RACIAL DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC GARDEN LEADERSHIP

by

Shi Tracy Qiu

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Science in Public Horticulture

Spring 2017

RACIAL DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC GARDEN LEADERSHIP

by

Shi Tracy Qiu

Approved: _____
Brian Trader, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Robert Lyons, Ph.D.
Chair of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences

Approved: _____
Mark Rieger, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Approved: _____
Ann L. Ardis, Ph.D.
Senior Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

Appendix

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

As the demographics of the United States grow more diverse, nonprofits are challenged to engage all constituents in order to remain relevant and financially sustainable as they plan for the future. Public gardens, as environmental and cultural nonprofits, are faced with similar challenges of engaging growing diverse audiences. Dialogue surrounding racial diversity in the field of public horticulture currently focuses on audience, membership, and volunteers. While visitor diversity is an important consideration for public gardens, it must be supported by equally diverse representation in public garden leadership. This research intends to explore the topic of racial diversity in public garden leadership. Using qualitative inquiry and narrative interviews, this research captures the experience of racially diverse public garden leaders. The stories of their pipelines to leadership will inform discussion on recruiting, retaining, and promoting people of color into garden leadership roles. Findings indicate a gap between the initial exposure to public gardens/horticulture/nature and high school/college career considerations. Findings also indicate that people of color in public garden roles require support for additional emotional labor caused by micro-aggressions, discrimination, isolation, and fatigue in the work environment. Finally, findings suggest one-on-one mentorship as an effective pipeline to public garden careers for youth, young adults, and emerging professionals. Considerations include the complexities of individual identities, and the ways that race did or did not play a part in the workplace identities of participants.

Keywords: Public Gardens, Race, Racial Diversity, Leadership, Institutional Culture

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Public gardens, like many nonprofits, are challenged to stay relevant and economically viable in the face of changing audience demographics. It is predicted that by 2065, only 46% of the population will be white, with an inevitable "minority majority" population that already exists in some major urban centers (Chishti et al., 2015; Pew Research, 2015). With a rise in population diversity, these communities of color, historically underserved by public gardens, are now an increasingly important audience for gardens and other nonprofits (Garfias, 1989).

This need for change also comes from financial and organizational necessity. Nonprofits overall are experiencing a decline in government support and donor loyalty, increasing need for earned revenue and diverse funding streams (Nonprofit Finance Fund, 2014; Marts & Lundy, 2015). As greater attention is placed on issues critical to African American communities, Latino/Latina populations, immigrants and refugees, as well as other racial minority groups, nonprofit funding foundations are showing preference to organizations that engage diverse audiences, including communities of color (Prinster, 2017). Public horticulture is attempting to attract a more diverse audience through programming and outreach initiatives (Lacerte, 2011; Lynch, 2015), while addressing a shortage of staff and leadership that reflects this diversity (Rodda, 2014; Meyer et al., 2016; Halpern, 2006). There is still a noticeable lack of people of color as public garden leaders. Similar to environmental and cultural nonprofits, public horticulture is challenged to "prepare for intergenerational

1

leadership changes in ways that reflect the increased diversity of communities"
(Halpern, 2006). While some research has been conducted on racial diversity in public
garden audiences (Wilkening & Chung, 2011; Lynch, 2015), there remains the need
for research about racial diversity from an institutional and leadership perspective in
order to effectively recruit, retain, and promote people of color in leadership roles.

This can be a difficult and uncomfortable topic for organizations to explore,
especially those that are new to the discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Race
in itself is a complex subject, currently defined as a social construct that differentiates
between groups of people based on their treatment in society, rather than past
definitions which focused primarily on biological differences (Higginbotham and
Andersen, 2012). The word "diversity" can be nebulous, including but not limited to
differences in race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, income,
class, physical/intellectual/emotional ability, and education level (Rice, 2005). For this
research, "diversity" and "diverse leadership" refers to racial and ethnic diversity,
specifically public garden leaders that are people of color. It is important to
acknowledge that diversity in all areas (gender, orientation, gender expression, ability,
age, class, income, education level, etc.) is necessary to create a relevant and inclusive
organization in the 21st century.

Race in America can be discussed in several contemporary and at times
critically differing contexts. Howard Taylor, in his 2012 essay "Defining Race",
explores six categories: "biology", such as physical appearance and skin color; "social
construct", defined by others; "social class/prestige", such as social ranks and wealth
in relation to skin color and race; "ethnicity", in relation to culture, nationality, and
religion; "self-definition": how one sees themselves; and the "racial formation of

societal institutions", such as how the U.S. government legally defines what makes an individual American-Indian. Taylor concluded that all six were equally important when discussing the significance of society's role in the definition of race, and these complex layers of racial and ethnic identity further compounds the way groups of people are described. For this research, the terms "white" and "white people" will be used to describe persons of European descent, perceived as "white" by the dominant group, often due to national origin or culture (Wise, 2012). The terms "person of color", and "people of color" describe those that do not fit into this dominant culture, and who belong to historically marginalized groups, often due one or more attributes such as skin color, nationality, culture, and/or ethnicity. It is crucial to note that there are differences between various communities of color in identification, gender, geography, culture, ethnicity, religion, values, history, and levels of privilege. For example, barriers experienced by young African American males differ from those of second generation Asian Americans. Barriers encountered by immigrants with work visas differ from the challenges of incoming refugees. With that being said, for efficiency and clarity, this paper refers to all "non-white" people or those not of the "dominant" white American/European American group as "people of color", "marginalized groups" or "racial minorities". Currently, there is dialogue around the use of the word "minority" when describing people and communities of color, as the connotation can be perceived as negative, or "lesser than". The language around race and identity is constantly changing and fluctuates based on differences in generation, geography, education, inherited culture, and self-identity.

The definition of "public garden leader" and "leadership" in this research refers to full-time paid staff and employees of public gardens in managerial and/or

administrative level positions. While some leadership studies focus solely on executive directors (Peters & Wolfred, 2001), the lack of racially diverse public garden directors necessitated a wider definition of leadership. This research expands the term "leader" to include "white collar" positions, as well as roles that may be considered "blue collar" - that is, skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled labor, often involving maintenance or installation. "White collar" positions in the environmental and public garden sector often self-describes environmental activists, and are professional positions that may require post-secondary degrees and training (Taylor, 2011a). White collar leadership positions may include roles such as director of education, director of development, and other high level senior staff positions. Blue collar leadership positions may include roles such as nursery manager, horticultural supervisor, and other management positions for maintenance and installation areas. It is important to note that public gardens have a wide degree of flexibility in job requirements; a director of horticulture for one garden may require a PhD while the director of horticulture at another garden may require a number of years of hands-on experience. As such, it is difficult to consistently evaluate a recurring role or job title such as "director of horticulture" across multiple gardens. With that in mind, the division between white and blue collar careers is an important consideration when looking at career pipelines, as blue collar careers typically present fewer barriers (networking, education, experience) for people of color entering the workforce (Taylor, 2011a).

There is a consensus in the profession that public garden leadership lacks people of color. Some of this is anecdotal (Redman, 2011), while some evidence for this has been observed by keynote speakers at conferences such as the American

Public Garden Association (APGA) Annual Conference (Raven, 2015). However, representation at annual conferences is not an accurate indicator of racial diversity, and does not represent demographics of the field, as the annual conference itself presents financial barriers for attendance.

There is no research of racial demographics within public horticulture staff and leadership. Current literature in public horticulture primarily explores topics of race and diversity through a lens of audience engagement (Wilkening & Chung, 2011; Lynch, 2015), sustainable community development (Gough, 2012), civic outreach (Lacerte, 2011) and social and environmental outreach (Lynch, 2015). Wilkening & Chung's study of public garden audiences identifies their visitors as "overwhelmingly" white. Lynch's report of the Communities in Nature program describes challenges of staff working with communities of color – existing staff often felt uncomfortable, unskilled, or unprepared to diversify their audience. Lacerte describes public gardens as having a civic responsibility to engage expanding minority populations. Gough's case studies examined how gardens contributed to sustainable community development, including environmental stewardship, civic and social issues, cultural connections and integration, economic improvements, as well as job and career training -- all issues faced by communities of color and/or those in low-income areas. While these four publications emphasize the importance of engaging diverse audiences, they do not explore leadership diversity or organizational issues that may affect increasing audience diversity. This lack of research in public garden staffing and leadership demographics points to a developing trend in diversity and inclusion that is still in the early stages, focusing on assessing external audiences instead of internal culture.

In lieu of public garden racial demographics, statistics in the cultural and environmental nonprofit field can be analyzed to estimate demographic trends in public gardens. Public gardens are defined as mission-based institutions, often nonprofit or non-governmental organizations (NGO), though there are for-profit exceptions. Under the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) Classification System, public gardens are classified under C41: Botanical Gardens, Arboreta, and Botanical Organizations. The C category encompasses organizations that aim for environmental quality protection and beautification. Public gardens can also be considered environmental institutions due to their connection to conservation, research, and environmental education/protection. While public gardens may emphasize ornamental plantings more than a national/state park or land trust, they are similar to environmental nonprofits in their missions of plant protection, increasing biodiversity, and environmental stewardship (Rakow et al., 2011). Simultaneously, the GuideStar Directory of Charities and Nonprofit Organizations defines Arts, Culture, and Humanities nonprofits as organizations that "bring the performing arts to the public; preserve and commemorate the events, places and cultures that created and continue to shape the nation; and promote the distribution of ideas." (Guidestar, 2017). Since many public horticulture programs expand beyond the scope of plant sciences to include history and the arts, public gardens can also be considered "cultural institutions" in their programming, organizational structures, and target audiences. As such, demographic statistics between cultural and environmental nonprofits may be compared when estimating racial diversity in public horticulture leadership.

Nonprofits, specifically cultural and environmental nonprofits, have significantly more research in the area of leadership and staffing diversity compared to

public gardens (Schonfeld & Westermann, 2015; Taylor, 2007; Taylor, 2014). Generally, the nonprofit field is perceived to be lacking in leadership diversity. While people of color make up approximately 30% of America's current population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013), a study of nonprofit organizations report that only 18% of staff are people of color, with a significant decrease when looking at leadership positions (Peters & Wolfred, 2001). In cultural nonprofits, the 2013 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation survey on art museum staff demographics recorded homogeneity in art museum leadership: 84% of museum curators, conservators, educators, managers, and directors were white, while 16% were of a historically underrepresented minority (Asian, Black, Hispanic White, Two or More Races) (Schonfeld & Westermann, 2013). In the environmental sector, the numbers are similar. A study of 243 environmental organizations revealed that ethnic minorities made up 17.2% of staff overall (Taylor, 2008). This study further broke down demographics by position, stating that only 14% of environmental CEO's were people of color. With a range of 16% - 18% of general nonprofit, environmental nonprofit, and cultural nonprofit staff representing people of color, we can estimate that public gardens, as both environmental and cultural nonprofits, have similar if not lower percentages of people of color in leadership.

These numbers are problematic, as racial diversity in public garden leadership may be a key factor for future garden relevance. With minority populations expanding in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013), public gardens are poised to engage these diverse communities as part of their own efforts to promote civic outreach and engage future supporters as well as sources of staff and leadership talent (Lacerte, 2011; Lacerte et al., 2009). Current social and civic issues that affect many people of

color such as food security, racism and prejudice, low-income neighborhoods, access to green space, and access to education are being explored through public garden educational and training programs (Gough, 2012; Waylen, 2006). Despite best intentions, these programs are difficult to plan and implement without input, engagement, and stakeholders from communities of color to voice their needs and expectations (Garfias, 1989). This process is further complicated by a lack of racial diversity in public garden leadership (Redman, 2011). In areas where communities are racially and ethnically diverse, reflecting this diversity in garden leadership could aid collaborations and partnerships with new immigrant communities. This could also be helpful connecting with existing underserved communities of color, such as the African American and Latino/Latina community.

In homogenous and white-dominated communities, racially diverse management can still be perceived as beneficial to a public garden. Studies in nonprofit leadership show that an organization that encourages diversity and inclusion will have a wider range of perspectives, experiences, and methods of action (Rice, 2005). An organizational culture that encourages differences can benefit from honest feedback, especially if "unpopular" opinions are taken into consideration. This can also be a challenge, as having a heterogeneous staff risks conflicts, disagreements, and misunderstandings due to different cultural, racial, and ethnic perspectives (Rice, 2005). With that in mind, a racially diverse organization is still one that has a diversity of experiences, perspectives and contexts to draw on in crisis management, and is better equipped to respond to emergencies (Rice, 2005).

Ollie Malone, in his for-profit article *Diversity Leadership* identifies that the lens in which a leader experiences and approaches life will affect one's decision-

making within an organization. The majority of organizational leaders fit into the dominant culture (middle-class, white, male) and lack the experience of being from a non-dominant group. Malone considers this lack of perspective to be an organizational disadvantage when working with contrary viewpoints, minority groups, or minority issues (Malone, 2003). This suggests that leaders with the experience of being a racial minority may be more sensitive and empathetic to the often-overlooked challenges of underserved groups (gender, income, education, class, ability, etc.). The same logic could be applied to public garden leadership, as this could affect decision-making processes as public gardens engage other underserved constituencies.

A lack of racial diversity in leadership may disadvantage a public garden's hiring process. In the study, *Diversity and Equity in Environmental Organizations: The Salience of These Factors to Students*, 1239 environmental students were asked to rate the importance of 20 factors in the workplace (Taylor, 2007). Eighty-one percent of minority students felt that the ability to take on leadership roles was "very" or "extremely" important when considering potential careers. Other factors considered to be "very" or "extremely" important (46% - 54%) included "having a workplace mentor," "having colleagues of color," "being part of a diverse workforce," and "mentoring of minorities" (Taylor, 2007). A diverse workforce may demonstrate organizational commitment to equity, inclusion, and representation, as well as indicate potential of career growth and mentorship for employees of color, all considered important factors for minority students entering the workforce.

This creates a "chicken or egg" scenario; in order to recruit emerging professionals of color, an organization might have to establish a commitment to inclusion and diversity. The most visible indicator of this is racial diversity in staff,

9

supported by a recent survey of 1,882 current and former nonprofit employees across America, where 90% of surveyed participants believed that staff diversity was the best indicator of an organization's commitment to inclusion (Schwartz et al., 2012). Despite the fact that institutional diversity and inclusion requires more than visible representation, this research implies that having people of color in leadership positions contributes to the positive perception of nonprofits as inclusive employers.

While perception is based on opinion and can often be biased, it is still an important consideration when attempting to diversify an organization's image. The same nonprofit survey gathered opinions and perceptions of both white employees and employees of color (Schwartz et al., 2012). Participants were asked questions about how they perceived their organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion. While most employees stated that their organizations valued diversity (nine out of ten surveyed), the majority (seven out of ten) also felt that their organizations did not prioritize diversity and inclusion enough, relying on "empty talk". Participants cited a "lack of staff diversity", "lack of follow-through on action plans", "lack of actionable practices in hiring", "lack of professional development opportunities for people of color", and "lack of budgeting priority for diversity initiatives", and often felt that their organization's commitment to diversity was "superficial". This was especially clear amongst employees of color, who were more likely than white employees to have negative perceptions of their organization's diversity commitment (25% compared to 16%) (Schwartz et al., 2012). This research also revealed that 16% of sampled nonprofit employees (both white and people of color) reported declining a job offer or withdrawing candidacy due to a perceived lack of organizational diversity or commitment to diversity (Schwartz et al., 2012). Another study from environmental

nonprofits found that employees of color had extensive work experience and long tenure and organizational loyalty, but lacked trust in their organization's commitment to equality; one in five felt undercompensated for their work compared to white counterparts (Taylor, 2011b). It is important to note that Taylor's quantitative study of white and minority environmental employees found no concrete evidence of wage differences based on race. However, this perception of "superficiality" and lack of trust could contribute to difficulties in recruiting and retaining people of color in garden leadership positions.

Public gardens likely encounter the same challenges around diversity in hiring. Additionally, there is a lack of visibility and connection between people of color in public horticulture. Other nonprofit and for-profit sectors have created minority associations/professional groups to provide a space for people of color in their field. Some examples include MELDI (Multicultural Environmental Leadership Development Initiative), MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences), and AAMA (African American Museums Association). Recently (as of 2016), the American Public Gardens Association has formed a committee dedicated to diversity and inclusion in public horticulture, but there are no networks or resources for people of color seeking support or connections with their peers in the public garden profession.

Why are there so few people of color in public garden leadership? Studies in cultural nonprofits explore the challenges of engaging communities of color as audience members and future employees. In a national study of museum-goers, it was observed that "minorities just do not engage and visit with museums, including public gardens, at the same rate as whites" (Wilkening & Chung, 2011). Audience research to

engage Latino/Latina families in museums discovered that while families valued the educational aspects of museums, they were generally seen as "boring" and "passive". Additionally, families felt that the museums lacked cultural relevance, and did not feel welcome in signage or represented by visible staff (Garibay, 2011). The Art Museum Demographics study maintained that there are not enough diverse educational pipelines into museum careers in conservation, and curation, indicating that more students of color must be encouraged to pursue graduate degrees for these high-level positions (Schonfeld & Westermann, 2015). Unfortunately, there are often barriers to higher level education for people of color - whether they be social, cultural, financial, geographic, or educational. This literature suggests that a lack of exposure, lack of engagement and relevance, and lack of educational pipelines could act as barriers for people of color entering cultural nonprofit professions, where public gardens are often positioned.

From an environmental nonprofit perspective, there is a long-held assumption that people of color are not interested in the environment. Research from the 1960's and 1970's examined minority awareness, interest, and participation in "mainstream environmental activities" such as bird-watching, hiking, wildlife conservation, and mountaineering (Taylor, 2008). Considering that these activities developed from a type of environmental activism primarily championed by white, upper-class males in the 18th and 19th century, people of color and the working class - who often did not have the privilege, finances, or leisure time for these activities - were portrayed as disinterested, disengaged, and unconcerned with "environmental affairs" (Taylor, 2008). Scholars at the time ignored environmental activism from the lens of people of color, which focused more on land rights, pesticide reduction, waste disposal, civil

12

rights, and public health in urban environments (Taylor, 2008). These issues were dismissed by organizational leaders as related to "discrimination and poverty" as opposed to "environmentalism" (Taylor, 2008). Also ignored was the fact that people of color were often less geographically and financially mobile, more likely to recreate in city parks or local recreational facilities as opposed to national parks. It was not until the 1980s that scholars challenged this negative perception of minorities in the environment, pointing out how biases in the framing of "environmentalism" and "environmental activities" could lead to erroneous conclusions of minority disinterest (Mohai, 2003). The literature indicates that contrary to these beliefs, African American communities were more likely than white communities to say that "we (as a country) spend too little improving and protecting the environment" (Mohai, 2003). African American communities were also more likely to perceive pesticides as an environmental hazard, and felt that the government was responsible for imposing stricter environmental laws (Mohai, 2003). This suggests that rather than being "unconcerned about the environment", people of color lack access to "traditional environmental activities" and are challenged by a biased framework of "environmentalism".

Far from being a recent issue, a lack of racial diversity has challenged mainstream environmental organizations for decades. In January 1990, the country's largest environmental organizations were called out, highlighting the lack of diversity in their staffing and leadership (Shabecoff, 1990). Leaders of these organizations argued that minorities were not applying for these positions, that there were few people of color in the pool of trained candidates, and that people of color did not want the low salaries of nonprofits and non-governmental organizations (Shabecoff, 1990).

13

These claims have since been contradicted; a 1991 study found a sizeable pool of minority students (13%) with educational backgrounds appropriate for the environmental sector. Fifty-nine percent of these minority students were interested in nonprofit organizations. The same study also reports that most minority students in these professions did not expect salaries above $25,000 per year post graduation; well within the parameters of environmental nonprofit budgets (Taylor, 2008). These studies suggest that contrary to prior research, people of color are interested in environmental careers, and that the lack of racial diversity in environmental nonprofits may be more a result of institutional culture, career pipelines, and hiring practices.

