

The Elephant in the (Well-Designed) Room

An Investigation into Bias in the Architecture Profession

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Abstract

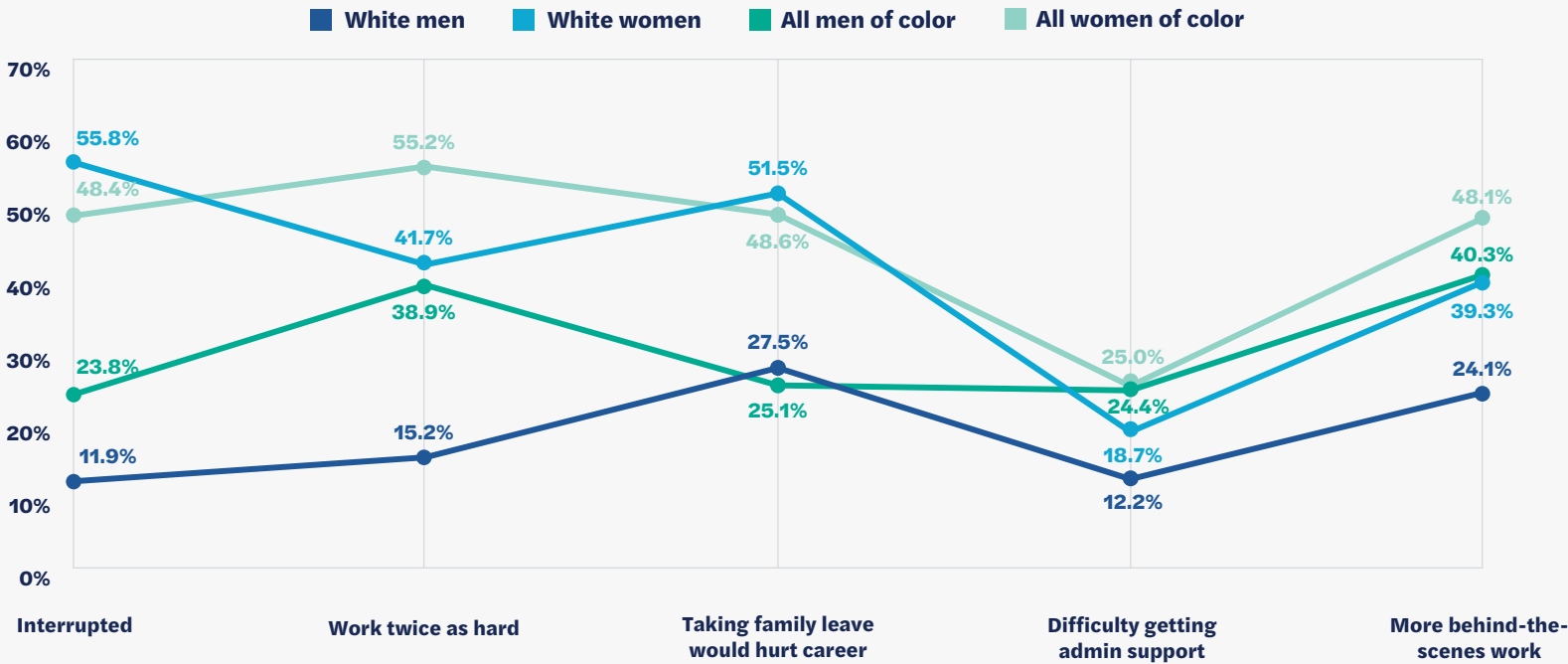
In partnership with The American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Center for WorkLife Law conducted a quantitative study of bias based on gender and race/ethnicity in the practice of architecture. This study reflects 1,346 architectural professionals' responses to the Workplace Experiences Survey, a simple 10-minute survey that picks up basic patterns of bias, where bias is playing out, and its impact on outcomes. We found an elephant in the room: White men are having a different experience than all other groups in architecture workplaces. Women of color reported the worst experiences overall, with white women and men of color falling in between, but closer to women of color. Implications and solutions are discussed.

Executive Summary

Executive summary

This is a quantitative study of bias based on gender and race/ethnicity in the practice of architecture. A simple definition of bias is when two otherwise identical people are treated differently because of their membership in a social group; indeed, bias is often measured by giving people identical resumes and documenting how people from different social groups are treated differently. In partnership with The American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Center for WorkLife Law examined how bias plays out in the architecture profession, how it affects workplace processes such as hiring and performance evaluations, and how it affects outcome measures such as intent to stay with one’s employer. This study reflects 1,346 architectural professionals’ responses to the Workplace Experiences Survey, a simple 10-minute survey that picks up basic patterns of bias, where bias is playing out, and its impact on outcomes. These quantitative data were supplemented by qualitative data in the form of survey comments, one-on-one interviews, and focus groups. All quotes noted throughout the report were drawn from these qualitative data. We report the experiences of architects and designers from the following racial/ethnic groups: white, Black, Latino/a, people of Asian descent, multiracial people, and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people.¹ The study did not include age as an aspect of study, but did include years in the profession. We note where this may be a factor in the analysis.

Across a variety of bias patterns, white men tend to report better experiences than white women, men of color, and women of color.



¹ The multiracial people group includes people who self-identified as two or more racial/ethnic groups on the survey. The Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people group includes 14 individuals who identified as Native American or Alaska Native, seven individuals who identified as Middle Eastern or North African, five individuals who identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 12 individuals who identified other racial or ethnic groups using a write-in option. We are not able to share the results from any of these groups individually because of participant privacy concerns.

KEY FINDINGS

White men report a different experience in the profession of architecture than all other groups

We found an elephant in the room: Bias plays an important role in the experiences of women and people of color. The largest divergences in the study were between white men and women of color. Men of color and white women tended to fall in between, with experiences closer to women of color than white men.

Black architectural professionals

Black women as a group reported the most negative experiences in the architecture profession. Across most of the bias patterns, workplace processes, and outcomes we studied, the experiences of Black women stood out, even compared to other women of color. Notable data points:

- Black architectural professionals reported racial bias at very high levels: Over 50% had to deal with negative racial stereotypes at work.
- Black architectural professionals felt excluded at work more than any other group, with over 50% of Black women reporting being left out of the information-sharing networks in their workplaces.
- Over 40% of Black architectural professionals reported being unable to see a long-term future in their current workplaces, compared to only 20% of white men.

Impacts of bias

Racial and gender bias have strong impacts on workplace processes and outcomes.

- Bias was extremely prevalent and had a measurable impact on 13 variables (see below).
- Over half of the variation in whether people feel excluded at work is attributable to bias.
- 41% of the variation in career satisfaction at one’s organization is attributable to bias.

-
1. Belonging
 2. Career satisfaction
 3. Inclusion
 4. Engagement
 5. Long-term future
 6. Clear path for advancement
 7. Recommend organization to a friend
 8. Fairness of compensation
 9. Fairness of assignments
 10. Fairness of hiring
 11. Fairness of performance evaluations
 12. Fairness of promotions

“...Most women of my generation left the profession entirely because of discrimination and lack of opportunities. Those who remain in the profession literally all own their own firms, most with their husbands or other small offices, it was the only way to survive. Data will show female ownership or women in principal roles, but only because they were forced out of other offices or denied career advancement opportunities in offices they worked.”

—White woman

1 The multiracial people group includes people who self-identified as two or more racial/ethnic groups on the survey. The Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people group includes 14 individuals who identified as Native American or Alaska Native, seven individuals who identified as Middle Eastern or North African, five individuals who identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 12 individuals who identified other racial or ethnic groups using a write-in option. We are not able to share the results from any of these groups individually because of participant privacy concerns.

TIGHTROPE BIAS

White men are expected to be authoritative and ambitious—behavior less readily accepted in other groups. These expectations make office politics harder for women and people of color because they have to find a balance between authoritativeness and approachability, and an “appropriate” way to demand career-enhancing work. White men just have to be ambitious and authoritative.

- Tightrope bias was the most commonly reported bias (see the [glossary](#) for various types of bias tested) among both architectural professionals of color and women.
- In one of the largest discrepancies, we found significantly higher numbers of white women (55.8%), women of color (48.4%), and men of color (23.8%) reported being interrupted in meetings, compared with only 11.9% of white men. In a profession where design critiques play a central role in the display of talent, this silencing has important repercussions.
- Over half of women reported pushback for assertive behavior, compared with only about a quarter of white men.
- Almost two-thirds of Black women said they were expected to be “worker bees” (defined as one who should work hard, avoid confrontation, and not complain). Roughly half of women and architectural professionals of color overall reported they were expected to be “worker bees,” but only about a third of white men did.
- White men were more likely than any other group to report that people expect them to play a leadership role. Latina women, women of Asian descent, and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people were more than 20 percentage points less likely than white men to report this expectation of leadership.

- Just over 40% of women of color and nearly one-third of white women and men of color reported that they had to change their appearance or demeanor in order to fit in at their workplaces. Less than one-fifth of white men reported the same. This sends not-so-subtle signals about who belongs—and who doesn’t.

PROVE-IT-AGAIN BIAS

Some groups are held to higher standards than others.

- Prove-it-again bias was the second most commonly reported pattern among both women and architects and designers of color.
- About half of all women and men of color reported having to prove themselves over and over again to get same level of respect and recognition as their colleagues. Only a quarter of white men reported the same.
- Black architectural professionals were most likely to report having to work twice as hard (70.5% of Black women and 57.3% of Black men). More than half (55%) of women of color overall reported this. In comparison, only 15.2% of white men reported the same.
- About two-thirds of Black and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architects and designers reported that they have to prove themselves over and over to get recognition—a percentage significantly higher than other groups.

MATERNAL WALL BIAS

- Often, motherhood is a trigger for strong negative competence and commitment assumptions in the workplace. Maternal Wall bias can affect women whether or not they change their work patterns after having children. In this study, the greatest differences in Maternal Wall bias were between men and women—with little variation by race/ethnicity.
- Over half of architectural professionals who are mothers reported that they were assumed to be less committed and competent after they have children; 84.7% of white men, and 78.7% of men of color, said the opposite. The experience of parenthood diverged particularly dramatically for white men and white women: 35.5 percentage points.

RACIAL STEREOTYPING

- In society and the practice of architecture alike, racism affects different groups differently—but it disadvantages all groups of people of color as compared with white people.
- Black women reported the highest levels of racial stereotyping, and both Black men and Black women reported some of the highest levels of Prove-it-again and Tightrope bias. Black architectural professionals also reported having to alter their appearance or demeanor to fit in at work (50% of Black women and 31.3% of Black men), and that they face perceptions they had unfair advantages at work (24.6% of Black women and 19.2% of Black men).
- Latino/a architects and designers also reported having to alter themselves to fit in (44.1% of Latina women and 17.9% of Latino men). They also reported being assumed to be less qualified (53.2%

of Latina women and 20.7% of Latino men), called loud when using a normal tone (36.7% of Latina women and 49.4% of Latino men), and being assumed to be from outside the U.S. even when they were not (36.5% of Latina women and 23.3% of Latino men).

- Architectural professionals of Asian descent reported more Tug of War bias compared to all other groups. They also reported being seen as team players rather than leaders (62% of women and 58.7% of men of Asian descent), being seen for their technical skills rather than managerial skills (55% of women and 51.5% of men of Asian descent), and being treated as “forever foreigners” (35% of women and 24.7% of men of Asian descent).
- Multiracial people reported having to alter themselves to fit in (44.9% of Multiracial women and 35.6% of multiracial men), having to deal with assumptions that they are less qualified (53.3% of multiracial women and 29.6% of multiracial men), and getting pushback for showing anger at work (49.3% of multiracial women and 39.2% of multiracial men). Multiracial women reported having to do the most office housework and the lowest levels of access to the design work (61% of multiracial women and 74.6% of multiracial men).
- Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people reported many of the highest levels of bias compared to all other groups in our study, including some of the highest levels of Prove-it-again and Tightrope bias and the most unfairness in many workplace systems. They also reported having to deal with assumptions that they are less qualified (55.2%), getting pushback for showing anger at work (54.2%), having to deal with negative racial stereotypes at work (48.3%), and having to deal with assumptions that they received unfair advantages (34.8%).

“Racism is pervasive in all work environments (e.g., job sites, client meetings, office). Equal opportunities do not appear to be extended equally to colleagues of similar experience level... We are perceived as the ‘help,’ not the leaders when oftentimes we are more capable of leading the job. Minorities having more degrees, more years of experience, more quals never equate to white males with less experience, as they are better-connected individuals. Constant country club behavior.”

—Multiracial woman architectural professional

Allocation of high-profile work

This was one arena in which the quantitative and qualitative data diverged. In interviews and focus groups, women architects and designers spoke of being channeled into project management, and of lack of access to design work. Women also noted that in small firms, architectural professionals typically play a variety of roles; the lack of access to design work may emerge particularly in large firms where architectural professionals play specialized roles. In contrast, quantitative data showed a divergence between white men and others, but also that many women do feel able to contribute to design work.

