

**'Postcolonial Planning' and Ethno-Racial Diversity in Toronto: Locating
Equity in a Contemporary Planning Context**

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Résumé

Cet article présente une perspective critique de l'équité dans le contexte de la planification urbaine contemporaine à Toronto. Je propose un concept de planification post-coloniale utilisé par le « Alternative Planning Group (APG) » - une collective interculturelle des organismes de planification sociale, représentant divers groupes communautaires d'immigrants et 'racialisés'. L'équité est présentée sous forme d'urbanisme post-moderne et de théories de planification post-coloniale: une combinaison de principes politiques et de pratiques de représentation, de reconnaissance, et de re-distribution des ressources. Je démontre comment les défis et les succès de l'équité se manifestent chez les urbanistes qui oeuvrent à l'extérieur des bornes de l'urbanisme professionnel, et comme membres de ces groupes d'immigrants et 'racialisés'. Je conclus avec des suggestions pour les urbanistes et les enseignants en urbanisme, pour créer un engagement plus équitable entre tous les urbanistes, qu'ils oeuvrent à l'intérieur, ou à l'extérieur, des bornes de l'urbanisme professionnel.

Mots clés: diversité; équité; la théorie de planification postmoderne; la théorie postcoloniale; la planification sociale

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Abstract

This paper provides a critical perspective of equity in contemporary planning by introducing a postcolonial planning as it is conceived and practiced by the Alternative Planning Group (APG) in Toronto—a cross-cultural collective of social planning organizations representing groups of racialized and immigrant communities in Toronto. Equity is presented through postmodern planning and postcolonial theories as a combination of the political concepts and practices of representation, recognition, and redistribution. The author draws from an empirical study of the APG's postcolonial planning in order to show how challenges and opportunities for equity in planning are manifest in the work of planning practitioners located outside of the professionalized realm, as social planners and as members of racialized and immigrant groups in Toronto. The paper concludes with suggestions for how professional planners and planning educators can take leadership in engaging in more equitable planning practices within and outside the professional planning realm.

Key words: diversity; equity; postmodern planning theory; postcolonial theory; social planning

Introduction

In her critical commentary on diversity and difference in Canadian planning, Beth Moore Milroy laments that planners are “well back in the pack of deciding what equity looks like in their context” (2004, 47). She calls for an examination of equity (i.e., what constitutes fairness) within the planning context, and for a stronger connection among the “concepts, language and tools” (i.e., the means) for just planning practices in a world of ethno-racial diversity. More recently, Fincher and Iveson (2008) have incorporated the notion of the “right to encounter” difference as another concept to be integrated in a normative framework, including principles of recognition and redistribution, for a more equitable approach to planning in diversity. Fincher and Iveson's work falls in line with Sandercock's (2000 and 2003) foundational studies of multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and postmodernism in relation to planning, and with those who have analysed the impact of cultural difference and social justice in the ‘communicative turn’ in planning theory (Campbell 2006; see also Healey 1997 and 2003). These works have contributed to the calls from the intersection of the academic discourses of social and political theory, planning and diversity for a better understanding of the role of equity in planning with and *within* the context of ethno-cultural di-

versity (Campbell 2006; Craig, Burchardt and Gordon 2008; Fainstein 2000 and 2005; Thompson and Dunn 2002; Young 1990).

In responding to these calls, this article provides a critical look at equity in planning theory and contemporary Canadian planning practice and presents the possibilities for analyzing and practicing equity in professional planning and planning education. Planning practitioners and educators are in a position to encourage discussions about equity within professional development and planning education (Goonewardena, Rankin and Weinstock 2004; Milroy 2004; Wallace and Milroy 1999; Rahder and Milgrom 2004) and to connect the analysis of equity in planning to planning action. I assert that for planners and planning educators to remain fearful of the uncertainty and complexities of ethno-racial diversity and therefore to look the other way constitutes a step away from developing more equitable planning practices.

I have organized this paper into three parts. First I outline the challenging relationship among social planning, ethno-racial diversity and discourses about equity in planning, in order to set the stage for my introduction to postcolonial planning. Second, I draw from both postmodern planning theory and postcolonial theory to tease out discourses of equity at the interstices of these theories. Third, I present the practice of a “postcolonial planning” in the context of the city of Toronto and by the Alternative Planning Group (APG), a cross-cultural social planning collective of organizations representing groups of racialized and immigrant communities in Toronto. For this reason, I put “a” in front of the term “postcolonial planning,” rather than presenting postcolonial planning as a universal practice. The three elements of the APG’s postcolonial planning practice are: (1) planning collectively to challenge dominant planning practices; (2) critically examining multiculturalism and diversity as concepts that inform how to think about and do planning; and (3) struggling through contestation and containment to facilitate a connection between identity and citizenship in the city. By highlighting the struggles of the APG for equity in planning, this paper looks at equity from the margins—that is outside the conventional professionalized realm—and simultaneously from within the context of social planning in ethno-racial diversity. Although diversity, as it is analyzed in the literature, is promoted as a norm for planning (Wallace and Milroy 1999; Fincher and Iveson 2008)—a universal tenet—it requires conscious effort and leadership on the part of planning practitioners and educators alike to implement and guide both education and the practice of planning. I conclude by offering possible future directions to encourage more equitable practices in planning from within the planning profession and planning education.

