ELEPHANT IN THE PLANNING ROOM:
OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF
PLANNERS OF COLOR

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ABSTRACT

In order to achieve more just and equitable communities, planners need to better understand and represent the diverse communities that they serve. Through literature review, the study explores and articulates the relevance of diversity amongst planners in order to better understand and represent communities, and achieve more just and equitable planning processes and outcomes. Presenting quantitative and qualitative data collected through a survey with over 300 responses and more than 30 hours of focus groups and interviews with planners of color and employers, the study analyses the current state of diversity in the profession in the New York Metropolitan Area, particularly related to the experiences and opportunities for people of color, with intersectional analysis on gender. The study introduces a ten-dimensional framework to understand the barriers to recruitment, retention, and advancement of people of color in planning. The final chapter lists a set of recommendations with tangible strategies that employers/managers, schools, planning institutions, White allies, and planners of color could implement to help overcome these barriers.

KEYWORDS

diversity, difference, urban planning, cultural competency, social justice, race, gender, minority, recruitment, retention
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The phrase “elephant in the room” is an idiom for an obvious truth or problem that remains unaddressed; that “no one wants to discuss,” (Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 298). If urban planning were a room, the elephant would be Race. Throughout its history in the United States (U.S.), urban planning has played a key role in both positively and negatively affecting the distribution of services and resources in neighborhoods, and thus life outcomes of different racial and other demographic groups. Tools like zoning, ordinances, housing codes, eminent domain, and redevelopment projects have been used to carry out the exclusion, segregation, displacement, and disenfranchisement of people of color. “Planners have historically been implicit in perpetuating racism,” states Sweet (2010, p. 230). Planning participation processes have been criticized over the decades for not representing various classes (Davidoff, 1965), for ignoring gender inequalities (Milroy, 1991), and disregarding gay and lesbian issues (Forsyth, 1997; 2001; Valentine, 1993).

In order to achieve more just and equitable communities, planners need to better understand and represent the constituencies most affected by injustice and inequality; and a way, perhaps the best way, to achieve this purpose is to have meaningful, if not full, representation in the field of people who are from these constituencies.

Several initiatives have highlighted the underrepresentation of minorities in the profession and called for change to more proactively promote diversity and inclusion in professional practice and in the workplace. The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct notes that a planner's overall responsibility to the public includes seeking "social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration" (American Planning Association or APA, 2009, A.1.f.). To help carry through this code, the Planning Accreditation Board’s (PAB's) 2012-2016 Strategic Plan Goal #4 states the need to “promote and encourage a systematic approach to diversity and multi-cultural understanding throughout each planning program.” For almost two decades, the national American Planning Association (APA) Diversity Task Forces has worked to better promote diversity in planning through diversity summits, highlighting diversity on the main APA website, implementing an ambassadors program to help expose diverse youth to the profession, and many other initiatives.
Yet today, people of color continue to be severely underrepresented in both schools and in the practice. Whereas in the New York Metro Area\(^1\) in 1990, Non-Hispanic White planners made up 78 percent of the total number, compared to 58 percent of the total population, in 2010 Non-Hispanic White planners made up 71 percent of the total number of planners, compared to 45 percent of the total population (See Table 1 in p. 29). While the total number of non-White and Hispanic planners increased somewhat, the proportion relative to the general population actually decreased. Meanwhile, the proportion of people of color living in the area has grown significantly and the representation gap continues to widen. Latino/as and Blacks remain especially underrepresented. Communities are diversifying, but the planning profession is increasingly less representative of the communities it serves.

There is a renewed interest in promoting diversity in the ranks of planners. The national APA Diversity Task Force is now encouraging local chapter diversity efforts. The APA's local New York Metro Chapter has responded, especially through its recently revived Diversity Committee\(^2\), the efforts of which this study hopes to inform.

**Goal and Objectives**

The main goal of the study is to share findings and recommendations to improve opportunities for people of color to enter and advance in the planning profession, in order to promote diversity in the profession, better understanding and representation of communities, and ultimately, more equitable and just planning process for all communities.

This study has five main objectives:

1. To articulate why diversity and cultural competency in the planning profession are important.
2. To compare demographic and professional trends in the planning profession in the New York Metro area since 2001 with new data, including intersectional analysis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and more.
3. To identify and map the barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of people of color in the profession in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

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\(^1\) NYM Area as defined by the American Planning Association New York Metro Area Chapter, which includes NYC, Long Island, and counties East and West of the Hudson River.

\(^2\) In 2001, the American Planning Associations New York Metro Chapter's Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee (today has been revived and renamed as the "Diversity Committee") conducted a study on diversity amongst planners in the New York Metro area, surveying firms on diversity numbers and interviewing various schools and employers in a report called "Lagging Behind." This study builds off of this report that was conducted 15 years ago.
4. To describe the issues and barriers current planners of color face in the field and identify what they might need to overcome them.

5. To recommend a set of strategies for various actors to proactively advance diversity in the planning profession.

Through a metro-wide survey, focus groups, and interviews with planners of color and employers / managers of various backgrounds, I sought to answer: How has the racial / ethnic make-up of planners in the profession in NY Metro Area compared to the overall population changed in the last two decades? How are planners of color represented in the public, private, and non-profit sectors? What are the differing experiences between planners of color between of various racial, ethnic, gender, and economic backgrounds? What are their experiences compared to their White peers? What kind of support might they need from planning institutions, schools, employers / managers, White colleagues, and other planners of color? How do employers articulate the importance of diversity, and what kinds of challenges do they face in hiring? What recommendations are necessary in order to better recruit, retain, and advance planners of color in the profession to achieve better representation?
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, “diversity” refers to the spectrum of differences in culture, values, skills, access to resources, and experiences between people that are shaped by the complex intersection of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, dis/ability, national origin, religion, and more. “Difference,” in a way, is a more expansive and useful concept than “diversity,” which, in the U.S., has become virtually synonymous with race / ethnicity and/or gender (Agyeman, 2012). Difference acknowledges that “population groups, differentiated by [these various characteristics], have different claims on the city for a full life and, in particular, on the built environment” (Sandercock, 2000, p. 15). Although what diversity encompasses is complex, the focus for this report will be mainly on racial and ethnic diversity in order to dive more deeply into its impact on race/ethnic equity and justice in the metro area. In order to understand the context of this report, I will first clarify a) what is meant by “ethnic diversity,” b) why it is important in the planning profession, and c) what have been the barriers to retain and recruit diversity.

What Is Meant by Racial / Ethnic Diversity?

June Manning Thomas introduces that the politics of difference is a “messy affair, requiring focused attention and effort” (2008, p. 229). Focusing on race and ethnic diversity is not to undermine the importance of other forms of diversity that contribute to same goals, but it is acknowledging the need to ground dialogue and proactively address a deep divide along lines of race and class that has left a lasting mark on the urban landscape and thus living conditions, residential patterns, and social and economic opportunities for people of color, particularly black and brown persons (Wilson, 2003). American cities, in particular, have a dark history of sociopolitical and institutional discriminatory practices tied to race and class and the built environment (Massey and Denton, 1993; Conley, 2009; Orfield, 2008; Omi and Winant, 1994; Lipsitz, 2006).

“Race” refers to the socially constructed categorization of people that, though complex and carries little biological justification, has been used to justify economic oppression of dark-skinned people throughout global history (Thomas, 2008, p. 228). Thus, acknowledging race as a system of power that has provided advantages and privileges to Whites, while refuting the oppression and disadvantages experienced by people of color, is an important step to dismantling it (Lipsitz, 2006). “Ethnicity” refers to social groups that share common and
distinctive cultures, such as religion or language. In this report, ethnicity is used to supplement the limited categories of race. Four main categories of ‘race’ will be highlighted in order to compare the data with previous studies conducted: Latino/a, Non-Hispanic (NH) White, NH Black, and NH Asian/Pacific Islander.

The focus and analysis of racial/ethnic representation in this report is aimed not at measuring numeric visibility by these broad racial categories, but rather at capturing the state of progress in terms of representation and opportunity of people of color in the field, who share various forms of (historically) underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds. The goal of greater diversity is beyond increasing the number of underrepresented groups, but more about efforts to “challeng[e] the status quo of power relationships” (Sweet, 2010, p. 228). Although race/ethnicity is the focus, gender and economic class will be inherently encompassed in many situations, as the remnants of the history of the American (and global) economy have maintained wealth and power in the privilege of White males, and placed people of color and women at an inequitable disadvantage, often trapping groups in deep cycles of intergenerational poverty (Lipsitz, 2006; Conley, 2009).

Throughout this report, the term “people of color” will be used to refer to underrepresented racial/ethnic groups in the planning profession. In previous studies, “minority” or “minority-race” groups have been used as primary terms (Thomas 2008; APA NY Metro Chapter, 2001; APA Diversity Task Force, 2004; APA Diversity Task Force, 2011). Some diversity advocates are shifting away from this term, criticizing its blanket coding, negative connotation, and failure to capture shifting trends across the country. Barry Cross Jr., President and CEO of Elsie Y. Cross Associates, a diversity and race-relations consultant, states that the term “minority” has become a code for everyone who is not a White male. The use of the term prevents us from noticing diversity’s differences and having an open and honest discussion about the benefits of diversity. We should be talking about why it is valid, useful and important to have different points of view based on social identity. (2009, pp.2-3).

Cross states that the term “minority” has a negative implication of something being “less than” White. He emphasizes that it paints a picture too broad that does not notice nor even

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3 The U.S. Census measures the racial categories of “Black/African American,” “White/Caucasian,” “Asian,” “Pacific Islander,” “Native Alaskan/Indian,” and “Mixed,” and “Other.” The Census categorizes Hispanic/Latino as an Ethnicity.
attempt to understand the different experiences and perspective by a social group identity. The term continues to make individuals and groups “invisible,” and does not allow others to experience diversity beyond a “minority group.” Further, it does not acknowledge the fact that demographics in the United States (U.S.) are shifting. The U.S. Census estimates that by 2045, the nation’s “minority” population will become the majority, outnumbering Whites (Colby and Ortman, 2014).

The term “people of color” on the other hand is more neutral and positive (compared to “non-White” or “colored”) and it unifies and encompasses people who experience race and color as a system of power in their history and daily lives (Omi and Winant, 1994). Distinguishing people of color from other “minority” members also calls for the need for additional initiatives to improve access and opportunities along gender, sexual orientation, class, age, (dis)ability, culture / religion, and more.

Why is Diversity in the Planning Profession important?

Scholarship about race and gender in planning began to emerge in the 1970’s and 1980’s. In the early 1990’s, an emphasis began to grow on the challenges of fostering diversity in the education, practices, and make up of planning educators and students (Sweet, 2010). I highlight below three main arguments in the literature on the importance of diversity in the planning profession: a) representation, advocacy, and agency, b) cultural competency and promoting inter-culturalism, and c) innovation and creativity.

Representation, Advocacy, and Agency

The predominant discourse around diversity in the planning profession has its roots in advocacy planning for more just and equitable cities and the need for representation of disadvantaged groups in positions of power. Sandercock criticizes planning theory to be predominately White in outlook — representing a “homogenous theoretical landscape—characterized by the supposed impartiality of the theorist” (1998, p. 109). Fainstein, author of The Just City, stresses the importance of participation in decision making by relatively powerless groups to reach equity outcomes (2000). Thomas states that to bring about lasting equity in the urban context, it is necessary to go beyond respecting difference, but also to ensure that professional planners encompass diversity in race and ethnicity “particularly in urban societies where severe inequalities in race and ethnicity exist” (2008, p. 228). She emphasizes, “If the urban planning profession cannot itself reflect commitment to
social equity in the form of its own demographics, it could seem contradictory for professional planners to argue for social equity in society at large” (2008, p. 228). Forester argues that this call for diversity in the profession as a means towards equity is mainly about deep awareness and understanding of the role of race, gender, and ethnicity in social inequity and people’s everyday lives. He writes that what planning needs is not complacent bureaucrats, but rather people who “speak articulately to the realities of poverty and suffering, deal with race, displacement, and histories of underserved communities that do not leave people’s pain at the door” (2000, p. 259). What planning needs is people who care.

The desired outcome of more diversity in the profession is a “behavior of advocacy, a promotion of the just city,” says Thomas, “some will be more motivated in this direction than others,” (2008, p. 234). Thomas suggests that having direct representation brings useful skills, including a diverse body of culture, history, community, or sentiment that is critical to the agency of disadvantaged communities. She argues, “agency effectiveness could definitely be diminished if racial minorities were severely underrepresented in the profession” (2008, p. 234). Thomas conducted interviews with Black Michigan planners about how they saw their work benefiting communities of color and found that the planners saw themselves as “playing an important role in inclusion for minority-race or low-income communities… to defend the interests of disadvantaged communities within the agency and to serve as a bridge to link communication between urban communities and planning agencies” (Thomas 2008, pp. 237-238). One planner that she interviewed shared that White planners treated communities of color as uneducated relative to their expertise. “Without [the planner of color’s] presence as a minority planner, the casual dismissal of the minority-race representative’s opinion would go unchallenged” (Thomas 2008, p. 238). Thus, representation and visibility are both crucial in the profession for advocacy.

Of course, all planners should be working towards this desired outcome. Thomas acknowledges that it is not so much the race / ethnicity per se that is important as the planners’ orientation and skill set (Thomas 2008, p. 234). She nonetheless argues that visibility for representation still matters. Berman (1997), Merrifield (1997) and Soja (1997) amongst many, warn against a tendency to claim that reform is only possible by an exclusive group—that ‘just us’ can bring about positive social change. They argue that this narrative causes isolation and exclusion, and that Whites are a necessary part of the advocacy team for issues of communities of color. Similarly, Whites cannot bring about positive social change without the involvement of people of color. Ultimately, representation
and advocacy for communities of color is about enabling them to have agency and self-determination – some form of influence on the state and future of their livelihoods and quality of life.

Cultural Competency and Inclusive Spaces
The next major discourse around diversity is the need for greater cultural competency amongst planners in the profession to enable more inclusive cities. Sandercock in her book, *Towards Cosmopolis*, defines cultural competency as “the range of awareness, beliefs, knowledge, skills, behaviors and professional practices that will assist in planning for, in, and with ‘multiple publics’” (1998, p. 85-86). At the core of cultural competency is the recognition of difference. Young (1990) maintains that the recognition of difference should not lead to equality of treatment but rather to different treatment of groups based on the extent of their lack of privilege and power, as well as cultural needs. Sandercock argues that if the purpose of planning theory is to contribute to good practice, then the matter of difference must inform discussion within planning theory: “If we want to achieve social justice and respect for cultural diversity in multicultural cities, then we need to theorize a productive politics of difference. And if we want to foster a more democratic, inclusionary profession for planning, then we need to start listening to the voices of difference” (Sandercock 1998, p. 109).

Buyaridi (2000) also emphasizes that different people require different treatment. He articulates that a shift in thinking to reflect the needs of people in city design, services, and participatory process, alters the balance of power. Buyaridi calls for planners to expand the options for conflict mediation and address cultural misunderstandings in order for communities of all backgrounds to meaningfully participate. Day also calls for planners to “recognize cultural diversity as part of the basic make up of all cities and… develop participatory… planning methods that appropriately engage specific ‘politics’ and balance power among them” (2002, p. 92). Millroy asks whether redistributive justice is enough and states, “Resource distribution is just one fundamental dimension of the politics of urban life. The other is recognition” (2004, p. 48).

Most literature around cultural competency stems from other professions, including public administration, social work, and health. Racial diversity within governments benefit for communities of color by enabling greater access and better service results when served by a public sector which includes representatives of different racial groups (Sowa and Selden, 2003). Social work scholars explicitly determine that effective practitioners need to
understand oppression and value diversity by developing cultural competency. Such efforts could conceivably benefit from the presence in social work of professionals who already have facility with the culture experiencing oppression because of their personal backgrounds (p. 237). Other U.S. professions with ethical obligations such as healthcare (Betancourt, et al., 2003), education, and public administration (White, 2004) have recognized this. The National Association of Social Workers, which sets standards of practice, incorporates cultural competency practice objectives in its code of ethics and has developed an operational definition. In the health care system, culturally competent care has been defined as essential to rid of health disparities: “Given the strong evidence for socio-cultural barriers to care at multiple levels of the health care system, culturally competent care is a key cornerstone in efforts to eliminate racial/ethnic disparities in health and health care” (Betancourt et al., 2003, p. 299).

However, most of this discourse around the need for cultural understanding in the planning profession was limited to theory until the late 2000’s. Pestieau and Wallace (2003) wrote that there was a wide gap between planning theory and practice, arguing that there is literature of how urban planning should respond to ethno-cultural diversity, but far less literature on how the strategies have or can be implemented. Cultural competency began to be re-emphasized in the mid to late 2000’s, as the U.S. began to enter the illusion of a post-racial society. As the nation diversifies and recognition becomes more important, cultural competency is growing in popularity in the discourse around planning and diversity. Wood and Landry called schools and local authorities to “develop structures and processes that would enable them to translate, adopt, and adapt their existing practices to take account of the changing realities of their communities” (2007, p. 264). The idea reemerged that planners need to “become more aware of (inter)cultural dynamics and how their own conscious and unconscious assumptions, beliefs, knowledge, and desires affect their ability to listen well and understand other cultures” (Thomas et al., 2011, p. 2). Vazquez (2009) calls for “cultural diversity” to be reframed as “cultural competency,” establishing it as a knowledge base critical to a planning practitioner in the 21st century as part of urban design, demography, or qualitative research skills. Vazquez developed Principles of Cultural Competency in Planning and Placemaking (2009) and recognizes that the imperative towards cultural competency must be nurtured in both the individual and institutions.

Agyeman adds that a more different and diverse planning profession is necessary to “help speed the production, quality and maintenance of culturally inclusive spaces and places,
and critically, the *embedding* and ultimately the *mainstreaming of culturally inclusive practice* within those professions" (2012, par. 3). A more diverse profession representing the diversity of communities enables more inclusive spaces and processes, while enabling long-lasting and systemic equity and inclusivity by altering its institutional framework, rather than isolating its benefits to special cases. Agyeman argues that a mainstreaming of cultural competency is of crucial importance as planning and urban design professionals’ cultural awareness, beliefs, knowledge, skills, behaviors and professional practice *can* and *do* influence everything from the level and tone of outreach and representation at meetings, to the interpretation of codes and the content of reports (Harwood, 2005). They influence the design of public spaces (Kumar and Martin, 2004), and the land use regulations within a region (Lee, 2002) (all cited in Agyeman, 2012). Agyeman writes: “Until that mainstreaming happens, current professionals have an ethical duty to ensure that they embark on culturally inclusive practice where attention to difference and diversity is *intentional*, and represented throughout design and planning processes” (2012, par. 4).

Cultural competency ultimately requires diversity in the profession to ensure diverse and inclusive intercultural spaces. One of the key shifts that cultural competency advocates ask of the planning profession is to view difference as an asset rather than a problem. Buyaridi (2003) notes that multi-ethnocultural spaces in planning literature are often regarded as problems to be solved, following the focus of Modernist planning on technique, expertise, and problem solving. He argues that multiculturalism has become a way of managing it rather than celebrating it. He advocates for the promotion of inter-culturalism, which implies a deeper, pluralist transformation of society. Amin adds that inter-culturalism is “used to stress cultural dialogue, to contrast with versions of multi-culturalism that either stress cultural difference without resolving the problem of communication between cultures, or versions of cosmopolitanism that speculate on the gradual erosion of cultural difference through inter ethnic mixture and hybridization” (2002, p. 967). Bloomfield and Bianchini articulate that:

> The interculturalism approach goes beyond opportunities and respect for existing cultural differences, to the pluralist transformation of public space, civic culture and institutions. So it does not recognize cultural boundaries as fixed but as in a state of flux and remaking. An intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different cultural backgrounds. Cities need to develop policies, which prioritize funding for projects where different cultures intersect, “contaminate” each
other, and hybridize…. In other words, city governments should promote cross-fertilization across all cultural boundaries, between “majority” and “minorities”, “dominant” and “sub” cultures, localities, classes, faiths, disciplines and genres, as the source of cultural, social, political and economic innovation. (2002, p. 6)

Inter-culturalism ultimately calls for more inclusive planning, considering and meeting the needs of different groups in order to facilitate understanding and promote peaceful and equitable coexistence.

Adaptability and Evolution of the Planning as a Field of Study

Diversity is needed in order to advance our scholarship and knowledge as planners, as well as for the profession to innovate and evolve. Thomas argues, “Knowledge is not really objective or academically neutral; instead it reflects assumptions, biases, and culture of those who create it” (1996, p. 174). The diversity project is not just about going beyond the rational planning model, but achieving another state that has a vision of diverse classrooms, faculty, and learning, with curricula that reflect multicultural knowledge (Thomas, 1996, p. 177).

Why Is There Lack of Diversity in the Profession?

Barriers to Recruitment

Overall, institutional racism and systemic inequality have been defined as a general major barrier in recruitment of people of color and diverse ethnicities in the urban planning profession. These barriers include socioeconomic factors, which restrict entry of diverse groups as students, faculty, and thus professionals, and continue to perpetuate lack of diversity. Blanc (1992) writes that the educational gap is one of the causes for the lack of democratic discourses on urban issues: “Urbanism is perceived as a highly specialized and technical field the understanding of which is restricted to experts rather than as a field of political competition concerning people, neighbourhoods and communities, and life choices. But technical expertise is not enough to provide for good urban environment,” (Blanc, 1992, p. 319). The APA Diversity Taskforce (2004) noted that the lack of exposure to planning and its relevancy and impact on society, especially accompanied by the lack of outreach in minority communities, are key issues. The lack of social capital and networks exposed to planning perpetually isolate certain groups from exposure to the profession. This limited
outreach to communities of color, combined with the lack of training and educational opportunities geared to them, also limit entry into planning education.

Lack of student diversity in schools itself may discourage students from attending the schools. Ross (1990) recommended ten techniques to improve diversity in planning schools that might be needed to recruit and retain students and faculty. Some of these included financial and other support for individuals and networks, as well as targeted recruitment of people of color and women in traditional fields where they are concentrated. Hill argues that a lack of faculty of color detracts students from entering the fields. Hill encourages a joint effort by planning schools to recruit, train, and hire faculty of color, highlighting an assumption that there were not enough faculty of color (1990). The Task Force noted the importance of directing resources for urban planning programs to proactively recruit minority students and high schools and undergraduate institutions. For women’s entry, Leavitt pointed to lack of services and resources such as childcare that became obstacles to women’s entry more than other minorities (1983, p. 55). On top of the cost of attendance, standardized exams such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and AICP exam can be costly. Their structure is also often not often geared for minorities. According to a study conducted by the AICP in 2004, while in 2003 Whites passed exams at a rate of 65 percent, for participants of color, it was 35 percent, showing a clear gap. People of color in this case were racial groups clumped together, as not enough test takers were available to compare (as over 70 percent of test takers were White). The starkest contrast was that only 28 percent of Blacks that took the test passed. They noted 79 particular test items over six years that statistically favored certain groups, of which 28 items have been eliminated.

In addition to systemic constraints, the perception of the costs and benefits of a planning career may serve as deterrents to both recruitment and retention. The APA Diversity Task Force (2004) noted that not only is the cost to attend graduate school high, but there is also little opportunity for career advancement and high salary relative to other careers that are most commonly associated with social mobility, such as business, law, medicine, etc. Further, planning’s historically racist implications and its current lack of integration of social equity in planning theory and practice may cause a perceived racism that deters recruitment of people from more diverse backgrounds. People from more marginalized backgrounds might be turned away from these professions in order to avoid racism or tokenism in school or the workplace. The Task Force also noted several gaps in the activities of planning organizations such as the APA that might contribute to this perception. These include the
limited number of conferences or special events geared to people of color, the lack of partnerships among minority organizations or community development corporations (CDCs), and the insufficient coverage of topics such as environmental justice, gentrification, displacement, and impact of smart growth on urban areas in publications.

Barriers to Retention
Barriers in retention can be outlined in categories of workplace discrimination, lack of support for equity goals, and structural impediments that implicate what Nunez-Smith et al. (2007) call “racial fatigue,” born of persistent experiences of racial discrimination and distrust (cited in Thomas 2008, p. 239). Ensuring an inclusive and professional cooperative environment of learning that protects the rights of individuals and prevents an atmosphere of intimidation, invalidation, insult, or disrespect, is a crucial part of retention (Sweet 2010). The national APA Diversity Task Force also noted that a minority mentoring program for graduate students and young professionals is needed to navigate this (2004, Note 11). Sweet indicates, “When students and professors of color are subjected to hostile work and learning climates, their ability to excel is hindered, and the same limiting climate is reproduced in city planning departments and other planning agencies” (Sweet 2010, p. 235). Greenberg (2004) articulates them as challenges to diversity in the workplace, which include differing styles of communication, organizational resistance to change, lack of implementation of diversity in workplace policies, and unsuccessful management of diversity in the workplace. Differing communication from perceptual, cultural, and language diversity, can cause barriers to understanding and collaboration, and can also perpetuate stereotypes and discrimination if workers are not trained to both understand and embrace diversity.