- 85.3% of white men reported that they had access to desirable assignments, compared to 62.5% of women of color, 73.3% of white women, and 75% of men of color. Only 50% of Black women reported access to desirable assignments.

Workplace processes and policies

White men were much more likely than other groups to feel that workplace processes and policies were fair, including assignments, compensation, inclusion, hiring, performance evaluations, promotions, and sponsorship.

- Architectural professionals tend to be paid less than other similarly educated professionals²—and some groups are paid even less than others.
- In the areas of bias tested, fairness in compensation showed the most significant difference between white men and other demographic groups, most notably Black women.
- Over three-quarters of Black women believe they are paid less than their counterparts in the profession, compared with 65% of women of color broadly, 54% of white women, and 42% of men of color. In contrast, only 27% of white men reported the same.

Sexual harassment

- 71.2% of white women and 67.7% of women of color reported some form of sexual harassment. 45.6% of men of color and 41.8% of white men also reported sexual harassment—an indication that sexual harassment within the profession of architecture is uncomfortable for men as well as women.
- Unwanted physical contact, such as back rubs, was reported by 27.2% of women of color and 27% of white women.
- Women architectural professionals reported sexual harassment from many corners, most commonly from contractors, followed by co-workers and clients.

Satisfaction and engagement

Overall, a high number of architectural professionals (roughly three-fourths) reported they were satisfied with their careers at their current organizations. White men reported the most positive experiences on outcome measures such as belonging, intent to stay with their firms, engagement, and career satisfaction.

- 86.8% of white men reported being satisfied with their careers at their current organizations. Career satisfaction was lower in other groups: 71.5% of women of color, 75.9% of men of color, and 75.6% of white women reported being satisfied.
- Black women reported the lowest numbers in career satisfaction at their current organizations (64.3%), followed by multiracial women (69.8%) and Latina women (70.8%)
- Less than two-thirds of Black women felt able to do their best work in their current organization, compared to 86.6% of white men, 79.2% of white women, 72.6% of all women of color, and 71.1% of all men of color.

² Dickinson, D. (2017). The Uneasy Relationship Between Architects and Money. *Common Edge*. Retrieved from: <https://commonedge.org/the-uneasy-relationship-between-architects-and-money/>

Solutions

Architectural firms can make progress on bias by using the tools that businesses commonly use to address any major business problem: metrics to establish baselines and measure progress, and evidence-based strategies to achieve company goals. Well-intentioned people can sincerely wish for inclusion, but if their organizations do not build an evidence-based, metrics-driven approach into hiring, work assignments, performance evaluations, and meetings while also addressing work-life concerns, progress will remain stalled.

This study builds on prior work to provide a comprehensive description of how bias shapes everyday workplace interactions in the architecture profession. See the [background](#) for an overview of this context. See the [methodology](#) for the demographics of the respondents and definitions. See the [bias interrupters](#) for the six toolkits for architecture firms, with information for how to interrupt bias in business systems.

Results

Results

OPEN RACISM AND SEXISM

Before dialing down to fine-grained data detailing what racism and sexism look like on the ground in the architecture profession, we start by reporting the high levels of open racism and sexism in the architecture profession. A notable finding was that racism and sexism in the profession were so open that we found a pattern of white men noting it with distaste, something we found in no other industries.³

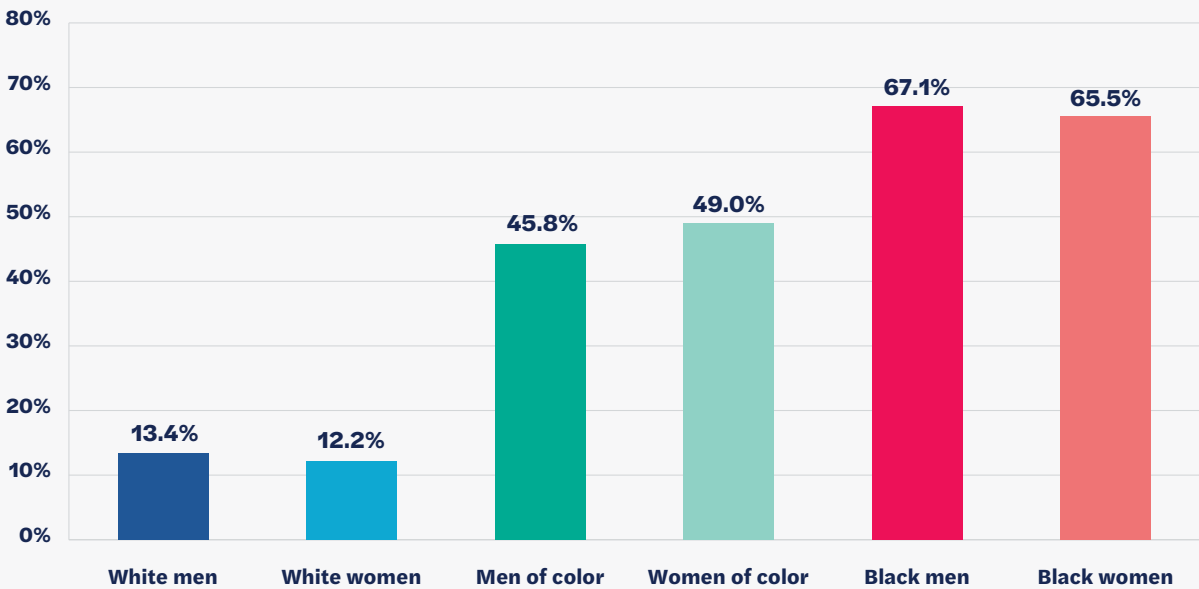
Racism

The AIA’s 2016 [Diversity in the Profession of Architecture report](#) identified key factors that affect the pipeline for people of color, notably the comparatively low pay compared to other professions that require similar levels of education, as well as a lack of role models and knowledge about the profession of architecture as a career.⁵

All this is true, but the lack of diversity in the profession is not just a pipeline problem. It’s also a culture problem: Open racism and sexism play an important role.

On our survey, nearly half of women of color and 45.8% of men of color reported experiencing racism in their workplaces, compared to only 13.4% of white men and 12.2% of white women. Black architectural professionals reported the most racism: Two-thirds of Black men and women said that they had experienced racism in their workplaces.⁶

Experienced racism



“For some reason, contractors continue to feel comfortable with racist and sexist comments because they think another white man must be in sync with them. This continues to happen even in 2019.”⁴

—White man

³ Williams, J.C., Li, S., Rincon, R., & Finn, P. (2016). Climate Control: Gender and Racial Bias in Engineering? Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Climate-Control-Gender-And-Racial-Bias-InEngineering.pdf>; Williams, J.C., Korn, R. M., Rincon, R., Finn, P. (2018) Walking the Tightrope: An Examination of Bias in India’s Engineering Workplace. Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/Walking-the-Tightrope-Bias-Indias-Engineering-Workplace.pdf>; Williams, J. C., Multhaup, M., Li, S., Korn, R. M. (2018). You Can’t Change What You Can’t See: Interrupting Racial & Gender Bias in the Legal Profession. American Bar Association & Minority Corporate Counsel Association. Available at: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/you-cant-change-what-you-cant-see-print.pdf>

⁴ All quotes in this report are from the qualitative data collected as part of this study unless otherwise noted. Some quotes contain language that may be considered offensive.

⁵ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

⁶ Throughout this report, we will always report the experiences of white men, white women, all men of color, and all women of color (in our data, people of color includes individuals who identified as Black or African American, Latino/a or Hispanic, Asian or Asian-American, Multiracial, and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people). We will also highlight the experiences of specific racial or ethnic groups when they differ from men of color and women of color as a group.

“There's no way I could quantify the number of incidents that have occurred involving racism.”

—Black woman

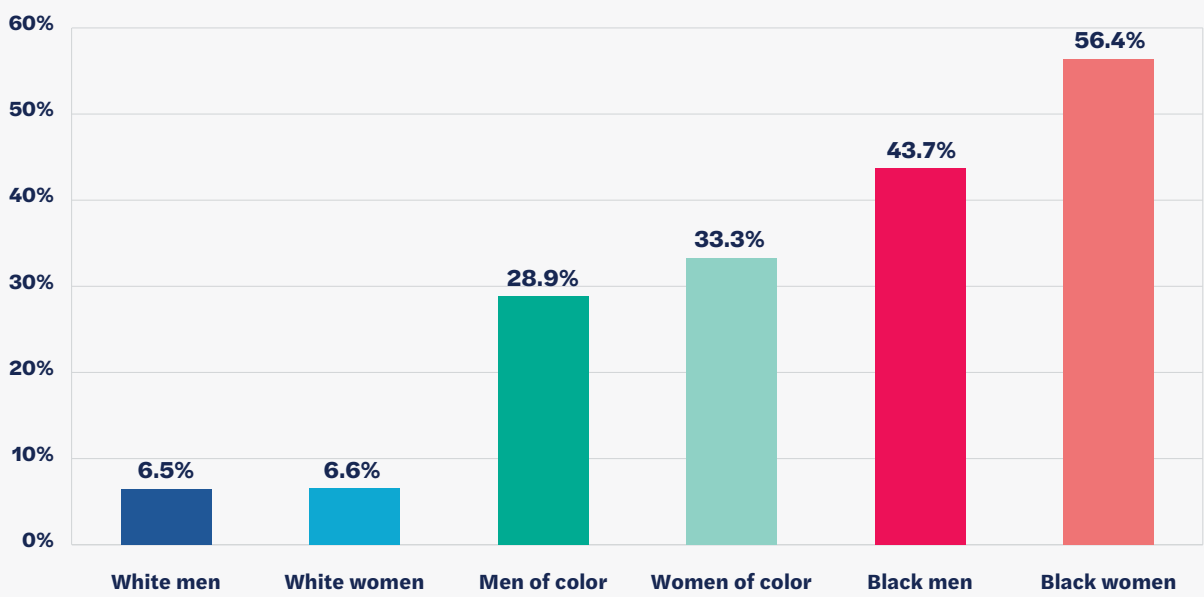
“... many of my white co-workers make racist jokes within earshot.” —Black woman

“I've been told in annual reviews that I shouldn't be concern about my salary because I make dollars and not pesos (I'm from Mexico).” —Latino man

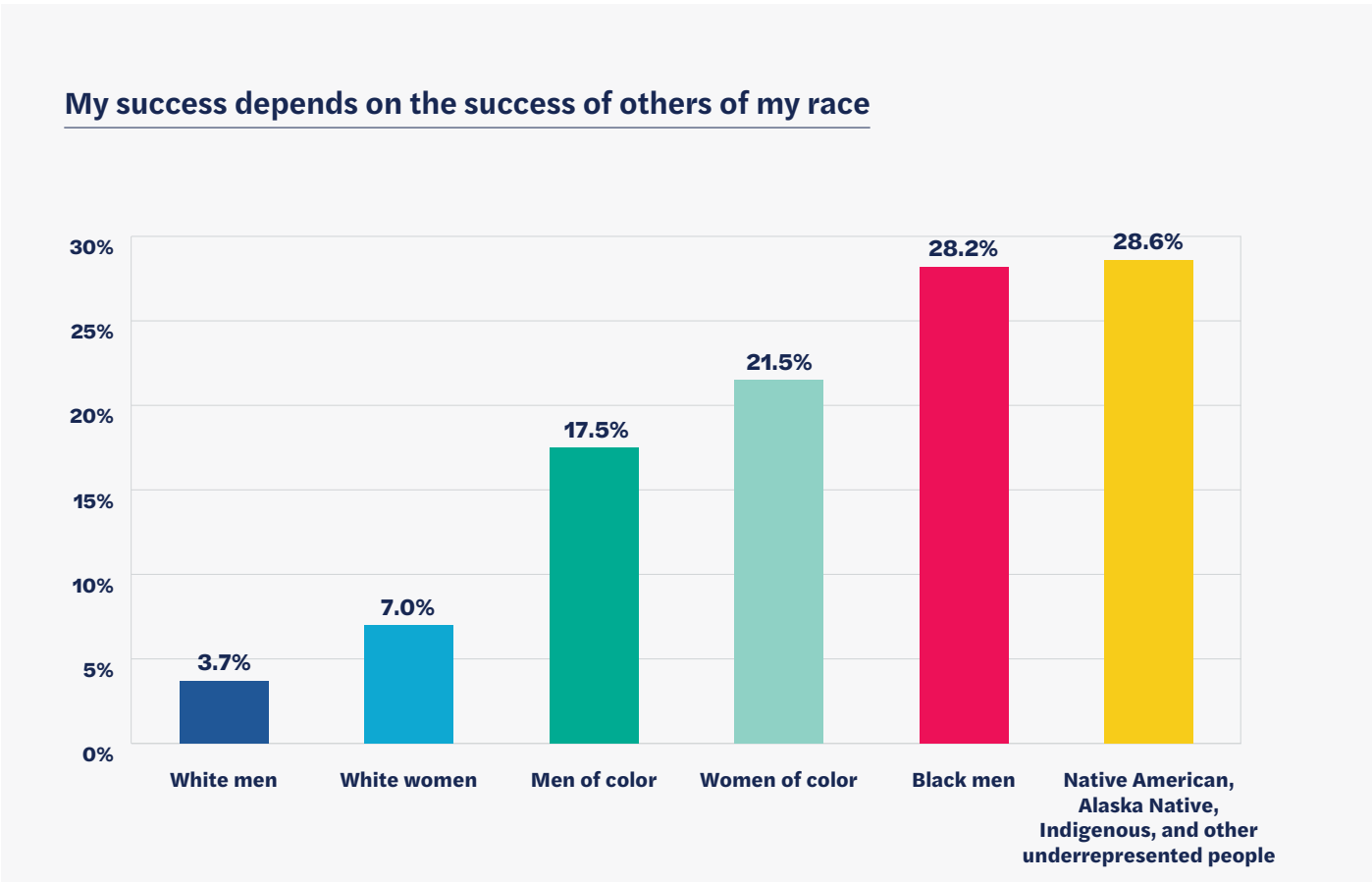
“Some extreme racism and unreasonable unspoken rules.” —Woman of Asian descent

One cost of racism is the time and effort people need to invest in dealing with racism deftly: stopping it without triggering resentment or retaliation. A third of women of color and 28.9% of men of color reported having to put effort into dealing with racism, while only 6.5% of white men and 6.6% of white women said the same. Again, Black architectural professionals stood out: 56.4% of Black women and 43.7% of Black men reported that they had to put in effort to deal with racism without getting retaliated against in their workplaces.

