environment that establish incentives for perpetrators' behaviours and self-understanding? What support structures at workplaces normalise sexual harassment as part of an expected normal working day? Are academic masculinities identity forms that are constituted by contempt for weakness, and if so, what importance does this have for how academic men and women handle power and influence? How can sexualised violence in terms of sexual harassment in academia be prevented, if research does not seek answers to questions such as these?

## Concluding discussion

### Summary of the results

Here we present more general conclusions from the entire international research field studied, with special focus on knowledge about prevalence, consequences for individuals and the challenges of the research field. For more detailed summaries of the results of analyses of the various research studies, please see the corresponding summaries in each chapter.

### Prevalens

- Harassment due to gender is the most common form of exposure in academia, according to the research field studied here. Sexual harassment occurs in all disciplines in academia, and exposure is reported by all groups (students, doctoral students and employees).
- International studies show great variation in prevalence when it comes to sexual harassment; from 2 to 93 per cent, depending on a multitude of different factors. 20 to 25 per cent of female students in USA report exposure in most of the major studies. Exposure to sexual harassment in academia in top-ranked articles varies between 11 and 73 per cent for women, and between 3 and 26 per cent for men. In Swedish mappings, 4 to 26 per cent of women and 2 to 6 per cent of men state that they have experienced sexual harassment.
- In general, studies that are based on large and broad samples, include detailed questions about experiences of exposure and/or focus groups with limited influence over their study or work situation, report a greater prevalence of sexual harassment. The international research field makes clear that women, younger women, women with insecure employment conditions and particular minorities (ethnicity and sexuality) are more exposed to sexual harassment than other groups.
- There is nothing that indicates that the proportion of women and men students in higher education who are exposed is declining over time.

### Consequences

- Exposure to sexual harassment leads to physical, psychological and professional consequences for individuals.
- There is support in research that sexual harassment in academia can lead to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress syndrome, physical pain, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, increased alcohol use, impaired career opportunities, reduced work motivation, termination, etc.
- There is a lack in principle of research into the consequences of exposure to

sexual harassment for work teams, work environment and organisation culture in academia.

- Underreporting of exposure in prevalence studies is a well-documented and comprehensive problems.
- A majority of the persons exposed to sexual harassment do not report the occurrence

### The research field

- Quantitative studies with cross-section data dominate the international research field in general.
- Research into sexual harassment in academia wrestles overall with challenges surrounding definitions, selection, measuring methods and underreporting.
- The theoretical basis in research into sexual harassment in academia is insufficient. Research is mainly conducted using national, legal definitions of sexual harassment as the starting point.
- A majority of the research reviews and the top-ranked articles are published in English, using empirical data from USA and to some extent also other Anglo-Saxon language areas.
- A majority of the top-ranked studies reviewed are based on limited and uncontrolled cross-section data, lack random samples and drop-out analyses and use inadequate statistical analysis tools.
- The analysed research field as a whole is characterised by an often unreflecting context-specificity, inadequate theorisation of questions and method choices, limited concept understanding over and above strictly legal applications; and too one-sided a binary understanding of gender.
- The Swedish research field lacks major prevalence studies of high quality. Research from the middle of the 2000s consists of a number of qualitative studies based primarily on feminist violence theory, feminist sociology, gender science theories and organisation theory.
- The state of knowledge and the research field in the other Nordic countries are splintered and unclear.
- Research that considers the diversification of exposure and focuses on intersectional dimensions in relation to sexual harassment are lacking to a large extent in the analysed material.
- Perpetrator studies or other research that focuses mainly on perpetrators are lacking in the analysed material.

### Shortcomings of the research field

The research field in Sweden and the other Nordic countries is limited in relation to international research. The international research field is made up from and formed primarily by the North American discourse. In the work on this report, we have of course also come into contact with research from other parts of the world (primarily English language literature, however). The reasons why this material does not appear in the report is the North American dominance, the principles for publishing and the design of this assignment.

In the international material analysed for the report, there is a gradual reduction of the distance between emerging legal definitions and the scientific definitions.

This is done expressly, and is seen as a desirable development (reaching a consensus around one common concept definition of sexual harassment, independent of situation, form of exposure and organisation) also in terms of an indirect effect. The latter means, in short, that the research-based approaches, by gradually subordinating themselves to legal demands for “usefulness” and other realistic demands, become ever more repetitive instead of being explorative, constructive, challenging and curiously asking, which otherwise primarily characterises the initial and often expansive phase of a scientific field.

