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SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING AND GENDER BELIEFS

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National Academy of Sciences Workshop on Sexual
Harassment

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Effect of Policy Training on Gender Beliefs

- Antiharassment policy training often reinforces traditional gender stereotypes and negative attitudes about women
- Why should we care?
 - Sexual harassment is
 - ...gender discrimination
 - ...a manifestation of power (Uggen et al.)
 - ...still pervasive



Quantitative Methods: Analysis of survey data of U.S. federal employees

- How are policy training, gender, age, occupational status, and beliefs about sexuality in the workplace related to how broadly people define sexual harassment?
- Data: U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board Study, 1994 (N=5902)
- Tinkler, J. 2008. "People are Too Quick to Take Offense'..." *Law and Social Inquiry* 33:417-445.



Qualitative Methods: Interviews and Participant Observations

- How do people articulate their concerns about the enforcement of sexual harassment law?
- Participant-observations of policy training sessions at a university (mock trial, acting troupe, scenario-based discussions, online video) and interviews with policy officers
- Interviews with 40 college students
- Tinkler, J. 2012. "Resisting the Enforcement of Sexual Harassment Law." *Law & Social Inquiry* 37: 1-24.



Methods: Experimental

- How does policy training affect beliefs about men and women?
- Sample: Men and women undergraduate students, 20+/condition
- Design: 2 conditions (Policy intervention or control)
- Measures
 - Unconscious bias (Implicit Association Test showing association of men with careers and women with families)
 - Explicit gender beliefs (self-reported ratings of men and women)



Measures

- Unconscious gender bias – Implicit Association Test (IAT)
 - Stronger association of men with careers and women with families



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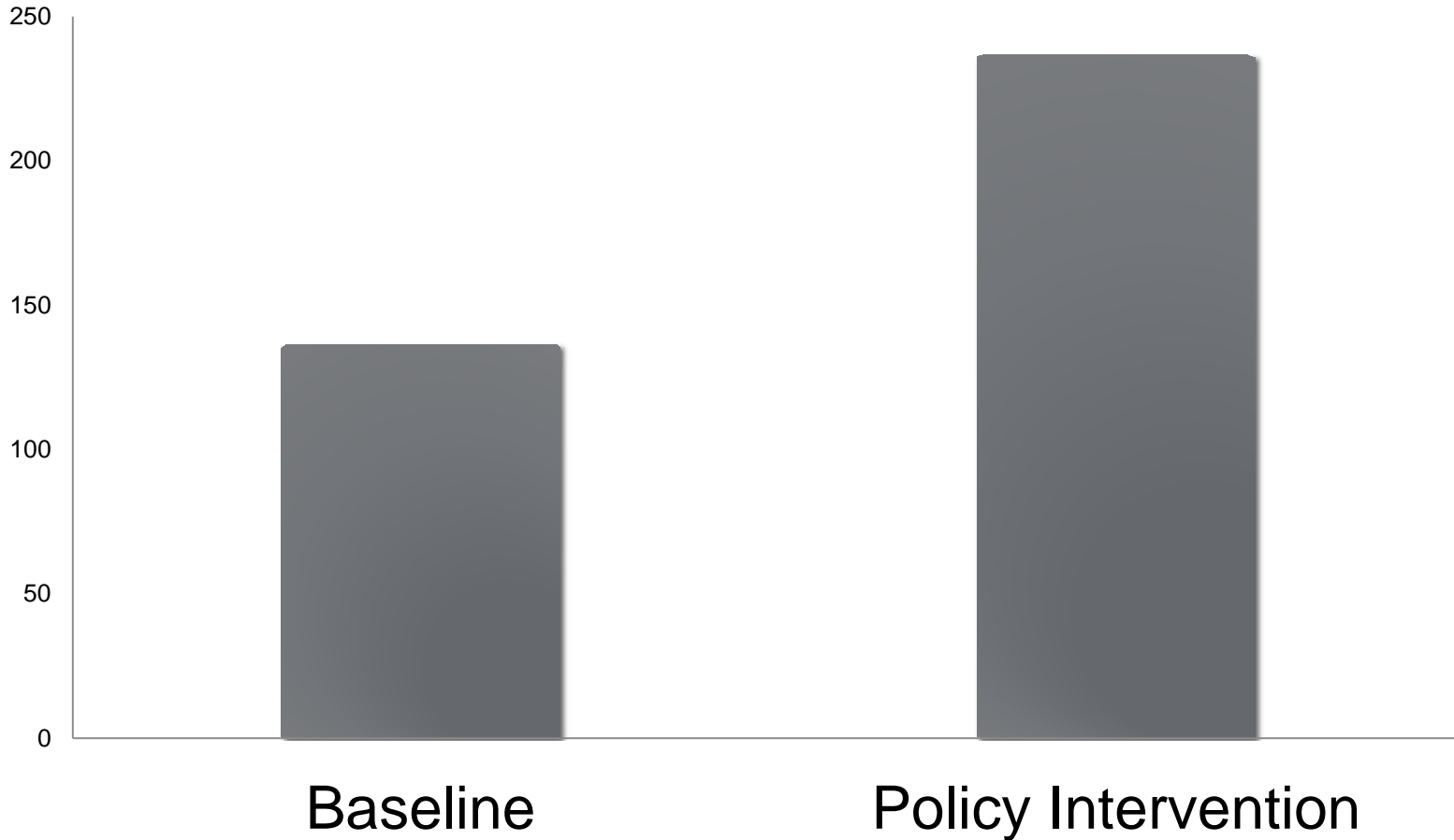
- Explicit gender beliefs (self-reported ratings of men and women and gender attitudes scales)



Some Findings

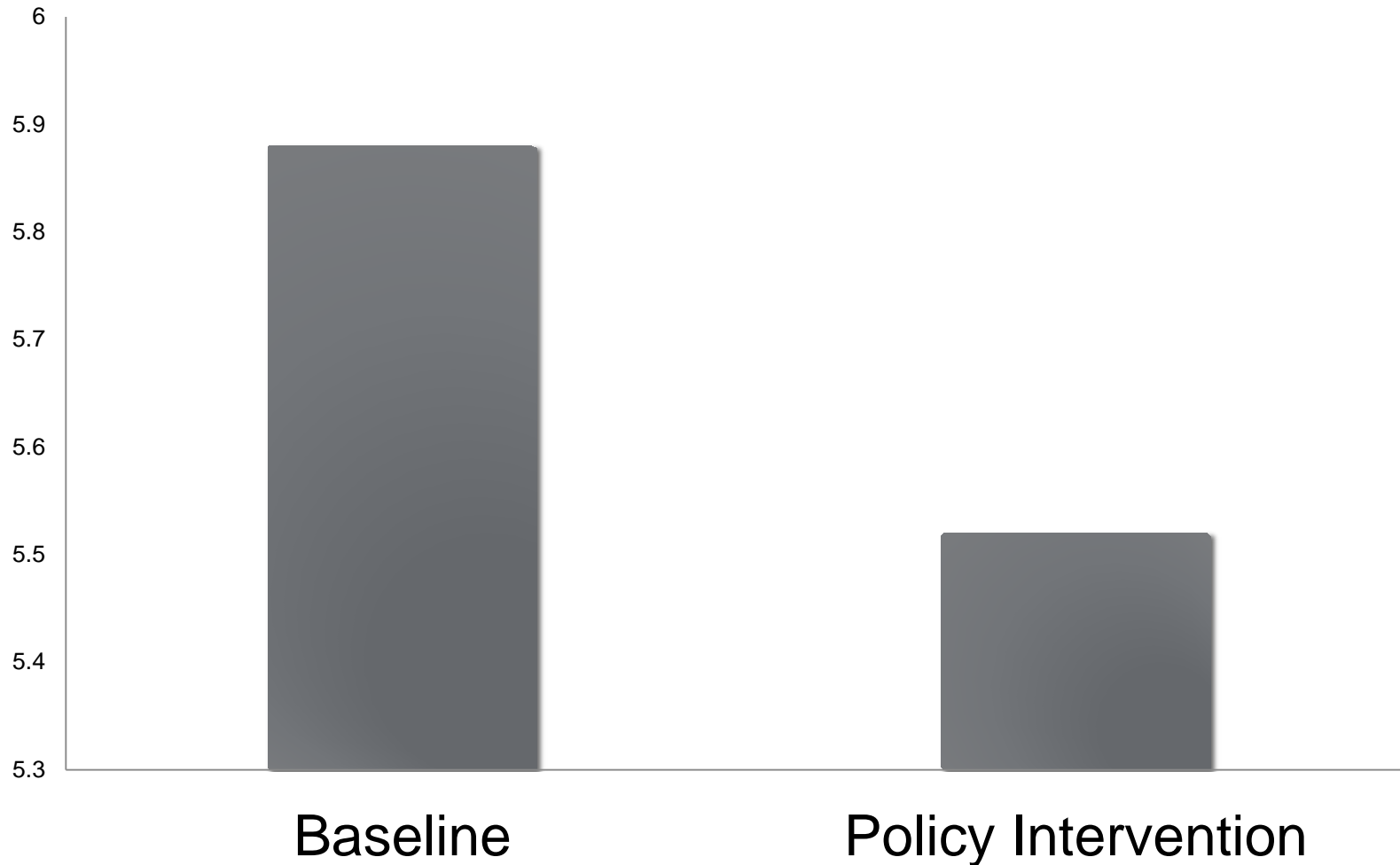
- **Policy training activates gender stereotypes and backlash against women (Tinkler et al. 2007; 2012; 2013)**
- This effect is strongest among men committed to traditional gender norms (Tinkler 2013)
- Women often feel disempowered by policy training (Tinkler 2008; 2012; 2013)
- The gender of the trainer matters (Tinkler et al. 2015)