Relating Social Planning and Ethno-Racial Diversity to Equity

This paper focuses on planning with social goals, that is “the manner in which the norms of planning can be rethought socially” (Fincher and Iveson 2008, 17) within the context of our ethnically and racially (i.e., ethno-racially) diverse Canadian cities. Social planning “implies particular attention to the spatial manifestations of social injustice” (Healey 2007, 134); however, sometimes host societies assume that their way of doing planning is “*the* way of doing things,” which can thus lead to the injustices that come with the disregard of knowledges and practices other than the dominant form (Fincher and Iveson 2008, 120). Certain approaches to planning are therefore dominant (e.g., resource intensive practices of mapping, longitudinal statistical analyses, and broad-based consultations), while planning that is practiced by those at the margins is deemed alternative or as “other,” and is often characterized by the marginal status of the practitioners or participants of planning, as people of colour or recent immigrants, low-income individuals and groups, and other equity-seeking groups (e.g., women, gays and lesbians), and by less resource-intensive planning methods (e.g., network development, short-term project-based initiatives and campaigns). Furthermore, these practitioners at the margins are also characterized by whom they serve (i.e., their own marginalized communities to which they are accountable, rather than an entire city, or universal populace) (Thomas 2008). Social planning is also often relegated to the margins of dominant approaches to planning that centre on land use and the design and allocation of physical infrastructure and built environments (e.g., roads, sewage systems, housing) rather than governance structures and service organizations located in the public realm (Fincher and Iveson 2008). Thus practitioners of social planning with, for, and from marginalized groups, are often disadvantaged in their location outside of the professionalized realm of planning as distinguished from land use planning (Fincher and Iveson 2008; Reeves 2005).

Discourses of diversity reveal how it is possible to be critical about the use of the term “diversity” and point to its relevance as a guiding principle or established norm (i.e., unexamined sets of behaviours and attitudes within a given social group). At the same time, language is being sought out to better express the meaning and value of ethno-racial differences within Canadian society. The use of diversity terminology, especially in public policy and planning discourses can negate differences and categorizations (i.e., along the lines of gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability, just to name a few). On the one hand diversity discourses sustain the status quo (Bannerji 2000) and on the other hand, attempt to incorporate new ways of understanding ethno-racial differences from the standpoint of those communities (Fincher and Iveson 2008; Wallace and Milroy 1998). For example, Bannerji (2000, 36) states: “the concept of diversity simultaneously allows for an emptying out of actual social relations and suggests a connectedness of cultural

description, and through this process obscures any understanding of difference as a construction of power.” Governments have been criticized for using the term “diversity” as a tool, much like multiculturalism, to highlight the “ethnic harmony” of Canadian society in cities such as Toronto (Croucher 1997). Although diversity as a tool is meant to efface differences or the possibilities for disagreement, intolerance, and possibly, violent conflict among the multitudes of individuals and groups in the city that might identify with these differences (Bannerji 2000), the concept of diversity also has altruistic origins.

Diversity is a term that bridges language used within ethno-racial communities and by the state, including professional planners. Fincher and Iveson (2008) point to the reality of diversity through encounters among different people in the everyday lives of neighbourhoods and cities. For Fincher and Iveson, the right to encounter, or the creation of spaces and opportunities for interaction among host societies and new residents from different ethno-racial backgrounds and experiences is a normative element to their construction of planning in diversity. Similarly, in the Canadian context, Wallace and Milroy propose that diversity should be a starting point to planning, rather than an “exceptional circumstance” to be accommodated by existing structures of “norm-focused [read: dominant] planning” practices (1999, 69–70). Wallace and Milroy recognize that diversity ought to be the norm, but that in fact Canadian society has not yet reached that point. Thus, in practice, planning practitioners who are located at the margins by virtue of being part of a racialized or a marginalized group doing social planning must make an overt and conscious decision to locate planning in the context of diversity. They must do so in order to shed light on the exclusion of ethno-racial groups and communities in planning processes, the groups’ curtailed access to services, programs and supports, and the relevance of their struggles for social equality to address their own exclusion. As I will show through the experiences of the Alternative Planning Group, diversity is the norm for their work among racialized and immigrant communities; however, it is not the norm within the larger realm of planning. According to Ahmed (2007, 235), “What makes diversity useful also makes it limited: it can become detached from histories of struggle for equality.” In turn, practitioners located in various societal institutions, including planning, who are committed to diversity must emphasize the connections among “the language of diversity” and terms such as equality and justice in order to call to mind struggles for equality by marginalized groups and the resultant legacies of such struggles (Ahmed 2007).