Another closely related tendency seen over time in the material analysed here is a wish to establish a common understanding of sexual harassment, that also has bearings on other sectors outside academia, which is happening above all through the design, testing and development of various models, tests and scales. In particular, the emergence and importance of the SEQ test for the North American discourse could be worth an analytical section by itself. What is striking to follow is now a normative scale emerges in practice and becomes established, with a strong leaning towards several traditional constituents of a positivistic epistemology. There is, in some way, a “contest” in the intersection between feminist, theory of science claims for power criticism on the one hand, and the wish/need/obligation to claim legitimacy-creating, normal science objectivity forms to give sexual harassment validity on the other, particularly clearly expressed in the articles from the 1980s that are scrutinised here. By shifting the ambition to “scientify” from the multi-faceted, lived experience into a conceptual homogenous object that can be manipulated and measured, there is also a gradual “de-radicalisation” of discourses about violence and exposure.

The work on this report has also made it strikingly clear how little we know about, and how few are studying, the perpetrators. Sexual harassment emerges as a serious and wide-spread problems that just exists, by itself, with a large amount of data about victims but not about perpetrators. Neither the Swedish/Nordic material, nor the research reviews, nor the top-ranked articles include studies focusing on perpetrators. When searching all the publications in the international research field, extremely few studies about perpetrators were identified. They are therefore extremely unusual, but it does show that it is possible, so the question why the perpetrators are notable by their absence from the majority of the research into the field demands attention.

Exposure to sexual harassment is diversified, and a complex problem. Apart from gender, factors such as sexuality, ethnicity/race/skin colour, socio-economic class, age, functionality, employment conditions, position in the workplace and previous exposure to violence impact on the incidence of exposure, the opportunities of reporting exposure and the consequences of exposure. At the same time, the measures and interventions are relatively homogenous, where the design of policies and education of students and employees about sexual harassment dominate. Whether policies and education courses have actual positive effects, and if so, how they should be designed, has not been clarified, and there is a risk that a disproportionate emphasis is being placed on measures that do not have a confirmed effect.<sup>209</sup>

In large parts of the analysed material, organisation, organisation culture and work environment appear to be key to preventing sexual harassment in workplaces. How work environments shall be designed and changed, and what produces actual results in terms of reducing prevalence, have not been clarified. However, research

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209 Se vidare i Bondestam & Lundqvist (2019).

results that indicate that sexual harassment is more common in workplaces with great power imbalance and hierarchy, and in workplaces where femininity is undervalued may serve as guidelines for preventive work. Relevant knowledge about work environment and change should be possible to find outside the research field in question, in particular within scientific disciplines such as human work science, organisation theory and feminist theory.

The consequences of not handling sexual harassment are considerable, in view of the research studies analysed in this respect. This applies in particular for the mental and physical health of the individual exposed, for the effectiveness and work of work teams, and for academia as organisation, which risks missing out on students, competence, expert knowledge and future colleagues when persons choose to end their studies or their careers in academia, for example, as a result of exposure to sexual harassment.

## Research into sexual harassment in other words

Here follows a short, summarising description of the main conclusions of the analyses of the international research field about sexual harassment in a way that invites the reader to understand what exposure means. For detailed summaries of specific results from the various studies of the research field, please see the section in question. Instead, the summary below uses as its starting point a common question for the whole of the analysed research field.

### What is sexual harassment in academia?

One conclusion from this research review is that international research lacks a common and accepted definition (and application) of the concept of sexual harassment in academia. This does, of course, make it difficult to answer simply, or at all, the question of what sexual harassment in academia is. Is the answer perhaps as self-evident as sexual harassment in academia meaning that there are persons who are exposed to sexual harassment in academia? Here are some research review-based attempts at answers:

If so, *how many* are they? Prevalence studies show a variation between 2 and 93 per cent across the whole analysed research field, that women are exposed more often than men, and that students and non-normative persons are more exposed than others. The typical figure for studies of USA's higher education sector, which is the most researched, is that around 20–25 per cent of female students are exposed. A composite picture of exposure to sexual harassment and other forms of sexualised violence indicates that more than 60 per cent of women in USA are exposed. In Sweden, knowledge is very inadequate, due to there being few, older and in several ways poor studies. The largest scope investigation about violence against women in Sweden to date draws the conclusion that “every third women who studies has been sexually harassed during the last year”, but this includes more categories of students than those at higher education institutions.<sup>210</sup>

*Who* is exposed to sexual harassment in academia? Those who have less power, and are more dependent on others, run a greater risk of being exposed to sexual harass-

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210 Lundgren, Kalliokoski, Heimer et al. (2001), p. 64.

ment in academia. But anybody can be exposed to sexual harassment in academia, even if the probability varies. In addition to what emerges from prevalence studies, the international research field here answers that this variation is dependent on gender, sexuality, gender identity, race/ethnicity/skin colour, age, function, religion, risk, vulnerability, role, relationship, position, situation, personality, experience, etc.<sup>211</sup> Sometimes the different factors enhance each other, sometimes they cancel each other out.

