PUBLIC SECTOR WHISTLE-BLOWING: THE ROLES OF STRUCTURE, REPRESENTATION, AND MANAGEMENT

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Sun Young Kim
To my parents
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Whistle-blowing refers to the exposure of wrongful practices by organizational members in the hope of stopping the offenses. As public organizations and their activities have become more complex, the importance of whistle-blowing has increased given that insiders are the best sources of knowledge and evidence of serious misconduct. Despite the growing reliance on whistle-blowing, however, relatively little is known about the roles of organizational conditions and managerial practices in encouraging such behavior. This dissertation investigates whether and how three important aspects of public organizations—ethics management, organizational structure, and demographic representation—can help to explain whistle-blowing among public employees. Specifically, I focus on addressing the following questions: (1) how management of ethics programs influences employees’ fear of retaliation for blowing the whistle, (2) how organizational structure relates to the decision to disclose unethical conduct, and (3) whether gender representation plays a role in encouraging employees to report sexual harassment and protecting them from retaliation. Theoretical frameworks and empirical models are developed and tested in the context of the U.S. federal government using data from multiple sources.

Results from the empirical studies suggest that ethics programs, organizational structure, and gender representation each have a meaningful influence on whistle-blowing attitudes and behaviors. First, I find that ethics programs designed to share ethical values and norms are more effective in reducing the fear of retaliation than are those programs focused on monitoring and compliance, especially for employees who hold less power in an organization. Second, among
various structural dimensions of public organizations, employees are more likely to engage in whistle-blowing when their organization is either less decentralized or more professionalized. Lastly, male representation is positively related to the likelihood that male targets report sexual harassment, while female representation has a negative association with reporting by female targets. However, greater female representation is shown to reduce reprisals against female whistle-blowers. Overall, this dissertation contributes to public management scholarship and practice by offering a better understanding of how public managers and executives can foster effective whistle-blowing and thereby build more ethical and transparent workplaces by effectively designing and managing ethics programs, structures, and representations.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, public sector organizations all over the world have produced a number of high-profile incidents of organizational wrongdoing, including corruption, fraud, mismanagement, waste of public funds or property, abuse of authority, and other breaches of laws and regulations. Unlawful and unethical conduct by public agencies and government employees increasingly crowds the columns of newspapers. Such practices have not only taken a significant toll on employees and organizations, but the costs associated with wrongdoing have often extended to clients, citizens, and society. Wrongful activities may also pose a threat to public health and safety, as seen in the recent 2014 scandal involving U.S. Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals where falsification of appointment data leading to delays in medical treatment was alleged to have caused the deaths of several veterans. In many cases, including the VA scandal, serious wrongdoing would not have been identified and investigated without insiders who stepped forward to reveal suspected misconduct. These people are known as whistle-blowers.

Whistle-blowing refers to “the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action” (Near & Miceli, 1985, p. 4). This definition indicates that organizational members can blow the whistle on what is considered unethical, inappropriate, or unacceptable, as well as on unlawful activities. Whistle-blowing is an act of reporting organizational misbehavior to someone who has the power to stop the wrongdoing or to punish the wrongdoer, and in so doing, whistle-blowers may use internal, external, or both channels to make their claims. Scholars have viewed whistle-blowing as a prosocial behavior
Whistle-blowing plays a central part in detecting and correcting unethical conduct by organizational members, which is otherwise difficult to disclose by external stakeholders. As public organizations have become larger and more complex, the importance of whistle-blowing has increased because it is the insiders who have the best knowledge and direct evidence of serious misconduct. Despite its role in making organizations more ethical and transparent workplaces, whistle-blowing is not always welcomed; reports of wrongdoing are often suppressed, and whistle-blowers are silenced. They also experience substantial reprisals due to their disclosures. It is because many organizations tend to view whistle-blowing claims as a threat to their authority structure (Weinstein, 1979), especially when top management is involved in the wrongdoing or when the organization is reliant on the wrongdoing or the wrongdoer (Near & Miceli, 1985). A national survey of government employees in the United States showed that 30% of those who observed transgressions did not report what they saw and 14% even felt pressured to compromise ethical standards and engage in misconduct (Ethics Resource Center, 2008).

In the VA scandal, several employees who had witnessed appointment and scheduling records being inappropriately managed or even fabricated reported it to their supervisors. However, their reports were ignored and buried, and nothing was done to correct the situation (Bronstein & Griffin, 2015). Some of the employees who had initially blown the whistle internally went outside the agency to make their claims public, and many experienced retaliatory treatment by coworkers, supervisors, and top managers, including harassment, defamation, job
transfers, and firings (Rosiak, 2015; Wax-Thibodeaux, 2015). A series of investigations revealed that the agency had heavily relied on this wrongful practice to fudge performance numbers; provided raises, bonuses, and promotions to employees who continued this practice; and stifled any objections to it (Oppel & Goodnough, 2014), which could have created a hostile work environment that discouraged whistle-blowing.

The act of whistle-blowing may disrupt an organization’s normal operations and traditional structures in the short term, but in the long term, it can enhance organizational performance and effectiveness by correcting and terminating transgressions at an early stage (Ewing, 1983). Whistle-blowers are found to be more loyal and committed to their organizations than employees who observe wrongdoing but do not act (Near & Miceli, 1985), and they provide organizations with the opportunity to cease a troubling situation before it develops into a full-blown scandal and thus avoid legal interventions and public scrutiny. Therefore, whistle-blowing should be regarded as “an attempt to improve the organization and to contribute to the public good, not as a betrayal or something to be punished” (Paul & Townsend, 1996, p. 157). As such, better mechanisms are needed for encouraging organizational members to report suspected wrongdoing without concerns about negative consequences.

Scholars and practitioners from various fields have extensively studied a range of antecedents, correlates, and outcomes of whistle-blowing in both public and private organizational settings. Specifically, public management researchers have identified and investigated several individual, organizational, and environmental factors as key antecedents, including public service motivation (Brewer & Selden, 1998; Caillier, in press; Cho & Song, 2015), leadership (Caillier, 2015; Hassan, Wright, & Yukl, 2014), organizational culture and climate (Lavena, 2016; Rothwell & Baldwin, 2006, 2007), and various legal protections such as

In spite of a large volume of scholarly work on whistle-blowing and considerable efforts by legislators, what public organizations and managers can actually do to promote whistle-blowing remains a question. It is theoretically and substantively important to understand the specific characteristics of public sector whistle-blowing and what factors can explain whistle-blowing attitudes and behaviors among public employees. In particular, more research is needed as to the roles of organizational conditions and managerial practices.

This dissertation aims to fill this gap in the literature by focusing on three particular aspects of public organizations—ethics management, organizational structure, and demographic representation—in the context of the U.S. federal government. It consists of three empirical chapters in which theoretical frameworks and empirical models are developed and tested using data from multiple sources. The outline of the dissertation is as follows.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the whistle-blowing literature, focusing on individual and situational predictors of whistle-blowing. It summarizes research findings from early studies and discusses recent developments in the past decade.

In Chapter 3, I examine the extent to which formal ethics programs implemented by federal agencies relate to public employees’ fear of retaliation for whistle-blowing. Drawing on control theory, I delve into different characteristics and orientations of ethics programs and test what impact they have on the fear of reprisal and whether these effects differ across demographic groups.

Chapter 4 explores the effect of organizational structure on the likelihood of disclosing wrongful activities. Specifically, this chapter focuses on five structural dimensions of public
organizations including decentralization of decision-making, span of control, horizontal complexity, professionalization, and politicization. The relationship between organizational structure and the use of internal and external channels is examined as well.

In Chapter 5, I investigate the effects of gender representation on federal bureaucrats’ whistle-blowing on sexual harassment and on the retaliation they receive due to their reporting. Grounded in the theory of representative bureaucracy, I posit that greater gender representation in the workplace would encourage harassment targets to take action against the problem and help protect whistle-blowers from retaliation.

In Chapter 6, this dissertation concludes with a summary of findings from the empirical studies, implications for theory and practice, and limitations and avenues for future research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

As whistle-blowing by organizational members has become critical to the identification, investigation, and rectification of serious wrongdoing, scholars and practitioners have examined what predicts whistle-blowing among employees, who are most likely to report, and which circumstances can encourage disclosures. Three comprehensive reviews have been conducted on the antecedents and correlates of whistle-blowing in organizations by Near and Miceli (1996), Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005), and Miceli et al. (2008). This chapter summarizes findings from early studies, some of which have been reviewed in the works aforementioned, and discusses more recent empirical research published since Miceli et al.’s 2008 review (i.e., in 2008–2017).

The Process of Whistle-Blowing

Whistle-blowing is a complex process that involves multiple parties, including whistle-blower, wrongdoer, complaint recipient, and organization, and a series of steps rather than a one-time event of making a disclosure (Near & Miceli, 1985). In Figure 2-1, the first two steps pertain to decisions and actions by a potential whistle-blower, while the last two steps relate to an organization’s responses. Initially, an employee who has observed a suspected activity should determine whether it constitutes misconduct and label it as wrongdoing. Then, he or she should decide whether to report the wrongdoing by evaluating the estimated benefits and costs associated with making the report. Once charges are made, the organization responds to the
whistle-blower by either ignoring the claim or taking action to correct the offense. The organization may also decide whether to reward or punish the whistle-blower.

A range of characteristics describing whistle-blower, wrongdoing and wrongdoer, job situation, and organizational context have been investigated for each step of the whistle-blowing process (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Miceli et al., 2008). In general, the antecedents of whistle-blowing are categorized into three types of variables: (1) whistle-blower characteristics, (2) wrongdoing and wrongdoer characteristics, and (3) situational characteristics. The first category includes personal attributes, such as demographics, personality, attitudes, and performance. The second set relates to features of the transgression, such as type, frequency, severity, and evidence of wrongdoing, as well as those of the wrongdoer, such as status, likeability, and closeness. The last category consists of organizational and contextual factors, such as supervisory support, organizational justice, culture and climate, organizational performance, and sector. Previous research has shown that situational variables are more consistent predictors of whistle-blowing intention and behavior than are personal characteristics (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Vadera, Aguilera, & Caza, 2009).

Figure 2-1. The Process of Whistle-Blowing

![Figure 2-1. The Process of Whistle-Blowing](image-url)
A Review of Whistle-Blowing Research Before 2008

Research on whistle-blowing has been conducted in several different disciplines, including management, law, philosophy, criminal justice, and sociology. Systematic studies using large-scale data started in the 1980s, taking advantage of federal employee surveys administered by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (1981, 1984). These surveys consisted of information about individuals’ perceptions, decisions, actions, and outcomes related to whistle-blowing. Early studies focused on examining both personal and situational characteristics to determine who were more likely to engage in whistle-blowing and which factors helped distinguish whistle-blowers from inactive observers (i.e., those who observed wrongdoing but chose not to report; e.g., Miceli & Near, 1984, 1985, 1988).

Personal Characteristics

A range of personal characteristics, including whistle-blowers’ demographics (e.g., gender, age, race, education, tenure, job level), personality traits (e.g., self-esteem, locus of control, morality), attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment), job performance, and role responsibilities, have been investigated as to their associations with the decision to report misconduct (Brabeck, 1984; Brewer & Selden, 1998; Dworkin & Baucus, 1998; Miceli & Near, 1984; Miceli, Near, & Schwenk, 1991; Sims & Keenan, 1998). While empirical evidence is somewhat mixed, it has been shown that typical whistle-blowers have greater educational attainment, longer tenure, more income, higher organizational positions, and better performance than do inactive observers, all of which are indicative of their power and status in the organization (Miceli & Near, 1984; Near & Miceli, 1996).
Also, employees are more likely to engage in whistle-blowing when their job prescribes the investigation and disclosure of wrongdoing as part of work responsibilities, as in the case of internal auditors (Miceli, Dozier, & Near, 1991). In public sector research, public service motivation (PSM) has been found to be one of the motives for revealing transgressions among government employees (Brewer & Selden, 1998). These results are consistent with other research findings that employees who personally value whistle-blowing are more likely to disclose suspected wrongdoing (Miceli & Near, 1984; Sims & Keenan, 1998).

Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 193 correlations published in 21 articles and provided supportive evidence for some of these relationships. They found that age, ethical judgment, role responsibility, and approval of whistle-blowing are positively related to the intent to blow the whistle. Female gender, tenure, job satisfaction, and job performance are positively associated with actual whistle-blowing, while job level has a positive correlation with both intention and behavior.

Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) provided three theoretical explanations for why and how personal characteristics influence whistle-blowing, based on (1) the idiosyncrasy model (Hollander, 1958), (2) resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), and (3) exit-voice-loyalty theory (Hirschman, 1970). First, those who have greater idiosyncrasy credit, such as high performers, are regarded as more valuable to an organization and are permitted to deviate from its norms without risking negative consequences. Moreover, people who have the kind of resources on which the organization is dependent tend to have more resource-based power. Employees with greater educational attainment, experience, and performance can contribute more to the organization. They are also likely to possess expert or legitimate power based on their knowledge, skills, and abilities (French & Raven, 1959). These people are more
powerful than other actors in the organization and are given greater latitude to voice their concerns, including those about ethical problems.

Hirschman’s (1970) model suggests that employees have three options when they encounter unsatisfactory work situations: (1) leave the organization, (2) voice their concerns, or (3) remain silent. Employees who have made greater investments in the organization (e.g., longer tenure, higher status) or those who more strongly identify with it (e.g., high commitment) are more likely to choose voice than exit or silence in order to correct the situation. Moreover, people with greater power are likely to be viewed as more credible, and thus, have a higher probability of getting their voice heard by managers and organizations (Miceli & Near, 1984).

**Characteristics of Wrongdoing and Wrongdoer**

While several individual characteristics are found to have significant effects on whistle-blowing, research has shown that situational factors can better predict and explain the decision to disclose wrongdoing (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Miceli & Near, 1984; Near & Miceli, 1996). The nature of the wrongdoing and the characteristics of the wrongdoer have been associated with such decisions, including perceived severity, estimated cost, quality of evidence, personal influence of wrongdoing, and closeness to wrongdoer (Miceli & Near, 1985; Near & Miceli, 1996). Among them, the seriousness of the wrongdoing and the quality of evidence are positively related to whistle-blowing behavior (Dworkin & Baucus, 1998; Miceli & Near, 1985; Victor, Treviño, & Shapiro, 1993). When the cost of the suspected wrongdoing is high, employees are likely to feel a greater obligation to report it. Also, better quality evidence allows whistle-blowers to make more valid and convincing claims, thereby increasing the perceived effectiveness of blowing the whistle. The wrongdoer’s social status is negatively related to the
decision to blow the whistle (Miceli & Near, 1985). Research shows that when the continuation of wrongdoing is critical to the organization’s operations and performance, whistle-blowers are likely to choose external channels to make claims rather than report internally (Miceli & Near, 1985) because, in such environments, top management is likely to suppress and sanction whistle-blowing. In Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran’s (2005) meta-analysis, the seriousness of the wrongdoing is positively correlated with whistle-blowing intention and action. Their study also shows that the more proximate the potential whistle-blower is to the transgressor, the more likely he or she intends to blow the whistle. This is because, in close proximity to the wrongdoer, one would be in a better position to detect wrongdoing and obtain more concrete evidence to support charges.

**Situational Characteristics**

Situational factors include supervisory or management support for whistle-blowing, organizational justice, organizational culture and climate, value congruence, and the threat of retaliation (Keenan, 2000; King, 1999; Near & Miceli, 1996). Supervisory or managerial support is strongly related to the decision to blow the whistle, particularly in making reports via internal channels (Keenan, 2000; Sims & Keenan, 1998). Social exchange theory suggests that when employees perceive a high level of organizational support, they are more likely to return the favor to the organization based on the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). Therefore, with greater support from supervisors or managers, employees are more likely to engage in whistle-blowing in order to terminate activities that may harm the organization. Also, they would choose to report problems internally, which would be less detrimental to the organization’s authority structure and reputation than external charges (King, 1999). Interestingly, Mesmer-Magnus &
Viswesvaran’s (2005) meta-analysis found that supervisory support has a positive relationship to whistle-blowing intentions but a negative correlation with actual whistle-blowing. In addition, perceived organizational justice and value congruence between employee and management are shown to be positively related to the likelihood of blowing the whistle (Miceli & Near, 1994; Victor et al., 1993).

Incidents of whistle-blowing tend to increase when an organization has a culture or climate that values whistle-blowing (Berry, 2004; Keenan, 2000; Miceli & Near, 1985; Near, Baucus, & Miceli, 1993), such as ethical climate (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2006, 2007). In contrast, retaliatory climate and the threat of retaliation are found to be negatively related to whistle-blowing (Keenan, 1995; King, 1999; Near & Miceli, 1996). The meta-analysis by Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) showed that organizational climate is more strongly correlated with the intent to blow the whistle than actual whistle-blowing and that the threat of retaliation is negatively associated with whistle-blowing intentions.

High-performing organizations and those with slack resources tend to have higher rates of employee disclosures (Brewer & Selden, 1998). Whistle-blowing is discouraged when there exist incentives for engaging in wrongdoing and when the organization relies on the wrongdoing or wrongdoer (Brewer & Selden, 1998; Miceli & Near, 1984). Previous research has also found that sector matters—reporting of misconduct is more prevalent in public sector organizations than in their private or nonprofit counterparts, due in part to greater employee motive to serve the public and stronger legal protections for whistle-blowers (Brewer, 1995; Miceli, Rehg, Near, & Ryan, 1999; Rothschild & Miethe, 1999).

It should be noted that whistle-blowing intentions and actions are two distinct constructs. In their meta-analysis, Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) found that personal, situational,
and wrongdoing characteristics have stronger relationships to whistle-blowing intentions than actual whistle-blowing. Although intentions and actions are assumed to closely relate to each other, a different set of variables predicts each one. The link between intention and behavior is weak, especially when the behavior is heavily influenced by subjective norms and social support (Miller & Grush, 1988; Mitchell, 1974), as in the case of whistle-blowing. Thus, the findings on whistle-blowing intentions may not provide valid conclusions about actual whistle-blowing and should be interpreted with caution (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswsvaran, 2005). More empirical research is needed to examine the relationship between whistle-blowing intent and behavior.

**Recent Developments in the Whistle-Blowing Literature, 2008–2017**

Recent studies on whistle-blowing have employed a variety of research methodologies, including surveys, experiments, scenarios, and case studies. Some of them have yielded findings that are consistent with previous research, and others have tested new variables that are not previously examined, thereby providing novel insights into the whistle-blowing process.

