Diversity Corner

How does SSCP fare as a "multicultural organization"?
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Concerted efforts have been taken by different professional organizations (e.g., APA, APS) to target the gaps in diversity science and competent practice. While forward movement is encouraging, it is important to give pause and assess critically how, as an organization, SSCP is reflecting the apparent value of advancing diversity in psychological research and practice. One such way SSCP has already gauged the "temperature" of the organization was by administering a membership survey in the spring of 2014. The results reflected something quite contrary to what an organization that aims to value diversity ought to show.

Jackson and Holvino (1981) developed a model comprised of three levels and six stages of the multicultural organization process (See Table 1). This model is the framework by which we aim to address the following questions:

- What does it mean to be a multicultural organization?
- How does SSCP fare as a multicultural organization?
- How might we better become such an organization?

Describing a multicultural organization
The following characteristics are not by any means an exhaustive list, but rather just some guidelines to describe a "multicultural organization." A multicultural organization:

- *Reflects the contributions and interests of diverse cultural and social groups in its mission and initiatives;*
- *Acts on a commitment to eradicate social oppression in all forms within the organization;*
- *Includes the members of diverse cultural and social groups as full participants, especially in decisions that shape the organization; and*
- *Follows through on broader external social responsibilities, including support of efforts to eliminate all forms of social oppression and to educate others in multicultural perspectives (Adapted from Jackson and Hardiman, 1981)*

What is useful in this description is the integration of ideals and values to which to aspire, as well as concrete action-based steps that organizations can take towards realizing these goals.

Where does SSCP fare as a multicultural organization?
In our humble opinion, SSCP falls at Level 2, Stage 3: "Affirmative Action – Compliance" (although more recently we are moving in a positive direction, as we will discuss further). What evidence do we have to validate this claim?

First, the demographic analysis of the SSCP membership survey taken in the spring of 2014 revealed that we are a rather homogenous group in terms of racial and sexual orientation identities (Rosmarin & Hankin, 2014) For example, from the 1/3 of the SSCP membership that completed the survey, the majority were self-identified as white (88%), heteresexual (84%), and female (62%). The administration

of this survey was a good first step to get an initial demographic portrait of the organization. This led to the creation of the Diversity Committee, a notable step in a positive direction for SSCP. However, it is worth mentioning that the survey did not also include broader social identity categories including spirituality and religion, class, and nationality (to name a few). Therefore, as we aspire to become a multicultural organization, it is important that we include within our documents, language, and programming, a more inclusive and comprehensive definition of diversity.

Second, the notion that a Level 2, Stage 3 organization is committed to removing some discrimination inherent in the "club" is, in our opinion, a rather accurate reflection of SSCP's current standing. SSCP has created mechanisms such as the Diversity Committee to work towards expanding the SSCP membership and diversifying the advancement of clinical science. Members of SSCP who identify with diverse cultural and social groups may feel pressure to assimilate to the culture of the majority. Social action inherently requires some "rocking of the boat," and what we have found in the narrative responses to our survey—and from informal discussions with SSCP members past and present—is that little has been done to alter some of the longstanding policies, structures, and culture of the organization toward greater inclusion. For example, lack of funding mechanisms in the past for research topics concerned with diversity has not promoted the active engagement in diversity-related research topics (although, we are actively working towards changing this). Additionally, it is questionable whether there have been mechanisms put in place not only to recruit members from diverse backgrounds into SSCP, but also help retain this membership (i.e., mentorship). SSCP strives to become a community of scholars who promote a safe place for those who identify from diverse backgrounds and those who are invested in studying these topics. Therefore, we hope to go from being an organization that is characterized by compliance and assimilation to one that is active and intentional in its efforts towards being a multicultural organization.

How do we continue to work towards becoming a multicultural organization?
We are hopeful and optimistic about the forward progress that is being made in SSCP toward becoming a multicultural organization. In order to raise our "ranking" within Jackson and Hardiman's framework, from Stage 3 to Stage 4 (and beyond), we propose the following:

- Shift the focus of targeted change from an individual level to an institutional and systems level. For example, re-examination of existing policies to assess where there is room for change in the ways SSCP has historically operated.
- Appoint members from diverse social and cultural backgrounds to positions of power. This will allow members who represent the interest of diverse social groups to have a voice in the decisions that are made.
- Continue to bring awareness about the importance of a diverse clinical science to the forefront. The SSCP Diversity Committee has utilized social media outlets to post relevant articles, publications, current events, and programs.
- Emphasize diversity related topics of study as a priority. Collaborate with other organizations, researchers, and experts in the field who are already engaging in rigorous diversity clinical science.
- More *actively* recruit members from diverse social groups that are typically missing from the organization. This may entail recruitment through diversity organizations at the graduate level, and the creation of mechanisms for mentorship between faculty and students of color.

• Educate current members about how to conduct themselves in a professional manner that is culturally sensitive to avoid microaggressions.

Conclusions

We are excited for initiatives and actions that SSCP has already taken with the overwhelming support of the SSCP leadership. This includes a panel discussion with four outstanding clinical scientists ("Mapping the intersection of diversity and psychological clinical science" at the APS Annual Convention in May 2015).

Also, we have a new webpage on the SSCP website that incorporates our publications, social media updates, and announcements. Last, but not least, the Diversity Committee is actively in the process of creating guidelines to promote the SSCP Board's financial support of diversity research.

We invite all members, from late career professionals to early graduate student members, to contribute to this forward movement of SSCP to become a multicultural organization. This culture shift can only take place if we work together and collectively as an organization. We are so appreciative of the support received by the board members and leaders of SSCP, and we are excited for the little and big steps towards improving our standing as a multicultural organization.

*Adapted from Jackson, B. J. and Holvino, E. V. (1988). Developing multicultural organizations. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science and Religion, 9(2),* 14-19.

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Table 1. Example features of different levels and stages of multicultural organizations. Adapted from Jackson and Holvino (1988)

Level 1: The Club	
Stage 1: Exclusionary Organization	• Deliberately restricts membership • Intentionally designed to maintain dominance of one group over others
Stage 2: The Club	• Maintains privileges of those who have traditionally held power and influence • Monoculture norms of dominant culture viewed as the only "right" way: "Business as usual" • Limited number of "token" members from other groups allowed in IF they have the "right" credentials, attitudes, behaviors, etc.
Level 2: Affirmative Action	

Stage 3: Compliance	• Committed to removing some of the discrimination inherent in the "Club" organization
	• Provides some access to members of other groups
	• No change in organizational culture or structure
	• All must be "team players" and "qualified"
	  o Must assimilate into organizational culture
	  o Must not challenge system or "rock the boat"

Stage 4: Affirmative Action Organization	• Actively recruits and hires members of groups that have been historically denied access and opportunity • Provides support and career development opportunities • Members encouraged to be non-oppressive • Members must assimilate to organizational culture
Level 3: Multicultural Organizations	
Stage 5: Redefining Organization	• Moving beyond being just "anti-racist" and "anti-sexist" • Committed to creating environment where all members can contribute fully and freely • Questions limitations of organizational culture: mission, policies, structures, morale, social climate, etc. • Searches for ways to implement values of inclusion, participation, and empowerment for all members
Stage 6: Multicultural Organization	• Values contributions of all members as full participants • Committed to broader societal and environmental responsibilities