Resistance to change is another, where employees might refuse to accept the fact that the social and cultural makeup of their workplace is changing. The “we’ve always done it this way” mentality silences new ideas and inhibits progress. Implementation of diversity policies in the workplace can be the overriding challenge, especially when there is a lack of data to support strategies. Lastly, successful management of diversity in the workplace is rare. Diversity training is not sufficient and must be accompanied with a strategy that creates a culture of diversity and anti-oppression (even if subtle) that permeates every department and function of the organization. Ways to address this include warring off resistance to change with inclusion, fostering an attitude of openness, promoting diversity in leadership positions (provides visibility and realizes the benefits of diversity in the workplace), providing diversity training.
In addition to workplace discrimination, a lack of support of equity goals in both the workplace and schools poses a barrier to retention of practitioners, faculty, and students of color. In interviews with planners of color, Thomas found that the planners claimed they entered the field highly motivated because of a perception of severe inequalities in their own communities. However, they did not feel supported by the planning agency or by their colleagues in their work for social equity (Thomas, 2008, pp. 241-242).

Herbert (1974) wrote that minorities can find themselves facing at least six key dilemmas in the workplace: 1) the workplace expects them to comply with official policies that conflict with goals of minority communities; 2) they are likely to be assigned to marginal job categories which deal with minority issues and resolution of issues difficult to achieve; 3) they experience pressure from colleagues to support organizational goals rather than community interests; 4) the minority community expects them to be accountable to that community in spite of work situation that demand accountability to the organization; 5) they may feel strong personal commitment to carry out policies of that community; but 6) feel pressure to ignore interests of the community in order to advance their personal careers (cited Murray et al., 1994).

In planning schools, Sweet writes, “For women and people of color, being on the frontlines of diversity pedagogy and curriculum has costs. Women and minorities, as exemplars as well as teachers of diversity, risk becoming targets in their teaching,” (2010, 234). Cordova (1997) described the “colonization of academia” and how it “fends off” women and people of color, especially women of color, from reaching positions of power. Cordova also warns that the voices of people of color need to be part of the academic agenda, as an unequal power structure can be created if theories in race and planning are appropriated by Whites. Of course, intertwined with all of the above are the complex intersectionalities with race / ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality. “The relationships and power hierarchies combine to create academic structures that obstruct diversity,” writes Sweet (2010, p. 234). Planning Scholars have not written much about intersectionalities, despite the fact that this needs to be explored more thoroughly (Cordova, 1997).

Lack of programs in planning schools that focus on issues of diversity also remains a barrier to retention. Sweet (2010) argues that since urban spaces are diverse by their very nature and its research, planning education should logically focus on issues of diversity. She
acknowledges that planning schools are training professional planners who will be helping to shape communities. “Surely then it is important to explore the realities and multiple tiers of diversity, or the lack of it, in planning educational environment” (Sweet, 2010, p. 235).

Even more challenging is that these structures of discrimination and shortsightedness to equity are currently operating under a supposed “post-race” context (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), whereby “Whites have developed powerful explanations—which have ultimately become justification—for contemporary racial inequality that exculpate them from any responsibility for the status of people of color” (p. 2). In practice, this has led to the greater challenge of including discussions of diversity in curricula and pedagogy. In personal conversations with planning faculty, Sweet describes that of 28 African American, 15 Latino, and two Native tenured or tenure track faculty among the 91 Accredited Planning schools in the U.S., 11 of them have not gotten tenure, been dismissed from consideration at the third-year review, or are enduring very difficult climates in which they do not expect to get tenure (Sweet, 2010, p. 235). She shares that subtle reasons are given for dismissal, such as teaching evaluations and low quality of peer reviewed published manuscripts, as forms of Bonilla-Silva’s “powerful explanations” for dismissal. The discrepancy between White planners and planners of color in tenure continue to perpetuate, as it is difficult to document incidences of faculty of color and women of color and their obstacles towards tenure.

**Literature Review Conclusion**

In the 1990’s, there was increased attention to the discourse about diversity in planning education and practice. However, political changes to the right and paradigm shifts towards a supposed post-racist and post-sexist society stalled that discourse (Sweet, 2010, p. 234) The framework of this discourse has also fallen short of including intersectionalities and exploring the barriers that hinder groups with multiple historically marginalized identities. There is literature of how urban planning should respond to ethno-cultural diversity, but there is far less literature that explains how these insights should be put into practices. Few have identified innovative strategies that practitioners have implemented. Many broad goal recommendations have been made, but few have identified next steps nor identified barriers to implementation of those recommendations. This study seeks to fill this gap in literature and make recommendations to implement successful diversity policies for the APA, for employers, and for schools in the New York Metro Area.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Over a period of one year, this project explored the status of diversity in the profession and the experiences of planners of color using these five main methodological approaches: 1) literature review and demographic research, 2) a metro-wide survey, 3) focus groups, 4) in-depth interviews, and 5) workshop-style brainstorming. It should be noted that the qualitative data from the surveys, interviews, and focus groups were coded into different categories, which were designed by identifying major themes and common responses found throughout the study. Recorded focus group conversations were not transcribed, but are available as audio files to reference and confirm notes.

Research Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2015 to April 2015</td>
<td>Literature review + study design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2015 to June 2015</td>
<td>Survey design + pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2015 to October 2015</td>
<td>Survey period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2015 to December 2015</td>
<td>Survey analysis + focus group design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2016 to March 2016</td>
<td>Focus groups and interviews + analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2016 to May 2016</td>
<td>Writing + final presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Literature Review and Demographic Research

A literature review was conducted to understand the relevance of diversity in the planning profession and identify the issues to explore through my survey, interviews, and focus groups. Studies previously conducted by the national APA Diversity Task Force and other groups have identified major barriers and recommended actions. An understanding of this is essential so as not to replicate them and their recommendations, but to contribute to new understandings and solutions relevant to today. I also conducted basic U.S. Census research on the demographics of the New York Metro area, focusing on overall racial demographic trends of residents and of residents that identified as planners as their occupation to compare with my survey sample.

A Metro-Wide Survey

The second research component of this study is a 22-question survey that was distributed online through Google Forms and distributed via email using professional, academic, and personal networks such as the APA’s New York Metro Chapter, local planning programs, their alumni newsletters, major planning firms in the area, local community development
corporations, public agencies, the Planner’s Network, and various Facebook groups with planning interest. I leveraged my planning networks in the public and non-profit sectors, and relied on personal contacts with close relationships with major partners and principals at local firms to reach the private sector. A pilot survey was distributed for feedback to 30 individuals of different sectors, races, genders, and levels of experience, and two more drafts were created to incorporate feedback. The final survey ran for four months from July through October and collected 303 respondents – equivalent to about a quarter to a third of the number of people that the U.S. Census Bureau estimated were working as “urban and regional planners” in the New York-New Jersey-Pennsylvania (NY-NJ-PA) Metropolitan Statistical Area in 2006-2010.\(^5\) The survey, found in Appendix B, asked basic demographic questions, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, sexual-orientation; where respondents worked, their position level, range of opportunities, professional memberships; and how they were first exposed to planning as a profession. They were also asked to rank their sense of belonging, sense of inequitable expectations, and experiences of racial and gender discrimination in the workplace. Salary was not inquired. The survey also inquired if participants were interested in participating in a specific focus group or interview. In developing the questions to explore, I consulted Leo Vazquez who conducted the previous study, as well as the national APA Diversity Task Force.

A codebook was created to reorganize responses for statistical analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted, primarily using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to look for statistical significance. Crosstabs were run particularly across race/ethnicity and gender to identify difference, correlation, and for some, significance in responses using the Pearson’s Chi-Square, Phi Coefficient, and Mann-Whitney U:

\( \text{Pearson’s Chi-Square (X^2)} \) is a “goodness of fit” test of association between variables, comparing actual observations to expected observations. Chi-Square measures the likelihood that dissimilarity between the observed and expected occurred by chance. Statistical significance was determined using a critical value threshold at \( p=0.05 \) or less.

\(^5\) The numbers provided by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2006-2010 are round five-year estimates. Although this geography most closely matches the NY Metro Chapter boundaries, the estimates are higher because the geography includes parts of northern New Jersey and Pennsylvania that is not part of the NY Metro Area.
Phi Coefficient uses the Chi-square value and measures the strength of association for nominal data sets from a scale of 0-1, where 0 signifies no association and 1, perfect association.

Mann-Whitney U is a non-parametric alternative to the t-test for independent samples that more accurately predicts than Chi-square by taking into account the ordinal status of the dependent variables. It examines whether the observed association between independent and dependent variables in a sample could have arisen by chance, and predicts whether the observed differences in the sample exists in the larger population. The Mann-Whitney is used to measure ordinal dependent variables and tests the difference between the median scores on the ranking of the dependent variable for each independent variable group. This was used primarily for the attitudes around inclusiveness in the workplace. The Mann-Whitney U test also assumes that variables are independent of one another, a randomized sample, and dichotomous independent variables. Statistical significance was determined using a critical value threshold at p=.05 or less. The Z value helps to guide to find statistical significance, where when divided into the square root of the number of cases, reveals an r value that indicates strength of effect. R values greater than 0.5 indicate a strong effect, while values less than indicate small, medium, to moderate effects.

The survey also gathered qualitative data through open-ended questions inquiring to how diversity is experienced in the workplace, how participants were first exposed to planning, and additional comments or feedback. Qualitative responses were coded and analyzed similarly to the interviews and focus groups.
Focus Groups
A pilot focus group was run in 2015 with recent alumni of Pratt Institute to inform the design of following focus groups in the study. Following the trial focus group and revisions to the methodology of the focus groups, ten focus groups were conducted. Eight were with planners of color working in different sectors and of different backgrounds, in order to identify possible next steps for implementing solutions to overcome barriers to recruitment and retention of diversity in planning. Focus groups targeted specific racial / ethnic groups with various intersectionalities of gender, and sexual orientation:

- Planners of color in the public sector
- Planners of color in the nonprofit sector
- Planners of color in the private sector
- Blacks in planning
- Asian Americans in planning
- Latino/as in planning
- Women of color in planning
- Queer planners of color

Each group comprised of three to seven people in size, including myself as the facilitator. Orchestration of focus group participants was purposive, selecting from the pool of survey participants that expressed interested in being part of a focus group, as well as a few individuals whom I knew personally and/or professionally that may not have taken the survey but had expressed interest in participating.

All participants were planners of color in these eight workshops. I assigned individuals to particular groups based on their interest identified in the survey (by sector, gender, or race/ethnicity-based group), and aimed for a variety in position levels, age, and intersectional identities within each; though last minute schedule changes, sickness, and cancellations limited the ability to diversify some sessions. Because the concept of diversity is so broad and the field of urban planning so multidisciplinary, planners of color can experience their identities in many different ways depending on their field, sector, gender identity, race/ethnicity, age, and other intersecting identities. Thus, the focus groups were not mutually exclusive, as topics were designed to bring people together who might share common experiences in at least two layers. (See Appendix C for description of participants.)
In addition to these nine focus groups with people of color, a ninth focus group was with *White allies in planning* group – a carefully selected group of White planners that I personally knew who were advocates for social justice. The term “allies” implies someone that is in solidarity and action in pursuit of social justice for a particular group, though not necessarily belonging to that group. This focus group explored why race may be challenging to discuss for Whites, what makes people withdraw, and how to bridge the gap between withdrawal and proactive solidarity.

The tenth and final focus group brought together original members of the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee of the APA’s local New York Metro Chapter. Its purpose was to gather reflections from longer-time planners of color on how things may or may not have changed since in the last two decades.

Focus groups were held at a New York City government office at 100 Gold Street in a conference room after work hours; snacks and refreshments were provided. As facilitator, I helped set the context, aimed to build trust and relationships between participants, and asked follow up questions for clarification.

Each focus group discussion was similarly structured. I began by sharing the survey results with additional information related to the focus group theme. I introduced the focus group goals and noted on the confidentiality of the conversation and protection of participants’ identities. I next asked the participants to introduce themselves, share where they worked and how they got there, and suggest one item that they hoped to discuss in the focus group. I then asked a series of structured questions around 1) how they each experienced their identity as a planner - both in challenges and assets, and 2) what they thought the major barriers to recruitment and retention of planners of color were and 3) what they think needs to be done. I also asked questions related to their reflections and responses to the data related to their specific focus group theme. Participants were free to take turns in responding and ask each other follow up questions. As a facilitator, I also tried to encourage those speaking less to speak up and those with lots to share to make room for the quieter ones. I focused on capturing the language, narrative, framing of experiences and relationships amongst participants, as well as how intersectional identities and different experiences may inform individual perspectives and influence group dynamics.
Focus groups were recorded upon receiving verbal permission from each of the participants. Notes were taken by hand, retyped, and coded. In this study, quotes from participants will only be attributed to their focus group to maintain anonymity and protect individual identities. Altogether, 49 people participated in the ten focus group meetings, excluding myself.

**In-Depth Interviews**

Eleven (11) in-depth interviews were conducted with five employers and managers representing the private, public, and non-profit sectors, as well as five planners of color representing diverse races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations. One additional informal conversation was conducted with a *White ally* who was not able to attend the focus group. Interviewees were identified through the survey among those who indicated interest in being interviewed, as well as other planners of color in personal or professional circles who have expressed interest in sharing their experiences for the study. A majority of the interviewees were also planners of color of various backgrounds, with the exception of two employers and one *White ally* planner. (See Appendix C for description of interviewees.) All interviews began with an explanation of my study as well as a promise of confidentiality of conversation and protection of their identity.

The five interviews for employers and managers focused on: 1) how they articulated the importance of diversity, 2) their experience with recruitment of planners of color, and 3) strategies (or lack thereof) to recruit and retain planners of color not only in entry-level positions but also leadership positions. These interviews also became informational for employers with whom I shared some of my findings and preliminary recommendations. Interviews with the other planners of intersectional identities were structured similarly to the focus groups, but with an opportunity to go more in depth with personal experiences.

Four personal interviews ran for about one hour each, and were conducted over the phone or in person. Two were informal personal conversations I had with friends, who were also planners, discussing common themes I had learned from focus group sessions. Conversations were not recorded but I took notes in my field journal on responses and major themes. To maintain and protect identities, I have omitted each interviewee’s name and refer to them as lettered planners (e.g., “Planner A” or “Employer A”). These interviews became therapeutic sessions for many planners of color who felt they did not have space or others to talk with in the profession regarding these issues.
Workshop
Lastly, I co-organized a forum on diversity for planning schools. Collaborating with the local APA New York Metro Chapter School Relations Committee and other members of the Diversity Committee, which I co-chaired at the time, we organized a forum and invited administrators, students, and faculty on April 15, 2016 to discuss strategies to overcome barriers to diversity in planning schools. Approximately 45 participants attended, including 23 students, 12 faculty, and ten other professionals from across the city, representing all five accredited schools in the New York Metro Area and more.

After a keynote introduction and context-setting for the evening, participants broke out into small groups and were asked to identify the main challenges under their specified topic of diversity in planning and propose an initiative or solution together. The selected topics included student recruitment, student support and retention, faculty recruitment and support, and curriculum development. Notes were taken in each small group and I reviewed and incorporated main suggestions into the recommendations section. Due to the timing of the workshop and the structured scope and timeline of this study, limited analysis was conducted on the recommendations for schools. Diversity in planning schools, including student and faculty experiences, may merit a separate study.

Reflections: The Impact of Researcher’s Intersecting Identities

Much of the background information that informed my research questions and framework analysis was based on my personal experiences as a young, queer, first generation immigrant, South-East-Asian-American woman that grew up in a working-class community in a Northeastern American city, as well as my professional experiences as an entry-level neighborhood planner in the public sector. Though my layers of non-dominant identity may have enabled me to be more conscious of the role of race, ethnicity, gender, generation, age, and class, I ultimately still hold many privileges that may have limited my perspective—I have medium to light-brown skin (depending on the season), a university-level education, am able-bodied, etc. I tried my best to be aware of my own personal biases and assumptions and carried with me the mindset of deeply listening, learning, and inquiring.

The fact that I am a person of color most likely impacted the comfort in interviewees in responding about race—easier for people of color and perhaps more difficult for White interviewees who may have been more cautious to not offend me. I probably helped in the
comfort level of White participants interviewed that I have personal relationships with all but one. In conversations with Whites, perhaps my identity as Asian rather than Black may have helped Whites feel more comfortable discussing race. On the surface, I am more removed from the perceived sensitivity and racial baggage between Blacks and Whites in the U.S. On the other hand, the notion of some Asians as the “model minority” in the U.S. and its association with Whiteness may or may not have affected the comfort level of people of color of more historically marginalized racial groups to fully share with me. To confront this and clarify my non-association with Whiteness, I made an effort to emphasize through introductions of the study my commitment to social justice, particularly centering the experiences of Blacks and Browns who are the most marginalized in the racial structure of the U.S.

I also found it necessary to clarify my working class upbringing to share my deep empathy with those few who came from and/or represent the struggle of working class communities. In the focus groups and interviews, I attempted to focus on questions of participants’ experiences and validate their responses through sharing similar experiences either in my own life or experiences heard in other focus groups. This openness, relationship-building, willingness to be vulnerable myself, and validation / sharing of empathy seemed to help in people’s process of reflecting during interviews. It was important for me to form my research questions into something that would be beneficial and usable for not only employers / managers, planning institutions, and planning schools, but also for larger communities of color. For the participants themselves, they expressed that the focus groups and interviews have been “therapeutic” particularly to share their experiences, express frustrations, and meet others who share similar experiences.

It is important to emphasize again the limitations of this study, not only in its pool of survey respondents and the sample of focus group and interview participants, but because of how my personal experiences and privileges may have informed my analysis of the data, especially the qualitative interviews. Nevertheless, the findings still provide insight into the many shifts that need to occur to achieve better opportunities for planners of color.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS & ANALYSIS – SURVEY TRENDS – TABLES & FIGURES

This chapter summarizes some of the main findings around the state and experience of race (and gender) in the profession from the Diversity in Planning 2015 survey, with supplemental demographic and economic research from the U.S. Census Bureau. The findings are categorized in five parts: 1) demographic trends in the New York Metro Area, 2) demographic overview in the survey sample, 3) growth and opportunity in different sectors, 4) attitudes around diversity and inclusivity in the workplace, and 5) means of exposure to the planning profession. (Refer to Appendix A for tabulation of the figures below.)

Demographic Trends of Planners in the New York Metro Area

Still Lagging Behind: racial diversity in the planning profession has not changed much in the last decade and remains largely White. According to the U.S. Census, while Whites make up only 45 percent of the population in the NY Metro Area and only 33 percent in New York City, they make up 71 percent of estimated urban and regional planners who work in the NY-NJ-PA Metro Area (Table 1). Planning has a greater percentage of Whites than in the fields of Architecture (70 percent), Engineering (57 percent), and Social Work (42 percent) (refer to Table 2). These figures have not changed much since 1990, when 78 percent of planners in the NY Metro Area were White.

As predicted by the APA New York Metro Chapter’s 2001 study, Asian Americans continue to be the fastest growing segment in the planning population in the New York area. Asian Americans made up 3 percent of planners in 1990 and tripled up to 10 percent in 2010 estimates. The greater representation of Asians in local planning schools in the area also indicates its continued growth into the future. The proportion of Latino/as and Blacks, on the other hand, remained relatively unchanged (Table 1).

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6 While the survey sample serves as the main source of findings and results where somewhat similar, I defer to the Census for larger estimates on race to describe representation differences in comparison with the New York Metro Area larger population. The survey’s marketed focus on diversity as well as my own personal networks of planners of color may have drawn a larger response from planners of color in the area and inflated the proportions.

7 Of about 1,250 “urban and regional planners” estimated by the U.S. Census working in the NY-NJ-PA metropolitan / micro statistical area which includes New York-Northern New Jersey, Long Island, and small part of Pennsylvania. This geography most closely approximates the geography defined as the “NY Metro Chapter Area” (NYC, Long Island, and counties East and West of the Hudson) by the APA as part of this and pervious studies (2000). The most recent data available on race and the urban and regional planning profession tabulated by the EEO for this geography is from the ACS 2006-2010.
As the region diversifies, the planning profession is becoming less representative of the New York Metro Area, with an overwhelming overrepresentation of Whites. While it seems the percentage of White planners is slowly decreasing, the proportion of people of color living in the New York Metro Area has grown significantly since 1990, from 42 percent of the population to 55 percent in 2014, and up to 67 percent in New York City. Twenty-five (25) years ago, Whites were overrepresented in planning by 19 percentage points, but today, they are overrepresented by 26 percentage points (see Table 1). Hypothetically speaking, one in every four White planners would need to be replaced by a planner of color in order to be more racially representative of the region.

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Hispanic/ Latino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Total Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Planners in the NY Metro Chapter Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation Gap a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
<td>-9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>-8.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2014</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>-4.8</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-17.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


a. Exhibits the over or under representation of each group based on expected rates (overall population distribution). A number in negative exhibits underrepresentation within the NY Metro Chapter Area.

Latino/as and Blacks remain the most underrepresented racial group in planning relative to their demographic proportions in the overall area, and the gap for Latino/as continues to widen. While Blacks are underrepresented by 5 percentage points, the gap for Latino/as is 18 percentage points (Table 1). The representation gap for Blacks has marginally improved, shrinking from 7 percentage points difference to 5; however, this largely reflects the overall decrease in the proportion of Blacks in the New York Metro Area—many who have moved to the South or perhaps have been displaced from gentrifying neighborhoods in the city. With national predictions on the continuing growth of Latino/a population across the country,

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8 According to the 2010 Census, about 17 percent of Blacks who moved to the South in the last decade left New York State, particularly from NYC, far more than any other state (Tavernise and Gabeloff 2011).
and the New York Metro Area serving as one of the central hubs for immigration of Latino/as (Cárdenas and Kerby, 2012), this gap will only widen without significant efforts to better recruit Latino/as in the profession.

When interviewees were asked about the reason for this gap, they attributed it to the fact that there are potentially more Blacks and Latino/as working in the community development sphere that may not consider themselves planners. Some also attributed it to the rapid increase in Latino/as and especially first generation immigrants more likely to choose professions other than planning. However, the Asian population also has a high number of foreign born and have increased at a significantly more rapid pace, but have significantly better racial representation in the profession.

The major part of this gap is likely due to economic injustice, particularly in the gap of educational attainment for Latino/as and Blacks. While there have been double-digit improvements for kindergarten-through-12th grade (K-12) performance on tests for Latino/a students, as well as improvements in college enrollment rates, there are still many barriers in access to education for these groups (Azziz, 2016). They are more often concentrated in schools with high degrees of poverty and neighborhoods with poor health outcomes and services. Latino/a and Black school drop-out and late graduation rates remain higher than other groups. They have lower mean test scores and a lower percentage of students in graduate programs (Santiago et al., 2015). See below for deeper analysis on opportunities for Blacks and Latino/as in different sectors.

Table 2. Race and Ethnicity In Planning Compared to Other Related Professions in the Worksite of New York-New Jersey-Pennsylvania Metro Area, 2006-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban &amp; Regional Planning</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY Metro Population</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


9 In my survey outreach, I welcomed anyone that did planning and/or community development work to respond.
The pipeline for planners is also not very diverse, and Whites still make up the majority of students and faculty. According to the 2014 Planetizen Guide, Whites make up more than two thirds of the total students in the New York Metro Area accredited planning schools. Compare this number to 62 percent in 1998 reported by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP, 2000). About 81 percent of faculty are also White, predominately White and male. While 52 percent of students in the area are female, only 35 percent of faculty members are female. Black and Latino/a students in particular are not well represented.

Table 3
Race, Ethnicity, and Gender of Students And Faculty in the Five Accredited Programs in the New York Metro Chapter\(^a\) Compared to the Area’s Planners and the Overall Population, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Urban Planners</th>
<th>General Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/ Latino</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>13.5 mil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^a\)Accredited programs include Pratt, NYU, Hunter (CUNY), Columbia, and Rutgers. Domestic students only.

Demographic Overview of the Survey Sample

To more deeply understand diversity across sectors and race’s intersection with gender and other forms of identity, it is necessary to analyze data from the Diversity in Planning Survey conducted between July and October 2015. In total there were 303 respondents to the survey, approximately one quarter to one third of the ACS 2006-2010 estimated total planners in the NY-NJ-PA Metro Area\(^{10}\).

The sample attracted a slightly higher proportion of people of color than the U.S. Census estimates. In this sample, 66 percent of respondents were White, and 33 percent were

\(^{10}\) The U.S. Census estimated 1,250 planners in the NY-NJ-PA Metro Area, which is unclear exactly how they defined who were planners. This number probably overinflates the real number of planners in the NY Metro Chapter area, as the NY-NJ-PA Micro-statistical Area geography is larger than that of the study area and includes parts of NJ and PA.
planners of color (see Figure 1), including 3 greater percentage points of Asians, more people that identified as mixed, and fewer Blacks compared to the (ACS) 2006-2010 estimates (see Table 4). The ACS estimated 71 percent White and 29 percent planners of color, but did not take into account potential number of mixed-race planners. The ACS estimates also look at a geography that include northern New Jersey and parts of Pennsylvania not considered in the sample, which may have greater percentages of Black planners and thus inflated these numbers. The survey sample also attracted a greater percentage of female planners (52 percent, compared to 48 percent estimated by the U.S. Census).