**Public Service Motivation**

PSM refers to “an individual’s orientation to delivering services to people with a purpose to do good for others and society” (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008, p. vii). Earlier studies pointed out that PSM might explain the differences in the likelihood of employee reporting across sectors (Near & Miceli, 1996, 2008), but little empirical research has been done to test its impact, with Brewer and Selden’s (1998) work being a notable exception. Recently, scholarly interest in investigating the role of PSM in the whistle-blowing process has revived. The basic tenet of this stream of research is that public employees tend to place greater value than their private sector
counterparts on serving their community, the public, and society. As whistle-blowing is considered a prosocial behavior, employees are more likely to report organizational misconduct when they have prosocial motives such as PSM. These motives can direct individuals’ behavior in a way that enhances the public interest. Individuals with high PSM are expected to blow the whistle to meet such motives.

Cho and Song (2015) found that PSM has a positive influence on federal employees’ intent to blow the whistle. Lavena (2016) showed that the likelihood of whistle-blowing is positively related to norm-based and affective work motives, facets of PSM. Her findings also indicate that whistle-blowing is negatively associated with elements of organizational culture, including respect and openness, cooperativeness and flexibility, fair treatment, and trust in supervisory authority. Caillier (in press) found that PSM has a positive relationship to both internal and external whistle-blowing and that its effect is moderated by the seriousness of the wrongdoing. In his other study, PSM is shown to have a positive impact on employee perceptions that they can blow the whistle without reprisal, mediated by organizational commitment (Caillier, 2015).

Leadership

Another notable development is the focus on leadership as an antecedent of whistle-blowing behavior. While previous studies examined the role of supervisory or managerial support, this line of research investigates how different leadership styles influence employees’ willingness and decision to report wrongdoing. Caillier (2015) and Caillier and Sa (2017) have studied the link between leadership styles and whistle-blowing, focusing on the effects of transformational and transactional leadership. Caillier’s (2015) findings show that employees
feel more comfortable reporting organizational misconduct when they perceive greater transformational leadership. Also, transformational leadership has been shown to have both direct and indirect impacts on whistle-blowing attitudes, being mediated by organizational commitment (Caillier, 2015). Caillier and Sa (2017) tested the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on employee perceptions of retaliation using panel data. Both leadership styles had a significant mitigating impact, but the effect size was larger for transformational leadership than transactional leadership.

Ethical leadership is another variable that has been widely examined. Leaders serve as role models for their followers; communicate an organization’s expectations, values, and norms; and provide guidance in work and nonwork domains. Ethical leaders are more likely to encourage subordinates to engage in ethical behavior. Hassan, Wright, and colleagues have studied the role of ethical leadership in promoting employees’ willingness to report ethical issues. In Hassan, Wright, and Yukl’s (2014) study, ethical leadership had a positive influence on the willingness to report ethical problems. Wright, Hassan, and Park (2016) demonstrated a pattern of interrelationships between PSM, ethical leadership, and the willingness to report ethical problems. They found a supervisor’s ethical leadership has a positive association with subordinates’ PSM, which in turn affects subordinates’ willingness to report unethical behavior.

Bhal and Dadhich (2011) showed that ethical leadership and leader-member exchange have a significant influence on whistle-blowing and that these relationships are moderated by the moral intensity of the issue. Mayer, Nurmohamed, Treviño, Shapiro, and Schminke (2013) examined how ethical leadership, coworkers’ ethical behavior, and fear of retaliation affected the reporting of ethical misconduct within an organization. They found that ethical leadership and coworkers’ ethical behavior jointly influence whistle-blowing and that their impacts are
mediated by fear of reprisal. They concluded that an ethical tone is set by multiple factors at multiple levels, including leader, coworker, whistle-blower, and context. In other words, it takes a village to encourage internal disclosures of wrongdoing.

Overall, these studies suggest that various leadership styles have significant implications for employee decisions to unveil misconduct. Other leadership theories and variables should be tested with respect to whistle-blowing in future research. Also, the findings show that leadership not only influences whistle-blowing attitudes and behavior but also interacts with other individual and situational factors. The potential interactions of leadership with other variables and their joint effects on employee reporting should be further investigated.

Other Variables

Scholars have incorporated new variables into whistle-blowing models. For example, Caillier (2012) examined several predictors of employee perceptions of potential retaliation for blowing the whistle. Although the fear of retaliation is considered a major obstacle to whistle-blowing, the factors that affect this perception or feeling have rarely been examined. Caillier found that supervisory support, organizational commitment, work group performance, managerial status, pay grade, majority race, and male gender are positively related to employees’ confidence that they can safely disclose wrongdoing without reprisals. Henik (2008) pointed out that traditional whistle-blowing models had put too much emphasis on the cognitive analysis and cost-benefit evaluations associated with whistle-blowing and that the affective aspect of reporting misconduct had been ignored. She posited that emotional responses to wrongdoing, such as anger and fear, predict whistle-blowing behaviors and that these relationships are moderated by the degree of value conflict. Vadera et al. (2009) proposed that identity and ethics
programs have implications for whistle-blowing decisions and could help explicate inconsistent findings about individual and situational antecedents. They argued that an individual’s multiple identities might influence decisions differently based on the salience of each identity and that incorporating ethics programs into the model of whistle-blowing would help better understand organizational determinants of reporting behaviors. In addition, cultural dimensions (Bashir, Khattak, Hanif, & Chohan, 2011), coworker invalidation, observer leverage, proactive personality (Miceli, Near, Rehg, & Van Scotter, 2012), abusive supervision, moral courage, and identification with organizational values (Hannah et al., 2013) have been associated with whistle-blowing intention and behavior.

Summary

A range of factors has been examined that influence employee attitudes and behaviors pertaining to disclosures of wrongdoing. They have contributed to our understanding of the processes and predictors of whistle-blowing, but a few gaps and questions remain in the literature, which need to be further investigated. In this dissertation, I aim to address two particular issues: the role of formal organizational conditions and the interactionist approach to whistle-blowing research.

Formal aspects of organizations have been largely overlooked in the whistle-blowing literature and have received little attention from researchers. In early studies of whistle-blowing, scholars examined a variety of situational and contextual characteristics (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Miceli et al., 2008; Near & Miceli, 1996), but most were related to informal aspects of organizations and management, such as supervisory support, leadership, organizational culture and climate, and organizational justice (e.g., Dworkin & Baucus, 1998;
Goldman, 2001; King, 1997; Rothwell & Baldwin, 2006, 2007; Sims & Keenan, 1998; Victor et al., 1993). Oftentimes it is difficult to change informal relationships, cultures, and support because they have developed over a long time and are deeply ingrained in organizations. Research on formal organizational practices, policies, and structures would help better understand what public managers can do to promote whistle-blowing. In the following chapters, I examine the effects of formal ethics management, organizational structure, and gender representation on public employees’ whistle-blowing attitudes and behaviors.

Another area of inquiry relates to the interactions between individual characteristics and organizational conditions and their role in determining the likelihood of whistle-blowing. Most previous studies have examined person and organization as independent components, while recent research has begun to explore potential interactions between them. The interactionist perspective suggests that to better understand and predict employee behavior, personal and situational factors and how they interact should be investigated (Chatman, 1989). Whistle-blowing is a dynamic process that involves several different actors and situational elements that relate to one another in a complex manner. These relationships should be theorized and tested in future research to explain whether the effects of particular organizational conditions are stronger or weaker for different individuals. This can provide public organizations and managers with more practical knowledge about how to build and manage work environments, taking into consideration the characteristics of employees. In the empirical studies that follow, some of the interactions between person and organization are explored.
Whistle-blowing is an essential means of detecting and correcting unethical organizational practices in public agencies, but the risk of retaliation often discourages potential whistle-blowers from coming forward to reveal wrongful activities. There exists a wide range of studies on the antecedents of whistle-blowing and retaliation, but little scholarly attention has been paid to the role that formal ethics management plays in the whistle-blowing process.

Utilizing survey and administrative data from the U.S. federal government, this chapter examines how management of ethics programs influences public employees’ fear of retaliation for disclosing organizational wrongdoing.

With the passage of several laws and regulations, such as the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, as well as increased public scrutiny over unethical practices, both public and private sector organizations have begun to adopt and implement a range of ethics programs. While the types and scopes vary across organizations, typical ethics programs include codes of conduct, ethics training, counseling and advice, discipline of ethics violations, ombudspersons, ethics hotlines, and legal compliance offices (Weaver, Treviño, & Cochran, 1999). Most organizations provide some sort of ethics programs and policies for employees, and the number offering formal ethics programs continues to increase. The National Business Ethics Survey of 2013, for example, showed that the percentage of companies providing ethics training had increased from 48% to 81% between 2003 and 2013 (Ethics Resource Center, 2014).
Managing employee ethics is an imperative for public organizations. Following the Ethics in Government Act, a federal unit was established in the Office of Personnel Management to oversee and monitor ethics administration in executive branch agencies, which later became an independent agency called the Office of Government Ethics. Most federal agencies assign the responsibility of managing ethics to high-level career bureaucrats or senior executives and provide a series of ethics programs for their employees, including ethics orientation for new employees, annual ethics training, financial disclosure programs, and discipline of ethical misconduct and conflicts of interest. There are several mechanisms in place for reporting problems, such as the inspector general of a department or agency, the Department of Justice, and the Merit Systems Protection Board. State and local governments across the United States have also instituted a variety of ethics programs and policies and have established commissions to manage ethical issues in the government.

Government agencies have invested a lot of time, financial resources, and human capital in developing and managing a variety of ethics programs, but relatively little attention—both scholarly and practical—has been paid to assessing the effect of such programs on individual and organizational ethical outcomes. Despite increasing interest in managing ethics, our knowledge about the effectiveness of ethics programs is limited. In particular, little empirical research has been conducted on the effects of ethics programs in the context of whistle-blowing.

The primary purpose of organizational ethics programs is to align employee behavior with an organization’s values, norms, and expectations about what is right or wrong behavior (Weaver et al., 1999). Vadera et al. (2009) argued that organizational ethics programs would have significant implications for employee whistle-blowing. Whistle-blowing is a costly and time-consuming process for both whistle-blower and organization, involving multiple
organizational actors, and external stakeholders in some cases, in the investigation and correction of alleged wrongdoing. Thus, employees are expected and encouraged to make “valid” charges in disclosing observed misconduct to reduce associated costs and save time. Ethics programs can help improve employees’ abilities to determine what constitutes misconduct and whether they have concrete evidence, as well as increase awareness of proper procedures and efficacious complaint channels for making whistle-blowing claims. In fact, some evidence suggests ethics programs are positively correlated with whistle-blowing. According to a report by the Ethics Resource Center (2012), employee reporting of wrongdoing increased by 81% in organizations with well-designed and well-implemented ethics programs compared to organizations with no such programs.

Importantly, whistle-blowing is a voluntary action that often involves self-sacrifice and a risk of retaliation. Retaliation is defined as “undesirable action taken against a whistleblower—in direct response to the whistleblowing—who reported wrongdoing internally or externally, outside the organization” (Rehg, Miceli, Near, & Van Scotter, 2008, p. 222). Stories about whistle-blowers who experience serious retaliation for their disclosures of misconduct frequently make headlines in the popular press. These stories show that retaliatory practices include not only work-related actions such as removals, demotions, transfers, and poor performance appraisals but also social reprisals such as harassment, ostracism, blame, and threats (Cortina & Magley, 2003). Whistle-blowing is likely to pose great personal and professional risks, and thus, the fear of reprisal is a major obstacle that prevents potential whistle-blowers from coming forward about the wrongdoing they have observed (Miceli et al., 2008). In short, the fear of retaliation is a critical antecedent of employee decisions to make disclosures or not (Gundlach, Douglas, & Martinko, 2003; Henik, 2008; Peeples, Stokes, & Wingfield, 2009).
Most previous studies on retaliation have retrospectively examined the characteristics of the retaliation that whistle-blowers encountered. That is, retaliation is viewed as a consequence of whistle-blowing behavior. What is largely missing in the literature is a prospective examination of public employees’ perceptions or fear of potential retaliation for disclosing wrongdoing (Caillier, 2012). Caillier (2012) showed that a set of individual and organizational factors such as supervisory support, organizational commitment, work group performance, and demographic factors (e.g., race) are significantly related to employee perceptions of the possibility of reprisal. Moreover, the fear of retaliation can predict whether employees will report a focal wrongdoing (Mayer et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that influence the perception of potential retaliation in order to fully comprehend the whistle-blowing process.

This chapter examines the role of formal ethics management, focusing on the effects of organizational ethics programs on public employees’ fear of retaliation. Whistle-blowing is a cognitive process in which employees engage in cost-benefit analysis. Observers of wrongful activities tend to assess the expected benefits and costs associated with their whistle-blowing before making actual claims (Miceli et al., 2008). They are likely to choose not to report if the expected costs (e.g., retaliation) far outweigh the benefits (e.g., the likelihood that their claims are effective in stopping the wrongdoing). The fear of retaliation increases costs, thus decreasing the likelihood of making a disclosure. Drawing on control theory and the typology of ethics program orientations, I argue that organizational ethics programs may help reduce the perceived costs of whistle-blowing and that different types of ethics programs have varying effects on the fear of reprisal.
The next section provides an overview of organizational ethics programs and their distinct orientations based on control theory. In the following section, two different types of ethics programs—values- and compliance-oriented ethics programs—are reviewed and a series of hypotheses concerning the relationship between ethics programs and the fear of retaliation is proposed. Then, I describe the data and methods for empirical analysis and present the findings from stereotype logistic models. This chapter concludes by discussing the study’s implications and limitations and directions for future research.

**Ethics Program Orientations**

Ethics scholars have viewed organizational ethics programs as formal control systems that standardize and regulate employee behavior to “bring some degree of order and predictability to employee behavior” (Weaver & Treviño, 1999, p. 317). These programs are aimed at holding employees accountable to the ethical values and norms of their organizations. Control theory suggests that organizational control systems can be distinguished by their modes, that is, how these systems create order and predictability (Etzioni, 1961; Gouldner, 1954; Weber, 1947). One mode of control system tends to align employee behavior with an organization’s ethical standards by coercing rule compliance and behavioral conformity and using the threat of punishment for noncompliance. Another type of control system emphasizes the sharing of organizational values and norms to help employees internalize such values and act according to them. Consistent with these theoretical distinctions, Adler and Borys (1996) asserted that there are two types of bureaucratic control, which govern employee behavior in different ways. They called the former “coercive” and the latter “enabling.”
Previous research has pointed out that there exist multiple approaches to managing organizational ethics and that ethics programs vary in terms of their orientations (Treviño, Weaver, Gibson, & Toffler, 1999). Ethics programs can be categorized into two types of bureaucratic control, depending on the purpose and content of the programs (Paine, 1994; Weaver & Treviño, 1999; Weaver et al., 1999). Based on several cases of corporate ethics practices, Paine (1994) claimed that organizations can take two different approaches to ethics management: one with an emphasis on values, training, and counseling, and the other founded on legal compliance, monitoring, and discipline. Treviño, Weaver, and colleagues provided empirical evidence confirming Paine’s (1994) arguments. Using surveys from large business companies, they showed that there exist two different orientations in ethics programs, with different but overlapping sets of antecedents and consequences (Weaver & Treviño, 1999; Weaver et al., 1999). One they called “values-oriented ethics programs” based on the enabling type of control, and the other, “compliance-oriented ethics programs” based on the coercive type of control. Primarily, these programs differ with respect to the way they manage and control employees’ ethical behavior and decision-making. Table 3-1 presents the characteristics of each ethics program orientation.

Table 3-1. Ethics Program Orientations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values-oriented ethics programs</th>
<th>Compliance-oriented ethics programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Enabling type of control</td>
<td>• Coercive type of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emphasizing identification with organization’s ethical values and norms</td>
<td>• Emphasizing adherence to rules and policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhancing employee commitment to organization’s ethical ideals</td>
<td>• Enforcing ethical standards and auditing compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Educating, training, counseling, or advising about ethical dilemmas</td>
<td>• Monitoring employee behavior and disciplining ethical misconduct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Values-oriented ethics programs aim at increasing employees’ awareness of and identification with ethical values and ideals at work and enhancing their commitment to ethical standards (Weaver & Treviño, 1999), taking a bottom-up approach to managing employee behavior. Rather than providing strict guidelines for conduct, these programs offer learning opportunities to employees through which they can experience dealing with various ethical dilemmas in a way that is consistent with the organization’s expectations. Values-oriented programs emphasize ethical aspirations and responsible conduct and provide education, training, counseling, and advice. On the other hand, compliance-oriented ethics programs focus on monitoring behavior, disciplining ethics violations, and enforcing rules and regulations (Weaver & Treviño, 1999), and managers are likely to use a top-down approach. Employees are expected merely to follow explicit rules and standards of conduct, and any deviations from them are likely to be punished with penalties and sanctions. However, values- and compliance-oriented ethics programs are not mutually exclusive. Some organizations may orient their ethics programs toward either sharing values or enforcing compliance, while others may attempt to incorporate both orientations and maintain a balance between them.

Research examining the antecedents and consequences of ethics program orientations is relatively sparse, with notable exceptions conducted by Treviño, Weaver, and colleagues (Treviño et al., 1999; Weaver & Treviño, 1999; Weaver et al., 1999). Weaver et al. (1999) investigated whether the adoption and implementation of these two programs were influenced by different factors and found that compliance-oriented programs were driven by external pressures, such as the U.S. Sentencing Commission’s guidelines for developing legal compliance programs to reduce fines and sentences for illegal practices, as well as by top executives’ commitment to managing ethics. Meanwhile, values-oriented programs were solely affected by top management.
External pressure to institute the legal compliance approach is more likely to push organizations to adopt compliance-oriented ethics programs than values-oriented ones.

Weaver and Treviño (1999) examined the effects of values and compliance orientations on a diverse set of work outcomes, including organizational commitment, employee integrity, decision-making, seeking of ethical advice, willingness to report ethics violations and communicate about problems, ethical awareness, and unethical conduct. The employees’ perceptions that ethics programs were oriented toward values were related to seven outcomes, while their perceptions that ethics programs were oriented toward compliance were related to four. These findings are consistent with those in Paine’s (1994) study, that values-oriented ethics programs have stronger and more long-lasting impacts on employee attitudes and behaviors than compliance-oriented programs because the latter often implies management’s distrust of employees and causes a “don’t get caught” motivation among them (Weaver & Treviño, 1999).

