

Incorporating race and gender  
in sexual harassment research:  
The Racialized Sexual  
Harassment Scale (RSHS)

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# Definitions: Sexual & Racial Harassment

- **SH: Quid Pro Quo & Hostile Environment** (EEOC, 1980; Fitzgerald et al., 1997)
- **RH: overt/covert; derogatory comments, exclusion, physical harm targeting ethnic minorities** (Civil Rights Act of 1964; Clark, 2004; Harrell, 2000; Schneider, Hitlan, & Radhakrishnan, 2000)

# Harassment prevalence & outcomes

- **SH = 50% of women** (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993)

**Work/School--decreased productivity, withdrawal  
Physical--Headaches, ulcers, sexual dysfunction  
Psychological--PTSD, Depression, Clinical SXS**

Avina & O'Donohue, 2002; Dansky & Kilpatrick, 1997; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Magley, & Waldo, 1999; O'Connell & Korabik, 2000; Schneider, et al., 1997

- **RH = 40-76% of ethnic minorities annually**  
(Scarville et al., 1999; Schneider, Hitlan & Radhakrishnan, 2000)

**Work/School—withdrawal, decreased productivity  
Physical—heart disease, cancer, hypertension  
Psychological—PTSD, decreased life sat**

Harrell, 2000; Jackson, Brown, Williams, Torres, Sellers, & Brown, 1996; Klonoff, et al., 1999; Schneider, et al., 2000; Williams, Neighbors, and Jackson; 2003

# Harassment & women of color

- **Increased prevalence & severity for women of color**  
(Bergman & Drasgow, 2003; Cortina et al., 1998; Fitzgerald, Magley, & Drasgow, 1999; Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Hughes & Dodge, 1997)
- **Harassment = chronic-contextual stressor disproportionately affecting women of color due to membership in multiple stigmatized groups**  
(Buchanan, 2005; Collins, 2000; Defour, David, Diaz, Thompkins, 2003; Harrell, 2000; Nelson, 2002; Vernon, 1999)
- **Research exploring both SH and RH is sparse**  
(exceptions: Buchanan, 2005; Buchanan & Ormerod, 2002; Cortina, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 2002; Defour et al., 2003; King, 2003; Martin, 1994; Moradi & Subich, 2003; Mecca & Rubin, 1999; Shelton & Chavous, 1999; Texiera, 2002; Yoder & Aniakudo, 1997; Wyatt & Riederle, 1995)

# Research intersecting Race and Gender

- **Prevalence & Severity are higher for women of color**
  - **Sexual imposition:**
    - **Employed women: Af Amer ♀ 67%; Caucasian 45%**
    - **Undergraduate women: Af Amer ♀ 19%; Caucasian 4-9%**  
(Mecca & Rubin, 1999; Wyatt & Riederle, 1995)
- **Perceptions of harassment differ**
  - **Perceived harassment as an effort to exclude and marginalize**  
(Martin, 1994; Texiera, 2002; Yoder & Aniakudo, 1995, 1996, 1997)
  - **Trivialized when Af Amer ♀ are targeted**  
(Shelton & Chavous, 1999)

# Research intersecting Race and Gender

- **Harassment and outcomes**
  - Frequency of sexist events uniquely predicts psychological distress, but sexist and racist events do not interact to predict distress (Moradi & Subich, 2003)
  - Relative influence of RH & SH on psychological distress, PTSD, and life satisfaction are approximately equal (Buchanan & Fitzgerald, under review).

# Research intersecting Race and Gender

- **Latina ♀ indicate:**
  - **Cultural affiliation and both universal & culturally salient factors influence outcomes among harassed Latinas** (Cortina, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 2002; Shupe et al., 2002)
- **African American ♀ report:**
  - **SH w/racial stereotypes based on physical features assumed to be characteristic of Af Am ♀** (Mecca & Rubin, 1999)
  - **sexualized images combining race and gender (e.g., “black bitch”) & exploiting history of Af Amer enslavement & sexual exploitation** (Buchanan, 2005; Buchanan & Ormerod, 2002)

