

Canadian Philosophical Association Equity Survey Analyses

May 2009

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General Information about the survey

The survey was conducted through Survey Monkey in April 2008. An e-mail was sent to the secretaries or administrative assistants of Canadian philosophy departments (or to the chair in the case of smaller departments) asking them to forward the e-mail to all faculty members (both regular and sessional), postdoctoral fellows and graduate students in their department. The forwarded e-mail contained a link to the survey. The survey opened on April 11 and closed on May 9. Two reminders were sent before the closing date. At this point we had 156 English respondents and 34 French respondents. At the Congress in May 2008, some members reported that they never had received or heard about the survey. We decided to reopen the survey in the Fall. The survey re-opened on September 19 and closed on October 9. A reminder was sent before the closing date. In the end we had 252 English respondents and 58 French respondents for a total of 310. The demographic information of the respondents is attached.

Goals of the survey

The introduction to the survey stated our general goal:

“The present survey asks about the various ways in which your life in a philosophy department may be affected by equity issues. Our goal is to develop a broader understanding of the state of equity in the profession. The survey will also let us know which issues and concerns are particularly pressing for each of you and for the profession as a whole. In these ways your participation will help us to better represent you.”

Since the goal was to get a picture of the subjective experience of the members of the profession, the questions were kept as broad and open-ended as possible. We offered many opportunities in the survey to “describe” concerns or comment on questions. Some people still felt that the questions were leading and guided by an “agenda”. The survey did offer them an opportunity to voice this concern.

The survey was divided into four sections: 1) The climate in your department, 2) The Policies in your department, 3) The impact of equity-related factors on your career, and 4) Research and Teaching in your department. This preliminary report focuses mostly on discrimination. The information gathered broached a lot of issues from the use of gender-neutral language to the policies concerning the hiring of Canadian citizens.

The last section of the survey asked for suggestions and comments about the activities of the equity committee in general and the survey in particular.

Some concerns raised in relation to the survey

- The survey didn't address some forms of discrimination.

Mentioned were: Class-based or economic discrimination, Anti-Semitism (though this might have qualified as racial and/or religious discrimination) and reverse discrimination.

We didn't ask “whether people believe that they have ever had advantages bestowed upon them due to their sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc., or whether they have seen the same in their department.” One respondent mentioned that “the most obvious form of discrimination that persists in Western academia is “reverse discrimination”: affirmative action, hiring / admission quotas and the like, which impede the flowering of a true meritocracy.”

One respondent also mentioned that the equity categories in the survey were borrowed from other disciplines and were not sensitive enough to discrimination specific to the discipline, e.g. “the hostility with which religious issues and religious philosophers are often received in philosophy departments.”

- One respondent suggested “focusing on individual circumstance, not some presumed 'group' circumstance”.
- One respondent suggested offering the possibility to separate different experiences either in different universities or at different levels. “Parfois on veut rapporter des expériences eues à différentes universités, mais le questionnaire mentionne seulement "votre" département.”
- Some mentioned that the information collected would be necessarily biased since only people already interested (that is, favourable or hostile) in equity issues or people with equity-related “complaints” would take the time to participate in the survey. A sign of this is the higher number of women who answered the survey. Almost 50% of the respondents to the qualitative survey were women while the quantitative survey conducted by the CPA equity committee this year shows that 30% of graduate students, 21% of full professors, 33% of associate professors and 47% of assistant professors are women.
- One respondent viewed the survey as an “effort to sow discord and anxiety in the university as well as the seeping poison of politicization loved by those who have more time for politics than they do for academic disciplines.”