Male Subjects' Unconscious Bias (association of men with careers and women with families; N=44)



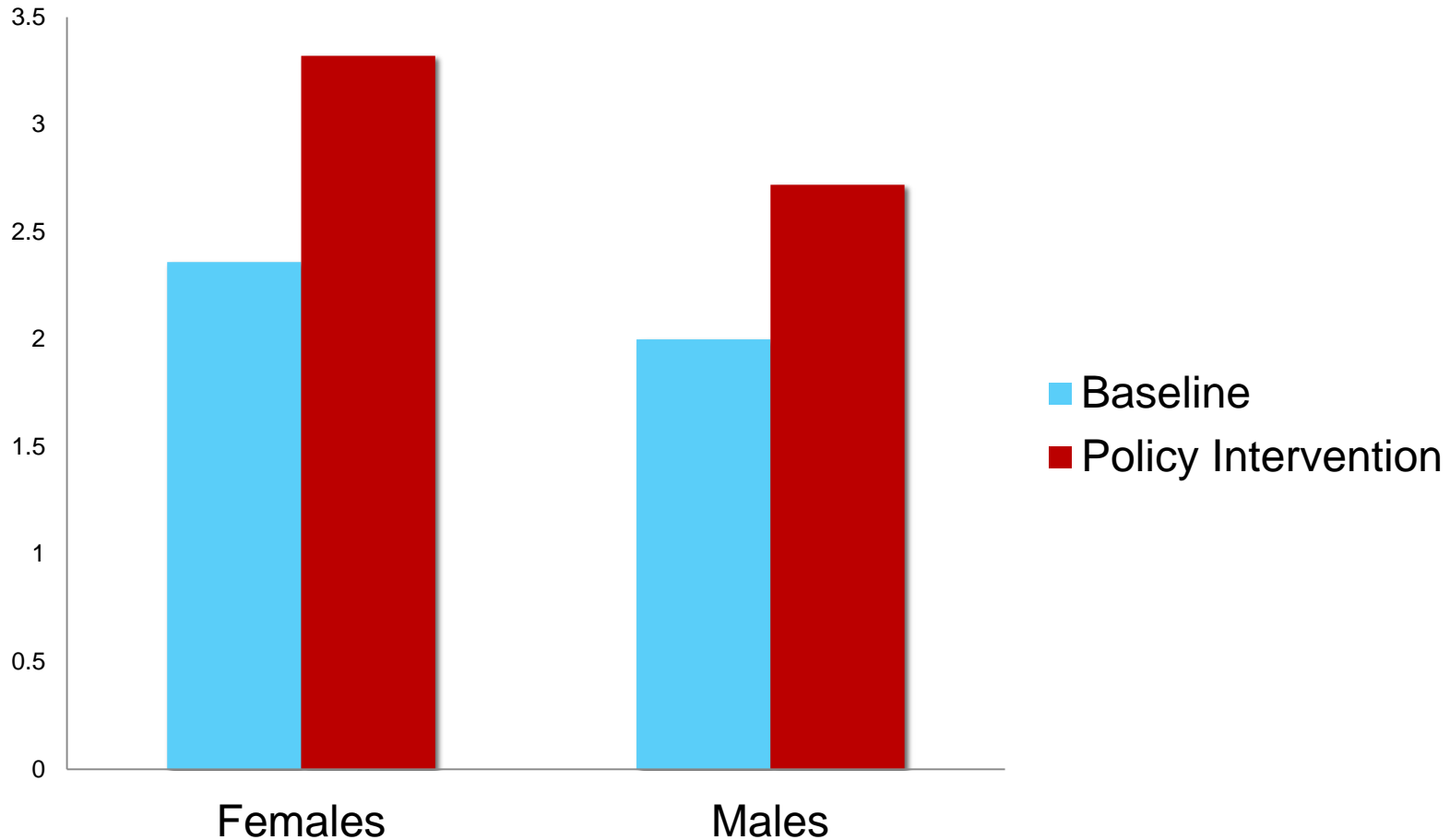
Tinkler, J., Li, Y.E., and Mollborn, S. 2007. "Can Legal Interventions Change Beliefs?" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 70: 480-494.

Male Subjects' Ratings of Women's Likability (N=44)



Tinkler, J., Li, Y.E., and Mollborn, S. 2007. "Can Legal Interventions Change Beliefs?" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 70: 480-494.

Agree that Women Tease Men Sexually (N=100)



