SPSP Sexual Harassment Survey Results

January 2019

SPSP SEXUAL HARASSMENT TASK FORCE:
REPORT OF SURVEY RESULTS

SUMMARY OF CHARGE

In January 2018, the SPSP approved funding for a Task Force on Sexual Harassment (SH) in personality and social psychology, with a focus on: 1) the empirical study of the prevalence of the problem and perception of responses to sexual harassment in SPSP; 2) the assessment of SPSP policies related to sexual harassment, and consideration of best practices toward prevention of sexual harassment; 3) evaluation of next steps for soliciting, supporting, and disseminating additional research on sexual harassment, sexual harassment prevention, and related issues, with an eye toward how SPSP can best leverage its membership's expertise to contribute to a leadership role in broader societal efforts to address sexual harassment.

TASK FORCE COMPOSITION

The Task Force membership:
- Ozlem Ayduk, co-chair (Berkeley)
- Sam Sommers, co-chair (Tufts)
- Justin Garcia (Indiana)
- Camille Johnson (San Jose State)
- Victoria Plaut (Berkeley Law School)
- John Pryor (Illinois State)
- Tomi-Ann Roberts (Colorado College)
- Pamela Smith (Rady School of Management, UCSD)

Statistical Analyses Lead
- Allison Mueller, Doctoral Candidate, University of Illinois, Chicago

Coding Assistance
- Olivia Holmes, Assistant Professor, Tennessee State University.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT SURVEY

Instrument & Sample

One of the specific objectives of the Task Force was to obtain anonymous data (via a membership survey) regarding the extent of sexual harassment and the features of the problem as it occurs in SPSP-sponsored spaces (e.g., annual convention, summer institute, the submission and review process at SPSP journals). To accomplish this goal, The Task Force worked in conjunction with the Diversity and Climate Committee to develop a membership survey, half of which examined climate within the Society and half of which focused more specifically on experiences and perceptions related to sexual harassment in SPSP.

The sexual harassment portion of the survey was developed by the SH Task Force and based, in large part, on surveys developed and administered by the ARC3 (Administrator Researcher Campus Climate Collaborative) and at UC-Berkeley. The complete instrument can be found at the end of Appendix A,

which is included with this report. The survey was created and managed on Qualtrics by graduate research assistants compensated for their efforts.

The initial call to membership to complete the survey went out on 5/8/18, with reminders sent on 5/17/18 and 6/4/18. The closing date for the survey was 6/15/18.

A total of 1,058 individuals completed the survey. Demographics of this sample are presented in the table below.

Sample Demographics[1]

Gender	Sexual Orientation	Race	Disability[3]	Career Stage	Institution Type
60.08% Women (41%)	76.60% Straight (75%)	68.32% White (64%)	94.54% No (89%)	24.26% Ph.D. Student (35%)	62.19% Public
38.57% Men (54%)	8.46% Bisexual (4%)	11.18% Asian (14%)	5.46% Yes (3%)	17.56% Full Prof (40%)	31.66% Private
0.58% Non-binary (1%)	4.70% Gay (5%)[2]	5.68% Latino (4%)		14.52% Assistant Prof (8%)	3.18% Not applicable
0.29% Another identity	4.14% Queer	5.15% Multiracial (4%)		13.69% Associate Prof (4%)	2.97% Non-academic
0.29% DK	2.16% Lesbian	4.79% Black (3%)		8.18% Postdoc	
0.19% Agender	1.69% Questioning	1.95% Middle Eastern (1%)			
	1.22% Asexual	1.77% Another identity			
	1.03% Another identity	0.89% Native American			
		0.27% Pacific Islander			

Notes. [1]Numbers in parentheses reflect demographics of the larger SPSP membership. [2]5% includes gays and lesbians in the SPSP membership database. [3]8% of the SPSP membership indicated they did not want to indicate their disability status.