*Who exposes others to sexual harassment in academia?* According to the international research field, the perpetrator is a man in more than nine cases out of ten. The perpetrator is most often a colleague or fellow student of equal status, in the second instance a superior, and in the third instance another person who is encountered in an everyday situation in the study or work environment. But actually, a large knowledge gap exists here. International research publications that exclusively study perpetrators and sexual harassment in academia would scarcely fill an archive, a bookshelf, or even a plastic pocket.

*When does this occur then?* An overall picture from prevalence studies internationally is that it occurs around the clock. In a moment. Exactly when you would least expect it, and exactly when you would expect it. It occurs in real time, always already. It does not start, and it does not end. It is physical and mental, analogue and digital, and often you are unsure whether it is actually happening (or has happened). It can continue for seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, over an entire lifetime. For some, it also occurs retrospectively, through memory work that increases with age or experience, and that gradually replaces denial with knowledge.

*Where does it occur?* Behind locked doors, and on an open stage. At conferences and in the lab. During the seminar, the pay interview and the leaving speech. Going to and from work and studies. In the taxi, on the stairs, in the lift, in the lobby. It occurs on the internet, during lessons, at the department board meeting, when you are tidying up after the dig, when chatting about your new hairdo, on your breasts. It occurs in the brief, irritated exhalation from the department head, after he has explained that it would be better for you to consider another location for your job, so that this sad situation can be solved.

*What is it that occurs?* The prevalence studies of the research field indicate, once again, that in academia it is verbal comments that are the primary source of unwanted exposure. Looks and gestures, as well as sexist jokes and sexualised jargon, follow closely behind. For unwelcome sexual invites and demands for sexual services, the prevalence is very varying and context-bound. At the same time, it does not just occur in an analogue way, but also digitally, in your mailbox, on your social media, on the university's learning platforms. The studies that are available about sexual harassment on the internet are few, but show alarming figures when it comes to unwanted images and comments, primarily among female students and non-heterosexual persons. In the Swedish higher education landscape, in a comparative perspective, we know too little about what is actually happening, and what the consequences are.

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211 It is notable that a class perspective is under-researched in the international research field about sexual harassment in academia, but this is one of several perspectives that is necessary in order to understand the diversity of exposure, see also Sohl (2014).

*Why* does it occur? Men's violence against women, other men, children, animals and others, are the basis for sexual harassment in academia occurring. But not exclusively. In addition to the factors that exist in terms of who is exposed, power, dependence, status, competition, group dynamics, work environment and organisation culture are some of a multitude of different factors that could, in principle, turn anybody into a potential perpetrator or victim.

The question of what sexual harassment is means that perhaps the most important question to ask oneself is why this question requires an answer. To ask oneself if the question has been posed correctly, or if it is even necessary to ask it? Is it really possible to not know what sexual harassment in academia is? After #Akademiuppropet, launched in the spirit of the #MeToo movement, after more than 40 years of research, after hundreds of years of women's movements? Is it even morally possible to continue to remain actively uninformed?

### An analytical answer to the question

The research into the higher education sector in Sweden uses a flora of concepts, with more or less clear definitions and demarcation lines in relation to the concept of sexual harassment: gender offenses, gender-offensive treatment, gender-offensive discrimination, gender-offensive actions, harassment attributable to gender, harassment due to gender, gender-related harassment, gender-based harassment, and so on. Feminism, gender equality, discrimination, human rights, diversity, gender and (sexualised) violence often form (un)spoken ideological, political, legal and/or epistemological entry points to or markers for concept definitions, both in Sweden and internationally. Alternative concepts and the markers mentioned can, to a varying extent, establish, explain, describe, justify, support, problematise, criticise or dismiss sexual harassment. In practice, this may not occur in a theoretically based or even consistent manner, but it still contributes to some extent to undermine a fundamental definition of sexual harassment in academia.