Suggestions for workshops and panels at the CPA

- "But no women applied for our analytic metaphysics job!: strategies for Department Chairs seeking to diversify faculty"
- "It's easy to get a job if you are a woman/black/in a wheelchair: strategies for graduate students dealing with anti-equity harassment"
- workshop on unconscious bias in tenure and promotion decisions using the ADEPT (Awareness of Decisions in Evaluating Promotion and Tenure) activity kit developed by Georgia Institute of Technology (see <http://www.adept.gatech.edu>)
- question the relevance of "equity" issues themselves, and conduct empirical research to see if such policies have any real effect or are merely tokenism or window dressing for most departments

- Using such terms as ‘indigenous philosophy’. Respondent: “Are we sure that ‘philosophy’ is genuinely neutral with respect to these cross-cultural issues of epistemic justice?”
- Women philosophers in traditional areas of philosophy (i.e. M&E) and women philosophers in women's areas of philosophy (i.e. ethics, feminism)
- ways of working towards greater inclusion of non-European traditions, including workshops on incorporating non-traditional (or non-western) philosophies into broad survey courses
- equity-related problems faced by graduate students, especially female graduate students
- discussion of the Canadian-first policy
- something on race or race and gender
- economic equity
- non-native speakers of English
- report on recent hirings

General concerns voiced about equity

- Reverse discrimination, the potentially negative result of equity measures, the danger of focusing on questions of equality or proportional representation at the expense of merit.

Respondent: “On doit faire attention que la pression envers l'équité ne crée pas de nouvelles inéquités, particulièrement envers les hommes. ”

Respondent: “institutional pressure to achieve equity "results" quickly could sometimes have negative consequences for the profession in the longer term.”

Respondent: “I'm not sure what the Equity Committee's goal is supposed to be. My comments in this survey refer to cases where I think merit was not treated equitably across candidates. It might be that the EC is more concerned with the equitable representation of various ethnic/gender groups, and if that's the case, I'm not sure that my comments are relevant. But it still seems to me worth considering whether "equality" in this latter sense is purchased at too high of a cost in some cases, and it might be worth

developing a more fine-grained approach that balances both considerations more delicately.”

Respondent: “We say we want equality, then let us aim for true equality (if that is obtainable). The "equity" that is currently on the agenda is one that marginalizes.”

- Not only focusing on the negative aspects, emphasizing the progress that has been made

Respondent: “I think we've made tremendous progress, both in Canada generally and in my department in particular. This isn't to say that "our work is done".”

Respondent: “I think we currently have a more progressive, diversity-friendly department than at any point in the past.”

- But some mentioned the danger of not seeing equity problems

Respondent: “I feel as if we have made two steps forward, and two steps back. The difference is, the young men in my department feel all the problems are solved.”

Respondent: “I don't think people see problems here so they do not discuss or address them much.”

General Suggestions for the equity committee

- Challenging our basic assumptions and relevance
- Finding a way of integrating the equity sessions of the CPA further into the regular program so as to increase and regularize attendance
- Advertising the committee more broadly
- Abolishing the committee and doing some real philosophy

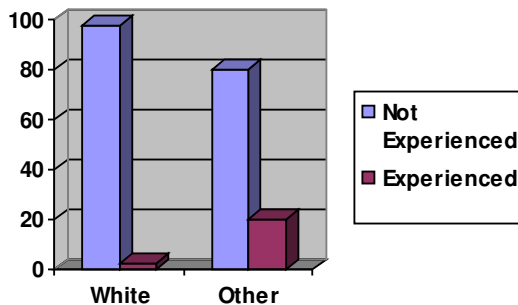
Key Preliminary Findings on Discrimination

- 20% of non-Caucasian respondents experienced racial/ethnic discrimination**
- 28.1% of female respondents experienced gender or sexuality-related discrimination**
- 14.4% of female respondents experienced sexual harassment**

Racial/Ethnic Discrimination

2.7% of people who listed their ethnicity as “white” experienced racial/ethnic discrimination whereas 20% of those who listed their ethnicity as “other” than white experienced racial/ethnic discrimination. People who did not identify their ethnicity as “white” experienced significantly more discrimination than those who identified as “white”.