Results

We are including an Appendix detailing the results obtained from the sexual harassment survey. Below, we summarize the central take-home points that emerged from the results. All tables and figures referenced below as well as the complete Sexual Harassment Task Force Survey can be found in Appendix A.

Frequency of SH incidents

- 19% of respondents reported having personally experienced some form of what they consider to be sexual harassment at an SPSP event at least once in their career and 9% reported having had such an experience at the 2018 convention in Atlanta (Table 1). The most common forms of harassment included *being treated in a demeaning manner; being put down or condescended to*; *being the target of remarks about appearance, body, sexual activities*; *offensive sexual remarks;* and *sexual jokes* (Table 2)

- The above results were for self-defined experiences with sexual harassment. If we instead take a less conservative approach and look at the percentage of respondents who reported that they had personally experienced at least one example of *potentially* sexual harassing behavior (regardless of whether or not they themselves considered it to be sexual harassment), these numbers climb to 32% (all-time) and 14% (in 2018 in Atlanta).

Frequency of SH incidents by different demographic groups

- Women were significantly more likely to report experiencing what they consider to be sexual harassment than were men, across multiple categories of harassing behavior. Overall, 28% of women reported having personally experienced sexual harassment at an SPSP event in their careers, compared to 5% of men, with 12% of women reporting experiencing sexual

harassment at the 2018 convention in Atlanta, compared to 3% of men (Table 3; see Table 3a for breakdown by gender and type of SH).

- Reporting rates were comparable across racial/ethnic identity (Tables 4 and 4a) and career stage (pre- vs. post-Ph.D.; Tables 6 & 6a). As Table 5 shows, sexual minority respondents reported both experiencing (13%) and witnessing/being told directly of (14%) sexual harassment at higher rates during the Atlanta convention than straight respondents (7% and 7%, respectively). There were no sexual orientation differences for all-time rates. See Table 5a further breakdown by sexual orientation and type of SH.

- Although more women reported experiencing sexual harassment than men, women and men reported having *witnessed* instances of SH at more comparable rates (28% vs. 22%, respectively for all SPSP events, and 8% vs. 8%, respectively for the Atlanta convention; see Table 3).

Characteristics of "most significant experience of sexual harassment at SPSP events"
(Note: Respondents could choose multiple options for the questions summarized below).

- Of the 165 survey respondents who experienced a self-defined SH event, 103 (62%) were graduate students at the time of their most significant experience of sexual harassment, 35 (21%) were faculty, 10 (6%) were post-docs, and 8 (5%) were undergraduates (7 declined to answer, 2 other) (Figure 1).

- In terms of who perpetrated the most significant sexual harassment experience (Figure 2), over 2/3 (*n*= 121, 73%) were faculty members, and one-quarter were graduate students (*n* = 41, 25%) at the time of the incident

- As Figure 3 illustrates, when they occurred at an SPSP annual convention, the most frequent specific contexts for these experiences were a restaurant or bar (36%), an official SPSP social event (31%), a break between workshops/symposia (20%), and a poster session (20%). The pattern was similar for harassment incidents that occurred at SISPP events (Figure 4).

Reactions to "most significant experience of sexual harassment at SPSP events"

- Of the 165 respondents who reported on their most significant SH experience at SPSP events, only 3 indicated that they had reported the harassment formally (2 to the party's home institution; 1 to SPSP). The vast majority of respondents indicated that they had responded by avoiding the person, not responding at all, treating it as a joke, asking for advice, or telling the person to stop (Figure 5).

Perceived vulnerability to SH at SPSP events

- Perceptions of vulnerability were assessed by a number of items (1-7 scale). Factor analyses (Table 7) revealed 3 main components: *vulnerability to harassment* (e.g., "I feel safe from sexual harassment at SPSP events and programs*,"* Reversed); *sexual objectification* (e.g., "Participants are expected to exhibit sexual availability at some SPSP events and programs'); and iii) *poor SH reporting outcomes* (e.g., "I am confident that SPSP would take such a report

of harassment seriously and investigate it fully," Reversed).