At best, a concept definition is made, with an expressed knowledge about theory traditions, awareness of subject disciplinary limits and blind spots, and with an intellectual honesty towards the problem, so that you actually already know far too well what you are actually asking about.<sup>212</sup> In the current, international research field, such transparency is rare, however. It is much more common for narrow legal definitions, context-specific representations and norms, or just unconscious eclectic starting points to routinely form the starting point for various research studies. A fundamental scientific approach should instead be a curious and ceaseless interrogation of the forms, meanings and limits of the own research object, and not a repetitive aggrandisement of the same.

In a relatively large set of studies, there is yet an expressed criticism of the concept of sexual harassment in itself, in particular the studies that have a pronounced qualitative approach and that start from a theoretical pre-understanding of concepts such as gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, identity, violence, exposure, etc. The criticism is based primarily on how sexual harassment is continuously drained of any critical perspective on gender, power and sexualised violence. Another critical entry point in these studies emphasises how the concept is constantly bureaucratised, juridified, individualised and made instrumental in a way that rather contributes to

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212 Bondestam (2001), p. 20.

reinforcing the exposure the concept aims to characterise as a problem. In this way, there are very few studies that do not, in one way or another, actually define sexual harassment in academia indirectly, by always seeing its failings and shortcoming (and this research review perhaps adds its own share to this, too). If critical questioning is coupled with continuous reflexivity, or why not reflexive sociology in its proper sense, then there is at least a seed that can grow an analytical answer to the question asked.

Sexual harassment is also an umbrella term for a knowledge field that strives to find pragmatic solutions to the knowledge about exposure existing in workplaces. Here, the concept functions almost like a well-manured hotbed for studies and improvement of policy, education, support processes, case handling and other preventive activities. Subject disciplines (psychology, sociology, law, criminology, medicine, etc.) and professions (lawyers, HR, psychologists, physicians, etc.) together develop various models, scales, tests and other instruments aimed at determining risks, vulnerability, identity, personality and sexuality. The aim is solely to develop even better policies and educational interventions and other innovative preventive measures and systems.

At the same time, the basis for all this work consists almost exclusively of empirically-focused cross-section studies. That is to say studies without the ambition or ability (or lacking any actual funding) to evaluate the effects or consequences of planned, ongoing or concluded interventions *longitudinally*, and with claims of *causality*, and not just with focus on correlation. Nor are any intervention, action research, participant-based, citizen science-initiated or other qualitatively advanced studies conducted of the corresponding processes, that are able to raise their sights and validate the quality of what is being done. In actual fact, we know very little about what works preventively, and yet we continue doing what we usually do. Here there is also a seed that can grow and provide insights into what sexual harassment in academia is, by using research to find out whether what we do to prevent sexual harassment actually contributes to its ceasing to occur.

Finally, it is striking how difficult it is to answer the question on what sexual harassment in academia actually is, as there are so many who lay claim to knowledge in itself. The scope of the research field (N=5 561 texts) is an ocean of knowledge to scoop from, and in some sense it is possible to gain research support for, frankly, almost anything for those who are so inclined (or to contradict anyone who claims anything else decidedly). But the problem is, in part, also another one. Several, often linked contexts – ideological, political, cultural, national, legal, organisation-specific, epistemological, discipline-scientific, theoretical, methodological – mean that a majority of all results from different studies are non-commensurate.

Another way of expressing this is that the question can, fortunately, not be answered, that the concept of sexual harassment in academia cannot be unified in itself, as a consequence of the diversity of perspectives and knowledge. Research is, so to speak, excellent if it is able to establish a continuously unstable characterisation of a research object, and very definitely so if this occurs within the framework of a theoretically and methodologically diversified and critical research field. In this case, and against the background of the entire analysed research field in this research review, sexual harassment in academia is quite simply *research-based knowledge on sexually connotated experiences of exposure in academia*.

## Conclusion

This research review is a first attempt in Sweden to summarise and analyse the international research field of sexual harassment in academia. Within the framework for the specific assignment from the Swedish Research Council, the ambition has been to summarise and clarify central aspects of the knowledge of the research field. Through a comprehensive work with systematic literature searches, summaries of existing research and brief analytical samples, a picture has been drawn of a very urgent research field, and a major, and diversified, knowledge area. The review tries to embody a problem that in its form, content and consequences constitutes one of the major challenges to an inclusive work and study environment in academia. This is a problem that also shines a light on the need for recognition of individual experiences of exposure, the importance of functioning preventive methods and relevant support structures, reliable measuring methods and relevant theoretical perspectives, as well as the importance of refined and changed legislation and legal practice. It is also a problem that clearly reflects academic organisation cultures' dysfunctional characteristics and their inability to address their own shortcomings.