Contemporary attempts to further enhance discussions about equity at the interstices of diversity and planning bring to light how equity is both a political concept and a practice, with the potential for influencing the development of just and normative frameworks in planning. Diversity as it is linked to social equality is a primary aim of social justice both in terms of equality of opportunity

and equality of outcome (Young 1990, 173). Unlike Rawlsian interpretations of equity that are based on the possession and distribution of "rights and duties" (see Rawls 1971), Young argues that equality of opportunity is based on a concept of enablement rather than possession. Young (1990, 173) goes on to say that:

[E]quality refers not primarily to the distribution of social goods, though distributions are certainly entailed by social equality. It refers primarily to the full participation and inclusion of everyone in society's major institutions, and the socially supported substantive opportunity for all to develop and exercise their capacities and realize their choices.

If it is assumed that social planning has social equality as a premise, then marginalized groups should have access to planning processes as well as systems of governance to exercise their capacities and choices. In contrast to Young, Fraser (2007) shows how inclusion and participation need not be separated from redistributive justice. According to Fraser (2007, 20) equity reflects a "parity of participation" that is based on a "three-dimensional theory of justice" requiring representation, recognition and redistribution and at the very least the intention and the struggle to achieve these elements. This is a "radical-democratic interpretation of the principle of equal moral worth" such that "justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life" (Fraser 2007, 20).

Fincher and Iveson (2008) have taken the foundation offered by Fraser and applied it directly to planning in order to bring to light the connection among the representation of diverse individuals and groups (i.e., based on gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.), their right to create spaces for ongoing and everyday encounters among these groups (i.e., the right to encounter), the recognition of these groups' particular needs and interests from their standpoint, and the redistribution of resources to these groups that may be required for planners to address their needs. Fincher and Iveson provide the example of 'planning for immigrants' as reflective of the combination of the recognition of the needs of new immigrants and the redistribution of resources to address their needs. In turn, planners must learn to move beyond common expectations and norms of mainstream or dominant host societies about how spaces are to be designed and services delivered. Recognition therefore becomes a "crucial means to challenge injustice" by including the voices and concerns of diverse groups or publics in developing programs, services, and processes of planning and governance that address their concerns (Fincher and Iveson 2008, 120).

Fincher and Iveson (2008) note that all claims made by diverse groups should be considered in relation to the given context and in part, to the limits to existing resources. To what extent, however, do recognition and redistribution shed light

on the possibility and potentiality that immigrant groups have the knowledge to address their own needs, and that resources ought to be distributed to them to enable them to build the capacity to address needs for their group members, or communities, on their own? In order to answer this question, a planner would have to consider whether or not she or he is an active agent in the process of both helping to identify and address the needs of marginalized groups. In both cases, the planner would not be a neutral party in the planning process. As noted by Fincher and Iveson (2008, 104):

The task for planners is precisely *not* to act as though they were neutral observers who are in a position to adjudicate between ‘valid’ and ‘invalid’ forms of recognition claims. As such, the task for planning for recognition is not to devise and implement a fixed and permanent model of recognition [...] as though this single model could address every status harm. [P]lanners can best advance a transformative politics of recognition by taking a *pragmatic* and *contextual* approach to the question of recognition.

This claim against the neutrality of planners, however, further brings to the surface questions of neutrality and accountability that are central to professional planning. Can professional planners be neutral and how does this affect their accountability to their peers and to a diverse public? While this question goes beyond the parameters of this paper, when professional planners give recognition to the existence of multiple forms of planning knowledge that exist outside of the professionalized realm, the capacity to ask the question to a willing audience can grow.

Modernist approaches to planning have had the intention of directing social progress toward egalitarian outcomes; however, in doing so, they have disregarded the contradictions, paradoxes and uncertainties that are foundational to planning (Holston 1999). The problem with universalist planning theories and associated pushes for one-size-fits-all planning practices is that they ignore the obvious: that planning interventions affect diverse groups in different ways. Postmodern planning theory and postcolonial theory both critique modernist approaches to conceiving of the world. It is at the intersection of these two theories where my conception of a postcolonial planning emerges.