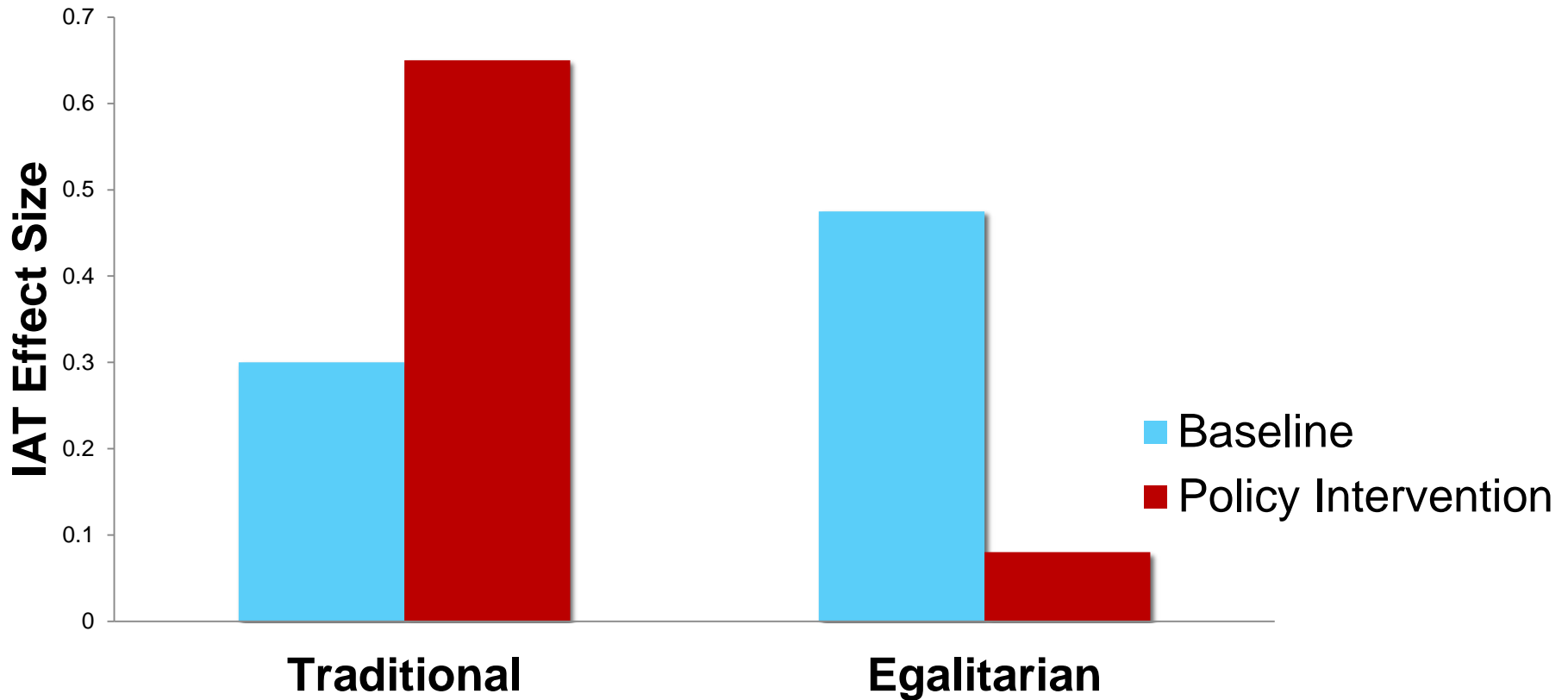
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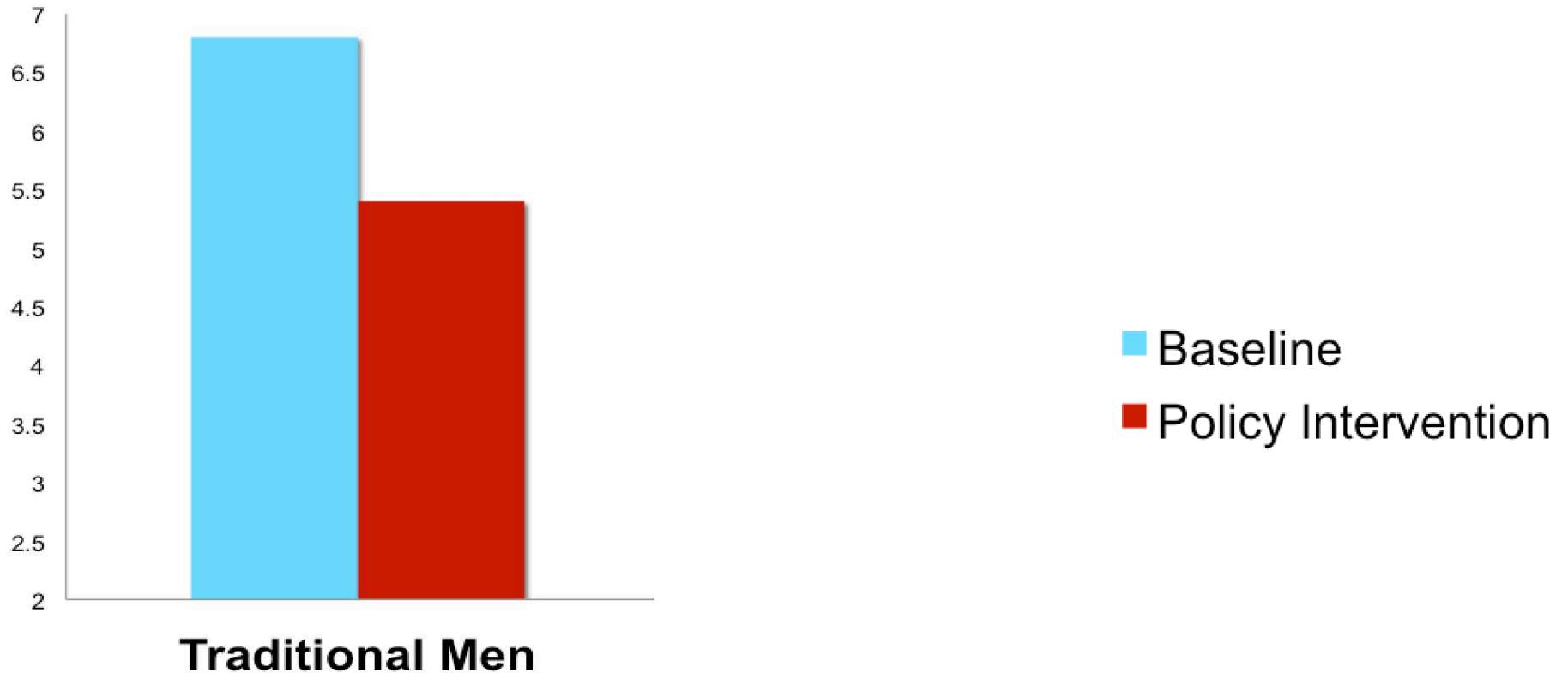
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Unconscious Gender Bias (gender aggregated)



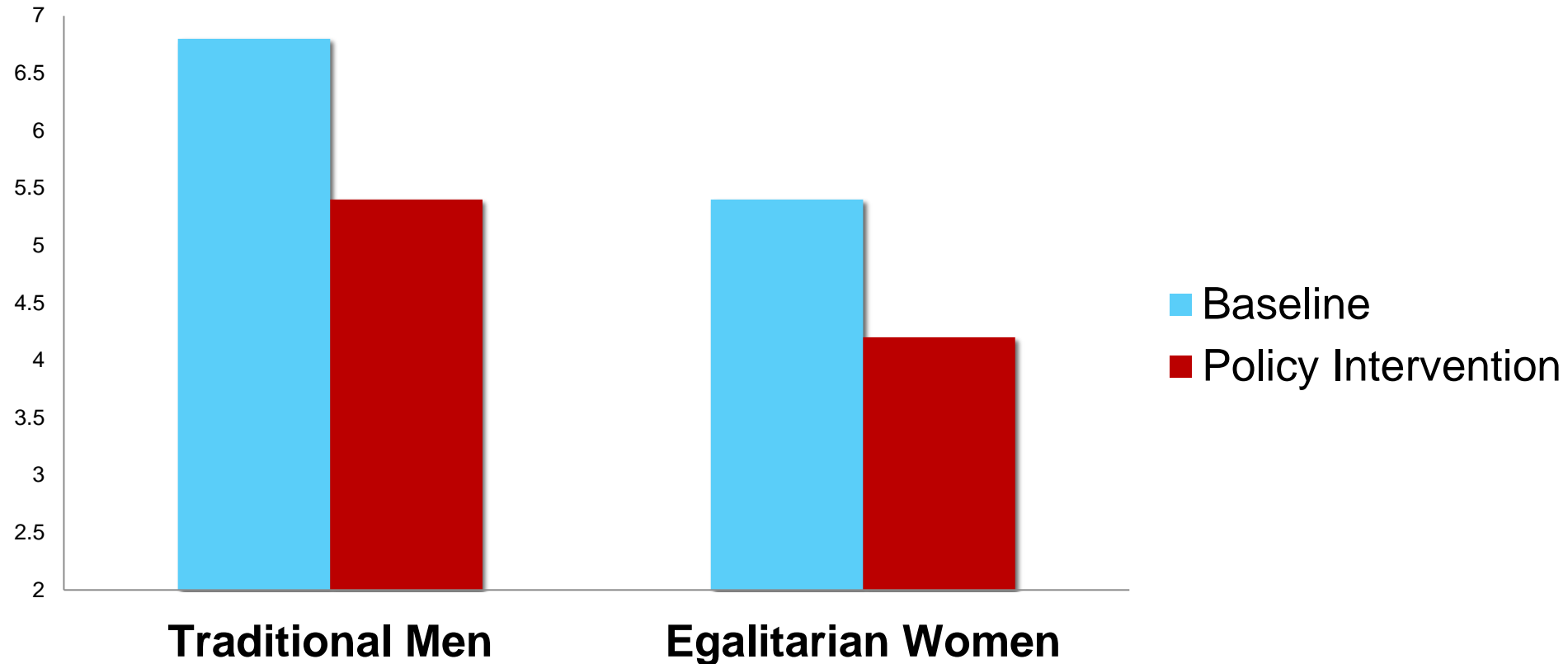
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Ratings of Women's Likability



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Ratings of Women's Likability (gender disaggregated)



Tinkler, J. 2013. "How Do Sexual Harassment Policies Shape Gender Beliefs?..." *Social Science Research* 42: 1269-1283.