For a long time, sexual harassment was a problem without name.<sup>213</sup> Today, there has long been a multiplicity of concepts and theories, policies and preventive practices, and experience-based knowledge is growing and is continuously refined. On the whole, sexual harassment is a problem that we know a lot about. We hope this research review is a contribution to what must be a joint striving to expunge sexual harassment in academia specifically, and sexualised violence more generally.

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213 JämO (1987); MacKinnon (1979).

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The reference summaries below are divided up according to the various main headings of the report. A selection of publications is analysed in four separate sections of the report. These are Research reviews, Top-ranked publications, Swedish research and Other Nordic research. The reference lists for these sections shows referenced publications as part of all publications from the literature search for each section. In addition, other referenced literature for each section is listed under a separate sub-heading when relevant.

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## **Appendix 1 – about the search process**

### **Delimitations of search terms**

At an early stage in the search process, a multitude of different synonyms for the concept of “sexual harassment” were identified. Examples of synonymous concepts that were excluded are “sexual assault”, “sexual abuse”, “sexual violence” and “rape”. These were excluded as the number of hits was considered to be unmanageable for this assignment. To begin with, research linked to other types of harassment than merely gender was of interest, more specifically harassment and the various grounds for discrimination recognised in Swedish discrimination legislation. These too had to be excluded for the same reason mentioned above. Using various search techniques, it was however possible to construe a search so that both the concept of “sexual harassment” and harassment due to sexual inclination, for example, could be included, by constructing the search as follows: sexual\* AND harass\*.

### **Choice of databases**

In its choice of sources, KvinnSam included both multi-disciplinary databases and also discipline-specific ones. Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) are in the first category, and have an emphasis on natural science subjects (Swedish Research Council, 2014). Databases with a more social science emphasis, and that can be assumed to be of relevance for the subject are Sociological Abstracts and Gender Studies Database. In some of the searches, educational science databases have been included, as they often contain publications about higher education, which was considered of relevance for the searches that only related to sexual harassment in academia. Supersök, the University of Gothenburg Library’s joint search portal that co-searches in most of the individual databases and the local library catalogue, has some limitations when it comes to searching systematically compared to the subject-specific databases. For this reason, it was only used for the part of the assignment that relates to Sweden and the Nordic countries. For the Nordic material, KvinnSam searched the national library catalogues (LIBRIS, Oria, bibliotek.dk, MELINDA and Gegnir.is). In addition to these, searches of publication databases such as SwePub and DiVA have been conducted. Finally, searches using Google Scholar have also been made to avoid missing any publications relevant to the subject.

## All databases used as sources for the assignment

International	Nordic
ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center)	Supersök (Göteborgs Universitetsbiblioteks samlade sökingång)
ERC (Education Research Complete)	Web of Science (Core Collection)
Gender studies database	SwePub
Google Scholar	Bibliotek.dk (Denmark)
Scopus	Bibsys – Oria.no (Norway)
Sociological abstracts	DiVA (Sweden)
	Gegnir.is (Iceland)
	Helka (Finland)
	KVINFO (Denmark)
	LIBRIS (Sweden)
	MELINDA (Finland)
	Norart (Norway)
	NordPub (Nordic countries)

## All research into sexual harassment

The assignment was to produce all national and international research into sexual harassment in working life, focusing on academia in the first instance. The selection should consist of peer reviewed articles, monographs, public inquiries, etc.

For this purpose, the databases used were WoS, Scopus, Gender studies database, Sociological abstracts and the Nordic databases Libris, SwePub, MELINDA, Helka, Bibsys, KVININFO's library catalogue and Bibliotek.dk.

KvinnSam used the following search string:

English: ((“sexual harass\*” OR (harass\* AND sex\*)) AND (universit\* OR college\* OR academ\* OR “higher education” OR work\* OR organisation\*)) NOT (child\* OR school\*)

Swedish: ((“sexuella trakass\*” OR (trakass\* AND sex\*)) AND (universit\* OR högskol\* OR akadem\* OR “högre utbild\*” OR arbet\* OR organisation\*))

In the Swedish translation, the last segment of the search string, NOT (child\* OR school\*), was not included, as these words in Swedish databases did not produce the same number of unwanted hits as in WoS and Scopus.