- Respondents felt significantly more vulnerable to poor reporting outcomes (M = 3.71, SD = 1.72) than to sexual harassment (M = 2.65, SD = 1.49) or sexual objectification (M = 2.60, SD = 1.25; Figure 6).

- Women reported feeling more vulnerable than men on all 3 factors (Figure 6a); non-White respondents reported feeling more vulnerable than White respondents across all factors (Figure 6b); and sexual minority respondents reported feeling more vulnerable than straight respondents (Figure 6c). Pre-PhD respondents reported feeling more vulnerable than post-PhD respondents in terms of reporting outcomes (Figure 6d), but not in terms of harassment or sexual objectification.

Reactions to the Code of Conduct

- Of all the survey respondents who responded to questions about SPSP's Code of Conduct (n = 800), 56.8% indicated that they had not yet looked at SPSP's Code of Conduct, 36.1% indicated they had some level of familiarity with it, and 7.1% indicated that they had read it closely (Figure 7).

- Mean satisfaction level was 3.76 (SD = .89) with almost 2/3 of the participants rating their satisfaction with the code of conduct to be at 4 (much) or 5 (very much); see Figure 8.

- Non-White and pre-Ph.D. respondents reported significantly less satisfaction with the Code of Conduct than Whites and post-PhDs, respectively (Figure 8a). Satisfaction did not differ significantly by gender or sexual orientation (Figure 8a).

Open-ended feedback on SPSP's approach to preventing and addressing SH

- 3 open-ended questions were included in the survey to probe respondents' views on how well or poorly SPSP has been responding to SH issues. These responses were coded for primary (more heavily emphasized in the response) and secondary (less heavily emphasized in the response) themes by 2 coders (ICCs > .83).

- Of the responses to what "SPSP is doing well" (see Tables 8 & 8a) SPSP's acknowledgement of SH (e.g., talking about SH, addressing members' concerns, conducting a survey to quantify the problem) and the steps taken by SPSP leadership towards changing organizational structures (e.g., revising the Code of Conduct, forming the SH task force) were the two strengths mentioned the most. Although this question asked specifically about "strengths," some respondents nevertheless raised concerns about SPSP's approach to SH (n = 24, 10.5%), noting that SPSP's response was an overkill, or that the Code of Conduct wasn't articulated well enough to differentiate rude from illegal behavior.

- Of the responses to what "SPSP is NOT doing so well" (see Tables 9 & 9a), the most frequently mentioned areas of improvement were punishing sexual harassers (e.g., removing offenders from SPSP programming; fewer rewards to offenders), further expanding and clarifying the Code of Conduct, improving culture of respect, and reducing fear of backlash against reporting. The need for transparency about SH incidents and the countermeasures taken by SPSP and for changing alcohol norms at SPSP sponsored events were also

brought up. Again, some respondents (*n* = 14, 8.9%) stated that they do not believe SPSP has a serious SH problem to start with.

- Having a stricter code of conduct where offenders face consequences was the top item mentioned in response to "any specific actions you would like to see SPSP take" (Table 10). Other actions mentioned (in order of frequency) were providing more education on SH (e.g., symposia on SH, informational training on how to deal with it), being responsive to diversity and inclusion concerns of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender neutral bathrooms, greater representation in programming), better reporting procedures (e.g., number to text during the convention for reporting), and reducing social events in programming that facilitate "bar behavior," and a desire for greater transparency surrounding SH incidents. In contrast, 6.6% of the responses recommended relaxing the Code of Conduct arguing that it's not SPSP's job to protect people from discomfort, and that SH should be considered only in the most extreme (illegal) cases.

Conclusions

These survey results will be discussed at the 2019 convention in Portland as part of a Town Hall session on Friday, Feb. 8th 11-12:15PM (Oregon 201). These results will also be reviewed at the SPSP Board meeting to take place after the convention, as part of a larger discussion regarding the Task Force's work and recommendations.