Organizational Ethics Programs, Employee Demographics, and Fear of Retaliation

As values- and compliance-oriented programs take different stances on ethics management, they would have differential effects on employees. In this section, I discuss why and how employees have more or less fear of retaliation for disclosures of wrongdoing, depending on the orientations of ethics programs. In addition, I argue that the effects of ethics programs vary by demographic groups and present a series of hypotheses concerning the relationships among organizational ethics programs, employee demographics, and the fear of reprisal.

First, employees who are more strongly committed to and identify with their organization’s ethical values are more likely to feel confident that they can blow the whistle
without fear of reprisal. In organizations with well-developed values-oriented ethics programs, employees are likely to believe that whistle-blowing is consistent with the organization’s ethical goals and ideals and that voicing concerns about unethical practices is not only acceptable but desirable. Thus, they would be more proactive in revealing and correcting omissions and improprieties. Values-oriented programs also increase the degree of value congruence among organizational members by emphasizing the learning and sharing of ethical values and norms. Consequently, top managers are more likely to see the merits of claims made by lower-level employees and less likely to retaliate.

Moreover, values-oriented ethics programs are likely to be perceived as supporting employees’ ethical aspirations and goals. Perceived organizational support, defined as employees’ perceptions that their organization “values their contributions and cares about their well-being” (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986, p. 501), tends to trigger the norm of reciprocity among employees (Gouldner, 1960). A values-oriented approach implies that the program is meant to help and support employees act in accordance with shared moral and ethical values. In addition, perceived organizational support generates mutual trust between employee and organization, and enhanced trust indicates that the organization counts on its employees on ethical issues and respects their effort to correct wrongdoing. According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), employees who perceive higher levels of support from their organization feel obligated to recompense. As whistle-blowing could help achieve an organization’s ethical goals, whistle-blowing claims would be trusted and supported and employees would be less likely to fear reprisals. Therefore, if public organizations spent more time in managing values-oriented ethics programs, employees would have fewer fears of retaliation for reporting misconduct.
Hypothesis 1. Employees are less likely to fear retaliation for whistle-blowing when agencies spend more time managing values-oriented ethics programs.

On the other hand, the effects of compliance-oriented ethics programs are more nuanced. These programs aim at generating behavioral conformity and rule compliance among employees. Organizations that use the compliance-based approach try to detect ethics violations and punish wrongdoers. These activities may be viewed as upholding “standards of justice” and fulfilling employees’ expectations of justice (Treviño, 1993). Just workplaces are considered fair in their investigations of wrongdoing and handling of whistle-blowing claims and are believed to protect whistle-blowers from improper retaliatory treatment. In such work environments, whistle-blowing can help organizations detect and discipline unethical behaviors and thereby achieve legal compliance goals. Employees may perceive that their own ethical goals and values are consistent with those of their organizations, and reporting misconduct is likely to be viewed as part of one’s responsibilities. As long as it is considered aligned with promoting the organization’s ethical goals, whistle-blowing would be encouraged and employees would less likely fear retaliation.

However, close monitoring and strict discipline, associated with the compliance-based approach, does not imply organizational support. Compliance-oriented programs are unlikely to create social exchange relationships between employee and organization, because legal compliance would not be regarded as supporting and enabling employees’ ethical aspirations but as controlling and constraining their behavior. Organizations with extensive compliance-oriented programs tend to emphasize the precise following of rules and policies rather than give employees room to question organizational practices. Given that whistle-blowing is an extra-role
behavior and not formally prescribed, compliance orientations would not encourage employees to engage in such behavior. Furthermore, it is also possible that whistle-blowing would be considered a deviation from set rules and a violation of an organization’s authority structure (Parmerlee, Near, & Jensen, 1982; Weinstein, 1979), which must be sanctioned or punished. Without strong ethical values shared among organizational members, whistle-blowing would likely be viewed as snitching. Top managers would discourage whistle-blowing and apply pressure with threats of retaliation.

Moreover, a strong compliance-based approach would indicate management’s distrust in employees as it implies that “employees cannot be trusted, or are in some other way ethically incompetent” (Weaver & Treviño, 1999, p. 320) and thus need to be closely controlled and supervised. This perspective prevents employees from going beyond what is required of them, including whistle-blowing. In addition, the lack of trust may generate a sense of alienation among employees and make them feel that any dissidence would involve serious risks. Similarly, Weaver and Treviño (1999) argued that the key aspect of compliance-oriented programs was the “threat of coercion” or “fear of discipline for nonconformity” (p. 323). Consequently, compliance-oriented programs may increase fear of retaliation for whistle-blowing.

Based on these theoretical explanations, I have developed two competing hypotheses about the effects of compliance-oriented ethics programs:

Hypothesis 2a. Employees are less likely to fear retaliation for whistle-blowing when agencies spend more time managing compliance-oriented ethics programs.
Hypothesis 2b. Employees are more likely to fear retaliation for whistle-blowing when agencies spend more time managing compliance-oriented ethics programs.

Previous research has shown that the demographic characteristics of employees are related to whistle-blowing attitudes and behavior (Caillier, 2012; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Near & Miceli, 1996; Rothschild & Miethe, 1999). According to resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), those who possess resources that are valued by an organization have greater power and are less dependent on the organization. When these employees blow the whistle, the organization is less likely to retaliate against them because it relies on powerful employees who have something of value to the organization, such as skills, expertise, experience, and social networks (Near & Miceli, 1985). Caillier (2012) tested this assumption using data from the U.S. federal workforce. Drawing on the power-dependence framework, he examined the effects of several factors indicative of power—such as performance, pay, gender, race, and supervisory status—on employee perceptions that they could report organizational wrongdoing without retaliation (Caillier, 2012). He found that lower levels of fear were correlated with characteristics such as involvement in high-performance work groups, greater pay, supervisory status, male gender, and Caucasian racial group.

I anticipate that employees who are less powerful, in terms of gender, minority status, supervisory level, and education, experience greater fear of reprisal. Employees from historically disadvantaged groups, such as women and racial minorities, are often considered less powerful actors because of their limited access to valuable organizational resources and underrepresentation in higher organizational levels (Ibarra, 1995; Kanter, 1979; Meier, 1975). In contrast, supervisory status indicates greater power in an organization due to formally-held...
positions and informal interpersonal relationships with other members. Employees with greater educational attainment often possess more accumulated knowledge, skills, and abilities, and these resources give them a competitive advantage. Consequently, organizations may be more dependent on those in supervisory positions or with higher education. Those with power and status would believe that their claims would be received and treated more favorably and that retaliatory actions would be less likely to occur. On the other hand, employees lacking power would experience greater fear of retaliation.

The effects of organizational ethics programs are likely to vary across demographic groups. Specifically, I expect the relationship between ethics programs and the fear of reprisal to be stronger for employees who are less powerful in an organization. Values-oriented programs aim at enabling employees to engage in ethical behavior by providing learning opportunities, sharing organizational values and norms, and enhancing ethical awareness and knowledge, which would be more beneficial to powerless employees. The compliance-based approach emphasizes monitoring employee behavior, enforcing rules and regulations, and disciplining unethical conduct. Whether these objectives are perceived as maintaining organizational justice or constraining employee behavior, powerful employees are relatively free from monitoring and oversight while the less powerful are more likely to be influenced by these programs. Therefore, I present the following two hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 3. Employees who are less powerful in an organization—such as women, minorities, nonsupervisors, or those without college degrees—are more likely to fear retaliation for whistle-blowing than employees who are more powerful—such as men, Whites, supervisors, or those with college degrees.*
Hypothesis 4. The effects of organizational ethics programs on the fear of retaliation are stronger for employees who are less powerful in their organizations—such as women, minorities, nonsupervisors, or those without college degrees—than for employees who are more powerful—such as men, Whites, supervisors, or those with college degrees.

Data and Method

This section provides information on data sources, measurement of variables, and the analytic approach for empirical analysis.

Data

To test the hypotheses, I utilized two main data sources from the U.S. Federal Government. First, agency-level data was derived from the 2014 Annual Agency Ethics Program Questionnaire administered by the Office of Government Ethics. It is a survey of executive branch ethics managers about the characteristics of agency ethics management, including management structure, program administration, financial disclosure programs, and enforcement and disciplines of ethics violations. All federal agencies are mandated to provide responses to the questionnaire annually, yielding a response rate of 100%.

Next, individual-level data was drawn from the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). This is a survey of federal employees about their perceptions of and attitudes toward work environments, management practices, leadership, and satisfaction. The survey was administered by the Office of Personnel Management to 839,788 employees working in cabinet-level departments and independent agencies in the executive branch. Among them, 392,752 employees completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 46.8%.
The individual- and agency-level data were matched for each federal agency. After matching, the final sample consisted of 321,102 employees working in 26 agencies due to missing data on one or more variables at either level. No meaningful differences were found between the respondents included in the final sample and those who were dropped, except that the agencies dropped from the final sample were generally smaller than those included. When compared to the demographics of the entire federal workforce, the final sample exhibited no response bias across demographic groups.

**Variables**

**Dependent variable.** The dependent variable is employees’ fear of retaliation for blowing the whistle, which refers to the extent to which employees fear being retaliated against due to their potential disclosures of organizational wrongdoing (Caillier, 2012). This variable was measured using a single item from the 2015 FEVS: “I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal.” This item had five response categories, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Employee responses were reverse-coded to measure the degree of perceived retaliation.

**Independent variables.** The main independent variables are (1) the time spent by a federal agency in managing values-oriented ethics programs and (2) the time spent by a federal agency in managing compliance-oriented ethics programs. These variables were measured using the 2014 Annual Agency Ethics Program Questionnaire. In the questionnaire, a representative of each agency was asked to rate the amount of time spent administering the following six ethics programs using a five-point scale: advice and counseling, education and training, confidential
financial disclosure program, public financial disclosure program, disciplinary process for violations, and outside activity approval. The response categories included 0 = no time, 1 = limited amount of time, 2 = moderate amount of time, 3 = significant amount of time, and 4 = very significant amount of time.

Values-oriented ethics programs include advice and counseling and education and training, which aim at the learning and internalization of ethical values and norms. Compliance-oriented ethics programs include confidential and public financial disclosure programs, a disciplinary process for violations, and outside activity approval, all of which focus on adherence to rules, monitoring, and discipline. Agency responses to each item were averaged for either values or compliance orientations. Cronbach’s alpha was 0.80 for values-oriented ethics programs and 0.76 for compliance-oriented ethics programs.

Figure 3-1 shows the distribution of time spent on either values- or compliance-oriented programs by executive branch agencies. All agencies provided both programs to different degrees, except for the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, which spent no time on either program. The figure indicates that there was some variance in the amount of time spent in implementing each program across agencies. On average, agencies spent more time on values-oriented ethics programs (M = 2.56) than on compliance-based programs (M = 1.80). There appears a positive linear relationship between the two programs, which suggests that they were not mutually exclusive and that agencies utilized both to manage organizational ethics.

Demographic variables were measured using employee responses to the 2015 FEVS, including gender (1 = female; 0 = male), minority status (1 = minority; 0 = nonminority), supervisory level (1 = supervisor/manager/senior leader; 0 = nonsupervisor/team leader), and education (1 = college degree; 0 = no college degree).
Figure 3-1. The Use of Values- and Compliance-Oriented Ethics Programs in the U.S. Executive Branch

![Graph showing the use of values- and compliance-oriented ethics programs in the U.S. Executive Branch.]

*Note. 0 = no time; 1 = limited amount of time; 2 = moderate amount of time; 3 = significant amount of time; 4 = very significant amount of time. Data from the Annual Agency Ethics Program Questionnaire, U.S. Office of Government Ethics, 2014.*

**Control variables.** Several agency-level control variables were included in the model, such as leader emphasis on moral values, whether the agency is a cabinet-level department or independent agency, the percentage of ethics employees (i.e., the number of employees performing ethics duties divided by the total number of employees), and characteristics of agency ethics officials, such as tenure in the current position (1 = less than one year to 4 = 10 or more years), total years of experience performing ethics duties, and time spent on ethics-related tasks (1 = 0–25% to 4 = 76–100%). Leader emphasis on moral values was measured using a
single item from the 2015 FEVS, “My organization’s senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity,” with five response categories ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This variable has been used in previous research to measure the moral or ethical climate of an organization (Caillier, 2012; Rothschild & Miethe, 1999). Employee responses to this item were aggregated at the agency level in order to examine shared perceptions about the agency’s emphasis on moral values as a whole.

The variables and measures used in this study are summarized in Table 3-2, and the descriptive statistics and correlations among variables are presented in Tables 3-3 and 3-4, respectively.
Table 3-2. Variables and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of retaliation</td>
<td>“I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal.” (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree; reverse coded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on values-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>“Use the following scale to rate the amount of time your agency spends to administer each item.” (0 = no time; 1 = limited amount of time; 2 = moderate amount of time; 3 = significant amount of time; 4 = very significant amount of time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on compliance-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>“Use the following scale to rate the amount of time your agency spends to administer each item.” (0 = no time; 1 = limited amount of time; 2 = moderate amount of time; 3 = significant amount of time; 4 = very significant amount of time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Respondent’s gender (1 = female; 0 = male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority status</td>
<td>Respondent’s minority status (1 = minority; 0 = nonminority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory level</td>
<td>Respondent’s supervisory level (1 = supervisor/manager/senior leader; 0 = nonsupervisor/team leader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Respondent’s educational attainment (1 = college degree; 0 = no college degree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>“My organization’s senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity.” (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3-2. Variables and Measures (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cabinet</th>
<th>Agency’s location in the executive branch (1 = <em>cabinet department</em>; 0 = <em>independent agency</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of ethics employees</td>
<td>Number of employees who perform ethics duties divided by the total number of employees in each agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s tenure</td>
<td>Designated Agency Ethics Official’s (DAEO) time in the current position (1 = <em>less than one year</em>; 2 = 1–4 years; 3 = 5–9 years; 4 = 10 or more years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s experience</td>
<td>DAEO’s total years performing ethics duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s time spent on ethics duties</td>
<td>DAEO’s percent of time spent on ethics duties (1 = 0–25%; 2 = 26–50%; 3 = 51–75%; 4 = 76–100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-3. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of retaliation</td>
<td>2.385</td>
<td>1.240</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.479</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>0.342</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>0.689</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on values-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>3.365</td>
<td>0.481</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on compliance-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>2.481</td>
<td>0.458</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>3.409</td>
<td>0.200</td>
<td>2.932</td>
<td>3.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>0.654</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of ethics employees</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s tenure</td>
<td>2.154</td>
<td>0.925</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s experience</td>
<td>10.346</td>
<td>9.596</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s time on ethics duties</td>
<td>1.808</td>
<td>1.201</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Individual-level $N = 321,102$; agency-level $N = 26$. 
Table 3-4. Correlation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Fear of retaliation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Female</td>
<td>0.047***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Minority</td>
<td>0.057***</td>
<td>0.119***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Supervisor</td>
<td>−0.129***</td>
<td>−0.090***</td>
<td>−0.053***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. College</td>
<td>−0.059***</td>
<td>−0.086***</td>
<td>−0.076***</td>
<td>0.090***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Time spent on values-oriented programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Time spent on compliance-oriented programs</td>
<td>0.283</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>−0.470*</td>
<td>−0.019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cabinet</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>−0.390*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Percentage of ethics employees</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>0.177</td>
<td>−0.116</td>
<td>−0.439*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ethics official’s tenure</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td>0.291</td>
<td>−0.274</td>
<td>0.391*</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ethics official’s experience</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>−0.214</td>
<td>0.293</td>
<td>−0.144</td>
<td>0.638***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ethics official’s time on ethics duties</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>−0.125</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>−0.184</td>
<td>0.424*</td>
<td>0.812***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note* Individual-level $N = 321,102$; agency-level $N = 26$.  

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.  


Modeling

Stereotype logistic models (SLMs) were used to test the hypotheses because the dependent variable is ordinal. SLMs do not impose the parallel regression assumption, so they are more flexible than typical ordinal logistic regressions (Long & Freese, 2014). The dependent variable was measured at the individual level, and the main independent variables were measured at the agency level. As individuals are nested in agencies, a potential clustering effect was taken into account in the analysis. To control for the clustering effect, I estimated the models with clustered standard errors using the Huber-White sandwich estimator (Freedman, 2006), which corrected the variance-covariance matrix of the errors. All subsequent analyses were conducted using Stata 14.

Results

It was hypothesized that the time spent on values-oriented ethics programs would be negatively related to employees’ fear of retaliation while the time spent on compliance-oriented ethics programs would be either positively or negatively associated. The results from the SLMs are presented in Table 3-5. As hypothesized, the time spent on values-oriented programs had a negative and significant effect on the fear of retaliation ($p < .01$). The more time agencies spent on values-oriented ethics programs, the less likely employees feared being retaliated against for blowing the whistle. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported. On the other hand, the time spent on compliance-oriented ethics programs did not have a significant relationship to the fear of retaliation. This result does not provide support for either Hypothesis 2a or Hypothesis 2b. As the competing hypotheses suggest, compliance-oriented programs may work to both increase and decrease employees’ fear of retaliation simultaneously, making the effect of such programs
insignificant. While not hypothesized, leader emphasis on moral values was found to have a negative and marginally significant effect \((p < .10)\), which indicates that the existence of leaders stressing moral values can decrease employees’ fear of retaliation. When leaders support and maintain strong ethical values and standards, employees are less likely to fear potential reprisals for blowing the whistle.