**Figure 1.**

**Race / Ethnicity of Planners in the NY Metro Area**

*Diversity in Planning Survey 2015*

![Pie chart showing race/ethnicity distribution]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race / Ethnicity</th>
<th>2015 Survey Sample (in NY Metro Area)</th>
<th>ACS '06-10 EEO Tabulation Estimates (in NY-NJ-PA Metro)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH White</td>
<td>200 (66.0%)</td>
<td>890 (71.20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>31 (10.2%)</td>
<td>160 (12.80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Asian, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>38 (12.5%)</td>
<td>120 (9.60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Latino, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>22 (7.3%)</td>
<td>50 (6.80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Mixed</td>
<td>156 (51.8%)</td>
<td>600 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Latino/a</td>
<td>1,250 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>2015 Survey Sample</th>
<th>ACS '06-10 EEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH White</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>71.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Asian, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Latino/a</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>6.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Mixed</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Latino/a</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a. Eight planners of Latino/a ethnicity, or approximately three percentage points in the 2015 sample identified as White. One planner of Latino ethnicity identified as Black.*
Within the racial diversity of planners, there exists immense ethnic diversity as well, but still not representative of some major groups. Outside of European mixes, Jewish make up the second largest ethnic group amongst planners in the New York Metro Area (Figure 2). The third largest ethnic group is Latino/as, predominately Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Mexican mixes, followed by East Asians, particularly Chinese and Korean Americans. African Americans, Caribbean / West Indians, and South Asians make up the next largest groups. Still, other major ethnic groups and quickly growing populations in the New York region, such as South American, Middle Eastern, Central / South Asian, and South East Asians are underrepresented.

Figure 2.

Major Ethnicities of Planners in the New York Metro Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Mix</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic / Latino</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asian</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asian</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean / West Indian</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix or Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East Asian</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, there are slightly more female than male planners, and planners of color were more likely to be female, while White planners were more likely to be male. While gender distribution for Blacks and Latino/as closely matched that of the overall sample (52 to 48 female to male ratio), the survey shows a predominance of White males and a significant gap in Asian males (see Figure 3). About 54 percent of the Whites that responded to the survey question were male, of which one in five had over 20 years of experience in the profession--reflecting the legacy of White male planners. Of a sample size of 39 Asian planners, only 6 individuals, or 16 percent, were male.

In interviews and focus groups, planners of color confirmed the predominance of female Asian planners compared to male Asian planners. Participants of the Asian Americans in Planning focus group theorized that this gap may be a product of greater cultural pressures for Asian males than Asian females to pursue higher paying and higher status careers.

Statistically significant at $p = .006$
While more research would be needed to test this hypothesis. Compare this to the career of Architecture, which, though allied to planning, enjoys higher status and peak incomes than planning: and of the total number, 17 percent are Asian, with 10 percent men and 7 percent women (See Table 2 on page 30).

**Figure 3.**

**Race Among Male vs. Female Planners**

*Diversity in Planning Survey 2015*

Within the sample, the planning profession has apparently attracted gay men of all age groups, most of whom are White. Almost one in every five men in the survey identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ), compared to less than one in eight women. Interviewees stipulated that there are probably significantly more. A total of 51 individuals in the overall sample (17 percent) identified as LGBTQ, of which White men made up 42 percent (Figure 4). Asian women and mixed-race men made up the largest groups of queer planners of color. Women identified in more diverse and fluid terms to describe their sexual orientation compared to men. While 94 percent of the men identified as “Gay,” 33 percent of women identified as “Queer,” 27 percent as “Bisexual,” and 22 percent as “Lesbian.” This difference in identification could also be attributed to intersectional privilege. In revealing your sexuality, White gay men can still fall on the privilege of being White and male, whereas other groups with intersecting marginalized identities may be less willing to name and assert or even have fewer opportunities to explore their identities without more severe social out-casting. Further study is needed to explore these trends.
Growth and Opportunity in Different Sectors

The private sector continues to be the least diverse in both race and gender, with severe underrepresentation of Blacks. Approximately 80 percent of private sector planners are White (about two thirds of which are White men), compared to 63 percent in the public sector, and 49 percent in the non-profit sector\(^\text{12}\) (see Figure 5). Diversity figures for the private sector remain largely unchanged in the last fifteen years, while the public and non-profit sectors diversified with about 7 to 12 percentage points increase in planners of color – mostly as a result of increase in Asians in the public and non-profit sectors (see Table 5). Blacks in particular remain severely underrepresented. While Blacks make up 18 percent of the NY Metro Area population, they make up only 2 percent of planners in the private sector (compared to 8 percent Asian and 7 percent Latino/a). Latino/as in the private sector in the survey sample are mostly White or mixed-race. This gap raises the question again of whether it is a product of self-selection and/or other barriers and covert discrimination that have resulted systemic exclusion of darker skinned planners from the sector. (See Barriers to Recruitment section for discussion on “Whiteness” in the private sector.)

\(^{12}\) The difference between Whites and Planners of Color in the non-profit and private sector is statistically significant at \(p = .001\)
Table 5.
Changes in Race in Planning by Sector in the New York Metro Chapter Area, 2000 and 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>% of Private</th>
<th>% of Public</th>
<th>% of Non-Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White 2000</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White 2015</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| White | % point change | -7 | -2 | -9 | -12 |
| Black | | 0 | -1 | 0 | -4 |
| Asian | | 4 | -1 | 6 | 9 |
| Latino/a | | 1 | 3 | -1 | 7 |

Source: Diversity Survey 2000; Diversity in Planning Survey 2015

While men dominate the private sector (two thirds are male), while women dominate the public and non-profit sectors (see Figure 6).
People of color are more likely to advance in the public sector compared to other sectors, though Latino/as are overall still severely underrepresented in this sector. About 40 percent of planners of color that hold senior-level positions can be found in the public sector. Of planners of color in the public sector, about a quarter are in senior level positions – just a little less compared to their White peers. While this has helped the advancement of Black and Asian planners, there still remains a significant representation gap of Latino/as in the public sector. Latino/as make up about a quarter of the NY Metro area population, but only 5 percent of public sector planners. Latino/as are most likely to be found in the nonprofit sector (see Figure 7). The sample size was very small for Latino/as in general in the overall sample (25 in total) and may also be a sampling error.

Returning to the discussion of economic justice and educational attainment gaps in Black and Latina neighborhoods, it might be expected that there are similar percentages of Blacks and Latino/as in the public sector, but the gap is significant at 12 percent versus 5 percent. The lower rate of Latino/as relative to Blacks in the public sector may actually illustrate the success of the more proactive efforts to recruit Blacks into the public sector in the past. There may be more reason to conduct further study on this with a larger sample.
Whites in the sample are more likely to hold senior level positions, especially compared to Blacks. While Whites make up 66 percent of the overall sample, they make up 72 percent of the respondents that held senior-level positions. Of respondents of color, 25 percent were in senior-level positions, compared to 34 percent of Whites (Figure 8). Planners of color were more likely to hold entry-level positions at 35 percent, compared to 21 percent of Whites. Interviews validated that many planners of color were stuck at mid-level positions and were under-promoted compared to Whites. However, there was not enough data to analyze proportions that were in senior-level positions, controlling for similar position levels across race.

Figure 8.

Position Levels of Planners by Race

Men dominate those that are in senior-level positions, and women are more likely to be stuck in mid level. Of those in senior level positions in the sample, 58 percent are men. Ten percent more men were in senior-level positions compared to women (see Figure 9). For planners with 6 to 20 years of experience, 55 percent of men were in senior-level positions, compared to only 48 percent of women. About 52 percent of these women were stuck at mid-level, compared to only 44 percent of men.

Figure 9.

Position Levels by Gender

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13 Difference between Blacks and Whites in position level were statistically significant at $p = .047$. 
Blacks are least likely to be in positions that allow them to solicit projects, manage different projects in various types of neighborhoods, represent the organization, and make decisions on hiring. When asked which of the aforementioned “major responsibilities” do respondents’ positions allow them to do, 26 percent of Blacks reported that their positions did not allow them to do any of the above, compared to only 10 percent of Asians and 9 percent of Whites (Figure 10). Seventy-two (72) percent of Whites checked at least two, whereas only 61 percent of Asians and 45 percent of Blacks did the same (see Figure 11). Differences between could be attributed to position level differences, as there are a significant number of Whites with more than 20 years of experience compared to Blacks and Asians, where the majority had less than five years of experience (see Figure 12). However, though Blacks and Asians were similar in their distribution of years of experience in the profession, and their answers to what their positions allowed them to do were very different (see Figures 10 and 11). This data could be evidence to interviewees’ observations that many Blacks are stuck in mid-level work.
More women reported they were not in positions that enabled them to do the above activities, at 12 percent versus 8 percent for men. This figure could reflect a younger female demographic of female compared to male planners (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13.**

*Years of Experience of Planners by Gender*

*Diversity in Planning Survey 2015*

As planners age, they are more likely to shift from the public into the private sector, and eventually the academic sector. Half of the youngest cohort considered (26-30 years) are in the public sector, a quarter in nonprofit, and another quarter in the private sector. Almost half of the next cohort (31-50 years) can still be found in the public sector, but one third is in the private sector. Half of the middle-aged cohort (51-65 years) are in the private sector, and half of the oldest cohort (65+ years) have landed in the academic sector. Interviewees also confirmed this trend in shifting sectors in search for greater opportunities. There is a limit to advancement in the public sector, and private sectors tend to be higher paying than other sectors.

White planners are more likely to hold institutional memberships and thus better network connections, compared to planners of color\(^{14}\). About 81 percent of Whites in the survey held some kind of membership, such as APA, AICP, Urban Land Institute, or Planner’s Network, compared to less than 68 percent of planners of color in the survey\(^ {15}\). Blacks in particular lack affiliation—only 58 percent of respondents that had some kind of membership, compared to 72 percent of Latino/as and 69 percent of Asians (see Figure 14). Women are also slightly less likely to hold membership than men. Interviewees attributed this largely to costs and questioned the value added of costly membership and were deterred from the

\(^{14}\) Statistically significant at p = .01

\(^{15}\) This number probably overinflates the real number of planners of color in the area with membership, as this survey was distributed through these networks, particularly the APA.
“Whiteness” of the institutions as well. (Refer to Chapter V, Section 5 on “Radiating Whiteness.”)

Figure 14.

**APA, AICP, ULI or Other Membership by Race and Gender**

*Diversity in Planning Survey 2015*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH White (200)</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Black (31)</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Asian (39)</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic / Latino (25)</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (144)</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (156)</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attitudes Around Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace**

Planners of color feel less of a sense of acceptance and belonging compared to Whites\(^{16}\). When asked if planners felt a sense of belonging in their workplace, overall, 51 percent strongly agreed, but Whites felt a higher sense of belonging than planners of color, with a mean of 4.47, compared to 4.09 for planners of color (5 = strongly agree). Latino/as and Asians in particular disagreed or strongly disagreed, at 13 to 25 percent, compared to 3 and 6 percent for Whites and Blacks (see Figure 15).

Figure 15.

**Q12a. "I feel acceptance and belonging."**

*Disagree or Strongly Disagree*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH White (200)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Black (31)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Asian (39)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic / Latino (25)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (144)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (156)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Whites are more likely to agree that their work environments fostered diversity, inclusion, and opportunity, planners of color are four times more likely to disagree\(^{17}\). Overall, respondents mostly agreed (44 percent) that they work in diverse and inclusive

---

\(^{16}\) Statistically significant at \(p = .00\) showing a medium effect.

\(^{17}\) Statistically significant at \(p = .05\) showing a small effect.
environments, about 70 percent of Whites and 60 percent of people of color. However, the number of people of color who responded with “Strongly Disagree” was four times greater than Whites. Blacks and Asians in particular strongly disagreed that their work environments fostered diversity and inclusion (see Figure 16). Women were also twice as much more likely to disagree than men.

Figure 16.

Q12b. "I feel I work in a diverse environment that fosters inclusion and opportunity."
Disagree or Strongly Disagree

People of color\textsuperscript{18} and women regardless of race\textsuperscript{19}, are more likely to feel that making a mistake at work would be attributed to their identity. While respondents generally agreed that making a mistake would not be attributed to their identity, the proportion of people of color to disagree or strongly disagree was five times greater than that of Whites. Blacks and Asians in particular felt vulnerable, where almost one in five Blacks and one in eight Asians felt that mistakes would be attributed to their identity (see Figure 17). The number of women to disagree or strongly disagree is almost twice that of men regardless of race, and this effect of gender is statistically slightly stronger than race.

Figure 17.

Q12c. "I feel I can make a mistake and it would not be attributed as a reflection of my race, gender, sexual orientation, or other part of my identity."
Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Blacks experience severe racial fatigue more than any other group. About 32 percent of Blacks in the sample reported persistent experiences of disrespect, invalidation, or

\textsuperscript{18} Statistically significant at p = .000 showing a medium effect.

\textsuperscript{19} Statistically significant at p = .000 showing a medium to moderate effect.
discrimination due to race or ethnicity, compared to only 8 percent and 12 percent for Asians and mixed-race individuals, and only 3 percent of Whites (see Figure 18). Overall, Planers of color were five times\textsuperscript{20} more likely to agree or strongly agree that they experience racial fatigue, and women also report experiencing more racial fatigue than men\textsuperscript{21}. Only 30 percent of planners of color could say the same. The mean score for planners of color in experiencing racial fatigue is 4.52, compared to 3.75 for Whites (5 = strongly agree). This is the most significant gap in score compared to all seven survey questions about attitudes of inclusion in the work place.

**Figure 18.**

**Q12d. "I feel I experience 'racial fatigue' at work."**

Women of color are more likely to experience both racial and gender fatigue, compared to their White and male counterparts. About 20 percent of women of color report racial fatigue, compared to only 8 percent of their male counterparts (Figure 19). About 34 percent of women of color reported experiencing gender fatigue compared to only 25 percent of their White counterparts (see Figure 20). Being both a person of color and woman seems to intensify the burden of both types of discrimination.

**Figure 19.**

**Q12d. Planners of Color: "Do you experience racial fatigue?"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree to Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree or Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial or Mixed Race</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 20.**

**Q12e. Female Planners: "Do you experience gender fatigue?"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree or Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Women</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women of Color</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{20} Statistically significant at p = .000 showing a moderate effect.

\textsuperscript{21} Statistically significant at p = .01 showing a small to medium effect.
Planners are more likely to witness gender than racial discrimination in the workplace, and a higher proportion of those are planners of color (see Figures 21 and 22). While 78 percent of the overall sample disagreed or strongly disagreed that they witnessed racial discrimination, only 71 percent could say the same about gender discrimination. Higher rates of Hispanics and Asians witnessed gender discrimination compared to other racial groups. Women were significantly more likely than men to identify racial discrimination. These figures suggest that gender discrimination happens more often than racial discrimination, or illustrate the more challenging ways of identifying racism due to the more covert ways in which discrimination around race occurs.

Higher rates of Blacks and Latino/as report witnessing racial discrimination in the workplace, compared to Asians. In fact, data shows that Asians do not witness much racial discrimination in the workplace on themselves or colleagues. Only 5 percent reported witnessing discrimination, compared to 16 percent for Blacks and Latino/as (see Figure 21). Compare this 5 percent figure to the 21 percent of Asians that report witnessing gender discrimination (see Figure 22). In interviews, many Asian women reported being unsure if some overt forms of discrimination were based on their race, gender, or age, and most attributed it to gender before race. The “model minority” stereotype for Asians has also privileged the group around attitudes about Asians in work competency, compared to dominant stereotypes of Blacks and Latino/as (Wu, 2002).

**Figure 21.**

**Q12f. "I often witness forms of discrimination / disrespect against my colleagues because of their race or ethnicity."**

**Agree or Strongly Agree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH White (198)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Black (31)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Asian (37)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic / Latino (25)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (144)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (152)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 22.

Q12g. "I often witness forms of discrimination / disrespect against my colleagues because of their gender or sexuality."

Agree or Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White (195)</th>
<th>NH Black (31)</th>
<th>NH Asian (38)</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino (25)</th>
<th>Male (143)</th>
<th>Female (152)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

White men are the least likely to witness gender²² or racial²³ discrimination occurring at work. Women were also more likely to identify racial discrimination than men²⁴. Perhaps this could be due to the nature of both White and male privilege that may blind individuals from identifying discrimination relative to those who can empathize with the experience of discrimination based on their race and or gender. Comments in surveys also noted that many White men worked in firms where there was not great gender or racial diversity and thus little to no discrimination to witness.

Means of Exposure to the Planning Profession

The great majority of planners (64 percent) are not exposed to planning until the second half of their college career or later, and Whites are more likely to hear about it earlier through social networks. About 4 percent reported they first heard in elementary school or younger, 4 percent in middle school, and 9 percent in high school -- mostly through family members or other acquaintances involved in planning. Whites are two times more likely to have been exposed to the profession by high school compared to people of color, and one-and-a-half times more likely to hear about it before the third year of college. More than 40 percent of Blacks and Asians heard about the profession during the third year of college, compared to only 30 percent or less for Whites and Latino/ as (Figure 23). Asians were not likely to have heard of the profession before high school, while other non-whites were not as likely.

²² Statistically significant at $p = .002$ with a strong to medium effect.
²³ Statistically significant at $p = .046$ showing a small to medium effect.
²⁴ Statistically significant at $p = .01$ showing a small to medium effect.
College classes were the most common first introduction to planning for respondents. About 30 percent of respondents first heard about planning through class. Additionally, social networks (16 percent), reading related books (11 percent), and internships (10 percent) were significant pathways. Many became interested in the planning profession through other fields, predominately architecture, construction, environmental justice, public health, real estate, or other community engagement and/or activism.

Relative to each other, people of color are more likely to be introduced to the profession through a class or environmental justice work, while Whites are slightly more likely to be introduced through an internship or community engagement activity (see Figure 24). About 32 percent of people of color hear about planning through college class, compared to 27 percent of Whites. About 8 percent discover the field while getting involved in environmental justice work – a field that centralizes race and equity issues related to the built environment, compared to only 4 percent of Whites. Planners of color are less likely to hear about the field through an internship or through community engagement work relative to Whites. About 11 percent of Whites find out about planning through a government-related internship, compared to only 9 percent of people of color. About 7 percent of Whites learn about the field through community engagement activity such as volunteering and organizing, compared to only 5 percent of people of color.
Men were also likely to find out about planning earlier in than women (Figure 25).

While class and social networks remained the main means of learning about the profession, women were more likely to find out through internships and through the environmental field, while men were most likely to find out through community engagement work, books, and childhood play of games such as SimCity (Figure 26).
Most respondents noted that their decision to pursue the field involved multiple exposures. Generally, planners experienced a combination of personal experience and/or interest in cities (through living in the city, traveling, or playing SimCity) reinforced by a book or class. This was often confirmed by knowing someone who was a planner or someone who knew about the profession (including friends, family members, school counselors, and random acquaintances, etc.). Travel seemed to also serve as a common thread to enable comparisons between places, especially cities.

Latino/as and Black Planners are most likely to have grown up in similar environments to the communities that they serve as planners today, yet are the two most underrepresented groups in the profession. Majority of planners in the sample reported that they did not grow up in similar environments to the communities they serve (race and class diversity, etc.). However, people of color are more likely to than Whites\textsuperscript{25}. About 84 percent of Latino/as and 81 percent of Blacks reported they grew up in similar communities (defined in the question as similar socioeconomic make-up), compared to 58 percent of Asians and 49 percent of Whites (Figure 27). These figures allude to the urgency of recruiting Blacks and Latino/as into the profession, as these underrepresented groups are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to bring with them the experiences that may equip one to better understand and empathize with the needs of the socioeconomically diverse neighborhoods of the New York Metro Area.

\textbf{Figure 27.}
\textit{Planners That Grew Up in Similar Communities to Those They Serve Today, by Race}
\textit{Diversity in Planning Survey 2015}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure27.png}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{25} Statistically significant at $p = .002$
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS & ANALYSIS – BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT

More than half of the population in the New York Metro Area (and two thirds of New York City) is comprised of people of color, yet, less one third of the population of the area’s planners are of color. Participants in interviews and focus groups highlighted that lack of diversity in the profession can largely be attributed to the shortage of people of color entering the planning profession. Many firms and agencies recruit directly from planning schools, which themselves struggle with recruiting and retaining diversity and exacerbate the discrepancies. To help understand and articulate the many different theories that have been raised regarding the barriers to entry in this study’s interviews and focus groups, I developed a five-stage framework to illustrate the variables that filter and shrink the number of people of color that enter the planning profession. The five dimensions include 1) inequitable communities, 2) lack of social capital and exposure to the profession, 3) lack of diversity in planning schools, 4) unequal opportunities to building professional experience, and 5) unconscious bias in the hiring process.

Recruitment Barrier 1. Inequitable Communities

While not all planners of color necessarily come from economically underprivileged backgrounds, nonetheless many people of color in American cities are living in communities with highly concentrated poverty that systemically hinder social and economic mobility.

Overcoming the Tie of Race and Class In American Cities

The primary and perhaps the most obvious stage that contributes to lack of diversity in planning are the structural barriers that have limited the opportunities for many people of color, particularly in under-resourced, inner-city, segregated neighborhoods, to advance and overcome intergenerational poverty. Inequitable communities with poor schools, inadequate housing, and poor infrastructure, systemically prevent many people of color in these neighborhoods from attaining the baseline quality of life and baseline educational resources needed to enter the planning field. Blacks and Latino/as, two of the most underrepresented groups in planning, are more likely to be concentrated in neighborhoods and schools with higher degrees of poverty (Azziz, 2016). One focus group participant shared, “Educational attainment in the neighborhood that I grew up in was very low because of all the things you deal with living in poverty. It was hard to get through high school for many, let alone college or even graduate school” (Focus Group, Latino/as in Planning, 2016). The burdens of
poverty also induce barriers to access to test preparatory resources for college-entry and graduate-entry standardized testing often required for entry into post-secondary education. Inequitable communities have also demoralized many in trusting the government and planning system.

**Lack of Community Exposure to Planners and (Good) Planning**

The lack of opportunities for residents to have a voice in what their neighborhoods could look like has limited the exposure to the profession and its role in shaping neighborhoods positively for communities of color. An interviewee noted, “Doing participatory planning and community engagement helps to expose people to the planning profession” (Employer C, 2016). Only 5 percent of planners of color in the survey sample heard about the profession through community engagement, compared to 7 percent of Whites (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015).

The quality of that exposure also matters. One interviewee articulated that many low-income communities of color have experienced poor planning, and have built a distrust with the government that might deter from the idea of working within it: “If you grew up only seeing how the government destroys your neighborhood, and especially if that government doesn’t look like you or act like they care about you, why would you ever want to be part of the government? You might choose to enter a field trying to be more productive elsewhere for your community” (Planner E, 2016). Because the history of urban planning has largely negatively affected these communities, their exposure to how planning can positively influence a neighborhood is limited, as well as their sense of agency.

This points to a potential way to promote more diversity among planners. “Executing good community engagement practices shows the general public that planning is important and where decisions are made about the community, and this might inspire people to join the profession. But people don’t make that connection unless they participated in the process,” suggested an interviewee (Focus Group, Non-profit Sector Planners of Color, 2016). Participation in good planning in itself can inspire people of color to join the profession.

**Recruitment Barrier 2. Lack of Social Capital to Expose One to the Profession**

The second stage that limits barriers to entry is the late, or lack of, exposure of the planning profession in communities of color, largely due to limited social capital. Many people of color
may enter the post-secondary education system, but few enter pursuing planning or have even heard about planning as a profession. According to the survey, 65 percent of planners were first exposed to planning as a profession in their third year of college or later. About 16 percent found out about the profession before college, and the majority of those respondents were White (Figure 23).

“I Dated A Planner Once”

When asked how they were first exposed to planning, the majority of survey respondents, regardless of race, shared that it involved multiple exposures—from experiences with the city, to travelling to other cities, to an interest sparked through a class, or a book you ‘stumbled upon’—all experiences which already might be limited by one’s economic privilege. On top of that, the majority of participants expressed that these experiences were coupled with later knowing a family member, friend, or mentor who was a planner or who knew about the planning profession. Two separate survey respondents even mentioned going on a date with a planner as their introduction to the profession.

We live in a fairly segregated society where one is more likely to have circles of people that reflect one’s own race26. Since the majority of planners throughout history have been White, particularly White and male, the social networks that spread and limit the exposure to the profession are still largely contained in the networks of Whites. The rare occasions they enter the networks of people of color are more likely through mentors, counselors, and on fewer occasions, a family or friend. Survey respondents validated the importance of the proactive early exposure to planning as a profession, particularly one that is directly associated with the ability to make a difference in one’s community. Interviewees across the board articulated that it was critical this exposure begin early, from elementary, middle, and high school students, and continue in proactive exposing of the profession at college and career fairs.

