CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION
Contact: Mangala Subramaniam (mangala@purdue.edu)

Climate refers to people's perceptions and experiences of an organization's environment. In the case of universities, this includes tenure track faculty, non-tenure track faculty, staff and students. This note pertains to faculty's perceptions and experiences of climate. Climate as a concept consists of two major dimensions: mistreatment and bias. The survey instrument will measure these dimensions of climate on three levels: the department level, the college level, and the university level.

(A) Mistreatment may be defined as "a behavior or situation…which the recipient perceives to be unwelcome, unwanted, unreasonable, inappropriate, excessive, or a violation of human rights" (Spratlen 1995: 286). This definition stresses interpersonal conflict. In Spratlen's (1995) study, mistreatment was measured by asking participants if they had experienced various forms of mistreatment, including "Verbal (yelling, swearing, name-calling), Physical (threats, hostile gestures, unwanted touch), Environmental (intimidation, isolation, offensiveness, hostility), or Other" (p. 290). Studies of workplace mistreatment tend to adopt similar definitions, such as "offensive behavior that is unsolicited or unwelcome" and violates "a fundamental right to respectful treatment" (Harlos 2010: 312; Salin et al. 2014). Again, mistreatment is understood to occur to the interpersonal, rather than institutional (for instance, university), level.

There are two gaps in the work on climate and mistreatment. The first is that very few studies of climate appear to use the term mistreatment itself- instead they discuss discrimination, harassment, abuse, and/or exclusion without viewing them as connected forms of mistreatment. For instance, Settles et al. (2006) examined 'sexist climate,' only focusing on gender rather than multiple forms of difference, and not breaking this concept down into its multiple dimensions. On the other hand, Maranto and Griffin (2001) focus on exclusion, using a modified version of James et al. (1994) workplace prejudice/discrimination inventory to ask participants to rate their level of agreement with statements such as "I feel isolated at work" and "I feel welcome and included in social gatherings." This ignores other aspects of mistreatment, such as verbal and physical mistreatment, and how they may be connected. Other studies, such as the Berkeley Climate Study (2014), are less clear about how they conceptualize climate or mistreatment. The authors of the report from the Berkeley Climate Study use 'diversity' and 'climate' interchangeably. Additionally, though they mention that climate is a multi-dimensional concept, they do not identify these dimensions or discuss how they were defined and operationalized. However, the report from the Berkeley Climate Study that is available online lists the measures/item statements that were used, even if they are not directly connected to key concepts or the definitions of those concepts. We have drawn on many of the items from these studies.

The second gap in the scholarship on climate and mistreatment is that those studies that do focus on workplace mistreatment focus more on responses to mistreatment rather than the development of valid measures of the concept (c.f. Cortina and Magley 2003; Harlos 2010; Salin et al. 2014). This means that there are abundant studies of 'climate,' and 'workplace mistreatment,' but very little work on defining these concepts and creating valid and reliable measures that can be used in multivariate models.

Based on the literature cited above, it appears that mistreatment can be conceptualized as consisting of three major sub-dimensions: (1) verbal, (2) physical, and (3) lack of inclusion. These forms of

mistreatment can occur at the department level, college level, and/or university level. Further, it is important to analyze both perceptions and experiences of mistreatment.

(1) Verbal mistreatment refers to demeaning comments, name-calling, and other forms of verbal harassment or abuse. The set of 8 measures/item statements below refer to experiences of verbal mistreatment, while the set of 4 item statements refer to perceptions of verbal mistreatment.[1]

Item Statements for experiences of verbal mistreatment on a response scale of 1 (Never) to 3 (Regularly)

      1a) Prevented from expressing your opinion
      1b) Discouraged from expressing your opinion
      1c) Been humiliated in front of others
      1d) Been belittled
      1e) Had someone try to turn others in your department against you
      1f) Been pressured to change your opinions
      1g) Been called a demeaning name
      1h) Been the target of a derogatory verbal remark
      1i) Been yelled at by a colleague

Items 1a-1d were modified from the custom statements (not tested for reliability or validity) used by Purdue in the 2015 COACHE survey and in which neither the Butler Center nor I were involved in creating. These were modified to ensure that only a single issue was addressed within a single statement (avoiding double-barreled statements). Items 1e-1g were adopted from Purdue custom statements from the 2015 COACHE survey but were modified on methodological basis. Item 1h was taken from the Berkeley Climate Survey (2014). Item 1i was developed by us.