Postcolonial Planning: Examining Equity at the Interstices of Postmodern Planning and Postcolonial Theories

Planning needs a “postmodern attitude or framework that is flexible enough to allow diversity to flourish even if the results themselves are less progressive” (All-

mendinger 2001, 189). Postmodern planning theory, including discourses about the communicative turn in planning (Healey 1997; McGuirk 2005) and collaborative practices in planning (Forester 1989; 1999) opens a space for the critique of dominant planning, and a starting point for thinking about a means for changing it altogether. As a postmodern theory of planning, the collaborative model takes a step forward to address diversity and the different groups that fall outside of the expert realm of professional planning; however, it has its limitations. In the framework of communicative planning and collaborative planning, all participants, including the planner, are privileged by their capacity to enter a process of communication, because of language, education, or ability to navigate political and participatory processes and exchanges within planning processes. A key criticism of the process of deliberative discourse is that it privileges communication, language, technical jargon and related processes that are part of communicative and collaborative planning (Rahder and Milgrom 2004).

Postcolonialism is relevant to the discussion about equity and ethno-racial diversity but not primarily in the temporal sense (i.e., the *post* as the marker for 'after' colonialism). Rather, theoretical and empirical studies of postcolonialism have examined how colonized groups have subverted power through their opposition of colonial constructs and by replicating or reinventing existing norms with new meanings and on their own terms (Bhabha 1994). Much of the postcolonial-focused research on urban planning demonstrates how the same groups that subvert systems of dominance can also benefit from sustaining power and material wealth that have been established within any given location under colonialism (Jacobs 1996; McClintock 1992). Postcolonialism recognizes how histories in these places inform the present moment and possible futures (Gunew 2004; Loomba 2005). Postcolonial theory also sets the stage for reconsidering Canada as a settler nation with a colonial past for some, and the colonial present for some First Nations Peoples, as well as a nation with ongoing connections to global processes. While immigrants and ethno-racial minorities have increasingly been pulled under the umbrella of urban postcolonialism, First Nations peoples—a "colonized" people in the textbook sense—also figure prominently into the question of ethno-racial diversity in Canadian cities like Toronto (Rahder and Milgrom 2004) and they are part of this rethinking of planning as a postcolonial or ongoing colonizing practice. However, for the purposes of this discussion, my delving into the emergence of a postcolonial planning is rooted in the ethno-racial diversity that is derived from contemporary immigration to Toronto and the work of the APG, and so I will not be including considerations of present day colonialism and/or postcoloniality generated by discussions of Métis and First Nations populations.

Equity emerges at the interstices of postmodern planning and postcolonial theories in three important ways. As a caveat, these may not be the only ways for equity to emerge, but these are the three most cogent for the ideas presented and

the empirical study to follow in this paper. First, by recognizing that there is no universal one-size-fits-all planning knowledge to fit all circumstances, postmodern and postcolonial forms of knowledge based on 'thinking and doing' open the space for a "freedom of local expression" (Allmendinger 2001, 190), including forms of knowledge based on an embodiment of characteristics based on race, gender, and sexuality, just to name a few, and experiences, including immigration and colonization. The positioning of knowledge at different locations (Foucault 1980), or as situated and embodied (Haraway 1991) opens the space for recognition and redistribution of power that is associated with how knowledge is implemented and by whom, which are both crucial to equity in planning.

Second, rather than simply considering the location of knowledge as situated at the centre or periphery of a place (such as a city, or a society), postcolonialism, as was noted earlier, opens the possibility for considering relations between dominant and oppressed groups and the negotiation that takes place between dominant groups and immigrant groups. The negotiations can happen through established mechanisms of engagement and practice such as planning, or through more subversive means, between groups with relative differences in power (Fincher and Iveson 2008; Fraser 2007). Knowledge, therefore, is attached to multiple locations. When the capacity to be actively engaged is afforded by dominant systems to marginalized or oppressed groups to be actively engaged in such negotiations, the space for "parity of participation" (Fraser 2007, 20) is opened and equity emerges.

Finally, both postmodern planning theory and discourses of postcolonialism bring to the fore ideas about identity and citizenship as associated with colonization, immigration and naturalization (i.e., formal citizenship documented through a passport and Aboriginal citizenships that are linked to territorial claims and histories), and with conceptions of justice, in particular, the struggles for recognition and redistribution. The relationship of these components is also a good example of what Laclau (1995, 107) calls an "ambiguity" among contradictory discourses and oppositional groups that cannot necessarily be resolved. Laclau (1995, 102) describes the result of marginalized groups that assert themselves toward dominant groups (including government institutions), at the same time that they assert their own identity, and depend on the very same system to which they show opposition:

T]he opposition, in order to be radical, has to put in a common ground both what it asserts and what it excludes, so that the exclusion becomes a particular form of assertion. But this means that a particularism really committed to change can only do so by rejecting both what denies its own identity and this identity itself.

There is no clear-cut solution to the paradox of radically negating a system of power while remaining in secret dependency on it.