Some Findings

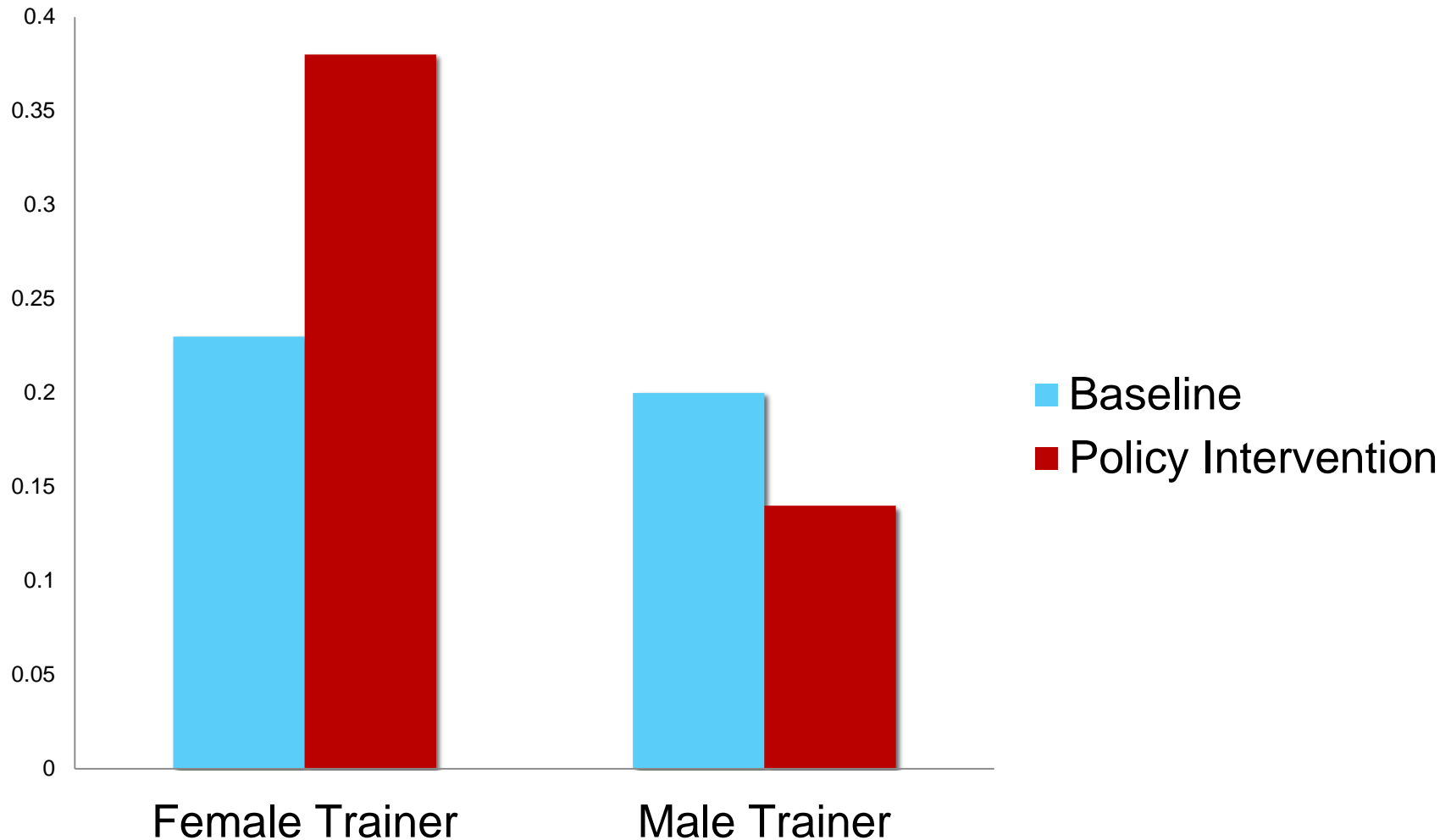
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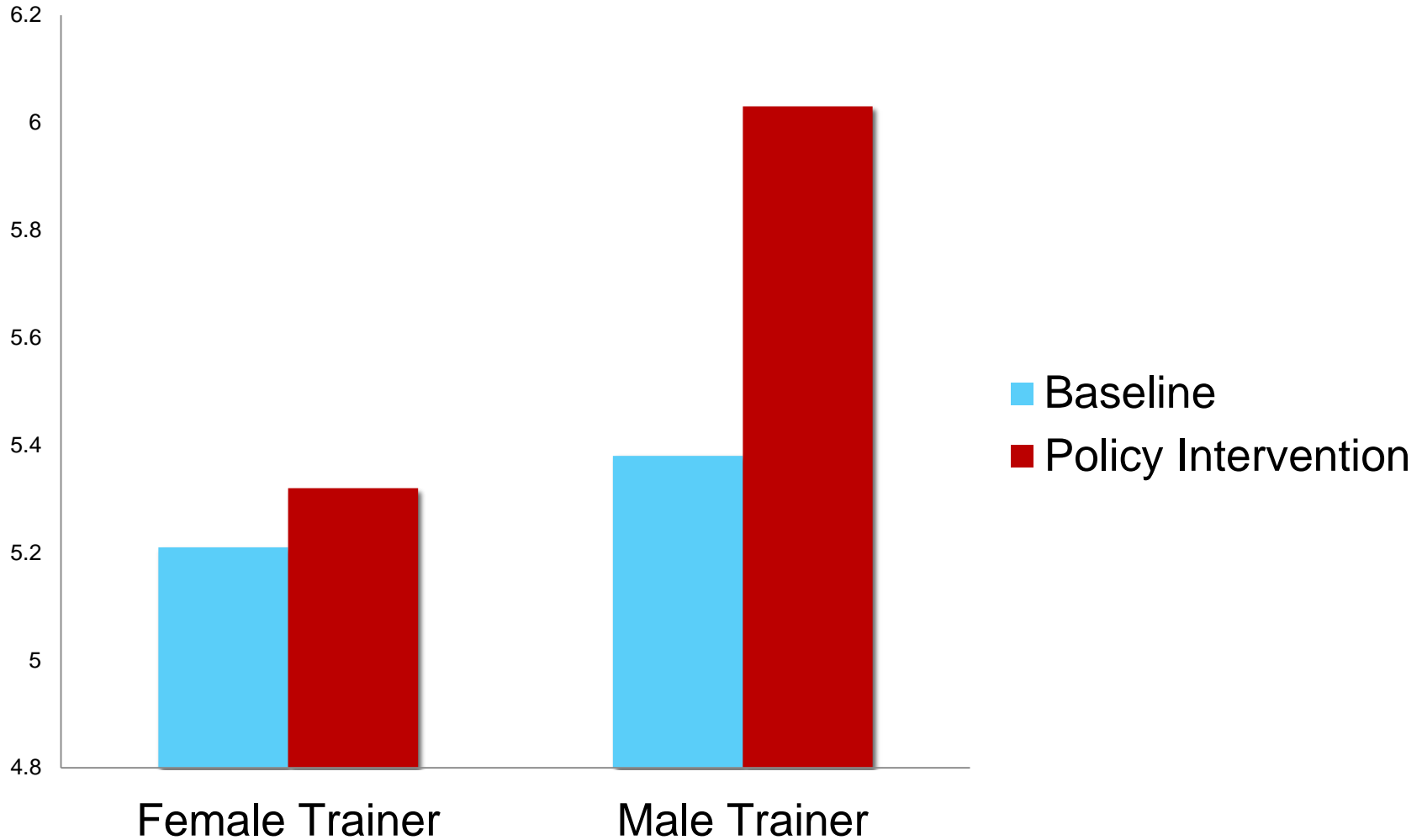
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Male Subject's Unconscious Bias (N=83)



Tinkler, J., Gremillion, S., Arthurs, K. 2015. "Perceptions of Legitimacy: The Sex of the Legal Messenger and Reactions to Sexual Harassment Training." *Law & Social Inquiry* 40: 152-174.