Table 3-5. Effects of Organizational Ethics Programs on Fear of Retaliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>DV: Fear of Retaliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on values-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>−3.328** (1.152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on compliance-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>0.773 (1.906)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>−3.250† (1.961)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on values programs × time on compliance programs</td>
<td>0.254 (0.191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on values programs × leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>0.766* (0.299)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on compliance programs × leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>−0.404 (0.465)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.189*** (0.040)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>0.295*** (0.040)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>−1.067*** (0.065)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>−0.249*** (0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>0.328* (0.136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of ethics employees</td>
<td>8.864 (10.721)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s tenure</td>
<td>−0.109 (0.075)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s experience</td>
<td>−0.010 (0.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s time on ethics duties</td>
<td>0.145 (0.096)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Individual-level \(N = 321,102\); agency-level \(N = 26\). Entries are logit coefficients. Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

*** \(p < .001\). ** \(p < .01\). * \(p < .05\). † \(p < .10\).

Previous research has shown that employees are more willing to report unethical practices when they are offered both values- and compliance-oriented ethics programs (Weaver & Treviño, 1999). The effect of formal ethics programs on whistle-blowing could also be much
stronger when ethical leadership is weak because employees would have no alternative but to blow the whistle to stop unethical conduct. I tested several interaction terms between ethics programs and leader emphasis on moral values (i.e., the interactions between values- and compliance-oriented programs, values-oriented programs and leader emphasis, and compliance-oriented programs and leader emphasis) to determine whether and how these variables interact with one another. Among the three interaction terms, the interaction between values-oriented programs and leader emphasis was positive and significant ($p < .05$). This positive interaction indicates that the effect of values-oriented programs is stronger when leaders do not emphasize moral values. That is, leader emphasis on moral values attenuates the effect of values-oriented programs. These two factors might work toward the same end—when senior leaders have already emphasized and supported moral values, such as honesty and integrity, they may not need strong values-oriented ethics programs, and the utility of such programs is low. Thus, these factors do not complement but substitute each other.

Employee demographics had significant relationships to the fear of retaliation. The effect of being female and that of being a minority were both positive and significant ($p < .001$). Being a supervisor and holding a college degree had negative and significant relationships to the fear of retaliation ($p < .001$). Female employees and minorities were more likely to fear retaliation while supervisors and employees with college degrees were less likely to fear retaliation, thereby providing support for Hypothesis 3. These results indicate that power dynamics play a role in the whistle-blowing process.

In addition, I examined whether the effects of ethics programs varied across demographic groups. I tested the interactions between values- and compliance-oriented programs and each of the four demographic variables in a series of models (see Table 3-6). Among them, two
interactions were significant: In Model 1, the interaction of values-oriented programs with being female was negative and significant ($p < .01$). This interaction indicates that the effect of values-oriented programs is stronger for female employees than for male employees. In Model 4, the interaction between values-oriented programs and college was positive and significant ($p < .05$). This interaction shows that the effect of values-oriented programs is stronger for employees who do not have college degrees than for those who do. In Model 2, the interaction between compliance-oriented programs and being a minority was positive and marginally significant ($p < .10$), indicating that the effect of compliance-oriented programs is stronger for minorities than for nonminorities. However, compliance-oriented programs did not have significant effects for either group. Lastly, the interactions between ethics programs and supervisory level were not statistically significant (see Model 3 in Table 3-6).

Among the control variables, cabinet-level departments had a positive and significant effect on the fear of retaliation ($p < .05$), suggesting that employees in cabinet departments reported greater fear. None of the characteristics of ethics management and ethics managers were statistically significant.
Table 3-6. Moderating Effects of Employee Demographics on the Relationship Between Organizational Ethics Programs and Fear of Retaliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>DV: Fear of retaliation</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on values-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>−3.064**</td>
<td>(1.129)</td>
<td>−3.236**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on compliance-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td>(1.882)</td>
<td>0.876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>−3.018</td>
<td>(1.937)</td>
<td>−3.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on values programs × time on compliance programs</td>
<td>0.248</td>
<td>(0.190)</td>
<td>0.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on values programs × leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>0.719*</td>
<td>(0.294)</td>
<td>0.751*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on compliance programs × leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>−0.435</td>
<td>(0.456)</td>
<td>−0.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.665***</td>
<td>(0.162)</td>
<td>0.189***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>0.295***</td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td>0.376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>−1.069***</td>
<td>(0.064)</td>
<td>−1.067***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>−0.249***</td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
<td>−0.247***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>0.331*</td>
<td>(0.136)</td>
<td>0.327*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of ethics employees</td>
<td>8.840</td>
<td>(10.619)</td>
<td>8.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s tenure</td>
<td>−0.115</td>
<td>(0.075)</td>
<td>−0.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s experience</td>
<td>−0.009</td>
<td>(0.014)</td>
<td>−0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s time on ethics duties</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>(0.096)</td>
<td>0.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female × time on values programs</td>
<td>−0.178**</td>
<td>(0.059)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female × time on compliance programs</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority × time on values programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>−0.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority × time on compliance programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.117†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Individual-level \( N = 321,102 \); agency-level \( N = 26 \). Entries are logit coefficients. Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

*** \( p < .001 \). ** \( p < .01 \). * \( p < .05 \). † \( p < .10 \).
Table 3-6. Moderating Effects of Employee Demographics on the Relationship Between Organizational Ethics Programs and Fear of Retaliation (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>DV: Fear of retaliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on values-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>−3.422*** (1.175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on compliance-oriented ethics programs</td>
<td>0.714 (1.905)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>−3.362† (1.975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on values programs × time on compliance programs</td>
<td>0.251 (0.193)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on values programs × leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>0.788* (0.306)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on compliance programs × leader emphasis on moral values</td>
<td>−0.390 (0.465)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.190*** (0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>0.296*** (0.040)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>−1.777** (0.587)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>−0.250*** (0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>0.332* (0.136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of ethics employees</td>
<td>9.177 (10.767)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s tenure</td>
<td>−0.110 (0.075)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s experience</td>
<td>−0.010 (0.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics official’s time on ethics duties</td>
<td>0.143 (0.097)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor × time on values programs</td>
<td>0.125 (0.141)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor × time on compliance programs</td>
<td>0.110 (0.071)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College × time on values programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College × time on compliance programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Individual-level $N = 321,102$; agency-level $N = 26$. Entries are logit coefficients. Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. † $p < .10$. 
Discussion and Conclusion

Ethics and legal compliance programs are widely used in public organizations, but it is relatively unknown whether these programs bring about desirable outcomes for individual and organizational ethics. Whether and how formal ethics management plays a role in the whistle-blowing process remain unanswered. This chapter addresses this issue by investigating the effects of organizational ethics programs on employees’ fear of retaliation for whistle-blowing. I propose that ethics programs aimed at sharing ethical values and norms (i.e., values-oriented ethics programs) are negatively associated with the fear of retaliation, while ethics programs focused on monitoring and disciplining unethical conduct (i.e., compliance-oriented ethics programs) are either positively or negatively related to the fear of retaliation. The results provide support for values-oriented ethics programs reducing employees’ fear of reprisal, showing that the more time agencies spend on values-oriented programs, the less likely employees fear being retaliated against. However, the effect of compliance-oriented programs was found to be not statistically significant.

These results are consistent with the findings from previous research that ethics programs oriented toward affirming values have a stronger and more desirable impact on employee outcomes than do ethics programs emphasizing compliance and discipline (Paine, 1994; Weaver & Treviño, 1999). Strong shared values among employees, perceived organizational support, and mutual trust between management and employees, all of which can be engendered by values-oriented ethics programs, lessened employees’ perceptions that they would be retaliated against if they disclosed wrongdoing. In contrast, while compliance-oriented programs might be regarded as upholding organizational justice by emphasizing investigation and correction of misconduct, close monitoring and the threat of punishment for nonconformity also indicate
management’s lack of trust in employees. Employees may perceive these programs as both enabling and constraining, and these opposing forces may cancel each other’s effects. This might be one of the reasons why time spent on compliance-oriented programs does not have a significant influence on fear of reprisal.

Employee demographics also have significant implications for fear of retaliation. Women, minorities, nonsupervisors, and employees without college degrees were found to have greater perceptions of potential retaliation. Previous research on whistle-blowing has shown that powerful employees are likely to be viewed as more credible in the whistle-blowing process, and thus, have a higher probability of getting their voices heard by managers and organizations (Miceli & Near, 1984). They are less likely to fear being retaliated against when they report suspected wrongdoing. The findings in this chapter are consistent with these expectations. Moreover, the results show that the effects of ethics programs vary across demographic groups. In particular, the relationship between values-oriented programs and the fear of retaliation is stronger for female employees and those without college degrees. In sum, these findings suggest that values-oriented ethics programs can reduce the fear of retaliation for all employees regardless of their demographic characteristics, but they are more beneficial to those who are relatively disadvantaged in the organization.

This chapter adds meaningful knowledge to the literature on public sector ethics and whistle-blowing in particular by providing theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence on the role of formal ethics management in the whistle-blowing process. A number of empirical studies have contributed to the literature by examining a range of antecedents, correlates, and consequences of whistle-blowing, but our understanding is limited due to a dearth of research on the relationship between ethics management and whistle-blowing. This study is one of the first
that empirically examines the effects of organizational ethics programs on employees’ fear of retaliation.

The fear of retaliation is a major disincentive to employees’ decisions to report misconduct. In providing a prospective examination of this fear, this study suggests that ethics programs have the potential to influence the likelihood of whistle-blowing. Moreover, examination of person-organization interactions is relatively scant in whistle-blowing research. This study tests potential interactions between ethics programs and employee characteristics and shows that certain individuals may be more receptive to managerial practices and organizational conditions. Unlike previous research that examined employee perceptions of ethics programs, this study investigates actual ethics management and the relationship between time spent on ethics programs and the fear of retaliation, thereby shedding light on how ethics programs should be managed. In addition, the time variable is less susceptible to common method variance, which is typically a problem in studies that use perceptual measures for independent and dependent variables.

This study provides practical implications for public organizations, ethics managers, and potential whistle-blowers. First, public agencies should be aware that, by effectively designing and managing ethics programs, they have the power to influence employee whistle-blowing decisions and to build a workplace in which employees feel they can safely report wrongdoing. Public managers and executives can play a significant role in reducing fears, thereby increasing the likelihood of employees reporting suspected wrongdoing. However, ethics programs have varying impacts on employees’ fears of retaliation. These findings underscore the importance of understanding and managing different types of ethics programs and the consideration that public organizations should give to the role and function of each during their design and
implementation. This study suggests that they especially pay more attention to a values-oriented approach, which has been shown to be more effective in reducing fear of reprisal. Values-oriented programs are likely to be perceived as support from the organization, which in turn generates employee obligation to repay the organization. Repayment may take a variety of forms, with whistle-blowing being one.

While compliance-oriented ethics programs are not significantly related to employees’ fear of retaliation, this does not mean that the compliance-based approach is useless and that public organizations should not spend time on such programs. Previous research has shown that compliance-oriented programs are associated with reduced levels of unethical conduct, improved ethical awareness and ethical advice-seeking, and better decision-making (Weaver & Treviño, 1999). Each orientation has its own value. Thus, public organizations should try to find a balance between the two types of programs by not only emphasizing the enforcement of rules but also sharing ethical values and enhancing moral aspirations. In addition, managers should consider different employee characteristics and backgrounds to maximize effects. Previous research has shown that less powerful employees have a greater fear of retaliation for whistle-blowing (Caillier, 2012). Therefore, another important implication of this study is that public organizations should consider providing ethics programs particularly targeted at disempowered and disadvantaged employees because these people may benefit more from such programs.

Several limitations to this study and directions for future research are discussed below. First, ethics programs were measured by the amount of time spent on each program, which focuses on a more objective aspect of formal ethics management. This measure should be complemented by employee perceptions of ethics programs. Employees may have different perceptions about the same program, and these perceptions could lead to different attitudes and
behaviors. Thus, both perceptual and objective measures should be utilized to fully understand the effects of ethics programs. Second, this study focused on employees’ fear of retaliation as a dependent variable and did not test the effects of ethics programs on actual whistle-blowing. For a better understanding of the entire process, future research should examine how ethics management and the fear of retaliation influence whistle-blowing actions. A meta-analysis of predictors and correlates of whistle-blowing has shown that whistle-blowing attitudes and actions are distinct constructs which may be influenced by different sets of antecedents (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). It should be empirically tested whether ethics programs are related to the fear of retaliation and whistle-blowing behavior in similar or different ways. Third, this study examined the role of formal ethics programs, but informal control mechanisms, such as organizational culture, may also have implications for fear of retaliation and whistle-blowing. These informal control systems should be incorporated into the theoretical models in future research.

Moreover, ethics programs may have broader consequences for organizational functioning, such as performance, commitment, and satisfaction (Weaver & Treviño, 1999). In particular, they should be examined to see how closely ethics and performance goals can be aligned in public organizations. Lastly, the generalizability of the findings to other settings remains a question, especially state and local governments because they may have different ethics management systems and whistle-blower protection laws (Miceli et al., 2008). It should be further investigated whether the findings of this study can be replicated at other levels of government.

In conclusion, organizational ethics programs are important for the effective management of government ethics, and different types of ethics programs have their own roles and functions
in promoting ethical behavior. With respect to whistle-blowing, public organizations should pay more attention to providing programs that affirm ethical values, increase employees’ awareness, and improve their commitment to ethical standards. All of these can create a context in which potential whistle-blowers can voice their concerns about unethical organizational practices without fear of negative consequences. In addition, ethics scholars and administrators should be aware that ethics programs have significant implications not only for whistle-blowing but also for the success of public organizations by making them more transparent and anti-corrupt workplaces.
An organization’s structure has wide-ranging effects on the behavior of organizational members, but empirical research investigating its impact on whistle-blowing is relatively scant. This chapter examines the influence of organizational structure on public employees’ decisions to disclose wrongful activities occurring in their organizations. It focuses on five structural dimensions of public organizations: decentralization of decision-making, span of control, horizontal complexity, professionalization, and politicization. In addition, this study explores how these structural characteristics influence whistle-blowers’ use of internal and external channels for making disclosures.

Whistle-blowing involves organizational members disclosing wrongful activities that occur within their organizations using internal and/or external channels in the hope of having such activities terminated. Observers of wrongdoing encounter several ethical dilemmas in making key decisions such as whether to report the suspected activity to someone in authority, and if they choose to report, which channels to use to make the charges public. A range of individual and situational characteristics have been identified and tested to explain such decisions, including employee demographics, work attitudes, wrongdoing and wrongdoer characteristics, supervisory and managerial support, and the threat of retaliation (for review, see Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Miceli et al., 2008; Near & Miceli, 1996). Organizational structure is one of the variables that has been proposed to have significant implications for whistle-blowing decisions and actions. In his conceptual article, King (1999)
presented a series of theoretical propositions about the relationships between various organizational structures and internal disclosure of misconduct. However, empirical research examining the effect of an organization’s structure on whistle-blowing is limited.

Organizational structure refers to “the formal, systematic arrangement of the operations and activities that constitute an organization and the interrelationships of these operations to one another” (Organ & Bateman, 1986, p. 607). It is related to the levels of hierarchy, spans of control, grouping of jobs and positions, and formal rules and procedures within an organization. Beyond its impact on internal operations, organizational structure shapes the relationships with outside actors as well.

An organization’s structure has three significant implications for the decision to blow the whistle. First, it determines the distribution of power and authority among organizational members. Power dynamics play a central role in the whistle-blowing process (Near & Miceli, 1985). Employees who hold greater power in an organization are more likely to blow the whistle because they believe that their claims would be more effective in stopping wrongdoing, and they have fewer fears of retaliation from management than do the less powerful. Second, organizational structure impacts internal, especially vertical, communication. Whistle-blowing is considered a particular type of communication, that is, delivering sensitive information to upper management (King, 1999). The fewer hierarchical levels there exist in the organization, the easier and faster is upward communication, which could encourage internal disclosure of unethical conduct. Third, organizational structure influences how whistle-blowing is viewed and treated in the organization. Organizations with a strict hierarchy of authority are likely to view whistle-blowing as noncompliance or dissidence that must be discouraged (Weinstein, 1979).
This chapter provides a theoretical model and an empirical examination of the relationship between organizational structure and public employees’ decisions to disclose wrongful activities using data from the U.S. federal government. Specifically, it investigates several structural dimensions of public organizations that have the potential to influence the likelihood of reporting misconduct and the choice of internal or external channels through which to make claims. This study focuses on five structural characteristics, including decentralization of decision-making, span of control, horizontal complexity, professionalization, and politicization, and tests whether and how each of these dimensions influences the decisions related to whistle-blowing.

The next section reviews the literature on organizational structure and whistle-blowing. I develop a series of hypotheses about the effects of structural dimensions on the likelihood of blowing the whistle. Then, I describe data and variables for the empirical analysis, develop and analyze multilevel logistic regression models, and present the results. This chapter concludes by discussing implications for theory and practice, limitations, and future research directions.

**Organizational Structure and Whistle-Blowing**

From the Weberian perspective (Weber, 1947), organizational structure and bureaucracy are closely related. Bureaucratic organizations are often criticized as suppressing or constraining employee whistle-blowing because such dissenting voice may pose a threat to their norms and values (Golden, 2000; Near & Miceli, 1996). Weinstein (1979) argued that organizations characterized by a strict hierarchy of authority are likely to view whistle-blowing as noncompliance with their authority structure and discourage attempts to disclose wrongdoing by members. In such organizations, managers are unwilling to have their decisions and actions...
called into question, even if the allegations are credible and would be beneficial for their organizations eventually. They may place formal and/or informal pressures on employees to remain silent or report through unofficial channels.

Miceli et al. (1991) provided an empirical analysis of the effect of bureaucracy on whistle-blowing, using a sample of internal auditors working in business firms and government agencies. Bureaucracy was measured by individual perceptions of the extent to which organizational climate was procedural, structured, ordered, and regulated. The authors found that internal auditors are less likely to expose wrongdoing in highly bureaucratic organizations, even though their primary responsibility is to investigate, detect, report, and follow up illegal or unethical practices. As bureaucratic organizations tend to view whistle-blowing as being in opposition to or a deviation from majority perspectives (Bourgeois, 1985; Schwenk, 1988) which should be disregarded or suppressed, potential whistle-blowers might choose to make reports outside of organizational boundaries because external actors are less likely to regard whistle-blowing as a threat to authority. Miceli et al. (1991) tested this assumption but did not find supportive evidence. In short, less bureaucratic and more flexible organizations are considered more open to employee dissent and believed to be “less threatened by whistle-blowers and more willing to cease and desist from wrongdoing” (Near & Miceli, 2008, p. 277).

The concepts of mechanistic and organic structures are particularly useful for further understanding the effect of organizational structure on whistle-blowing. At opposite ends of a continuum, a mechanistic structure is formal, centralized, rigid, and bureaucratic, while an organic structure is informal, decentralized, flexible, and loose (Burns & Stalker, 1961). In mechanistic structures, decision-making is concentrated at the top, leaving lower-level employees little room to become involved in important organizational decisions. Formal rules
and regulations are the primary mechanisms for controlling individual choices and actions. In contrast, organic structures have fewer formal rules and policies. Decision-making spreads out to the lowest levels possible, allowing employees to have greater flexibility and autonomy in choosing their actions.