Had to put effort into dealing with racism



Architectural professionals of color reported feeling that their success at work depends on the successes of others of their racial/ethnic group:⁷ 21.5% of women of color and 17.5% of men of color reported this, as compared with only 3.7% of white men and 7% of white women. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals⁸ and Black men were even more likely to report being judged on the successes of their racial/ethnic group.



⁷ Duguid, M. M., Loyd, D. L., & Tolbert, P. S. (2012). The impact of categorical status, numeric representation, and work group prestige on preference for demographically similar others: A value threat approach. *Organization Science*, 23(2), 386-401. doi: 10.1287/orsc.1100.0565

⁸ The Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people group includes 14 individuals who identified as Native American or Alaska Native, seven individuals who identified as Middle Eastern or North African, five individuals who identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 12 individuals who identified other racial or ethnic groups using a write-in option. We are not able to share the results from any of these groups individually because of participant privacy concerns

“I have experienced too many incidences of sexism to count or share within a small text box while in architecture, and I have been planning on leaving the profession for some time for primarily this reason.”

—White woman

Sexism

Qualitative articles note that workplace bias plays an important role in women leaving the profession.⁹ Our findings provide quantitative data that support this observation.

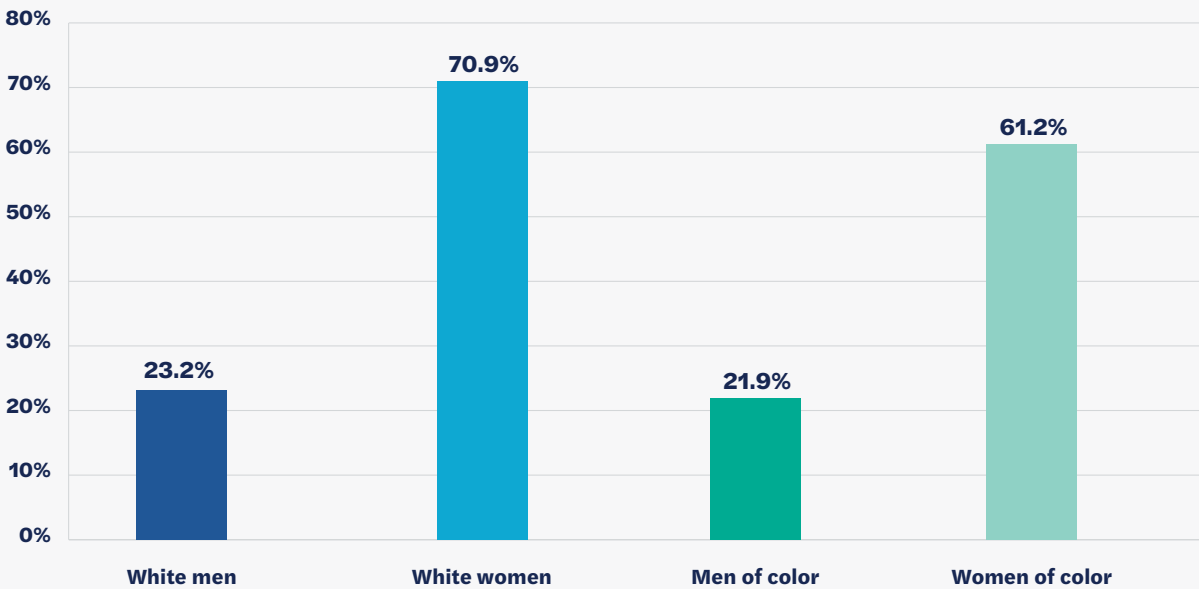
“Women architects who are technically strong are often not acknowledged, not respected, or are bullied by their less capable or experienced co-workers.” –*Multiracial woman*

“My direct supervisor saying, ‘That sounds like something a woman would do’ during my career review when I mentioned that I wrote out a list categorizing my priorities.”
–*Woman of Asian descent*

“I’ve been told I should be a housewife.” –*White woman*

On our survey, 70.9% of white women and 61.2% of women of color reported experiencing sexism in their workplaces, as compared with less than a quarter of white men and of men of color.

Experienced sexism



⁹ O'Neill, M. (2018). Is the industry a hotbed of sexism – and if so, can it be changed? *Architectural Digest*. Retrieved from: <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/gender-parity-in-architecture>; Lee, S. (2018). Why Doesn't Architecture Care About Sexual Harassment? *The New York Times Opinion*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/opinion/richard-meier-metoo-moment.html>

IMPACTS OF BIAS

Bias had a strong impact both on whether the workplace was perceived as fair and inclusive, and whether architectural professionals intended to stay with their employers. Primary among our findings:

- **Exclusion:** Bias had a particularly important impact on whether people felt excluded at work, accounting for over half (54%) of the variation in exclusion scores.
- **Fairness in promotion:** Bias accounted for nearly half (48%) of the variation in whether or not people felt promotions were fair.
- **Fairness of performance evaluation:** Bias accounted for 44% of the variation in perceptions of fairness in performance evaluations.
- **Career satisfaction:** Bias accounted for 41% of the variation in career satisfaction.

Prior research shows that small amounts of bias add up over time. One computer simulation built in a 1% bias against women and found that a workforce that started out with 53% women soon had only 35% women.¹⁰ Our findings confirmed that bias affects a range of outcomes in the profession of architecture. We examined the impacts of the bias patterns on outcomes by conducting regression analyses.¹¹

We conducted multiple regression analyses using composite scores for each of the bias patterns and controlling for race/ethnicity and gender. Across all of the outcomes we examined, we found

that bias has a measurable impact on architectural professionals’ experiences. In the following analyses, variables were measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 6 (Strongly disagree–Strongly agree). For ease of understanding, we present the findings scaled up as if they were measured from 0 to 100.

Tightrope bias had the strongest impact of all the bias patterns for many outcomes. This is not surprising: Tightrope bias is the most commonly reported pattern of bias, and it includes a range of experiences: pushback for assertive behavior, leadership expectations, interruptions, and more. For every 20-point increase in Tightrope bias, there was a corresponding:

- 15.2 point decrease in seeing a long-term future at your organization
- 14.4 point decrease in ability to do your best work
- 14.4 point decrease in career satisfaction
- 11.4 point decrease in being able to see a path for advancement at your organization
- 8.6 point decrease in reporting being likely to recommend your organization to a friend
- 8.2 point decrease in belonging
- 7.2 point increase in feeling excluded

¹⁰ Martell, R. F., Lane, D. M., & Emrich, C. (1996). Male-female differences: A computer simulation. *American Psychologist*, 51(2), 157–158. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.51.2.157>

¹¹ Regression analysis is a statistical technique to determine the relationships between variables. We examined the relationship between outcomes (e.g., career satisfaction) and bias patterns, while controlling for gender and race/ethnicity.

Tightrope bias also had strong impacts on architectural professionals’ perceptions of the fairness in their organization’s processes and policies. A 20-point increase in Tightrope bias was associated with a corresponding change in perceptions of fairness:

- 10.4 point decrease for promotions
- 7.2 point decrease for performance evaluations
- 6.6 point decrease for sponsorship
- 5.2 point decrease for compensation
- 4.8 point decrease for assignments
- 4.8 point decrease for hiring

Prove-it-again bias also was linked to other negative outcomes. For every 20-point increase in Prove-it-again bias, there was a corresponding:

- 7.4 point increase in feeling excluded
- 6.4 point decrease in being able to see a path for advancement at your organization
- 5 point decrease in career satisfaction
- 5 point decrease in belonging
- 3.8 point decrease in reporting being likely to recommend your organization to a friend
- 3.6 point decrease in seeing a long-term future at your organization
- 3.6 point decrease in ability to do your best work

Prove-it-again bias also had strong impacts on architectural professionals’ perceptions of fairness in their organization’s processes and policies. A 20-point increase in Prove-it-again bias was associated with a corresponding change in perceptions of fairness:

- 7.4 point decrease for compensation
- 6.2 point decrease for sponsorship
- 5.4 point decrease for performance evaluations
- 5.2 point decrease for promotions
- 5 point decrease for assignments
- 2.8 point decrease for hiring

These results suggest that if organizations improve the bias climate, they will improve employee morale, satisfaction, and turnover—and inclusion.

Racial stereotyping was linked to negative outcomes, even after controlling for the effects of the other patterns of bias. For every 20-point increase in racial stereotyping, there was a corresponding:

- 4 point decrease in being able to see a path for advancement at your organization
- 3 point decrease in career satisfaction
- 2.6 point decrease in ability to do your best work

Racial stereotyping also had impacts on architectural professionals’ perceptions of the fairness of their organization’s processes and policies. A 20-point increase in racial stereotyping was associated with a corresponding change in perceptions of fairness:

- 4.2 point decrease for hiring
- 2.4 point decrease for promotions
- 2 point decrease for sponsorship
- 1.2 point decrease for assignments

Maternal Wall bias was similarly linked to a number of negative outcomes for architectural professionals, even after controlling for the effects of the other patterns of bias. For every 20-point increase in Maternal Wall bias, there was a corresponding:

- 3.6 point decrease in ability to do your best work
- 3.4 point decrease in reporting being likely to recommend your organization to a friend
- 3 point decrease in career satisfaction
- 2.6 point increase in feeling excluded
- 2.4 point decrease in being able to see a path for advancement at your organization
- 2.4 point decrease in belonging

Maternal Wall bias also had impacts on architectural professionals’ perceptions of whether their workplace was fair. A 20-point increase in Maternal Wall bias was associated with a corresponding change in perceptions of fairness:

- 3.8 point decrease for compensation
- 3 point decrease for hiring
- 2.8 point decrease for promotions
- 2.2 point decrease for sponsorship
- 2 point decrease for performance evaluations
- 1.2 point decrease for assignments

After controlling for other types of bias, Tug of War bias was linked to a smaller number of negative outcomes for architectural professionals. For every 20-point increase in Tug of War bias, there was a corresponding:

- 2.4 point decrease in ability to do your best work
- 2.2 point decrease in career satisfaction
- 2 point decrease in perceptions of fairness of the promotions process

Although the impacts of Tug of War bias were not as widespread as the other types of bias, it is still important for organizations to work to minimize intra-group conflict because when it occurs, it can be a powerful force in derailing the careers of women and people of color.

Firm size

This study explored the ways people at different size architecture firms experience bias. There was a clear pattern: People working at large firms (50+ employees) reported more bias than those working at small (2–19 employees) or medium-sized (20–49 employees) firms.

Women of color were slightly more likely to be employed at large firms, while men of color were slightly more likely to be employed at small firms. However, despite this difference in demographic makeup, reports of bias still differed across firm sizes. For example, women of color at large firms tended to report more bias than women of color at small or medium firms.

At small firms, owners and employees commented about their level of responsibility in setting the culture. When firm leadership values diverse voices and equity, it sets the tone that results in a better experience for all employees.

“Inside the office walls we are diverse in age, sex, and race. We are small enough that we can still have open discussions about firm operations, future work and staffing, and firm evolution. As a firm, we have had discussions about what work we should and should not be pursuing, conflicts, and who to hire next.”