Male Subjects' Ratings of Women's Likability (N=83)



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Implications

- How can we improve policy training?
 - Be attentive to threats to gender norms of interaction
 - Be attentive to threats to men and women's status
 - Men's role in policy enforcement
- How can workplaces reduce sexual harassment and avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes?
 - Policy training is not a panacea (Kalev et al. 2006)
 - Create opportunities for disconfirming stereotypes (Ridgeway 1997)
 - Less hierarchical work groups along gender lines (Green and Kalev 2008; Whittington and Smith-Doerr 2008; Kalev 2009)



- **Survey data of Federal Employees (1994)**

- Tinkler, J. 2008. "People are Too Quick to Take Offense'..." *Law and Social Inquiry* 33:417-445.

- **Participant-observations of policy trainings and in-depth interviews**

- Tinkler, J. 2012. "Resisting the Enforcement of Sexual Harassment Law." *Law & Social Inquiry* 37: 1-24.

- **Experimental data**

- Tinkler, J., Gremillion, S., and Arthurs, K. 2015. "Perceptions of Legitimacy: The Sex of the Legal Messenger..." *Law & Social Inquiry* 40: 152-174.
- Tinkler, J. 2013. "How Do Sexual Harassment Policies Shape Gender Beliefs? An Exploration Of The Moderating Effects Of Norm Adherence And Gender." *Social Science Research* 42: 1269-1283.
- Tinkler, J., Li, Y.E., and Mollborn, S. 2007. "Can Legal Interventions Change Beliefs?" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 70: 480-494.



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THANK YOU

POLITICALLY CORRECT

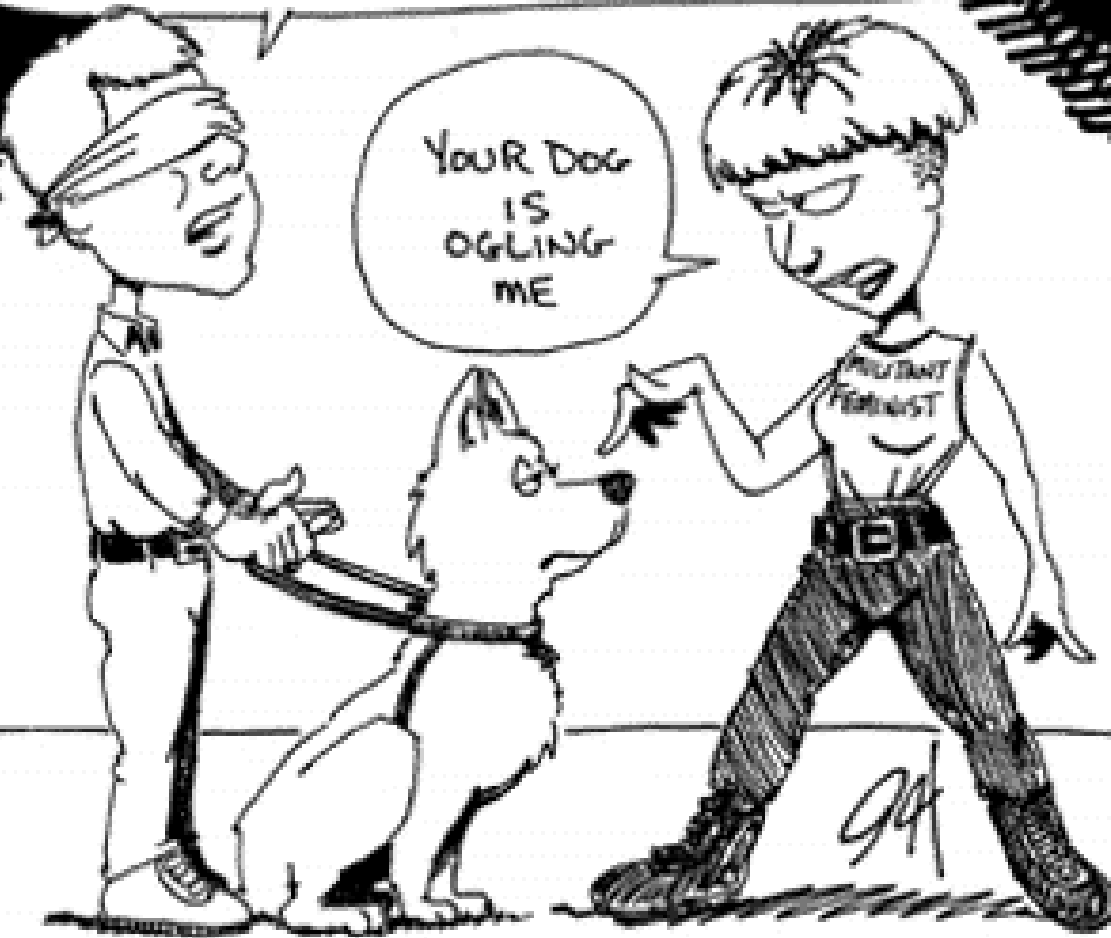
by Jim Huber



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WITH THIS BLINDFOLD ON, I CANNOT SEE OR DO ANYTHING THAT COULD BE CONSTRUED AS SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND THERE IS NO WAY YOU CAN ACCUSE OR ASSOCIATE ME WITH IT.

YOUR DOG IS OGLING ME





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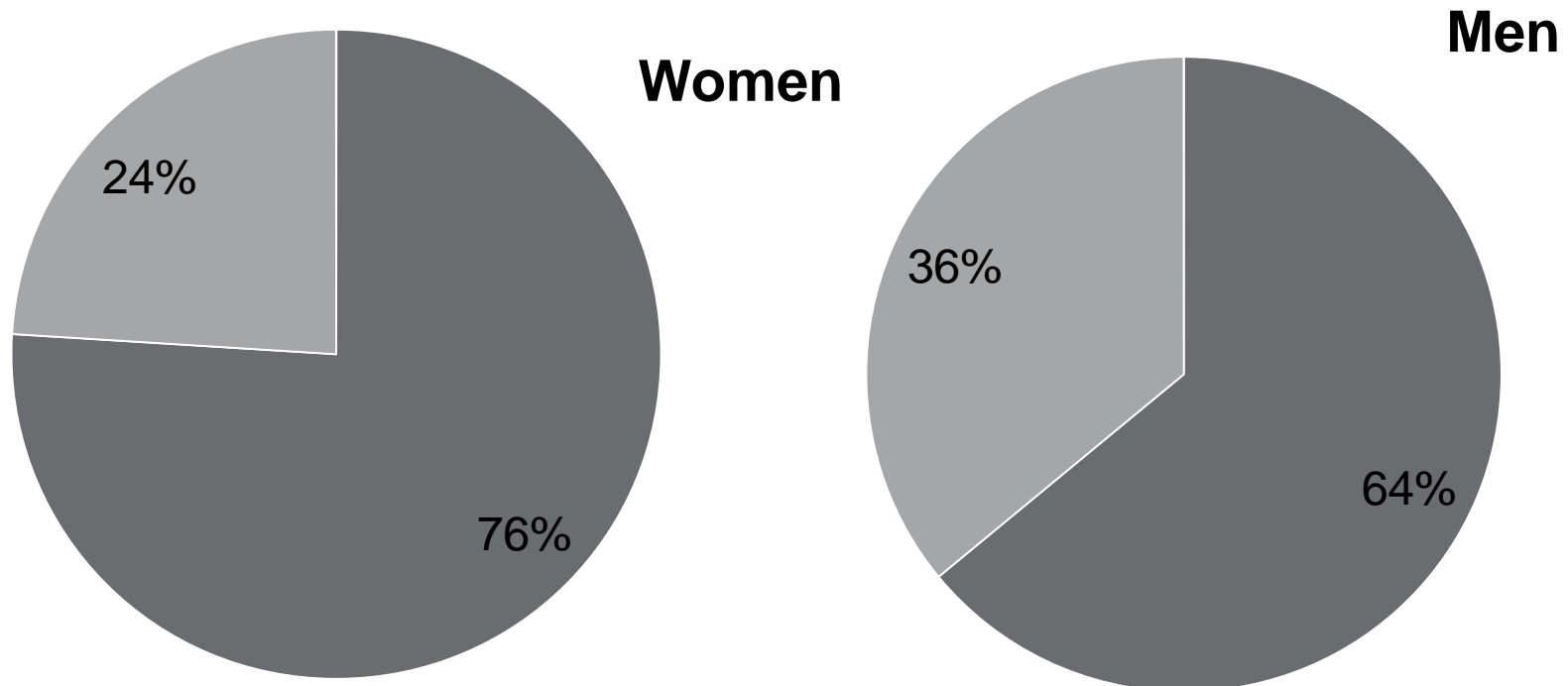
Activates gender stereotypes