While public horticulture may be compared to cultural and nonprofit institutions, public gardens are unique in their combination of curation, conservation, education, and interpretation. The need for further exploration into public garden leadership is supported by current garden trends focused on engaging racially diverse constituents, maintaining cultural relevance, and remaining responsive and adaptable in years to come. This qualitative study intends to explore the pipelines, experiences, and challenges of racially diverse garden leaders that may facilitate further discussion on the institutional changes necessary to recruit, retain, and promote people of color in public horticulture.

Chapter 2

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this research is to identify methods of supporting, encouraging, and sustaining racially diverse leadership in public gardens. Through personal narratives, this study explores the different career pipelines of people of color in garden leadership, and seeks to understand the motivations and inspirations of racially diverse public garden leaders.

Research Questions

1. What is the experience of being a person of color in a leadership position at a public garden?

   a. What are the pipelines to diverse leadership in public horticulture?

   b. What are the barriers, challenges, and obstacles faced by diverse leaders in their career?

   c. What are the successes and opportunities for diverse leaders in this field?

2. What is the perception of diversity in the public horticulture field from the perspective of diverse leaders?

3. What are the direct and indirect effects of having a diverse leader in a public horticulture institution?

Setting

Potential participants were found in the field of public horticulture professionals. Professional groups such as the American Public Gardens Association (APGA) and the Botanical Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) were utilized for network sampling. Participants were interviewed at one of three locations:

4. The American Public Garden Association Annual Conference – Miami, Florida

5. Through phone-call or Skype

6. At their place of employment (within a hundred-mile radius of Newark, Delaware)

Population

The population was identified through network sampling and snowball sampling methods at professional conferences and events, as well as the researcher's professional contacts. The participants were required to be:

1. Self-identified as a "person of color", racial or ethnic minority, and/or not a member of the dominant cultural/ethnic/racial group in the United States of America such as white, European, European American, or white American. Examples of some self-identifications included but were not limited to: Black, African American, Asian American, South Asian, North African, mixed race, biracial, Latino/Latina, Mexican.

2. A paid employee at a public garden, botanical garden, or arboreta, or an employee within the past five years. This did not include volunteers, board and foundation members, or other unpaid supporters of public gardens.

3. Occupying/occupied a leadership position, defined as any position that had influence over organizational decisions, budget, staffing, volunteers, design, planning, etc. Positions included but were not limited to: nursery manager, assistant director, volunteer director, education coordinator, horticulture supervisor, executive director

4. Occupied their leadership position within the United States of America where the dominant race/ethnicity/culture is white/European. Participants in foreign countries such as Korea, Mexico, and Singapore were excluded.

Ethical Considerations

In accordance with University of Delaware policy and federal law requiring that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) review all research involving human subjects, this research follows the guidelines, procedures and regulations prescribed by the IRB as of May 2016th. The IRB approved this research (Appendix A Institutional Review Board Approval) under the provision that consent forms were obtained for all participants, and that any risk to participants was minimized by maintaining participant anonymity and privacy (Appendix B: Informed Consent to Participate in Research).

Participant privacy was maintained by assigning pseudonyms to participants and when appropriate, omitting names altogether as well as specific locations, institutions, or other identifying factors that may compromise the confidentiality of participant interviews.

Participants were allowed to decline answering any question, and to have an answer be "off the record". "Off the record" discussions could contribute to overall perspective and insight, but without any specific attribution. Participants were allowed to add any statements or questions that they felt addressed the issue of racial diversity in public garden leadership.

Research Design

Research questions were addressed using a narrative inquiry interview method. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) define narrative inquiry as both "phenomenon and method", implying that the narrative method is a qualitative research technique, and that the narrative story itself is a phenomenon to be studied. Arising from the concept that "people by nature lead storied lives", narrative inquiry examines the way

participants experience the world and how these narratives (stories) are used to create meaning in their lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Connelly and Clandinin (2004) describe the three dimensions of narrative inquiry space as personal and social (interaction); past, present and future (continuity), and place (situation). This research focuses on the personal and social through the interactions of public garden leaders, continuity through chronological events of participant experience, and place -- situational experience in the public garden field. The researcher will engage with participants in the form of interviews, allowing participants to voice their own stories and experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 2004).

Research began in April 2016, with a list of professional contacts from the researcher's thesis committee's public garden network. Initially, twelve individuals were identified who fit the selection criteria. Two high-profile public garden professionals were consulted because of their extensive network and knowledge of public garden professionals.

- The Chair of the Director of Large Gardens (DLG) professional group, of the American Public Gardens Association (APGA)

- The Director of the American Public Gardens Association

During the consultation with these garden professionals, the research and selection criteria for participants were discussed. Neither individual was able to add to the list of potential candidates, though they were able to suggest names that had already been identified.

The Chair of the Director of Large Gardens group sent out an email to the fifty-four member institutions of DLG asking for suggestions. Four replies from other directors of large gardens were received, but no additional participants were added to

the list. One was able to recommend a leader within their garden's foundation, but the individual did not fit the criteria of being a full-time paid employee.

Initial contact was made with the twelve individuals on the list. Potential participants were contacted by email, with a short introduction to the research project, and a request for a ten to fifteen-minute phone conversation to further explain the project details if there was interest. Emails (Appendix C: Recruitment Protocol and Information) were sent on May 13th, May 23rd, and June 1st. The contact was listed as "not interested" if they declined to reply after the third email.

Seven individuals participated and were scheduled to be interviewed in June of 2016, either by phone, or in person at the American Public Garden annual conference in Miami, Florida. Of the seven participants interviewed, only one was able to recommend another participant that would fit the selection criteria.

During the APGA 2016 Annual Conference in Miami, 12 potential candidates were identified through network sampling. Six of them responded and agreed to be interviewed. In total, 13 participants were interviewed and recorded, out of a potential 21 participants – approximately 60%. The rest of the participants (8) were either interested in being interviewed but not able to schedule a time (3), interested in being interviewed but did not reply (2), did not reply to the initial email (2), or declined to be interviewed (1).

Interview Protocol

Interviews ranged in length from forty-five minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes, with the average interview taking an hour.

Interviews took place between June 2016 and July 2016, and were all transcribed by August 31st, 2016. Interviews were narrative and organic in nature, and

19

allowed for the interviewee to "tell their own story" about a particular subject or event. Interview questions were based off of the research questions, though due to the organic nature of the interview, questions (Appendix D: List of Interview Questions) were not always presented in exact order. Information that each interview gathered included:

1. Interviewee's racial/ethnic self-identity

2. Childhood interests compared to current career

3. At what point did the interviewee develop an interest in horticulture?

4. What was the educational pipeline for the interviewee?

5. What was the career path for the interviewee?

6. If public horticulture was the first choice of career paths:

    i.   What inspired entry into this field?

    ii. What educational and professional steps did they take to enter this field?

    iii. What were the challenges of entering this field initially?

7. If public horticulture was a second career choice:

    i.   What was the interviewee's first career?

    ii. Why did they choose to change careers?

    iii. What was the transition like as they moved to the field of public horticulture?

    iv. What were the challenges in transitioning?

8. If an interviewee's racial and ethnic identity had any significant impact on their career (day-to-day work, social and professional relationships, job-seeking, climbing the career ladder, positive and negative interactions, connecting with others)

9. What was the interviewee's perspective of diversity in the field of public horticulture?

10. In the interviewee's opinion, what needed to change in order to promote, support, and sustain diverse leadership in public horticulture?

11. Did the interviewee have any suggestions for other potential participants?

Interviews took place in private locations to maintain participant anonymity. In person interviews were recorded using the Voice Memo app on an iPhone 5. Phone and Skype interviews were recorded using both the Voice Memo app on an iPhone 5, and using the Quicktime recording function. Interviews began with a description of the study parameters and summary of ethical considerations for participants.

Data Analysis Strategy

All recorded interviews were transcribed using the online transcription software, Transcribe (transcribe.wreally.com). Interviews were slowed to 50% speed and transcribed by the researcher using a MacBook Pro. Indications of pauses, mid-word changes, starts and stops, and individual speech patterns were recorded. Transcriptions were not edited for a participant's grammar or speech colloquialisms. Transcripts were saved as Word .docx documents and imported into NVivo, a qualitative coding software program (NVivo for Mac, Version 11.3.2, 2016, QSR International). Coding was performed solely by the researcher.

Gordon-Finlayson (2010) describes coding as "a structure on which reflection (via memo-writing) happens." This "memo-writing" – written records of analysis – are combined with diagrams (visual devices that depict relationships between analytic concepts) (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) to connect concepts and theories throughout all stages of qualitative coding.

The data for this research was coded using NVivo as well as hand-written methods (memo-writing and diagrams in transcript margins) combined with field notes from the interviews themselves. Coding was done in three rounds, an initial First Cycle Coding (Exploratory Method), a second First Cycle Coding (In Vivo Method), and a Second Cycle Coding (Pattern Method), before conducting "Code Weaving" or "triangulation" (connecting key themes and concepts to suggest statements or interpretations).

Initial Exploratory Coding

Saldana (2009) covers six methods of First Cycle Coding in "The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers" (grammatical, elemental, affective, literary, exploratory, and procedural). The First Cycle Exploratory Coding Method used preliminary codes generated by the researcher. Also known as "provisional coding", these researcher-generated codes were based on suggestions of what participant interviews may reveal, and were developed prior to the interviews. Codes were divided by research question.

Pre-generated/provisional codes (Table 1) were created based on the research questions and answers suggested from preparatory research and previous literature.

Table 1   Table – Exploratory and Provisional Codes

Research Question	Codes	Description
1. What is the experience of being a person of color in a public garden leadership position (career pipeline, barriers, opportunities)?	Childhood (1a)	These codes categorize the narrative of a person of color in a garden leadership role, starting from their childhood up until their career, including any mentors or barriers along the way. It is also important to note the ways that identity does or does not affect their experience
	Education (1a)	
	Mentorship (1a)	
	Career(s) (1a)	
	Barriers (1b)	
	Opportunities (1c)	
	Racial and ethnic identity (1a)	
What is the perception of diversity in public horticulture from the perspective of leaders who are people of color?	Diversity in public horticulture leadership	These codes describe the general perception of racial diversity in public horticulture leadership, as well as their personal opinions on how the field can improve racial diversity in leadership positions
	Recommendations	
What are the institutional effects of having a person of color in a leadership position?	Leadership effects	This code explores the direct and indirect effects of having a person of color in a garden leadership role, and if their racial or ethnic identity could be connected to these leadership effects

The first research question encompasses the most codes and categories. The initial provisional codes include themes that were theorized to be important to the narrative of racially diverse garden leaders. While the interviews did not have to follow a specific order, the final data created a chronological narrative that described a leader's personal experience. It was anticipated that the codes of "barriers" and "identity" would manifest throughout the chronological timeline of a participant's

experience and career pipeline. The second research question focused on the topic of diversity and public horticulture. Preparatory research suggested participants would not only have opinions on current levels of racial diversity, but that they would also have recommendations for the field as a whole.

The third research question could be covered by the generic code of "leadership effect", as there were no assumptions or suggested answers that could predict how participants would answer.

In Vivo Coding

Once transcripts were coded according to these provisional codes, transcripts were analyzed using a First Cycle In Vivo Coding Method (Saldana, 2009). In Vivo Coding examines participant language, perspectives, and narratives for commonalities and themes that could then act as stand-alone categories, or be added to existing categories. These codes expanded on the initial provisional codes by using the voices of the participants (Appendix E: In Vivo Coding).

Pattern Coding

Second Cycle Coding Methods reorganize First Cycle codes in order to develop a coherent synthesis of the data (Saldana, 2009). Existing codes from the first round(s) were consolidated or re-classified depending on the amount and depth of data in each code. Pattern coding was used to identify emerging themes and to group First Cycle codes into subsets, merging the initial nine exploratory codes and subsequent In Vivo codes into themes and categories that fit the context of the research questions.

Summary

This qualitative research used network sampling in the field of public garden professionals to identify potential participants. A narrative inquiry methodology was used to explore the experiences of public garden leaders through personal stories. Care was taken to insure the anonymity of participant information in order to provide a comfortable interview environment that allowed for participant honesty and a relationship of trust between the researcher and participant. The interviews themselves were consistent in the information gathered, but were flexible in their narrative and organic format. Interviews were transcribed and coded by the researcher, using three different rounds of coding to identify the themes for discussion.

Chapter 3

RESULTS

The results from the narrative interviews provided an in-depth view into the perspectives of people of color in public garden leadership roles. These stories and quotes share the narratives of people of color as garden leaders– their experiences, challenges, and successes. The results from these interviews intend to add to the discourse of race and diversity in public horticulture leadership, as well as to initiate discussion on recruiting, retaining, and promoting racially diverse leaders in the public garden field.

Participant Information

The 13 participants who are all leaders in the field were found using convenience sampling of the researcher's professional network within the public garden field, as well as through networking at public horticulture conferences. Other strategies included a network sampling method, recommended by other participants, professional contacts, or colleagues.

Racial/Ethnic Identity

The 13 participants ranged in race and ethnicity. Self-identification descriptors included:

- African American
- Bi-racial (African American and white, Mexican and white)
- Hawaiian
- Indian (South Asian, not American Indian)
- Jamaican

- Philippine

- Mexican

- Mexican American

- Mixed-race (two or more races)

- Pacific Islander

- North African

- South Asian

- Spanish/Portuguese

These were identifiers chosen by the participants themselves, and they were not instructed to choose from a selection of ethnic and racial identities. Some participants expressed prior challenges choosing their identity on census forms, where identities such as Asian-American, North African, or bi-racial were not always options. Using the American Census categories of race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013), the individual who identified as North-African would be categorized by the American Census Survey as "white", and the individuals who identified as Mexican or Spanish would normally be categorized under non-white Hispanic under ethnicity. In the following chart, Hispanic and Latino /Latina is included in racial categories as all Hispanic participants identified as non-white Hispanic. There were no participants who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native. Several participants were mixed race (white + other), but chose to identify with their non-white race and ethnicity due to visual indicators, societal treatment, and family culture. In this demographic, Philippine is categorized under Asian, rather than Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (Figure 1).

Interview Participants Divided by U.S. Census Categories - Race (n=13)

Legend:
- White (Includes Middle Eastern and North African)
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino/Latina (Non-White)
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
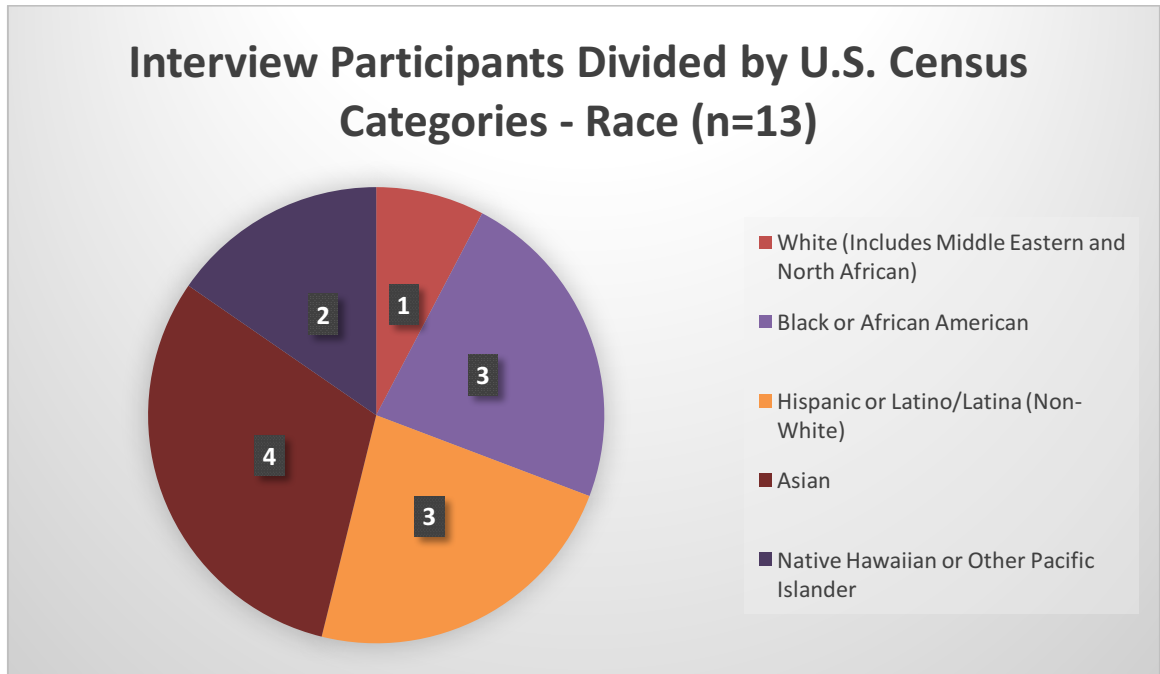
Figure 1   Figure – Interview Participants Divided by U.S. Census Categories – Race

Second Career Transitions

Only three of 13 participants followed a majority-traditional educational and career pipeline for their positions in the public horticulture field. This included post-secondary education in a horticulture related field, followed directly by a position in the horticulture or public garden field. Eight candidates had prior careers before transitioning to horticulture. These careers spanned a range of fields, including education, non-profit management, entrepreneurship, tourism and hospitality, and the skilled trades. Two participants were studying for alternate fields (one related to horticulture and one unrelated) but ended up working in public horticulture during

28

their time in college and continued working for a public garden upon graduation (Figure 2).

Public Gardens as Initial and Secondary Careers (n=13)

- Public Gardens as Initial Career (Post-Secondary Education in Related Field)
- Public Gardens as Second Career
- Public Gardens as Post-Secondary Work Placement Resulting in Career
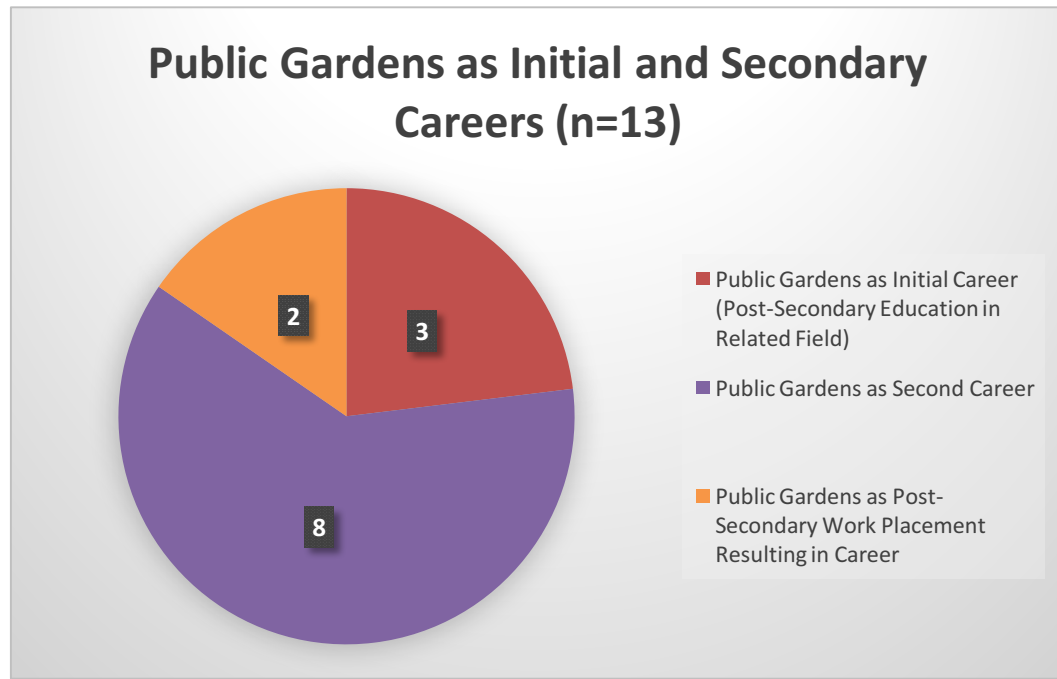
Figure 2   Figure – Public Gardens as Initial and Secondary Careers

Job Description

The 13 participants ranged in leadership position and included: assistant director, curator of living collections, chief executive officer, deputy director, director, director of horticulture, director of research, manager of volunteer programs, nursery manager, volunteer coordinator and youth education specialist (Figure 3). As mentioned in the literature review, these leadership positions included both "white collar" and "blue collar" professions with varying levels of education requirement. All leadership positions involved managing a group of employees or volunteers, as well as

varying levels of decision-making power such as budgeting, hiring, planning, scheduling, and programming. Some participants were new to their position $(1 - 2$ years) while others had been in their position for over a decade.