—*White woman*

“...I have owned my company for the last 24 years. I did not have a partner, so being the boss and setting the culture of the company was my responsibility.” —*White woman*

Larger firms may have missed the opportunity to prioritize diversity and firm culture from the beginning. Once bias is built into all of your business systems, the only way to make a change is with systemic interventions.

“While there are company-wide policies to protect minorities, it all comes down to culture. It is very, very hard to inspire cultural change, and it will take a few generations to pass before we can get to the equality we are looking for.”

—*Latina woman*

The bottom line is that firms are responsible for creating a culture where individuals from all backgrounds have an equal chance of success. Our research suggests that this is an area where large firms in particular have struggled.

TIGHTROPE BIAS

We will now discuss how bias commonly plays out in everyday workplace interactions, beginning with Tightrope bias, which reflects beliefs about who is entitled to display assertive and dominant behavior.

Not surprisingly, dominance is expected from historically dominant groups.¹² Behaviors that signal dominance and leadership—notably assertiveness, self-promotion, competitiveness, and justifiable anger—are more readily accepted from men than from women. Deference is also built into expectations of people of color.¹³

Tightrope bias stems partly from status expectations: Lower status groups are expected to behave in deferential, non-dominant ways in the workplace. High-status group members are free to act in assertive, agentic, or independent ways, while low-status group members are supposed to “know their place” and not try to take on leadership roles.¹⁴

Tightrope bias also stems from prescriptive stereotypes—beliefs about how men and women *should* behave.¹⁵ Men are expected to be authoritative and ambitious. Women and non-dominant groups are not: They are expected to be nice, modest, communal, sensitive,

and helpful. When a man acts in an assertive way, he’s seen as a leader; the same behavior from a woman violates prescriptive stereotypes and leads to her being judged as overly aggressive. These expectations make office politics more complicated for women and people of color: They are forced to walk a tightrope between approachability and authoritativeness, and to find a way to demand access to the career-enhancing work without triggering pushback.

Our survey found Tightrope bias to be the most prevalent kind of bias in the profession of architecture, which means that women and people of color have to be politically savvy than white men in order to succeed. White men just need to act competent and commanding, while members of other groups need to convey competence and leadership without triggering backlash fueled by the sense that they are behaving inappropriately—even when they do something that is readily accepted in white men. Across the board, the experiences of white men differed sharply from those of women and architectural professionals of color. Once again, women of color reported worse experiences of bias, with Black women and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architects and designers¹⁶ reporting the worst.

¹² Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). *Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders*. Harvard Business Press.

¹³ Ridgeway, C. L. (2019). Status: Why Is It Everywhere? Why Does It Matter?. Russell Sage Foundation.; Eagly, A. H., Nater, C., Miller, D. I., Kaufmann, M., & Sczesny, S. (2019). Gender stereotypes have changed: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of US public opinion polls from 1946 to 2018. *American Psychologist*; Brescoll, V. L., & Uhlmann, E. L. (2008). Can angry women get ahead? Gender, status conferral, and workplace emotion expression. *Psychological Science*, 19(3), 268–275. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02079.x; Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 573-598. doi: 10.1037//0033-295X.109.3.573; Rudman, L. A., & Fairchild, K. (2004). Reactions to counterstereotypic behavior: the role of backlash in cultural stereotype maintenance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(2), 157-176. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.87.2.157; Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (1999). Feminized management and backlash toward agentic women: the hidden costs to women of a kinder, gentler image of middle managers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(5), 1004-1010. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.77.5.1004; Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (2001). Prescriptive gender stereotypes and backlash toward agentic women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 743-762. doi: 10.1111/0022-4537.00239; Rosette, A. S., Koval, C. Z., Ma, A., & Livingston, R. (2016). Race matters for women leaders: Intersectional effects on agentic deficiencies and penalties. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 429-445.; Berdahl, J. L., & Min, J. A. (2012). Prescriptive stereotypes and workplace consequences for East Asians in North America. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 18(2), 141-152. doi: 10.1037/a0027692

¹⁴ Ridgeway, C. L., & Nakagawa, S. (2017). Is deference the price of being seen as reasonable? How status hierarchies incentivize acceptance of low status. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 80(2), 132-152. doi: 10.1177/0190272517695213; Ridgeway, C. L. (2019). *Status: Why Is It Everywhere? Why Does It Matter?*. Russell Sage Foundation.

¹⁵ Burgess, D., & Borgida, E. (1999). Who women are, who women should be: Descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotyping in sex discrimination. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 5(3), 665. Prentice, D. A., & Carranza, E. (2002). What women and men should be, shouldn't be, are allowed to be, and don't have to be: The content of prescriptive gender stereotypes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 26(4), 269-281. doi: 10.1111/1471-6402.t01-1-00066; Rudman, L. A., Moss-Racusin, C. A., Phelan J. E., & Nauts, S. (2012). Status incongruity and backlash effects: Defending the gender hierarchy motivates prejudice against female leaders. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(1), 165-179. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2011.10.008

¹⁶ The Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people group includes 14 individuals who identified as Native American or Alaska Native, seven individuals who identified as Middle Eastern or North African, five individuals who identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 12 individuals who identified other racial or ethnic groups using a write-in option. We are not able to share the results from any of these groups individually because of participant privacy concerns.

Tightrope bottom line

Women and architectural professionals of color were more likely to report experiencing Tightrope bias than any other bias pattern. To be seen as leaders, white men just need to display leadership; other groups need to figure out a way to both display dominance and avoid triggering a backlash for behavior that would be readily accepted in white men. The end result is that people of color and women need to be savvier and spend more mental and emotional energy than white men in order to succeed. The day-to-day impacts of Tightrope bias add up to create a completely different workplace culture for women, people of color, and other marginalized groups than exists for majority men.

Interruptions

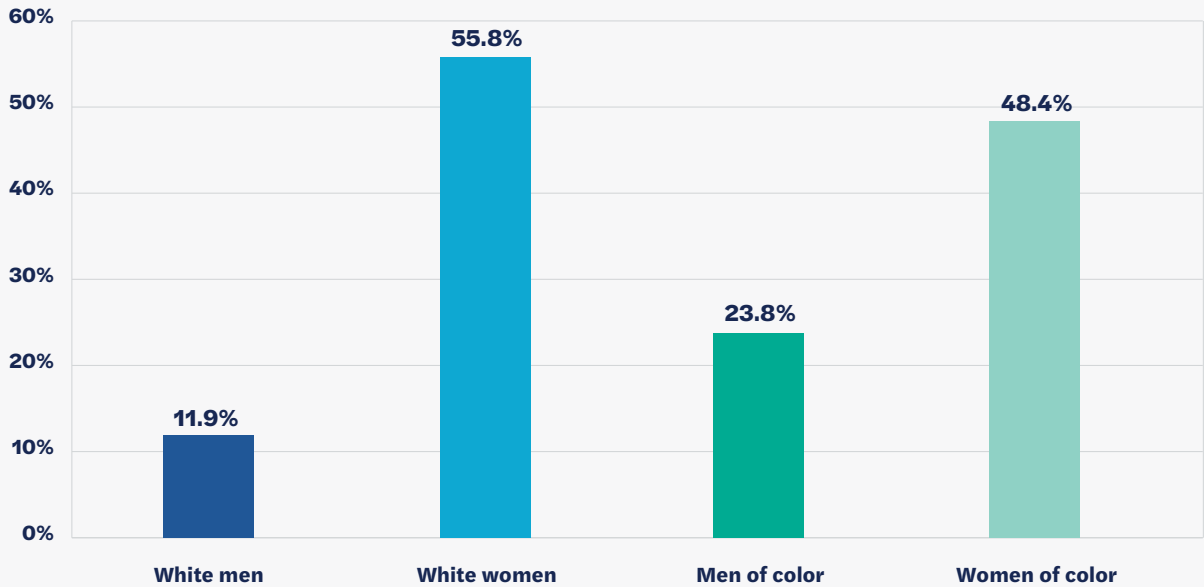
Men tend to interrupt during conversations more than women¹⁷ for a simple reason: It is seen as socially appropriate because it shows they are competitive and ambitious, which is what’s expected and valued in (white) men. Identical behavior in a woman may not be accepted because women are supposed to be modest and nice, deferring to others in conversation. Sometimes this makes it hard for women to get a word in, even when they are well prepared.

“[O]n a team where I was the only woman and most junior, insensitive comments [were made]... about my assumed subservience, when in fact they were speaking so much I couldn't get a word in edgewise...” —*Multiracial woman*

“On architect reviews that are dominated by men, when women make a comment, that’s when the men start talking to each other as if her comment doesn’t even matter.” —*Woman, race/ethnicity unspecified*

Interrupted

The nearly 44 percentage point disparity between white men and white women was one of the largest discrepancies in the survey, and reflects the common observation that women feel “silenced.”



More than half (55.8%) of white women and almost half (48.4%) of women of color, as well as almost a quarter of men of color report being interrupted in meetings—compared to only 11.9% of white men.

In a profession where design critiques often play a central role in negotiations of status and displays of talent, this silencing takes on particular salience.

¹⁷ Smith-Lovin, L., & Brody, C. (1989). Interruptions in group discussions: The effects of gender and group composition. *American Sociological Review*, 424-435. Zimmermann, D. H., & West, C. (1996). Sex roles, interruptions and silences in conversation. *Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science Series 4* (pp. 211-236).

“During a performance review, the operations director told me I need to be more of a team player and less of a risk taker when it comes to advancing design.”

—White woman

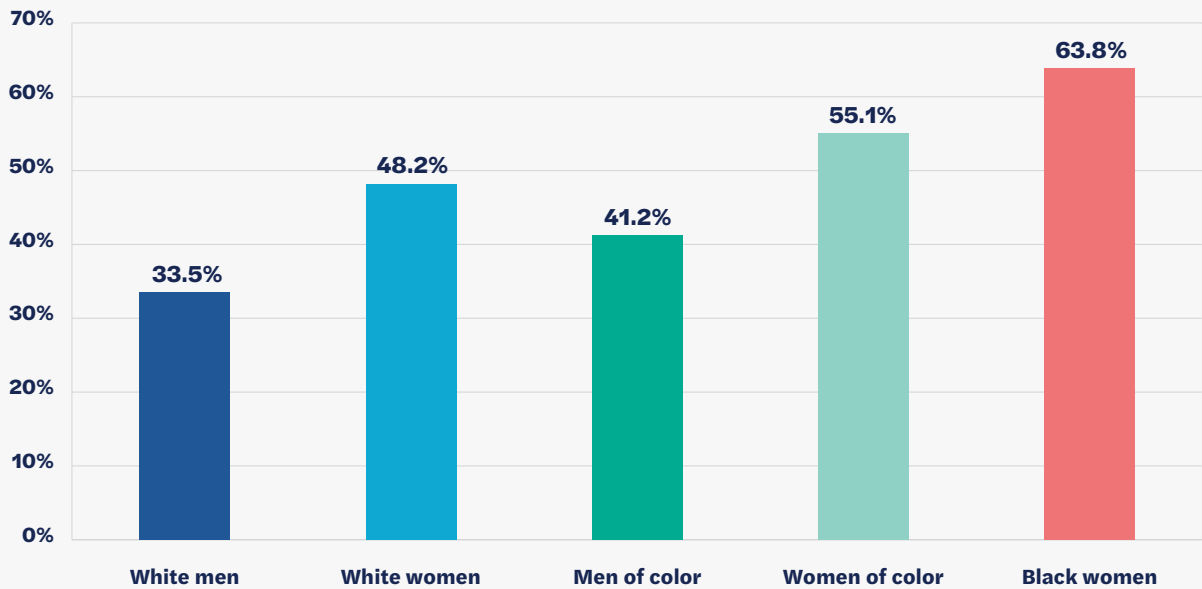
A leader...or a worker bee?

Prescriptive stereotypes tend to put pressure on women to fulfill traditionally feminine “helpmeet” roles, instead of striving for career-enhancing work and leadership roles. This type of stereotype is often expressed as criticism of women for not being “good team players.”¹⁸ Our data find that men of color also face similar expectations that they will be the “worker bee” (that they will keep their heads down, work hard, and avoid confrontation), not the leader.

“I come up with all the work effort to prepare all the presentations and design but I’m not invited to the presentations, I don’t have client interaction. It feels like the firm is ashamed of me in representing the firm in front of a client.” —Latino man

“Instead of being rewarded for doing a good job, I am told to continue doing what I am doing... the bias is that I am expected to not complain and continue to perform and meet expectations.” —Woman of Asian descent

Worker bee



More than half (55.1%) of women of color, along with 48.2% of white women and 42.1% of men of color reported that they are expected to behave like a “worker bee,” compared to only a third of white men. Black women reported the strongest worker bee expectations.