As whistle-blowing is voluntary and discretionary in most situations, employees are likely to feel encouraged to report misconduct when they have latitude in workplace behavior and decision-making. Such freedom would extend to decisions about whether and how to engage in whistle-blowing. Organic structures tend to permit employee dissent and are less resistant to employees’ attempts to reveal and correct wrongful activities. Thus, whistle-blowing is more likely to occur in organic structures than in mechanistic ones. Similarly, King (1999) argued that hierarchical organizations with vertical communication and centralized decision-making are associated with a lower likelihood of internal whistle-blowing.

Structural Dimensions of Public Organizations

In this section, I examine five structural characteristics of public organizations, including decentralization of decision-making, span of control, horizontal complexity, professionalization, and politicization.

Decentralization of Decision-Making

Decentralization is defined as the extent to which “power is distributed among social positions” (Hage & Aiken, 1967b, p. 77), and it reflects “where decisions are formally made in organizations” (Colquitt, LePine, & Wesson, 2014, p. 532). A key dimension of decentralization is the level of “participation” in decision-making (Schminke, 2001). In a decentralized structure,
most employees are delegated important work-related decisions, whereas, in a centralized one, decision-making is concentrated at the top and few employees have the opportunity to engage in the decision-making process.

Decentralization of decision-making may increase or decrease the likelihood of blowing the whistle. On the one hand, power theory suggests that observers are more likely to disclose wrongdoing when they perceive they have sufficient power—specifically, the power to stop or correct the wrongdoing—relative to that of their organizations and the wrongdoers (Miceli & Near, 1984, 1988; Near & Miceli, 1985). In decentralized organizations, employees are likely to believe that they have greater power and authority than they would otherwise have had in centralized structures and that they would be more effective in getting their voice heard by top managers. The voice literature provides similar explanations (Hirschman, 1970). Whistle-blowing is considered organizational dissidence, which is expressed in the form of employee voice rather than silence or exit (Near & Miceli, 1985). Morrison and Milliken (2000) suggested that centralized decision-making may prohibit employee voice by creating “an environment in which employees feel uncomfortable speaking up about certain issues” (p. 712). In such an environment, employees would believe that their voice is unwelcome and their opinions are not taken seriously by upper management. Expressing concern about sensitive issues such as unlawful or unethical practices would be thought of as dangerous and even jeopardizing their careers.

On the other hand, decentralization of decision-making may discourage employees from reporting observed misconduct. By definition, whistle-blowers rely on powerful others to some extent for the discontinuation of wrongdoing or the punishment of wrongdoers, as they lack “the authority to change the organization’s activities” by themselves (Near & Miceli, 1985, p. 2).
When decision-making is decentralized, lower-level employees may believe that managers and supervisors who receive complaints do not have sufficient power and authority to take action because of their limited control over organizational decisions; this would reduce the perceived effectiveness of reporting. In addition, employees who have greater latitude in decision-making may attempt to correct or stop wrongful activities in different ways, possibly through informal channels rather than formal reports. Also, responsibilities are likely to be more diffused among employees in decentralized organizations than in centralized ones. It might be unclear who is responsible for blowing the whistle and who is responsible for receiving complaints, which may lead employees to believe that reporting wrongdoing is not their responsibility. Thus, I develop the following two hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1a.** Employees are more likely to blow the whistle on organizational wrongdoing when decision-making is more decentralized.

**Hypothesis 1b.** Employees are more likely to blow the whistle on organizational wrongdoing when decision-making is less decentralized.

**Span of Control**

An organization’s span of control, which refers to the number of employees a manager is responsible for, is related to the degree of latitude given to subordinates in terms of decision-making and the number of hierarchical levels in the organization (Colquitt et al., 2014). When an organization has a narrow span of control, managers oversee fewer employees and can use more directive leadership styles and close supervision, granting their employees little autonomy. In
organizations with wide spans of control, however, managers are responsible for a large number of employees. For effective management in such situations, employees are given some discretion to make decisions on their own. In addition, organizations with narrow spans of control tend to have more layers in the hierarchy, while those with wide spans of control are flatter with fewer hierarchical levels. Therefore, the wider the span of control is, the easier and faster vertical communication is between upper and lower levels. Miceli and Near (1992) argued that whistle-blowing is more likely to occur when the distance between observer and upper management is closer or when there are fewer sequential links in upward communication. Due to this autonomy and the ease of communication, wide spans of control would be related to an increased likelihood of whistle-blowing.

*Hypothesis 2. Employees are more likely to blow the whistle on organizational wrongdoing when the organization’s average span of control is wider.*

**Horizontal Complexity**

Another dimension of organizational structure is horizontal complexity, which broadly refers to the degree of differentiation among internal components (e.g., functions, roles, occupations, work locations) that are relevant to an organization’s operations. More specifically, it is defined as the extent to which organizational roles, functions, and divisions are differentiated laterally rather than vertically (Aiken, Bacharach, & French, 1980). Horizontal complexity can be measured in various ways, such as departmentalization (or functional differentiation) and role specialization (or occupational differentiation) (Damanpour, 1996), the latter of which is used in this study to operationalize horizontal complexity at the occupational level (Hage & Aiken,
Whereas decentralization of decision-making and span of control represent the vertical structure of organizations, this variable is related to the horizontal structure.

Differentiation often goes hand in hand with the development of unique work procedures, technologies, rules, and policies in each unit of an organization in order to handle dissimilar jobs and tasks. In addition, each unit may establish varying norms and cultures. Consequently, highly differentiated organizations require specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities to cope with such complexity. From the whistle-blowing perspective, if questionable activity occurs in one particular unit of a highly complex organization, it is most likely that employees working in the same unit have the best chance to detect it, the knowledge to determine whether it constitutes wrongdoing, and the potential to make it public. Moreover, in highly differentiated organizations, decision-making authority is usually given to employees in each unit; therefore, these employees tend to have greater autonomy in reporting wrongful actions. Those with specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities are also in a better position to closely monitor internal operations and find any omissions. If an organization is more complex and diverse in terms of occupations, each occupational group is likely to develop its own specific knowledge base that is not applicable to other groups, and any unethical conduct occurring in the group is best monitored from within. In short, the likelihood of whistle-blowing would increase in horizontally complex organizations.

*Hypothesis 3. Employees are more likely to blow the whistle on organizational wrongdoing when the organization is more horizontally complex in terms of occupations.*
Professionalization

Previous research has shown that whistle-blowing is positively correlated with professional status (Miceli & Near, 1988; Perrucci, Anderson, Schendel, & Trachtman, 1980; Pincus, 1990). Ethical decision-making, including whistle-blowing, often relies on personal norms and values. Professional employees are likely to hold strong ethical standards as prescribed by their professions. Actions that are not formally sanctioned or governed by organizational rules and policies can be guided by these professional norms and standards. In addition, these standards may provide social cues through which professional employees can determine what is considered immoral or illegitimate in organizational settings. When faced with ethical dilemmas in the whistle-blowing process, their decisions to disclose misconduct are likely to be supported by professional networks. Moreover, professional employees tend to have more employment opportunities outside the current organization than do nonprofessional employees, and thus, they are less dependent on their employer and have fewer fears of potential negative consequences, such as demotion, transfers, and firing (Miceli & Near, 1988). The greater educational attainment, knowledge, skills, and expertise that professional workers tend to possess also serve as sources of power (French & Raven, 1959), which would increase the likelihood of whistle-blowing.

Hypothesis 4. Employees are more likely to blow the whistle on organizational wrongdoing when their organization is more professionalized.
**Politicization**

Political control over bureaucratic activities may have an influence on the likelihood of blowing the whistle, but the effect could be either positive or negative. On the negative side, political influences impose substantial constraints on bureaucratic decisions and actions, thereby reducing bureaucrats’ discretion in daily operations. This limited autonomy in decision-making may discourage public employees from revealing observed wrongful practices. In addition, political appointees are from outside an organization and are often not as loyal or committed to the organization as career bureaucrats. Such emotional detachment may cause them to be less willing to receive complaints about wrongdoing and/or take action to have it corrected.

On the other hand, bureaucrats’ decisions and actions are subject to greater political scrutiny in a highly politicized organization. Political appointees are in a position to closely monitor and control organizational actions and practices (Moe, 1985; Nathan, 1983), so otherwise unnoticed or disregarded omissions can be made public. Moreover, they are outside of the organization’s traditional authority structure or chains of command, so potential whistle-blowers may view them as alternative channels for reporting wrongdoing, whose actions and decisions are more open to the public eye. Thus, the following two hypotheses are developed:

*Hypothesis 5a.* Employees are more likely to blow the whistle on organizational wrongdoing when there are more political appointees in the organization.

*Hypothesis 5b.* Employees are more likely to blow the whistle on organizational wrongdoing when there are less political appointees in the organization.
In addition to the hypotheses described above, this study explores whether and how organizational structure impacts the choice of whistle-blowing channels by examining the effects of five structural components. Whistle-blowers may use internal, external, or both channels to make their claims. The distinction between internal and external whistle-blowing is important because internal disclosures are considered more beneficial to organizations because they provide an opportunity to correct wrongdoing without risking public scrutiny or legal interventions (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005) and help create an ethical climate in the workplace (King, 1999). Previous research has shown that most whistle-blowers initially choose to report via internal channels (Miceli & Near, 1985) and that they undergo similar processes and are affected by similar factors when making disclosures internally or externally (Miceli & Near, 1992). While not hypothesized, the effects of structural dimensions are investigated for internal and external whistle-blowing to see if any different patterns emerge for either case.

Data and Method

Data

The hypothesized relationships between structural dimensions and whistle-blowing are multilevel in nature, in which structural characteristics are organizational-level variables and whistle-blowing is an individual-level variable. Data for the empirical analysis were drawn from individual as well as organizational sources. The dependent variable, whistle-blowing, was measured using the 2010 Merit Principles Survey (MPS). This survey was administered by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board to 71,910 randomly selected full-time and permanent employees working in the 22 largest federal agencies, including cabinet departments and independent agencies, using stratified sampling. Among those surveyed, 42,020 employees
completed the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 58.4%. As this study focuses on the decision to blow the whistle on observed wrongdoing, only those who had witnessed misbehavior in the past 12 months were included in the sample. A total of 3,770 employees reported they had “observed or obtained direct evidence of one or more illegal or wasteful activities” involving their agency. Individual-level control variables were derived from the 2010 MPS as well, including minority status, supervisory level, education, federal tenure, frequency of wrongdoing, and fear of reprisal.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s FedScope, the 2008 United States Government Policy and Supporting Positions, and the 2010 MPS were utilized to collect information about organizational-level variables at the subagency level. The individual- and organizational-level data were matched using subagency IDs. Due to missing data on one or more variables at the individual or organizational level, the final sample included 2,716 employees in 50 subagencies. No meaningful differences existed between the respondents included in the final sample and those who were not.

Variables

Dependent variables. In the 2010 MPS, observers of wrongdoing were asked whether they had reported the suspected activity. They were given a list of potential complaint recipients and allowed to mark multiple responses (see Table 4-1). Those employees who reported wrongdoing through at least one internal or external channel were considered whistle-blowers in this study. Those who did not report at all and those who told the activity only to a family member or a friend did not constitute whistle-blowers. The dependent variable was coded with dichotomous categories, in which 1 indicates blowing the whistle and 0 represents not blowing
the whistle. Among the 2,716 observers of misconduct in the final sample, 1,747 employees (64.3%) blew the whistle.

In addition, this study examines whether structural characteristics have varying effects on the use of internal versus external channels to make disclosures. Accordingly, two additional binary dependent variables were created: (1) “internal” whistle-blowing, in which 1 indicates internal reporting and 0 represents non-whistle-blowing, and (2) “external” whistle-blowing, in which 1 represents the use of one or more external channels and 0 indicates non-whistle-blowing. The Other category in Table 4-1 was considered missing data because it was ambiguous whether those who marked this response category had used internal, external, or both channels. In the sample, 1,636 employees (60.2%) reported through internal channels, and 366 employees (13.5%) reported externally.

**Independent variables.** The degree of decentralization was measured using a summated rating scale, with two items in the 2010 MPS. The survey items included “My job gives me the freedom to make decisions regarding how I accomplish my work” and “My opinions count at work,” which assessed the extent to which employees participated in decision-making (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.70). These two variables were averaged and then aggregated for each subagency to measure the degree of decentralization at the organizational level.

The span of control was measured as the average number of lower-level employees supervised by each manager. The data for this variable were derived from FedScope. The number of nonsupervisory employees was divided by the number of supervisors and managers in each subagency.
Horizontal complexity was measured as the degree of differentiation in terms of occupations in each subagency using the Blau index of heterogeneity, which was calculated as $1 - \sum p_i^2$, where $p_i$ denotes the percentage of employees in each occupational category $i$.

FedScope was utilized to collect information on occupational categories, which included professional, administrative, technical, clerical, other white-collar, and blue-collar. The higher the value of the Blau index was, the more complex the organization was in terms of occupations.

To measure the degree of professionalization, the proportion of professional employees was computed as the number of professional employees divided by the total number of employees in each subagency. The data for this variable were drawn from FedScope.

Politicization was measured as the percentage of political appointees in each subagency and was computed as the number of political appointees divided by the total number of employees in the organization. The types of positions held by the political appointees included Presidential Appointment with Senate Confirmation (PAS), Presidential Appointment without Senate Confirmation (PA), noncareer Senior Executive Service (SES, NA), and Schedule C Excepted Appointment (SC). Data for the PAS and PA positions were drawn from United States Government Policy and Supporting Positions, and data for noncareer SES and Schedule C positions were derived from FedScope.

**Control variables.** Individual characteristics such as minority status (1 = minority; 0 = nonminority), supervisory level (1 = supervisor; 0 = nonsupervisor), education (1 = less than a high school diploma to 8 = academic or scientific doctorate), and federal tenure (1 = under one year to 11 = more than 35 years) were included as control variables. The model also included the frequency of wrongdoing as a control (1 = once or rarely; 2 = occasionally; 3 = frequently), as
employees are more likely to report the suspected wrongdoing when it is more serious or frequent in occurrence. The fear of reprisal was controlled for because the more employees fear being retaliated against, the less likely they are to blow the whistle. Organizational size was added to the models as an organizational-level control variable, which was measured as the total number of employees in each subagency using data from FedScope. The natural log of the variable was taken because the original data were skewed. In large organizations, employees may have more chances to observe wrongdoing and thus are more likely to blow the whistle. However, large organizations tend to be less dependent on any one employee and can replace an employee with another easily (Miceli & Near, 1985). In addition, there are more hierarchical levels between lower-level employees and upper management, which makes it difficult for whistle-blowers to communicate with potential complaint recipients.

The variables and measures used in this chapter are summarized in Table 4-1, and the descriptive statistics and correlations among variables are presented in Tables 4-2 and 4-3, respectively.
Table 4-1. Variables and Measures

Observation of wrongdoing
- “During the last 12 months, did you personally observe or obtain direct evidence of one or more illegal or wasteful activities involving your agency? (Note: Do not answer “yes” if you only heard about the activity in the media or heard about it as a rumor.)” (1 = yes; 0 = no)

Whistle-blowing
- “Did you report this activity to any of the following? (Please mark ALL that apply.)” (1 = yes; 0 = no)
  - I did not report the activity
  - Family member or friend
  - Coworker
  - Immediate supervisor
  - Higher-level supervisor
  - Higher-level agency official
  - Agency Inspector General
  - Office of Special Counsel
  - Government Accountability Office
  - Law enforcement official
  - Union representative
  - News media
  - Congressional staff member or member of Congress
  - Advocacy group outside the Government
  - Other

Frequency of wrongdoing
- “How frequently did this activity occur?” (1 = once or rarely; 2 = occasionally; 3 = frequently)

Fear of reprisal
- “I feel that I could disclose wrongdoing without any concerns that the disclosure would make my life harder.” (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree; reverse coded)

Decentralization of decision-making
- “My job gives me the freedom to make decisions regarding how I accomplish my work.” (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)
- “My opinions count at work.” (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)
Table 4-1. Variables and Measures (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Span of control</td>
<td>Number of nonsupervisory employees divided by the number of supervisors and managers in each subagency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal complexity</td>
<td>Blau index of heterogeneity in occupational categories (including professional, administrative, technical, clerical, other white-collar, and blue-collar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalization</td>
<td>Number of professional employees divided by the total number of employees in each subagency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicization</td>
<td>Number of political appointees divided by the total number of employees in each subagency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority status</td>
<td>Respondent’s minority status (1 = minority; 0 = nonminority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory level</td>
<td>Respondent’s supervisory level (1 = supervisor; 0 = nonsupervisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Respondent’s education level (1 = less than a high school diploma to 8 = academic or scientific doctorate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal tenure</td>
<td>Respondent’s tenure in the federal government (1 = under one year to 11 = more than 35 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational size</td>
<td>Total number of employees in each subagency (logged)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-2. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistle-blowing</td>
<td>0.643</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.771</td>
<td>1.444</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal tenure</td>
<td>6.105</td>
<td>2.635</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of wrongdoing</td>
<td>2.316</td>
<td>0.746</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of reprisal</td>
<td>3.785</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational size (logged)</td>
<td>9.509</td>
<td>1.349</td>
<td>6.738</td>
<td>12.547</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decentralization of decision-making</td>
<td>3.757</td>
<td>0.158</td>
<td>3.252</td>
<td>4.098</td>
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<tr>
<td>Span of control</td>
<td>8.023</td>
<td>2.973</td>
<td>4.217</td>
<td>16.758</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horizontal complexity</td>
<td>0.537</td>
<td>0.175</td>
<td>0.152</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professionalization</td>
<td>0.254</td>
<td>0.211</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicization</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Individual-level N = 2,716; organizational-level N = 50.
Table 4-3. Correlation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Whistle-blowing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Minority</td>
<td>−0.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Supervisor</td>
<td>0.044*</td>
<td>−0.024</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Education</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>−0.057**</td>
<td>0.130***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Federal tenure</td>
<td>−0.005</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.178***</td>
<td>−0.086***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Frequency of wrongdoing</td>
<td>0.101***</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>−0.067***</td>
<td>−0.030</td>
<td>−0.009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Fear of reprisal</td>
<td>−0.016</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>−0.134***</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.122***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational level</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Organizational size (logged)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Decentralization of decision-making</td>
<td>−0.061</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Span of control</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Horizontal complexity</td>
<td>0.473***</td>
<td>−0.004</td>
<td>−0.053</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Professionalization</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.379**</td>
<td>0.325*</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Politicization</td>
<td>−0.215</td>
<td>−0.033</td>
<td>−0.220</td>
<td>−0.121</td>
<td>−0.052</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Individual-level $N = 2,716$; organizational-level $N = 50$.