# Racialized Sexual Harassment

- **DEF: Harassment that infuses elements of racism and sexism** (Buchanan, 2005; Buchanan & Ormerod, 2002; Martin, 1994; Texiera, 2002)
- **Applicable to all people, more salient to some**
  - **Everyone is simultaneously raced and gendered** (West & Fenstermaker, 1995)
- **RH and SH  $r = .36$  to  $.69$**  (Buchanan & Fitzgerald, under review; Cortina et al., 2002; Moradi & Subich, 2003)
  - **may indicate they are intertwined for women of color**
- **Separate measures of racial harassment & sexual harassment which may not capture RSH**

# The Racialized Sexual Harassment Scale (RSHS)

- **Inductive test development process**
  - Reading literature (feminist, historical)
  - Anecdotal stories
  - **Focus group data** (Buchanan 2005; Buchanan & Ormerod, 2002)
- **7 items; Piloted with 786 students from 2 large Midwestern universities**
  - Coefficient alpha = .86
  - PCA = 1 factor

# RSHS items

- 1) Said things to insult people of your *gender and ethnicity* (for example, *Black women are rude, Asian men are wimpy, Latino men are violent, White women are dumb, etc*)
- 2) Told jokes or stories that described people of your *gender and ethnicity* negatively
- 3) Displayed pictures or cartoons that showed people of your *gender and ethnicity* negatively

**RSHS:** 7 items; Coefficient alpha = .86

- 4) Called you insulting names that referred to your *gender and ethnicity* (“black bitch,” “white whore,” “geisha,” “mamacita”)
- 5) Made comments about your body that emphasized your *gender and ethnicity* (for example, for Black women, comments about one’s “Black ass”, for Black men “large penis” “skinny white bitch,” etc)

**RSHS:** 7 items; Coefficient alpha = .86

- 6) Made comments about your clothing/accessories emphasizing your *gender and ethnicity* (for example, for Black women, comments about clothing with animal prints or lots of color, traditional dress for women of your ethnicity, for Black/Latino men, comments on gold necklaces/chains)
- 7) Said they expected you to behave certain ways because of your *gender and ethnicity* (for example, expected you as a Black or Latina woman to wear inappropriate clothes, expected you as an Asian man to be self-controlled and disciplined, as an Asian woman to try to please others, as a Latino man that you would be unfaithful in relationships, etc.)

# Correlations between RSHS, sexual harassment and racial harassment

	RSHS	SH	RH
RSHS	1.0		
SH	<b>.41**</b>	1.0	
RH	<b>.73**</b>	<b>.39**</b>	1.0

Note: \*\* $p < .01$

Correlations between RSHS and PTSD, Depression, general clinical symptomology, and Life Satisfaction were also significant ( $p < .01$ ) in the expected directions.

# Correlations between RSHS, SH and RH by Gender

<b>WOMEN</b>	RSHS	SH	RH
RSHS	1.0		
SH	<b>.44</b>	1.0	
RH	<b>.71</b>	<b>.40</b>	1.0

<b>MEN</b>	RSHS	SH	RH
RSHS	1.0		
SH	<b>.35</b>	1.0	
RH	<b>.78</b>	<b>.39</b>	1.0

# ANOVA comparing RSHS Scores across gender & race

	Cauc.	Asian/ Pacific Island.	Latino/a	Af Amer.	Multi- racial
♂	1.87	3.55	5.55	4.43	8.07
♀	2.08	2.86	2.78	4.66	4.26

# Challenges to measuring RH, SH and RSH

- Memory bias toward salient aspect of harassment (e.g., remembering/labeling only the racialized or gendered component)
- RH *or* SH in content, but *perceived* as both
- Double barreled questions?
- Measuring separate constructs in a single item?
  - Qualitative and preliminary quantitative data suggest that RSH may indeed be a distinct construct
- Generalizing the measure to fit many ethnic groups
  - Capturing stereotypes specific to each group

# Future Directions

- Further refinement of measure
- Pilot with working women
- Addressing additional confounds
  - Will harassment differ as a function of class?
    - Race and social class often confounded
    - Research on blue collar workers show
  - Do other social status variables create unique constructs as well (e.g., Ability status, sexual orientation)

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