¹⁸ Burgess, D., & Borgida, E. (1999). Who women are, who women should be: Descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotyping in sex discrimination. *Psychology, Public policy, and Law*, 5(3), 665. Prentice, D. A., & Carranza, E. (2002). What women and men should be, shouldn't be, are allowed to be, and don't have to be: The content of prescriptive gender stereotypes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 26(4), 269-281. doi: 10.1111/1471-6402.t01-1-00066

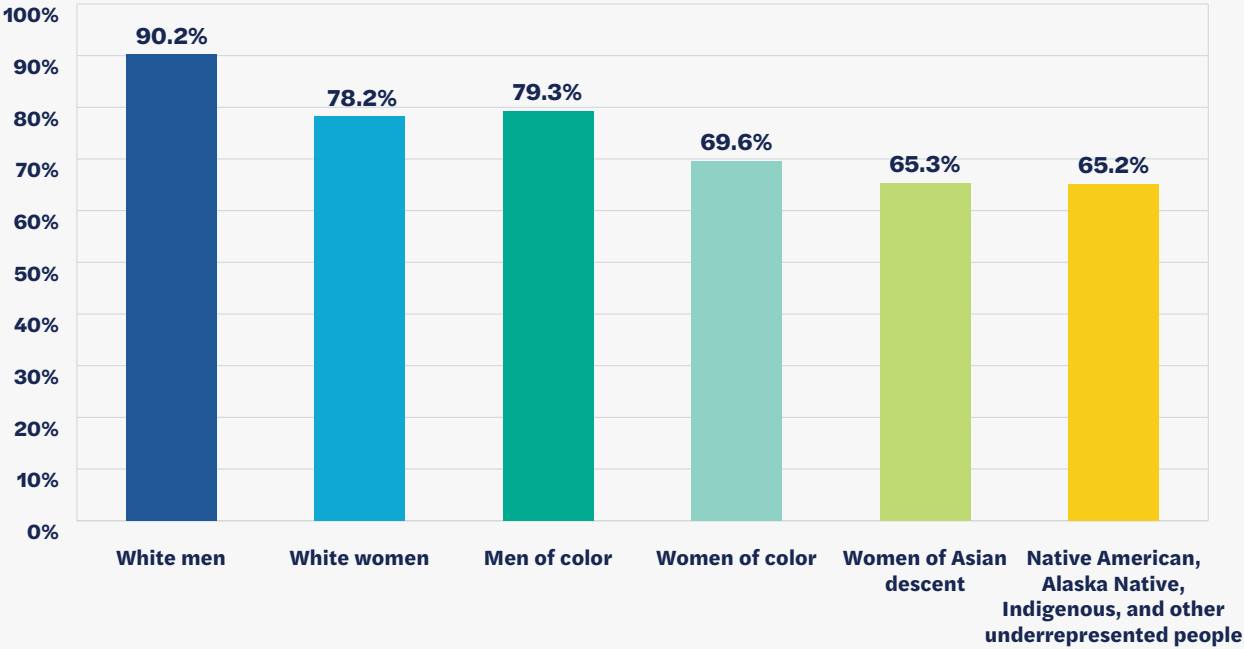
The kinds of behaviors expected of leaders are more readily accepted from men than from women. Men are also expected to be more effective leaders than women, and they tend to get more positive evaluations when they hold leadership roles.¹⁹ Leadership also is less likely to be expected or accepted from people of Asian descent.²⁰

“As an Asian-American man, I often felt firm leadership would overlook my leadership contributions and capabilities.”
—Asian-American man

“Someone on my firm was put on probation for not being collaborative... She was simply challenging the opinion of a senior leader. If you’re being collaborative, everyone’s opinion should be equally heard.” —Black woman

This study’s data confirmed that leadership expectations are shaped by gender and race/ethnicity: 90.2% of white men reported being expected to take on a leadership role at work, compared to only 69.6% of women of color, 78.2% of white women, and 79.3% of men of color. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals and women of Asian descent were the least likely to feel they are expected to play leadership roles.

Expected to be a leader



¹⁹ Ridgeway, C. L. (2011). *Framed by gender: How gender inequality persists in the modern world*. Oxford University Press.; Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders. Harvard Business Press.; Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (1991). Gender and the emergence of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60(5), 685.

²⁰ Rosette, A. S., Koval, C. Z., Ma, A., & Livingston, R. (2016). Race matters for women leaders: Intersectional effects on agentic deficiencies and penalties. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 429-445.; Berdahl, J. L., & Min, J. A. (2012). Prescriptive stereotypes and workplace consequences for East Asians in North America. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 18(2), 141-152. doi: 10.1037/a0027692; Kawahara, D. M., Pal, M. S., & Chin, J. L. (2013). The leadership experiences of Asian Americans. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, 4(4), 240.; Sy, T., Shore, L. M., Strauss, J., Shore, T. H., Tram, S., Whiteley, P., & Ikeda-Muromachi, K. (2010). Leadership perceptions as a function of race–occupation fit: The case of Asian Americans. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(5), 902.

“[O]ffice peers tend to criticize... as hyperaggressive or ‘passionate’ when a male in the same position would be regarded/lauded as a leader/assertive, meanwhile women that lead are perceived as bitches.”

—Multiracial woman

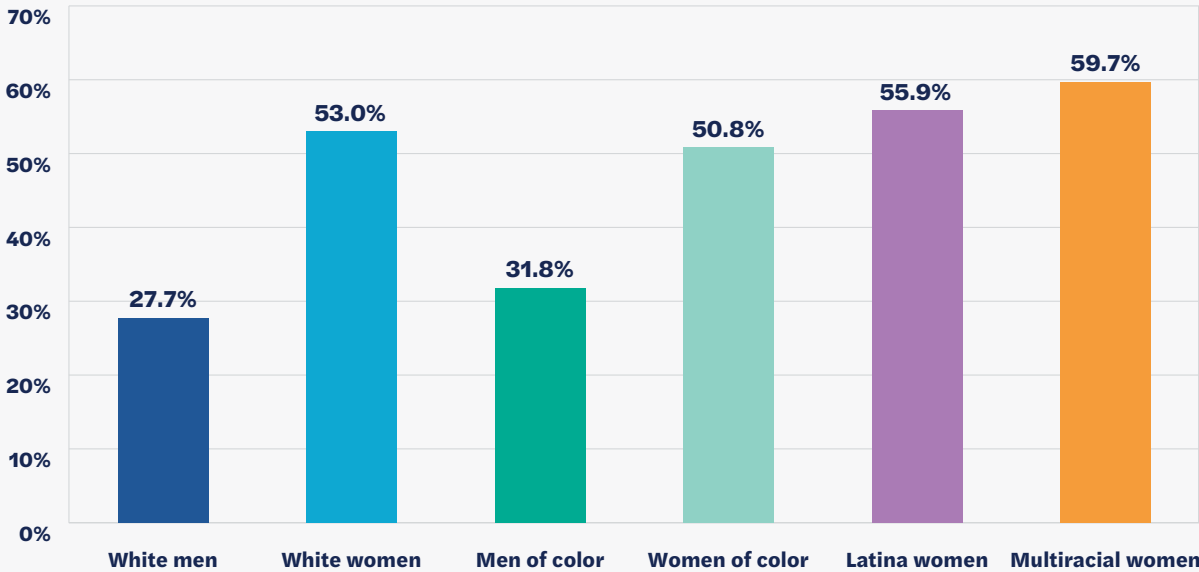
Pushback for assertive behavior

While (majority) men are expected to be assertive and agentic in the workplace, women are expected to be nice, communal team-players.²¹ These expectations mean that women may face a backlash, or agentic penalty, for acting in ways seen as inappropriate for a woman.²²

Dominant behavior may be expected and rewarded from white men, but research shows that Black men face a penalty for the same behavior.²³ In fact, this effect extends to appearance as well: Black men who are CEOs tend to be baby-faced, compared to white men CEOs who have more mature faces that convey authority.²⁴ This “teddy bear effect” gives racial reassurance to white people that Black CEOs are not “threatening.” Like women of all racial/ethnic groups, Black men have to walk a tightrope in both appearance and demeanor in order to survive and thrive in professional workplaces.

Black women face different prescriptive stereotypes than Black men and white women.²⁵ Black women are expected to be more dominant, so they may be able to act in assertive ways without the agentic penalty that white women face—so long as they aren’t seen as “angry Black women.”²⁶

Pushback for assertive behavior



²¹ Burgess, D., & Borgida, E. (1999). Who women are, who women should be: Descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotyping in sex discrimination. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 5(3), 665. Prentice, D. A., & Carranza, E. (2002). What women and men should be, shouldn't be, are allowed to be, and don't have to be: The content of prescriptive gender stereotypes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 26(4), 269-281. doi: 10.1111/1471-6402.t01-1-00066

²² Brescoll, V. L., & Uhlmann, E. L. (2008). Can angry women get ahead? Gender, status conferral, and workplace emotion expression. *Psychological Science*, 19(3), 268–275. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02079.x; Okimoto, T. G., & Brescoll, V. L. (2010). The price of power: Power seeking and backlash against female politicians. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36(7), 923-936.; Rudman, L. A. (1998). Self-promotion as a risk factor for women: The costs and benefits of counterstereotypical impression management. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(3), 629-645. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.74.3.629; Rudman, L. A., & Fairchild, K. (2004). Reactions to counterstereotypic behavior: the role of backlash in cultural stereotype maintenance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(2), 157-176. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.87.2.157; Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (1999). Feminized management and backlash toward agentic women: the hidden costs to women of a kinder, gentler image of middle managers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(5), 1004-1010. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.77.5.1004; Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (2001). Prescriptive gender stereotypes and backlash toward agentic women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 743-762. doi: 10.1111/0022-4537.00239; Livingston, R. W., Rosette, A. S., & Washington, E. F. (2012). Can an agentic Black woman get ahead? The impact of race and interpersonal dominance on perceptions of female leaders. *Psychological Science*, 23(4), 354-358. doi: 10.1177/0956797611428079

²³ Livingston, R. W., Rosette, A. S., & Washington, E. F. (2012). Can an agentic Black woman get ahead? The impact of race and interpersonal dominance on perceptions of female leaders. *Psychological Science*, 23(4), 354-358. doi: 10.1177/0956797611428079

²⁴ Livingston, R., & Pearce, N. A. (2009). The teddy-bear effect: does having a baby face benefit black chief executive officers? *Psychological Science*, 20(10), 1229-1236. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02431.x

²⁵ Rosette, A. S., Koval, C. Z., Ma, A., & Livingston, R. (2016). Race matters for women leaders: Intersectional effects on agentic deficiencies and penalties. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 429-445.

²⁶ Livingston, R. W., Rosette, A. S., & Washington, E. F. (2012). Can an agentic Black woman get ahead? The impact of race and interpersonal dominance on perceptions of female leaders. *Psychological Science*, 23(4), 354-358. doi: 10.1177/0956797611428079; Rosette, A. S., Koval, C. Z., Ma, A., & Livingston, R. (2016). Race matters for women leaders: Intersectional effects on agentic deficiencies and penalties. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 429-445.

Women of Asian descent may face even worse penalties for assertive behavior than other groups.²⁷ Research documents pushback for assertive behavior for both men and women of Asian descent.²⁸

“I’ve been told recently that I get ‘defensive’ in discussions. I see myself as just sharing my opinion. I don’t think a male counterpart would be called ‘defensive’ when sharing his opinion.”—*White woman*

“I am viewed as strong or engaging aggressively when it is just my culture and the way we are socially. Been told... that I need to ‘lead’ the client in different ways rather [than] talk the way I do (which I view as just talking normally).”—*Latina woman*

“I think there is more of a bias [against] people who are not assertive. You need to be very assertive to get ahead or to even continue.”—*Woman of Asian descent*

Women of all racial/ethnic groups reported more pushback for assertive behavior than white men: Pushback was reported by more than half of white women and women of color, as compared to only a quarter of white men. Men of color reported similar levels of pushback as white men. The groups who reported the most pushback when behaving assertively were multiracial women and Latina women.

²⁷ Rosette, A. S., Koval, C. Z., Ma, A., & Livingston, R. (2016). Race matters for women leaders: Intersectional effects on agentic deficiencies and penalties. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 429-445.

²⁸ Berdahl, J. L., & Min, J. A. (2012). Prescriptive stereotypes and workplace consequences for East Asians in North America. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 18(2), 141-152. doi: 10.1037/a0027692; Kawahara, D. M., Pal, M. S., & Chin, J. L. (2013). The leadership experiences of Asian Americans. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, 4(4), 240.; Sy, T., Shore, L. M., Strauss, J., Shore, T. H., Tram, S., Whiteley, P., & Ikeda-Muromachi, K. (2010). Leadership perceptions as a function of race–occupation fit: The case of Asian Americans. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(5), 902.; Lin, M. H., Kwan, V. S., Cheung, A., & Fiske, S. T. (2005). Stereotype content model explains prejudice for an envied outgroup: Scale of anti-Asian American stereotypes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(1), 34-47.