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. 
Modeling

Given the hierarchical structures of the hypothesized model and the data, a series of multilevel models were developed for each dependent variable to test the effects of structural dimensions, which were measured at the organizational level, on the likelihood of whistle-blowing, which was measured at the individual level. As the dependent variables were binary, multilevel logistic regression analyses were conducted using Stata 14. All continuous variables were centered at their grand means in order to reduce potential multicollinearity.

Results

The results from multilevel logistic regressions are presented in Table 4-4. I ran three models with different dependent variables. For overall whistle-blowing (see Model 1), holding other variables constant, the degree of decentralization was negatively and significantly associated with whistle-blowing ($p < .05$). This indicates that whistle-blowing was less likely in more decentralized organizations, providing support for Hypothesis 1b. Looking further into its influence on reporting channels (see Models 2 and 3), decentralization was negatively and significantly related to the use of external channels ($p < .05$), whereas it had a negative but only marginally significant effect on the use of internal channels ($p < .10$). These results suggest that decentralization reduced the likelihood of blowing the whistle in general, probably because employees were less inclined to make claims externally.

The effect of professionalization on overall whistle-blowing was positive and significant ($p < .05$), which lends support for Hypothesis 4. The degree of professionalization was positively and significantly related to internal whistle-blowing ($p < .05$), but its effect was not statistically significant for the use of external channels. Thus, professionalization is expected to increase the
likelihood of whistle-blowing, by encouraging employees to report unethical practices internally. The effects of the other structural characteristics (i.e., span of control, horizontal complexity, and politicization) were not statistically significant.

Among the control variables, being a supervisor was positively and significantly associated with overall whistle-blowing ($p < .05$), which is consistent with what power theory suggests. Specifically, supervisors were more likely to disclose misconduct through internal channels. In addition, the frequency of wrongdoing was significantly and positively related to the likelihood of whistle-blowing, regardless of channel ($p < .001$), indicating that employees were more likely to report when the wrongdoing occurred frequently. Lastly, the fear of reprisal increased external disclosures ($p < .01$).
Table 4-4. Effects of Organizational Structure on the Likelihood of Whistle-Blowing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DV: Whistle-blowing</td>
<td>DV: Internal whistle-blowing</td>
<td>DV: External whistle-blowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>−0.109 (0.225)</td>
<td>−0.306 (0.230)</td>
<td>−1.648*** (0.365)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>−0.072 (0.097)</td>
<td>−0.092 (0.099)</td>
<td>−0.005 (0.150)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>0.181* (0.091)</td>
<td>0.207* (0.092)</td>
<td>−0.169 (0.149)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.001 (0.030)</td>
<td>0.010 (0.030)</td>
<td>−0.067 (0.046)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal tenure</td>
<td>−0.008 (0.016)</td>
<td>−0.007 (0.016)</td>
<td>−0.019 (0.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of wrongdoing</td>
<td>0.297*** (0.054)</td>
<td>0.329*** (0.055)</td>
<td>0.462*** (0.091)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of reprisal</td>
<td>−0.036 (0.034)</td>
<td>−0.036 (0.035)</td>
<td>0.175** (0.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational size (logged)</td>
<td>0.038 (0.035)</td>
<td>0.032 (0.036)</td>
<td>0.033 (0.058)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization of decision-making</td>
<td>−0.632* (0.322)</td>
<td>−0.618† (0.329)</td>
<td>−1.102* (0.509)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Span of control</td>
<td>0.011 (0.016)</td>
<td>0.008 (0.016)</td>
<td>0.019 (0.026)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal complexity</td>
<td>0.387 (0.289)</td>
<td>0.471 (0.293)</td>
<td>−0.058 (0.476)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalization</td>
<td>0.551* (0.277)</td>
<td>0.572* (0.281)</td>
<td>0.079 (0.457)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicization</td>
<td>3.629 (6.821)</td>
<td>2.750 (6.889)</td>
<td>3.204 (10.961)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Individual-level N = 2,716; organizational-level N = 50. Entries are logit coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses. Whistle-blowers are compared to non-whistle-blowers.

*** p < .001. ** p < .01. * p < .05. † p < .10.
Discussion and Conclusion

Previous research has suggested that organizational structure would have meaningful influences on employee disclosures of wrongdoing, but few empirical studies have been conducted to explore the effects of organizational structure in the context of whistle-blowing. This chapter investigates how structural dimensions of public organizations relate to the likelihood that public employees report observed misconduct. Using U.S. federal government data from multiple sources, I examine the impacts of five structural dimensions on employee decisions to report and to use internal or external channels. The results show that whistle-blowing, external reporting in particular, is less likely in decentralized organizations, suggesting that the diffusion of responsibilities, ambiguous chains of command, and blurred boundaries between employee and management might limit employees’ ability to make disclosures. This is consistent with Schminke’s (2001) finding that decentralization of decision-making is negatively associated with employees’ ethical predispositions, which would be closely related to whistle-blowing decisions. On the other hand, professionalization is shown to increase the likelihood of whistle-blowing, especially through internal channels. Professional workers tend to possess resources, such as knowledge, skills, and social networks, that are more valuable to an organization, so they have a greater chance of having their voices heard by top management. Thus, whistle-blowing is more likely in professionalized organizations. Other structural characteristics, such as span of control, horizontal complexity, and politicization, do not have significant effects on the decision to report unethical conduct.

This study has several implications for whistle-blowing research and practice. First, while previous studies have shown that situational and contextual factors have greater explanatory power in predicting whistle-blowing behavior than do personal characteristics (Mesmer-Magnus
& Viswesvaran, 2005; Miceli et al., 2008; Vadera et al., 2009), they have focused on examining informal aspects of work environments, such as supervisory support and organizational climate. Little empirical research has been conducted on the role of formal organizational structure in the whistle-blowing process. This study sheds light on the importance of understanding and designing structural components to encourage public employees to reveal wrongful activities. Also, it shows that different structural dimensions have varying impacts on the decision to blow the whistle and the choice of internal and external channels. These and other structural characteristics of public organizations (e.g., formalization) should be further examined in future research to enrich our understanding of the relationship between organizational structure and whistle-blowing.

In addition, this study informs public managers that they should take various structural dimensions into consideration when designing their organizations if they wish to encourage whistle-blowing among employees. However, the findings of this chapter should be interpreted with caution. While it is found that whistle-blowing is more likely in less decentralized organizations, it does not mean that all public organizations should have centralized structures. It is important to understand that such structures have both advantages and disadvantages. Centralization would be beneficial because of its clear chain of command and procedures for reporting. Managers in highly decentralized organizations may be able to increase the likelihood of whistle-blowing by providing employees with information about adequate whistle-blowing channels, efficacious complaint recipients, and official procedures for making reports (King, 1999). In addition, professionalization is positively associated with the likelihood of whistle-blowing. Professionalization would increase individuals’ idiosyncrasy credits (Hollander, 1958) as well as change the power-dependence dynamics between employee and management (Pfeffer
& Salancik, 1978). Thus, public organizations should consider offering several opportunities to employees so they can develop professional knowledge, skills, and abilities, all of which would be valuable to the organization.

Limitations of this study and avenues for future research are discussed below.

Decentralization of decision-making is measured by employees’ perceptions that they can participate in making important organizational decisions and that their opinions are valued. While this perceptual measure is widely used in management studies, future research should consider employing more objective measures. Other aspects of the decentralized structure need to be examined as well, such as the hierarchy of authority (Hage & Aiken, 1969; Schminke, 2001). Relatedly, while other structural dimensions tested in this study are measured using archival and administrative records, decentralization of decision-making and whistle-blowing are measured using the same source of data, the 2010 MPS, which may result in common method variance. However, the whistle-blowing variable is concerned with whether the respondent actually reported the suspected wrongdoing, which is more factual than perceptual. In addition, individual responses to the decentralization items are aggregated at the organizational level and subsequently modeled and analyzed as an organizational-level variable, which reduces the possibility of common method variance. Thus, single source bias is less of a concern in this study.

While this study focuses on five structural dimensions of public organizations, the effects of other structural characteristics on whistle-blowing behavior should be explored in future research. Also, different structural dimensions may interact with one another. For example, the effect of decentralization on the decision to report misconduct may depend on other structural characteristics such as formalization, such that decentralized decision-making would have a
stronger negative relationship to the likelihood of reporting wrongdoing when the organization is more or less formalized. Thus, scholars should examine potential interactions and joint effects of various structural dimensions. This would help in understanding what combination of structural components leads to the highest probability of whistle-blowing among employees. Also, given that whistle-blowing is one particular type of voice behavior (Morrison & Milliken, 2000) and communication (King, 1999), it would be interesting to examine how organizational structure influences employee voice and communication in general.

In sum, public organizations and managers should be aware of the role of organizational structure in encouraging employees to report ethical problems in order to design and manage their structural configurations more effectively. A more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between organizational structure and whistle-blowing will help enhance the organization’s ability to detect and correct unethical practices and thereby increase administrative transparency.
CHAPTER 5
GENDER, REPRESENTATION, AND WHISTLE-BLOWING IN THE CASE OF
SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a prevalent and pervasive workplace issue that has significant negative outcomes for both employees and organizations. Scholars have examined a range of antecedents and consequences of sexual harassment, but the factors that influence the likelihood of reporting and retaliation are relatively unknown. Drawing on the theory of representative bureaucracy, this chapter investigates the extent to which gender representation can explain the likelihood that targets of harassment blow the whistle on their harassers and receive retaliation for that reporting.

According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), sexual harassment refers to “deliberate or repeated unsolicited verbal comments, gestures or physical contact of a sexual nature which are unwelcome” (25 C.F.R. § 700.561). More specifically, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines it as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature . . . when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual’s employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment” (29 C.F.R. § 1604.11). Sexual harassment has been a pervasive and persistent discriminatory issue in the federal workplace. The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB, 1995) reported that the incidence rates of sexual harassment remained largely unchanged between 1980 and 1994 for both female and male employees, with approximately 40% of women and 15% of men experiencing some type of sexual harassment.
The consequences of sexual harassment are substantial. The 1995 MSPB report estimated the costs associated with sexual harassment as follows: $24.7 million in turnover and replacement, $14.9 million in sick leave, $93.7 million in individual productivity loss, and $193.8 million in work group productivity loss. Academic research has also found that sexual harassment is related to physical health problems (e.g., headaches, gastrointestinal diseases, sleep disorders), psychological stress, anxiety, depression, interpersonal conflict, work disruption, organizational withdrawals (e.g., turnover), and diminished morale and satisfaction (Bergman, Langhout, Palmieri, Cortina, & Fitzgerald, 2002; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997; Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Koss, 1993). These negative outcomes are not limited to the targets of sexual harassment but often extend to coworkers and employers as these issues and problems tend to create a hostile work environment.

Given the prevalence and dire consequences of sexual harassment, it is important to know how to prevent or at least reduce its occurrence in the workplace. In addition, efforts should be made to help targets deal with their distressful experiences and resolve harassing situations. To do so, how targets respond to the incidence of sexual harassment needs to be understood. Targets’ responses may take a variety of forms, including denial, avoidance, support-seeking, negotiation, confrontation, and reporting, which range from passive to active strategies (Gruber, 1989). Among them, reporting is one of the most assertive, focusing attention on the perpetrator rather than the victim and invoking the support and advocacy of others; thus, reporting is considered to be more effective than other responses in stopping harassment (Knapp, Faley, Ekeberg, & Dubois, 1997).

Bergman et al. (2002) defined the reporting of sexual harassment as “the act of telling an organizational authority (e.g., supervisor, equal employment opportunity representative) about
unwanted or offensive sex-related behavior (whether or not the target explicitly labeled this experience as ‘sexual harassment’)” (p. 231). Harassment targets should be encouraged to report their experiences to someone in authority who can bring about change to the harassing situation more effectively. Despite the supposed benefits of reporting, many cases of sexual harassment go unreported (Brooks & Perot, 1991; Fitzgerald et al., 1988). The number of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints filed for sexual harassment has been small, despite the frequency and prevalence of the issue in federal agencies (see Figure 5-1).

Figure 5-1. Number of Filed Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunity Complaints Based on Sexual Harassment

Scholars have examined a range of antecedents and consequences of sexual harassment, but the factors that influence the likelihood of reporting and its outcomes are relatively unknown. As reporting sexual harassment is considered one particular type of whistle-blowing, targets may experience serious reprisals due to their reports. Given that sexual harassment is a gendered issue and that gender context may play a vital role in determining targets’ responses, this study examines how gender representation is related to reporting behavior and retaliation. These relationships are modeled and tested at multiple organizational levels, including immediate supervisor, work group, agency head, and organization.

The next section provides a review of the literature on sexual harassment. I discuss and hypothesize the impact of gender representation on reporting of sexual harassment and subsequent retaliation by drawing on the theory of representative bureaucracy. Then, I describe data, variables, and modeling strategies and present the findings. This chapter concludes with the study’s implications for research and practice as well as its limitations and future research agendas.

**Gender Context and Sexual Harassment**

Previous research on sexual harassment has shown that the incidence of sexual harassment and subsequent reactions to it are influenced by the following three categories of variables (Bergman et al., 2002; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Lee, Heilmann, & Near, 2004): stimulus factors (e.g., frequency and length of harassment), individual factors (e.g., organizational status, vulnerability, attitudes), and contextual factors (e.g., organizational climate, tolerance). Several scholars have argued that sexual harassment can be better understood by looking at contextual factors surrounding targets and harassers, rather than viewing it merely as individual deviance
Specifically, job gender context and organizational climate have been hypothesized and tested as critical antecedents of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999).

Job gender context refers to “the gendered nature of the workgroup, for example, group gender ratio” (Fitzgerald et al., 1997, p. 579), while organizational climate is defined as “organizational characteristics that communicate tolerance of sexual harassment” (Fitzgerald et al., 1997, p. 579). In empirical studies, job gender context has been operationalized as (1) the extent to which a job is usually held by a person of male or female gender, (2) the supervisor’s gender, and (3) the gender ratio among coworkers (Fitzgerald et al., 1997, 1999). The gender context of work groups is closely related to organizational climate because gender-imbalanced work groups dominated by a majority gender (in most cases, male) are likely to develop a more hostile and offensive climate toward sexual harassment reporting.

Both men and women are more likely to experience sexually harassing situations in work environments in which their own gender is considered atypical (e.g., female employees working in male-dominated work settings) than in gender-balanced environments (Ellis, Barak, & Pinto, 1991; Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Gruber & Bjorn, 1986; Gutek, 1985). Thus, individuals of minority gender groups—whether male or female—are likely to perceive their work environments as more tolerant of sexual harassment and less effective in resolving it. In addition, they may receive little support from coworkers and organizations when they attempt to take action against the harassment. According to Kanter (1977), members of minority gender groups do not feel that their work climate is supportive of them until subunit composition reaches numerical parity (i.e., close to 50%).
These negative perceptions and expectations would be associated with targets’ reporting behavior and experience of retaliation. In their conceptual model of targets’ responses to sexual harassment, Knapp et al. (1997) argued that the gender composition of work groups influences the likelihood of reporting because it is related to individuals’ expectations about the outcomes of reporting. Similarly, Lee et al. (2004) hypothesized that the number of male coworkers and having a male supervisor would have a negative effect on whistle-blowing and a positive effect on retaliation among female targets, although they did not find significant results. The theory of representative bureaucracy also suggests that gender representation has a meaningful impact on reporting and reprisals by changing the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of bureaucrats as well as harassment targets.

**Representative Bureaucracy and Blowing the Whistle on Sexual Harassment**

The notion of representative bureaucracy is based on the assumption that demographic representation (i.e., passive representation) leads to policy outcomes that are more beneficial to minority clientele (i.e., active representation; Meier, 1993). If the demographic characteristics of bureaucrats mirror those of the clients they serve, the bureaucracy becomes more responsive to the clients’ needs, thereby improving the welfare of those clients. Bureaucrats and clients who have similar social origins (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, class) would share common values and belief systems and develop congruent attitudes toward policy issues, which, in turn, would influence the bureaucrats’ decisions and actions in the policy process (Dolan & Rosenbloom, 2003; Meier, 1993). A bureaucracy that represents its clients is more likely to engage in active representation, which helps achieve policy and administrative outcomes that are beneficial for
members of the represented group (Hindera, 1993; Meier, 1993; Meier & Nicholson-Crotty, 2006).

Previous research has found that racial representation is fairly consistently associated with positive outcomes for racial minorities (Hindera, 1993; Meier & Stewart, 1992; Meier, Wrinkle, & Polinard, 1999), whereas gender representation has often been found to not bring about such results (Fernandez, Malatesta, & Smith, 2013). A study by Keiser, Wilkins, Meier, and Holland (2002) offered a set of conditions in which passive representation on the basis of gender is likely to translate into active representation:

We argue that a policy area can become gendered (1) because the policy directly benefits women as a class, (2) because the gender of the bureaucrat changes the client–bureaucrat relationship, or (3) because the issue has been defined as a women’s issue through the political process. (p. 556)

Based on these conditions, sexual harassment is regarded as a gendered issue, for which demographic similarity can take the form of both passive and active representation, as in policy areas such as sexual assault (Meier & Nicholson-Crotty, 2006) and child support (Wilkins & Keiser, 2006).

It has been shown that the benefits of bureaucratic representation do not only accrue to clients but also to bureaucrats themselves (Grissom & Keiser, 2011). More representative bureaucracies affect the bureaucrats’ attitudes and behaviors in such a way as to change the relationships between them. In the context of public schools, Grissom and Keiser (2011) found that greater racial representation among teachers and principals leads to higher levels of job
satisfaction and teacher retention. Similarly, if targets of sexual harassment are better represented in their organizations, they would have more positive expectations for resolving harassing situations, be more likely to choose to report harassment, and receive fewer retaliatory actions.