- “You are trivializing your friendship with her. If you are somebody’s best friend, you should go punch him (Jack) out. She may have been really **stupid** in the car (for kissing Jack) on the 2nd date, but he is a real jerk and **you should punch him.**”
(65+ man)



Injurious and should be illegal

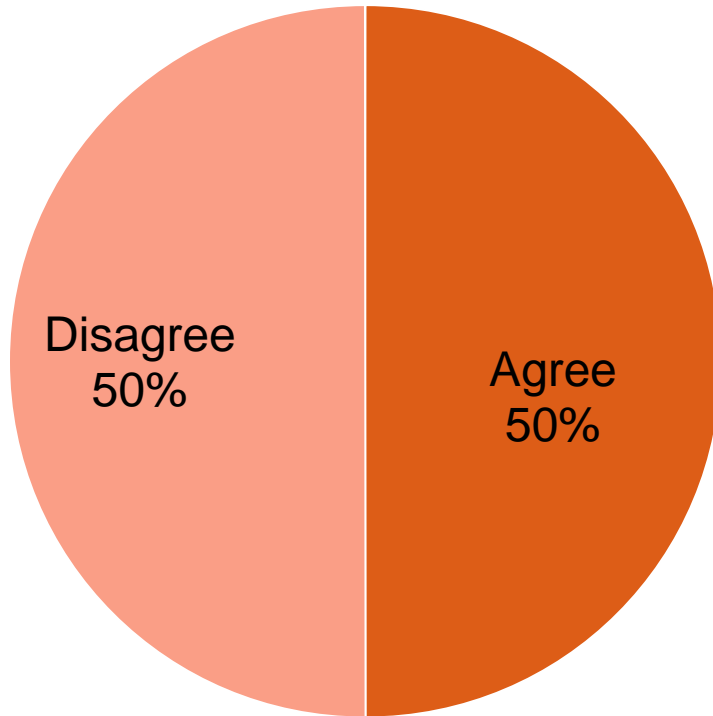
- Unwanted Sexual Joking is Harassment
- Unwanted Sexual Joking is Not Harassment