There is no significant difference in awareness of racial/ethnic discrimination between those who identified themselves as “white” and those who identified themselves as “others”.



Respondent: “I think the university needs to address as a whole the issue of equity and in particular it needs to address the disparity in the representation of racial minorities.”

Respondent: “There is no overt discrimination, however, there are no racial minorities or people with disabilities on the faculty.”

Age-related Discrimination

3% of respondents experienced age discrimination and 8.7% of the respondents are aware of age discrimination. Age discrimination is not affected by one’s age or by one’s gender.

Respondent: “Age discrimination: Adjuncts who have been around for a long time count for almost nothing, even if they are qualified for tenure-stream professorships.

Departments hire only "new blood" even if the experienced contract workers in their midst are qualified for better positions.”

Religious Discrimination

Very few respondents experienced religious discrimination (2.9%) though 9.7% were aware of religious discrimination. There were no differences between experience or awareness by Christians and non-Christians. Furthermore, coding atheists as either Christian or non-Christian does not affect the results.

Respondant: “I find that there is some bias and prejudice against religion and against Christianity in particular. It is not rampant or widespread, but there seems to be little concern about people having these biases or making various derogatory remarks.”

Gender or Sexuality-related Discrimination

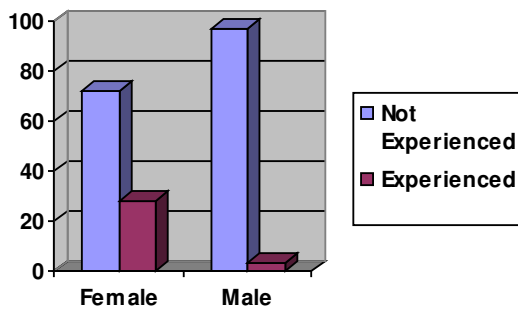
Those who identified themselves as females report significantly more experience of gender or sexuality-related discrimination than those who identify themselves as males. 28.1% of females report experiencing gender or sexuality-related discrimination whereas 3.5% of males report experiencing gender.

Gender or sexuality-related discrimination is not affected by one’s age.

Individuals who do not identify themselves as heterosexual report more discrimination than individuals who identify themselves as heterosexual.

When looked at together, effects for gender, not sexual orientation, are driving the results.

Gender or sexual orientation does not affect the percentage of respondents who are aware of gender or sexuality-related discrimination.



There were a number of instances of women expressing workload or work type discrimination.

Respondent: “Female faculty in our department do a disproportionate amount of administrative work, which I think is a product of gender discrimination. They are also more likely to be (or be put) on committees that are "soft," in the sense that they require not intellectual work but social or emotional work.”

Respondent: “A previous chair in my department did not assign graduate courses to myself and to another woman who was hired at the same time, claiming we were too junior. Yet a graduate course was assigned for two years in a row to a male colleague who was hired at exactly the same time, at the same level. That chair has now retired, and I believe my department is at present completely non-discriminatory in its policies. I would add, however, that non-discrimination is not the same thing as openness to (let alone interest in) e.g. feminist thought, or non-European traditions.”

Respondent: “J'ai été victime de discrimination et de harcèlement dû à mon sexe. J'ai été traité de manière différente que mes collègues masculins. De plus, mon chef de département a fait des blagues inappropriées à mon endroit de même qu'il "laisse tomber les yeux" lors de discussions avec moi. Je sais que certaines étudiantes aux études supérieures ont vécu des choses similaires avec ce collègue de même qu'avec un collègue à la retraite qui est souvent présent au département ou encore aux conférences publiques.”