Gender representation can influence the likelihood of reporting sexual harassment and experiencing reprisals in various ways, particularly through enhanced advocacy, awareness, and trust. First, potential complaint recipients (e.g., supervisors) who have the same gender as the targets tend to share similar values, feelings, and experiences with them and feel greater empathy for the targets’ situation. If complaints are received, they are more likely to take an advocacy role and make decisions that are favorable for the targets, which would increase the targets’ perceived effectiveness of reporting. Also, they are less likely to retaliate against those who blow the whistle. Second, greater gender representation may change attitudes and behaviors of bureaucrats who have a different gender by increasing their awareness of the importance of preventing and correcting sexually harassing behavior (Lim, 2006). Increased awareness, in turn, would lead to greater support from coworkers in the reporting process and reduce the likelihood of retaliation.

Third, gender representation may have a symbolic effect on the part of the targets (i.e., symbolic representation) by affecting their perceptions of the fairness and legitimacy of internal reporting systems and policies as well as by increasing their trust in complaint recipients. Scholars have argued that symbolic representation is likely to occur even with no particular action taken by bureaucrats (Gade & Wilkins, 2013; Meier & Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Theobald & Haider-Markel, 2009). For example, the mere presence of more female employees in an organization can help female targets believe that their workplace is less tolerant of sexual harassment, their claims will be taken more seriously, and organizational decisions and actions will be more fair and trustworthy.
Drawing on the theory of representative bureaucracy, I develop a series of hypotheses about the effects of gender representation on the likelihood that female and male targets report sexual harassment and experience retaliation due to their reporting. These effects are hypothesized and tested at multiple organizational levels, including supervisor, work group, agency head, and organization. Knapp et al. (1997) argued that the gender composition of a work group as well as the attitudes of immediate supervisors and top managers have significant and distinct implications for targets’ responses to sexual harassment. Moreover, it is likely that the degree of representation varies across organizational levels, and this may have different impacts on reporting behavior. Thus, it is necessary to examine the degree of gender representation at multiple levels. Given that the reporting of sexual harassment is one specific type of whistle-blowing, organizational actors at different levels may influence the likelihood of reporting and retaliation in different ways because of their relative power and positions.

The first set of hypotheses is concerned with the effect of gender representation on the reporting of sexual harassment. In general, I expect that female targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when women are more widely represented at the supervisory, work group, agency head, or organizational level. Conversely, male targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when men are more widely represented in the workplace.

Hypothesis 1a. Female targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when their immediate supervisor is female than when the supervisor is male, while male targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when their immediate supervisor is male than when the supervisor is female.
Hypothesis 1b. Female targets in gender-balanced or female-dominated work groups are more likely to report sexual harassment than those in male-dominated work groups, while male targets in gender-balanced or male-dominated work groups are more likely to report sexual harassment than those in female-dominated work groups.

Hypothesis 1c. Female targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when the agency head is female than when the head is male, while male targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when the agency head is male than when the head is female.

Hypothesis 1d. Female targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when the proportion of female employees is high than when it is low, while male targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when the proportion of male employees is high than when it is low.

Next, I set up hypotheses as to the relationship between gender representation and retaliation among those who have reported sexual harassment. It is anticipated that female bureaucrats experience fewer reprisals when women are more represented in the organization, while male bureaucrats encounter less retaliation when men are more greatly represented.

Hypothesis 2a. Female targets are less likely to experience retaliation when their immediate supervisor is female than when the supervisor is male, while male targets are less likely to experience retaliation when their immediate supervisor is male than when the supervisor is female.
Hypothesis 2b. Female targets in gender-balanced or female-dominated work groups are less likely to experience retaliation than those in male-dominated work groups, while male targets in gender-balanced or male-dominated work groups are less likely to experience retaliation than those in female-dominated work groups.

Hypothesis 2c. Female targets are less likely to experience retaliation when the agency head is female than when the head is male, while male targets are less likely to experience retaliation when the agency head is male than when the head is female.

Hypothesis 2d. Female targets are less likely to experience retaliation when the proportion of female employees is high than when it is low, while male targets are less likely to experience retaliation when the proportion of male employees is high than when it is low.

Data and Method

Data

Individual-level data were drawn from MSPB sexual harassment surveys administered to approximately 23,000, 13,000, and 13,200 federal employees working in cabinet-level departments and independent agencies in 1980, 1987, and 1994, respectively. The respondents were selected using stratified random sampling. The survey format and questionnaire items were largely the same across the three years, allowing a systematic comparison of survey results from one year to another. These surveys are particularly useful for research on sexual harassment because they collected sensitive information on the respondents’ perceptions, experiences, and
reactions related to sexual harassment, which is typically not publicly available. They also included information on the respondents’ demographic characteristics (e.g., gender) and perceptions of work environments. A total of 20,314 (1980), 8,523 (1987), and 8,081 (1994) respondents completed the surveys. In each survey, the respondents were asked if they had received any “uninvited and unwanted sexual attention during the last 24 months from someone where you work(ed) in the Federal Government.” As this study focuses on targets’ responses to experienced harassment, only those who answered they had received sexual harassment were included in the sample. Among the survey respondents, the numbers of employees who had experienced sexual harassment were 5,456, 2,268, and 2,480 in 1980, 1987, and 1994, respectively.

Organizational-level data for gender representation were obtained from the OPM’s Central Personnel Data File. The data included the number of employees working in each federal agency by gender. Data on the gender of agency heads were manually collected by conducting multiple searches in archived databases, newspapers, and agency websites. These organizational-level data were matched to the individual-level survey data for each federal agency. The numbers of agencies in the final sample were 17 (1980), 22 (1987), and 22 (1994). Due to missing data on one or more variables, the final sample sizes were reduced to 3,408, 1,597, and 1,777 employees in 1980, 1987, and 1994, respectively. No meaningful differences were found between the employees in the final sample and those dropped. There were 2,673 (78.4%), 1,268 (79.4%), and 1,359 (76.5%) female targets in the final sample in 1980, 1987, and 1994, respectively. All three samples were combined prior to analysis to create a pooled cross-sectional data structure.

Variables
**Dependent variables.** This study has two dependent variables: (1) whether the target of sexual harassment reported the experience (i.e., reporting) and (2) whether the person who reported experienced retaliation subsequently (i.e., retaliation). The former variable was measured using a single item in the MSPB surveys: “I reported the behavior to a supervisor or other official(s) such as an EEO counselor.” A binary variable was created, in which 1 was coded if a respondent answered “yes” and 0 if “no.”

The latter variable was measured using a single item in the MSPB surveys: “How did your agency’s management respond to the formal action you took?” The respondents were given a set of response options, including “They were hostile or took action against me,” and were asked to mark all that apply. To measure the incidence of retaliation, a binary variable was created in which 1 was coded for the respondents who answered “yes” to this statement and 0 for those who did not. As only those who had reported sexual harassment could have experienced reprisals, the sample for testing the second set of hypotheses consisted of the reporters only.

**Independent variables.** The main independent variables included supervisor gender, work group gender composition, agency head gender, and the proportion of female employees in the organization. Supervisor gender and agency head gender were coded 1 for female and 0 for male. Work group gender composition was measured using a questionnaire item in the MSPB surveys, which asked respondents to describe the people they worked with during a normal work day. The response categories included “all men,” “more men than women,” “about equal numbers of men and women,” “more women than men,” and “all women.” These responses were recoded into three categories: (1) male-dominated work groups (including “all men” and “more men than women”), (2) gender-balanced work groups (including “about equal numbers of men
and women”), and (3) female-dominated work groups (including “more women than men” and “all women”). These categories were dummy-coded for subsequent analyses using male-dominated work groups as the base category. The proportion of female employees in the organization was measured as the number of female workers divided by the total number of employees working in each agency, using data from the Central Personnel Data File.

Control variables. Several control variables, including the targets’ marital status, supervisory level, age, education, and pay grade, were measured using the MSPB survey items (see Table 5-1). These variables are indicative of the power or vulnerability of the targets (Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Miceli & Near, 1992). Marital status was coded 1 for married and 0 for other. For supervisory level, 1 was coded if the respondent was a supervisor and 0 if not. Age was coded on a scale ranging from 1 (16 to 19 years) to 6 (55 years or older). Education was coded using a scale ranging from 1 (less than a high school diploma) to 7 (graduate or professional degree). Pay grade was coded on a scale ranging from 1 (GS 1–4) to 5 (higher than GS 15). In addition, the harassers’ supervisory level was controlled for in the models and coded 1 if the harasser was a supervisor and 0 if not. The whistle-blowing literature suggests that the power and status of a perpetrator has a negative relationship to the likelihood of reporting (Miceli & Near, 1992). At the organizational level, the number of sexual harassment cases in each agency was used as a control variable and measured by counting the number of employees who reported that they had received uninvited and unwanted sexual attention in each MSPB survey.

The variables and measures used in this chapter are summarized in Table 5-1, and the descriptive statistics and correlations among variables are presented in Tables 5-2 and 5-3.
Table 5-1. Variables and Measures

Experience of sexual harassment
- “How often have you received any of the following uninvited and unwanted sexual attention during the last 24 months from someone where you work(ed) in the Federal Government?” (1 = never; 2 = once; 3 = once a month or less; 4 = 2–4 times a month; 5 = once a week or more)
  - Actual or attempted rape or assault
  - Unwanted pressure for sexual favors
  - Unwanted, deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering, or pinching
  - Unwanted sexual looks or gestures
  - Unwanted letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature
  - Unwanted pressure for dates
  - Unwanted sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions
  - Stalking (unwanted following or intrusion into your personal life)

Reporting
- “I reported the behavior to a supervisor or other official(s) such as an EEO [Equal Employment Opportunity] counselor.” (1 = yes; 0 = no)

Retaliation
- “How did your agency’s management respond to the formal action you took? They were hostile or took action against me.” (1 = yes; 0 = no)

Target gender
- Respondent’s gender (1 = female; 0 = male)

Supervisor gender
- Gender of the respondent’s immediate supervisor (1 = female; 0 = male)

Work group gender composition
- “Are (were) the people you work(ed) with during a normal work day?” (1 = all men; 2 = more men than women; 3 = about equal numbers of men and women; 4 = more women than men; 5 = all women)

Agency head gender
- Gender of the respondent’s agency head (1 = female; 0 = male)
Table 5-1. Variables and Measures (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency female proportion</td>
<td>Number of female workers divided by the total number of employees working in each agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>Respondent’s marital status (1 = married; 0 = other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory level</td>
<td>Respondent’s supervisory level (1 = supervisor; 0 = nonsupervisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Respondent’s age (1 = 16 to 19 years; 2 = 20 to 24 years; 3 = 25 to 34 years; 4 = 35 to 44 years; 5 = 45 to 54 years; 6 = 55 years or older)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Respondent’s education level (1 = less than a high school diploma; 2 = high school diploma or GED [General Equivalency Diploma]; 3 = high school diploma plus some technical training or apprenticeship; 4 = some college; 5 = graduated from college [BA, BS, or some other bachelor’s degree]; 6 = some graduate school; 7 = graduate or professional degree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay grade</td>
<td>Respondent’s pay grade (1 = GS [General Schedule] 1–4; 2 = GS 5–10; 3 = GS 11–12; 4 = GS 13–15; 5 = higher than GS 15 [senior executive schedule, executive schedule, etc.])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassers’ supervisory level</td>
<td>Harassers’ supervisory level (1 = immediate supervisor[s] or higher-level supervisor[s]; 0 = other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sexual harassment cases</td>
<td>Number of incidents of sexual harassment in each agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Targets of Sexual Harassment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reporting</td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Female target</td>
<td>0.781</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.077***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Female supervisor</td>
<td>0.263</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
<td>0.044***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gender-balanced work group</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>-0.021†</td>
<td>0.032**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Female-dominated work group</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.029*</td>
<td>0.038**</td>
<td>0.347***</td>
<td>-0.356***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Married</td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.027*</td>
<td>-0.135***</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.020†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Supervisor</td>
<td>0.210</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.045***</td>
<td>-0.098***</td>
<td>-0.060***</td>
<td>0.037**</td>
<td>0.030*</td>
<td>0.076***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Age</td>
<td>3.905</td>
<td>1.011</td>
<td>-0.030*</td>
<td>-0.095***</td>
<td>-0.038**</td>
<td>0.035**</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.110***</td>
<td>0.218***</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Education</td>
<td>4.547</td>
<td>1.521</td>
<td>-0.074***</td>
<td>-0.081***</td>
<td>-0.031*</td>
<td>0.045***</td>
<td>-0.054***</td>
<td>-0.022†</td>
<td>0.182***</td>
<td>0.037**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Pay grade</td>
<td>2.588</td>
<td>0.896</td>
<td>-0.078***</td>
<td>-0.102***</td>
<td>-0.149***</td>
<td>0.036**</td>
<td>-0.106***</td>
<td>0.056***</td>
<td>0.344***</td>
<td>0.236***</td>
<td>0.533***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Harassers’ supervisory level</td>
<td>0.295</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.053***</td>
<td>0.172***</td>
<td>-0.090***</td>
<td>0.022†</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
<td>-0.046***</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational level</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Female agency head</td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Agency female proportion</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>0.112</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of sexual harassment cases</td>
<td>126.9</td>
<td>198.9</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Individual-level N = 6,782; organizational-level N = 61.

*** p < .001. ** p < .01. * p < .05. † p < .10.
Table 5-3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Reporters of Sexual Harassment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>7</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individual level</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Retaliation</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Female target</td>
<td>0.835</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Female supervisor</td>
<td>0.205</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.119†</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gender-balanced work group</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Female-dominated work group</td>
<td>0.282</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.152*</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td>0.364***</td>
<td>-0.280***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Married</td>
<td>0.436</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>-0.162*</td>
<td>-0.084</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Supervisor</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td>-0.122†</td>
<td>-0.065</td>
<td>-0.059</td>
<td>0.137*</td>
<td>0.163*</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Age</td>
<td>3.769</td>
<td>0.979</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>-0.178**</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>-0.117†</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.137*</td>
<td>0.234***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Education</td>
<td>4.312</td>
<td>1.442</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>-0.147*</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>-0.050</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.234***</td>
<td>0.145*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Pay grade</td>
<td>2.363</td>
<td>0.869</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>-0.262***</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>-0.153*</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.280***</td>
<td>0.175**</td>
<td>0.532***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Harassers’ supervisory level</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.194**</td>
<td>0.116†</td>
<td>-0.182**</td>
<td>-0.164*</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>0.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational level</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Female agency head</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Agency female proportion</td>
<td>0.434</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of sexual harassment cases</td>
<td>134.6</td>
<td>205.9</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Individual-level N = 234; organizational-level N = 56.

*** p < .001. ** p < .01. * p < .05. † p < .10.
Modeling

The data, as well as the theoretical model, had a hierarchical structure, in which individual employees were nested in organizations. As the dependent variables (i.e., reporting and retaliation) were binary, multilevel logistic regressions were employed to test the hypotheses. All analyses were conducted using Stata 14. In order to control for unobservable factors residing in each survey year (e.g., changes in laws and procedures governing sexual harassment cases), two dummy variables were created and entered into the models, each representing 1987 and 1994, with the year 1980 as a base category. Statistical analyses were conducted for female and male employees separately in order to examine whether the effect of gender representation varied by the targets’ gender. All continuous variables were grand-mean centered before analysis in order to reduce potential multicollinearity.

Results

The results from multilevel logistic regressions show that the effects of gender representation on the reporting of sexual harassment had different patterns for female and male targets as well as at different organizational levels (see Table 5-4). Work group gender composition had a significant influence on female targets in that they were less likely to report sexual harassment in gender-balanced \( (p < .05) \) or female-dominated work groups \( (p < .01) \) than in male-dominated work groups. However, male targets’ reporting was not significantly associated with work group gender composition. These findings do not provide supportive evidence for Hypothesis 1b, which expects women to report more frequently in female-dominated groups and men to report more frequently in male-dominated groups. Regarding agency female proportion, the likelihood that female targets reported sexual harassment was not
significantly related to the ratio of female employees in the organization. However, female proportion had a negative and marginally significant effect on male targets’ reporting ($p < .10$), which suggests that men were more likely to make reports of sexual harassment when there were more men in the workplace. These findings lend partial support for Hypothesis 1d. Supervisor gender and agency head gender did not have statistically significant influences on reporting by either gender.

Among the control variables, age was found to be positively and significantly related to male targets’ reporting ($p < .05$). Education was negatively and significantly associated with male targets’ reporting of sexual harassment ($p < .01$), while pay grade had a negative and significant relationship to the likelihood that female targets reported sexual harassment ($p < .01$). Education and pay may represent the targets’ status within an organization. Employees with higher levels of education and/or pay may not report sexual harassment for fear of losing their status. The relationship between the harassers’ supervisory level and reporting was positive and significant for both female and male targets ($p < .01$). When the harasser is a supervisor, the target may perceive the situation as more upsetting and offensive because harassment by higher-level perpetrators may pose a significant threat to victims’ well-being as well as career prospects. While targets may take actions other than reporting when they are harassed by coworkers or subordinates—such as confronting the harassers and telling them to stop—they are likely to feel a greater obligation to make formal reports when experiencing harassment from supervisors (Bergman et al., 2002).
Table 5-4. Effects of Gender Representation on the Likelihood of Reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>DV: Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>−0.980*** (0.227)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female supervisor</td>
<td>−0.022 (0.101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender-balanced work group(^1)</td>
<td>−0.245* (0.106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-dominated work group(^1)</td>
<td>−0.290** (0.104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female agency head gender</td>
<td>0.125 (0.124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency female proportion</td>
<td>−0.540 (0.402)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>−0.087 (0.079)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>−0.097 (0.119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>−0.063 (0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>−0.056† (0.032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay grade</td>
<td>−0.182** (0.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassers’ supervisory level</td>
<td>0.242** (0.083)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sexual harassment cases</td>
<td>0.000 (0.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1994(^2)</td>
<td>0.350** (0.121)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1987(^2)</td>
<td>0.409** (0.118)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. For female targets, individual-level \(N = 5,300\); organizational-level \(N = 61\). For male targets, individual-level \(N = 1,482\); organizational-level \(N = 61\). Entries are logit coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses. Reporting is compared to non-reporting.

\(^1\)Base category is male-dominated work group. \(^2\)Base category is Year 1980.