Administrative Position

Assistant Director
Chief Executive Officer
Deputy Director
Director

Administrative and Horticultural Position
Director of Horticulture
Director of Research

Administrative and Visitor-Based Position
Manager of Volunteer Programs

Horticultural Position

Nursery Manager
Curator of Living Collections

Visitor-Based Position

Volunteer Coordinator

Horticultural and Visitor-Based Position
Youth Education Coordinator

Figure 3   Figure – Participant Job Description

American Citizenship

The 13 participants represented various citizenship statuses. Ten were born and raised in the United States. Three were born and raised outside of America, and came to the United States for post-secondary education or professional reasons as adults, and are residents within the United States. The participants represented the following nine states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Wyoming. Participants were not asked about their age or marital status.

Themes and Coding

Research Question	Themes	Categories	
What is the experience of being a person of color in a public garden leadership position (career pipeline [1a], barriers [1b], opportunities [1c])?	Early Exposure to Nature (1a)	Educational Programming	
		Familial Connection	
		Early Jobs and Experience	
		Preconceptions of Horticultural Careers	
	Horticultural as a Second Career (1a)	Reasons for Transitioning	
		Educational Transition	
		Prior Skills and Experience	
	Barriers and Challenges (1b)	Micro-aggressions and Discrimination	
		Volunteers	
		Isolation and Fatigue	
		Non-Racial Barriers and Challenges	
	Successes and Opportunities (1b)	Job Satisfaction	
		Mentorship	Race and Mentorship
			Mentorship – Career
			Mentorship – Emotional Support
What is the perception of diversity in public horticulture from the perspective of leaders who are people of color?	Perception of Racial Diversity in Public Horticulture	Perceived Lack of Racial Diversity in Field	
		Recruitment Challenges	
		Recommendations for Change	
What are the institutional effects of having a person of color in a leadership position?	Effects of Racial Diversity in Leadership Role	Institutional Effects	
		Personal Identity	

Table 2   Table – Final Themes and Coding

The themes and codes in Table 2 are a visual representation of the categories developed through the three phases of transcript coding. The codes were not weighted equally across all three research questions, as some questions received more detailed narratives than others. In the first research question, most participants spoke about their first experiences or interest in the natural world. While participants did briefly detail their educational pipeline, very few participants felt that there were any appropriate careers in the plant sciences, garden, or environmental sector. As a result, almost all participants had a different career initially and transitioned into horticulture as a second career. In the theme of education, several participants discussed the challenges of attempting further qualifications once established in their career, constrained by finances and time. It was a challenge for participants to discuss the way that race might have affected their careers, as this required an awareness of the complexities of race and society to begin with. Some participants described instances of micro-aggression, discrimination, or emotional fatigue related to race, while others did not feel that their race impacted their day-to-day work.

When asked about the public horticulture field as a whole, an unexpected theme that occurred was that of recruitment and hiring. Participants were wary of hiring to increase diversity, and concerned about tokenization, as well as having the "best candidate" for the job.

All participants spoke about the successes and opportunities in their career, but most were based on personal interest and achievement, rather than connected with their own racial or ethnic identity. Due to this, the theme of personal identity was discussed in much more detail towards the end of the interviews, where participants were able to reminisce on how their racial or ethnic identity might have played a role

in their careers. This was discussed more than their effects on the institution as a racially diverse leader, as participants felt that question required more of an outsider perspective and measurement.

Research Question 1: What is the experience of being a person of color in a public garden leadership position?

Early Exposure to Nature

The data analysis revealed that almost all participants had some type of early exposure to nature, both formal and informal, ranging anywhere from early childhood to teenage years. These memories remained with the participants, who could often describe detailed visual imagery of these experiences. This early interest in nature extended to topics of horticulture, gardening, landscaping, environmental concerns, agriculture, and cultural relevance. Participants received this exposure through dedicated programming (in school or outside of school), through family ties, or due to jobs worked in childhood or early youth, both out of interest and necessity.

Educational Programming

Three out of thirteen participants gained exposure or experiences through educational programming. Audrey was a high school volunteer for a public garden, where she performed weeding and maintenance. Overall, it was not a particularly memorable incident for her, but it created awareness of the garden's existence. Wesley was introduced to horticulture at age six through a public garden summer program. The third participant, Thomas, was involved in a pre-school program that focused on nature based learning and environmental sustainability. Thomas credits the program

for inspiring his interest in nature and the environment, leading to his career in public gardens.

> *My pre-school was very focused on the outdoors, and being outside was something that we did every day. You know, whether it was just sledding, or actively trying to make the environment better, like picking up trash. We had adopted a segment of creek locally, that we decided to survey. ...And after I was done with preschool, the next couple years, while I was in the public-school system, I stayed connected with the preschool, the teacher, and the people who were currently in the preschool and so forth...So, I got involved with that project, as a kid, and I'm still involved to this day.*

Familial Connection

Comparatively, nine out of thirteen participants recalled stories of their exposure to nature and gardening in connection with a family member. Wesley was influenced by his sister; her involvement in a summer gardening program eventually led to his participation.

> *...Seeing her in the garden at a young age, and also working in the garden with my siblings, I think that really created a relationship with the earth as well as a longing for knowledge in the garden. As far as how plants grow, just in general – curiosity – to learn more about nature and my place in the world.*

Many participants discussed parents or grandparents owning a yard or garden where their exposure to nature took place. Dominic recalled performed landscaping and maintenance chores:

> *Absolutely yeah, I enjoyed being outdoors and part of nature, um, so I was always tending my parent's landscape, mowing the front and back lawns, pulling weeds, doing a little bit of hardscape with my father and his brothers, so I always had some sort of a green thumb growing up.*

Kelly reminisced about outdoor family activities and described how gardens were a source of pride and joy in her family:

> *It was – like I would spend weekends hiking, my family would spend weekends camping. My grandfather, I credit my grandfather a lot-- instilling that love of nature. He gardened-- I remember him caring for avocado trees and citrus trees. He was always – both of my grandparents, grandfathers particularly, were out working in their gardens and their yards, were big – you know -- points of pride, that beautiful yard.*

In some instances, this interest in nature countered cultural expectations of gender. Marisa, who grew up outside of the United States, characterized herself as a "tomboy" and related these tomboy activities to her interest in gardens and plants.

> *I was always climbing trees, in the dirt, doing everything that most girls at my age wouldn't be doing. ...The earliest memories I was having was plucking flowers through my grandfather's garden. And I would do it as mischief, but I was just intrigued. I think I was just intrigued into plants right from the beginning.*

Marcus described family members as plant enthusiasts and hobby growers, exposing him to different propagating and gardening methods at a young age:

> *...Everyone in my family on both sides of my families-- my grandparents on both sides, my mother-- were all interested in plants. My grandfather used to have a small shade house -- he raised ferns and orchids -- a lot of different stuff. I had my own orchids when I was younger-- elementary school and even in high school-- I had my own plants and I had my own orchids and stuff.*

This familial connection was not available to all participants. A counterpoint of having family ties to gardening and nature was the consideration of privilege and access. Some participants' families had less access to traditional outdoor environmentalist activities such as camping or hiking, and their exposure to nature was

limited to backyard chores. Ava recalls learning about how her colleagues were
introduced to the natural world:

> *And one thing I remembered is that most of them (colleagues) got
> into horticulture because their parents liked being outdoors. And a
> lot of these people were white women. And I remember thinking--
> my parents, my mother-- she'd have us weed the garden, but my
> parents never took us hiking, they didn't garden, they didn't do any
> of that stuff you know? My mother worked, because she had to.*

Early Jobs and Experience

Three participants described early jobs in the horticulture and agricultural field.
For some participants such as Alyssa, the job was out of financial necessity:

> *…We were not a financially comfortable family, so I had to work at
> a very young age. My first job, I think I was about ten years old
> when I started working summers doing agriculture, so picking
> strawberries, and potatoes. (…) I used to also ride on the back of
> spray tanks and I would be responsible for breaking up the clumps
> of whatever was in there, be it pesticide or whatever became a solid
> chunk and would not dissolve in water.*

Another participant, Manuel, was from a farming community in a rural area
and was exposed to agriculture and growing at an early age. Lastly, Wesley, who was
introduced to horticulture via his local public garden, was hired to work there as part
of a middle school summer program.

> *It was only six hours (a week) during the summer, from what I
> remember, and it was every Saturday. So, one Saturday a week I
> would do different things, I would learn how to make a sales call, I
> would learn how to conduct market research, and take a look at
> what the appropriate price of the herbs and greens that I was selling
> to the restaurant.*

Preconceptions of Horticultural Careers

Despite this early exposure, most participants did not consider horticulture or gardens an option for a future career, though they found the activity and exposure to be enjoyable. A common code was the "prestige", "dignity", or "perception" of careers involving caring for plants (agriculture, gardening, horticulture, environmental studies). There were often negative associations due to a family history of low-paid agricultural labor, negative cultural associations of agriculture and manual labor, or the perception of other careers (business, law, medicine, technology, management) having more mobility and potential for future sufficiency and financial sustainability. Kelly describes her memories of gardening in contrast with her career choices:

> *I remember even as a fourth grader, fifth grader, I had like – a vegetable garden, and a strawberry patch. But it was all hobby. I never – never, for whatever reason, I never considered it as a career path.*

A theme that emerged was the negative association of horticulture with agriculture, menial labor, and lack of job mobility. This often connected to the American history of slavery, plantation workers, and immigrant labor in the agricultural industry. Morgan ruminated on different attitudes towards the public garden sector as a career choice:

> *So, if you have parents who might be immigrants to this country, who always want better for their kids, without having a relationship with botanical gardens, they're gonna see- "Well the only career choice my kid could possibly have is to be a gardener, and that's not okay." You know? "My family worked in fields, and struggled, to get us to a better place."*

Kelly discussed how as a second-generation immigrant, she may have subconsciously wanted to distance herself from agricultural associations, as it seemed her whole generation "(was) working to separate ourselves from that role (in

38

agriculture). Marcus thought that this could also be due to the perceived lack of in-between positions in the agricultural field, and by proxy, the horticultural field:

> *I mean coming from a plantation state, you'd think-- but when people in my generation at least, when you thought about taking care of plants, it was immediately about picking pineapples or working in a sugar plantation. It was not the level of horticulture. You were either an agricultural employee, or you were the boss, there was no in-between.*

Manuel, born and raised outside of the United States, described how economic trends affected what were perceived as "desirable jobs" in his country:

> *The trend was everybody needed to make fast money. Nobody-- the younger kids then don't wanna go into agriculture, cause it's a long wait. Everybody goes into the tourist areas here…waiter, cooks, maids, house helpers, that was more (where) the economy was headed at that time.*

Marisa, also born and raised outside of the United States, spoke about the cultural context of working outdoors in gardens:

> *…in [country] it's considered a man's job. It's not considered a field where you can go and work in the dirt, can get your hands dirty, you know? And so, they were baffled that I was still in horticulture, and that I wanted to go for an unpaid internship where I would have to work hands-on, pulling weeds.*

Apart from negative associations with agricultural labor was the fact that many participants weren't aware of the career possibilities in public horticulture. Wesley simply had not been aware that it was even an option:

> *I had no knowledge at the time, when I was six, seven years old as a kid, that I could continue my passion of gardening that would develop into a career for myself. No idea. But I think... one thing that I knew though was that I enjoyed being in the garden, and I enjoyed working with plants.*

Horticulture as a Second Career

Most participants transitioned into public gardens as a second career. The few that followed an educational pipeline to public horticulture did so through graduate studies, and the transition was fairly seamless (leadership positions during or within a year of completing a Ph.D.). Participants without post-secondary qualifications tended to work their way up, starting as roles as volunteers, gardeners/horticulturists, or horticulture enthusiasts that eventually obtained promotion to a leadership position.

Reasons for Transitioning

Those that transitioned from other fields came from education, hospitality, skilled trades, or non-profit fields, and were able to apply their previous job skills to their current position. While many participants described public horticulture salaries as low and barely sufficient, most participants agreed that the stability and benefits of public horticulture positions were an important consideration when transitioning to the field. Other reasons for transitioning included being familiar and competent with horticulturally based work, wanting a new challenge in their career, the innate desire to work outdoors or with plants, the therapeutic value of working in a botanical garden, and the variety of roles, projects, and opportunities in public gardens. Audrey, who transitioned from the nonprofit field into a high-level executive role spoke about what excited her the most:

> *It was literally the challenge of the job. It's the challenge that when I first started, they wanted someone who could really help elevate the profile of the garden.*

Ava changed majors to horticulture during her time in college because she liked the variety of knowledge the field contained:

> *Something I love about horticulture is that you can learn a little bit of every kind of science. There's chemistry, there's physics, there's biology, there's so many different things that can grasp your imagination. And there's art too, there's social side, there's science, and- everything, when you study live systems. I feel like there's something to fall in love with for the rest of your life, you know?*

Alyssa, who had initially been working in a nursery, enjoyed working with plants, but ultimately wanted something more engaging:

> *...In my experience, in my opinion, there's more intellectual satisfaction in a public garden. ... when you're in the public garden sector, you have the opportunity -- depend(ing) on your personality -- but you have the opportunity to change your job dynamic. So, you know, if you get really interested in working with kids for instance, you can still bring that into your job in some way or another.*

Dominic had been in the skilled trades, but had trouble finding work due to economic changes, and decided to take a lower paying position in horticulture in exchange for consistent work hours. Manuel, who formerly worked in the hotel industry was tired of his job and wanted to get back to nature, of which he had fond childhood memories. He began volunteering with a public garden before applying for a position there. Overall, there was a consensus among participants that while the pay was low and the work could be physically challenging, the intellectual satisfaction, steady hours, and therapeutic environment of public gardens were a worthwhile trade.

Educational Transition

The participants divided into three groups: 1.) those who had completed a post-secondary degree, 2.) those that had not completed a post-secondary degree, and 3.) those who had gone on to graduate studies. Themes that emerged included accessibility of education – some participants were not able to complete their post-secondary education due to restrictions on finances, time, or support. Dominic

41

discusses his education being on hold so that he could prioritize his family and his full-time job:

> *…The idea was to get certified in horticulture, landscape, irrigation. I never completed those programs, because I started working. … and I have kids that are into activities during the week, school. And then my wife was going, getting her (degree)… So, I kind of had to put that on pause.*

Manuel had been working on an associate's degree, supported by the garden he was employed under. Unfortunately, due to limited resources the funding was not renewed and he was not able to continue the program.

Another theme that emerged was that of parental and generational education – many participants discussed their parents and extended family. Participants such as Sonia, who had family members with graduate degrees or post-secondary education spoke of how this influenced her own decision and motivation to pursue post-secondary education:

> *And I have an uncle who's a big agricultural scientist in [country], my dad's brother. …so, he has been a great inspiration for me, growing up.*

Participants such as Ava that were the first in their family to attend post-secondary education described some of the challenges navigating the academic and social circles of university and college, as well as the financial and time restrictions that acted as barriers to education:

> *I wish I would have had some guidance then, because my parents kind of went to college, but they never finished college. I think my mom went through a year, my dad- I think he went to community college a little bit. (…) But I was really the only person- the first person in my family to go to graduate school. I was the first person in my family to finish college, period. I don't know how that [expletive] works you know?*

Two of the three foreign transplants described their education as the turning point of their career – during post-secondary studies they moved to the United States to pursue their education, and were able to obtain work visas in order to begin their careers.

One participant, who was unable to complete his initial degree expressed challenges associated with the lack of educational qualification, and discussed how it affected his career:

> *I wasn't 100% qualified for (the job), but that was one of the big challenge(s). I got myself pretty much more qualified now, but not where I want to get as far as qualification and credential(s). ...it's still something I encourage people to get, just a little more qualified.*

Few participants actually had degrees in horticulture, botany, agriculture, or related fields. Most participants obtained degrees in other fields, though two participants began working in public gardens as students while completing their degree, and continued to work at the garden after graduation.

Prior Skills and Experience

Most participants found that they were able to apply skills from their prior career into their public horticulture position. One participant, who once worked in the trades was promoted to manager within two years of working at the garden:

> *You know what, if it wasn't for [skilled trades], for that work ethic, I don't think I would have moved up this quickly into a manager position. I give it all to the union, we went through this apprenticeship program for five years, and they train you in everything... So, that made a lot of things easier for me here.*

Morgan transferred from the non-profit sector, but was able to use her previous experience managing volunteers to secure a position in a public garden. No

participants felt that their current position was an enormous leap of scope from previous work or previous knowledge of horticulture. Those who acquired a blue-collar position such as grounds manager, or nursery manager, cited prior experience with growing plants as a reason for their successful transition.

Barriers and Challenges

Barriers for participants were coded as workplace culture, micro-aggressions and discrimination, tokenism, isolation and fatigue, and non-racial barriers and challenges. Participants told stories about challenges in the workplace that were both related and unrelated to race. Some did not feel they experienced any workplace barriers in relation to their race or ethnicity, and rather felt that their gender or age (female, or under 40) contributed to prejudice against them. Most felt that their organizations were comfortable places to work as people of color, even if they were the only person of color within the department or organization. However, most participants also had one or two stories of a workplace incident involving a micro-aggression or an outright discriminatory comment.

Micro-aggressions and Discrimination

The Oxford Dictionary defines "micro-aggression" as "A statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority." Many participants spoke about misidentification as a micro-aggression in the workplace, whether it came from staff, volunteers, or garden visitors. An example of a micro-aggression is asking a person of color where they are "from", assuming they are

foreign and not American. One participant, who identifies as Latina speaks about visitors questioning her ethnicity.

> *...People used to ask me "What am I? What are you? Are you (American) Indian?" Are you --it's such a boring question Tracy, I can't tell you how boring that question is, like this man asked me that this weekend. I was working you know, they pay me to be nice, so I had to be nice about it. And I said oh, you know, I'm (Latina). And well "but don't you have any Native American in you, you really look Native American."*

Another participant, who is biracial, recalled colorblindness from colleagues and other staff members who dismissed her ethnicity and race:

> *And there were micro-aggressions left and right from people in that group that say "Oh I'm colorblind, I don't even see people of color." or they say to me "[Name], I thought you were white until the summer time". And they were like "we thought you got your color from someone else in your family, because my grandfather is Mexican and sometimes I have color." and I'm like, oh my god, seriously?*

A participant who identifies as mixed race but recognized that she presents as white-passing, spoke about how being misidentified as white engaged her in uncomfortable conversations with white colleagues:

> *I think it's interesting because my cultural background is not visually obvious, and so because I present as a power group, I have an interesting window into racial issues at places that I've worked. And that can be painful, horrifying, enlightening, all of the above. Alienating. ... like in my current position there's a lot of condescension towards the gardening staff (who are people of color) ... and I always end up being a segue way between the gardeners and the administration.*

A more extreme example of intolerable workplace culture revolves around workplace language and the role of the organization in enforcing rules about

discrimination, as seen in one participant's case with her former public garden employer:

> *And the staff regularly use the n-word and the f-word like slurs. And that is part of an acceptable culture there. And I told my boss, and nothing happened. And he's also a white man and I'm the only person of color on staff, I am the only person of color on the entire history of the (garden), to be a person of color, ever. So, there's an acceptable culture that has been there, and I was the first person to say that it's not okay.*

For the most part, participants did not feel like they were outright discriminated against in their place of employment, though almost all participants brought up an instance where they felt uncomfortable in the face of a micro-aggression.