Architecture, the Environment, and Engineering Are Pretty White, Too

About one in three planners found out about the planning profession in their first job out of college, graduate school in another field, or later. Many planners entered the profession through architecture, engineering, real estate, construction, public health, environmental

26 A recent study conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute showed that 91 percent of the average White American’s closest friends and family members are White, and just 1 percent are Black. Similarly, about 83 percent of the average Black American’s closest friends and family members are Black (Public Religion Research Institute 2014).
studies, or other related fields, and switched in search for a more holistic approach to ‘design’ and infrastructure of cities. These other professions from which planners traditionally derive lack in diversity as well. For example, 70 percent of architects that work in the New York Metro area are White, and 58 percent of engineers are White. Diversity in these fields is dominated by Asians; Black and Latino/as continue to be underrepresented (see Table 2).

“Wait, What Does a Planner Do Again?”
Further complicating the decision to explore planning as a career, the field is very multidisciplinary and thus leaves vague and unclear the pathways post-graduation. Job prospects are not as clearly defined and may not carry the same social prestige as working in more known related fields such as architecture, public policy, law, or engineering. Often, it is associated with technical work around land use, and its connection to decision-making that impacts communities is unclear. Lacking social circles with planners may limit even more the understanding of the various career options to which one with a planning degree might have access. In general, planning is not a career that is explicitly encouraged in communities of color. In the 1960’s and 1970’s there was a greater effort to proactively recruit Blacks into urban politics, and thus those communities have more exposure to the public sector but this type of outreach has not happened for Latina neighborhoods (Focus Group, Latino/as in Planning, 2016). The combination of these barriers in social capital and knowledge about planning as a profession further filter the pool of people of color that enter graduate planning programs.

Recruitment Barrier 3. Lack of Diversity in Planning Schools

The third stage of barriers to recruitment is lack of diversity in planning schools27. Many employers that were interviewed shared that they recruit directly from schools, but those pools are also limited in their diversity prospects. In 2014, of the total number of current students attending the five accredited schools in the New York Metro area, more than 67 percent were White (Planetizen Guide, 2014). Many employers recruit from their alma matters, particularly if they come from prestigious universities that are often even more homogenous in the race and class backgrounds of their students. In addition to the obvious structural inequalities that make it challenging for students of color to enter into graduate

27 This section only highlights a few of the barriers, as this section could have its own entire thesis dedicated to studying them.
programs, such as test scores and access to test preparation, as well as professional/academic experiences, the trade offs between the cost and benefit of a planning degree may not seem worth it to those that come from less privileged backgrounds.

“How Long Will It Take Me to Pay Off That Debt?” Interviewees highlighted that planning is not a well-known career path, particularly not one that is known to make a return on one’s investment in post-secondary education. Many that successfully overcome the systemic barriers to enter college and excel in their education, may feel pressured to pursue more known higher-prestige and higher-paying careers such as law, finance, or medicine. This is particularly the case for many immigrant families whose families may have high expectations in the sacrifices they made for their children’s education. One participant, a second-generation immigrant from East Asia, lightheartedly expressed, “My parents to this day don’t really understand what I do as a planner, and still ask me ‘So you sure you still don’t want to be a doctor or lawyer instead, or something that makes more money?’” (Focus Group, Asian Americans in Planning, 2016).

With the exception of in-state student costs at Hunter City University of New York (CUNY) and Rutgers University, full tuition and fees for a Master’s-level planning degree in the New York Metro Area in 2014 averaged above $110,000 (Planetizen Guide, 2014). This figure does not include health insurance, housing, transportation, and other living expenses; nor does it include other barriers to applying such as standardized exams, test preparation, application fees, and more. Meanwhile, entry-level positions can range from $40,000-$70,000 for public sector planners, and the median annual salary for a planner across the nation is just under $67,000 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Compare this to the Bachelor-level degree needed for Engineering and its median annual salary of $82,000 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014). Additionally, the high cost of living in New York City can quickly discourage the number of local students to enroll. Interviewees expressed that a majority of their peers in graduate school were from out of state and very few were actually from the area (Focus Group, Latino/as in Planning, 2016).

The amount of family support, burden of risk, and confidence in future advancement varies by class and background. A participant expressed: “When you think about who’s more willing to take on that debt or have parents that can help pay for that tuition, what do you think the pool is going to look like?” (Focus Group, Queer Planners of Color, 2016). Additionally, interviewees noted that little was done in planning schools to aim to recruit from
local colleges that may have higher concentrations of students of color, and that in general, recruitment needed to start at an earlier age to expose students to planning as a profession.

Should International Students Satisfy “Diversity” in Schools?28

Interviewees also noted that, of the few other planners of color in their graduating cohorts, many of them were international students – a questionable strategy of some schools to fill their diversity quotas. On average, international students, mostly from East Asia, South Asia, or Latin America, comprise 14 percent of the total student body in the New York Metro Chapter schools, and up to 44 percent at Columbia University (Planetizen Guide, 2014).

Though many acknowledged that international students certainly do count and add diversity to the planning education experience, many (though not all) have come from more privileged backgrounds and may not stay in the U.S. to work as planners. Interviewees expressed that this is a very different type of diversity compared to the set of assets that students of color from underprivileged backgrounds bring to the classroom and should never replace the other in a quota system. One faculty of color in one of the planning schools noted: “International students are great, their perspective is always greatly appreciated… but they certainly skew the conversations about race, class, and planning in the classroom because they are less familiar with the American context of race and often come from higher income backgrounds” (Planner D, 2016).

Lack of Support for Students of Color

In addition to the lack of financial resources to support students of color from underprivileged backgrounds, there is often a lack of social infrastructure to support the wellbeing and success of students of color. Many students may experience isolation and micro-aggressions, and outright discrimination, especially if there is little diversity to begin with in schools. Almost unanimously, interviewees of color in this study stated that they were one of the few, if not the only, person of color in their planning school graduating cohorts. They expressed the disappointment and isolation that resulted from this, as well as the frustration in discussions about race, class, power, and privilege with their majority White peers. Interviewees expressed a similar sense of “betrayal and disappointment” that author robin Kelley describes many students of color feel when they begin to discover that their

28 The PAB encourages targeting for diversity in both students and faculty in connection with U.S. citizenry only, which is helpful to distinguish domestic vs. international students of color.
college campuses failed to live up to their advertisements as a welcoming, nurturing, and protective place:

If they believed this it was in no small part because university recruiters wanted them to: tours for prospective students, orientations, and slickly produced brochures [that] highlight campus diversity, and emphasize the sense of belonging that young scholars enjoy… it is supposed to be an enlightened space free of bias and prejudice, but the pursuit of this promise is hindered by structural racism and patriarchy. (Kelley, 2016, p. 8)

Outlets to discuss diversity and social justice issues, whether in the classroom or as part of campus resources, are critical to facilitate both safe space for planners of color to share related pain / trauma and find support that is needed, as well as conversations of growth for all students. Interviewees identified this support as necessary for both local and international students of color. Kelley criticizes that although efforts to increase diversity include safer spaces, better training, and a curriculum that acknowledges historical and contemporary oppressions are needed, but are these not enough. The student support that is critical also includes more radical and proactive initiatives that address root causes of economic injustice, such as aggressive recruitment and open admissions policies, free tuition programs for Black and indigenous students, divestment from prisons, and deep investments in communities (Kelley, 2016, p. 12).

Lack of Support for Faculty of Color

A part of the absence of that support is also the absence of mentors in the form of faculty of color. Interviewees that taught at universities as adjuncts or full time faculty also expressed that they were usually one of the very few, if not only, planners of color among planning faculty. While 33 percent of students in New York Metro Chapter schools are students of color, 81 percent of faculty are White (Table 3). About 52 percent of students identify as female, but only 35 percent of faculty are female. These interviewees and respondents expressed also a sense of isolation, tokenism, and lack of support, particularly unequal support in regards to research opportunities, visibility, and funding for topics related to issues connected to race, class, gender, and tenure tracks relative to White faculty and colleagues (Planner E, 2016; Diversity in Planning Survey, 2014). A faculty of color at a local planning school expressed: “The visibility is clear on what is valued… the kinds of programs that are funded or events held, for example are indicative of what the school thinks is important. You notice who is visible and who is promoted, who is tenured… and
people of color are not” (Planner E, 2016). Another interviewee shared that she left an institution because she was denied tenure at the university:

This is a systemic issue that is disproportionately preventing women and African Americans and Latino/as and other minorities to obtain tenure… There has never been a tenured Latino/a in this school and very few of other races. It is a social justice issue that the majority-White, majority-male decision boards will not redress on their own unless they felt external social pressure, e.g., the potential of scrutiny… (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015).

The diversity in faculty ultimately influences not only the support system for students, but also the content of what is taught and addressed in the classroom to prepare students to enter the field as practitioners and professionals.

“Colorblind Curriculum
A survey participant noted that, “Curriculum design that engages with the topics and issues most relevant to diverse audiences will attract that audience” (Diversity in Planning Survey 2015). Interviewees, with the exception of alumni from a few schools, highlighted that their planning programs barely touched on the issue of race and planning, outside of planning history (Focus Groups, Pilot 2015; Latino/as in Planning, 2016; Blacks in Planning, 2016; Asian Americans in Planning, 2016; Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016; Private Sector Planners of Color, 2016). Social justice is an important principle identified by the PAB. However, recently, the PAB has proposed changes to its accreditation standards that may undermine the relevance of diversity tracking and social justice education as part of the required curriculum (Owens, 2015). Many schools and planning institutions, including the Planners Network, Planners of Color Interest Group of the AICP, and the APA’s local New York Metro Chapter have taken a stance against these proposed changes and call for the strengthening of initiatives to promote social justice in the curriculum. The curriculum, including opportunities to gain experience working with communities of color, shape (and limit) what students are ultimately exposed to before they graduate and become real planners of the world. Colorblind planning curricula may only perpetuate the self-selection of people of color away from the planning profession. It nevertheless contributes to the lack of

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29 Colorblindness, or race blindness, is the racial ideology that states the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regards to race, culture, or ethnicity. It focuses on commonalities and a shared humanity. However, the term is criticized and used by sociologists to refer to a false notion of claiming to not see race, which results in ignoring and not acknowledging implicit bias and inequities along the lines of race and color (Wise, 2010).
diversity in schools and further filtration of the pool of people of color that enter the planning profession.

Recruitment Barrier 4. Unequal Opportunities to Building Experience

The fourth stage that contributes to barriers to entry is unequal opportunities to gain “professional” experience and skills as a planner outside of the classroom.

“Oh, It’s Unpaid?”
Many employers interviewed expressed that they prefer to hire candidates that have either interned at the firm or agency previously, or have good experience through internships and fellowships during graduate school (Employer A, 2016; Employer B, 2016; Employer D, 2016). However, many planning-related internships, particularly in the public sector, are unpaid. Those that are able to take on unpaid internships are more likely to come from more privileged, often White backgrounds, where they have other means such as family support or assets to support their cost of living that lower income college and graduate students may not have. Eleven (11) percent of Whites reported that their interest in planning stemmed from a government-related internship, compared to only seven percent of people of color (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015). If schools are unable to support their students with sufficient stipends to offset the cost of living, especially in a city like New York, then those who may come from more underprivileged backgrounds are excluded and thus have unequal access to opportunities to build experiences through internships. Those that are able to take on unpaid internships have more opportunities to build their qualifications, skills, resume, and confidence in application and interviews for jobs.

“Hey, You Should Interview This Person”
Social capital is crucial not only in exposing one to the profession, but also in getting a foot in the door for an interview for an internship or job. Across the board, interviewees validated that who gets considered for an interview for an internship or job is often more correlated with who you know rather than your actual application. This can put at a disadvantage planners of color who may not have the social connections to existing planners in positions of power compared to White applicants. In the Diversity in Planning 2015 survey, people of color, particularly Blacks, were significantly less likely than Whites to be members of professional groups such as the APA, AICP, Urban Land Institute, or other network. (Refer
to Figure 14.) These unequal opportunities to access experience and build one’s skills due to lack of economic and social capital further filter and shrink the pool of candidates of color.

What Counts as “Qualifications?”

Many employers stated that their pool of “qualified” planners of color is often small and when hiring they want to prioritize “qualified” candidates (Employer A, 2016; Employer B, 2016; Employer D, 2016; Focus Group, Private Sector Planners of Color, 2016). When asked to clarify what these qualifications were, those employers who came from more privileged backgrounds were more likely to refer to “technical skills” and academic prestige, including alma maters. However, employers that grew up in working class neighborhoods or have worked hand-in-hand with communities of color, were more likely to articulate the value of one’s experiences as a person of color as a critical skill that contributed to one’s qualification and competency to do the job (Employer C, 2016; Employer E, 2016).

Some of the interviewees expressed a frustration with the lack of acknowledgement of life experiences as qualifications to conducting planning work. One said: “I’m Black, I’m Latina, born and raised in Brooklyn and experienced first-hand how certain policies affected my neighborhoods – shouldn’t I have more street cred as a planner for New York City than some White chick from Ohio?” (Focus Group, Latino/as in Planning, 2016). When asked how they experienced their identity of diversity as an asset, an interviewee responded:

I’ve seen and understand what the City has done to communities, more than my White colleagues from [out of state]. I think people of color bring a level of perspective and trust that has never been there before, particularly for government. Perspective is definitely a big one – for example, my [department] doesn’t have a translation budget. This is crazy to me to think it’s not something the City has done before. Translation is something I am always conscious about because I always played that role for my mother who knew little English and did not civically participate for this reason, so I deeply understand this need. The people pushing back on translation needs are those that speak English only (Planner A, 2016).

This goes back Forester’s point that the call for diversity in the profession is mainly about providing deep awareness of the understanding of the role of race, gender, and ethnicity in social inequity and people’s everyday lives – of people who “speak articulately to the realities of poverty and suffering, deal with race, displacement, and histories of underserved
communities that do not leave people’s pain at the door,” (Forester, 2000, p. 259). Access to participation is a particular area where planners of color often have more skills and qualifications relative to White colleagues, especially when working with communities of color. When asked for why he hires for diversity, an employer of color responded:

Simple: people of color bring value. White planners often find themselves as outsiders that work with communities and they often deal with cultures they don’t understand. They often come from privileged backgrounds and just don’t have this experience working with communities of color and can’t connect with them – what are the implications? When I hire, I hire for diversity because I’m constantly thinking of access – how to help communities feel like they can be a part of.” (Employer E, 2016).

One White employer validated the value of the skills that more diverse planners often bring:

When we hire, we go to the prestigious schools, such as MIT, Columbia, PennDesign, etc.... which... are not very diverse. These planners always have really great GIS skills, graphic skills, etc., but to be honest, I notice they fall short when it comes to community engagement... they just don’t have the skills (Employer B, 2016).

Employers also identified diversity not only as important as it relates to community engagement, building trust, and improving accessibility, but also in the different perspective in the technical components of planning attributed to “impartiality.” For example, the same White employer shared his recognition of the relevance of diversity in preparing Environmental Impact Statements: “Certain cultural values impact people’s uses and space and service needs. And this is not something I would have ever thought about because I didn’t grow up or was ever exposed to those cultural values, until someone recently pointed it out” (Employer B, 2016). Another White employer of a private firm noted from his experience with his staff:

A White’s perspective is different from an African American’s and it will find its way into the work that you do. The [City Environmental Quality Review] CEQR technical manual may have particular guidelines on what you identify as impacts, but within that range depends on your ethnic and racial cultural context that gives you a different perspective on how to interpret the data and needs (Employer D, 2016).
The different perspective not only impacts the kind of analysis, but often also the passion and drive by which one works. Another employee explains that sometimes experiencing living in low-income communities of color is a critical asset that empowers one with a drive and perspective that cannot be learned: “I grew up middle class. I deeply care about the impact of our work on working class communities, but I definitely have less expertise and experience than if I grew up working class. I notice that when people have experienced it, there’s more heart to the work that they do” (Employer A, 2016).

Whether in the community engagement, technical components to planning, or ‘heart’ placed in the work, the experiences and perspectives that planners of color bring are largely undervalued because they are not seen as ‘hard skills’ that contribute to the perceived competence and qualification of a candidate. For the White employers that were interviewed in this study, they learned the relevance of diversity overtime—often through external pressure and criticism of the lack of diversity. Employers of color with lived experiences in lower income neighborhoods, on the other hand, more implicitly valued diversity through their personal experiences. The undervaluing of these experiences of planners of color by the greater pool of employers inherently leads to a further filtering and shrinking of the pool of “qualified candidates” that may be non-White for hire.

**Recruitment Barrier 5. Unconscious Bias and Colorblindness in Hiring**

The final stage that serves as a barrier to entry for planners of color is unintended bias in the hiring process.

**Unprofessionalism Equated to Non-White Culture**

“It doesn’t matter if you are explicitly discriminatory or not. Hiring is also based on energies, and people are most comfortable with those that look like them or share experiences with them,” articulated an interviewee in a directorship position. “If you grew up in a small town community where you never met a Black person or have made any Black friends, you may not be as comfortable when you’re interviewing a Black person to join your firm” (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016). Others around the table validated her sentiment. Interviewees articulated that no matter what your intersection of identities, you
are often most comfortable with the people that are a ‘cultural fit’ to you. Whether that was a small-town upbringing, a prestigious university – each of these spaces embodies a culture that perpetuates in the work environment. “It’s true that there’s a particular culture and personality to every firm and agency… and it’s because they hire the people that validate their values and culture,” an interviewee articulated (Employer C, Interview 2016). “‘Cultural fit’ then becomes synonymous to race and class,” another interviewee suggested (Focus Group, Blacks in Planning, 2016). One interviewee shared an example of cultural fit and the need to decrease markers of “otherness,” or deviating from Whiteness, in oneself in hiring:

I tell my Black female friends when they are going to a first interview that they should straighten their hair... This is shocking to them and pisses a lot of people off. I am a woman with a lot of Black pride; my hair is natural, and yes, self-love, reclamation, I agree… But this is the reality – the first step is getting them to listen to you and take you seriously. Because the moment you walk into that interview, they already have all kinds of assumptions of who you are just because you’re a Black woman” (Focus Group, Pilot, 2015).

Participants expressed that grooming, attire, manner of speech, and body language all become markers of “cultural fit” and “competence” in interviews, and often put planners of color that did not grow up in the culture of Whiteness and wealth, and/or are not as well versed to “code switch” to the dominant culture, at a disadvantage. An interviewee shared, “A job interviewer in the private sector asked my friend if he was willing to cut his dreads off” (Planner E, 2016). Participants noted that what may have cultural significance amongst non-White groups are often flagged as markers of lack of cultural fit and unprofessionalism.

Complicating the matter, the markers of “professionalism” that promote authority and competence in the workplace often do not equate to authority or trust in communities, particularly for planners of color working in low income neighborhoods of color. A survey respondent wrote: “Economic and educational background are important it seems in how planners are treated by peers and by their communities, often those perceptions are at odds with each other” (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015).

Gender and sexuality also carry their markers of cultural fit, where in a patriarchic society, femininity and homosexuality are attributed to lack of assertiveness and oftentimes morality.

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30 This concept is known as “homophily” - a principle in social science literature first articulated by Lazarsfeld and Merton in 1954 that describes the preference for people who are like oneself. See “Hiring as Cultural Matching” (Rivera 2012).
Planners that identified as LGBTQ expressed the challenge of strategizing if and how exactly to “come out” to colleagues. One interviewee described: “Our work is politics. You have to hold your cards close because there are many assumptions made of you and your identity” (Focus Group, Queer Planners of Color, 2016). You want to be open, free, and in that process be empowering to those that might also be of that identity, but you feel pressure to disassociate with the parts of your identity that others might associate with stereotypes that question your morals or authority.

**When You Open the Dictionary to the Word “Competent,” Who Do You See?**

Interviewees across all focus groups and one-on-ones articulated that how racism plays has changed over the decades. Today, people generally do not see themselves as sexist, racist, nor genuinely think of themselves as acting as such. However, their discrimination is often more implicit and unconscious based on their upbringing of what they came to learn as markers of competence and of value.

Planners of color expressed that they felt the constant needed to reassure others that they can in fact do their job: “People often look at me, see I am a Black woman, and have doubt that I am competent enough to do the job” (Focus Group, Blacks in Planning, 2016). A Latino planner shared similar sentiments: “We people of color always need to make an extra effort to convince people that ‘I can do this work. You can trust me; you can hire me!’” (Employer D, 2016). A survey participant articulated: “People presume greater competence from men and Whites than for women and people of color. We are all socialized to think and behave that way…but this is exactly how systemic racism and sexism happens,” (Diversity in NY Planning Survey, 2015). One interviewee shares that she herself has internalized some of this: “I sent a tall White man alone into a meeting, I assumed he was competent, but he admitted after that he was scared shitless… and I realize now that if it were a young Asian woman, I would have given it a second thought to send her alone into the meeting, because she didn’t ‘fit the bill’…even though I myself am an Asian woman.” (Focus Group, Private Sector Planners of Color, 2016). These subtle and unconscious biases impact decisions made around selection of candidates for hire.

“**We Don’t See Color When We Hire**”

When asked about their willingness to hire for diversity, the majority of employers, particularly those in the private sector, made explicit that with the limited capacity to conduct recruitment, they prioritized hiring for “quality, no matter what it looks like” (Employer A,
However, due to unconscious bias previously discussed, colorblindness only perpetuates systemic exclusion of people of color from the profession. It excuses the lack of acknowledgement of the impacts of a society structured around race, and only equates to indifference and inaction. Color-consciousness, on the other hand, enables us to see differing opportunities and systemic imbalances of power that a person of color may face, and shed light on areas for intervention to enable more equitable workplaces and opportunities for growth for all staff. In order to address race issues, one cannot be blind to the fact that race, though an invented concept, affects the realities and life outcomes and paths of different people (Young, 1990; Buyardi, 2002). Most importantly, color-consciousness enables the acknowledgement and celebration of the assets that planners of color bring to both the working environment and ultimately work outcomes.

Radiating Whiteness

The perception of planning as very White in culture, encompassing also its racist history, in itself may cause people of color to self-select away from both planning overall and jobs in particular sectors. Many planners of color in interviews and focus groups identified a strong perception and stigma of “Whiteness” in the private sector. Many also felt similar regarding the APA as an institution as a whole and questioned the value of its costly membership (Focus Groups: Blacks in Planning 2016; Latino/as in Planning, 2016; Queer Planners of Color, 2016; Non-profit Sector Planners of Color, 2016; Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016). “When I go to these conferences, I’m most likely one of the only people of color there, unless it’s a session about diversity. I hear people say all kinds of things and then I remember that NYC is a diversity bubble” (Planner E, 2016). When asked to define this “Whiteness,” interviewees employed as descriptors homogenous, wealthy, privileged, entitled, corporate, wall-street-y, frat-y, slightly racist, and “does not care about diversity.”

These perceptions (and realities) were expressed as reasons for many to avoid particular planning sectors. One interviewee shared: “The reason why I’m in the public sector is because generally that’s not the culture. It’s certainly there, but not a dominant part. I’ve been offered good money to work in the private sector, but I never could do it because I hate [that culture] so much! It’s not worth it!” (Planner D, 2016).

31 On the other hand, planners of color that worked in the private sector shared that they mainly chose it for its efficiency, opportunity for innovation, and largely, the better salary (Planners of Color in the Private Sector 2016). The majority of these planners seemed to have grown up in cultures and/or economic conditions that better familiarized, conditioned, and sometimes internalized them to private sector culture.
The Importance of Color- (and Class- and Gender-) Conscious Leadership

Lack of diversity in leadership often serves as evidence for many prospective planners for how much a firm values diversity and the assets it brings. While Whites make up 66 percent of the overall sample, they make up 72 percent of the respondents that hold senior-level positions (Diversity in Planning, 2015). Visibility of diversity is critical, but it cannot be tokenism (Thomas 2008). A critical component to attracting a diverse pool of candidates is a leadership that deeply values diversity and social justice and explicitly integrates it into a firm or agency’s vision, mission, and strategies. Without a firm or agency’s explicit statement of value for diversity and justice, the baseline assumption is that these firms don’t value or care about issues related to people of color, and thus insinuate that they will not be safe spaces. Many interviewees acknowledged that just because someone is a person of color, does not mean they necessarily carry the perspective and social justice values that are implied in this discussion. One interviewee articulated the importance of class intersection with race when hiring for diversity: “The head of our [hiring division] is Black, but she grew up in a wealthy community and she doesn’t see [why its important to hire for diversity]. A Black person who grew up in Forest Hills versus a Black person that grew up in the South Bronx have very different experiences and perspectives” (Planner B, 2016).