\(*** p < .001\). \(** p < .01\). \(* p < .05\). \(† p < .10\).
The results about the relationships between gender representation and retaliation are presented in Table 5-5. The sample for these analyses consisted of only those employees who received sexual harassment and subsequently reported it. The effect of working in a female-dominated work group was negative and marginally significant in relation to the likelihood of receiving retaliation among female targets ($p < .10$), which indicates that retaliation was less likely to occur in female-dominated than male-dominated work groups. However, the effect of work group gender composition was not significant for male targets. Agency female proportion had a negative and marginally significant relationship to retaliation experienced by female targets ($p < .10$), indicating that female targets were less likely to receive retaliation when there were more women in the organization. Supervisor gender and agency head gender did not have a significant influence on reprisals against female or male targets. These marginally significant or insignificant relationships between gender representation and retaliation might be due to the small sample size as only a portion of the employees who had experienced sexual harassment made reports of their experiences. In sum, these results do not provide strong support for Hypotheses 2a–2d, but the hypotheses need to be further examined with larger samples.
Table 5-5. Effects of Gender Representation on the Likelihood of Retaliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Female targets</th>
<th>Male targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>−4.954***</td>
<td>12.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female supervisor</td>
<td>−0.060</td>
<td>−23.788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender-balanced work group¹</td>
<td>0.510</td>
<td>−4.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-dominated work group¹</td>
<td>−1.004†</td>
<td>−4.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female agency head</td>
<td>0.881</td>
<td>−23.555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency female proportion</td>
<td>−3.658†</td>
<td>17.908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>0.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>−0.409</td>
<td>2.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.412†</td>
<td>−2.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>−0.064</td>
<td>1.277†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay grade</td>
<td>0.276</td>
<td>−1.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassers’ supervisory level</td>
<td>1.031*</td>
<td>0.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sexual harassment cases</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>−0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1994²</td>
<td>1.155†</td>
<td>−5.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1987²</td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td>1.401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. For female targets, individual-level $N = 193$; organizational-level $N = 54$. For male targets, individual-level $N = 41$; organizational-level $N = 27$. Entries are logit coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses. Retaliation is compared to no retaliation.

¹Base category is male-dominated work group. ²Base category is Year 1980.

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. † $p < .10$. 
Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter draws on the theory of representative bureaucracy to examine whether and how gender representation can explain the reporting of sexual harassment among female and male bureaucrats and the retaliation against them. I hypothesize that the more the harassment target’s gender is represented in the workplace, the more likely the target is to blow the whistle on sexual harassment and the less likely he or she is to receive retaliation. The findings provide partial support for the hypothesized relationships. Male targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when there are more men in their organizations; however, female targets are less likely to do so in gender-balanced or female-dominated work groups than in male-dominated work groups. On the other hand, female targets are less likely to receive retaliatory treatments from management following their reporting when there are more women in the work group or organization, although these relationships are only marginally significant.

There are a few possible theoretical explanations for the differences in reporting behavior between female and male targets. First, it might be due to the power differentials across gender groups. By definition, whistle-blowers must appeal to other parties who have sufficient power or authority to stop alleged transgressions or punish transgressors as they lack “the authority to change the organization’s activities” on their own (Near & Miceli, 1985, p. 2). In the reporting process, therefore, both male and female targets are likely to seek support and advocacy from coworkers and supervisors with whom they closely work. However, men and women historically have different social status and power (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2004). Even if there are more female coworkers in the work group, these people may not be in a position to provide strong support for victims or to take action against harassers. This might be one reason why female targets are discouraged from reporting sexual harassment in gender-balanced or female-
dominated work environments, while male targets are more likely to report sexual harassment when men are more widely represented in the agency.

Also, given that the surveys were conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, it is suspected that strong cultural norms and gender stereotypes that were prevalent in those periods might have prohibited female targets from making formal reports of sexual harassment even though they worked in female-dominated work environments. This is consistent with what the queen bee syndrome suggests—in situations where male gender is favored in terms of career prospects, women may not choose to advocate for other women because it could harm their social standing in the organization (Fernandez et al., 2013), and they may want to identify more with a male group rather than act in the interest of female targets.

Still, the results from the present study suggest the possibility that once the whistle is blown on sexual harassment by female targets, other female bureaucrats may engage in defending them against retaliation, which supports the notion of active representation. This finding is important because many harassment victims choose not to report their experiences because doing so often causes damage to their job and psychological outcomes (Bergman et al., 2002). Thus, public organizations should provide women with clear information on reporting procedures and strong mechanisms for handling complaints in order to encourage them to disclose sexually harassing behavior in the first place without concerns that their claims will not be taken seriously or that nothing will be done to address their experiences properly. Organizations should also focus attention on finding an optimal level of gender representation that can maximize the likelihood of reporting by both male and female targets. This will help organizations rectify harassing situations earlier in the process and thereby alleviate adverse outcomes such as diminished morale, satisfaction, and performance.
Despite the mixed findings, the research presented in this chapter is one of the first attempts to test the theory of representative bureaucracy in the context of whistle-blowing. While this study has focused on examining the effect of gender representation on one particular type of wrongdoing—sexual harassment—bureaucratic representation on the basis of gender as well as other attributes may have broader implications for whistle-blowing on other types of organizational misconduct, including corruption, fraud, mismanagement, and waste of public funds. When employees are better represented in their organizations, they are likely to perceive that managers and coworkers who share their social origins will support and advocate for them when they blow the whistle and take action to stop the offense. In addition, previous research suggests that targets’ responses to sexual harassment may take various forms other than reporting, such as denial, avoidance, negotiation, and confrontation (Gruber, 1989; Knapp et al., 1997). It would be interesting to explore how similarly or differently gender representation influences those other forms of responses and whether gender representation leads targets to choose one form rather than others.

The findings from this study should be interpreted with caution due to its limitations. The data used for the empirical analysis were collected in the 1980s and 1990s, which may cast doubt on the generalizability of the findings. Considering the rapidly changing social norms of gender equality and the status of women in organizations, it is necessary to investigate the role of gender representation in the whistle-blowing process using more recent datasets. This would also allow researchers to explore trends in the occurrence, handling, and outcomes of harassment issues over time. Furthermore, this study has examined sexual harassment issues in U.S. federal agencies, where laws and regulations that govern these issues (e.g., formal complaint channels,
protections for whistle-blowers) might be different from those in other settings (Near & Miceli, 2008).

This study has relied on employee responses to survey items to measure their experiences related to harassment and retaliation. It would be useful to incorporate administrative records of sexual harassment cases, reports, and retaliation charges to strengthen our confidence in the robustness of the findings. However, the original data are still valuable sources of information and provide researchers with ample opportunity to investigate a sensitive issue using large-scale, systematic surveys of harassment targets. The results need to be replicated using data collected from multiple years, settings, and sources to further explore whether gender representation has meaningful implications for the reporting of sexual harassment and its aftermath in public organizations.

Building an anti-harassment work environment is an urgent problem confronting all organizations. While government agencies at the federal level and others have made significant efforts to prevent and reduce sexual harassment and remedy negative outcomes for employee morale and productivity, a large number of such incidents still occur in the workplace. Public organizations and managers should pay careful attention to the role of gender representation to better understand how targets deal with harassing experiences and what happens to them due to their responses. Supervisors and coworkers should also be encouraged to act in favor of harassment targets rather than perpetrators by advocating for targets in the reporting process and protecting them from retaliation.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Overall, this dissertation seeks to identify and examine organizational conditions and managerial practices that impact the whistle-blowing attitudes and behaviors of public employees. Specifically, it investigates the roles of ethics management, organizational structure, and gender representation in reducing employees’ fear of retaliation and promoting disclosures of wrongdoing, which have rarely been studied in previous research on whistle-blowing. I find that each of these factors plays a significant role in the whistle-blowing process as they shape power dynamics among organizational members and help create a work environment in which employees feel comfortable and competent voicing their concerns about ethical lapses. In this concluding chapter, I provide a brief overview of the findings from the three empirical studies, discuss their theoretical and practical implications, and present limitations of the dissertation and directions for future research.

Summary of Findings

In Chapter 3, I investigate the relationships between organizational ethics programs and employees’ fear of retaliation for blowing the whistle. Drawing on control theory and the typology of ethics program orientations, I argue that organizational ethics programs can be categorized into two different types: values- and compliance-oriented ethics programs. I posit that these two programs have different impacts on the fear of reprisal and that their impacts depend on employee demographics. Results show that values-oriented programs that are focused on sharing ethical values and norms can decrease employees’ retaliation fears and that this effect
is stronger for female employees and those without college degrees than for male workers and college graduates, suggesting that the values-based approach is particularly beneficial for those who are disempowered in the organization. In contrast, compliance-oriented ethics programs do not have a significant relationship to the fear of reprisal.

Chapter 4 explores how organizational structure influences public employees’ decisions to disclose wrongful activities and whether it impacts the use of internal and external channels for making reports. Specifically, five structural dimensions are the focus of this chapter: decentralization of decision-making, span of control, horizontal complexity, professionalization, and politicization. I find that whistle-blowing is more likely to occur in organizations that are less decentralized or more professionalized. Also, results show that decentralization decreases the use of external channels while professionalization increases the likelihood of internal disclosures. The effects of span of control, horizontal complexity, and politicization on whistle-blowing decisions are not significant.

Chapter 5 focuses on one particular type of wrongdoing—sexual harassment—and examines the effect of gender representation on reporting and retaliation. Based on the theory of representative bureaucracy, I expect greater gender representation to increase the incidence of reporting sexual harassment and to decrease that of retaliation against whistle-blowers, whether the targets are female or male. Findings provide mixed evidence about these expectations. Specifically, greater female representation does not encourage female targets to blow the whistle on sexual harassment, but it reduces the likelihood that they experience reprisals due to the reporting. These results suggest that even though female employees may not be able to actively support female victims in disclosing sexual harassment, they are likely to take action to protect
them from retaliation once reports are made. Greater male representation increases the likelihood of reporting by male targets, but its impact on retaliation is not significant.

**Theoretical Contributions**

Empirical models and evidence from this dissertation can provide a broader picture of whistle-blowing in public organizations. While previous research has focused on the role of informal components of organizations and management, formal organizational conditions and policies are shown to have meaningful implications for fears of retaliation and whistle-blowing actions. However, this emphasis on the formal attributes does not mean that informal support, behavior, and relationships are not important or should be ignored in the effort to encourage employee reporting. In fact, this dissertation suggests that both formal and informal characteristics should be taken into consideration and that they may jointly influence whistle-blowing. In Chapter 3, for instance, I examine the interactions between ethics programs and leader emphasis on moral values and find that values-oriented ethics programs and leader emphasis on moral values have a significant interaction effect on the fear of reprisal. The mitigating effect of values-oriented programs on retaliation fears is stronger when leaders do not maintain moral values than when they do, which indicates that these two factors substitute each other. Whistle-blowing researchers and practitioners should further investigate both formal and informal organizational factors and their joint relationships.

This dissertation also offers some evidence that organizational conditions and individual characteristics are interrelated in the decision to report wrongdoing. Not only do organizational conditions and policies matter in shaping employees’ attitudes and decisions related to whistle-blowing, but they may have varying impacts on different types of employees. In Chapter 3, I
examine whether and how the effects of ethics programs vary across demographic groups. According to resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), employee demographics are indicative of power in the organization. Findings show that values-oriented ethics programs are more beneficial for employees who hold relatively less power, such as women and those with lower educational attainment, in reducing their fears of retaliation. Chapter 5 also shows that the effect of gender representation is different for female and male targets on their reporting of sexual harassment and the retaliation they receive due to the reporting. Specifically, while greater male representation increases the likelihood of male targets’ reporting, greater female representation has a negative influence on reporting by female targets.

While not empirically examined in Chapter 4, it would be interesting to see whether the effect of organizational structure on whistle-blowing varies for different individuals, depending on their demographic characteristics, power and status, and hierarchical levels. Previous research suggests that the effect of structure is contingent on the environment, technology, and employees (Dalton, Todor, Spendolini, Fielding, & Porter, 1980). For instance, the effect of decentralization might be different for top-level managers and front-line bureaucrats. Top managers already possess sufficient power and discretion in decision-making, and thus, their whistle-blowing decisions would not be greatly influenced by the degree of decentralization. However, lower-level employees may benefit more from decentralized structures, which allow them to voice their concerns about unethical practices with greater autonomy and confidence. Thus, the interactionist perspective is needed to examine the potential interactions of person and situation in the whistle-blowing process so that organizations can maximize the likelihood of whistle-blowing among different types of employees.
Practical Implications

This dissertation provides public managers and ethics administrators with practical suggestions and hands-on knowledge about how to design and manage ethics programs, organizational structure, and gender contexts to encourage whistle-blowing. First, Chapter 3 offers evidence of the effectiveness of ethics programs in promoting whistle-blowing and the importance of understanding their different orientations. Not all ethics programs have the same effect, so public managers should consider the different roles and functions of ethics programs and their outcomes for organizational and individual integrity. The chapter also recommends that public organizations pay greater attention to and invest more time and resources in values-oriented ethics programs such as ethics training, education, and counseling to reduce employees’ fear of retaliation. Given that certain employees may benefit more from organizational ethics programs, the characteristics of employees and the power relationships among them should be taken into consideration when developing and implementing ethics programs. In addition, more systematic attempts need to be made to evaluate the utility of ethics programs not only for whistle-blowing but other outcomes such as organizational performance, employee satisfaction and commitment, and ethics violations.

In Chapter 4, the results point to the value of understanding and organizing structural components to encourage whistle-blowing among public employees. It is shown that some structural dimensions, particularly decentralization and professionalization, have significant influences on the decision to disclose wrongdoing. Specifically, whistle-blowing is more likely in less decentralized or more professionalized organizations. Centralized organizational structures are advantageous for whistle-blowing, probably due to their clear communication channels and chains of command, which play an important part in whistle-blowing decisions.
given that whistle-blowing is an attempt to communicate sensitive information to upper management. However, whistle-blowing can be encouraged even in more decentralized organizations if public managers provide employees with information on how to deliver ethical problems to managers, adequate whistle-blowing channels and procedures, clear chains of command, and learning opportunities to develop their professional skills and expertise.

Lastly, while Chapter 5 provides mixed results about the effect of gender representation on the reporting of sexual harassment, findings show that gender context and representation bring about significant consequences for whistle-blowing and retaliation. Since gender representation may have different effects on female and male employees, public managers should put extra care and effort into managing demographic compositions. The negative effect of female representation on female targets’ reporting might be due to power differentials between men and women and strong social norms and pressures that prevent women from taking action against harassment. Managers should also foster a climate that is not tolerant of sexual harassment and that values the voices of all groups of employees.

Taken together, these findings suggest that public agencies and managers have the potential to influence employee decisions, attitudes, and actions related to whistle-blowing. They can create a supportive and enabling work environment by effectively managing ethics programs, structural dimensions, and demographic compositions so that employees feel safe and comfortable in coming forward about wrongful activities.

**Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

This dissertation has several limitations, and additional research is needed to address such drawbacks. First, the three empirical studies of the dissertation were conducted using data from
the U.S. federal government, and thus, the extent to which the results can be replicated in other settings should be empirically examined in future research. In particular, the roles of ethics programs, organizational structure, and demographic representation need to be investigated in state and local governments. State and local governments may have different structural characteristics, ethics management systems, and workforce compositions from the federal government. Therefore, the theoretical models developed in this dissertation should be analyzed and tested at different levels of government to ensure their generalizability.

Future research should also examine organizational ethics and whistle-blowing in different sectors and countries, taking a comparative approach. Sector differences are an interesting area of research that would help understand whether and how organizational conditions and policies have varying impacts on whistle-blowing among public and private sector employees. Moreover, cross-cultural studies would contribute to a better understanding of the roles of national culture, economic conditions, and political and legal environments in shaping employees’ ethical values, norms, and behaviors. For instance, whistle-blowing is less likely to occur in countries with high power distance or high uncertainty avoidance. In such cultures, employee dissent is more likely to be viewed as a threat to the organization’s norms and standards and would be discouraged or even sanctioned. On the other hand, countries with low power distance or low uncertainty avoidance would be more open to employee voice from lower organizational levels and welcoming toward efforts to correct unethical practices. Furthermore, the influence of organizational conditions might be different across cultures. For example, the effect of compliance-oriented ethics programs might be stronger in cultures with a strict hierarchy of authority and greater power distance because these cultures are likely to put strong emphasis on behavioral conformity and rule compliance.
This dissertation relies on quantitative methods using large-scale surveys and administrative data. To complement the findings of this dissertation, future research should consider employing qualitative research methodologies such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and case studies. These methods can help better comprehend the perceptions, attitudes, and decision-making processes among whistle-blowers, managers, and executives, which are not fully observable in quantitative data. A mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, would be particularly useful for understanding the complexity of whistle-blowing. Also, additional data need to be collected through surveys and experiments, especially from state and local government employees, to learn more about ethical infrastructures and ethics management at different levels of government.

Lastly, broader theoretical frameworks and empirical models consisting of both antecedents and consequences of ethical behavior and whistle-blowing need to be developed and tested. This dissertation focuses on identifying organizational determinants of whistle-blowing attitudes and behavior, but the outcomes of whistle-blowing are worth further examination as well. Other potential antecedents may include organizational goals such as goal ambiguity, goal conflict, and goal setting; performance appraisals and reward systems; and job security. In addition, future research should examine how ethical behavior and whistle-blowing impact such outcomes as organizational performance, mission accomplishment, government accountability, and citizens’ trust in government. How external environments affect whistle-blowing is of interest as well. Case studies by Johnson and Kraft (1990) suggest that the role of the political environment is critical for whistle-blowers to bring about change in public policy. They proposed extensive media coverage and support from the public, political groups, and legislators as key conditions for promoting effective whistle-blowing. Researchers should investigate how external
contexts such as citizen participation, nongovernmental oversight, professional associations, and laws and regulations play a role in the whistle-blowing process.

In sum, this dissertation stresses that public organizations and managers can encourage whistle-blowing among employees by managing ethics programs, structures, and representations. Whistle-blowing is an individual’s decision that is significantly influenced by organizational conditions, policies, and practices. It is the responsibility of public agencies to build a workplace that is conducive to higher rates of employee disclosures. Such a work environment will enable and empower employees to actively engage in uncovering wrongdoing and to help organizations correct unethical practices and increase their transparency and integrity.
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