Justified anger

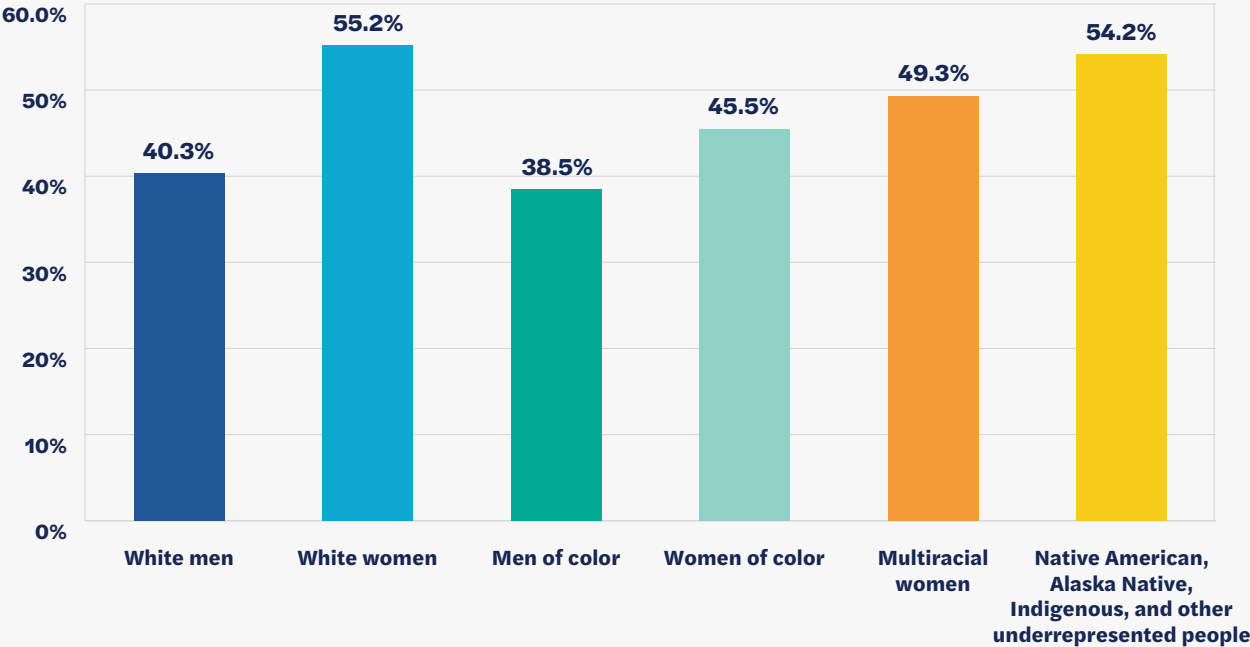
Stereotypes about how women and people of color should behave in the workplace mean that expressions of anger are interpreted differently depending on gender and race/ethnicity. For example, expressing anger tends to increase the status of a man but decrease the status of a woman.²⁹ Race also plays a role here: Black people have to work extra hard to avoid being seen as an “angry Black person”—a racialized stereotype that covertly perpetuates structural racism through the assumption that anger about racism is unjustified.³⁰

“I’ve been called out multiple times (the last included a disciplinary letter) for someone taking my tone the wrong way. Yet, my male peers have been in screaming matches with upper management without follow-up or being reprimanded.”
—White woman

“... [My] co-worker yelled at me and called me a ‘fucking child’ for calling them out. The supervisor did not do anything to resolve the problem. The supervisor... not only dismissed my co-worker's feelings as just anger but also took him out for drinks that same day... Even though he was yelling and I stood quietly, the project manager told us both to stop acting like children.” —Black woman

In the architectural profession, women reported more pushback for expressions of anger: 55.2% of white women and 45.5% of women of color reported this, compared with 40.3% of white men and 38.5% of men of color. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported the most pushback for expressions of anger, followed by multiracial women.

Negative reactions to justified anger



“When conflicts arise, I am always put in the defensive position because the assumption is that I was the initial aggressor. My defensive behavior gets more of the negative spotlight than the actions or the individuals of those I'm defending myself against.”

—Black woman

²⁹ Brescoll, V. L., & Uhlmann, E. L. (2008). Can angry women get ahead? Gender, status conferral, and workplace emotion expression. *Psychological Science*, 19(3), 268–275. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02079.x

³⁰ Rosette, A. S., Koval, C. Z., Ma, A., & Livingston, R. (2016). Race matters for women leaders: Intersectional effects on agentic deficiencies and penalties. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 429-445.; Wingfield, A. H. (2007). The modern mammy and the angry Black man: African American professionals' experiences with gendered racism in the workplace. *Race, Gender & Class*, 196-212.

Self-editing for acceptability

Some groups feel the pressure to conform to a narrow template of behavior deemed acceptable for people from their group, reflecting expectations shaped not only by race/ethnicity and gender, but also by heteronormativity. Of course, everyone has to self-edit to some extent in the workplace—but some groups have to edit more than others. Assimilating to fit in may be necessary to get ahead in a white male-dominated workplace, but when people are unable to act authentically, they may be less interested in remaining in the field.³¹

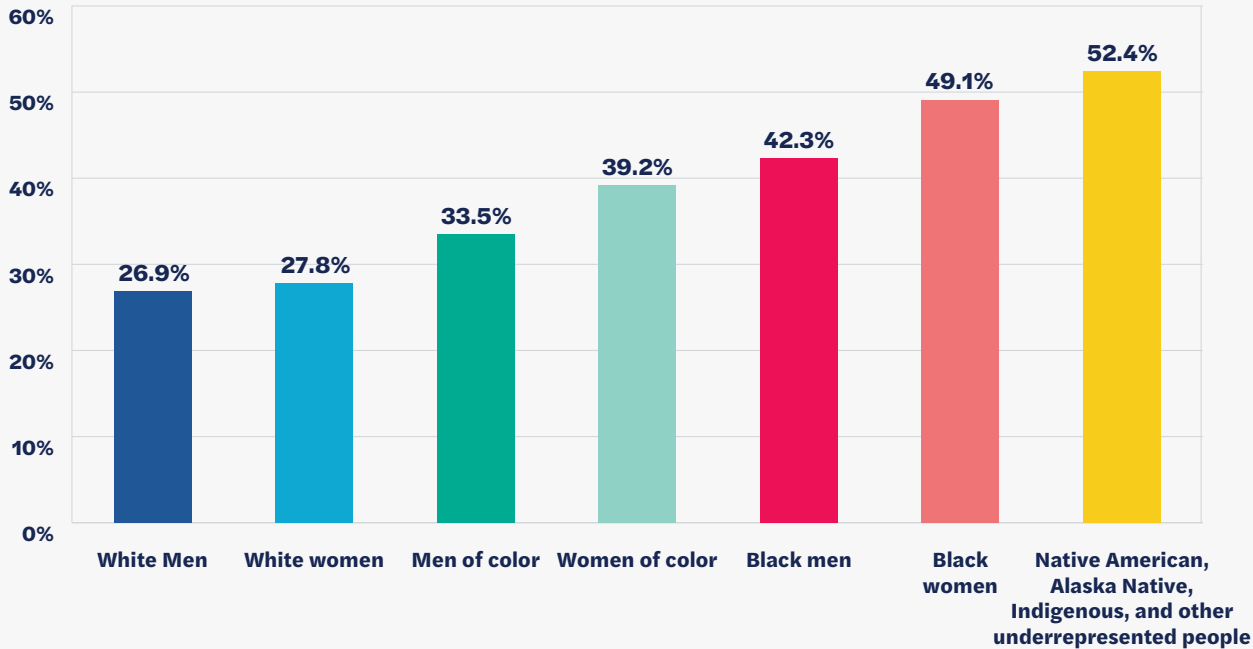
“Co-workers using my sexual preference as a way to set standards for how I should act and dress.”—*Latino man*

“We were hiring a secretary, and a man applied. The vice president said it would be weird having a man answer the phone and greet people. I was also told that proper professional ladies’ attire was to include pantyhose and ¾ -inch heels with skirts.”—*White woman*

“When I joined [my firm]... I was one of few women, so I always tried to hide my gender as much as I could. I’d wear my hair in a tight bun and wear a black suit and just tried to hide the fact that I was a woman and hoped that nobody would notice.”—*Woman, race/ethnicity unspecified*

Over a third of women of color and men of color reported being expected to conform to a narrow range of behaviors, compared to about a quarter of white men and white women. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported the strongest pressures to conform to a narrow range of behaviors, followed by Black women and Black men.

Narrow range of behaviors



31 Dormanen, R., Sanders, C. S., Maffly-Kipp, J., Smith, J. L., & Vess, M. (2020). Assimilation Undercuts Authenticity: A Consequence of Women's Masculine Self-Presentation in Masculine Contexts. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 0361684320947648.

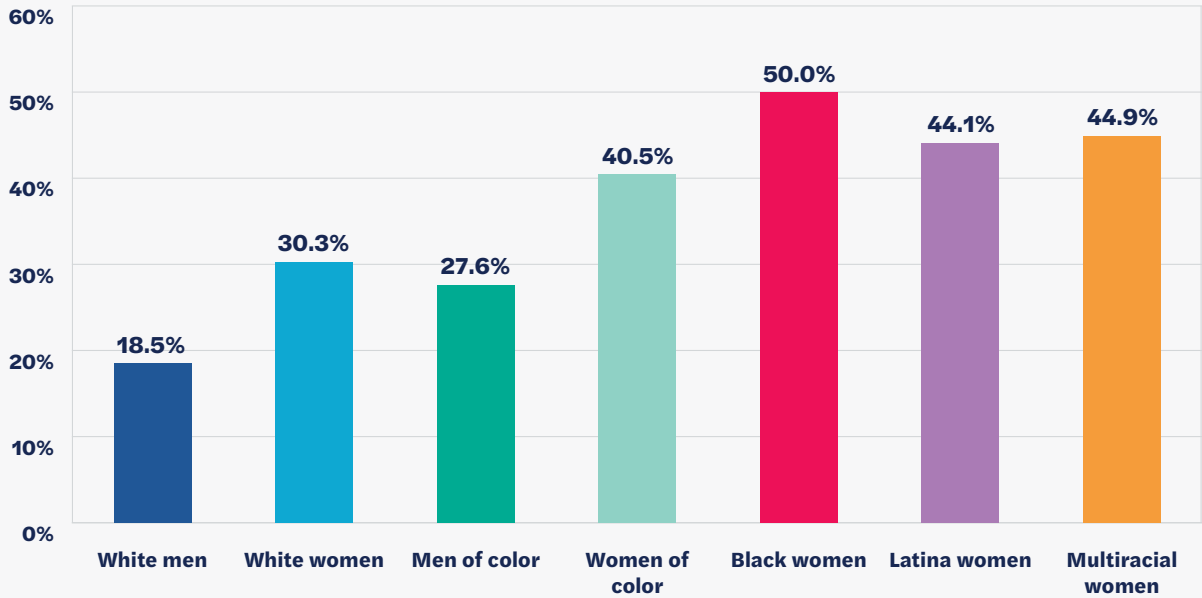
People are often expected to alter their looks or demeanor to fit in at work, but, again, racial and gender patterns emerge. Self-editing is often exhausting.

“One of the greatest challenges is simply noticing others' discomfort around me and overcoming my own inner voices of frustration, anxiety, or self-consciousness while coping with the pressure to perform well in front of others who may be preoccupied with my apparent age, gender, ethnicity.”
—Biracial woman

“...as I got older and more successful, I became more feminine because I felt like, ‘Wow, I’ve made it. I’m a partner now. I can be myself.’... And what’s really interesting is I think I’m better at my job when I allowed myself to become who I really am.”
—Woman, race/ethnicity unspecified

Forty percent of women of color, 30.3% of white women, and 27.6% of men of color reported changing their appearance or demeanor to fit in at work, compared to only 18.5% of white men. Black women, multiracial women, and Latina women reported this pattern most strongly, which sends not-so-subtle signals about who belongs—and who doesn’t.

Change appearance or demeanor



Self-promotion

Talking up your own accomplishments can be a good way to bring attention to your work, but laboratory studies show that self-promotion is more readily accepted from men than women. The pushback women commonly experience for self-promoting reflects the prescriptive stereotype that women should be modest and self-effacing.³²

In a rare example where we did not find confirmation of the laboratory studies, our survey found no statistically significant differences between demographic groups on the question about whether respondents are rewarded for speaking up about their accomplishments. The reported data: 59.2% of women of color, 60.7% of white women 57.2% of men of color, and 64.8% of white men agreed that they are rewarded for speaking about their accomplishments. Two groups were slightly less likely than women of color to report being rewarded for self-promotion: Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architects and designers (46.4%) and multiracial men (47.3%).