The English version of the search string was used in all the databases listed. In the Nordic databases, one further search was made, where the search string was translated in each individual language. Overall, the searches resulted in 5 561 unique items in total.

## Research reviews

The criteria for this part of the assignment was to produce the most relevant, peer reviewed research reviews into sexual harassment in academia and working life. KvinnSam based this on the following search string: (harass\* OR “sexual harass\*”) AND (universit\* OR college\* OR academ\* OR student\* OR teach\* OR professor\* OR work\*) AND (“systematic review” OR “literature review” OR “systematic literature review”). In order not to miss any publication central to the field, search words were added afterwards in the event an analysis of a hit list had contributed to synonyms of search words being found, for example. KvinnSam screened the hit lists, mostly based on some of the publications not having consisted of research reviews. Following a first revision, it was thought that the search needed to be widened specifically for research reviews and academia, and therefore the overall principle of excluding the word discrimination from the searches was abandoned, and *diskriminer\** and *discriminat\** respectively were added to the search. Out of a total of 122 items, a further selection was made by the authors of the report, based on content, which resulted in 29 relevant publications.

## Top-ranked publications

The criteria for this part of the assignment was to produce a selection of top-ranked, peer reviewed articles without geographic limitations, that focused only on academia and not on working life if possible, with the help of field-standardised citation calculated by the Swedish Research Council using the database Web of Science. The following search string was used: (sexual\* harass\* AND (“higher education” OR universit\* OR college\* OR academ\*)). This search produced 916 hits in Web of Science. Based on this hit list, the Swedish Research Council produced the field-standardised citation for the items on the hit list. The reason for this was to compensate for time and also for citation frequency within a subject. Data is lacking for 211 of the items (out of 916). This is because they were published in 2017 or 2018, or because they are of another publication type than a scientific article, for example a “book review” or “proceedings paper”. The list was sorted based on the field-standardised citation for each publication. The world average is 1, so if a publication has the value 1.5 this means that it has been cited 50 per cent more than other publications in the subject class during the same time period. After having screened out the items that lacked data, the 60 with the highest citation value were selected. Out of these 60 items, a further selection based on content was made by the authors of the report, which resulted in 30 publications.

## Swedish and other Nordic research

KvinnSam started with a search string and combined this with each country, for example (“sexual harassment”) AND (universit\* OR higher education OR college\* OR academ\* OR student\* OR professor\*) AND (Norge\* OR Norway\* OR norwegian\* OR norsk\*). KvinnSam also searched for (scandinav\* OR norther\* OR nordic\*) Searches were also made in the other Nordic languages. For all countries, searches were made in national library catalogues, journal databases, Supersök (University of Gothenburg’s overall search service), and international databases such as WoS, Scopus, Gender Studies, plus Google Scholar. A request for search assistance was sent to Denmark: KVINFO, Finland: Centre for Gender Equality Information/National Institute for Health and Welfare, Iceland: Jafnréttisstofa/Centre for Gender Equality and Norway: Kilden, Research Council of Norway.

For Danish material, KVINFO and Bibliotek.dk were also asked. For Icelandic material, searches were made in GEGNIR, and help was also provided by an Icelandic contact who could make correct translations of the search strings in question, and also pass on interesting publications, where a few were of relevance for the task. For the Norwegian material, KvinnSam also searched the national library catalogue ORIA, and Norart (Norwegian and Nordic journal articles). No hits of relevance were made over and above what had already been found in the journal databases. After being tipped off after various mailings, KvinnSam also made a search in the publications of the National Institute of Occupational Health (STAMI) and the Fafo Research Foundation. For Swedish material, searches were made in LIBRIS, KVINNSAM (the database itself), SwePub, DiVA and artikelsök. For Finnish material, searches in MELINDA and HELKA were used. To safeguard Finnish literature, the reference list to Liisa Husu’s thesis “Sexism, Support and Survival in Academia” was checked.

In addition to this, KvinnSam has also looked at the reference lists of relevant publication, in order to find further publications. They also searched relevant publications in Google Scholar in order to find publications that had cited these.

The Swedish Research Council has commissioned a research review on sexual harassment in academia from the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, University of Gothenburg. The aim is to provide an overview of current knowledge in international research. The review is based on an analysis of approximately 800 publications out of a total of 5 561 during the period 1966–2018, which were selected through an extensive search process in literature databases.

In a concluding discussion the authors of this research review present general conclusions from the entire international research field studied, with special focus on knowledge about prevalence, consequences for individuals and the challenges of the research field.

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