Item statements for perceptions of verbal mistreatment on a response scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree)

      1j) Some faculty have a condescending attitude toward women
      1k) Some faculty have a condescending attitude toward racial/ethnic minorities
      1l) In meetings, people pay just as much attention when women speak as when men do
      1m) In meetings, people pay just as much attention when racial/ethnic minorities speak as when whites do

Item statements 1j-1m were all adopted from the Purdue custom statements from the 2015 COACHE survey but modified on methodological basis.

(2) Physical Mistreatment refers to actions of harassment or abuse, including physical violence. The set of 4 item statements below refer to experiences of physical mistreatment. Prior studies have not discussed perceptions of physical mistreatment.

Item statements for experiences of physical mistreatment on a response scale of 1 (Never) to 3 (Regularly)

---

[1] The terms item statements and measures will be used interchangeably throughout this note

2a) Physical violence
2b) Threats of physical violence
2c) Rude gestures
2d) Unwanted touch

Items 2a and 2b are taken from the Berkeley Climate Survey (2014), while items 2c and 2d are based on Spratlen (1995).

(3) <u>Lack of Inclusion</u> refers to being ignored, isolated, or not being welcome and supported. The set of 3 measures below are for <u>experiences of lack of inclusion</u>, while the following set of 5 measures are for <u>perceptions of lack of inclusion</u>.

Item Statements for <u>experiences of lack of inclusion</u> on a response scale of 1 (Never) to 3 (Regularly)

3a) Discouraged from speaking at department meetings
3b) Been left out of the loop in regard to important department emails
3c) I enjoy department social events

These items were modified from Maranto and Griffin (2011) and are all regarding lack of inclusion at the department level.

Item statements for <u>perceptions of lack of inclusion</u> on a response scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree)

3d) An 'old boys' network runs my department
3e) I feel isolated in my department
3f) I feel welcome at department gatherings
3g) Women are less likely than men to receive helpful advice from colleagues
3h) Racial/ethnic minorities are less likely than whites to receive helpful career advice from colleagues

Items 3d-3f are based on Maranto and Griffin (2011), while items 3g and 3h were taken from the Purdue custom questions from the 2015 COACHE survey but were modified to adhere to methodological basis.

(B) <u>Bias</u> is the second major dimension of climate and is defined as a "semi-permanent belief based on repeated exposure to stereotypes" (Project Implicit 2011). There is a large body of scholarship on bias, and we will only be drawing on the literature on bias as it relates to climate. While it has become less socially acceptable to admit to negative stereotypes, these views continue to persist (Koenig et al. 2011). Bias may be either implicit (unconscious) or explicit (consciously known). Both forms of bias impact how individuals view themselves and those around them and, by extension, decision-making. Bias against both women and racial/ethnic minorities in academia, particularly in the sciences, is well-documented (Barres 2006; Guiterrez y Muhs et al. 2012; Dade et al. 2015). For instance, women may be rated as less competent than men, even in cases where their CVs are otherwise comparable (Moss-Rascusin et al. 2012). Even individuals who believe themselves to be free from prejudice or bias aren't immune to this phenomenon.

Bias can impact the "organizational climate" of a university in that the faculty, staff, and administrators that make up the university may develop and execute policy based on their own biases (Settles et al. 2006). Thus the "policies, practices, and procedures" of an organization (in the case of campus climate, the department, college, or university) may function to disadvantage certain populations. This may result, for instance, in a disproportionate service burden for certain groups (Harley 2008) and barriers to tenure and promotion Stanley 2006) that make it difficult for women and racial/ethnic minorities to succeed. These forms of "organizational climate" or "organizational injustice" related to deeply ingrained biases have been measured through questions related to perceived fairness of decision-making and evaluation as well as equity of workloads and support.

Based on the literature cited above, bias may be conceptualized as both (1) implicit and (2) explicit. Due to the difficulty in determining whether an experience was the result of another's bias, the emphasis is on perceptions of bias.

