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# **Leadership Status, Sexual Harassment Training, and Women's Expectations About Working with Men**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Occupational gender segregation is a key driver of labor market inequality and is prominent across occupations, within occupations, and within workplace task groups. This paper explores how structural arrangements and cultural messages shape women's preferences for working with men vs. women. With respect to structural arrangements, we analyze how women's relative power on a team influences their partner preference. With respect to cultural messages, we examine how one common source of information that has the potential to either challenge or reify notions of gender difference—sexual harassment policy training—affects partner preference. **Methods:** We conducted a laboratory experiment in which we placed 100 college-aged women in positions they may commonly find themselves in at the start of a new job—identifying coworkers to partner with on group tasks—and varied (1) their relative power on the team (leader or helper) and (2) exposure to workplace training (sexual harassment or ergonomic computer setup). We then assessed their attitudinal and behavioral preference for working with a female vs. a male partner on a decision-making task. **Results:** Women, particularly women assigned to a leadership position, more often chose to work with a female partner. Sexual harassment training did not affect women leaders' attitudes about working with a male partner but those in a helper role expressed more positive attitudes about working with a man after sexual harassment training. These findings document how macro-level processes can shape workplace gender segregation, thus identifying mechanisms underlying the reproduction of gender inequality.