Recruitment Is an Initiative; and Yes, It Takes Effort

One survey respondent replied:

   The company doesn’t seem to go out of its way to recruit Black or Latin job candidates… the bosses don’t want to interview lots of candidates and when they do hire, there are already plenty of good candidates to choose from. It seems that most of the pool is White or Asian, including many foreign-born of both backgrounds. Our company is thus mostly White and Asian, a few Blacks and Latino/as. (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015)

Though there are many strategies to recruiting for diversity, for example targeting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or recruiting from schools that may have lower barriers to entry and thus more diversity, employers rarely seek out this proactive recruitment. White employers shared the sentiment of lacking the capacity to invest time in targeting recruitment and training (Employer B, 2016; Employer D, 2016). Larger firms had human resource departments whose recruitment efforts were often limited to equal employment opportunity (EEO) policies, while small firms relied on direct application review
by principals. With the forces of historic, systemic, and institutionalized racism, lack of diversity in the planning profession will continue to perpetuate if employers don’t make a conscious shift to change their recruitment strategies and proactively recruit for diversity. One interviewee shared:

The reason why the [specific unit in the agency] is so diverse is because [the former Director], who was a woman of color, consciously and purposefully recruited for it. Yes, she turned away some candidates that were also qualified, but she knew that diversity was an asset that would ultimately benefit the team and the work they were doing (Employer A, 2016).

Employers interviewed who most deeply valued what diversity brings to the quality of the process and outcome were more willing to turn away qualified candidates, even if would lead to turning away personal connections, required a longer time frame, and demanded more resources to go beyond personal networks and proactively hire for a planner of color. One White interviewee expressed, “Maybe employers should be willing to pay more for that diversity – it’s in high demand and there’s a short supply. It all goes back to how much do you really value it?” (Focus Group, White Allies in Planning, 2016).

**Summary**

These five dimensions serve as a framework to understand the various barriers to recruitment in order to understand intervention points. Proactive initiatives are needed to address structural economic injustice, improve exposure of the profession in communities of color, diversify planning schools, enable opportunities for planners of color to build experience, and eliminate unconscious bias in the hiring process. Another critical strategy to promoting opportunities for people of color in the planning profession is ensuring the proper support systems and pathways to growth. Refer to the next chapter to explore the barriers to retention and upward mobility for planners of color.
CHAPTER VI. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS – BARRIERS TO RETENTION & MOBILITY

Diversity in the planning profession requires not only strategies to better recruit planners of color, but also efforts to retain, support, and enable leadership and growth throughout their careers. Planners of color in this study have expressed common experiences around race, class, and gender discrimination that have led to isolation, fatigue, and, for some, the decision to leave specific firms or sectors in pursuit of safer spaces and better opportunities. These common experiences that interviewees expressed can be categorized in five overarching themes: 1) micro-aggressions and racial fatigue, 2) self-doubt and isolation, 3) skipped promotions and less visible and meaningful work, 4) White male dominant culture that covertly hinders advancement, and 5) White-dominant planning lens and inner conflict.

Retention Barrier 1. Micro-Aggressions and Racial Fatigue

Many of planners of color shared that though they rarely experience outright discrimination, they receive subtle expressions of bias that are hurtful nonetheless, commonly termed “micro-aggressions” from colleagues, supervisors, and communities. “Micro-aggressions are especially difficult to address because the (micro-) aggressors are often unaware of having done any harm,” explains a survey respondent (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2016).

Constant Reminders of Not Belonging

People of color in the sample were more likely to disagree that they felt acceptance and belonging in the workplace compared to Whites (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015). Whether it is interrogation on where you are really from, statements about one’s hair being less wild, being mistaken for someone else in the building of the same race, or a surprise that you don’t have an accent, interviewees expressed a range of manifestations of “othering” from colleagues and communities that they work with (Focus Groups: Asian Americans in Planning, 2016, Blacks in Planning, 2016, Latino/as in Planning, 2016; Employer C and E, 2016; Planners A, B, C, and E 2016). These micro-aggressions range in severity and context, but ultimately recall painful stereotypes, question the belonging of an individual, perpetuate the “othering” of certain groups, and insinuate a devaluation of an individual’s legitimacy and self-autonomy based on stereotypes. These are small forms of discrimination, often unnoticed as a form of hurt by its perpetrators, but build up overtime and cause anger and frustration. Blacks in particular reported experiencing racial fatigue.

more than any other group (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015). While at least two thirds of planners of other racial groups indicated that they had not felt “racial fatigue,” only 42 percent of Blacks could say the same. (Refer to Figure 18). Planners across all the focus groups and interviews expressed that while they face variations of micro-aggressions, they are most often experienced when working with communities or project partners, and less directly with colleagues in the office. However, some still shared incidences that came especially from colleagues in the office who may have had very little exposure to diversity throughout their career and/or lives. These presumptions of sameness and otherness become constant reminders to certain groups that they do not belong.

Playing Against Your Stereotype, But Not Too Much (Double Standards)
Most interviewees articulated that they needed to be tactful in disassociating themselves with common stereotypes that people might have about their racial or gender group, simply to be heard. A Latino planner in a director-level position expressed: “People look at me and assume I am aggressive, that I only speak to my people, that I will have an accent, and that I am of a lower level. I constantly have to reassure people ‘it’s okay, you can talk to me’” (Employer E, 2016). Many Black planners that were interviewed expressed similar experiences. One interviewee articulated the delicate balance of playing against one’s stereotype, particularly when it crosses with gender and race: “To be taken seriously as a woman of color, I have to be more assertive—but when I am assertive, and no more assertive than my colleagues, then I’m all of a sudden ‘the angry Black lady’ and am told I am ‘too aggressive’” (Focus Group, Pilot, 2015). Black planners found themselves consciously being careful with words so as to not be interpreted as emotional or angry, while some Asian American planners often found themselves becoming more aggressive in personality throughout their career so as not to be interpreted as passive and submissive (Focus Groups: Pilot, 2015; Blacks in Planning, 2016; Women of Color in Planning, 2016).

Intent and Impact of Delineating Between the Good Vs. Bad Minority
Interviewees expressed that sometimes these micro-aggressions are attempts by their colleagues to reach out, but intent often does not translate to consequence nor can it be excused for the hurt that it causes. Some White allies recognized this: “Most things are not intentional but have an impact and that needs to be called out and discussed too” (Focus Group, White Allies, 2016). As one example, several Black planners in the focus groups shared that that when they first started, colleagues were often “pleasantly surprised” at how they behaved in the work environment (Focus Groups: Blacks in Planning, 2016; Women of
Color in Planning 2016; Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016). In another example, an interviewee shared: “In conversations about race, for some reason, it’s a trend for some White colleagues to say to me: ‘but I don’t really see you as Asian, you know? – But wait, no, I don’t know!’ And is that supposed to be a compliment?” (Planner E, 2016). Frank Wu, author of Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White, describes a similar experience of White friends’ micro-aggressions and articulates: “They are trying to reach out, but they are implying that it is better to be white than Asian American and they like best the Asian Americans who are most like whites. They are distinguishing between the good minority individual at the expense of the bad minority group” (2002, p. 12).

This validation from White colleagues on what is a good versus bad minority based on his or her association with Whiteness is problematic in multiple ways. Firstly, it ignores differences within racial groups and makes dangerous assumptions about what are the markers and truths of specific racial groups. This can often cost life opportunities in the real world, particularly for black- and brown-skinned peoples whose predominant stereotypes have been used by the larger American society to justify conditions of poverty and systemic oppression. Secondly, it places constant pressure on people of color to tactfully perform and play against their stereotypes, simply to be taken seriously. At the same time, these statements perpetuate a dominant stereotype of each minority group, while celebrating the isolated cases in which a member of that group deviates from it and achieves a certain level of Whiteness. Yet, as Wu articulates, it ignores the fact that people of color are treated differently by larger society and can never be truly White nor be granted the same privileges of Whites.

Even if some planners of color might be in positions of power, they express that the realities of race are still there in the real world. One interviewee shared that the day he got the directorship position: “I was so proud, called my mother and told my family; she told all of her friends. That evening on my way home I went to Walgreens to get some gum, and I got stopped and frisked and accused of stealing.” Having the position does not equate to having the security and privileges of Whites. He reflected:

I had the mayor’s, deputy mayor’s, commissioner’s, and everyone’s number on my blackberry. But I didn’t tell anyone about that the next day – I was afraid to show up as a person of color and carry that experience with me because I feared about my ability to move forward – that I would have been judged differently (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016).
The interviewee emphasized the importance of showing as a person of color when one gets to a leadership position. However, this is not always an easy task.

A study recently published in the Academy of Management Journal found that women and non-White executives who frequently engaged in diversity-valuing behaviors were not awarded, but rather rated worse by their bosses in terms of competence and performance compared to their female and non-White counterparts who did not actively promote diversity. Female and non-White managers were judged more harshly if they hired someone that was also a woman or non-White, but a White male choosing another White male or other racial or gender group had no effect on their competence and performance. “Women and minorities are often scrutinized when they try to favor those like them, in a way that White men are not,” (Johnson and Hekman, 2016, p. 3). The authors theorize that when women and non-White leaders advocate for other women and non-Whites, it highlights their low-status demographics and activates the stereotype of incompetence. They warn that this unconscious bias and punishment can lead to women and minorities choosing to not advocate for other women and minorities once they reach positions of power, as they do not want to be associated with incompetence, serving to reinforce the ceiling on achievement for women and non-Whites.

**When They Insinuate or Make Assumptions About Your Competence**

While planners of all minority racial groups dealt with stereotypes on their competence, Black and Latino/a planners in particular faced the most challenges in overcoming others’ notions about their ability, based on dominant stereotypes that presume inability. “White men have an automatic respect from others,” acknowledged an interviewee (Focus Group: Women of Color in Planning, 2016). Planners of color, on the other hand, constantly have to prove their competence. A Black planner who was awarded with a high-merit award for her work shared that “people were surprised and in disbelief. They congratulated me but thought it was a customer service award and assumed I was an administrator” (Focus Group, Blacks in Planning, 2016).

When layered with gender, assumptions of competence were painfully worse. One common experience, particularly for women of color who are youthful in appearance, is the immediate assumption that they are an intern or secretary. One interviewee shared: “People don’t take me seriously because I am a woman and a person of color. In meetings, they’ll look at the
White guy next to me for answers, who is my intern” (Focus Group, Private Sector Planners, 2016). Another interviewee shared:

When I walk into meetings where the crowd is largely White, I have to face the fact that for these people, in no way does a Black woman have the final say of what happens – clearly it cannot be her making the final decision. I get all the time: ‘We’ll talk to your higher up’s, let’s see what he says.’ (Focus Group, Women of Color in Planning, 2016).

Blatant and obvious, many women of color shared that they experienced condescending tones and invalidating statements, particularly when working with Community Boards or other public-facing forums. An Asian American interviewee summarized well the concerns of other women of color in her focus group: “I spent my entire career training myself so people take me seriously. I have to inflect differently, speak louder and more deeply, dress up, wear heels to at least be on their level height… it’s exhausting to always be making a decision. I wish I could just be me and they’d listen” (Focus Group, Women of Color in Planning, 2016). Another interviewee shared that towards the closing of a project, an older White colleague once said to her, “You should use your feminine guile to get approval of the project,” to which another focus group participant invalidated by posing, “Or you’ll get approval of the project by using your intellect and competence!?” (Focus Group, Private Sector Planners of Color, 2016). The suggestion to use feminine guile was supposed to be a joke, but diminished her real qualifications beyond the objectification of her femininity. Overall, the absence of female planners of color in the profession perpetuates a misunderstanding about the qualifications of female planners of color when they are present.

These situations can be powerfully mitigated by intervention of supervisors and colleagues. One powerful example a participant in Private Sector Planners of Color Focus Group shared was when she was with her supervisor and encountered a project partner, who asked, “Is this your affirmative action hire?” (Focus Group, Private Sector Planners of Color, 2016). The supervisor immediately called out that it was inappropriate and walked away with the interviewee and apologized to her for the partner’s behavior. The next day, she approached her and asked again how she was doing after the inappropriate comment. The supervisor powerfully stated that they would not do business with that project partner anymore. The supervisor’s action communicated to the staff that she was meaningful and valuable. Interviewees shared that these micro-aggressions serve as constant painful reminders that you are overlooked, unacknowledged, and disrespected, which becomes burdensome and
exhausting especially without White allies to validate their emotional impact and support planners of color.

Why So Many Bystanders?
Planners of color in interviews and focus groups expressed that these types of micro-aggressions happen throughout their lives, but what makes them more frustrating is when their colleagues or worse, supervisors, remain bystanders in the situation. “Out in the community, people will say inappropriate things to me based on my race. But my colleagues and supervisor don’t call it out or don’t support me” (Employer C, 2016). Interviewees expressed being “discouraged” and “disheartened” from constantly needing to defend alone the idea that you belong and you are competent, in addition to constantly being the sole educator to others on race and diversity. One interviewee pointedly commented, “Where’s my bonus for these teaching moments?” (Focus Group, Pilot, 2015). Across all focus groups, planners of color expressed the need for White allies to step-in and call out White supremacy from other Whites because they will be taken more seriously than a person of color standing up for diversity.

Yet, in their focus group, the White allies identified a variety of reasons for why some might choose to be a bystander in the moment, including fear of confrontation, being misunderstood, or attacked and excommunicated if they said the wrong thing. One focus group participant articulated, “It’s challenging to discuss race in an open way because the talk is all negative. We always talk about the problems and not enough of the assets that diversity brings. Race is not just these big issues, but people withdraw discussion is limited to it” (Focus Group, White Allies, 2016). Some expressed discomfort intervening because they are “not prepared with a script” or have not seen many examples of how not to be a bystander. Others admitted to blindness due to privilege to the fact that a situation was offensive. Others shared situations of intimidation and uncertainty, where they did not want to speak for people of color. In situations where a comment is made about a minority group in an all-White setting, some Whites remained bystanders because they felt they could accomplish more elsewhere than trying to convince the inconvincible. This silence about race from Whites in itself is a systemic issue. In a society that advantages Whites as a dominant group, Whites have the privilege and ability to stay silent about the issues. People of color, on the other hand, experience systemic and institutionalized oppression everyday and do not have the privilege to remain detached.
Also in their focus group, the White allies expressed pride in confronting the issues of race and emphasized that the statement made when one calls out discrimination can be very powerful. Planners of color in other focus groups shared that a lack of response (bystanding) to a problematic statement can equate to validating that statement. “Being an ally means not fearing bringing up these difficult conversations,” stated an interviewee (Focus Group, White Allies, 2016). Some participants of the White Allies focus group felt that it was not a matter of choice whether to be a bystander. These individuals were longer-time civil rights activists who are part of a generation who had witnessed for decades the same types of discrimination unfolding. They themselves shared that they could empathize from having experienced persecution against their political / ethnic identity in a different context and differing severity. One interviewee expressed: “There’s something about experiencing the other that you bring with you… it’s a gut level feeling – I was a political refugee, and to this day, I never understood how people find displacement as acceptable. Hearing the March on Washington [and other civil rights speeches] – I felt they were speaking to me as well,” (Focus Group, White Allies, 2016). They attributed their conscious decision to be an ally to this empathy, coupled with opportunities to build friendship with people and communities of color, who welcomed and introduced them to not only the obstacles that they experienced, but also to how White privileges held them back from seeing the beauty of diversity and the need to defend and celebrate it.

An important nuance emerged in the focus group with White Allies, implying that perspectives are evolving. Participants shared that they fear intervening partly because they are still in process of acknowledging their privilege, deeply valuing diversity, and growing in their ability to participate in race discourse. One White Ally noted that, “Sometimes in conversations about diversity issues, White people feel this urgency of needing to contribute to the conversation, like ‘what should I do?’ But it’s not about you. And it’s not fair to put that on people of color to figure out what Whites should do about their guilt and privilege… Whites have to process it and figure it out on their own and spend more time listening instead” (Planner F, 2016). The participant highlights that this fear to intervene focuses again on the security of Whites, which can result in micro-aggressive situations and can continue to validate and perpetuate the pain and oppression that planners of color experience.
Retention Barrier 2. Self-doubt and Isolation

“I changed jobs because I didn’t want to be the only person of color. It’s isolating culturally,” expressed an interviewee (Focus Group, Queer Planners of Color, 2016). As planners of color experience more doubt than validation from the individuals and groups they work with, they can be expected to manifest self-doubt and isolation PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED. This seems to be most present amongst planners in the private sector, who are often one of the only planners of color in their firms and rarely have the opportunity to discuss these experiences or access understanding and support from colleagues. This self-doubt can cause additional stress on planners of color that lead to fatigue. One interviewee articulated:

I always question if I belong here. I’m a woman of color and I’m competent and confident - but I’ve had a lot of self-doubt because of the way people treated me throughout my career. When people see me, they see ‘Indian’ and immediately make judgments of what I represent. (Focus Group, Private Sector Planners of Color, 2016)

Imposter Syndrome

Stress comes not only from self-doubt but also self-pressure. Interviewees expressed that sometimes they felt constant pressure to never make a mistake, else it be attributed to their race and risk the reputation of everyone else in the racial group that they are perceived to represent.

This seems to especially impact Black planners, Asian women, and women in general. The survey reveals that almost one in five Black planners felt strongly that making a mistake would be attributed as a reflection of their race, compared to 13 percent of Asians, majority of whom are women, and 4 percent for Latino/as in the sample. (Refer to Figure 17). “I feel the need to always be the example of my race and gender... it’s a lot and its exhausting” (Focus Group, Women of Color in Planning, 2016). A senior-level interviewee described:

“It’s really isolating. If you are the only one, it’s really difficult. There’s a pressure to perform. I’m the only person of color in my office, the token person of color, so I can’t fuck up or risk the reputation of all [planners of my race]” (Employer C, 2016). The interviewee continues, “I sometimes get imposter syndrome – when you question if you belong, that they’re going to ‘find out’ that you don’t have what it takes, and you psyche yourself out. I’ve laid in bed awake thinking about this.” There is pressure that others put on planners of color, multiplied by the pressure planners of color often put on themselves.
Internalization and Desensitization
Some planners of color, especially entry level, have internalized this pressure, carrying an attitude that highlights the fact that other planners have made it and that they simply need to work harder, not knowing that the pressure rarely stops. Senior-level planners, on the other hand, are more likely to describe discrimination as systemic and structural. Sometimes, these internalized stereotypes facilitate discrimination between people of color who are in the system and those just entering the system. An Asian American planner shared an uncomfortable realization during a focus group: “When I’m reading resumes and I run into a resume that has an Asian-sounding name, I find myself immediately thinking ‘Oh man, I hope they speak English’” (Focus Group, Private Sector Planners of Color, 2016). “That’s pretty messed up, but I know what you mean,” a co-participant of the focus group empathized. For some that have experienced isolation in the industry for a longer period seem to feel more desensitized, though still experience pain when recalling it: “It puts me in a bad place to try and remember. I’ve suppressed it… If I bring the memories up again it chips away at where I stand today. It’s just easier to not carry it with you. Being in the industry long enough, the more you just get used to it…” (Focus Group, Private Sector Planners of Color, 2016).

Do You Really Care or Do You Just Like How I Look?
Contributing to isolation, many planners also question whether their presence is a token or genuinely valued. An interviewee describes, “Maybe you’re invited to a meeting or a panel, and you know you’re asked to be there as a person of color and you wonder, do they want you there to look good for the company, or do they genuinely care? I really struggle with that and it’s really uncomfortable” (Planner C, 2016). A lack of validation from supervisors and peers and other planners of color to debrief on these moments contribute to this doubt and isolation.

Too Much Is Not Enough, and Not Enough Is Too Much
Some planners of color, particularly for Black and Latino planners, experience Black and Latino communities criticizing them for not doing enough for these communities, or for “selling out” (Focus Group, Latino/as in Planning, 2016; Blacks in Planning, 2016; Public Sector Planners, 2016; Employer C, 2016). Alternatively, when planners of color take a stance of prioritizing issues related to diversity, they are accused by Whites of only fighting for the interest of their racial group. There is greater trust when planners of color present to communities of color, but interviewees also expressed feeling pressure for greater
expectations from the communities they represent too, particularly if they are in a position of power. Planners of color commonly expressed undergoing internal conflict, especially in regards to specific City policies that may go against their own values or may lead to uncertain outcomes for the communities that they represent. (Refer to the White Dominant Planning Lens section.)

**Retention Barrier 3. Skipped Promotions and Less Meaningful and Visible Work**

“People of color don’t get promoted,” expressed an interviewee, shrugging her shoulders and confirmed by discouraged nodding heads around the table; “…at least not as fast as Whites” (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016). In addition to micro-aggressions and racial fatigue that lead to isolation and sometimes self-doubt, many interviewees shared individual observations on skipped promotions and less meaningful and visible work for planners of color relative to their White colleagues. Many planners described leaving firms and agencies because of the ceiling of growth and opportunity that they saw as clearly delineated by race: “Some people have left the profession as a whole because of this. How many promising people do we lose because people are stuck at mid-level?” (Focus Group, Original Founders of the ECDC, 2016).

**Disparity in Promotions Beyond Mid-Level**

Of respondents of color in the survey, only 25 percent were in senior-level positions, compared to 34 percent of Whites. Planners of color expressed being stuck in mid level tasks and positions, and survey data validated that planners of color had fewer major firm responsibilities, such as hiring, project solicitation, and representing the organization, compared to Whites. (Refer to Figures 10 and 11). “While there is no discrimination on a daily basis, I observe that promotions to managerial position are somewhat influenced by racial identity. Your lower and mid-level team may be pretty diverse, but the leadership will still be all White,” wrote a survey respondent (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2016). Several other respondents submitted similar sentiments. “Many qualified people of color were passed for promotions [in my agency], and people left because of that,” described another in a personal interview, who also found himself discouraged at opportunities for growth (Planner B, 2016). In interviews and focus groups, those that have been in the profession for longer, in particular, described witnessing several times White colleagues who started after them, were less qualified, or were trained by interviewees themselves, supersede them and other quality planners of color on position promotions. One White interviewee reflected, “I
just thought about this now… the long-time planners of color that are in our office that are in the same level position – we kind of see some of them as older, a little crazy, not doing much work and just collecting pensions, but I wonder how much of it is because they weren’t given meaningful nor visible work from the beginning and weren’t granted the opportunities to grow in the agency, ever. We never really questioned it in that way,” (Focus Group, White Allies, 2016). Though there may be a variety of reasons for this difference, interviewees attributed them to less meaningful work, less visible work, and difference in culture on self-promotion.

Opportunity to Grow Beyond Working in Outreach
A survey respondent writes on observation, “Overall, I'd say that there is a dichotomy within the field: land use and urban design tend to be whiter, while community development has a higher percentage of African American and Hispanic individuals” (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015). While this trend may be partly due to self-selection and interest, interviewees suggest that planners of color are often pigeonholed to work in outreach. “People see our work is in racially diverse communities and we get pigeonholed to do that,” articulated an interviewee (Focus Group, Original Founders of the ECDC, 2016). Several planners of color, particularly those with multilingual skills or those that have been in the profession longer, expressed frustration that they are continuously assigned to work in neighborhoods or projects that utilize their identity as a person of color to conduct outreach that often compromises their opportunities to be a planner beyond outreach. “There are certain types of projects that I am randomly assigned just because of where I grew up and the language I can speak – but I just end up being a translator and not a planner,” expressed an interviewee frustrated at the idea of serving as the official translator for the agency. “You can just hire a translator! Let me do my job as a planner” (Focus Group, Latino/as in Planning, 2016).

True, some people entered the profession to be a community planner to work in outreach for these neighborhoods, and to good purpose in advancing the quality of their work and impact. One interviewee describes, “I look like the community and I use that to my advantage, sharing experiences with people in the community, living the same type of life. I became a planner to stop a trend for my family, for community” (Focus Group, Latino/as in Planning, 2016). However, participants expressed that while this representation is important to the work of the firm/agency as well as process and outcomes in the community, not all planners of color entered the planning profession with this goal, nor do the majority plan to
do this outreach work for their entire careers. These positions are typically entry-level, and many want to move up to be able to make greater impact and influence, especially on the policy and at the citywide level. An interviewee and leader in diversity initiatives in planning described the necessity of differentiated experiences to achieve those positions:

Planners of color are easily marginalized and type-casted. If you are Hispanic, then you get the Hispanic community project. Only the White planner gets the Midtown [Manhattan] or other hot planning projects. You are always assigned to deal with community issues and not hard-core density or other planning issues – but you need exposure and experience in high profile areas in order to grow and move up. (Focus Group, Original Founders of the ECDC, 2016)

Limited to outreach work, many planners of color don’t get the same opportunities to work and gain experience in different types of neighborhoods and projects relative to their peers, and thus unequal opportunities for growth and promotion.

“Only White Planners Get the Sexy Projects”

In addition to growth through differing experiences, interviewees identified that key to promotion is the visibility of you and your projects. “I’ve seen plenty of people of color who did their time but were never promoted. The trajectory for planners of color is different because they have different visibility. To be promoted, you need the sexy projects – the ones that get you in front of the [City Planning] Commission. Only White planners get the sexy projects” (Focus Group, Women of Color in Planning, 2016). Another planner expressed, “You can tell who gets what projects and it doesn’t favor the minority planner. And after a while you learn that it’s not just in your head and you know you need to move on” (Focus Group, Original Founders of the ECDC, 2016).