Volunteers

A code that emerged was that of discrimination or micro-aggressions coming from public garden volunteers despite a relatively supportive and inclusive workplace. The following participant, who has an Arabic sounding name describes an interaction:

> *…Especially more these days because of the national rhetoric (Islamophobia) around who I am, and how my name sounds and so forth. And they've (staff) been very supportive of me through that. So, no incidences with the immediate people that I work with. From time to time, there'll be a comment about you know-- and most people do it jokingly and they think that it's funny and it's not-- comparing my name to like a terrorist or something like that. And that's obviously not cool but people think it's funny. Nobody on staff has done that in a way I feel is inappropriate, but I've had at least one volunteer say something like that to me.*

In a more extreme incidence, another participant worked with volunteers who would use racist, homophobic, and ableist[1] slurs with little repercussion:

> *I was told that, by a volunteer who had been volunteering there for years, that "the Muslims have it right" -- you know she was xenophobic too "the Muslims had it right, they kill gay people. Gay people are an abomination."*

Participants describe their volunteers as a mixed group, with some that have predominantly retired white volunteers, and some having more racial and age diversity depending on the local population and programming of the garden. Morgan discusses different generations of volunteers and challenges dealing with micro-aggressions and discrimination:

> *You know mid-level managers are typically millennials, maybe some Gen-X, the boomers are senior staff, and then I've got this humongous group of great generation volunteers. So, you know, so I have great generation people who will... will say offensive things to my face, in a public arena. And, I have to immediately assess "Okay, is this... an opportunity to educate? Is this an opportunity to basically dictate? A.K.A take them down? Or do I ignore it?"*

Isolation and Fatigue

Participants spoke about feelings of isolation and/or the discomfort of being one (or few) people of color in a predominantly white environment. Some of these narratives are from professional events and conferences, while others take place within

---

[1] The Oxford Dictionary defines able-ism as "Discrimination in favor of able-bodied people." This includes physical, emotional, and mental health and ability. Examples of ableist language include the word "retarded", "crippled", and defines people by their disabilities, suggesting they are "inferior".

the workplace. Dominic spoke about undercurrents of discomfort at primarily white networking events:

> *...Going to these conferences, I stand out because there's nobody... there's hardly anybody that's a minority that goes to those. It's pretty white predominant there. And there's people... that's where I get a lot of the looks. I mean everyone's nice, but I can tell. I can read people's faces and how they sort of like change the subject or stop talking to me for whatever reason.*

Participants speak about the need to be a "chameleon", either changing their body language, appearance, or speech to fit in with dominantly white workplaces. Kyle discussed how he codeswitches between English, the local language, and the local dialect depending on the situation. Some participants, such as Thomas, didn't feel uncomfortable despite being the only person of color in the organization, but did still feel he was the "other":

> *I think the first word that comes to mind is anomaly. I feel like an anomaly. I don't feel like ... I'm special or, like, not that I'm out of place, but I guess kind of. But, more that I'm not the norm. I'm not normal (laughs). Which doesn't bother me, I'm sort of living in this space just fine, I don't feel ostracized or anything like that, but I just feel like an anomaly.*

Morgan described the additional emotional intelligence that she has developed in order to succeed as a woman of color in the professional world:

> *I think that when you're a person of color navigating through just about any world, you learn very much to be a chameleon. You have honed your emotional intelligence like nobody's business. Like, I have to walk in a room and immediately assess in three to five seconds what I'm dealing with, so I can act accordingly. And, that's just real. I mean like, if I go in- I mean I know who the racists are. I know who the people are that have already pre-judged me before I've even opened my mouth.*

Audrey, whose organization is in a culturally diverse location described how she was uncomfortable when travelling in different areas, where the only person of color is "behind the counter, … preparing food". Manuel also remembered the discomfort at being the only person of color at various professional events:

> *…And I went to that talk, and I was almost a little uncomfortable to tell you the truth. I don't know if it's a thing where multicultural people just wouldn't go to certain things, but I go because I was invited, and I could look around, there was nobody looked like me. Nobody at all. They were all either Caucasian, mostly older. So, if I'm in a crowd like that, immediately I am conscious of it. Not necessarily affected by it, but I am conscious of it.*

The repeated stress of facing micro-aggressions or discriminatory behavior had some participants feeling fatigued and exhausted. Morgan, who previously discussed great generation volunteers, also spoke of the rapid decisions that had to be made with dealing with micro-aggressions – whether to confront an individual or to let it go:

> *And you have to make those kinds of decisions, hundreds of times a day. And it's exhausting. Because I think that people who have white privilege don't necessarily have to navigate the business world in that way… Because rarely is someone else going to educate on your behalf.*

Non-Racial Barriers and Challenges

Several participants also felt that they faced relatively few barriers due to their race in the workplace. This was the case in two foreign transplants that came to study and work in the United States. Marisa felt that there were more barriers when she tried to get an American H1 Visa from the American Consulate in her own country:

> *I remember in 2001, going for my visa interview in the consulate in [city], and the US officer-- the consul officer-- he said do you have land back here (in her country)? Are you gonna come back and*

farm? I said no, I'm just going to go and study and then come and
find a job in public gardens. And he- he pretty much laughed at me,
he said that's unheard of, I don't think you'll find a job, you can go
and study but- because there aren't public gardens in [country] (the
same way there are in the United States). So, I think I struggle with
the diversity aspect through my transition whether it was student
visa to work visa, you know, and sustaining my work visa
throughout all that.

Sonia perceived her race as something that helped her stand out amongst other professionals in the field, especially in a male dominated environment:

I feel maybe it is the degree that I have, when I'm in a group, which
I feel horticulture is a very male dominated field. Even though you
would think of women being gardeners and more women would be
in the field, it is a very male-dominated field. And so, in meetings
that have been where it's been predominantly male, and I feel
sometimes if it was an American Caucasian woman, a lot of them
might dismiss it as not much, whereas if I spoke up I would – I've
gotten the perception that I would get more respect and I would be
listened to.

She also spoke of how it caused her to be perceived as "intimidating" by other employees and colleagues, though she allows that it could be due to her position:

I sometimes also wonder, being non-white, if I can be intimidating
too. Because I know I feel like I'm intimidating to my staff, and that
could be because I'm in a supervisory role. So sometimes with a lot
of people, if you're a CEO you have a certain respect, and you
won't speak off your turn, or whatever. So, it could be part of the
respect too, that I could come across, because I'm in a position that
people could consider me to be intimidating.

Other participants spoke more about barriers in age – Audrey in particular felt the challenges of being younger than other leaders in the field:

I honestly don't think that (race) has as much an impact as the
perception of my age. I think because I'm in a field or we're in an
area where most of the constituents at the time supporting the
garden, all the volunteers, were older, it was new for them I think, to
see that leadership could come from someone who was young. And

*being able to prove that leadership could happen at a young age,
only was proved by demonstrating success rather than just telling
people about it. So, I think to me that felt more of the barrier rather
than I wasn't white.*

Dominic thought that his relatively young age combined with being a racial minority was an area of interest for other public garden professionals, for better or for worse:

*My biggest challenge is... you know, I'm 32 years old, so I was 30
when I got the position, so there's a lot of people that are older than
me, that went to school, had got a degree in plant science. They
assume I have the same background as them. And when they ask me
where'd you go to school, and I told them the same story that I told
you, how I was in in school for a little bit, got a job, and moved up
the ladder from there, they kind of go "oh, really" they kind of do
that a little bit. Kind of like "oh, oh I had to go to school to get this
position".*

*You know I get that, I can feel a little bit of the hate going on, you
know I get haters (laugh) because they see I'm a [ethnic family
name], right away I'm a minority. My only defense is, hey I worked
hard at what I do, I didn't give myself the promotion, someone
offered it to me, that had a degree, that knew what they were doing,
and they saw talent or just knew that I needed to be in that position,
whatever they saw that's fine.*

Successes and Opportunities

Despite challenges and barriers in the field of public horticulture, most participants were very satisfied with their careers and day-to-day roles. A large part of the job satisfaction was in the concept of "meaningful work", work that felt emotionally fulfilling for participants. A theme under this category was the relationship many participants had with their mentors, and how this relationship lead to career and job opportunities in the field of public horticulture.

Job Satisfaction

Participants spoke about the flexibility and variety of work available in the public garden field. Any position, including that of grounds manager or nursery manager, could potentially allow for a leader to manage employees, volunteers, and participate in community outreach activities. Participants found this ability to expand beyond the day-to-day requirements of their role to be enjoyable and enriching. Alyssa was able to use the flexibility in her position to engage and interact with underserved groups:

> *I really enjoy the public outreach aspect, at [former garden] I was able to work with halfway houses that served people who are mentally challenged and that was really incredible. Here at my current position I've been working with a group of women who are domestic abuse survivors so that's been really exciting, and just constantly interfacing with young people and giving them an opportunity to be exposed to horticulture, I can expand that group, I love that. It's exciting, it's charging, it feels like I'm doing something that's worthwhile.*

Morgan described herself as a passionate advocate of professional employee development. Her role in the organization changed and she was able to take on responsibilities related to human resources, much to her enjoyment:

> *Because day-to-day operation, people is a large part of (my interest). And (the director) knows that that's kind of my love, too. And some of the programs that I'd built at the garden are kind of for the professional development of people. Moving them forward. So, it just kind of makes sense for me to take kind of those functions on.*

Dominic originally wanted to become a firefighter as a child; he wanted a career where he could help people. He was satisfied with the contributions of his career in public horticulture, in how plants relate to human environments:

> *I wanted to help people or stuff like that. And I didn't know that eventually I would be helping plants. Not necessarily people, I'm*

52

helping plants. I'm helping habitats, I'm helping restoration, I'm
helping science, in a bigger way than most people think.

Mentorship

Mentorship was an important topic for participants when discussing their success and access to opportunities. Most participants mentioned one or two mentors – both formal and informal – who were instrumental to their current career path. Mentors were past employers, educators, professional colleagues as well as family members.

Race and Mentorship

Few of the participants mentioned a public horticulture mentor who was a person of color, and most participants discussed having a white mentor. These cross-racial mentorships were all deemed to be positive and extremely important to their professional development. Ava in particular spoke fondly of a former employer who she had a strong connection with:

He's from (state), he's a white man, and his wife loves to garden.
...they were incredibly giving and loving and everything like that,
and that's probably the most loving job I've ever had, is actually not
working in public gardens, but working for a rich white family,
which sounds really weird… he did a lot of things, that made me feel
comfortable (talking to him as a person of color).

Mentorship – Career

Several participants were able to find employment due to connections through their mentors. These mentors acted as advisors during career transitions, educators in the early exposure to horticulture and gardening, and professional contacts that introduced the participant to other contacts in public horticulture. Wesley, who was

53

introduced to horticulture early on, describes his relationship with a public garden staff member who encouraged his development in the horticultural field:

> *I'd known him since I was six, and this was kind of crazy, he was the first person to introduce me to the world of plants, and that was [name]. And he is currently the director of the education department at the arboretum. To me he's kind of a grandfather because I've known him since I was six. He's the reason why I'm in this position, just thinking about it. He was the person who decided we needed to take the experiences as the arboretum, and connect it to communities who don't get the opportunity. Only through him wanting to make that a possibility that I was even able to have this experience.*

Morgan remembered how a mentor in the cultural field was able to provide valuable expertise that could be applied to the public garden field:

> *...the deputy director at the museum who took me under her wing, and basically taught me everything there was to know about how do you take this business degree and apply it to the museum field. That was kind of where I learned everything. And I was able to stay in this field as a result of her.*

Mentorship – Emotional Support

Another theme under mentorship was having someone to turn to for emotional support and encouragement during challenging times. Kyle spoke about how his mentor was able to help him with a difficult decision:

> *So anyways, I go to my major professor soon after that, and say look well, I got this amazing job, it's been our dream to live in [location], here's an amazing job that would do that but I've committed to the Ph.D. program and I don't know what to do. And I was expecting him to say yes, you've committed, you need to finish what you started, but I looked him in the eye, and he said "don't be stupid go for the job." And I said, what? He said, the reason you get a Ph.D. is to get a good job, and if you can get a good job without the Ph.D., get the job.*

Dominic was aided by a former employer and mentor who acted as a sounding

board when he was problem-solving at work:

> *I have an old boss that I'm friends with now, that I would call from*
> *time to time to give me advice. To make sure my decisions are not*
> *too wild, you know? Making sure my decisions aren't based on*
> *emotions and stuff like that that. And I feel a lot of the bad decisions*
> *are made off of emotions you know? Even to the simplest email,*
> *sometimes you have to wait a night to write an email because you're*
> *too emotional and you're being too blunt, and it's not that big a deal.*

Ava also spoke about her time in graduate school, and how another

professional in the public garden field was able to emotionally support her during a

difficult time in her thesis, encouraging her to continue working in public horticulture:

> *...she just looked at me and she's like, you have to do it for the*
> *people you love. And she was right, I had to let go of that anger…*
> *and remember how important the work is, you know?*

Research Question 2: What is the perception of diversity in public horticulture from the perspective of leaders who are people of color?

Perception of Racial Diversity in Public Horticulture

Perceived Lack of Racial Diversity in Field

All participants felt that the field of public horticulture lacked racial diversity

in leadership. A few participants felt their institutions had some amount of racial

diversity in staffing, or at least was geographically located in a diverse community.

None of the participants felt that their institutional leadership was racially diverse. All

participants had attended to at least one American Public Gardens Association

(APGA) conference. All were aware of the lack of racial diversity in the public garden

field, though three participants were surprised seeing it in person. Like others, Audrey mentioned being able to pick out other people of color at the annual conference:

> *Yeah well, that's an interesting question, cause if I literally looked at the conference represented of the field, it definitely isn't diverse. I think you (researcher) were the only other Asian person I saw (laughs), there probably may have been others, but I think I recall going, well, Oh, well there's one other person.*

Ava, who identifies as bi-racial discussed some of the challenges of measuring public horticulture diversity:

> *I feel like botanic gardens are so spread out, and most staff cannot afford to go to APGA, and when you are at APGA, it's like "oh my god, I get to catch up with my friends!" And identities aren't always visible, like you said, how (a colleague) thought I was white. Like (this colleague) knows me, like I don't know, fifteen years, and he thought I was white that entire time which is not true. You know, I- I very rarely feel like I see a person of color at conferences. I feel like I very rarely see people of color who are under the age of thirty-five, you know I'm thirty-seven, but I very rarely see people of color who are young, also.*

Kyle remembered feeling surprised, as he had come from a diverse community to attend the annual conference:

> *… it hit me like a freight train when I got here, whatever the first day was. I was like, this is a very… unique cross section of humanity here. And it's not really representative of… everything that America is, you know. And like, lot of white guys, a lot of middle aged white guys, lot of gay guys. So, I don't have a problem with any of those classifications, but it seems like there's kind of a heavily weighted or overbalanced towards those demographics. So, not too many brown people. Like, I sat down at the conservation table, and there's these two ladies from Malaysia, I say "hey, brown people!" and I sat down and we're having a conversation (laughs).*

Diversity was particularly lacking in the African American population, as noted by one participant:

> *Well last year, I was little surprised, knowing that it's not only national, but international, there's people come as far as Israel... as far as I see, I didn't see much of diversity. At one time, I was walking around, I was like-- am I the only Black person?*

Sonia, who is more established in the research side of the public garden field, felt that the academic conferences were more racially diverse representations of the profession:

> *And that such a common scene for me because before APGA, or (a conference at) Longwood you know; I've been to American Soil Science Society or other conferences where it was maybe one or two (people of color) you know. And especially from …(country). There was always a handful you could count it, and so if I made it a point to look around (at APGA), that would sink in like, oh… it's sad, to see that there's not many people of color you know.*

Recruitment Challenges

When asked about their perceived reasoning for this lack of racial diversity, many participants spoke about the challenges of finding people of color to work in their organization who not only had the skill set for the position, but was also willing to accept the perceived lower pay of a non-profit compared to the for profit or academic sector.

A common theme was that participants, or their organizations, wanted to have the "most qualified candidate". In many cases, participants were aware of the lack of diversity in their organization, but were cautious of tokenization – hiring someone on the basis of their race to fill a "quota" in the human resources department, as discussed by Kelly:

> *I mean it, that's a tricky question because then you start to get into the quotas and stuff. So, I think representational of the community – yes, it's important. But not just to fill, you know, a quota. So, like, I*

57

*don't know if it should be mandated or structured, but I think people
should be mindful.*

One participant remembered her difficulties when she was hiring for their
horticulture department:

> *In general, when I interview, unless it's a white male or a white
> female, it's very hard to find anybody else to come to the- when we
> send out advertisements. You just cannot find anybody. A seasonal
> employee, when we hire seasonal employees, at twelve dollars an
> hour, it's weeding and hard labor work. So, it's very hard to find
> anybody else because I think a Caucasian male or female, once
> they're very passionate about gardening, they love being outdoors,
> they like doing that kind of thing. Where, I think other cultures, I
> don't see the interest in other cultures too. They consider that labor.*

Wesley thought part of the issue was due a lack of access to educational
opportunities, particularly graduate level studies, that are often required for leadership
positions in public gardens:

> *I mean when you think about it that's one of the main qualifications
> for people to obtain those higher (leadership) opportunities. If
> there's not as many um, people of diverse backgrounds pursuing
> those, actually taking those opportunities, ultimately obtain those
> higher career opportunities, I mean it's... not a surprise I would
> think.*

Thomas, who initially went to college for environmental science, also felt there
needed to be more pipelines for people of color going into horticulture:

> *I think as we were talking about earlier, there's less of a pipeline,
> there's less people coming into the field who are taking interest in
> environmental science as a profession, or if they are taking interest
> in environmental science, it's not ultimately ending up in the
> botanical gardens or public garden world.*

Another participant – who had previous fundraising experience – thought that part of the reason could be that higher-level executives were often expected to assist with development:

> *It's hard for people to fundraise outside of their culture. It's really… you're gonna have a lot more success raising money within your own culture, within your own ethnic group…you can't just throw a non-white person into an affluent white community and expect them to be really successful at raising money. (They) can be (successful), and they're gonna have some success, but I think it's challenging to raise money outside of your ethnic group.*

Morgan however, who had experience in recruitment, did not feel that there is a lack of "qualified candidates" in the hiring pool. She described the ideal hiring process as a relationship between community and organization:

> *But we no longer can just say "Well you know, I ran an ad in the Hispanic newspaper. I, you know, put the thing in the magazine. I put it on Telemundo." You know, I've heard of all these offensive things. Over and over again. And I'm like, okay. Well good for you, but how is that cultivating a relationship?*

Morgan felt that attracting diversity into the field required an institutional commitment over a longer period of time in order to expose younger generations to public garden pipelines and employment opportunities before they even begin college:

> *…at the end of the day, you just want the best person that can take your institution to the next your level. But what we need to do, is, a little bit more than we've been doing, to make sure that pool of candidate- of qualified candidates, is diverse. And it has to go beyond just the obligatory putting in a variety of, you know. Got to go beyond that. I think that's what I mean by intentional. What else are you doing? Are you going to schools that have diversity and talking about what kinds of job opportunities you have? Not necessarily job openings, but "have you thought about this as a career track? Have you thought about this as a possibility before you even, uh, apply for colleges?"*

Participant Recommendations for Change

Participants had a variety of responses for recommendations to increase racial diversity in public garden leadership. A theme was workplace culture and environment, especially from a top-down perspective. One participant, who had previous experience in social justice and diversity and inclusion training, strongly felt that simply claiming a "lack of qualified applicants" was not enough, and a more internal view was necessary to change organizational culture:

> *It takes leadership from the top to actually change that culture, and it's not my responsibility as a person of color to change that culture. I think every single person currently in a leadership position or in a hiring position, you go through social inclusion training, social justice training, to deeply understand what their bias is, their unconscious biases are, so that they understand how their action and the actions of the entire institution are making people of color feel unwelcome. They need to do some deep, personal thinking, and some deep personal work. ...I hear this all the time. "Why aren't people of color coming here? Well it's not my fault that they're not interested in our programs." You know, they put the onus- they put the blame on communities of color. "It's their fault they're not coming here." [Expletive]. It's your fault they're not coming here.*

Alyssa recommended re-examining the hiring process and installing a human resources department that understood the complexities of diverse hiring:

> *Uh, maybe a good start would be to increase diversity into our HR representatives, the people who are doing the hiring in administration. I feel like in many botanical gardens there will be sort of an HR person in charge, but at the same time it's also the nepotism that's fueling the hiring decision, or it's somebody who knows somebody, or somebody who worked on his masters with somebody, or somebody who was on his committee, and they wanna put him in, you know these kinds of backroom deals to get these men around from one garden to the other. And if the HR person themselves was a little more open or even sensitive to these issues at all, um, that could change.*

Another theme was exposure to public horticulture – both as a personal interest and as a career path. Morgan thought that this was best done through deliberately engaging underserved communities, so that when the time came for students to consider their careers, parents would not be shocked or dismayed at their choice of horticultural career. Marisa, who had worked in education and programming, spoke about the importance of nature-based play:

> *Exposure. I think, as early as you can. You know, you can see the nature deficit disorder, you know I'm really passionate about connecting kids to plants… And you noticed that in most states unfortunately, especially in the East Coast and Midwest, there aren't that many preschool nature programs, you know, for kids.*

A broader topic was the connection of racial injustice to public gardens, and the cultural and environmental field in general. Thomas felt that a lot of the access and exposure to public gardens was related to socioeconomic status and class, which often connected to race:

> *Because this sort of gets into the racial and ethnic dynamics of our nation, which are not improving. Public gardens have traditionally been not a very accessible place for everyone to be. And, it has been generally a-- you have to be able to afford to appreciate a botanical garden, or have the time to take off from work to appreciate the botanical gardens, or not be working three jobs to come out and appreciate the botanical gardens. So, it's an economic justice issue to some extent, we don't have racial equity within the economic distribution of our nation, so there's difficulty there in terms of engaging diverse audiences.*

61

Research Question 3: Institutional Effects

Effects of Racial Diversity on Leadership Role

This was the most difficult research question for participants to answer. Most participants required different phrasing of the question, or an explanation of the context. It was also challenging for participants to gauge their own effect on the organization without a previous organizational model to compare to, and without quantified data to reflect upon. Some participants were able to reflect on their contributions to the organization, and noted that they had made efforts to reach out to underserved demographics in their positions.