(1) Implicit Bias, as mentioned above, refers to a situation in which "a person consciously rejects stereotypes but still unconsciously makes evaluations based on stereotypes" (AAUW 2016). This may result in more 'subtle' forms of discrimination that become encoded into policies and practices within a department or college. The following set of measures are for implicit bias.

> 4a) Yearly evaluations at the department level are fair
> 4b) Criteria for research support at the department level is uniformly applied
> 4c) There is adequate feedback regarding progress toward promotion
> 4d) There is a clear relationship in my college between performance and reward
> 4e) There is adequate feedback regarding progress toward tenure
> 4f) My research is valued within my department
> 4g) My teaching is valued within my department
> 4h) I do not know the criteria for allocation of research support in my department
> 4i) My service contributions to my department are ignored
> 4j) Addressing gender and race issues leads to additional burden for minority faculty

Items 4a-4e are based upon Maranto and Griffin (2011), while items 4f-4j were developed by us.

(2) Explicit Bias refers to evaluation based upon stereotypes that is conscious and known. The following measures are for explicit bias.

> 5a) Research on race and gender is devalued in my department
> 5b) Members of my department have hostile views toward racial/ethnic minorities
> 5c) Members of my department have hostile views toward women
> 5d) Men are discriminated against in my department
> 5e) Women are consistently denied tenure in my department
> 5f) Racial/ethnic minorities are consistently denied tenure in my department

These measures were developed by us specifically for this project.

References cited

American Association of University Women. (2016). *Barriers and Bias: The Status of Women in Leadership.* Washington, DC: American Association of University Women.

Barres, B. (2006). Does Gender Matter? *Nature* 442: 133-136.

Cortina, L.M. and V.J. Magley. (2003). "Raising Voice, Risking Retaliation: Events Following Interpersonal Mistreatment in the Workplace." *Occupational Health Psychology* 8(4): 247-265.

Dade, K., C. Tartakov, C. Hargrave, and P. Leigh. (2015). Assessing the Impact of Racism on Black Faculty in White Academe: A Collective Case Study of African American Female Faculty. *Western Journal of Black Studies* 39(2): 134-146.

Guiterrez y Muhs G. Y.F. Niemann, C.G. Gonzaelez, and A.P. Harris. (2012). *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia.* Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado.

Harley, D.A. (2008). Maids of Academe: African American Women Faculty at Predominately White Institutions. *Journal of African American Studies* 12(1): 19-36.

Harlos, K. (2010). If You Build a Remedial Voice Mechanism, Will They Come? Determinants of Voicing Interpersonal Mistreatment at Work. *Human Relations* 63(3): 311-329.

James, K., C. Lovato, and G. Khoo. (1994). Social Identity Correlates of Minority Workers' Health. *Academy of Management Journal* 37(2): 383-396.

Maranto, C.L. and A.E.C. Griffin. (2010). The Antecedents of a 'Chilly Climate' for Women Faculty in Higher Education. *Human Relations* 64(2): 139-159.

Moss-Racusin, C. A., Dovidio, J. F., Brescoll, V. L., Graham, M.J. & Handelsman J (2012). Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. 109(41): 16474-16479.

Project Implicit. (2011). Frequently asked questions. implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/faqs.html.

Rankin and Associates Consulting. (2014). *University of California Berkeley Campus Climate Project Final Report.* Berkeley, CA: UC Campus Climate Assessment Project.

Salin, D. (2003). Ways of Explaining Workplace Bullying: A Review of Enabling, Motivating and Precipitating Structures and Processes in the Work Environment. *Human Relations* 56(10): 1213-1232.

Settles, I.H., L.M. Cortina, J. Malley, and A.J. Stewart. (2006). The Climate for women in Academic Science: The Good, the Bad, and the Changeable. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 30(1): 47-58.

Stanley, C.A. (2006). Coloring the Academic Landscape: Faculty of Color Breaking the Silence in Predominately White Colleges and Universities. *American Educational Research Journal* 43(4): 701-736.

Spratlen, L.P. (1995). Interpersonal Conflict Which Includes Mistreatment in a University Workplace. *Violence and Victims* 10(4): 285-297.