The result is a paradox whereby particular identities (e.g., those based on marginalization and other oppressions, or something else) are in opposition to a seemingly universal dimension in society (e.g., individualism, dominant planning practices) and yet, cannot exist apart from it (Laclau 1995, 107). In turn, particular groups vie for recognition to redefine the universal, and then to represent it, if only temporarily (Laclau 1995), and the possibilities for new radical forms of citizenship emerge. Isin and Wood (1999) present the notion of a pluralized form of citizenship that offers individuals the capacity to define their own identity based on different cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, gendered, and sexual identities or experiences (including immigration and colonization) and yet remain connected with a social and political collective of humans. The authors, however, agree that this is a blurry, conflict-ridden process that has not yet and may not reach an endpoint.

I propose that engaging in a discussion between postcolonial theory and contemporary discourses of postmodern planning theory (and vice versa) opens the field to involve diverse groups in examinations of equity in planning practice. Counter-hegemonic practices, of which efforts to address injustices are a part, emerge at the intersection of postmodern planning theory and postcolonialism. Sandercock (1998, 85) shows how counter-hegemonic theories of planning would replace the modernist way of thinking about planning by identifying multiple forms and locations of planning theories and practices. This paper supports Sandercock's (1999; 2003) assertion that postmodern planning approaches are situated among the knowledges of different groups, some of which emerge from legacies of colonialism, and the different physical spaces of the city, public and private, which may or may not be affiliated with the settlement of these groups. As a counter-hegemonic planning practice, postcolonial planning, as practiced by the APG, is both a way of thinking about and doing planning that emphasizes the collective capacity to express identity and citizenship and address access and equity.

Postcolonial Planning as a Practice of Alternative Social Planning in Toronto

There are three elements to a postcolonial planning in Toronto as experienced and practiced by the APG: (1) collective formation based on shared identity; (2) a critical analysis of and experiences with diversity; and (3) a struggle for a pluralizing citizenship. I am not suggesting that these elements of postcolonial planning are standard to forms of postcolonial planning in other cities; however, I am offering

an example for a postcolonial planning that is grounded in the planning and governance histories of Toronto since the city amalgamated in 1998 and the political challenges of equity in planning.

Collective Formation Based on Shared Identity

In 1998, the city of Toronto amalgamated its six municipalities and one metropolitan government into a mega-city. The experiences of non-governmental organizations in Toronto at the time of municipal amalgamation and the fiscal downloading in the years prior to amalgamation resulted in shifts in service delivery and management. These shifts were linked to the changes in the role of the welfare state under neoliberalism (e.g., fiscal and governance restructuring and the erosion of health care, social program and housing assistance) (Larner 2000; Peck and Tickell 2002). During this time the dominant social planning council in the city, the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, faced internal turmoil due to fiscal reorganization and to external criticism regarding the perceived lack of representation of racialized communities in their work and the leadership of their organization (Zizys, Kosny and Bonnell 2004). It was also during this time that the organizations from South Asian, Chinese, and Latino-Hispanic communities of Toronto, as predecessors to the APG began to confront mainstream planning and address the needs of their racialized and immigrant communities *collectively*. By 2001, the Chinese Canadian National Council – Toronto Chapter (CCNC-TO), the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA), and the Hispanic Development Council (HDC) developed a collective that they called the Alternative Planning Group. By 2003 the African Canadian Social Development Council (ACSDC) a group representing communities from continental Africa also became a part of the APG. The activities of the APG were internal to each of their communities and also involved external groups. For example, each member organization was involved in building youth capacity on their board of directors and within their networks, and in developing integrated service plans among their communities to better identify and understand the various obstacles that immigrants in their communities face in gaining access to social services (see Viswanathan, forthcoming). As external projects, the APG organized campaigns regarding anti-racism and the media, a coalition for more just refugee and immigration policies and processes, and joint advocacy on the reform of seniors' income supplement programs (see Viswanathan, forthcoming). These activities also involved campaigns among their communities for social service improvements that were then presented in deputations to City Council every year during the municipal budget discussions.

According to Rick Sin, former Executive Director of the CCNC-TO and co-founder of the APG, each member organization of the APG collective approached social planning as more than “a generic technical thing” but rather as

being based on anti-racist practices and equity (personal communication, 3 May 2005). Furthermore, while each member organization contended with discrimination in their own communities, they each found a means to learn from each other's experiences with discrimination, which built common ground. Duberlis Ramos from the HDC noted that the collective developed "a collective consciousness about terms and experiences of newcomers and immigrants as a whole and about the experiences of [their] own communities at the same time" (personal communication, 6 May 2005).