Some may argue that a predominately White neighborhood should have a White planner so they better understand and are better received by the community. However, this assumption that “hot planning projects” or “hot areas like Midtown” also would not benefit from having a minority lead, or at least a more diverse staff to manage the project, is problematic. First, having a planner of color lead is even more critical in these neighborhoods in order to understand and advocate for the marginalized voice in, say, a majority-White neighborhood. Second, this justification is what leads to the systemic invisibility of planners, as having high-profile projects is necessary for building visibility and credibility of planners of color to White communities, as well as personal growth and opportunity for promotion.
Uneven Valuing, Framing, and Legitimizing Based On Unconscious Bias (Again)

Interviewees expressed that how supervisors delegate roles and introduce their staff also plays a role in the visibility or invisibility of planners of color and thus their ability to grow. One interviewee describes: “There’s a glass ceiling. I’ve been asked to prep other people to give a presentation, but to never speak myself. At first I began questioning myself, but it has happened enough times where I know I’m more competent to do the job and I know there’s something wrong in this picture” (Planner B, 2016). Another planner described, “In meetings, I am presented differently than some other people. My director will introduce my colleagues ‘this is so and so and they are the lead of this project!’ But when they introduce me, they just say my name. It’s uneven” (Focus Group, Latino/as in Planning, 2016). In both these instances, the supervisors may not have been aware or conscious of the uneven delegation and treatment, but interviewees articulated the importance of the supervisor’s role in contributing to the visibility and promotion of their staff of color. Unconscious bias once again may play a role in the uneven valuing: “It's not usually anything outright, but I do think the systemic predisposition to hire White men prevents this from happening,” a survey respondent wrote (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015). The patriarchic and White-dominant culture that is prevalent in our overall culture and work environment, beyond planning, has defined the qualities of one that is promotable.

Retention Barrier 4. White and Patriarchic Culture That Covertly Hinders Advancement

Despite micro-aggressions, isolation, and uneven work, there are many planners of color that are capable and confident and deserve to be promoted; however, they may not culturally carry themselves with the specific markers that dominant western patriarchic culture values and associates with advancement. Many planners of color described that others often perceive their cultural values and expressions to be at odds with these markers, which covertly hinders\textsuperscript{33} the advancement of people of color and women.

Differing Values Around Self-Promotion

Many planners of color, particularly women, expressed that their cultural tendency towards modesty counteracts with the self-promotion that is associated with confidence in White and male-dominated work culture. “People think I’m not confident, but no, I’m pretty confident –

\textsuperscript{33} Survey data shows that 16 percent of Blacks and Latino/as agree and strongly agree that they witness racial discrimination against colleagues at work, compared to only 8 percent of Whites, who may be less likely to identify it due to privilege. (Refer to Figure 19). Another significant proportion of planners across all racial groups felt neutral or unsure, reflecting the covertness of racial discrimination today.
it’s just that it’s not my nature to self-promote; jockeying is not my style” (Focus Group, Non-profit Sector Planners of Color, 2016). For some Asian and Latino planners, they attributed this to a cultural tendency towards humility, modesty, and more indirect styles of communication that they were taught, relative to the perceived cultures of their White and Black colleagues (Focus Groups: Asian Americans in Planning, 2016; Latino/as in Planning, 2016). Those who grew up with different cultures often misinterpret this humility as a reflection of lack of confidence. Thus, cultural competency plays a role in perceptions of who may deserve to be promoted. A respondent noted that “cultural competency is a critical skill that management needs to learn so they don’t miss out on bringing out the best in their diverse staff” (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2016).

Black planners shared this sentiment of lack of self-promoting nature, but described it as less about a clash of culture around humility and more as “being less entitled” in comparison to the cultures of those colleagues with more privileged backgrounds (Focus Group, Blacks in Planning, 2016; Planner B, 2016; Planner D, 2016). Planner D, a Black planner, described a recent interview he had for a recruited high-level position in an office that embodies the homogenous private-sector culture described earlier, where the interviewer shared his doubt of the interviewee’s leadership ability to take charge and command a team based on his modest and calm demeanor. Although the several rounds of interviews confirmed his qualifications and leadership, this particular interviewer told the interviewee, “you just don’t look like the type that would be able to do this job.” The planner assured him that he was assertive when he needed to be, but that his leadership style is more collaborative. He later reflected that his leadership style is directly derived from what his identity and upbringing has taught him:

If I were in a position of privilege all of my life or if my work was based on constant access to high level positions where I would have learned to behave in that way and carry that level of entitlement, then my approach for things I’m sure would be very different. I actually had to work and compromise for things all my life, thus my approach is different. But what they were looking for in approach is someone who understands them. If I were a White version of myself and grew up in a context where I would have learned to behave in that way, then would I would probably have that job. (Planner D, 2016)

Sociological research shows that different ethnic groups have different communication styles. While Whites and African-Americans often come from more direct-communication cultures, Asians and Latino/as come from more indirect-style cultures. Those of more direct styles often misinterpret others from indirect-communication groups as being unsure, unprepared, or uncomfortable. See Brett et al 2006.
He continued his reflections on an earlier interview, where someone recommended that he twist himself in the interview to fashion for what they are looking: “How much am I willing to twist? While having my integrity? A lot of POC find themselves in that position… This job would pay a lot but maybe it’s not worth the money… especially knowing the people you’d be working for don’t value certain fundamental things about you.”

Those that are able to code-switch often find themselves fatigued and under pressure to perform, and/or conflicted in their self-valuing of their intersectional identities. In addition, there is only so much of yourself that you might be able to “twist,” particularly if the markers of competence that those in positions of power hold may directly contradict the race and gender with which you were born and are associated.

Unequal Working Environments That Limit Participation and Growth
In addition to cultural differences around self-promoting, many planners identified unequal working environments due to the white-male-dominant structure that limits the ability of women and other caregivers from gaining the same experience and opportunities necessary for advancement compared to their male and White colleagues.

Female interviewees in particular expressed a constant pressure to keep up with their male colleagues that may not have the same familial obligations. “It’s tough because you feel you’re not doing enough at home and you’re not doing enough at work,” described a planner of color and mother (Planner C, 2016). Without the appropriate services to support mothers and caretakers, such as paid leave, daycare near work, pump rooms, and flexible work schedules or ability to work from home, caregivers are forced to make decisions between their families and careers. A survey respondent wrote:

As a woman who had been widowed with small children at a young age, I was very aware of the reduced flexibility I had to work freely in the field, where travel and evening meetings are part and parcel of the work. I had no support network of extended family members close enough to cover evening childcare for me, and so my availability to work was subject to being able to arrange for childcare. (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015)

Having fewer resources limits one’s ability to fully reintegrate with one’s career after parental leave. Caregivers are often unable to work the same number of hours as male or other non-caretaker colleagues and thus unable to build experience and visibility at the same pace.
About 52 percent of women with 6 to 20 years of experience were still in mid-level positions, compared to 44 percent of men with the same level of experience.

Work inflexibility excludes not only mothers, but also those with more limited resources and/or who come from more diverse backgrounds where there may be greater cultural expectations and obligations around family and community. Planner E shared her realization around her contribution to an unfair working environment:

I’m privileged to not have a family to care for after work, and I am able to put in more hours on these projects – but I’m only realizing that by working all these extra hours, I am helping to facilitate an unfair work environment by building expectations on employee commitments and achievement that my colleagues with kids and family, may not be able to fulfill, and these are more likely other people of color. (Planner E, 2016)

The interviewee acknowledges that, in a way, an intense work environment prevalent in the private sector that demands many hours and lacks appropriate support and resources for those with cultural or familial commitments, disincentives diversity and covertly excludes certain groups from opportunities to advance.

Dismissed as Fighting for Your Own Cause

Many people of color and women who advocate for changes that would lead to greater respect and fairness are dismissed as fighting for one’s own cause and creating excuses to not achieve what a select few have been able to do. Several interviewees described the challenge in working in environments with Whiteness and colorblindness to these issues. A survey respondent writes his reflection on this matter:

I suspect that because I am White and male, I have been taught and have learned, by virtue of being able to be part of mainstream heteronormative society before I knew there were options, to stand up for myself and for others; and along the same line of reasoning, I suspect I have had opportunities and “permission” not afforded to persons who are not White / male / heteronormative-behaving to practice ensuring that I address disrespect and unfairness, whether directed at me or at others. (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015)

This particular survey respondent recognized this and eloquently articulated it, but interviewees expressed that they feel most of their white colleagues do not see it. “Because the office is majority White, the office culture largely revolves around White culture and I feel
like I have fewer opportunities to engage,” writes a survey participant (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015).

Planners of color expressed often feeling the need to hold back talking about certain experiences or advocating for specific needs because it can be challenging to discuss without making certain people feel uncomfortable and withdraw. “It’s hard to bring up when there’s a diversity-related issue, especially if you’re the only person of color. You’re not sure how people will react or how people might treat you differently afterwards. It could even cost you your job if you’re unlucky,” (Planner E). Without calling out the dominant patriarchic-white-hetero-normative-structure that limits these conversations, building the cultural competency and capacity of Whites to understand and participate in these conversations, nor facilitating the space to discuss these issues in a safe space and productive way, advancement in the profession for planners of color continue to be systemically, yet covertly, hindered.

**Discrimination Based On Assumptions About Existing Racial Relations**

A survey respondent wrote: “Gave my two weeks, suggested two candidates to replace me – a White woman, and a Black (Haitian) man. Boss passed over the black guy because he thought developers we work with were racist and wouldn't accept him” (Diversity in Planning Survey, 2015). The respondent’s boss made assumptions based on his or her knowledge of existing racial relations that the Haitian man would not be able to perform the job because partners may not accept him. Instead of acknowledging his competence and qualifications and hiring for him to perform the job, the supervisor made assumptions on race relations that only further perpetuate the segregation and discrimination. Perhaps the supervisor could have hired the man to help prove the developers wrong. It would have been more powerful to hire the man and provide him with the support he needed.

**Retention Barrier 5. White-Dominant Planning Lens and Inner Conflict**

"No one is breaking the cycle of White planning and racism," said an interviewee (Focus group, Blacks in Planning, 2016). While micro aggressions, isolation, skipped promotions, and lack of cultural humility and competency amongst planners hinder a sense of belonging and opportunity for advancement for planners of color, probably one of the more challenging barriers to retention is the White planning lens that continues to dominate planning theory and practice today. For a profession that is so closely tied to decision making that impacts
equity in life outcomes of different racial groups throughout history, planning seems to surprisingly often ignore the topic of race. “We are terrible about discussing race in the profession,” an interviewee bluntly summarized (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016). Participants of this study across the board expressed the lack of conversations around race amongst colleagues. Many expressed the frustration and discouragement that comes with realizing the lack of acknowledgement of urban planning’s racist history, the coding of language that carries underlying discriminatory attitudes, the inner conflict that comes with being a part of problematic projects, and the fear and avoidance of colleagues to critically reflect on problematic policies.

Lack of Acknowledgement of Planning's White and Racist History

Many interviewees expressed that they have encountered many colleagues who do not understand or refuse to acknowledge planning’s dark history with race and class. One interviewee shared an account at a staff meeting where they began a discussion debriefing on the history of redlining, urban renewal, and now gentrification and the distrust that the public sector encounters when planning in communities of color:

I raised the idea to the group that there is distrust with communities when we work because of how all these issues tie to race. Someone came up to me afterwards, [who was] White, and said to me, “I don’t think race has anything to do with what we’re talking about.” I had to take a step back because I was in such shock. (Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016)

Interviewees expressed the frustrating nature of working in environments where one constantly has to educate colleagues about basic planning history and overcome their skepticism of the significance of discussing race. “We have used federal policies to gentrify neighborhoods,” stated an interviewee, “and as planners today we have to own that history and do something about it” (Focus Group, Blacks in Planning, 2016). The interviewee articulates that colorblind planning only perpetuates the inequalities that persist today. Another interviewee articulates: “I think people are uncomfortable that inequity is how our city developed, but we need to acknowledge that communities were invested in unequally. It’s hard for some people to accept that – their personal politics is confined with that which we do. But there is a deeper sense of accountability when we are called out on how we destroy communities” (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016). The interviewee acknowledges that owning this history places a deeper sense of responsibility on planners to proactively address the systemic issues that have plagued communities of
color. Removing personal politics and acknowledging the fact that segregation, concentrated poverty, and disinvestment of communities of color were not self-imposed but rather purposefully planned, would empower planners to take responsibility to consciously reflect on the imbalances of power, reverse these outcomes, and better promote equity.

**Codes of Discrimination in a Post-Racial Society**

In addition to lack of acknowledgment of racist history, planners of color interviewed also expressed frustration over the many ways in which colleagues perpetuate racist and classist attitudes towards communities through coded language. Interviewees expressed that some of their colleagues do acknowledge planning’s racist history but believe we have moved beyond it and live in a post-racial society as progressive planners. “I encounter this a lot with my colleagues – this entitlement; making conclusions and presumptions about communities of color and their wants, desires, needs. There’s a lack of sensitivity. We are a nonprofit organization and have the right mission and all, but I find myself butting up against it all of the time. I must brace for it in conversations,” shared Planner C, reflecting on the constant prejudices she hears directly from her colleagues who most of the time do not understand they are being insensitive (Planner C, 2016). “I have so many moments of being so angry because I’m seeing folks make poor decisions, saying racist things, constantly,” shared another planner, highlighting the ignorance of perpetrators on the fact that their words and decisions have consequences on real communities and perpetuate discrimination (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016).

Discrimination in language has taken on a more covert form, even amongst progressive planners. Perpetrators may be unaware of their insensitivity and impacts, but many planners of color find them painfully obvious. One example is the ways in which planners rearticulate community concerns: “I hear White planners say communities ‘complain’ – insinuating there is already doubt on that clientele” (Focus Group, Blacks in Planning, 2016). The interviewee explains that the word *complain* is problematic in already implying a limited level of credibility over concerns that may be deeply hurting communities of color. Participants noted that the level of paternalism that is very obvious to communities of color harks back to colonial and imperialistic attitudes. Many shared the sentiment that while this seems like an overstatement for many White planners, it is challenging for communities of color to be removed from this history of race relations because they continue to experience its systemic impacts and struggles everyday.
Planners of color that work in communities with a dominant White and wealthy population often experience the coding of language that communicates a distaste for low-income people and minorities. One interviewee describes:

White and wealthy don’t want poor [people of color] in their neighborhoods. They use codes though, like, “We don’t want people that barbeque; we don’t want to encourage basketball playing; we don’t want retail discount stores; we don’t want people to play soccer and ruin the grass; we don’t want overcrowded homes – people living in those basements.” People use codes, law, and zoning to discriminate from a certain group of people that use space differently or have different values of aesthetic… but people would rather sleep in a basement than have no place to sleep at all. (Focus Group, Women of Color in Planning, 2016)

Participants indicate that what is most frustrating is the blatant lack of humanity in comments such as these. Many planners share that not only do they find these comments offensive, they are disheartening as they are at a loss how to respond in the moment. Interviewees expressed that it can be particularly hurtful and enraging when one shares identity with the group discriminated through coded language. “I have the urge to tell them off and call out what they’re really saying, but I can’t... At least at my current job I can share with people and vent my frustration and they'll understand, but I've been in work environments where people don't understand and that's really hard,” shared an interviewee on the importance of colleagues that validate concerns and frustrations (Focus Group, Women of Color in Planning, 2016).

The Importance of Explicitly Discussing and Centralizing Race in Planning
When asked why a discussion of race and racism was important, interviewees responded that its absence places certain groups at greater disadvantage. One interviewee noted, “We don’t discuss race at work – people don’t bring up race; but racism is perpetuated if it’s not unpacked” (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016). Employer C notes that “planning is politics and politics is about power – power defaults to those with resources which are the wealthiest and Whitest” (2016). Without those conversations, planners are not conscious of the ways in which we may be privileging certain groups over others and perpetuating inequalities and inequitable life outcomes.
Subset discussions on diversity in planning are, however, not enough. Acknowledging planning’s racist past and centralizing diversity as planning doctrine itself is critical to reshaping planning processes and outcomes. One survey respondent wrote:

Diversity and justice should be a pillar of urban planning, as it should embody both themes as a living doctrine. It is a shame that even the spirit of planning doesn’t acknowledge the economic disparities and racial injustice that it was founded upon and we have yet to see the planning profession truly tear that down and adhere to a new planning doctrine comprised of equitable representation, investment and development. (2015)

The respondent emphasized the need to see the planning profession truly acknowledge the injustices it was founded upon and fully adopt a new planning doctrine based on equity.

Fear of Debate and Critical Tension

Such conversations (about race) are not easy to begin not facilitate, and many White interviewees, though they were allies, noted the challenges in discussing race. "I think people have a hard time talking about race because they are trying to avoid confrontation,” commented a participant (Focus Group, White Allies, 2016). Planner E, an Asian American interviewee, articulated that Asians are more likely to be found in private firms compared to other racial groups partly because of the model minority image and assumptions Whites make about Asian Americans and speaking up about race issues: “White people hire us because we’re the 'safe minority;' like ‘you’re kind of like us, successful, quiet’…. They hire us to not have that conversation about race” (2016). But planners of color and some White planners noted that critical tension is necessary. A White interviewee articulated, "If its not slightly adversarial then discrimination will only continue because the status quo is discriminatory" (Focus Group, White Allies in Planning, 2016). Another White interviewee noted, "It’s easy now to be complacent, but people think they’re doing the right thing if we are not actively debating. We end up on the wrong road with the smallest turns and we lack the foresight” (Focus Group, White Allies in Planning, 2016). The interviewee noted that when we are not actively debating, it is easy to be complacent about what is happening around us; and without knowing it, we could be worsening discriminatory practices. Another interviewee noted that having more people of color in the room is necessary for these conversations to be productive, “We need more people of color there, or else the conversation is always on the defensive... constantly needing to defend that it’s even an issue and it’s exhausting" (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners, of Color 2016). Race and gender issues are often considered trivial and/or dismissed partly in fear of their truths.
The debate and critical tension is important not only internally to create change in planning theory and practice, but also externally through the work of advocates and community-based organizations to challenge predominant institutions. Harney and Moten (2008), authors of *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, disavow the idea that institutions are places that would actively seek to “disrupt the reproduction of classed, racialized, nationalized, genderized, moneyed, and militarized stratifications” (cited in Kelley, 2016). As institutions dedicate themselves to professionalization, minorities are left to fend such initiatives alone with little institutional acknowledgement, support, or effort to make structural changes. In their essays, the authors call for an external network, termed as “fugitive,” that serves not only as a place of refuge, but commits to abolition and collectivity that prevails over the culture of institutions “whose university skepticism and claims of objectivity leave the world as-it-is intact” (cited in Kelley, 2016). Although Harney and Moten are specifically discussing educational institutions, this idea can be applied to governmental and planning institutions, whose internal structures are set to perpetuate inequities. The activism of communities, local organizations, and advocates is critical to transforming debate, discussions, and decisions to improve planning processes and outcomes to disrupt institutional reproduction of inequity.

**Summary**

Together with the framework introduced in Chapter V, these ten themes illustrate the various barriers to the recruitment, retention and advancement of planners of color in the profession. Without the adequate support and resources for planners of color to manage racial fatigue and isolation, work in meaningful and visible projects that can lead to opportunities for growth, and safe and open environments to unpack systemic discrimination and problematic policies, the planning profession will continue to have difficulty retaining and promoting planners of color and especially women. Proactive initiatives are needed to improve the support system and pathways for mobility and the advancement of diversity, and subsequently, the advancement of the planning profession towards better outcomes for diverse communities.
CHAPTER VII: RECOMMENDATIONS

As articulated in the APA NY Metro Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee’s Diversity Study (2001), the planning profession depends on the consent of its clientele: communities. As the clientele continues to diversify, the profession needs to take proactive steps to increase and foster diversity and monitor its progress in order to achieve more equitable outcomes for the communities it serves. Synthesizing this study’s literature review and quantitative and qualitative findings, I propose the following set of recommendations to better recruit, retain, and enable growth and leadership for people of color in the planning profession in the New York Metro Area, applicable to other parts of the country seeking to better represent their local communities. These recommendations reflect tangible strategies and actions, from low hanging fruit to long term projects, suggested by interviewees and crowd-sourced through the focus groups. The appropriateness and efficacy of each recommendation of course varies depending on the context (e.g. smaller office versus larger firms, more homogenous vs. very diverse communities). The idea is to provide a list of different strategies, small or large, that 1) employers and managers, 2) planning institutions, 3) planning schools and programs, 4) White planners as allies, 5) planners of color, and 6) researchers for further study could undertake.

For Employers and Managers

The following recommendations are for employers and managers, who play a crucial role in recruiting, retaining, and advancing opportunities for diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Employers represent the front line of both advancing planners of color and improving the work of the firm or agency in planning for and with communities of color.

1. Build the social infrastructure to foster genuinely inclusive work environments and more equitable opportunities.

1.1 Begin by increasing your own understanding of privilege, power, oppression, and awareness of personal bias. Much of discrimination is perpetuated unconsciously by the ways in which each individual is socialized, but institutional change often starts with individual transformation. Leaders should prioritize their own learning about the different experiences of various people of color and women through existing literature, conversations with colleagues, and practice being aware of one’s own
privilege, power, cultural barriers, and biases. Dismantling biases is a lifetime process, but it is critical for those in leadership positions to commit to personal awareness, reflection, and growth to become an ally in order to shift for institutional change.

1.2 Appoint leadership that genuinely values diversity as an asset and for its contribution to better planning processes and outcomes. Intention to improve diversity should derive from a genuine value that a more diverse staff and leadership, particularly inclusive of individuals that have experienced living in the communities we serve, will lead to better analysis and problem solving of the issues.

1.3 Incorporate diversity and equity-outcomes as central parts of the mission, strategic plan, and workplace goals. This statement of values that guides an agency or firm’s work also sends a message to current employees, prospective employees, and communities served.

1.4 Mandate training of staff and management in anti-oppression, undoing racism, and other cultural competencies. Training facilitated by organizations that specialize in anti-oppression and diversity trainings can help build the capacity of staff to be more culturally humble and equipped with both the lens and language to welcome and foster an environment of diversity and inclusion. Trainings are especially critical for managers to understand different work and communication styles and identify personal biases. (These trainings can also shift the lens of work to enable better outcomes for communities, and begin to address the stigma of “Whiteness” prevalent particularly for private firms.)

1.5 Organize staff retreats, leadership workshops, and working groups centered on fostering more reflective and inclusive work environments and products. One-off trainings during orientation are not enough to foster inclusive environments, as unpacking bias is a long-term process. Safe spaces and time are needed to enable

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35 Reflection questions to consider recommended by focus group participants: How might I preference particular groups over others? Based on what markers do I (mis)judge the competence of certain individuals over others? How might I have particular biases or assumptions on certain individuals because of their identity? What markers do I equate to ‘unprofessional’ versus ‘professional’ and how might differing cultures value these differently? How might others’ biases or assumptions related to race, gender, age, or other identity prevent individuals I work with to grow in their careers?

36 Some employers only value diversity reactively – in response to criticism they have received or for the desire for better access and acceptance in communities of color. Personal reevaluation is recommended.
introspection in the profession and promote team building across demographies. Retreats could encourage reflection of diversity and ethics in practice, and provide opportunities to discuss the social and economic infrastructure that might be needed at work to support underrepresented planners, including women, care-givers, those living with disabilities, and more. To be more effective, following retreats and workshops, working groups should be dedicated to leading the rest of the staff in continuing to advance diversity goals. Of course, it would be essential that the working group(s) are themselves diverse and not limited to only those who belong to historically marginalized groups. Promoting diversity and related goals must not be delegated to a subset group, lest it be marginalized as being about the “other” rather than about everyone.

1.6 **Enable work flexibility.** Paid maternity and paternity leave, family sick leave, ability to work from home, pump rooms, and other infrastructure to support mothers and caregivers are crucial to dismantling unequal working environments.

2. **Aggressively recruit staff (at all-levels) through non-traditional means that target more diverse audiences.**

2.1 **Connect with existing local planning networks to recruit for planners from more diverse backgrounds.** The New York Metro Chapter’s Diversity Committee is a growing network of local planners of diverse backgrounds with many connections to national planning diversity networks\(^{37}\), and can serve as a link and outlet for recruitment. The Planner’s Network, whose focus is on progressive planning, can also serve as a link to identify diversity-minded students and professionals.

2.2 **Recruit from community-based organizations and non-profits, where more planners of color, or people of color with planning-related experiences, are employed.** Interviewees in the public sector noted that the greater presence of planners who came from community-based or organizing backgrounds that now work for the City

\(^{37}\) In addition to the national APA Diversity Task Force and the AICP’s Planners of Color Interest Group, there are national minority associations for just about every related profession that could also serve as resources, including the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), Nation Society of Black Engineer, the National Association of Minority Landscape American Society of Landscape Architects (NAMLA).
has enabled more diversity, better relationships with communities, a shift in agency mindset, and ultimately better outcomes for neighborhoods.