The same pattern of no significant differences emerged when we asked whether people felt a backlash when they self-promoted: 55.5% of women of color, 56.4% of white women, 49% of men of color, and 52% of white men reported some form of backlash. Again, Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals (66.7%) reported slightly stronger backlash for self-promotion.

It is possible that there is a generalized prescription against self-promotion in the profession of architecture, which mutes the expected gender and racial differences. An interesting exception: Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported negative consequences for self-promotion at higher levels than other groups did.

³² Daubman, K. A., Heatherington, L., & Ahn, A. (1992). Gender and the self-presentation of academic achievement. *Sex Roles*, 27(3-4), 187-204.; Gould, R. J., & Slone, C. G. (1982). The "feminine modesty" effect: A self-presentational interpretation of sex differences in causal attribution. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 8(3), 477-485.; Phelan, J. E., Moss-Racusin, C. A., & Rudman, L. A. (2008). Competent yet out in the cold: Shifting criteria for hiring reflect backlash toward agentic women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 32(4), 406-413.; Rudman, L. A. (1998). Self-promotion as a risk factor for women: The costs and benefits of counterstereotypical impression management. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(3), 629-645. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.74.3.629; Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (1999). Feminized management and backlash toward agentic women: the hidden costs to women of a kinder, gentler image of middle managers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(5), 1004-1010. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.77.5.1004; Heatherington, L., Daubman, K. A., Bates, C., Ahn, A., Brown, H., & Preston, C. (1993). Two investigations of "female modesty" in achievement situations. *Sex Roles*, 29(11-12), 739-754.

PROVE-IT-AGAIN BIAS

Some groups need to provide more evidence of competence in order to be seen as equally competent.³³ Prove-it-again bias is a result of descriptive stereotyping: We assume that people will conform to stereotypes about their groups.³⁴ Women,³⁵ Black people,³⁶ Latino/a people,³⁷ and people from lower class–origin backgrounds³⁸ are stereotyped as less competent, so they are forced to prove themselves more than others in professional workplaces in order to get the same respect and recognition as white men from elite backgrounds. People of Asian descent are stereotyped as competent and good at technical work, but not leadership material.³⁹ Prove-it-again is a status effect: It impacts people based on gender, race/ethnicity, social class, disability status, LGBTQ+ status, and more.⁴⁰

Prove-it-again bias stems from two different mechanisms: in-group favoritism and lack of fit. In-group favoritism means that people in the dominant group tend to favor other people in the

dominant group. In arenas where white men are the in group, as in the profession of architecture, they will be more likely than others to get the benefit of the doubt, access to inside information, sponsorship, and other in-group advantages.⁴¹

Imagine a brilliant architect. *ArchDaily* examined 45 films portraying architects: 91% of the films showed a male architect, and 96% showed a white architect.⁴² When a white man is the prototypical image of an architect, it often means that women and people of color have to prove more than white men that they are a good fit.⁴³ Lack of fit pulls in the same direction as in-group favoritism; again, people of color and women often have to prove themselves more than white men because they are seen as less good a fit.

³³ Foschi, M. (2000). Double standards for competence: Theory and research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 21-42. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.21 Biernat, M., & Kobrynowicz, D. (1997). Gender- and race-based standards of competence: Lower minimum standards but higher ability standards for devalued groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(3), 544-557. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.72.3.544; Foschi, M., Lai, L., & Sigerson, K. (1994). Gender and double standards in the assessment of job applicants. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 326-339.; Foschi, M. (1996). Double standards in the evaluation of men and women. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 59(3), 237-254. doi: 10.2307/2787021; Ridgeway, C. L. (2011). *Framed by gender: How gender inequality persists in the modern world*. Oxford University Press.

³⁴ Williams, J. C., & Dempsey, R. W. (2014). *What works for women at work: Four patterns working women should know*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

³⁵ Biernat, M., & Kobrynowicz, D. (1997). Gender- and race-based standards of competence: Lower minimum standards but higher ability standards for devalued groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(3), 544-557. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.72.3.544; Foschi, M., Lai, L., & Sigerson, K. (1994). Gender and double standards in the assessment of job applicants. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 326-339.; Foschi, M. (1996). Double standards in the evaluation of men and women. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 59(3), 237-254. doi: 10.2307/2787021

³⁶ Biernat, M., & Kobrynowicz, D. (1997). Gender- and race-based standards of competence: Lower minimum standards but higher ability standards for devalued groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(3), 544-557. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.72.3.544

³⁷ Weyant, J. M. (2005). Implicit stereotyping of Hispanics: Development and validity of a Hispanic version of the Implicit Association Test. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 27(3), 355-363.

³⁸ Rivera, L. A., & Tilcsik, A. (2016). Class advantage, commitment penalty: The gendered effect of social class signals in an elite labor market. *American Sociological Review*, 81(6), 1097-1131.

³⁹ Lin, M. H., Kwan, V. S., Cheung, A., & Fiske, S. T. (2005). Stereotype content model explains prejudice for an envied outgroup: Scale of anti-Asian American stereotypes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(1), 34-47.; Lai, L., & Babcock, L. C. (2013). Asian Americans and workplace discrimination: The interplay between sex of evaluators and the perception of social skills. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34(3), 310-326.; Rosette, A. S., de Leon, R. P., Koval, C. Z., & Harrison, D. A. (2018). Intersectionality: Connecting experiences of gender with race at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 38, 1-22.

⁴⁰ Biernat, M., & Kobrynowicz, D. (1997). Gender- and race-based standards of competence: Lower minimum standards but higher ability standards for devalued groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(3), 544-557. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.72.3.544; Ridgeway, C. L. (2001). Gender, status, and leadership. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 637-655 Ridgeway, C. L. (1982). Status in groups: The importance of motivation. *American Sociological Review*, 76-88.; Sears, B., & Mallory, C. (2014). Gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace Ameri, M., Schur, L., Adya, M., Bentley, F. S., McKay, P., & Kruse, D. (2018). The disability employment puzzle: A field experiment on employer hiring behavior. *ILR Review*, 71(2), 329-364.; Tilcsik, A. (2011). Pride and prejudice: Employment discrimination against openly gay men in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(2), 586-626.; Derous, E., & Decoster, J. (2017). Implicit age cues in resumes: subtle effects on hiring discrimination. *Frontiers in psychology*, 8, 1321.; Weichselbaumer, D. (2017). Discrimination against migrant job applicants in Austria: An experimental study. *German Economic Review*, 18(2), 237-265.; Cuddy, A. J., Norton, M. I., & Fiske, S. T. (2005). This old stereotype: The pervasiveness and persistence of the elderly stereotype. *Journal of Social Issues*, 61(2), 267-285.

⁴¹ Brewer, M.B. (1996). *In-Group Favoritism: The Subtle Side of Intergroup Discrimination*. *Behavioral Research and Business Ethics*, 160-170. Russell Sage, New York.

⁴² Anthony, K.H., Deering, R., Pratt, C. (2013). Why Hollywood Needs to Change its Conception of “The Architect”. *ArchDaily*. Retrieved from: <https://www.archdaily.com/441844/why-hollywood-needs-to-change-its-conception-of-the-architect>

⁴³ Heilman, M. E. (1983). Sex bias in work settings: The Lack of Fit model. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 5, 269-298. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1984-10927-001>

Prove-it-again can play out in any workplace system. For example, bias can be present in hiring processes: Matched resume studies have found that men with upper-class activities on their resumes (like sailing and polo) were called back for a job at a rate more than four times higher than other applicants who had lower-class activities like pickup soccer and country music.⁴⁴ Or in performance evaluations: Low-status groups may have their mistakes noted and remembered, and have their successes attributed to luck rather than to skill.⁴⁵

Our survey data show that Prove-it-again bias is prevalent in architecture workplaces, and that it affects women and architectural professionals of color. Across a variety of measures, Black architects and designers and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals report the highest levels of Prove-it-again bias.

Prove-it-again bottom line

Experimental studies provide an objective measure of Prove-it-again patterns.⁴⁶ This study documents that architects and designers report the patterns of bias documented in social psychology labs. The result is often that women and people of color are held to higher standards than white men in the profession of architecture. Prove-it-again bias is strongest for Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals and Black architectural professionals, giving rise to the African American folk saying, “You have to be twice as good to get half as far.”

⁴⁴ Rivera, L. A., & Tilcsik, A. (2016). Class advantage, commitment penalty: The gendered effect of social class signals in an elite labor market. *American Sociological Review*, 81(6), 1097-1131.

⁴⁵ Heilman, M. E. (1995). Sex stereotypes and their effects in the workplace: What we know and what we don't know. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 10(4), 3.; Swim, J. K., & Sanna, L. J. (1996). He's skilled, she's lucky: A meta-analysis of observers' attributions for women's and men's successes and failures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22(5), 507-519. doi: 10.1177/0146167296225008

⁴⁶ For more experimental studies, see <https://biasinterrupters.org/wp-content/uploads/Bias-Interrupters-Master-Bibliography.pdf>

“I’ve constantly had to keep proving myself even with a stellar track record of outperforming all of my peers.”

—Multiracial woman

Prove-it-again

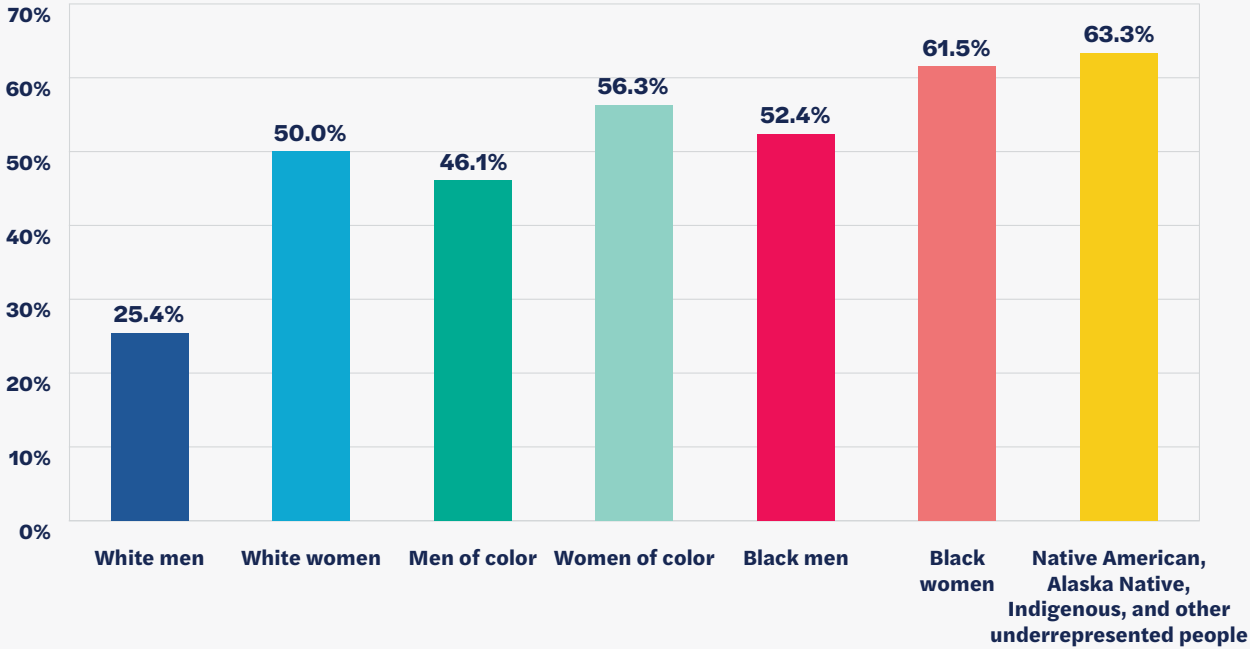
The survey asked respondents if they feel they have to prove themselves more than their peers. Architectural professionals of color and women often did.

“Client undervalued my construction expertise to such an extent that I hired a macho CM to come to meetings and deliver the same information.” –*White woman*

“I was... told I would need to report/work for him because he is in charge, even though I have more project experience, am a licensed architect (he is not,) and I know how to use the software.” –*Woman of Asian descent*

Women of color reported having to prove themselves repeatedly at much higher levels than white men—56.3% compared to 25.4%, respectively. Half of white women and 46.1% of men of color reported Prove-it-again bias. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals and Black women reported the strongest Prove-it-again bias. Black men reported more Prove-it-again bias than other men of color.