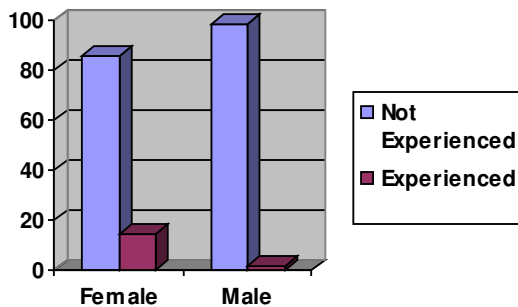
Respondent: “The grad students in my department vary widely in their philosophical abilities. I find that consistently the weakest students are Canadian and/or female (though there are noteworthy exceptions in both cases). As such, I think admissions policies must disproportionately favor Canadians and women. Further, I happen to know that of at least two female students who seem to have benefited from illicit, romantic relationships with professors who recommended them (at previous institutions - not my own).”

Sexual Harassment

Females experience significantly more sexual harassment than males. 14.4% of females experienced sexual harassment whereas 1.4% of males experienced sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is not affected by sexual orientation or age.

Awareness of sexual harassment is not affected by age, gender or sexual orientation.



Respondent: “I think they are quite vague and tend to be acted on in an ad hoc manner. I have had to fight long and hard, for example, to have a faculty member taken to task ('disciplined' would be too strong a word) for ongoing sexual harassment. And there are faculty members who exercise masculine power vis-à-vis young female faculty and grad students in ways that they themselves would not acknowledge – so those of us who are aware make sure to warn those we believe are vulnerable to the behaviours. Which is part of what I mean by ad hoc.”

Respondent: “The department is governed by campus wide-policies on sexual harassment and ethics provisions of the collective agreement. In the case of conflict of interest the accusations got passed back and forth between the SH Officer, the Administration and the Union and tended to fall through the cracks. Also, the SH Officer once said to me "Don't forget the University pays my salary" which led me to believe she was less than impartial. Finally, the University has no Ombudsman and the higher Administration operates in secret and in a top-down fashion on most issues. Those who complain or criticize are punished.”

Quick look at equity-related issues in department/faculty/university or in the profession

There were a number of comments regarding felt hostility toward continental philosophy, feminist philosophy and practical ethics. Many of the comments sited the connection between women doing philosophy, inequality and these “fuzzy” fields.

Respondent: “The Anglo-European bias against French/German-European thought here feels like when you are in Quebec and Anglophones get angry hearing Francophones. (It's a bicultural reality, but the presumption of a default idiom is the Anglo-idiom; and the presumption of who is being indulged goes to the French). This doesn't have a gender profile in this department. It also reminds me of the double-consciousness principle: Continental theorists are expected to know their field but also be able to converse in and assess papers in all other fields, but the reverse doesn't hold true.”

Respondent: “Sometimes philosophers are reluctant to the idea that the questions and problems discussed in Feminist Philosophy are genuine philosophical problems, while they are not so reluctant to treat similar questions and issues in other areas of philosophy as genuine philosophical issues.”

Respondent: “Too often issues concerning race or gender in philosophy are dismissed as issues that sociology should be discussing, not philosophy. Given that the majority of our field has always been privileged in some way (gender or race or class), no one really considers them important because the majority that makes up our philosophy departments (white and male) historically never had to worry about being paid less (promoted, hired etc) on account of who they are.”

Respondent: “The usual stupid, macho assumption that talk of value is wishy-washy or fuzzy, which (unfortunately) female philosophers also engage in.”

Demographics Summary

Age:

20-29: 25.8%
30-39: 30%
40-49: 25.2%
50 and over: 17.7%
(skipped: 1.3%)

Race/Ethnicity:

White (Caucasian): 83.2%
Others: 9.7%
(skipped: 7.1%)

Academic Situation:

Graduate students: 37.4%
Tenure-track: 11.3%
Tenured: 30%
Others: 14.5%
(skipped: 6.8%)

Religious Affiliation:

Agnostic and Atheist: 53.3%
Unaffiliated: 19.7%
Christian: 13.5%
Others: 5.8%
(skipped: 7.7%)

Gender:

Female: 49.4%
Male: 46.5%
Trans: 0.6%
(skipped: 3.5%)

Marital Status:

Married: 42.6%
Single: 29.4%
Common-law: 18.7%
Others: 5.1%
(skipped: 4.2%)

Sexual Orientation:

Heterosexual: 54.8%
Others: 8.4%
(skipped: 36.8%)

Children:

61.3% do not have children
37.1% do
(skipped: 1.6%)
-Those with children have an average of
1.8 children
-The average age of children is 16.5
years old

Mother Tongue:

English: 69%
French: 18.1%
Others 11.3%
(skipped: 1.6%)

Citizenship:

91.3% of the respondents are Canadians
or permanent residents

Demographic Information

Age Group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-29	80	25.8	26.1	26.1
	30-39	93	30.0	30.4	56.5
	40-49	78	25.2	25.5	82.0
	50-59	34	11.0	11.1	93.1
	60-69	19	6.1	6.2	99.3
	70+	2	.6	.7	100.0
	Total	306	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.3		
Total		310	100.0		

Academic Situation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Grad Student	116	37.4	40.1	40.1
	Post-doc	6	1.9	2.1	42.2
	Part-time adjunct	22	7.1	7.6	49.8
	Full-time adjunct	16	5.2	5.5	55.4
	Tenure-track	35	11.3	12.1	67.5
	Tenured	93	30.0	32.2	99.7
	Emeritus	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	289	93.2	100.0	
Missing	System	21	6.8		
Total		310	100.0		

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	153	49.4	51.2	51.2
	Male	144	46.5	48.2	99.3
	Trans	2	.6	.7	100.0
	Total	299	96.5	100.0	
Missing	System	11	3.5		

Total	310	100.0		
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Sexual Orientation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Heterosexual	170	54.8	86.7	86.7
	Bisexual	16	5.2	8.2	94.9
	Gay/Lesbian	10	3.2	5.1	100.0
	Total	196	63.2	100.0	
Missing	System	114	36.8		
Total		310	100.0		

Citizenship

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Canadian	261	84.2	85.3	85.3
	Permanent Resident	22	7.1	7.2	92.5
	Non-Canadian	23	7.4	7.5	100.0
	Total	306	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.3		
Total		310	100.0		

Mother Tongue

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	French	56	18.1	18.4	18.4
	English	214	69.0	70.2	88.5
	Other	35	11.3	11.5	100.0
	Total	305	98.4	100.0	
Missing	System	5	1.6		
Total		310	100.0		

Race/Ethnicity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Arab/West	5	1.6	1.7	1.7
	Asian	5	1.6	1.7	3.5
	Chinese	4	1.3	1.4	4.9
	South Asian	3	1.0	1.0	5.9
	Latin American	258	83.2	89.6	95.5
	White	1	.3	.3	95.8
	Aboriginal	12	3.9	4.2	100.0
	Multiple	288	92.9	100.0	
	Total	22	7.1		
Missing	System	310	100.0		
Total					

Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	91	29.4	30.6	30.6
	Married	132	42.6	44.4	75.1
	Common-law	58	18.7	19.5	94.6
	Divorced	12	3.9	4.0	98.7
	Separated	3	0.9	1.0	99.7
	Widowed	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	297	95.8	100.0	
Missing	System	13	4.2		
Total		310	100.0		

Religious Affiliation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agnostic	51	16.5	17.8	17.8
	Animist	1	.3	.3	18.2
	Atheist	114	36.8	39.9	58.0
	Buddhist	3	1.0	1.0	59.1
	Christian	42	13.5	14.7	73.8
	Hindu	1	.3	.3	74.1
	Jewish	10	3.2	3.5	77.6
	Muslim	3	1.0	1.0	78.7
	Unaffiliated	61	19.7	21.3	100.0
	Total	286	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	24	7.7		
Total		310	100.0		

Children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	190	61.3	62.3	62.3
	yes	115	37.1	37.7	100.0
	Total	305	98.4	100.0	
Missing	System	5	1.6		
Total		310	100.0		