2.3 **Recruit from community colleges and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).** Planners of color, especially those who grew up in lower income neighborhoods, bring a valuable lived experience to their skills set that Ivy League (for example) degrees cannot teach in the classroom. Community colleges and state schools are more likely to be more diverse because of the lower economic barriers to entry. HBCUs are also key, and there are several that offer accredited graduate planning degrees, including Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, Howard University, Jackson State University, Morgan State University, and Texas Southern University.

2.4 **Recruit and mentor college graduates from community colleges in urban studies, planning, and related fields; and provide additional training and opportunities for these students to advance their planning skills.** There are several community colleges in New York City that offer undergraduate urban studies and planning-related programs and dozens of students of color with lived experiences growing up in the city. Employers can offer entry-level positions, meaningful paid internships with mentorship, fellowships that can lead to full-time positions, and/or sponsorship to pursue further graduate-level education. These students may need additional skills training and support but are critical for firms towards diversity and thus better work products. Mindful of the demands on their own time, employers could work with local graduate programs to develop scholarship or fellowship programs.

2.5 **Charge the Equal Employment Officer (EEO) to include proactive recruitment for diversity, particularly in connection with leadership positions.** Senior level positions need targeted recruitment, and having dedicated staff members to use sources such as LinkedIn and the networks mentioned above, conduct research on potential candidates, and reach out to recruit candidates are proactive strategies that are highly more effective than waiting and hoping for a diverse application pool.

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38 There are no HBCUs that offer accredited graduate programs in New York; however, there may be students originally from New York City that attended HBCU programs elsewhere across the country. Medgar Evers College is an HBCU located in Brooklyn, and offers an Urban Administration program, including course on community development, urban planning, and local government.
Commissioner Mitch Silver for the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, is beginning to implement this.

3. **Be conscious of opportunity inequities and be intentional in leadership to help planners of color grow.**

3.1 **Validate and legitimize planners of color for who they are, their skills, and what they bring to the table, no differently than other planners.** Many planners of color find themselves questioning whether they are a token or genuinely valued. They also face the burden of bias in meetings and public forums where others may already be making assumptions about their competence. This can be as simple as introducing your staff in meetings with what their main lead project is and what they bring to the table to improve visibility. Validation can also be expressed through assigning meaningful projects and showing trust in your staff.

3.2 **Assign meaningful projects, and rotate planners and projects to diversify exposure and experience in high profile areas.** Planners of color expressed experiencing being limited to working on outreach with similar neighborhoods to their ethnicity and low-profile projects. Planners of color should be given the same chance to work on higher-profile and more challenging projects and grow their experience and visibility as other planners. In turn, different backgrounds will provide opportunity for fresh approaches and solutions to emerge. It is important to avoid mistaking and dismissing humility and modesty for lack of confidence. On the other hand, it is critical to mentor your planner of color and build the extra confidence and skills they might need to succeed and excel in future large projects. Ask them where they want to be and what they might need.

3.3 **Provide more equitable opportunities such as trainings and conferences to advance skills and visibility of planners of color.** Employers can help to seek out opportunities to deepen experiences for planners of color who may not have had the same opportunities to lead projects or exposure to travel and conferences as others in the workplace. This is also about sharing your trust and genuine support for them. This recommendation is about consciousness around equity and providing opportunity for advancement of people of color to build in light of a foundation of microaggressions and systemic barriers.
3.4 **Be an ally and let your staff know you are an ally.** It is important to declare and foster a culture of zero tolerance of discrimination. Being an ally means avoid being a bystander and instead being more outward that certain behavior is unacceptable and calling out situations that are not appropriate. It is critical to look out for signs of discrimination in its most covert ways, and stand up for planners of color.

For Planning Institutions

Below includes a series of recommendations for planning institutions both in local chapters and national groups such as the American Planning Association (APA), the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB), American Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP), and other planning affiliations, who play a role in promoting particular values within the planning academia, practice, and community.

4. **Seek creative approaches to comprehensive outreach about the planning profession, particularly in communities of color.**

4.1 **Provide stronger incentives to join the APA Ambassadors Program**\(^{39}\) and facilitate better information sharing and collaboration across ambassadors. The Ambassadors Program, an idea that came out of the National Diversity Task Force, enlists planners to commit to conducting outreach in underrepresented communities regarding the profession. However, still not many members know about the program or feel enough incentive to volunteer their time to commit to it. The APA should make it possible for Ambassadors to fulfill hours in exchange for Certification Management (CM) credits. Currently, ambassadors are working in silos, but the APA could help to encourage and enable collaboration with other ambassadors by region. National conferences should also provide an opportunity for ambassadors to gather together and share strategies.

4.2 **Develop a campaign for raising awareness about planning that targets “minority markets” and support local schools to advertise their programs.** It is critical to increase efforts to expose more people of color to the profession. One way is for the

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\(^{39}\) The ambassadors program enlists planners to commit to conducting outreach in underrepresented communities regarding the profession.
APA to promote the profession through ads and campaigns in national magazines, radio, television, or other media that target minority markets. Ads should make powerful statements about planning as a profession and highlight the impacts of planning decisions in communities, and can be shared with local chapters to implement regionally. One idea is to tap into the creativity of planning students and host a competition across planning schools for the best campaign about the planning profession, targeting diverse and underrepresented audiences.

4.3 Invite and encourage members to nominate and support urban planners to apply for prestigious national and local award programs that acknowledge leadership, innovation, and community impact. Examples of these include City and State’s 40 under 40, or Forbes’ 30 under 30 Women. These lists acknowledge, which are not traditionally filled with urban planners, can help to increase exposure to the greater public on the planning profession.

4.4 Develop and share a package of informational and recruitment materials on planning and list of ideas for planning programs on how to engage and disseminate info to teachers and guidance counselors in local high schools and colleges. The APA could develop materials for local chapters and planning programs to disseminate locally that better highlight joining the planning profession as a means of achieving agency and positive change in communities. This literature could feature planners of color and real-life stories. The package could also include a list of ideas to guide schools on how to conduct outreach and ultimately increase exposure to the planning profession and better recruit students of color.

5. Centralize and increase visibility of social equity goals and outcomes in dominant planning discourse and encourage introspection in the profession.

5.1 Proactively seek diversity and social justice values in leadership of all levels in the institution to break the stigma of planning and “Whiteness” of organizations representing planning interests. What is valued most in an organization is reflected in its leadership. Rather than viewing diversity and equity values in leadership candidates as a plus, the APA, AICP, PAB, and ACSP should see these values as a core and necessary quality for the job. Just as employers should more proactively recruit for leadership that values diversity and equity, and recruit for greater racial
and ethnic diversity amongst leadership, so should planning institutions and associations.

5.2 **Highlight minority planners and successful initiatives in minority communities in newsletters and print materials, and the number of times they are featured relative to White planners should at minimum reflect national demographics.** APA has been improving the number of articles and individuals featured; this needs to emphasize highlighting planners of color in the important work they do. APA could encourage local chapters and diversity networks to nominate individuals to be featured.

5.3 **Centralize diversity topics and topics that address less mainstream and traditional planning approaches, while requiring an equity lens in all published articles and all panels in the national and local conferences.** Rather than having special diversity workshops or small feature articles where only those interested attend, centralize diversity by featuring it as a cover-page article or plenary session, such as that in the 2015 New York Metro Chapter annual conference. For print materials such as the Journal of the APA (JAPA), editors could ask each author to reflect on some sort of equity impact of their topic, especially in race, gender, class, and their intersectionality. The APA could require a reflection of equity to be incorporated in each conference session proposal, and connect them to the Diversity Committee for any technical assistance or support that may be needed. Proposal evaluators could also encourage applicants to consider and include space for non-dominant perspectives (eg. having diverse perspectives on a panel). These gatekeepers play a role in promoting reflection of would-be researchers, authors, presenters, and audiences, to more deeply reflect on planning’s direct connection to equity in communities.

5.4 **Be more active and vocal on national and local social equity issues.** While avoiding specific Political party allegiances, it is critical for the APA, AICP, and ACSP to take a stronger stance and contribute to discussion on national equity issues that affect especially communities of color, such as gun violence, prison system reform, minimum wage, fair housing, immigration, and more. Highlight the urban planning and structural perspective on each of these issues, and encourage members, especially those of color and women, to submit op-eds to newspapers. The APA
especially cannot be a bystander on these issues, as they directly affect the communities of planners of color in the network as well.

6. **Promote cultural competency as a critical skill in the profession.**

   6.1 **Require and monitor diversity CM credits to maintain certification.** Just as the AICP requires fulfilment of Law and Ethnics requirements for CM credits so as to maintain certification, members should be required to earn credits for participating in equity-focused sessions, anti-oppression or cultural competency trainings.

   6.2 **Emphasize diversity and social justice as explicitly as possible in the planning core curriculum and requirements for accreditation.** Accreditation holds great leverage and, often, only thing that holds many of these schools accountable to diversity and equity-based curriculums. The PAB should not only encourage, but also *require* participatory planning and cultural competency education in planning curricula. The PAB could include links to curricula and syllabi that integrate diversity in planning education, such as that put together by the AICP Planners of Color Interest Group in 2014. The PAB should continue requiring schools to report on diversity and create a plan to recruit for diversity for accreditation, and enable alternate forms of reporting for schools in states where it may be more legally challenging. Recently, the PAB proposed changes that would undermine the importance of diversity, and advocates should continue to pressure the PAB to reconsider and instead strengthen diversity measures.

7. **Provide more opportunities for networking, mentorship, support, and growth, especially for planners of color.**

   7.1 **Provide entrepreneurship-training workshops targeted to planners of color, so they can more quickly move into leadership positions in private sector firms, or create firms that are able to compete with existing private sector firms.** Visibility of competitive contracts with minority firms can help to procure more minority contracts, and APA should help in providing targeted training opportunities to promote equity.

   7.2 **Continue expanding the mentorship program to recruit more planners of color, and enable CM credit opportunities for mentorship.** Tap into diversity networks to recruit
and provide language that emphasizes the ability to indicate preference for mentors or mentees of similar race, ethnicity, gender, etc. In general, CM credits for mentorship could serve as an opportunity to further incentivize and recruit new mentors and mentees.

7.3 Feature keynotes that reflect on equity and/or diversity related issues in informal networking events as a means of creating more inclusive spaces. By reputation, planning events without marked attention to diversity already imply for many a non-diverse and thus unwelcoming environment. As an interviewee noted, “Most of the time I don’t feel like going because I know I’m going to be one of three people of color there” (Focus Group, Queer Planners of Color 2016). Whether simple happy hours or informal networking, APA could more often feature and advertise some type of keynote address reflecting on an equity-based and current topic. This can not only attract a more diverse audience, but ultimately foster a more inclusive, welcoming, and reflective space.

7.4 Create a Diversity in Planning listserv and facilitate better communication and information sharing between and across local and national APA chapter diversity committees. Currently, diversity committees are working separately across the nation and communication is unclear. The listserv could serve as a forum to share articles or resources, conferences, ideas, job postings, and other collaboration opportunities.

7.5 Convene a summit for planners (and students) of color. The AICP and PAB should partner with Black in Design, a conference organized by students of color at Harvard in 2015, to more formally bring together planners and students of color across the nation to discuss diversity in the planning profession and build networking opportunities.

8. Remove cost barriers to enter planning school and build networks.

8.1 Fundraise to create a fellowship program for underprivileged students using an-opt out system during conference registration. One idea could be to use APA, AICP, and ACSP conference sign-up as an opportunity to raise money for scholarships for underprivileged students. Each member could be automatically charged $50 to
support a scholarship fund with an “opt-out” or “enter other amount” option. The funds could be used to create a scholarship to support a group of underprivileged students for 2 years of study. Students could be part of a fellowship and leadership development program to foster future leaders in the planning profession from diverse backgrounds.

For Planning Schools

The recommendations below serve as a compilation of ideas for planning programs in the New York Metro area, who play a critical role in the recruitment and education of future planners, as well as the advancement of planning theory.

9. **Find creative means to remove financial barriers to attendance costs for students of underprivileged backgrounds, and advertise these on materials and websites.**

   9.1 **Work with local firms and agencies to create a full scholarship program in the New York Metro Area for students of color from underprivileged backgrounds to pursue planning education.** Planning programs could more closely collaborate with local firms and agencies to create scholarship and fellowship opportunities (paid internships) that can help support underprivileged students financially and academically. Initiatives to overcome economic injustice, such as free tuition programs and aggressive recruitment for students of color, are critical. Planning programs should lobby with their institutions to provide at least one full scholarship for a student of color from an underprivileged background. New York University is one example of a school that is implementing this.

   9.2 **Grant portfolio credits that count towards electives for graduation for those with community organizing or other social work background experience, as part of a tuition reduction strategy.** These are often critical community planning skills not obtainable through the traditional classroom. Planning programs should advocate their institutions for the possibility of granting portfolio credits for relevant work experience in planning / community development. Pratt Institute is an example program that enables this and has more successfully recruited diverse prospective students from local community based organizations.
9.3 Work with local community colleges to develop a fast-track college to master’s degree programs and/or joint degree or cross-sector programs. Target especially first generation college students. Creating a fast-track program to complete a Bachelor’s degree at a community college and get a graduate degree in urban planning in five to six years can help to motivate and support these students to enter the profession (Campaign for College Opportunity, cited in Azziz, 2015). Pratt Institute is one example of another program that is exploring this idea.

9.4 Consider eliminating requirement for GRE or exemption for the planning program. While the majority of schools in the metropolitan area do not require the GRE for application, some still do and this poses another barrier for underprivileged groups and barrier to a more diverse set of perspectives in the classroom.

9.5 Enable flexibility with courses by offering some online, evening, and/or weekend classes. This can help students who need to work during the day to cover living expenses, as well attract adjunct practicing-faculty, who may be more diverse than fully academic faculty. Where feasible, it can be encouraging to explore the possibility of providing childcare options (subsidies, vouchers, last minute babysitters, etc.) for students and faculty who may need it for evening sessions.

10. Design and implement early recruitment initiatives.

10.1 Encourage students and faculty to sign up for Ambassadors Program and conduct planning workshops for middle, high school, and undergraduate programs. The APA’s NY Metro Chapter Diversity Committee, national APA, and other planning institutions have a library of planning activities and curricula for elementary, middle, and high school that are ready to use. Planning programs should attempt to build and maintain relationships with particular high school or undergraduate programs to create as an annual pipeline. Consistency, eg. returning to present at high school and college career fairs, could be a way to build this relationship and pipeline.

10.2 Connect faculty and students of undergraduate programs of community colleges and HBCUs in related studies, such as Urban Studies, Sociology, American Studies, Race and Ethnic Studies, etc. to speak about the profession as a career path. These are very relevant fields to the interdisciplinary nature of urban planning and are more
likely to have more diverse students. The connection between these studies and their application to urban planning is seldom made. The instructors may not be familiar with the urban planning profession themselves. Presentations in class about urban planning can serve as an opportunity to raise awareness and recruit equity-minded students into graduate school and into the profession.

10.3 Recruit from community-based organizations. These individuals are more likely to come from the communities that they serve and can often benefit from a planning education. Planning programs could use community-based studios and other community-university relations as opportunities to recruit more people working in local neighborhoods conducting community development work to pursue a discounted graduate education. Sound community planning collaboration and practices also increase exposure and reputation of the profession in these communities.

11. Improve outreach and visibility of the planning profession and program.

11.1 Highlight alumni planners of color, and present university awards to alumni for advancing diversity and equity. Making these awards known in local papers that target minority-markets would aid in general to increase exposure about the profession, what planners do, and how they can advance the interest and needs of communities of color.

11.2 Advertise about the planning profession and program in local newspapers, magazines, subway advertisements, and social media, particularly those that target local minority-markets. Planning programs could advertise about their programs and better feature planners of color and the power of planning to positively change life outcomes.

12. Modify curriculum and student life with infrastructure to equip students with cultural competency skills, introspection, community experience, and respect for local knowledge before they graduate.

12.1 Design a curriculum that clearly engages with topics and issues that are more relevant to diverse audiences. Programs should make an effort to integrate equity
throughout all planning topics throughout the required curriculum, as well as incorporate studio practicum with community partners or research centers that focus on these issues. Planning programs could require community-based work as part of graduation, whether in internships, incorporating a community-client in studios. Making this known on course and curriculum descriptions, and this can help to attract more diverse applicants. The ACSP People of Color’s Interest Group (POCIG) has collected a packet of example syllabi of courses exploring diversity from planning schools across the nation.

12.2 Implement a robust mandatory diversity training and/or course introducing cultural competency to enable greater reflection on the changes needed in the profession. This is meant to serve as an introduction to the language and framework around power, privilege and oppression that is common in community organizing, and its applicability to planning. The course could include introspection as core part of the planning curriculum, just as there is personal reflection on privilege, power, and researcher in fields such as anthropology and sociology. Students of the Diversity Initiatives Group (DIG) at Pratt Institute created a syllabus for a five-week introduction course to cultural competency with the help of faculty member Ayse Yonder.

12.3 Encourage, fund, and support a student- and faculty- run diversity committee to help advise the program and its efforts to promote inclusion and a stronger equity-based curriculum. This group can also help to foster safe spaces for students and advocate for student needs.

12.4 Incorporate a question in course evaluations measuring how students’ understanding of an aspect of diversity has improved as a result of the class. In response to the recommendation of its student-run Diversity Initiative Group, Pratt Institute recently implemented this as part of their standard evaluation in their Programs for Sustainable Planning and Development that asks “On a scale of 1-5, how much do you agree with the statement that this class improved my understanding of social justice / diversity.” This can help to indicate their importance to faculty and measure progress in course curricula.
13. Actively recruit faculty of color and support their growth and visibility.

13.1 Target recruitment of practicing planners of color from local firms, agencies, and non-profits, and advocacy or research groups to teach. Planning programs could better tap into local professional networks, such as the APA’s New York Metro Chapter’s Diversity Committee, for recommendations of practicing candidates or for help in advertising open faculty positions. Administrators and fellow faculty in existing planning programs could also directly seek advice from their faculty of color and colleagues of color for ideas.

13.2 Mandate diversity and cultural competency trainings for faculty and administrators. Students are not the only ones that need to reflect on privilege, power, and oppression, not only in roles as planners but also in interactions in the classroom. Students and faculty of color have reported experiencing micro-aggressions in the classroom from students, but also from faculty. Faculty should also be trained on how to address discriminatory situations in the classroom and be trained to properly intervene and incorporate as a teaching moment.

13.3 Promote mentorship and collaboration among faculty and more informal gatherings. Planning programs could facilitate all-faculty meetings where each individual gets a chance to introduce themselves to initiate collaboration. Happy hours could also build and sustain mentorship and collaboration between faculty members outside of the classroom. Programs could collaborate and facilitate happy hours across institutions in the metro area for faculty of color, as well to promote inter-university collaborations and mentorship. Programs could also better feature their profiles, experiences, and research on program websites.

13.4 Encourage and support faculty of color in publishing peer reviewed journals and applying for fellowships. Planning programs could more proactively target support for these opportunities to faculty of color and more equitably provide resources such as release time, stipends, mentorship, and other publishing support for those who have not had the same opportunities for mentorship as others. Planning programs could also better feature bios and work of faculty of color on websites and make it more visible and accessible for students of color to read about their work and connect with faculty of color.
13.5 Proactively take initiative to ensure diversity in tenured faculty by providing mentorship and support for diverse candidates. Planning programs could host training workshops targeted to underrepresented faculty (of color and women) interested in pursuing tenure and provide strategies and support to help them work towards it. Programs should also advocate in the institution for more inclusive selection practices around tenure, as well as diversity in administrative leadership.

For White Planners as Allies

The following set of recommendations are for White planners who are interested in becoming allies and improving opportunities for diversity in the profession. As interviewees noted, White allies are critical to fostering and legitimizing more inclusive and safe environments and ultimately better retaining and advancing planners of color.


14.1 Bring awareness to your personal biases and work to unpack and dismantle them; help your peers do the same, and use your privilege for good. For White planners interviewed in this study whose commitment to racial equity was more deeply ingrained, it was because they empathized with the experience of being an “other” or because they opened themselves to learn from those considered “others”. They built deep friendships and took time to humbly learn from those communities to learn that they were valuable and meaningful. White planners could discuss these with friends of color, but spend more time humbly listening and learning. White planners could also seek out opportunities to learn about the history and experiences of different racial groups in the U.S., and reflect on privilege, power, and oppression. Being proactive in seeking anti-oppression training and building one’s understanding and even the vocabulary to understand privilege and social justice are critical to being an ally.

40 One example of a reflection exercise could be to reflect on the assumptions we make about people, both positive and negative, particularly the reactions we might have when a person of color versus someone White, or a woman versus a man, were to do something. When might we delineate between a good and bad minority? When might we carry double standards? This introspection and dismantling of learned biases and double standards is a lifetime process that everyone should practice, regardless of identity. Luckily, there are many resources such as articles, books, workshops, and groups actively working to reflect and acknowledge White privilege and work to dismantle White supremacy and anti-Blackness.
14.2 Call out discrimination and educate other Whites on diversity issues; come out as an ally on these issues and make planners of colors and other Whites feel safer to bring up and discuss these issues. A White interviewee articulated that going back into White communities to help dismantle racism and White-supremacy is perhaps the most critical thing Whites can do for themselves and people of color: “It’s funny because Whites are always working in other communities, lower income areas, all around the world, trying to ‘fix their problems,’ even though we’ve got a lot of big problems in the White community that we have to fix first” (Planner F, 2016). Dismantling discrimination is not possible without White allies who help to advocate and legitimize the concerns of people of color, and work within their own communities to create change. It is often exhausting for planners of color who find themselves solely defending why diversity is relevant. When in meetings and an inappropriate comment is made around race, gender, etc., it is important for White (particularly male) allies to call them out and directly address how they are problematic. Discrimination is often coded and it is important for Whites to be more aware of these codes and not be bystanders.

15. Promote the advancement of planners of color in the workplace and profession.

15.1 Shift the discourse to diversity as an asset. Allies see diversity as something that needs celebration, not just a condition with many issues to address. Planning needs more White planners that acknowledge and promote the value that we learn from diversity and that work outcomes are better as a result of differing and often opposing perspectives.

15.2 Recognize where structural racism and sexism have limited opportunities for certain groups in the workplace, and advocate for colleagues of color. It is critical for each person to try and reflect on how structural racism and sexism may have helped to systemically facilitate the people who are in positions of power in office. If you notice your project partner or colleague of color does not get much visibility despite the quality of his or her work or time they have put in, advocate for them. White planners could help to be more aware of when they may be able to step back to provide colleagues of color space to lead and grow as well.
15.3 Nominate under-celebrated and under-appreciated colleagues of color for more important projects, awards, or higher-level positions. If you are in a position of power, implement initiatives to change institutional barriers to the recruitment and advancement of planners of color (also see recommendations for employers and managers).

15.4 Explore joining the local Chapter Diversity Committee to participate in initiatives to improve diversity and cultural competency in the planning profession. The committee brings together people of color and allies not only as a support group, but also a team that organizes various local trainings, workshops, forums, and other diversity-promoting initiatives.

15.5 Own the discriminatory history of planning and centralize economic justice in your planning and everyday work. It is often challenging to reflect and remain humble as a planner. It would be powerful if more White allies prompted reflections and conversations with colleagues about the role of a planner, the impact of racial and class privilege, and on the possible implications on race, gender, and class on the policies and communities we work with. White planners could help take a stand to challenge or even refuse to work on certain policies that may have negative impacts on marginalized communities. While these initiatives to personally reflect and support planners of color are critical, the ultimate barrier to diversity in planning is structural economic injustice, which limits opportunities for many people of color to thrive in communities. As planners, we can play a critical role in enabling more equitable communities and thus life outcomes and opportunities for communities of color. But we also straddle the line in our policy and planning decisions in either promoting more equitable communities, or worsening and perpetuating historical inequalities. White planners play a critical role in advocating for the centralization and implementation of economic justice policies and practices (part of APA Code of Ethics). It cannot be limited to planners of color to be involved in advocacy work locally around issues that affect communities of color. More participatory community engagement strategies can serve as a professional as a starting point to enable communities to meaningfully incorporate their concerns and ideas into the planning process.
For Planners of Color

This next set of strategies summarize what employers and planners of color that were interviewed recommend for planners of color do for themselves and each other to do to improve recruitment and advancement of diversity planning.

16. “Come out” as a planner of color, female, and/or -of working-class-background planner to both recruit and advocate for others in the profession.

16.1 Get involved in expanding planning as a career to communities. Planners of color can help to spread the word in our own communities and show that we are a person of color and a planner, working to make positive change in communities. Planners of color can serve as role models and articulate to youth that planning is a way to change the state of folks of color, and ultimately help to further promote the planning profession as a means of achieving self-determination in communities.

16.2 Promote and care for other planners of color. One interviewee said, “Just as we can choose whether we show up as a bureaucrat just because we work in City government, we can also choose whether we show up as a person of color everyday” (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016). However threatening to the fragility of a power position, planners of color need to support each other and continue advocating for diversity issues and the needs of communities of color. This also means sharing our experiences as a people of color and continuing to speak up and educate others: “There’s a burden to being a person of color – but you have to share those experiences to make a point for those who don’t see” said another interviewee (Focus Group, Public Sector Planners of Color, 2016). Self-care is also important – not every battle is worth fighting.