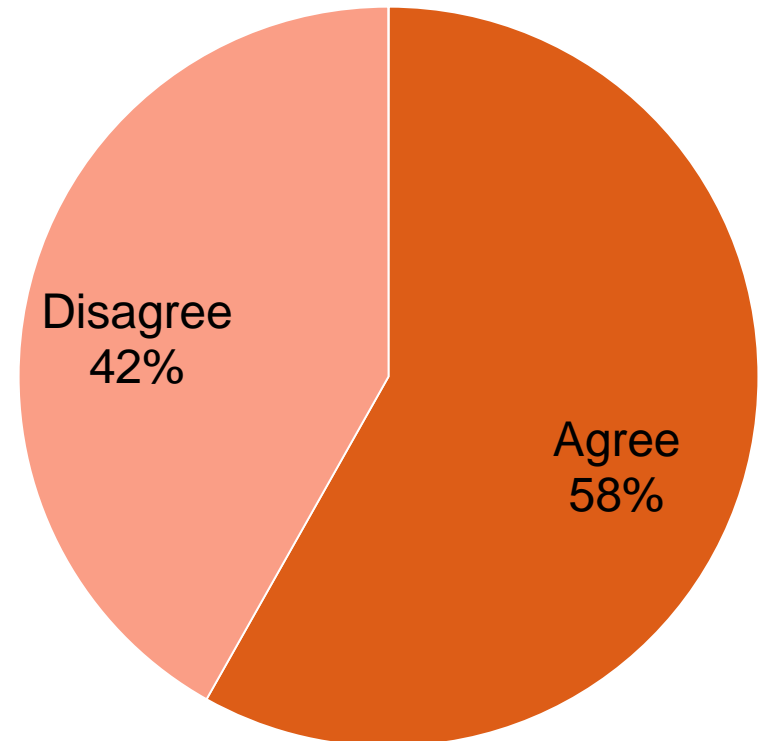
Resistance to Enforcement

Women



People are too quick to take offense at looks and remarks

Men

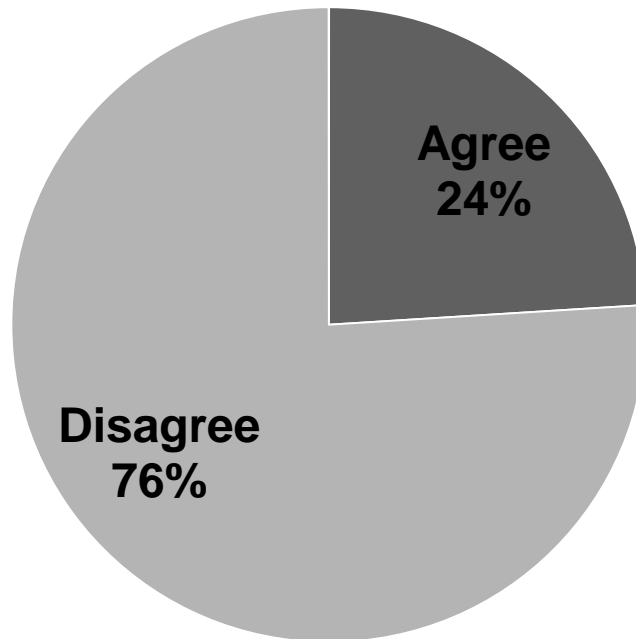




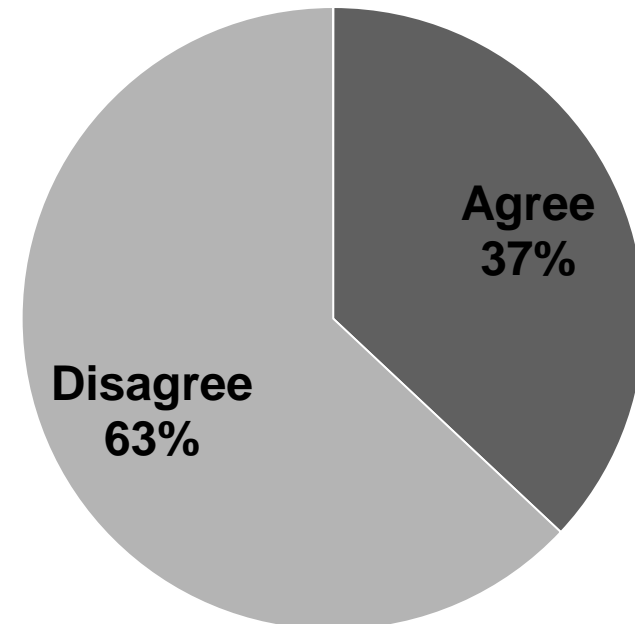
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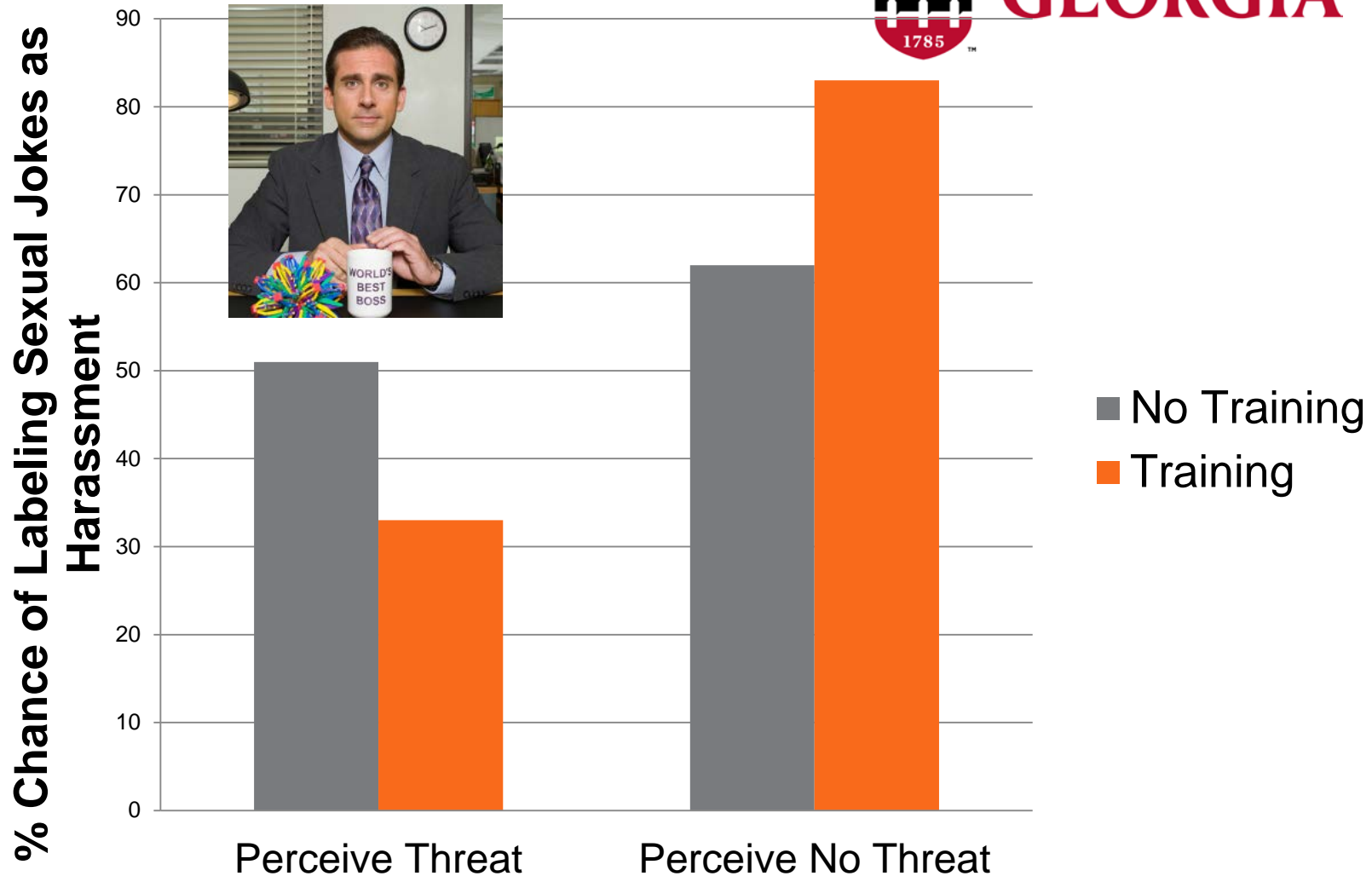
**People often misinterpret
normal attraction for sexual
harassment**