Institutional Effects

Morgan, who had decision making power over human resources spoke of her hiring practices:

> *And I think first of all, first and foremost, I'm not gonna hire anyone whose qualifications don't meet or exceed what I need. But I just, I feel like-- I am willing to leave the position open longer in order to leave no stone unturned. Because I don't profess to know everywhere to look either. But I want to be sure that I have given this every consideration.*

Kelly managed volunteers and had used her connections to local schools to attract racially diverse millennials:

> *I've been courting this group from (a local) high school, they're this group of Latinas and they do great work, and I really want them to come volunteer at the garden because I know they're really good workers and I want them here, and I want their presence here, and so, I think, being a (person of color), I'm definitely trying to open up this world to them.*

Thomas, who also managed volunteers perceived his racial identity as something that can be comforting to other non-white visitors, despite differences in racial or ethnic background:

Because I work with so many different people, our volunteer team is more diverse than our staff is, generally speaking. And so, working with volunteers from a diverse background, I often have the sense-- and this has not been confirmed by them-- but I have the sense that my name being you know, not a traditional Anglo name gives different people a different sense of comfort in their ability to work with me and find their own- see their own reflection in who we are as an organization.

And even for those folks that aren't of a similar racial background as me, I think we have folks that are from, you know, Europe, that have accents. We have folks that are from you know- uh, India, who are from you know different parts of the world, and I think that being somebody who is not of the- I don't know what the right word is, of the traditional dominant racial group, gives them an opportunity to uh feel like they're not anomalies. We're an anomaly together, and thus we're not an anomaly.

Personal Identity

Most participants were not able to comment on their own effects as a racially diverse leader. Almost all participants, however, were able to reflect on their own personal racial/ethnic identity, and the context this has played throughout their careers. For some, they felt "othered" from an early age, often as second-generation immigrants caught between two cultures, such as one participant, who recalls his childhood:

I was just thinking back, growing up, I had a lot of Latino/Latina friends, that were just Spanish speaking friends. And they would hassle me almost, even wanna fight me because I didn't know enough Spanish. Or I wasn't into the culture. And then I would be with my American friends, my white friends, they would hassle me for being too Mexican. And so, I was always struggling with

*friendships and relationships, until I got old enough and realized
that that was society, that was people being mean, and realizing who
my true friends are, and what I need to do in that life and it's not
gonna come easy.*

Kelly, a second-generation immigrant who lived in upper middle-class
neighborhoods described looking back on childhood events from a context of race:

*And it's funny, as an adult, I remember incidences from high school
that maybe didn't bug me at the time, but now that I'm older, they
kind of are a little thorn in my side, I feel like I took a lot on the chin
when I was growing up, just to try to fit in.*

Others, in contrast, did not notice their racial identity on a day-to-day basis,
such as Sonia, who did not immigrate to the United States until she was finishing
graduate school and beginning her career:

*It's just out of my head. And, maybe you know when I lived in
[state], walking into a store it would remind me, or if I was going to
a nursery, but not, not here. Not in [state], not in this part of [state]
anyways. Which, when I took up the job, I didn't know how it was
going to be. But I was pleasantly and happily surprised, and it
doesn't stand out on a daily basis or it doesn't even cross my mind.
But I think it's internal in me to not think of myself like that and not
approach people but it's also the staff.*

One participant who identified as African American discussed an incidence
where she was asked to represent a larger group of people:

*I had the director of a museum come up to me and say: "Okay, we're
gonna do this exhibition on such and such, what do you think the
Black community's gonna say?" Well- you know, I don't know. Let
me call the black community, hang on. You know, it's... I am not the
voice of the people. I'm the voice of [name] and I have an
experience I can share, but mine is very different than the next
African American that stands next to me.*

Dominic felt pressured to excel in his position as a racial minority in a
leadership role:

I don't want to be another statistic of ..., being laid off, or being fired, and then "oh you're a minority". I guess that's kind of a fear or something I think about too much. That's how society is, that's how they made me think growing up at a young age.

Some participants did not want to be thought of as a "minority", feeling that they wanted to be recognized on their own merit outside of racial ties. The example below is from a participant who moved to the United States for graduate school:

You know, when I look at something, I look at it as a field, and do not look beyond race and culture. And I don't look at, oh it's predominantly white, and I do not feel that way at all. Because with ASHS, (they have) a whole group, they have all these different working groups, and there was a whole working group of [race] in horticulture. And I kept thinking why would you want to separate yourself as a little minority group, I think the issues are more global than a minority problem, or a thing.

One theme that emerged was the idea that racial minorities were expected to face barriers and challenges, based upon a generalization that any person of color would automatically experience discrimination. Audrey, for example, did not feel like she experienced these barriers and challenges:

I guess in the way where people are expecting some sort of struggle due to ethnicity or diversity or whatever the correct terms are. And I really do feel-- and maybe I'm being naive about it-- I don't know that I felt that (race) being a barrier as much as maybe age or even gender played a bigger role in things. I get the sense that oftentimes, that they want you have that struggle, like they're really curious in hearing it, and when you don't it's kind of a downer.

This is echoed in the narrative of Ava, who thought it was important to recognize the different experiences, privilege, perspectives, and narratives of people of color:

You know, trying to speak over (people of color) or anything like that is not okay. But, I would say that they probably have (faced micro-aggressions or racism), and they just didn't realize it. Or, that

65

the world has taught them that that stuff is okay. That it's not that big of a deal, they didn't mean it, you know, stuff like that. So, I mean, my first response is gonna be... don't. Don't try to speak over people, don't try to de-legitimize their experience. My second one is, there might be some internalized oppression going on there, where people aren't realizing what's happening to them, or they're making excuses for the stuff that's happening to them. I mean, certainly I've done that in my life.

Summary

The findings revealed themes that contributed to participant choices to work in public horticulture, such as early exposure to horticulture, and mentorship. The research discovered that most participants had "never" considered a career in public horticulture and transitioned to the field as a second career. Some barriers and challenges related to race, while others did not. Most participants were able to provide at least one story of an instance of micro-aggression or discrimination they had faced in the workplace. Additionally, many participants discussed the emotional labor of being the only, or one of few people of color in the workplace. Within the industry, participants all felt that public horticulture lacked leadership diversity, and most participants noticed this at professional events, conferences, and symposia. While participants were not able to comment on the effect of their racial or ethnic identity on their institution, participants were able to openly discuss how their racial or ethnic identity impacted (or did not factor) their day-to-day lives and decision making.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary goal of this research was to contribute to the body of knowledge on racial diversity in public garden leadership. By exploring the experiences of racially diverse garden leaders, commonalities in participant career pipelines, barriers and challenges, and successes and opportunities were characterized. Perceptions of diversity in the public garden profession were explored through interviews. Additionally, the impact of racial diversity in public garden leadership was examined. Ultimately, these research questions informed a discussion of implications for the following topics: Pipeline and Recruitment, Retention, and Promotion of people of color in public garden leadership roles.

Research Question 1: What is the experience of being a person of color in a leadership position at a public garden?

1a. What are the pipelines to diverse leadership in public horticulture?

Findings indicated two heavily weighted observations. The first is that almost all participants experienced a strong passion, curiosity, connection, and interest in the natural world at an early age. Participants were exposed through educational programs, family activities, jobs and chores, or traditional cultural activities. The word "always" was used often in connection with different activities – "always been interested"; "always in the garden"; "always climbing trees"; "always in the dirt"; "always picking flowers"; and "always tending my parents' landscape". This is supported by Morales' significant life-experience theory – the idea that early childhood exposure to nature-based activities cultivates emotional and environmental empathy, and a lack of exposure may hinder their recruitment into environmental

careers (Morales et al., 2015). Wandersee and Schussler call this lack of exposure "plant blindness", and it is implied that reduced and plant-based interaction can account for some youth not entering horticulture (Meyer et al., 2010). The research suggests that consistent exposure to nature-based activities creates a positive association with the outdoors that may later lead to careers in public horticulture.

Despite early exposure experiences to nature, only four out of 13 participants went to college or university in a nature-based field. When asked why participants did not initially begin their career in public horticulture or other nature-based sciences, the word "never" appeared frequently. The phrases "never thought of it as a career"; "never saw myself in that field"; "never heard that word (horticulture) before"; "never knew my job existed"; and "never knew you could major in (horticulture)" imply that the experience alone was not enough to drive participants towards a career in public horticulture. This seems to partially contradict Morales' research – "lack of access or exposure to nature" was cited as the largest barrier preventing minority high school and college students from entering the environmental field, yet these participants were almost all exposed to nature and plants at an early age. However, most participants had their experiences at an early age (elementary and middle school), and those that had their experiences in high school did not have any knowledge of public horticulture as a career field. A lack of exposure to nature during teenage years, especially to careers in the environmental field, could account for the lack of consideration from participants.

The research also suggests that there are too few pipelines towards higher level careers in public gardens, and that people of color may not be aware of existing pipelines due to a combination of generational, socioeconomic, and sociocultural

factors. Many administrative public garden leadership positions require post-secondary, graduate, or doctoral degrees. Wesley, a Millennial public garden leader interested in graduate studies, spoke about the challenges of finding appropriate graduate programs (The Pew Research Center defines the Millennial generation as the segment of the population born between 1981 and 1997 (Fry, 2016)). This is supported in the cultural field; the Art Museum Demographics similarly maintained that there were not enough educational pipelines into museum careers (Schonfeld & Westermann, 2015). Another consideration is that graduate programs are not always funded, resulting in a financial barrier. Once again, the financial, cultural, social, and geographic barriers preventing people of color from entering graduate school may contribute to the lack of people of color with these employment qualifications.

Along with a lack of exposure to public garden careers and pipelines, the lack of career awareness also highlights a disconnection between the participants and cultural/environmental nonprofits and related activities. As Ava mentioned, she was unable to experience traditional activities such as gardening, hiking, and camping because her parents were working. Only one participant, Morgan, described visiting a museum at a young age. While socioeconomic factors must be taken into consideration, this generally supports research in the field of environmental nonprofits stating that people of color are less geographically and financially mobile, which limits participation in nature-based activities (Mohai, 2003; Taylor, 2008).

Results indicated that some participants had negative perceptions and preconceptions of horticultural jobs related to agriculture and menial labor. While participants were not always initially aware of this perspective at the beginning of the interview, some felt – upon deeper reflection – that this perception could be why they

did not consider public horticulture as a career field. Participants Kelly, Marcus, Alyssa, Manuel, and Dominic all had prior negative perspectives of the agricultural field that they associated with the field of horticulture. Terms such as "migrant labor", "plantation workers", and "manual labor" were used to describe this kind of work, as well as the idea that people of color were "workers" and "never the boss". Alyssa and Manuel both came from a background of agricultural work and wanted to move away from that field. Dominic and Kelly thought they subconsciously wanted to avoid the stereotype of migrant agricultural workers, and the social and cultural barriers that accompanied the stereotype. This aligns with prior research that minority students (typically from urban and non-farm areas) were more likely to have negative perceptions regarding agriculture and saw less opportunity in this field (Talbert & Larke, 1995).

Despite these perspectives, Mullinix's research on people of color in agriculture (specifically Latino/Latina farming communities in Washington state) showed that those already in agriculture generally enjoyed their jobs, and thought that careers in the agricultural field were worthwhile. A majority of these Latino/Latina agricultural professionals felt they could achieve a better life for their family through a career in agriculture, especially with educational experience. An overwhelming number of Mullinix's subjects did not have educational certificates past high school, though these Latino/Latina farmers desired to get an education in agriculture, even though they lacked access. This contradicts assumptions that Latino/Latina workers in agriculture lack "other options", or are noncommittal and uncaring about pursuing higher education and promotions (Mullinix et al., 2006). Considering that most of the public garden leaders in the research did not mention parents in the agricultural field,

it could be that their negative perception stems from public conventional thinking – assuming Latinos/Latinas dislike working in agriculture – when in reality many Latino/Latina people like their jobs in agriculture but wish they had the ability to further their careers through education. It could also be that Washington as a state is more progressive and has higher minimum wages than other states, studies in another state with different wages may incite different responses.

Participants that thought positively of horticultural and agricultural work, such as Sonia and Marisa, both came from families with a history of graduate-level education, and at one point performed researcher in those fields. Both those participants discussed challenges in finding applicants of color for garden maintenance positions, due to the unflattering association of "pulling weeds". While surveys show a sizeable pool of minority students in the agricultural and environmental field (Taylor, 2008), Sonia's observations of racial diversity in the academic field suggest that more students choose to go the route of research and academia, considered a more "high-profile" and "respectable" career. The research found that participants associated manual labor with a lack of opportunity, career growth, and respect. One participant described situations at her public garden where gardeners were treated with "condescension", and in some cases, "sub-human". This implies that the barrier does not lie solely with the field of agriculture and horticulture itself, so much as the perception of low-pay, backbreaking labor, and lack of respect in public garden labor-based positions that is commonly assumed by the general public (Meyer et al., 2016). The negative perception of agriculture as a field is more prominent in urban and inner-city youth, who often happen to be of a racial minority (Frick et al., 1995). When speaking about racial diversity in leadership, most participants automatically spoke

71

about the perception of labor-based work, even in leadership positions such as a garden curator or head of horticulture. However, this fails to account for the many administrative positions in public gardens. Roles such as Director of Marketing, Human Resources Coordinator, or Executive Director may not have the same association of manual labor. This could be due to the previously stated lack of awareness of careers within public horticulture, or a perception of lower pay in the nonprofit field compared to corporate salaries for administrative positons.

Long-term opportunities for exposure and career pipelines may exist in programming and education. Participants Wesley and Thomas both described engaging educational programs that connected students with nature. Both participants are part of the Millennial generation. The public horticulture field may see more young people of color in the pipeline within ten to twenty years as youth-focused horticulture programs increase in partnership with community gardening and urban agriculture programs, such as Chicago Botanic Garden's Windy City Project, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum's Urban Gardening Program, and Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Garden Apprentice Program. There are also multiple initiatives to expose youth to careers in horticulture, which includes public gardens, such as Seed Your Future. A joint initiative between Longwood Gardens and the American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS), Seed Your Future aims to change the perception of horticulture careers, especially in the K-12 demographic. The American Public Gardens Association (APGA) also has a working group for Emerging Professionals, allowing newcomers to the field to interact with their peers and other horticulture leaders. The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) targets college

aged students in their annual National Collegiate Landscape Competition – a week-long competition in hands-on as well as academic subjects relating to plant sciences.

Potentially, the lack of minority youth enrolling in plant-based degrees could be addressed by efforts such as Seed Your Future, which could expose underserved youth (such as racial minorities) towards the possibility of a career with plants. Public gardens could also partner with agriculture, environmental science, and horticulture programs in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and some colleges are expanding their social service mission through urban agriculture programs (Carter, 2014). Other initiatives include MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences) – a professional group that has many chapters in agricultural universities across America and promotes minority careers in the agricultural sciences. Until this perception is addressed, the negative view of agriculture and horticulture related careers will continue to be a barrier for people of color entering the public garden field.

1b. What are the barriers, challenges, and obstacles faced by diverse leaders in their careers?

The research identified that while most participants were content to stay at their organizations unless given a better offer (promotion, benefits), challenges in the workplace such as micro-aggressions, discrimination, and isolation all led to fatigue due to a higher level of emotional labor. Sue et al. (2007) describes micro-aggressions as commonplace daily occurrences that communicate negative slights or insults towards people of color. Most participants described instances of micro-aggressions they had experienced due to their race or ethnicity, whether or not they experienced more discriminatory behavior in the workplace. While perpetrators are often unaware

of their actions, day-to-day micro-aggressions are still a source of emotional labor for people of color. Emotional labor, defined by Hochschild in *The Managed Heart* is "the process by which workers are expected to manage their feelings in accordance with employer-defined rules and guidelines." Emotional labor is more common in non-dominant groups such as women, LGBTQ individuals, people of color, and people with disabilities. It is suggested that the constant performance of emotional labor can lead to "emotive dissonance" as employees continually evaluate what feelings are appropriate to express in the workplace (Hochschild, 2012). An example would be an employee of color facing a micro-aggression or discriminatory expression, unable able to speak up due to workplace culture or employer expectations of "customer service", causing emotional distress and disturbance. Emotional labor is often influenced by the demographics of power groups in the work place. Within the public garden profession, the dominant group is largely white. In the context of this research, examples of emotional labor can range from tolerating offensive behavior or adjusting outer presentation to match workplace norms. Some examples:

1. Ignoring or having to "be nice" when confronted with a micro-aggression from a volunteer or member

2. The energy involved in deciding whether to "let go" or "speak up" when a colleague makes a discriminatory comment

3. Codeswitching – changing personal body language, tone of voice, vocabulary, appearance in order to integrate in a predominantly white culture

4. Assessment upon introduction of potential allies versus potential challengers?

This implies that people of color in public garden leadership roles may require additional support, both professionally and emotionally, to make up for the emotional

labor of dealing with daily micro-aggressions and other pressures of being a racial minority. This support could take on multiple forms. Participants suggested making connections with other leaders who are people of color, and spending time on self-care. Institutionally, participants suggested allowing time during the work-day for people of color to mentor emerging professionals and help in their professional development (as often this is done in spare time as opposed to office hours), inviting a facilitator to discuss race, diversity, inclusion, and micro-aggressions, training all employees on bystander intervention (how to redirect the situation when a co-worker or volunteer enacts a micro-aggression or discriminatory behavior), enforcing zero-tolerance policies of abusive and discriminatory language in both staff and volunteers, and ensuring that all employees have a safe space to discuss workplace issues without fear of repercussion. This aligns with research that difficult dialogues on race are often full of powerful emotions on both sides, easily triggered by racial micro-aggressions (Sue et al., 2009), supporting the need for an experienced and educated facilitator or instructor.

