

Power, Politics, and Public Secrets: Understanding Sexual Misconduct and its Impacts among the Andean Studies Community

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IAS Working Group Charge

In July 2020, the IAS Board assembled a **Working Group on Ethical Conduct**, charged with drafting: 1) a statement of shared ethical commitments to safe educational, workplace, and research climates; and 2) a code of conduct for IAS meetings and constituents. Recent media coverage and scholarly attention on sexual harassment and Title IV-related processes have highlighted the prevalence of unprofessional behavior and the sometimes intentional, and often insidious, ways they are normalized and perpetuated in our professional practices. This atmosphere informed our policy's emphasis on **sexual misconduct** and simultaneously led us to ask how pervasive it is in the Andean Studies community; how it affects student experiences and professional trajectories; and how it impacts diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

Background

In recent years, archaeologists, activists, and survivors have become increasingly vocal about what has long been a '**public secret**' in archaeology: the prevalence and high rates of sexual misconduct, not only in field settings but also in classrooms, laboratories, museums, office workplaces, and conferences. By **sexual misconduct**, we refers to a wide range of discriminatory and illegal practices related to actual or perceived gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as to unwanted sexual advances, quid pro quo coercions, hostile workplace environments, and sexual assaults. Since the publication of Clancy et al.'s 2014 Safe Academic Field Experiences (SAFE) study*, archaeologists based in the Southeastern U.S., California, Canada, and Europe have conducted qualitative and quantitative research to demonstrate epidemic rates of sexual misconduct in our field. These studies have revealed that women, archaeologists of color, LGBTQIA+ and nonbinary archaeologists, and archaeologists with disabilities are disproportionately harassed, although **all** genders have reported misconduct at high rates.

Objectives

After a year of mostly-weekly meetings, we recommended that members of the IAS Working Group administer a confidential, IRB-vetted **survey** to the Andean Studies (AS) community, broadly construed. We aim to understand the nature of incidents and official and communal responses to them, and measure the impacts of sexual misconduct on the lives and research of survivors, witnesses, departments, organizations, and local stakeholders.

The survey will be beta tested and distributed in Qualtrics via email in Spring 2022. Survey respondents should in some way be involved or have prior involvement with AS and/or an AS researcher (as a student or professional), but **do not** need to be a member of IAS to participate. Please share widely!

Proposed Survey Sections

- **Demographics and involvement in AS**
 - Age, nationality, country of residence, race/ethnicity, biological sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, dependents
 - Education, current/previous employment
 - Contexts of AS engagements (e.g., fieldwork, coursework, labwork, museum work, CRM)
 - Subregion(s) of work or study in the Andes
- **Experiences with sexual misconduct in AS or with an AS professional**
 - Where experienced (setting and geographic location), how often, duration
 - Power dynamics (supervisor/trainee, peer-to-peer)
 - Witness or knowledge of misconduct of others
- **Training and reporting**
 - Required training in misconduct prevention?
 - Awareness of reporting mechanisms
 - Formal or informal reporting (if reported, to whom or to what administrative body?)
 - Lack of resources or access to resources

Proposed Survey Sections (Cont.)

- **Outcomes and Impacts**
 - Satisfaction with reporting outcome(s)
 - Coping mechanisms and survival strategies
 - Impact on well-being
 - Impact on professional trajectory
- **Other potential topics to include:**
 - Other types of gender-based discrimination (not necessarily sexual in nature)
 - Awareness of 'public secrets' prior to involvement with AS practitioners
 - What constitutes misconduct? An intercultural understanding
 - Which organizational climates tolerate misconduct?

Feedback Requested

What else would you like to know, and/or what other topics do you think should be included in this survey? We welcome all feedback on survey topics!

Through the analysis of demographic data in tandem with other survey responses, we will examine whether protected groups and/or those with historically marginalized identities experience higher rates of sexual misconduct in Andean Studies.

Terminology: Survivor, victim, or complainant?

We use the term 'survivor' following the definition provided by the Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network (RAINN), i.e., to refer to someone who has gone through the recovery process, or when discussing the short- or long-term effects of sexual violence. Some people identify as a victim when referring to someone who has recently been affected by sexual violence, while others prefer the term survivor. The best way to be respectful is to ask for preference. Feedback is requested on this issue!

Resources

For more resources on how to identify, report, and prevent sexual misconduct, please scan the QR code.

Concerns, complaints, and other inquiries for the IAS **Community Relations Officer (CRO)** can be sent to CRO@andeanstudies.org for confidential review.



We Need Your Help!

Are you interested in assisting with any aspect of the survey development or analysis?

We are looking for:

- Help distributing the survey (snowball sampling)
- Expertise in qualitative research (analysis of open-ended response data)

If interested, please contact Dana Bardolph (dbardolph@niu.edu) or Beth Scaffidi (cscaffidi@ucmerced.edu)

IAS Working Group Affiliations

1. Northern Illinois University
2. Jesuit University Antonio Ruiz de Montoya
3. Art Institute of Chicago
4. Universidad de Buenos Aires
5. University of Wyoming
6. Universidad de Buenos Aires
7. US Forest Service
8. University of California, Merced

Reference

*Clancy, K. B., Nelson, R. G., Rutherford, J. N., & Hinde, K. (2014). Survey of academic field experiences (SAFE): Trainees report harassment and assault. *PLoS one*, 9(7), e102172.