16.3 Get involved with networks and mentorship with planners (and students) of color through the APA local chapter Diversity Committee and NY Planners of Color and Allies LinkedIn network. One idea is to reach out and share with other planners of color and or allies by joining the committee, at least the listserv or related LinkedIn network of planners of color and allies. Anyone is welcome to suggest different event types to the local Diversity Committee chapter to promote particular discussions or types of networking, e.g. Latino/as in planning or Women of Color in
planning. It can also be beneficial to get involved with alumni associations and mentor students of color, or join the local chapter mentorship program to support other planners of color.

17. **Place extra effort on improving your own growth and visibility, as well as that of your fellow planners of color.**

Network and seek real mentorship. Whether seeking for jobs or not, it can be beneficial to request informal interviews with firms and agencies for whom you might be interested in working. Participants noted that it is key to participate in networking opportunities and bring a colleague or two to encourage you to participate, as you will never know who you will meet or opportunities you will cross. Whether through the mentorship program or through personal or professional networks, it helps to find someone that can help encourage you and expand on your assets and push you to pursue all opportunities. One interviewee shared, “My mentorship is going to be tough love because no one is going to hand it to you,” (Focus Group, Founding Members of the ECDC, 2016).

17.1 Participate in panels, conference, write articles, and encourage other planners of color and especially women and improve your own visibility and the visibility of other planners of color. An interviewee recommended, “If you want to be outstanding, you need to get out, get to panels, go to conferences, and stand out. People need to get face-time, write articles, expose themselves, so people can’t say who is that person?” (Focus Group, Founding Members of the ECDC, 2016). The interviewee suggests that despite the fact that these extra efforts are unpaid, the approach must be to push oneself and treat it like a work project, because the connections and visibility are invaluable.
For Researchers

Very little research is available on the experiences of planners of color and their intersectionality, particularly to compare experiences nationally and longitudinally. Due to the limitations of the scope and timeframe of this study, there were many aspects of the survey that were not able to be analyzed that future research could explore, including but not limited to:

- Are there concentrations or clustering of certain groups under particular fields within planning and why?
- How often do planners of color switch jobs or organizations and why?
- What are the experiences and reasons for the gap specific for Blacks in the private sector and Latino/as in the public sector?
- What are the reasons for significant difference between the number of male versus female Asian planners in the profession (significantly less Asian men)?
- What are the stats and experiences of planners of color stuck in mid-level?
- What are the differences in responses across race and gender, controlling for years of experience, age, sector, field, and more? What about class? Geography (e.g., New York City versus its suburbs)?
- What are the experiences of being queer in the planning profession between men and women; the role of the queer perspective in planning; why gay males are prevalent in the profession; intersections across race?
- What are the different reasons why people choose to not become members of the APA or other planning institutions? What would incentivize planners of color?
- What are initiatives and outcomes of other cities to promote diversity and inclusion in their work places in public policy (e.g., Seattle)?
- What is the dynamic between urban studies versus urban planning programs and why fewer students of color pursue planning?

41 One of the misjudgments of this study was measuring age and years of experience in intervals rather than directly ordinal and made it difficult to understand the full picture and compare responses. Future study should measure these in ordinal numbers.
CONCLUSION

Advancing opportunities for planners of color leads to better representation, advocacy, agency, cultural competency, adaptability, and ultimately, better processes and outcomes for the diverse communities in the New York Metro Area. The recommendations above are not revolutionary, but rather are tangible small steps. They call for all stakeholders in planning to take shared responsibility in efforts to overcome barriers to recruitment and retention of people of color in the profession. They call for a greater introspection of ourselves and of our practice, greater awareness of how inequality permeates our everyday work, and greater initiative on the individual, interactional, and institutional levels to promote diversity and progress. The barriers to diversity are structural and systemic, and thus refusing to acknowledge the elephant in the room, only perpetuates planning to remain a predominately White profession with inequitable outcomes for all communities along the lines of race, and potentially damaging consequences for communities of color. While implementing these initiatives mentioned are critical steps to advancing diversity in planning, it is still not enough and should never serve as a completion check-list to achieve an end to diversity initiatives. Real change will require economic, political and educational reform, and the dismantling of structural racism and White supremacy. As planners influencing the built environment and socioeconomic policy, we are primed in a position of power to catalyze that change through our service in communities.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Cross, Barry, Jr. “Publisher’s Perspective: Isn’t it time to stop using the term “minority” to describe all individuals, racial and ethnic groups who are not White?” *Workforce Diversity Network*. Professional Resources. Retrieved from: http://www.workforcediversitynetwork.com/res_articles_termminority.aspx


451–78.


Next City. Retrieved from: https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/planning-accreditation-board-diversity-urban-planning


Appendix A. Tabulation of Survey Results – Crosstabs with Race and Gender*

### Table 6. Yrs Experience (Q4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>23.10%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>21.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>32.30%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>18.80%</td>
<td>26.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>18.60%</td>
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<td>29.00%</td>
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<td>0.00%</td>
<td>25.70%</td>
<td>17.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 30</td>
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<td>0.00%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>9.70%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>13.20%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (100% of column)</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>144</td>
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</table>

### Table 7. Position Level (Q3)

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Entry-Level</td>
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<td>75.00%</td>
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<td>28.20%</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>45.50%</td>
<td>32.30%</td>
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<td>45.50%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>34.00%</td>
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<td>12.50%</td>
<td>36.10%</td>
<td>26.30%</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>25</td>
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### Table 8. Sector (Q5)

<table>
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<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>56.40%</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
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<td>39.60%</td>
<td>50.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>6.50%</td>
<td>20.50%</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
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<td>38.90%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>12.50%</td>
<td>25.80%</td>
<td>17.90%</td>
<td>36.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>15.30%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Academic</td>
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<td>5.10%</td>
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<td>12.50%</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only one individual did not identify as male nor female and was excluded to not reveal too many clues to identity.
Table 9. Position Allows for how many of the following responsibilities (Q7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>25.80%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.00%</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
<td>28.20%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>22.90%</td>
<td>19.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>106</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72.00%</td>
<td>45.20%</td>
<td>61.50%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>68.80%</td>
<td>67.90%</td>
</tr>
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<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>156</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Membership (Q8)

<table>
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<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.00%</td>
<td>41.90%</td>
<td>30.80%</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>20.80%</td>
<td>25.60%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>116</td>
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<td>58.10%</td>
<td>69.20%</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. I feel acceptance and belonging amongst my colleagues (Q12a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree or Strongly</th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>6.45%</td>
<td>12.82%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>3.47%</td>
<td>5.13%</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.50%</td>
<td>25.80%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree or Strongly</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>129</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90.50%</td>
<td>64.52%</td>
<td>79.49%</td>
<td>84.00%</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>88.89%</td>
<td>82.69%</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. I feel I work in a diverse environment that fosters inclusion and opportunity (Q12b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree or Strongly</th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.64%</td>
<td>32.26%</td>
<td>17.95%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>7.64%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.30%</td>
<td>16.10%</td>
<td>23.10%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>20.10%</td>
<td>20.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree or Strongly</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.05%</td>
<td>51.61%</td>
<td>58.97%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>72.22%</td>
<td>62.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (100% of column)</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only one individual did not identify as male nor female and was excluded to not reveal too many clues to identity
### Appendix A. Tabulation of Survey Results – Crosstabs with Race and Gender*

#### Table 13. I feel I can make a mistake and it would not be attributed as a reflection of my race, gender, sexual orientation, or other identity (Q12c)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree or Strongly</strong></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>126</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disagree or Strongly</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (100% of column)</strong></td>
<td>198</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 14. I feel I experience 'racial fatigue' (persistent experiences of disrespect, invalidation, or discrimination due to my race or ethnicity) (Q12d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree or Strongly</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disagree or Strongly</strong></td>
<td>178</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (100% of column)</strong></td>
<td>194</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 15. I feel I experience 'gender fatigue' (persistent experiences of disrespect, invalidation, or discrimination due to my gender identity or sexuality) (Q12e)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree or Strongly</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disagree or Strongly</strong></td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (100% of column)</strong></td>
<td>197</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only one individual did not identify as male nor female and was excluded to not reveal too many clues to identity*
## Appendix A. Tabulation of Survey Results – Crosstabs with Race and Gender*

### Table 16. I often witness forms of discrimination / disrespect against my colleagues because of their race or ethnicity (Q12f)

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree or Strongly</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.08%</td>
<td>16.13%</td>
<td>5.41%</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>7.64%</td>
<td>9.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.60%</td>
<td>16.10%</td>
<td>21.60%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>9.70%</td>
<td>15.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disagree or Strongly</strong></td>
<td>161</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81.31%</td>
<td>67.74%</td>
<td>72.97%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>82.64%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (100% of column)</strong></td>
<td>198</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 17. I often witness forms of discrimination / disrespect against my colleagues because of their gender or sexuality (Q12g)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree or Strongly</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.36%</td>
<td>16.13%</td>
<td>21.05%</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>13.29%</td>
<td>19.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
<td>18.40%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
<td>15.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disagree or Strongly</strong></td>
<td>147</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75.38%</td>
<td>70.97%</td>
<td>60.53%</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>80.42%</td>
<td>65.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (100% of column)</strong></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 18. LGBTQ (Q14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight</strong></td>
<td>156</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82.10%</td>
<td>93.30%</td>
<td>78.90%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
<td>77.00%</td>
<td>87.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBTQ</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.90%</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>21.10%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
<td>23.00%</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (100% of column)</strong></td>
<td>190</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 19. Grow up in similar environments (Q17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.70%</td>
<td>19.20%</td>
<td>41.90%</td>
<td>15.80%</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
<td>35.40%</td>
<td>48.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.30%</td>
<td>80.80%</td>
<td>58.10%</td>
<td>84.20%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
<td>64.60%</td>
<td>51.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (100% of column)</strong></td>
<td>136</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only one individual did not identify as male nor female and was excluded to not reveal too many clues to identity*
Appendix A. Tabulation of Survey Results – Crosstabs with Race and Gender

Table 20. First Exposure to Planning (Q19a)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College (1 or 2nd)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.50%</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>20.50%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>18.10%</td>
<td>19.20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College (3rd or later)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.50%</td>
<td>45.20%</td>
<td>43.60%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>32.60%</td>
<td>32.70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post College job or grad</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.50%</td>
<td>25.80%</td>
<td>28.20%</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>24.30%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After first grad or midcareer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (100% of column)</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21. Means of Exposure to Planning (Q19b)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic / Latino</th>
<th>NH Mixed</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Networks</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.50%</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>15.30%</td>
<td>16.70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>13.20%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.50%</td>
<td>48.40%</td>
<td>23.10%</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>26.40%</td>
<td>32.10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Intern</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>7.60%</td>
<td>10.90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Play</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Field</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.50%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (100% of column)</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only one individual did not identify as male nor female and was excluded to not reveal too many clues to identity*
Appendix B. Survey Instruments

Example email:

Dear planner friends, hope you had a great weekend! Please see the email below and help me spread the word about a survey for my thesis. If you can please complete the survey yourself and then let me know what networks you might be able to help pass it to so I can trace my outreach, I'd greatly appreciate it. Thanks!

--

Do you consider yourself a planner working in New York City, Long Island, or East/West of the Hudson Valley? (or do enough planner-y things?)

If so, please take the next 5-10 minutes to complete this survey on demographics in the planning profession and help pass it on to your networks. All confidential information will be protected and used only for statistical purposes.

What is this survey and who is conducting it?
My name is Giovania Tiarachristie and I am conducting research for my Masters Thesis at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn NY, on barriers to recruitment and retention of people of color in the planning profession in the NY Metro Area*. This research is inspired by a report that the American Planning Association NY Metro Chapter’s Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee published 15 years ago. I hope for the new findings and recommendations to help inform local initiatives, as well as my work as a newly-appointed co-chair of the Committee.

*New York Metro Area as defined by the APA Chapter consists of New York City, Long Island, and East/West of the Hudson Valley

What are the next steps?
1) After filling out this survey, please forward this email to at least 10 planners you know that work in the NY Metro Area and/or to your workplace or other professional networks. Participants will have until the end of October to complete the survey.
2) Throughout the next several months I will be conducting interviews and focus groups with employers, schools, and professionals, with an aim to publish my findings and recommendations in the Spring of 2016. Stay tuned!

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, feedback, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at gtiarach@pratt.edu.

Best,

Giovania Tiarachristie
APA NY Metro Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee, Co-Chair
Graduate Candidate in City & Regional Planning at Pratt Institute
gtiarach@pratt.edu
about.me/gtiarachristie
LinkedIn

Survey Link: http://goo.gl/forms/YrgXNOO1w4
Diversity and the Planning Profession

Thank you for participating in this survey on diversity and the planning profession in the New York Metro Area! The survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes and will help contribute to research for my Masters Thesis on the barriers to recruitment and retention of people of color in the planning profession. Though this study mainly focuses on race and ethnicity, it aims to explore its intersection with other forms of diversity, particularly gender and sexuality. All planners in the NY Metro Area, regardless of racial/ethnic identity should take it. All information will remain confidential and individual responses will be protected and only used for statistical research purposes. Have fun!

* Required

1. Organization / Firm / Agency *
   (protected info - only recorded to track outreach and ensure a wide representative sample)

2. City / Town / County *
   o New York City
   o Nassau
   o Suffolk
   o Westchester
   o Putnam
   o Dutchess
   o Orange
   o Rockland
   o Sullivan
   o Ulster
   o Other

3a. Current Position Title
   eg. "Project Manager" or "Director of...

3b. Current Position Level *
   o Entry-level
   o Mid-level
   o Senior-level

4. Approximate # of years working in the Planning Profession? *
   o <2 years
   o 2-5 years
Appendix B. Survey Instruments

- 6-19 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31+ years

5. In which sector are you mainly employed? *
- Public
- Private
- Non-Profit
- Academic
- Other:

6. In what area in planning do you mainly specialize?
- Zoning and Land Use Regulations
- Town Planning
- Comprehensive Planning
- Urban Design / Placemaking
- Transportation
- Environment & Public Health
- Affordable Housing / Economic Development
- Community Development / Organizing
- Sustainability and Resiliency
- Other:

7. Does your position allow you to...? *
- Solicit projects to work on
- Manage projects on various types of neighborhoods
- Hire staff/significantly influence hiring practices
- Represent the organization to the client/community
- None of the above
- Other:

8. Are you a member of any of the following organizations? *
- American Planning Association (APA)
- American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)
- No membership
- Other:
Diversity and the Planning Profession

Planning Profession Survey - Race, Ethnicity, and the Workplace

Now for some questions regarding race, ethnicity, and your experiences in the workplace. All information will be kept confidential and only inquired for statistical research purposes.

9. With which racial category do you mainly identify? *
   - Black
   - White
   - Asian / Pacific Islander
   - Indigenous
   - Multi-racial or Mixed Race

10. With which ethnic group do you mainly identify with? *
    If you do not mainly identify with any of the following or identify as mixed, please check 'other' and specify
    - Mexican / Central American
    - Puerto Rican / Cuban / Dominican
    - South American
    - Spanish
    - African American
    - West Indian / Caribbean American
    - West African / East African / Sub-Saharan African
    - North African / Middle Eastern / Arab American
    - Jewish / Jewish American
    - European Mix
    - Western European
    - Eastern European
    - Chinese / Chinese American
    - Japanese / Japanese American
    - Korean / Korean American
Appendix B. Survey Instruments

- Vietnamese / Vietnamese American
- Filipino / Filipino-American
- Other South East Asian / SEA American
- South Asian / South Asian American
- Pacific Islander or other islander
- Native American or Alaskan Indian
- Other:

11. Were both you and your parents born and raised in the U.S.?
- Yes
- No, I am second generation (born/raised here, but main parent / both parents born abroad)
- No, I am first generation (born abroad, moved here within last 5 years)
- No, I am first generation (born abroad, have lived here between 5-10 years)
- No, I am first generation (born abroad, have lived here for 10+ years)
- Not sure / It’s complicated!
- No - born or raised abroad

12. On a scale of 1-5, how do you disagree or agree with the following statements regarding your experience in your workplace(s)? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I feel acceptance and belonging amongst my colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I feel I work in a diverse environment that fosters inclusion and opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I feel I can make a mistake and it would not be attributed as a reflection of my race, gender, sexual orientation, or other identity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I feel I experience 'racial fatigue' (persistent experiences of disrespect, invalidation, or discrimination due to my race or ethnicity)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I feel I experience 'gender fatigue' (persistent experiences of disrespect, invalidation, or discrimination due to my gender identity or sexuality)</td>
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<td>f. I often witness forms of</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B. Survey Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discrimination / disrespect against my colleagues because of their race or ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. I often witness forms of discrimination / disrespect against my colleagues because of their gender or sexuality</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

h. Anything to elaborate or add to Q12 A - G?

« Back  Continue »  50% completed

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Diversity and the Planning Profession

Planning Profession Survey - Other Demographic Info

Previous studies around diversity and the planning profession have not looked at the role of intersecting identities. Please help us better understand different experiences of people by answering the following questions. All information will be kept confidential and will only be used for statistical research purposes. Each personal question has the option "prefer not to answer".

13. Which gender identity do you mainly identify with? *
   - Female
   - Male
   - Transgender/sex M to F
   - Transgender/sex F to M
   - Fluid / other Queer / Questioning
   - Prefer not to answer

14. What is your sexual orientation?
   - LGBTQ
   - non LGBTQ / Straight
   - Prefer not to answer

15. If you answered LGBTQ to the question above, please specify
Appendix B. Survey Instruments

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Trans
- Intersex
- Asexual
- Queer
- Questioning
- Other not on this list
- Prefer to not specify

16. What is your age group?
- 18-25
- 26-30
- 31-50
- 51-65
- >65
- Prefer to not answer

17. Did you grow up in an environment similar to the neighborhoods you serve today?
For example, if you are a planner in NYC, did you grow up in an environment that was urban and diverse socioeconomically?
- Yes
- No, but I've lived in similar environments for much of my life
- No

18. From what university / institute did you obtain your professional planning degree (if any)?

19a. When did you first learn about urban planning / community development as a profession? *
- Elementary School or younger
- Middle School / Junior High
- High School
- College (1st or 2nd year)
- College (3rd year or later)
- Post-college job or graduate school
- After first graduate degree
Appendix B. Survey Instruments

- ☐ Mid-career
- ☐ Other:

19b. Where and how did you become exposed and interested in urban planning as a field/profession?
For example, were there places, books, classes, people, events or issues that influenced you?

________________________________________________________________________

20. Any other aspects of diversity and planning you’d like to share?
(optional) This survey did not explicitly ask about (dis)ability, religion, culture, or other aspects of diversity and how they are experienced in the workplace. Please help us understand your experiences.

Diversity and the Planning Profession

Planning Profession Survey - Interviews and Focus Groups

Thank you for taking the survey! Part of this research will also include conducting interviews and focus groups with employers, schools, and professionals of all races and ethnicities to both collect experiences of diversity in the workplace, as well as identify the barriers and potential solutions to recruiting and retaining diversity in the planning profession.

Are you interested in participating in an interview or focus group for this study regarding the topic of recruitment and retention of people of color? If so which?

- ☐ One on one Interview – general diversity and planning field / workplace
- ☐ One on one Interview – for employers/managers
- ☐ Focus Group: with other people in my sector
- ☐ Focus Group: with other people who share my racial/ethnic identity
- ☐ Focus Group: with other people who share intersecting underrepresented identities (eg. Queer, female, person of color)

75% completed
Appendix B. Survey Instruments

- Focus Group: with other people who share my generation or position level
- Focus Group: with other planners working in suburban areas
- Focus Group: academics/faculty/deans/schools
- Focus Group: current students/recent alumni
- Focus Group – general or other categories to be determined
- No thank you :)”
- Other:

**Email Address**
Only to be used to contact you regarding interview or focus group or in case any follow-up questions are necessary

**Any comments or feedback regarding the study?**
FOCUS GROUPS

Asian Americans in Planning. 13 Jan 2016.
- This focus group had six participants, including an entry-level male in the non-profit sector, one mid-level male in the private sector, and four entry-level females in the public sector. All participants were of second generation of East Asian decent, including Chinese-, Taiwanese-, or Korean-American, with the exception of one South East Asian first generation. Most entered the profession through interests in the environment or real estate, and one through organizing.

Blacks in Planning. 12 Jan 2016.
- This focus group only had two individuals due to last minute schedule changes and sicknesses. One was a mid-level West-Indian female planner in the public sector, and the other was an entry-level African American male planner in the private sector. The small group, however, enabled more focused discussion and deeper dive into experiences and recommendations. Additional info the experience of Blacks in planning was solicited through personal interviews and other focus groups.

Latino/as in Planning. 25 Jan 2016.
- This focus group had four participants, including one entry-level White female in the public sector, one mid-level Black female in the public sector, one senior level White male in the private sector, and one mixed-race male in the non-profit sector. Most were second generation or later from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, or Mexico, with the exception of one first generation that moved here in the last 10 years. One interviewee joined in via conference call.

Non-Profit Sector Planners of Color. 8 Feb 2016.
- This focus group only had two participants due to last minute cancellations, but included one senior-level Asian female and one mid to senior-level Black male. The small group, however, enabled more focused discussion and deeper dive into experiences and recommendations. Additional info on non-profit sector experience was solicited through personal interviews.

- This focus group was conducted over the phone and included four original members of the APA New York Metro Chapter Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee, though some did not overlap with each other during their time there. Interviewees included a Latina mid-level female working in the public sector, a Black senior-level male in the public sector, a Latino senior-level male in the private sector, and a retired Black male who worked in the private and public sectors.

- This pilot session included six planners of color who were recent alumni (within five years) of a local planning school working in various sectors. Participants included one Asian female in the public sector, one Asian male working in the private sector; one Black female in the public sector, another Black female in the suburbs public sector, one Latino male in the non-profit sector, and one Black Latina female in the public sector.
Appendix C. Description of Focus Groups and Interview Participants

Private Sector Planners of Color. 18 Feb 2016.
- This session included three participants working in the private sector, including a South-Asian woman directing a small firm, an East-Asian American in a senior-level position at a large firm, and an East-Asian American in a mid-level position at a large firm. Additional information on private sector experience was collected through other personal interviews to supplement.

Public Sector Planners of Color. 11 Jan 2016.
- This session included six participants working in the public sector, including a Black entry level male, one bi-racial entry-level woman, two Black senior-level female, a Latino senior-level male, one Black senior-level male. Most either had been consistently in the public sector or had transitioned from non-profit sectors. One of the participants dialed in over the phone.

Queer Planners of Color. 21 Jan 2016.
- This session included three queer planners of color, including one Black entry-level male working in the public sector who recently transitioned from the private sector; one Asian senior-level male in the public sector who recently transitioned from the non-profit sector, and one Black bi-racial entry-level male working in a private sector. Female queer planners did not respond to requests for interviews, and thus information was supplemented through personal conversations.

- This session hosted five women of color, including two entry-level Black women in the public sector, one senior-level Asian woman in the public sector, and one mid-level Asian woman in the non-profit sector.

White Allies in Planning. 2 Mar 2016.
- This session convened six White planners who considered themselves allies and I personally invited because I considered them allies, including one female and one male long-time planners of Eastern European and Jewish descent who were active in civil rights movements in the 60’s and 70’s; one senior-level male working in the public sector, one entry-level male in the public sector, one entry-level male in the private sector, and one mid-level female in the private and academic sector.
Appendix C. Description of Focus Groups and Interview Participants

INTERVIEWS

Employer A. 26 Jan 2016.
- Personal in-person interview with a female Asian American director in the public sector.

Employer B. 29 Jan 2016.
- Personal in-person interview with a male, Caucasian, director of a small to medium private firm.

Employer C. 2 Feb 2016.
- Personal phone interview with a male, African American planner in the suburbs. Recently transitioned from the non-profit sector into private sector.

Employer D. 3 Feb 2016.
- Personal phone interview with a male, Caucasian, director of a large private firm and experience working abroad.

Employer E. 17 Feb 2016.
- Personal in-person interview with a male, Latino, director position in a non-profit organization.

Planner A. 16 Feb 2016.
- Personal in-person interview with a female, Asian American Queer entry-level planner in the public sector, transitioned from the non-profit sector with an organizing background.

Planner B. 23 Feb 2016.
- Personal phone interview with a Male, African American senior-level but in middle project management position despite long-time working in the public sector; born and raised in a low-income community of color.

Planner C. 3 Mar 2016.
- Personal phone interview with a female, South Asian senior-level in the non-profit sector, transitioned from the private sector and experience working abroad.

Planner D. 6 Mar 2016.
- Personal phone interview with a male, African American senior-level working in the public sector, also teaching faculty in one of the local schools.

Planner E. 14 Jan 2016.
- Personal in-person conversation with a female, Asian American Queer entry-level planner in the non-profit sector, community-organizing background.

- Personal in-person conversation with a female, Caucasian entry-level planner in the public and non-profit sectors, community-organizing background.