Women

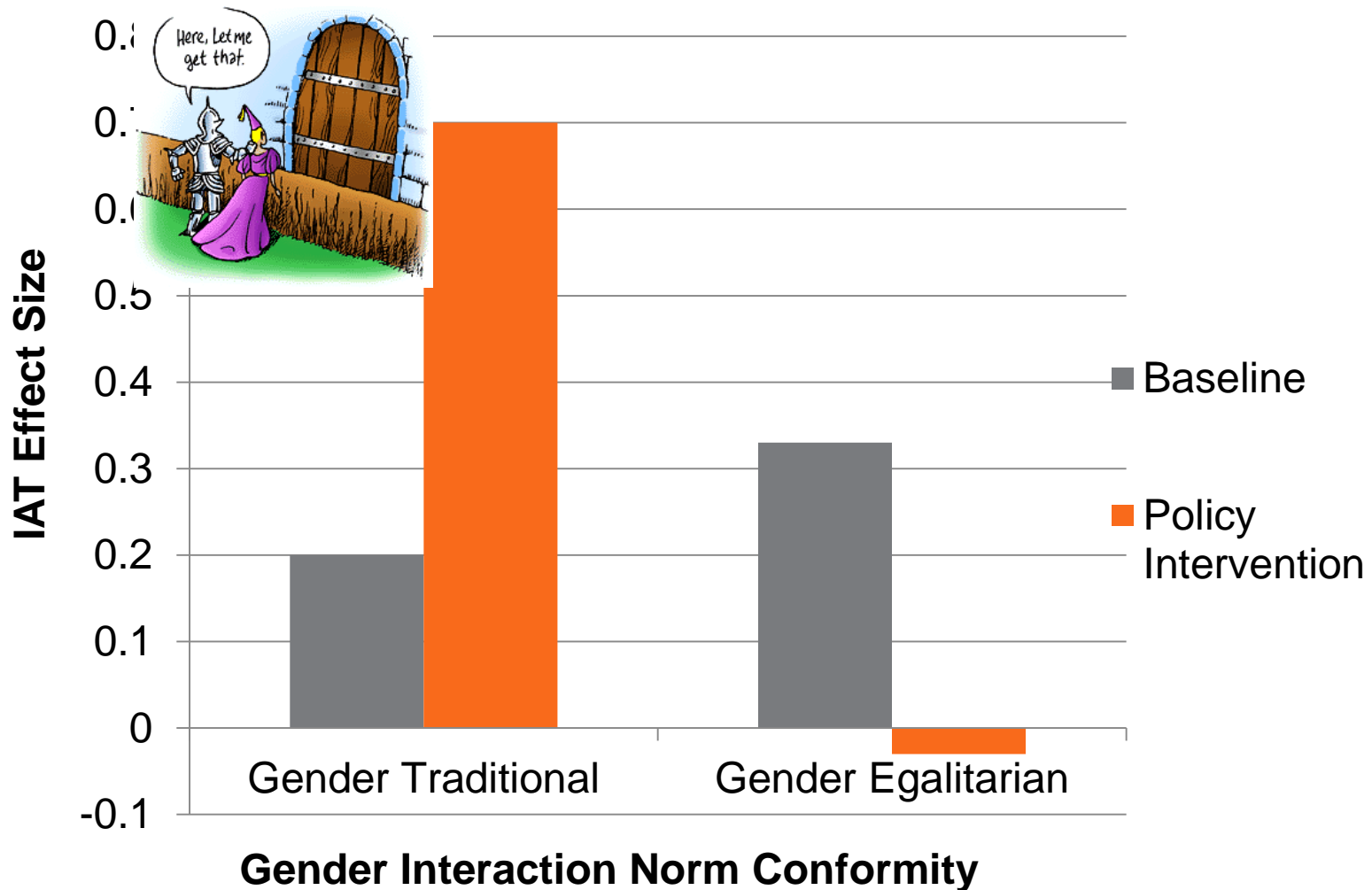


Men

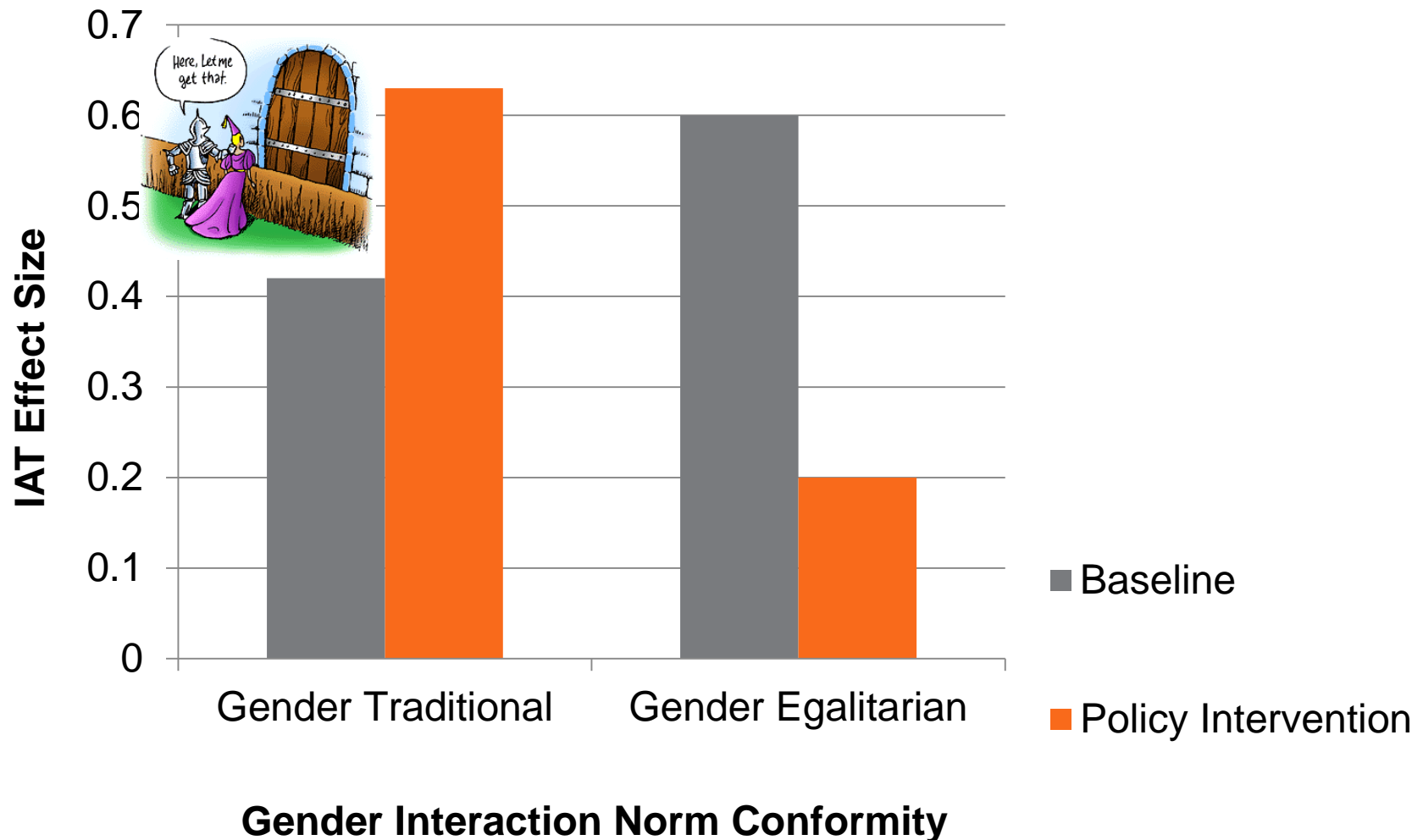




Male IAT Effect (Implicit Association of Men with Careers and Women with Families)



Female IAT Effect (Implicit Association of Men with Careers and Women with Family)





Threat to status of women

- ML estimates from ordinal probit: defining sexual harassment to include jokes and remarks

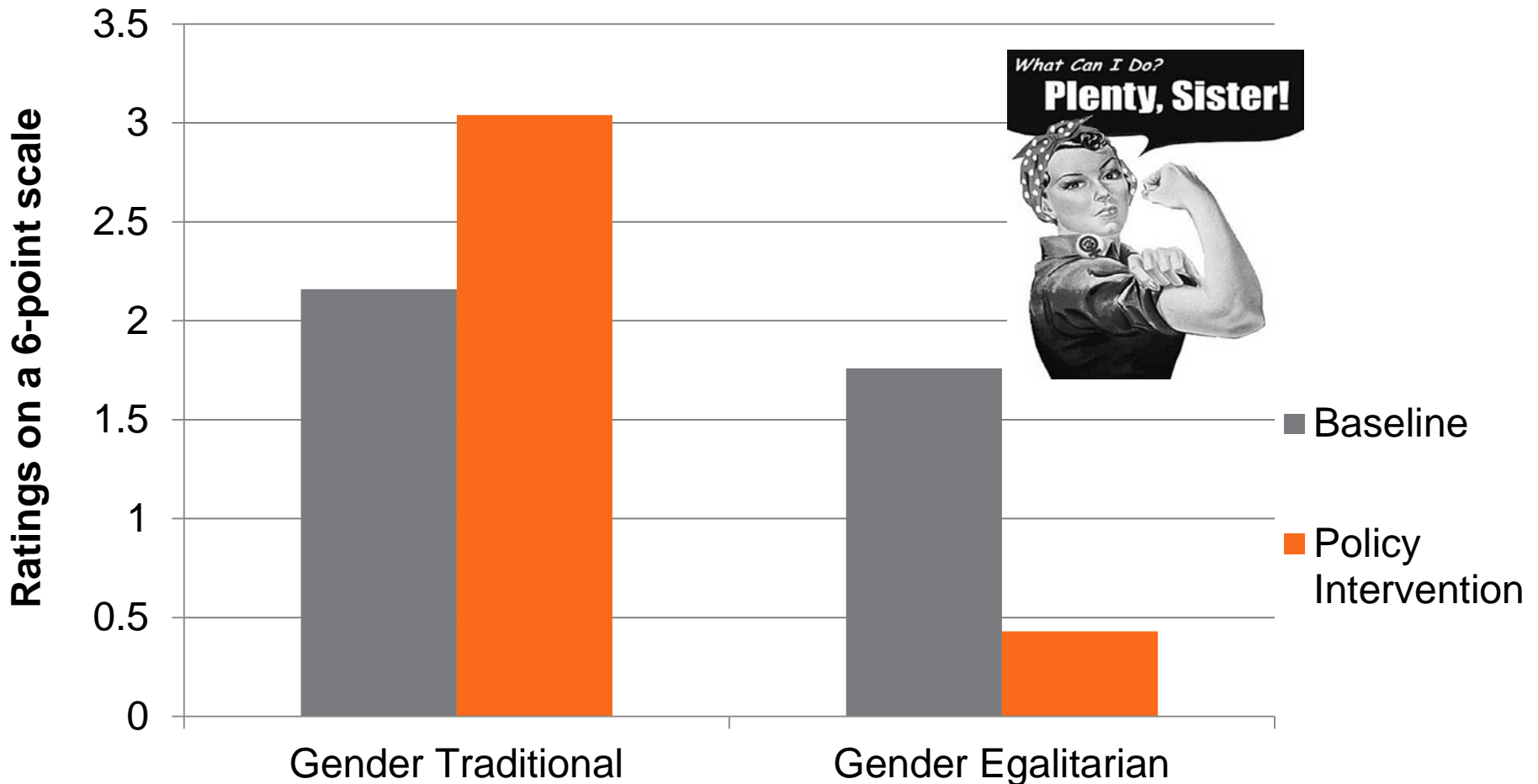
	Males	Females
People overly sensitive	-.21 (.09)***	.02 (.07)
Supervisor	.01 (.07)	-.18 (.07)***
Supervisor*overly sensitive	-.03 (.08)	-.15 (.09)**

Threat to Status of Women



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Females: Stereotypes of women as virtuous and in need of male protection



Gender Interaction Norms Conformity