Through the city government, the state was an active agent in recognizing the role that the APG played in addressing the needs of racialized communities and began to provide dollars to the APG's member organizations in order for them to do their collective work. According to Sin, "[F]or the city government to admit that [the APG was] doing social planning [was] a big transformation for the APG and for the city itself. The APG [member] organizations were no longer being perceived as victims of racialization but [as] active agents in the city" (personal communication, 3 May 2005). The actions of the state in recognizing the APG as a social planning collective, translated into the redistribution of social planning dollars by the city to each of the member organizations of the APG. The Community Services Grant Program is the fund from which dollars were allocated for social planning. Historically about \$1 million was allocated, solely to the Community Social Planning Council. Prior to 2004, the city government distributed dollars from the Access, Equity and Human Rights Community Partnership and Investment Program to each of the APG member organizations to address access and equity issues, including human rights violations and the reporting of hate crimes. Starting in 2004 the city government started to provide each member of organization of the APG \$30,000 each (although the ACSDC, being a new organization received \$22,500) on the condition that they conducted their social planning activities collectively (Viswanathan forthcoming). The city government practice of splitting activities with the purpose of promoting equity and anti-racism from social planning activities was entrenched in the way that the city separated the funds distributed to community organizations. However, despite this separation, for the APG, these activities were in practice the same thing. "Planning is about equity" from the standpoint of the APG, according to Uzma Shakir, former Executive Director of CASSA, and co-founder of the APG (personal communication, 19 May 2005).

The first element of a postcolonial planning as practiced by the APG in Toronto is a collective planning approach based on a shared identity rooted in the experiences of racialization, immigration histories, and poverty. Ultimately, the APG claimed the language and practice of social planning and made it their own—the foundation of their work with racialized and immigrant communities. At the same time, the city government implicated itself in the practice of social planning by recognizing the work of the APG, and distributing dollars to the collective. From the

standpoint of fiscal distribution, the city perpetuated the separation of social planning from equity-seeking activities; however, from the standpoint of equity, the city government recognized and distributed dollars to a collective of organizations that had not been funded for this activity before, and was beginning to address the social planning needs of diverse communities. (Viswanathan forthcoming; see Zizys, Bonnell and Kosny 2004).

The APG's Critical Analysis of Diversity Informs Their Work

Two different discourses of diversity, one based on access and equity, and the other based on economic development, emerged during the course of Toronto's amalgamation into a mega-city, and these were manifest through the governance restructuring of the city. Prior to the amalgamation of Toronto's municipalities, the Metro Toronto City Council had established a committee called the Council Action Committee to Combat Racism, and later renamed the "Anti-Racism, Access and Equity Committee." From 1994 to 1997, the committee was composed solely of elected councilors who then reported to municipal council on issues dealing with diversity. After amalgamation the City pursued discussions about diversity with the public and unveiled a new motto: Diversity, Our Strength (City of Toronto 2000; Siemiatycki et al. 2003). In this way, the "new" Toronto merged civic engagement efforts with access and equity and by 2000 developed a final report that was adopted by Toronto City Council.

An outcome of the recommendations of the report was a reassessment of how access and equity and community engagement would be fostered within the government rubric and how this would link to the economic development goals of the city. Another outcome was the bifurcation of the meaning of diversity as access and equity on the one hand, and on the other, the means for economic prosperity for the city. Brenda Sikes (pseudonym), a policy advisor to the city government of Toronto stated in an interview that the city faced three challenges in economic and labour market development for which the city's ethno-racial diversity would play a role: marketing Toronto to investors and employers; promoting labour market development; and supporting the education and skills development among and within the city's immigrant populations and neighbourhoods. According to Sikes, the corporate logo of "Diversity, Our Strength" would go far in assisting the city to make a "business case for diversity" because "framing these issues as economic issues is the way to go ... So it's not 'how do we eliminate racism?' It's framing things on a kind of positive side of things without sugarcoating the fact that we've got problems" (personal communication, 12 May 2005).

Shakir commented on how the city's motto "Diversity, Our Strength" morphed from a simple and meaningful one, emerging from equity as representation and

recognition of diversity in the city, into a corporate logo—still positive in its message—but crucial to the economic development of the city. She notes:

What the city fail[ed] to understand [was] that maybe resolving the contradictions of plurality [was] not really the point. Diversity *per se* is unmanageable ... But there is this inherent fear of a social breakdown because of this cacophony of disparate voices, all talking at the same time, pulling in different directions. So there is this very controlling kind of attitude. The city deals with diversity pretty much like that. It is that kind of management perspective... a corporate attitude toward diversity ... and essentially it implies that diversity left to its own devices can be chaotic, and so we need to actually manage it and we need to bring certain ... semblance of control over something which inherently has the tendency to be uncontrollable. (U. Shakir, personal communication, 13 May 2005).

Ultimately, for the APG, diversity is inherently unmanageable by anybody, including the city government, unless constrained to economic purposes, and this is not optimal.