Another barrier towards racial diversity in public garden leadership is in promoting qualified employees of color into leadership roles. Participants that made it to leadership positions without a qualifying degree found that it was difficult to move beyond those positions, and equally challenging to go back to school to pursue their education. Other participants felt that they were not entirely qualified for their positions, but also acknowledged that their work experience, community connections, and organizational tenure made them more attractive candidates, especially in positions where public gardens struggled to retain more qualified staff. One participant described his tenure at his garden, and how he had seen employee turnover in higher

leadership positions. He was satisfied with his current leadership position, and did not want to take on more responsibility as there was more risk involved, including potentially losing his job. This is a consideration, as some people of color facing socioeconomic challenges may value a stable position over greater responsibility and leadership roles. Other participants such as Morgan and Dominic were eager to take on more responsibility. Participants such as Audrey and Sonia entered their organization at high level administrative roles, and looked forward to strategically growing their organization. While not directly discussed, it was implied that gender was also a challenge for women of color in public horticulture. Haslam and Ryan (2008) observed that women of color in leadership roles were more likely to face a "glass cliff" – dealing with high-risk situations that could potentially set them up for failure, a phenomenon that may also occur in the public garden field.

While most organizations may not intend to discriminate against people of color when considering promotions, prior literature indicates a subtle bias may cause corporate leaders to consider people of color more of a "hiring risk" than someone who is white, and as such, require them to "prove themselves" more (Thomas & Wetlaufer, 1997). For example, a white employee who lacks necessary experience or qualifications may be given a chance to prove him or herself, whereas an African American employee with a similar skillset may be considered more of a hiring risk and be required to show further proof of experience or education qualifications. Along with this potential bias, some public garden employees and leaders of color may lack the education or qualifications that would make them deemed a worthwhile "risk". On the opposite end of hiring bias, past literature indicates that Asian candidates in the workforce, though often university graduates and well-educated, face the "bamboo

76

ceiling" – over qualifying for "managerial" positions along with a "lack" of leadership ability due to the stereotype of Asian employees as "passive" (Hyun, 2005). While there was no evidence of these biases in the participant interviews, further study of public garden hiring practices, evaluation methods, and promotion requirements would aide public gardens in uncovering and understanding hidden biases.

The research suggests that the public horticulture profession may benefit from more concrete (and transparent) leadership pipelines that develop professional skills and qualifications in order to support leaders of color. Morgan mentions the development of staff and emerging professionals as leaders through training, mentorship, and experience as one of her passions in her organization. Other participants such as Alyssa and Manuel spoke positively about educational experiences that were sponsored by their organization. Providing professional qualifications or training, such as apprenticeships and certificates, are a way that public gardens could retain, develop, and then promote employees into leadership positions. Some public gardens (Longwood Gardens, New York Botanical Garden) offer accredited training programs for students in landscape and ornamental horticulture. However, in order to increase racial diversity at a higher administrative level, there must also be opportunities for professional development in leadership and management, as well as some support for higher education. Some examples of this include graduate level programs for students interested in public garden leadership (Cornell Public Garden Leadership Program, Longwood Fellows Program, Auburn University Certificate in Public Horticulture) but spaces are limited and often require a prior bachelor's degree, GRE testing, and a considerable commitment of time. As well, people of color are challenged in higher education programs due to the fact that

their cross-cultural perspectives (e.g. communication methods, formalities, concepts of time, learning styles) are sometimes seen as handicaps, rather than positive contributions to the education process (Garfias, 1989).

1c. What are the successes and opportunities for leaders in this field?

The findings indicated that most participants transitioned into public horticulture as a second career and chose to stay there despite a lower salary, less diversity in the workforce, or the challenge of manual labor. Participants generally loved their work, found their jobs meaningful, engaging, and interesting and appreciated that the public horticulture field allowed for a variety of roles and opportunities to expand, corroborating with research that describes the work in public gardens as "innovative" and "creative" (Meyer et al., 2016). Similar to Mullinix's research, public garden leaders enjoyed their jobs despite negative public perception (Meyer et al., 2016) and were not in the field for a lack of better options. Almost all participants worked with volunteers, including those managing garden grounds, the nursery, and research areas. Participants indicated that public gardens were generally a positive place to work, claiming that being in nature was therapeutic compared to jobs in offices or public schools. Many participants, such as Morgan, Marcus, Kyle, Manuel, and Sonia had been in their positions for more than five years and intended on continuing with the organization. This supports Taylor's findings that employees of color tended to have a long tenure and organizational loyalty (Taylor, 2011b), both advantageous to public garden institutions.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of diversity in the public horticulture field from the perspective of diverse leaders?

The research showed that people of color did not perceive the public garden field to be very racially diverse, aligning with hypotheses based on preliminary research and professional communications. Surprisingly, very few participants were able to recommend a new participant who was both a public garden leader and person of color. Many participants were surprised to learn that so many (twenty-two) candidates had been identified for the interview. This could be due to the resource challenges of attending the annual conference and the geographical distance between public gardens across the United States. Many participants indicated that they were the "only one" at various professional events and conferences, and several participants expressed that they were surprised and delighted to meet another person of color within public horticulture. Prior to this research project, the only resource was an online Facebook group – Inclusive Public Gardens – that spoke about issues of diversity (including race) in the public garden field. Presently, the American Public Garden Association has announced their diversity and inclusion working committee, as well as their diversity and inclusion policy statement.

Many of the barriers and challenges in Research Question 1 (experiences of people of color in public garden leadership), as well as Research Question 2 (perspective of diversity in public horticulture), affect the recruitment and hiring of people of color in public horticulture. Without the ability to attract new professionals of color, it is difficult to develop these professionals into leaders within the field.

Another challenge in recruitment was at the hiring stage. Several participants disclosed that they found it difficult to find qualified candidates that were also people of color. For some, this was due to a lack of qualifications in applicants. For others, it

was that there were few applicants of color to begin with. While Taylor's 2008 survey indicated that a 60% of minority students in the environmental sector were interested in nonprofit institutions, it was clear from participant description that few were applying to the participants' gardens. All participants stated that they wanted to find "the best candidate for the job". Whether this was because they did not want to be seen as "reverse-discriminatory", or whether they themselves were concerned about perceptions of being hired as a token representation, participants were cautious about actively "seeking" racial diversity in their hiring practices. While this could be attributed to most participants being "racial pioneers" (the first or early employees of color) in their organization, the research is not able to compare itself to participants from more racially diverse organizations. The subject of affirmative action and diverse hiring is a complicated and often controversial topic. Some studies present evidence that Title VII litigation (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission - EEOC) has increased Black and African American employment in the workforce from the 1960's – 1980's (Leonard, 1983). Others argue that while the EEOC created a post-pioneer era for women and minorities, the 1978 Affirmative Action Agreement failed to address enough workplace barriers and may even be promoting new patterns of segregation within race and gender (Harlan & O'Farrell, 1982). Studies from the year 2000 and onwards continued to find pervasive patterns of discrimination in the workforce, despite progress in government legislation (Pogrebin et al., 2000).

Not all participants felt that the "lack of candidates" was an excusable reason for a lack of institutional diversity. Morgan, who had extensive experience in HR and employee development, felt that the responsibility lay with the organization in its own hiring practices, workplace culture, and outreach relationships. She felt that

organizations needed to engage local communities of color, providing programming, education, and exposure to public garden career pipelines. She felt that this could counteract some of the negative perception of garden-based employment. Both Morgan and Ava thought that public garden job descriptions and hiring practices needed to change in order to appeal to more people of color, whether it was allowing for more experiential qualifications, keeping the position open for a longer amount of time, or recruiting and advertising in minority universities and professional groups.

Research Question 3: What are the direct and indirect effects of having a diverse leader in a public horticulture institution?

The research was not able to determine the effect of racially diverse leadership in public garden leadership. Most participants had difficulty comprehending this question; were they being asked about their own personal successes as a leader? Or were they being asked about the importance of racial diversity in public horticulture? This question challenged participants by asking them to consider their own racial identity in relation to their accomplishments. Some participants felt that they had encouraged greater audience, member, and volunteer diversity in their organizations, as a visible person of color in a leadership role. Others felt that their racial or ethnic identity did not relate to their success or accomplishments, and did not see a connection between the two.

Personal identity among participants varied. The range of personal identities demonstrated the diversity and uniqueness of individual experience among people of color. Participants such as Marisa and Sonia did not feel their racial identity played much of a role in their careers, nor did it contribute to their identities within the public horticulture field. They were aware of the lack of diverse representation, but did not

particularly feel they were a part of a "minority" group or disadvantaged as people of color. Other participants, such as Thomas and Kelly grew up fairly integrated within white communities. While they were aware of the differences their racial identity presented, they were also comfortable interacting and communicating within their predominantly white workplace. They noticed occasional micro-aggressions but for the most part did not feel that their racial identity played a large part in their career identity. While it is true that different people of color experience race and identity in various ways, there is also research that suggests some minority group members minimize discrimination subconsciously as the results are psychologically beneficial (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997).

Participants such as Morgan, Ava, and Dominic felt a clear connection between their racial identities and their workplace identities. They noticed how they stood out as people of color in their field, and the implications of their ethnicity and race from the perspective of co-workers and colleagues. They were proud to represent a racial minority, and felt that they had overcome barriers related to race and ethnicity. The differences between these identities portray a complex relationship between race and career that may benefit from future exploration. Another important factor is the generalization of people of color in the "minority" role, associating participants with "barriers" or "struggle". Feelings of guilt, shame, and discomfort were described by participants in association with their own privilege, disconnect from their culture, or lack or perceived barriers. Participants such as Audrey felt that they were expected to have a "challenging story" to present. Other participants such as Dominic feared negatively representing their community. Ultimately, the research indicates that contextual considerations are important when discussing race and diversity, and that

other influencing factors such as class, socio-economic status, geography, immigration/citizen status, language skills, cultural affiliation, and social group greatly affect the experiences of people of color.

Implications for Addressing Diversity in Public Garden Leadership

Recruitment of Diverse Leadership

With initiatives such as Seed Your Future, the National Collegiate Landscape Competition, and other youth-based garden programs, there is hope for growth in recruiting a diverse talent pool for the public horticulture industry. Continued exposure to horticulture and horticultural careers (particularly in public gardens) would aide these horticultural initiatives and bridge a gap in the pipeline between early life-experience (gardening with family members, playing in nature) and high school career considerations. However, exposure alone is not enough to maintain diverse candidates for the public garden pipeline, as evidenced by interview participants. Building relationships with individual youth, as well as with communities of color, could help mitigate some of the negative stereotypes associated with horticultural careers. These relationships could take place in the form of one-on-one mentorship and guidance, allowing a young person to observe career options in public gardens. These relationships could also come in the form of organizational relationships with community partners that support people of color, in order to demonstrate to parents that public garden careers can be fulfilling and satisfying. Activities that engage multiple generations of people of color may be a way to build awareness of public garden careers and change perceptions for parents and grandparents, an important consideration when examining career counselling from a racially diverse standpoint

where family members have influence on student career choices (Kim, 1994; Ma &

Yeh 2005; Stebleton, 2007)

Another implication is that pipelines to public garden careers are not always

accessible to people of color, whether it is due to financial barriers, or educational

ones, such as participants who are the first generation navigating college and the

academic field. Support for people of color in public garden and horticulture education

could come in the form of scholarships and fellowships, paid internships, and grants

for areas of study. While these financial opportunities exist within the horticultural

field, further marketing (HBCUs, centers within communities of color, ethnic

language newspapers) may help them reach previously underserved and untargeted

groups.

<div align="center">Retention of Diverse Leadership</div>

A certain level of isolation and fatigue for people of color in public garden

organizations exists, particularly if they are the only person of color in their

department or organization. While not all participants felt the effects of their race or

ethnicity within their work environment, micro-aggressions and other subtle

discriminations can add emotional labor to a job description. One participant left their

organization due to issues of discrimination. Others were not looking to leave their

job, but were aware of tension, discomfort, and micro-aggressions within the

workplace, which contributed to emotional fatigue. A necessary component may be

the education and understanding of public garden leadership when it comes to the

topic of race and diversity. More than just a token session of "workplace training," a

consultant is recommended to facilitate an in-depth discussion of diversity including

race, class, gender, ability, etc. Smaller gardens with less feasibility could send staff

members to diversity training workshops and conferences, or consider combining resources with other small gardens to create a consortium (for example, the Greater Philadelphia Gardens). Leadership must acknowledge that racial diversity goes far beyond skin tone and nationality, and that differences in generation, educational access, socioeconomic status, and cultural affiliation all impact the experience of a person of color. The public garden field should allow for and support the diverse range of experiences and perspectives brought by people of color entering the field. As discussions of race can often be difficult and emotional, it is imperative that facilitators are trained to recognize racial micro-aggressions (Sue et al., 2009), allowing them to navigate these discussions as someone outside of the organization. For this reason, an outside consultant or facilitator is recommended, rather than using a current staff member. Facilitators can help develop intercultural sensitivity through a development plan on understanding cultural differences (Bennett, 1986), especially among different generations where language use may differ. Training serves to emphasize the importance of ally-ship from non-marginalized groups, and how participants can use bystander intervention to support and speak up for marginalized groups such as people of color. An ally (ally-ship), as defined by the Multicultural Resource Center, is defined as: "a member of the dominant" or majority group who questions or rejects the dominant ideology and works against oppression through support of, and as an advocate with, or for, the oppressed population." (Multicultural Resource Center, 2014).

Participants also revealed that they were often uncomfortable pointing out micro-aggressions or taking discriminatory issues to superiors they didn't trust. Larger organizations may have dedicated human resources staff that can provide a safe and

confidential space for employees to discuss uncomfortable situations. Smaller organizations may be able to group together (for example, five gardens in a certain radius) and contract to an outside organization that specializes in employee counselling and human resources.

<p style="text-align: center;">Promotion of Diverse Leadership</p>

The research implies that a lack of educational qualifications is a factor preventing employees of color from moving up the career ladder. Professional development opportunities, funding for training or certifications, and leadership development programs are some of the participant suggestions for improving numbers in leadership diversity. Institutional biases may also need to be examined, by individual gardens and by the public horticulture field as a whole. For example, are job descriptions tailored to a certain demographic? Are certain qualifications set in stone and really necessary for a position? And what assumptions or biases are organizations making when they evaluate employees? Beginning the discussion on organizational bias may entail exploring institutional history, or conducting an institutional assessment. One model of organizational evaluation is the Metric for Institutional Transformation in Museums (Appendix F: Empathetic Museum Maturity Model). This maturity model uses a rubric to determine an organization's empathetic maturity level in five categories (related to diversity), ranging from Regressive (Low Maturity) to High Maturity. The model also includes definitions of key terms, along with a simple matrix for institutions to use when planning next steps for strategic diversity. Some questions that organizations can ask themselves include:

1. What role has the organization played in the system of race, oppression, and privilege?

<p style="text-align: center;">86</p>

2. How might outside communities have viewed the organization?

3. What perspective and voice does the organization promote and represent?

4. What assumptions does the organization make about what is "important" or "normal"?

5. What are some outsider perspectives that may have been dismissed by the organization in the past?

6. How do organizational hiring practices lead to the current demographic?

These questions are based off reports and documentation of effective diversity consultation (Mayeno, 2015 and Govine, 2017).

Implications for People of Color and Allies in Public Garden Leadership

The research implies that not all people of color experience their racial or ethnic identity in the same way. Some individuals may see themselves as change agents for racial diversity within an organization, while others may be occupied with challenges not related to race. It is important not to tokenize employees of color or assume their role as change agents within an organization – not every person of color wants to serve on a diversity committee, represent a community (which they may or may not be part of), or consider themselves at a "disadvantage" as a racial minority. For people of color who are public garden leaders, participants felt it was important to own their own identities and narratives, rather than molding themselves to an "expectation" of a racial minority's life experiences.

The research implies the importance of allies in the advancement of diversity initiatives. People of color are often expected to take on roles as "change agents", and carry excess emotional labor as "educators" on topics of race or ethnicity. Allies that are not people of color can increase their own awareness and understanding of issues

87

such as privilege, micro-aggressions, and other unconscious biases. Allies are also important in supporting people of color who face micro-aggressions or discriminatory situations, as well as being the change agent to call out discriminatory behavior or language. There are many online resources for challenging biased assumptions or offensive language, such as the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) (SPLC, 2015). By allowing people of color to have their own identity and tell their own story, allies can support their individuality rather than tokenizing someone based on their race or ethnicity.

Further Research

Further in-depth qualitative and quantitative research is recommended to better understand the public garden field and its lack of racial diversity in leadership. This includes research in the area of public garden segmentation and categorization, the cultural context of career counseling, emotional labor of people of color in predominantly white workplaces, societal perspectives of horticultural and manual labor, cultural accessibility of environmental and cultural fields to communities of color, and institutional culture and history of public garden organizations.

Limitations and Considerations

There is little literature on the topic of public gardens and racial diversity in leadership. This study faced several challenges that should be noted. The sample population is not a quantitative representation of people of color in public garden leadership. A demographic study is recommended in order to gather quantitative and representational data about the intersection of racial identity and employment position in the public garden field.

The researcher herself is a person of color (Chinese-Canadian, second generation immigrant) with past experience in the public garden field. Her experiences and perspectives of working in public gardens, as an emerging professional and a person of color, has influence on this body of work.

The public garden field can be compared to environmental and cultural nonprofits, but public gardens also include educational and social programming that can influence demographics and racial diversity. Further consideration into the segmentation of public horticulture as a whole is recommended, in order to examine how these segments of public gardens may affect racial diversity in leadership. For example, a university affiliated botanical garden that is heavily focused in horticultural, agricultural, and plant science research may have different demographics of racial diversity compared to an ornamental garden that focuses on traditional English gardening techniques and estate history.

The research investigates racial diversity in public garden leadership. In order to remain within the scope of the research, race and identity are briefly explored. However, the phenomena of racial diversity in public garden leadership is part of a much broader and complex phenomenon of race, environment, and cultural institutions in the United States. In-depth studies in the field of environmental justice, museum studies, anthropology, sociology, and racial studies are recommended to explore the deeper implications of race and ethnicity within public gardens (as both cultural and environmental institutions).

The study did not take into consideration those individuals that, "did not make it." For example, this study did not include people of color who studied or apprenticed in public horticulture but did not continue in the field. All participants were considered

"successful" leaders within their profession and had overcome barriers and obstacles in order to obtain their positions.

Due to financial and time constraints, the researcher was the only individual transcribing, coding, and analyzing interviews. Further qualitative studies may benefit from engaging multiple auditors in the coding process to ensure consistency.

Summary

The topic of racial diversity can be challenging and uncomfortable. Some see it as "tokenization," or simply checking off boxes and meeting quotas. Others might feel that it is unnecessary from a "colorblind" perspective, or that it is a form of "reverse-discrimination." Ultimately, the goal is not for a public garden to have a certain amount of people of color in leadership, but rather for public gardens to have an institutional culture that values, represents, encourages, and supports diversity in all forms. Creating such an institutional culture goes beyond programs, community outreach, and informal/formal education program. It must involve a deep, internal, and often uncomfortable exploration of workplace culture, as well as pathways to building trusting relationships between public garden institutions and the diverse communities they serve. By creating a workplace culture of inclusion and diversity, public gardens and the public horticulture profession can create an environment where people of color are aware of horticulture careers, excited to work in public gardens, feel that these positions have prestige and respect, and are proud to encourage this line of work to the next generations of youth.