This critical perspective on diversity by the APG constitutes the second element to the group's postcolonial planning. I am using "critical" to denote deep reflection by the APG about economically-driven actions associated with diversity management. The group cut through economic uses and management of diversity, at the same time that the group continued to work within the constructs of social planning established by the city through practices of funding as noted earlier that separated planning from access and equity.

Postcolonial Planning in a Struggle for Pluralizing Citizenship Linked to Identity and Diversity

The APG has negotiated with other social planning organizations in Toronto and with the city government through a social planning reform process called the Toronto Social Development Network (TSDN). Established by the city government in 2005 for the review of social planning in the city, and with a one-year mandate, the TSDN membership included the Community Social Planning Council, each member organization of the APG and social service and governance organizations from the city's Aboriginal population, and its long-standing Portuguese community. The task of the TSDN was to address the so-called fragmentation of social planning in the city that resulted from the city's municipal amalgamation and to develop an overarching vision of planning for the city along with a requisite funding plan/mechanism to pay for it (Zisys, Bonnell

and Kosny 2004). Although the invitation by the city to the APG to join the TSDN could be perceived as a success for the APG—a formal recognition of their importance as a social planning collective and notice of their arrival at the level of city policymaking—the TSDN was not a successful vehicle for the APG to further an equitable funding and planning agenda. The APG wanted to “shift the paradigm” of social planning in the city. Shakir (2008, under “Engaging the City: An Exercise in Futility”) notes:

We [members of the TSDN] delivered a set of recommendations to the [city] council for a city plan to fund and conduct social planning. This report, however, failed to deliver results. In fact, the very premises of alternative social planning (to shift the paradigm) were undermined in the creation of TSDN. It was a top-down structure, forcing players who had inherent inequality of resources and power and divergent political agendas and understandings of planning to sit at a table designed by the funder (in this case the city). The Aboriginal People’s Council of Toronto, for instance, withdrew from the process, citing lack of capacity to sit at the table. In hindsight, it appeared to be the wisest decision.

I propose that this experience of the APG on the TSDN represents a relationship between civil society and the city government that is *simultaneously* a reflection of how the APG contested an approach to universalizing planning and the containment of citizenship and identity by the state. On the one hand, the participation of the APG in the TSDN is an achievement; the APG was recognized as one of several social planning bodies in the city. On the other hand, the APG’s representation on the TSDN ran the risk of identifying the group as part of the process for building a universal planning approach, one that addressed the city government’s concern about fragmentation in social planning without recognizing the differentials in identity, need, resources, and power that are required for equitable redistribution of funds for social planning.

The interactions of the APG with the state through the TSDN and the critical perspective of diversity, along with the group’s collective formation of identity, fostered the movement of the APG toward a more radical form of citizenship. According to Isin and Wood (1999, 159), if citizenship and identity are both part of a negotiated relation among groups and the state, then all parties need to maintain a conscious effort to contribute to ongoing relations and “an openness to the multiplicity of identities.” The city recognized that planning was located in multiple organizations throughout the city and linked to a multiplicity of identities. Although the city government has remained involved in the APG’s efforts to

engage in planning through recognition and redistribution of resources, it was up to the APG to maintain a collective identity as a group at the same time that the differences in history, experiences of racialization, and the ethno-racial construction of each member organization of the APG inform the group's overall identity as a whole. This connection and sustaining of organizational and collective identity simultaneously during interaction among the APG's member organization and then as a collective in negotiation with the city is part of the struggle for a pluralized citizenship.

Thus, the final characteristic of a postcolonial planning as exemplified by the APG is an ongoing struggle to build a pluralizing citizenship—one that attempts to encompass all the differences simultaneously, but does not necessarily meet that end. Although this pluralized citizenship has not yet been achieved, I want to emphasize that a struggle for a pluralized citizenship parallels a struggle for equity in planning. Both are rooted in groups' refusals to be relegated to a minority status and by a mammoth effort to uphold their right to contribute to society and to participate at par with other groups (Fraser 2007).

Conclusion: Future Directions

In this paper, I elaborated on the challenges of equity from the standpoint of the APG a collective of social planning organizations engaged in a postcolonial planning practice in Toronto. The APG collective is not neutral in representing groups of racialized and immigrant groups in Toronto. Neutrality is central to professionalized planning, but this paper, in part, questions whether this neutrality is *always* possible or, dare I say, necessary. That is, within any institution, be it the planning profession or the academy, "we are differentially positioned in legitimately recognizing or claiming the saliency of race, gender, sexuality or class in our lives" (Dei 2000, paragraph 4). The possibility and practicality of neutrality, therefore, is questionable at best, and affects the interventions made by planners and the resultant impacts of their actions. As Ahmed (2007, 252) notes, the commitment to equity involves an emotional investment not just a resource-based investment, or an appeal to promoting an "ideal image [that an] organization has of itself, otherwise known as its brand or marketing appeal."