REFERENCES

Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *10*(2), 179–196. https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(86)90005-2

Carter, J. (2014). HBCUs Lead New Innovation in Urban Agriculture. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/31/hbcus-lead-new-innovation_n_4705119.html

Chishti, M., Hipsman, F., & Ball, I. (2015). *Fifty Years On, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Continues to Reshape the United States* (p. http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/fifty–years–1965–immigration–and–nationality–act–continues–reshape–united–states). Migration Policy Institute.

Collins, P. M., Kamya, H. A., & Tourse, R. W. (1997). Questions of Racial Diversity and Mentorship: An Empirical Exploration. *Social Work*, *42*(2), 145–152. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/42.2.145

Connelly, M., & Clandinin, J. (1990). Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, *19*(5), 2–14.

Connelly, M., & Clandinin, J. (2004). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. San Franciso: Jossey-Bass.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canon, and Evaluative Criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, *13*(1).

Frick, M., Birkenholz, R., Gardner, H., & Machtmes, K. (1995). Rural and urban inner-city high school student knowledge and perception of agriculture. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, *36*(4).

Fry, R. (2016, April 25). *Millennials overtake Baby Boomers as America's largest generation.* Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/

Garfias. (1989). *Cultural Diversity and the Arts in America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Garibay, C. (2011). Using Audience Research to Engage Latino Families. *Public Garden Magazine*, *26*(Fall), 11.

Gordon-Finlayson, A. (2010). Grounded Theory. In M. Forrester, *Doing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. London: SAGE Publications.

Gough, M. Z. (2012, November 26). *The Role of Public Gardens in Sustainable Community Development*. Retrieved from http://www.publicgardens.org/files/files/Sustainable_Communities_11_26_2012_final.pdf

Govine, G. (2017). *Laying the Foundation: An Employer's Guide to Developing an Effective Diversity Program*. Govine Consulting.

Guidestar Directory of Charities and Nonprofit Organizations. (2017). Retrieved from https://www.guidestar.org/NonprofitDirectory.aspx

Halpern, R. P. (2006). *Workforce Issues in the nonprofit Sector: Generational leadership change and diversity.* American Humanics Initiative for Nonprofit Sector Careers.

Harlan, S. L., & O'Farrell, B. (1982). After the Pioneers: Prospects for Women in Nontraditional Blue-Collar Jobs. *Work and Occupations*, *9*(3), 363–386. https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888482009003006

Haslam, S. A., & Ryan, M. K. (2008). The road to the glass cliff: Differences in the perceived suitability of men and women for leadership positions in succeeding and failing organizations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *19*(5), 530–546. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2008.07.011

Hickson, M. (2002). What role does the race of professors have on the retention of students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities? *Education*, *123*(1), 186+.

Higginbotham, E., & Andersen, M. (2012). The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity. In *Race and Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape* (3rd ed., pp. 3–6). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The managed heart: commercialization of human feeling* (updated ed). Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

Hyun, J. (2005). *Breaking the bamboo ceiling: career strategies for Asians: the essential guide to getting in, moving up, and reaching the top*. New York: Collins.

Kim, E.-Y. (1993). Career Choice among Second-Generation Korean-Americans: Reflectionsof a Cultural Model of Success. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *24*(3), 224–248.

Lacerte, S. (2011). Public Gardens and Their Communities: The Value of Outreach. In *Public Garden Management* (pp. 175–189). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Lacerte, S., Campbell, L., & Wiesen, A. (2009). Adapting the Botanical Garden into a Sustainable, Multicultural Resource. In *Restorative Commons: Creating Health and Well-Being Through Urban Landscapes* (p. 278). Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station. Retrieved from http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/gtr/gtr-nrs-p-39papers/16-lacerte-p-39.pdf

Lynch, B. (2015). *How Can Botanic Gardens Grow Their Social Role? Lessons from the Communities in Nature Programme* (pp. 1 – 28). London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, UK Branch.

Ma, P.-W. W., & Yeh, C. (2005). Factors Influencing the Career Decision Status of Chinese American Youths. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *53*.

Malone, O. (2003). Diversity Leadership. In *Handbook of Diversity Management*. Lanham, NY: University Press of America.

Marts & Lundy. (2015). *Trends and Issues in Philanthropy: 2012-2014 Survey of APGA Members* (National Trends in Gardens & Arboreta Philanthropy: Benchmarking Study (2002-2014)).

Mayeno, L. (2015). *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work: Eight Questions for Building Readiness and Steering Clear of Pitfalls*.

Meyer, M. H., Needham, D., Dole, J., Trader, B., Fox, J., Conley, M., … Shaw, J. (2016). Importance of Horticulture and Perception as a Career. *HortTechnology*, *2016*(2), 114 – 120.

Mohai, P. (2003). Dispelling old myths: African American concern for the environment. *Environment*.

Morales, N., Jacobson, S., & Wald, D. (2015). A Life-Cycle Analysis of Minority Underrepresentation in Natural Resources Fields. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*.

Mullinix, K., Garcia, L., Lewis-Lorentz, A., & Qazi, J. (2006). Latino Views of Agriculture, Careers and Education: Dispelling the Myths. *NACTA Journal*.

Multicultural Resource Center. (2014). *Privilege, Allyship, & Safe Space*. Retrieved from https://new.oberlin.edu/dotAsset/2012201.pdf

Nonprofit Finance Fund. (2014). *2014 State of the Nonprofit Sector Survey Results* (p. 18).

Ospina, Sonia M. (2005). It's About Time: Catching Method Up to Meaning—The Usefulness of Narrative Inquiry in Public Administration Research. *Public Administration Review*, *65*(2), 143–157.

Peters, J., & Wolfred, T. (2001). *Daring to Lead: Nonprofit Executive Directors and Their Work Experience* (pp. 1–46). CompassPoint Non-Profit Services.

Pew Research Center (2015). *Hispanic Trends: Modern Immigration Wave Brings 59 Million to U.S., Driving Population Growth and Change Through 2065*. (2015, September 28). Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/modern-immigration-wave-brings-59-million-to-u-s-driving-population-growth-and-change-through-2065/

Pogrebin, M., Dodge, M., & Chatman, H. (2000). Reflections of African-American Women on their Careers in Urban Policing. Their Experiences of Racial and Sexual Discrimination. *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, *28*(4), 311–326. https://doi.org/10.1006/ijsl.2000.0131

Prinster, R. (2017). Why Diversity Matters: Securing Grants. *INSIGHT into Diversity*. Retrieved from http://www.insightintodiversity.com/why-diversity-matters-securing-grants/

Rakow, D., Lee, S., & Raven, P. H. (2011). *Public Garden Management*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Raven, P. (2015, June). *Closing Plenary Lunch with Peter Raven*. Keynote Address presented at the 2015 APGA Conference, Minneapolis/St. Paul.

Redman, P. B. (2011). The Shape of Gardens to Come. In *Public Garden Management* (pp. 327–338). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Rice, M. F. (2005). *Diversity and Public Administration*.

Rodda, K. (2014). Generation Gap. *Nursery Management*.

Ruggiero, K. M., & Taylor, D. M. (1997). Why minority group members perceive or do not perceive the discrimination that confronts them: The role of self-esteem and perceived control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*(2), 373–389. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.72.2.373

Saldana, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London: SAGE Publications.

Schonfeld, R., & Westermann, M. (2015). *The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey* (p. 12). The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Schwartz, R., Weinburg, J., Hagenbuch, D., & Scott, A. (2012). *The Voice of Nonprofit Talent: Perceptions of Diversity in the Workforce*. Commongood Careers & Level Playing Field Institute.

Shabecoff, P. (1990, February 1). Environmental Groups Told They Are Racists in Hiring. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/1990/02/01/us/environmental-groups-told-they-are-racists-in-hiring.html

SPLC Southern Poverty Law Center - Speak Up: Responding to Everyday Bigotry. (2015). Retrieved from https://www.splcenter.org/20150126/speak-responding-everyday-bigotry

Stebleton, M. (2007). Career Counseling with African Immigrant College Students: Theoretical Approaches and Implications for Practice. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *55*.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, *62*(4), 271–286. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.62.4.271

Sue, D. W., Lin, A. I., Torino, G. C., Capodilupo, C. M., & Rivera, D. P. (2009). Racial microaggressions and difficult dialogues on race in the classroom. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *15*(2), 183–190. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014191

Talbert, A., & Larke, A. (1995). Factors Influencing Minority and Non-Minority Students to Enroll in an Introductory Agriscience Course in Texas. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, *36*(1), 38–45.

Taylor, D. E. (2007). Diversity and Equity in Environmental Organizations: The Salience of These Factors to Students. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, *39*(1), 19–44. https://doi.org/10.3200/JOEE.39.1.19-44

Taylor, D. E. (2008). Diversity and the environment: myth-making and the status of minorities in the field. *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*, *15*, 89–147.

Taylor, D. E. (2011a). Green Jobs and the Potential to Diversify the Environmental Workforce, *Utah Environmental Law Review*, *31*(1) (pp. 47–77).

Taylor, D. E. (2011b). Racial and Gender Differences in Job Mobility and Wages of Employees in Environmental Organizations. *Cambridge Core - Environmental Practice*, *13*(4), 370–385.

Taylor, D. E. (2014). The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations. *The Green Diversity Initiative (Green 2.0)*. Retrieved from https://orgs.law.harvard.edu/els/files/2014/02/FullReport_Green2.0_FINALReducedSize.pdf

Taylor, H. (2012). Defining Race. In *Race and Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape* (3rd ed., pp. 7–14). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Thomas, D., & Wetlaufer, S. (1997). A Question of Color: A Debate on Race in the U.S. Workplace. *Harvard Business Review*, (September - October).

U.S Census Bureau. (2013). *State and County Quickfacts*.

Waylen, K. (2006). *Botanic Gardens: Using biodiversity to improve human well-being*. Richmond, UK: BGCI International. Retrieved from http://www.bgci.org/files/Worldwide/Wellbeing/Presspack/wellbeing.pdf

Wilkening, S., & Chung, J. (2011). Who Goes and Doesn't Go to Public Gardens and Why? *Public Garden Magazine*, *26*(Fall 2011), 11–12.

Wise, T. (2012). White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son. In *Race and Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape* (3rd ed., pp. 144–149). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Appendix A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: May 9, 2016

TO: Shi Tracy Qiu
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [902792-1] Racial Diversity in Public Garden Leadership

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: May 9, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: May 8, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # *(6, 7)*

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that <u>informed consent</u> is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Farnese-McFarlane at (302) 831-1119 or nicolefm@udel.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Project: Racial Diversity in Public Horticulture Leadership

Principal Investigator(s): Tracy Qiu

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form tells you about the study including its purpose, what you will be asked to do if you decide to take part, and the risks and benefits of being in the study. Please read the information below and ask us any questions you may have before you decide whether or not you agree to participate.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this research is to continue the dialogue on racial diversity in public garden leadership, understand the experiences of diverse leaders in the field, and identify areas for future study. The study will be part of a Masters of Science thesis in Public Horticulture, and research from this study may be published. The primary research questions are as follows:

- What is the perception of diversity in the public horticulture field from the perspective of diverse leaders?
- What is the experience of being a person of color in a leadership position at a public garden?
  - What are the pipelines to diverse leadership in public horticulture?
  - What are the barriers, challenges, and obstacles faced by diverse leaders in their career?
  - What are the successes and opportunities for diverse leaders in this field?
- What are the direct and indirect effects of having a diverse leader in a public horticulture institution?

You will be one of approximately ten to twenty participants in this study. You are being asked to participate because:

- You are someone who represents racial diversity in the field of public horticulture
- You currently or have previously occupied a paid position of leadership in the field of public horticulture with influence over policy, budget, staffing, programming, interpretation, and other administrative or management tasks

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

As part of this study you will be asked to:

- Answer a series of semi-structured questions about your career, background, introduction to public horticulture, perceptions of workplace diversity, and potential barriers/challenges faced in your career.
- The study will take place in one of three locations:
  - At your organization/institution
  - On a computer using Skype or Facetime
  - Over the phone
  - At the American Public Gardens Association Annual Conference 2016, in Miami, FL
- The study will take approximately 60 - 90 minutes

Page 1 of 4

Participant's Initials _____

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

Possible risks of participating in this research study include:

- Discomfort and/or distress when discussing uncomfortable subjects or events

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS?

- You may not benefit directly from taking part in this research. However, the knowledge gained from this study may contribute to understanding issues surrounding racial diversity in public garden leadership, and will benefit the field as a whole.

HOW WILL CONFIDENTIALITY BE MAINTAINED? WHO MAY KNOW THAT YOU PARTICIPATED IN THIS RESEARCH?

- Your identity and the identity of your organization will remain anonymous and confidential in all reports.
- Confidentiality will be maintained via the assignment of pseudonyms to all participants, and the removal of information that may identify features such as location, organization, and job title.
- Files related to subject participation will be stored securely on the University of Delaware campus. Electronic records and transcripts will be stored in password protected filed on University of Delaware secure servers. **Records must be kept for a minimum of 3 years after a study is closed.**
- Research results will be analyzed and reported as key themes in response to specific questions. Direct quotes from transcripts may be used with pseudonym identifiers. Research data will not be shared with outside institutions, though publications may be produced from the final thesis.
- An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made. If a participant does not want to be taped, they will not be able to participate in the research study.

The confidentiality of your records will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your research records may be viewed by the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board, which is a committee formally designated to approve, monitor, and review biomedical and behavioral research involving humans. Records relating to this research will be kept for at least three years after the research study has been completed.

USE OF DATA COLLECTED FROM YOU IN FUTURE RESEARCH:

The research data we will be collecting from you during your participation in this study may be useful in other research studies in the future. Your choice about future use of your data will have no impact on your participation in this research study. Do we have your permission to use in future studies data collected from you? Please write your initials next to your preferred choice.

_____ YES   _____ NO

Page 2 of 4

Participant's Initials _____

WILL THERE BE ANY COSTS TO YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH?

There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION?

There is no compensation for participation in this study

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

Taking part in this research study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this research. If you choose to take part, you have the right to stop at any time. If you decide not to participate or if you decide to stop taking part in the research at a later date, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision to stop participation, or not to participate, will not influence current or future relationships with the University of Delaware.

WHO SHOULD YOU CALL IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Tracy Qiu, at (302) 588-7508 or tqiu@udel.edu. The academic advisor for this research study is Dr. Brian Trader, who may be contacted at (610) 388-5428, or at btrader@udel.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board at hsrb-research@udel.edu or (302) 831-2137.

Your signature on this form means that: 1) you are at least 18 years old; 2) you have read and understand the information given in this form; 3) you have asked any questions you have about the research and the questions have been answered to your satisfaction; and 4) you accept the terms in the form and volunteer to participate in the study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

_____   _____   _____
Printed Name of Participant   Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____   _____
Person Obtaining Consent   Person Obtaining Consent   Date
   (PRINTED NAME)   (SIGNATURE)

Participant's Initials _____

OPTIONAL CONSENT TO BE CONTACTED FOR FUTURE STUDIES:

Do we have your permission to contact you regarding participation in future studies? Please write your initials next to your preferred choice.

_____ YES   _____ NO

_____

Page 4 of 4

Participant's Initials _____

Appendix C

RECRUITMENT PROTOCOL AND INFORMATION

Dear Public Garden Leader,

My name is Tracy Qiu, and I am a first year graduate fellow in the Longwood Graduate Program, at the University of Delaware. For my Master's thesis, I am researching the experiences, perspectives, and effects of racial diversity in public garden leadership. You may view my profile at http://canr.udel.edu/longwoodgrad/home/fellows-bios/. I am writing to ask for your participation in my thesis research.

You have been asked to participate in this study for the following reasons:

1. You have been identified as a person of colour, or as someone who represents a non-dominant racial or ethnic group (non-white/European-American) in Canada and the United States. This can include, but is not limited to those who identify as Black/African, East/South Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern/Arabic, Indigenous/Aboriginal, Latina/Latino/Hispanic, Mixed Race/Multiple Races, and other members of non-dominant racial and ethnic groups.

2. You once occupied, or currently occupy a position of leadership at a public garden. "Leadership" in this context is defined as a paid, full time position with administrative, managerial, and/or decision-making power and influence over any of the following: budget, staffing, policy, interpretation, organizational strategy, organizational mission, programming, curriculum, and other areas that would affect how an organization reaches its mission goals.

3. You have been peer-identified, possibly through a referral.

Your participation is voluntary and confidential, and you are free to answer any questions you'd like, to withdraw your consent and/or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. The general purpose of this study is to understand:

1. The perspective of public garden diversity from a person of color in the field, the pipeline of diverse leaders' careers

2. The barriers and challenges they have faced and overcome, and the successes and opportunities they have identified

3. The effects that diverse leadership has had on an organization.

It is estimated that there will be 8 – 20 participants involved

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask for 45 to 60 minutes of your time for an audio-taped, face-to-face interview, either in person or over the computer. In the event that face-to-face is not an option, I will ask for an interview over the phone. The interview is semi-structured, and will consist of open-ended questions about your perceptions of diversity in

public garden leadership, your background and career trajectory, and your experiences/challenges/successes in public garden leadership. The interview will be scheduled at a time that is most convenient to you. I may also request to get in touch for follow-up questions, although you are free to decline. This research carries minimal risk apart from potential discomfort in answering any questions, and confidentiality will be maintained throughout all stages of the research process. There will be no reimbursement.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me (Tracy Qiu) at 126 Townsend Hall, The Longwood Graduate Program, Newark DE, 19711, or at my email tqiu@udel.edu, or my cell phone 302-588-7508. I greatly appreciate your time and contribution, and look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Tracy Qiu
Longwood Graduate Fellow
Master's of Science Candidate – Public Horticulture
University of Delaware – Plant and Soil Sciences
302-588-7508
tqiu@udel.edu

Appendix D

LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thesis Questions

Background
1. Tell me about yourself! Where are you from? Where did you grow up?
2. What is your racial/ethnic background? How do you identify/see yourself, in this context? (For example, I was born in China, but moved to Canada at a young age. I see myself as Chinese-Canadian, since I grew up in both cultures)
3. What were you interested in, as a child?
4. Did you have any interest in horticulture (plants, nature, flowers, gardening) as a child?
5. What did you want to be when you grew up?

Education
1. What were you interested while you were in elementary school? Middle school? High school?
2. Was there any interest in plants/horticulture/gardens at all during this time?
3. Did you go to college or university? If so, what did you study?
4. What made you decide to study ____?
5. Did you go on to graduate school? What was your research/thesis?
6. As someone of a racial/ethnic minority, what was your experience in school?
7. Did you feel any of your experiences were because of someone else's perception of your race/ethnicity?
8. What were some challenges and barriers you faced in school?
    a. Were you able to overcome these? How did you do it?
    b. What lessons did you learn from these?
9. Where did your support come from in school? Mentors, family, friends, professors?
    a. What was most significant?
    b. Who was your greatest mentor?

Career
1. Did you have a prior career that was not horticulturally related?
    a. Could you tell me more about your experience in that career?
    b. How long were you in that career? How many jobs did you have?
    c. What made you choose to switch careers/fields?
    d. Can you tell me about this transition?
    e. What was the hardest thing about the transition?
2. How did you get to your current job in public gardens? What were the steps you took?

3. Did you have any mentors during your career? Who were they?

Public Horticulture
1. What is your current position?
   a. What are you responsible for?
   b. What is your role as a leader in the organization?
   c. How long have you worked in this organization?
2. What are you most passionate about in your career? What drives you?
3. What does a day or week in your job look like?
4. How does your race/ethnicity affect your job and your career? What does it contribute to you as a leader?
5. Do you feel that other people's perceptions of your race/ethnicity have an effect on your job?
6. What has been the hardest thing/biggest challenge in your public horticulture career? Does any of it have to do with race, or is it unrelated?
7. What have you accomplished that you are most proud of? Can any of this be attributed to your background?
8. Is your current organization racially diverse? Does it reflect the population it serves?
   a. If your organization is not diverse, how does it feel to be a minority leader in this organization?
9. What are your organization's attitudes towards racial diversity and inclusion? Are there any official statements or initiatives?