From the standpoint of professional planning those of us in the profession are still left with the question of how to engage in discussions and practices of equity from the sphere of the expert.

Young (1990, 26) advocates that "evaluating social justice according to whether persons have opportunities, therefore, must involve evaluating not a distributive outcome, but the social structures that enable or constrain the individuals in relevant situations." How then does professional planning constrain or enhance equity through practice? I posit that the planning profession is in a position of

leadership to foster a commitment to representation, recognition and redistribution—that is, equity—in planning both from within its membership and in practice. This is why although it may be too soon to see how equity is part of planning from within the professionalized practice, it is an opportune time to look for examples of experiences of equity in planning among practitioners outside of the profession and among the communities that they serve.

Cultural sensitivity training for students and planning education that includes opportunities for “cross-cultural communication,” or intercultural communication that finds a common language between cultures, attempts to teach ways of building fairness in planning processes (Sandercock 2003). This training and education addresses the need among planning students for tools and skills focused on working across ethno-racial and cultural differences, recognizes feelings of helplessness and uncertainty regarding this work, and attempts to bridge differences among diverse planning practitioners and non-planners. Intercultural communication and related training can be a means to build an understanding of alternative planning knowledges or merely a means to gain access to information. Some university courses on “multicultural cities” or “cross-cultural planning” attempt to teach skills necessary to communicate across cultures (i.e., intercultural communication) and to overcome fears of breaking out of one’s own comfort zone. Efforts to promote intercultural communication come closer to recognizing the role of conflict in planning, rather than venerating consensus as the sole relevant outcome of communication and deliberation. At the same time that this is a strategy for addressing conflict, in a way, it could be perceived as continuing to privilege the educated professional planner as the “knower” and the diverse communities as the “known,” which seems to be counter to efforts for promoting and sustaining equitable planning practices. As such, promoting empathy through education as a form of social justice “can foster positive social action, whereas its [continued] absence can perpetuate injustice” and negate the social responsibility associated with sustained efforts, if not obligations, towards the socially marginalized (Goodman 2001, 127).

Communication, albeit a start, is not enough. Although I do not dismiss the benefits of greater exposure to building communication skills and self-reflective approaches in planning education, I call for caution. I contend that these skills are useful to planners and would-be planners only if (a) they realize and *accept* that they alone do not have and might not obtain all the answers when they actually do planning in demographically and culturally diverse settings; (b) they consider how they are or can be social agents implicated within the context of this plurality; and (c) (this is harder for some planners and students alike) they understand that planning is political, and communication is only one aspect in navigating the power and social dynamics of planning in the context of demographic and

cultural plurality. Skills in communication and in building processes for understanding different social and personal experiences may open doors for planners. At the same time, when walking through those doors, planners must be willing to acknowledge that what lies on the other side may be valuable. Thus, the outcome of communication is not simply to validate the planner's own standpoint, but to seek out an alternative standpoint worthy of consideration and possibly full acceptance. Sometimes talk is just talk, even if it takes place across cultures. If a planner remains open and willing to learn from knowledge frameworks and experiences outside to her own, I have hope that intercultural communication is but one small, yet potentially meaningful, contribution to working through conflict. It is an alternative to simply confronting and containing conflict through professionalized knowledge, communication and management practices.

Implementing structures within the professional body such as a committee on equity issues, a review of membership to focus on representation and recognition of diversity within the profession would be a bold step to enable the profession to look inward for answers about equity. Such a committee would enable the profession to learn about its limitations, opportunities, and challenges for promoting and building equity within professional practice. Are professional planners reaching out to bring other planning practitioners into discussions about community development, and vice versa? If so, then how, and does this reach go beyond conventional practices of public consultation? These are additional questions that need to be posed if we as a profession are to move forward and develop "a different kind of professional practice, different in both objective and method. This difference amounts to a reconceptualization of the field, and the notion of professional identity" (Sandercock 1998, 102).

I am proposing a radical rethinking of professional planning practice, but one that I fundamentally believe can be done with the expertise of planners whose work is done outside of the professional realm as well as with the leadership of professional planners and planning educators. The possibility for equity in planning is only enhanced through such collective effort. The example of the Alternative Planning Group also shows how even the state—as a governing body—alongside civil society is implicated in this challenge of equity in Toronto. I leave the last word for Uzma Shakir, of the Alternative Planning Group: "We must re-imagine ourselves in the context of both the city and the planning profession by addressing the existing racial /cultural /linguistic /ethnic /religious diversity in the population and the production of racialized inequities" (Shakir 2008, under "Implications for Alternative Planning").

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