Racial Diversity
1. In your opinion, what is the state of diversity in public horticulture? (Can be overall, or just racial diversity). Where does it need to be, and why?
2. Why do you feel we are lacking racial diversity at the leadership level?
3. What do you think the biggest barriers/challenges to leadership diversity are?
4. Have you seen any initiatives to increase leadership diversity?
5. What do you think about leadership diversity vs diversity in entry level staff?
6. Why is racial diversity in leadership important to the field?
7. How many other people of colour do you know in the field?
8. Do you have any advice for people of colour entering this field?
9. Can you recommend anyone else for this study?

Appendix E

IN VIVO CODING

Racial and Ethnic Identity (codeswitching, othering, tolerance, confined)
- Codeswitching/ Learn to be a chameleon (2)
- "Claim that identity" (bi-racial)
- "Doesn't cross my mind"
- "Pigeonholing" (themselves into a minority group)
- "Lump me in" generalization
- Multiple identities aside from race
- Don't think (race) has as much of an impact
- People are expecting some sort of struggle due to ethnicity
- Maybe I'm being naïve about it
- I am not the voice of the people
- "Certain boxes to check"
- "I always felt different"
- "Intimidating (2) to white people
- Trying to fit in"
- "Took a lot on the chin"
- "Apart from the group"
- "Difficult to find my place"
- "I felt like an anomaly"
- I present as a power group
- That's my people

Intro to Horticulture (consistency, hands-on exposure, curiousity, relationship with nature, enjoyment)
- "I've always been interested"
- "Calming, wonderful thing"
- "I was always…" (in the garden, climbing trees, outdoors)
- "In the dirt"
- "Always had an interest in plants from a very young age" "Interest in nature" (2)
- "I had no knowledge (of a gardening career). No idea!"
- Relationship with the earth
- Very focused on the outdoors
- "Build my ethic" in the environment
- Enjoyed being outdoors
- Part of nature
- Always tending my parents landscape
- Was always interested
- I loved being outdoor, that's just how I grew up

Transition to Horticulture (growth, sharing, self-care, challenge, competence)
- "I wanted the growth"
- "Share that interest, share that curiousity"
- "associated" with plants
- "Taking care of my own needs"
- "Relaxed and beautiful"
- Fell in love with botanical gardens
- Really "changed my life"
- Personal growth
- Had an epiphany
- There's more intellectual satisfaction in a public garden
- Opportunity (in public gardens, mentioned several times)
- I missed being with plant people
- Realized what I was good at
- Something I wouldn't have encountered anywhere else
- It was literally the challenge of the job
- A learning process for me, I was pretty excited about it
-

Lack of Exposure to Hort Career (unexposed – career, job, major, language, field)
- "I didn't know my job existed"
- It wasn't like they had career days for (hort)
- I never thought of it as a career/never considered it a career path (2)
- You can major in that?
- "Too early for me to think I'd have anything to do with plants"
- Coming to a botanical garden is not even on the radar
- Never saw myself getting into that field as a kid
- Never thought of it as something I would be doing
- I never heard that word before (horticulturist)
-

Negative Connotations of Hort Career (second-class, manual labor, association with migrant work, struggle/rough, honor/prestige)
- "Presentation"
- "people want the best fields"
- Get your hands dirty
- People "baffled" by your choice
- Pulling weeds (2)
- Hands-on work
- Manual labor
- Less "significance" than other fields

- Association with migrant work
- "Separate ourselves from that role"
- My family worked in the fields, and struggled, to get us to a better place
- Shame associated with working with plants
- Could be a rough job
- Don't get paid much
- Not an "honorable path"
- Younger kids don't wanna go into agriculture
-

Race in Public Horticulture (shock, recognition, "alone"/isolated, qualified candidates, occasional, painful, reflection)
- "Hit me like a freight train" (lack of diversity at APGA conference"
- "Oh my god, there's another one!" (seeing another PoC at a conference) (2)
- "I'm not alone"
- Abysmal
- "hard to find a person of color" (when hiring)
- Lack of "qualified racial minorities" (2)
- Miniscule
- "People around here have been very supportive"
- See each other from across the room
- Painful
- Horrifying
- Enlightening (workplace issues)
- Alienating
- Us vs them (conservation)
- Plantation model
- Clear and kind of disturbing (big picture)
- Patterns are patterns for a reason
- PH Making a painful transition
- Pretty white predominant
- Speckled or peppered
- Not well balanced (diversity)
- Subconscious
- Wow what's happening? (at the conference)
- Blue collar diversity
- No leaders "rooted" in the community
- Painfully obvious that there's no other person like me around
- "This is not my normal"
- Am I the only black person?
- I was surprised

- I'm always aware and very conscious of it
- Nobody looked like me

Micro-aggression and Discrimination in the Workplace (shame, exhaustion, stress, isolated, comfort and creating comfort, condescension, tokenization)
- "Shocked, embarrassed, and ashamed" (physical and verbal abuse in the workplace"
- "The world teaches you (that) you are less" (as an immigrant)
- "You're exhausted and you're tense"
- Feeling "unwelcome"
- Like attracts and respects like
- "Comfortable" or uncomfortable -- defining white comfort and race (3)
- "Shame" at racial un-identity
- "I had to be nice about it"
- "Laugh it off"
- "I felt like an anomaly"
- Honed emotional intelligence
- It's exhausting
- Too educated for position
- Too ambitious for position
- "Veiled and polite"
- Blindness to issues
- I get haters
- I am not the voice of the people
- Condescension towards gardening staff
- Being treated almost subhuman
- See people treated as expendable
- Token representation
- Dual function

Barriers and Challenges in Workplace (opportunities, reflection, disheartening, emotional labor, risk)
- Knowing about opportunities
- Lack of "representation" and "reflection"
- "Cultural connection"
- Disheartening – inclusion and diversity committees
- "Breadth of experience" of different leaders
- Tokenization
- "It's not gonna matter" at the end of the day
- Agricultural model
- Pervasive

- Racial lines
- Nepotism in hiring
- Reading people's faces
- Being the underdog
- Pressured to be good at what I do
- Don't want to be a statistic
- My hands are tied (recruiting)
- Scraping the funding for training
- Perception of my age
- Always go to the best candidate for the job
- Spotlight (minorities)
- It becomes more risky
-

Successes and Opportunity
- "I find a niche that's not being filled"
- I want to leave "no stone unturned" (diversity)
-

Mentorship (encouragement, support, inspiration, connections)
- "Pushing me"
- "Held my hand"
- creating a "support network"
- "been an inspiration"
- Reason why I'm here
- Provided opportunity
- Took me under her wing
- Very encouraging of professional development (boss mentor)
- Give me advice (mentor)
- Mentor "entry into the botanical garden world"
- He was the one who let me know there was an opening and details like that
-

Recommendations for Improvement (deeper thinking, creating pipelines, early exposure, honoring manual labor positions)
- "Deep personal thinking"
- "High touch" with volunteers
- "Reflective" of culture and identity
- "Pipeline" in environment
- Cultivating a relationship
- Intentional recruitment
- Restoring honor to positions
- Dignity and appeal

- Be an advocate for yourself
- Speak up

Educational Barriers
- Kind of regret not doing that when I was 18
- Put it on pause (education)
- Put it on the backburner
- Because back then I had no idea how that [expletive] worked (academia)
- Get your degree as early as possible
- That was like, a drag back
-

EMPATHETIC MUSEUM MATURITY MODEL

A Metric for Institutional Transformation in Museums

Empathy is one's ability to connect with others by relating to their personal experiences. It takes insight and a willingness to engage. The Empathetic Museum posits that cultural institutions can relate to their communities in the same way, and should align the work they do with the experiences, values, and needs of the communities they serve.

This assessment tool and associated resources can help organizations look within, and move towards a more empathetic future.

How to use the Maturity Model:

Materials: Overview & Characteristic Definitions (2 pgs), Rubric (2 pgs)

In the rubric, each characteristic is listed in the far left column. The columns to the right represent increasing levels of maturity in empathetic practice.

As you examine each characteristic, evaluate the level to which your institution embodies that characteristic and check the boxes that apply. Checked boxes identify your institution's current level of achievement, ranging from Regressive to Proactive. Unchecked boxes represent goals for your institution, and can inspire organizational change, the reallocation of resources, or whatever it takes to reach the highest level of empathy for all characteristics.

This model is designed to be flexible for institutions of varying size, location, and mission (with moderate & appropriate modification). If you have suggestions to make the tool more useful to your museum or to the field, please contact us at empatheticmuseum@gmail.com.

Key Terms:

Anchor Institution*: A key institution of civil society, such as library system, university, health system, educational system. Museums should be and should view themselves as anchor institutions. (Lord and Blankenberg 2015)
*museums are not anchor institutions by default; this position requires community buy-in

Soft Power: "The power of influence rather than of force or finance;" soft power resources are "ideas, knowledge, values, and culture." (Lord and Blankenberg 2015).

White Privilege: "An invisible package of assets that [white people] can count on cashing in each day...." Conditions that are viewed by whites as "morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow them to be more like us. "(McIntosh, 1990)

Employment Equity: Adherence to socially just guidelines for hiring in terms of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, pay scale.

Decolonization: Deconstructing the Euro-centric, colonial origin of museums to reframe the way objects are presented, narratives constructed, and cultures priviledged in interpretation, exhibition design, and educational programming.

Lord, G. D., & Blankenberg, N. (2015). *Cities, Museums and Soft Power.* American Association of Museums.
McIntosh, P. (1990) White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack. ted. coe.wayne.edu

Empathetic Museum Contributors: Gretchen Jennings, Stacey Mann, Janeen Bryant, Matt Kirchman, Rainey Tisdale, Elissa Frankle, Jim Cullen, Jessica Konigsberg, Alyssa Greenberg, and many others who have generously shared their time and expertise.

www.empatheticmuseum.com/maturity-model

Civic Vision

Civic vision is a matter of imagination and behavior. For museums to be 21st century civic leaders and relevant to the societies in which they reside (i..e. anchor institutions), their leaders must have the imagination (vision) to see their institutions in such a role: that they matter in their communities. Museums must behave as civic leaders, joining with other institutions of civil society to use their combined efforts to influence and shape (soft power) the quality of life in their community and the promotion of social justice in their municipalities.

For more information: *A discussion of museums as agents of soft power can be found in Chapter 1 of "Museums, Cities, and Soft Power," (2015) by Lord and Blankenberg (http://www.lord.ca/Pages/Cities-Museums-and-Soft-Power-Chapter1.pdf)*

Institutional Body Language

A term coined by Gretchen Jennings and discussed frequently in her blog, Museum Commons. Analogous to personal body language, institutional body language refers to the powerful messages museums convey through unspoken and unwritten manifestations of their being: the design of their buildings, the content of their advertising, the behavior of front line staff to visitors, the demographics of their staff and boards, the choices they make in their collections, exhibitions, and programs. In the context of diversity and inclusion, museums' body language often conveys the message that the museum is for the white, the wealthy, and the powerful. Such museums may have written diversity policies and goals, but the image presented to the public by the institution in its many manifestations speaks more loudly than written goals or mission statements. People of color and other marginalized communities get the message—this place is not really for or about us—and stay away.

For more information: *Museum Commons blog posts*
        http://www.museumcommons.com/2013/06/the-empathetic-museum-institutional.html
        http://www.museumcommons.com/2015/06/charleston-the-cultural-landscape.html
        Incluseum article
        https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2mitjKPAu6yVk9HV0ZwRkRIT0E/view

Community Resonance

Just as an empathetic individual resonates with the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of another group or person, an empathetic museum is so connected with its community that it is keenly aware of its values, needs, and challenges. The best way to achieve this is through a board and staff that reflect the diversity of a community; advisory boards, collaborations, and partnerships also help a museum's ability to be in touch with and responsive to its community.

For more information: *Incluseum Blog (www.incluseum.com)*
        Joint statement from Museum Bloggers and Colleagues on Ferguson and Related Events
        http://www.museumcommons.com/2014/12/joint-statement-museum-bloggers-colleagues-ferguson-related-events.html

Timeliness and Sustainability

Because an Empathetic Museum is so connected to its community (see Community Resonance), it is able to assess and respond to particular events or crises that affect its community (and beyond) in a timely and sustainable way. For example, if a museum is aware of racial tension in its community because of the racial diversity of its staff and/or strong collaborative community relationships, it can be well informed about what programs, exhibits, social media and other initiatives it might take within its mission and vision to address this civic issue. And it is aware that one-off efforts are not effective. It maintains a continuous and sustained awareness of and collaborative spirit towards its community and its needs.

For more information: *Elaine Gurian on Timeliness*
        http://www.egurian.com/omnium-gatherum/museum-issues/timeliness
        Museum Commons blog
        http://www.museumcommons.com/2015/04/museumsrespondtoferguson-whats-authentic.html
        Incluseum article
        https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2mitjKPAu6yVk9HV0ZwRkRIT0E/view

Performance Measures

A museum working to develop the characterics discussed above also incorporates them into its strategic planning. It creates tools to assess the level of achievement of each characteristic and its related goals. An Empathetic Museum commits resources to regular assessment, not only of its revenues and attendance, but also of its public and social impact.

For more information: *Scott, C.A., ed. (2013). Museums and Public Value. Chapter 3, "Creating Public Value Through Intentional Practice," by Randi Korn.*

www.empatheticmuseum.com/maturity-model

Institutional Identity & Relationships (internal/external)

Operational Functions & Assessment

Characteristic	Regressive (Lowest Maturity)	Emergent (Low Maturity)	Planned (Medium Maturity)	Proactive (Advanced Maturity)
Civic Vision i.e. How the museum expresses empathy externally through its civic role. *An "anchor institution" of civil society (like universities, libraries, etc.); Exercises "soft power"(influence for social good) in community.*	☐ Identifies as independent, stand-alone player ☐ Indifferent to/unaware of issues within community ☐ Focused on core subject matter only	☐ Interested in being more relevant to civic life in the community ☐ Willing to reassess mission and vision ☐ Lacking required resources or clear direction	☐ Acknowledges role as anchor institution in community ☐ Ensures mission and vision reflect civic role ☐ Explores authentic ways to be part of its community and allocates project resources to do so	☐ Embraces and internalizes role as an anchor institution in community ☐ Key civic player with responsibilities and influence used for growth and social justice ☐ Exercises soft power in the community with dedicated staffing and project resources
Institutional Body Language i.e. How the museum embodies empathy through staffing, policies, workplace culture and structure, etc. *Aware of unconscious & unintended messages of white privilege communicated by building., administration, staff, hiring practices, collections, advertising, etc. Values intersectional cultural competency at all levels of staff and governance.* **EMPATHETIC MUSEUM** **MATURITY MODEL**	☐ Museum culture embodies privilege (racial, cultural, social, etc.) ☐ Governors, leaders, employees, exhibits, collections, etc. are predominantly single demographic (usually white) reflecting that of founders ☐ Unaddressed issues of pay (unpaid labor, low wages, wage disparity) and employment equity in hiring practices	☐ Token "community coordinator" is hired, or a "diversity function" is added to someone's job to attract "diverse" audiences ☐ "Diversity" initiatives consist of short term "outreach" programs or only overlap with "ethnic" holidays ☐ Some labor practices amended to create more equitable working conditions ☐ No substantial change in internal culture in terms of board, staffing, collections, exhibitions, programming	☐ Enacts formal policies through staff collaborations with community partners, advisory committees, experts on inclusion, equity, etc. ☐ Assesses and reorganizes board, staff, collections, exhibits and programs—its entire ethos—to reflect its community ☐ Hiring practices examined for bias; efforts made to address staff concerns ☐ Parity in representation are prioritized as the responsibility of all staff ☐ Changes from a place of white privilege to a place where all feel welcome	☐ Internalized awareness of privilege communicated by building, leadership, staffing, collections, advertising, etc. ☐ Workplace culture reflects inclusive environment with participation from staff of diverse thought, experience, and cultural competencies at all staff levels ☐ Fully resembles the complex and intersectional community's evolving demographics and values ☐ Recognizes and supports need for staff self-care to limit burnout ☐ Enacts long range plan to ensure sustainability of this transformation

Empathetic Museum Contributors: Gretchen Jennings, Stacey Mann, Janeen Bryant, Matt Kirchman, Rainey Tisdale, Elissa Frankle, Jim Cullen, Jessica Konigsberg, Alyssa Greenberg, and many others who have generously shared their time and expertise. Special credit and thanks to Jim Cullen for contributing and incorporating the Maturity Model framework.

Characteristic	Regressive	Emergent	Planned	Proactive
Community Resonance i.e. How the museum values, relates to, and serves its diverse communities. *Persistent awareness of surrounding community; forges strong, trusted connections with all (often underrepresented) segments of community in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status.*	☐ Concerned with "attracting wider audiences" to expand audience base ☐ Uninterested in investigation of institutional connections to exclusion, racism, sexism, oppression, white privilege, etc. ☐ Perception that community issues have little connection to museum	☐ Authorizes research into the history of its building, location, collections in relation to racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege ☐ Examines its relationship with previously ignored or excluded communities ☐ Community connections focus on execution of the museum's mission and vision; relationship is predominantly one way, serving the museum's needs; involves cultural appropriation	☐ Solicits help from experienced facilitators and community partners to address engagement issues from an intentional, structural perspective ☐ Revisits institutional policies (staffing, collections, exhibitions, programming, etc.) to prioritize internal transformation ☐ Secures partnerships with other anchor institutions and local organizations more fully integrated with community issues	☐ Acknowledges complicity in legacy of exclusion, racism, oppression, cultural appropriation and privilege ☐ Implements plan to reverse these connections; seeks reconciliation with affected communities ☐ Nurtures reciprocal, community-driven relationships with local organizations that link the museum and its mission to local/national/global issues relevant to the surrounding community
Timeliness & Sustainability i.e. How, why, and when the museum responds to community issues and events in a sustainable way. *Able to respond to unexpected issues affecting its community due to continuous and sustained relationships & role as anchor institution.*	☐ Rarely acknowledges or responds to local, national, or global events. ☐ Programs are reactive, one-offs and not sustained; do not emanate from prior planning.	☐ Responds and can reallocate committed resources as a plan deviation ☐ Aware that one-off, unsustained responses do not build lasting community engagement	☐ Plans strategically for the future and engages periodically with stakeholders (internal/external) so that appropriate community/national/global issues can be addressed ☐ Allocates resources to provide responses that are flexible and sustainable	☐ Plans strategically; reciprocal relationships with community members enable museum to anticipate and respond in a timely way ☐ Rarely blindsided, highly nimble and flexible; resources already allocated ☐ Community resources and programs are fully funded and protected in budget
Performance Measures i.e. How the museum measures success in empathetic practice. *Values and commits resources to regular assessment of public impact; shares this with the public.*	☐ Traditional measures focus on outputs, attendance and revenues ☐ Metrics rarely reported to internal/external stakeholders or the local community	☐ Traditional measures supplemented by attempts to gauge community collaboration and impact ☐ Museum reports to internal stakeholders annually	☐ Community impact and effectiveness as anchor institution are included in outcomes to be measured ☐ Museum reports to internal and external stakeholders annually	☐ Museum continuously assesses and redefines its public value impact ☐ Commits resources to continued impact assessment along with attendance and revenue ☐ Reporting is increasingly transparent and widespread

Citation: Jennings, G., Mann, S., Cullen, J., et.al. (2016). *Empathetic Museum Maturity Model.* http://www.empatheticmuseum.com/maturitymodel   **www.empatheticmuseum.com/maturity-model**

114