Prove myself over and over



Double standards

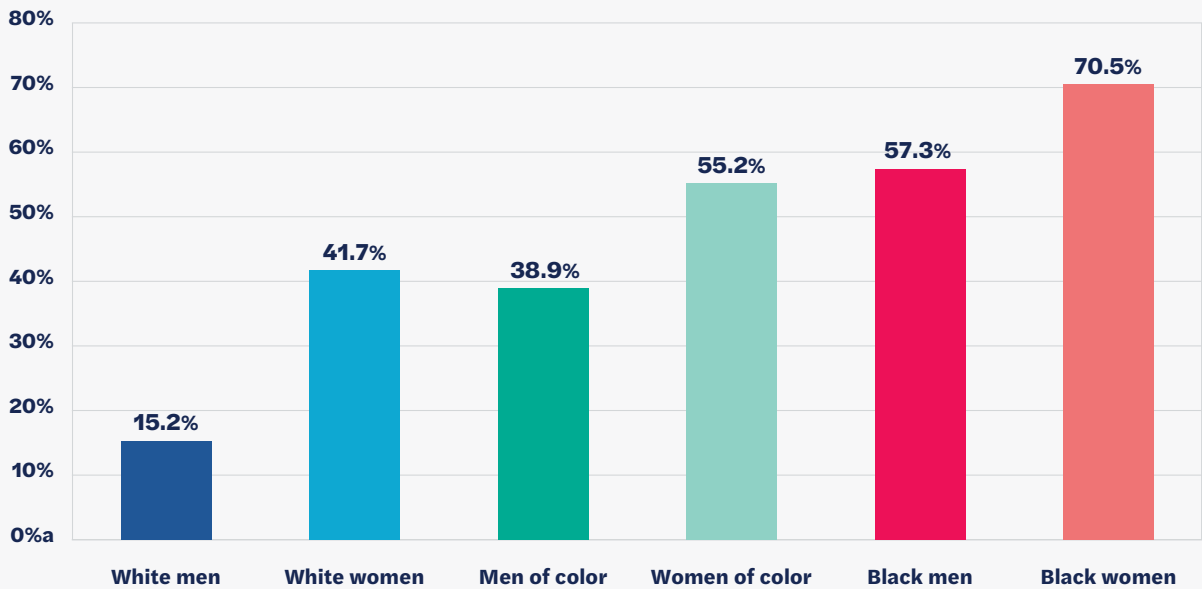
Prove-it-again bias leads to double standards. Resume review studies detail how this plays out in the workplace: For example, one study using identical resumes found that “Jamal” needs eight extra years or experience to get called back for an interview at the same rate as “Greg.”⁴⁷ Survey respondents describe what this looks like in the architecture profession.

“I feel like I have to work five times as hard as my colleagues to gain a fraction of the respect.” –*White woman*

“I felt that extra hours and two times the work was necessary to get the same recognition as male counterparts.”
–*Multiracial woman*

More than half (55.2%) of women of color reported that they have to work twice as hard as other colleagues to get the same level of recognition in the workplace—40 percentage points higher than white men report, at 15.2%. The experience of white women and men of color, as groups, was much closer to that of women of color than white men. Black people, especially Black women architectural professionals were most likely to report having to work twice as hard: 70.5% of Black women and 57.3% of Black men did so.

Work twice as hard



⁴⁷ Bertrand, M. & Mullainathan, S. (2004). Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination. *American Economic Review*, 94(4), 991-1013. doi: 10.1257/0002828042002561

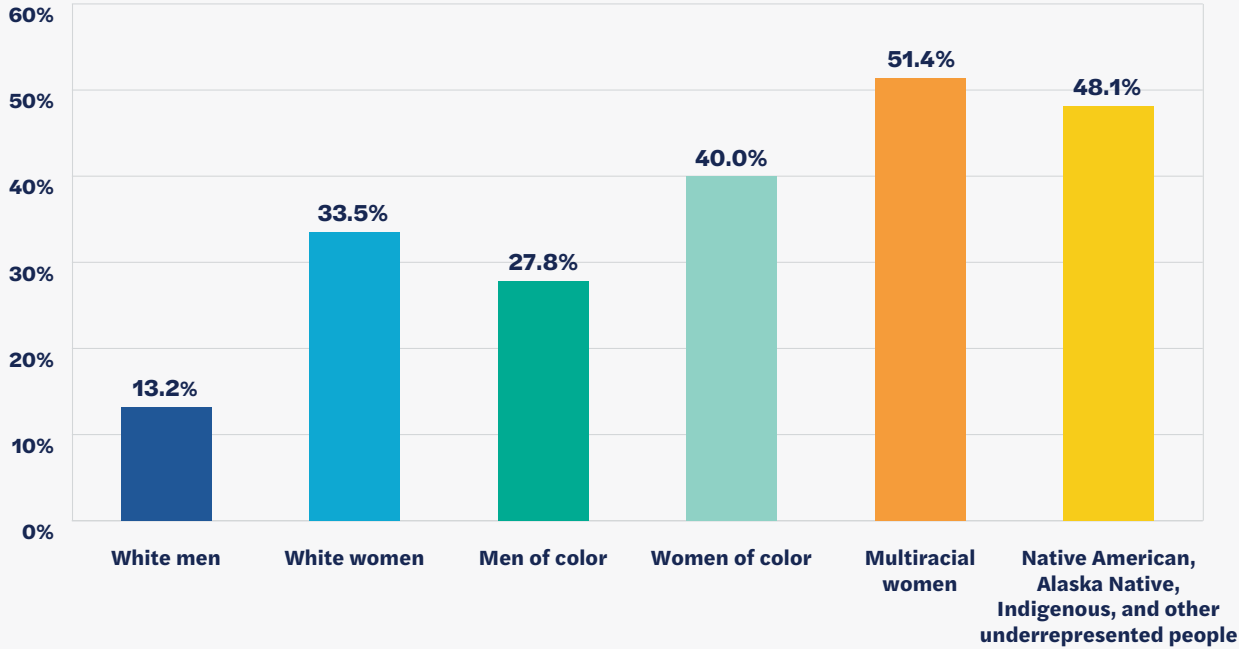
We also asked whether respondents get the same level of respect for the same quality of work as their colleagues.

“My abilities or knowledge are often questioned. It is often assumed that I don’t know things that I actually do know. I’ve been asked to go read books on topics I’m ... well versed in...”
—*Latina woman*

“I have been questioned at every turn, even on topics where I am clearly the most experienced and knowledgeable... I have been undermined by both junior and senior male staff in front of clients and within the office.” —*White woman*

Forty percent of women of color, 33.5% of white women, and 27.8% of men of color reported getting less respect for the same work as others, compared to only 13.2% of white men. Multiracial women and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported the least respect for the same work.

Less respect for the same work



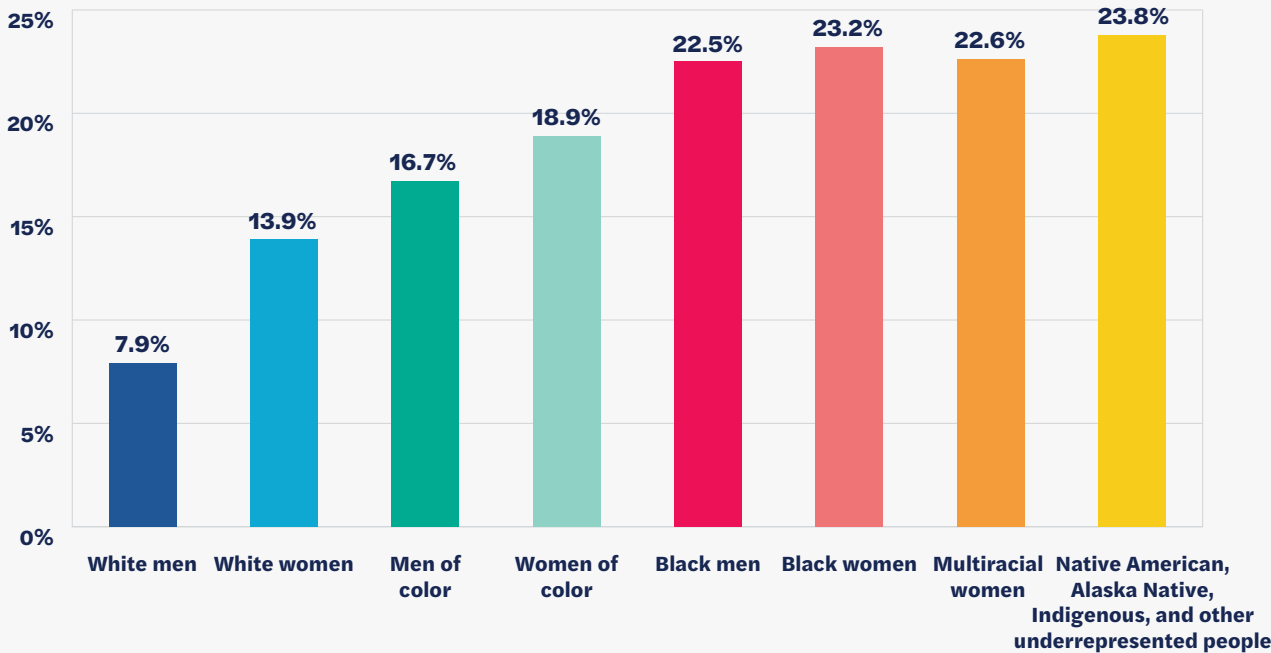
Competence dismissed

Prove-it-again bias shapes how people code co-workers’ successes, in a pattern often called “He’s skilled, she’s lucky.”⁴⁸ When a white man has a success, it tends to be attributed to talent; when other groups have success, it tends to be attributed to unstable outside causes such as luck—“just a fluke.” Of course, this means that some groups have their accomplishments dismissed.

“This past year our five-person office brought in over half of the firm's income, even though we are less than one-fifth of the staff. It was blown off as a fluke, not a result of our very hard work.” –White woman

At about 23%, almost three times as many Black men and women, multiracial women, and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people—and about two times as many white women—reported that their workplace accomplishments are dismissed as luck, compared to 8% of white men.

Accomplishments dismissed as luck



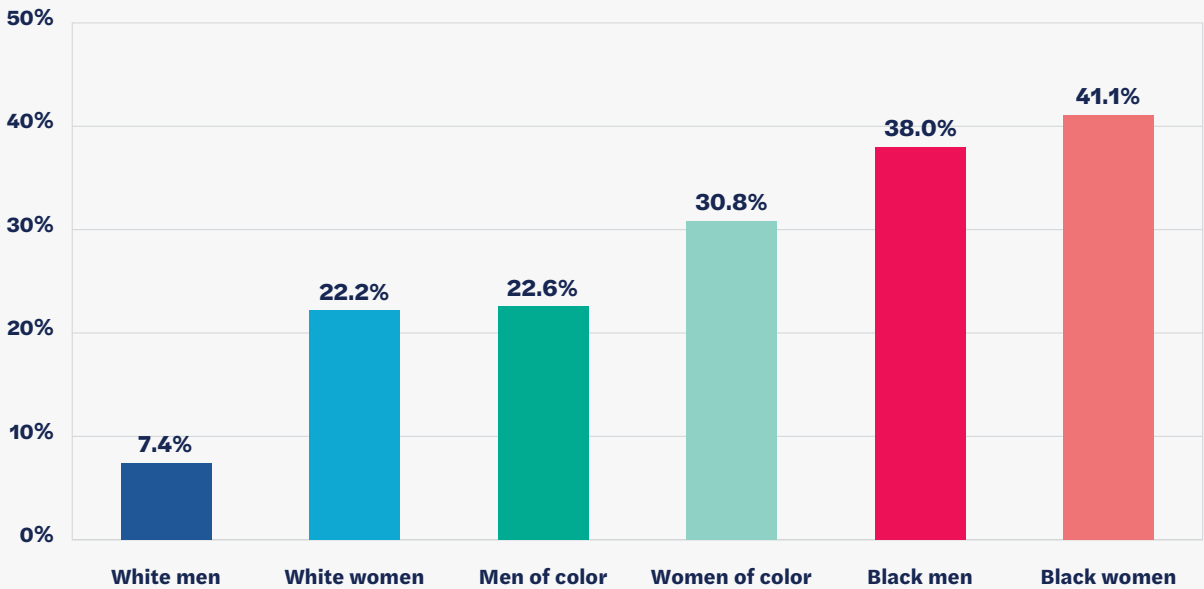
⁴⁸ Swim, J. K., & Sanna, L. J. (1996). He's skilled, she's lucky: A meta-analysis of observers' attributions for women's and men's successes and failures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22(5), 507-519. doi: 10.1177/0146167296225008

Bias also affects the coding of successes and failures. Few white men reported that co-workers seem surprised when they performed well, but nearly a third of women of color did, with white women and men of color falling in the middle. Again, the experiences of Black architectural professionals stood out: 41.1% of Black women and 38% of Black men felt they encountered this surprise at their performance.

“Failure is not an option for Black women” is the title of one well-known experimental study. Bias also affects the coding of mistakes, which tend to be noticed or remembered more from some groups than others.⁴⁹

“I have seen white males who make extremely costly mistakes on projects (where the firm/insurance had to pay) get a slap on the wrist or even promoted, while I’ve seen women who made one bad decision get forced out.”—*Woman of Asian descent*

Successes met with surprise



⁴⁹ Rosette, A. S., & Livingston, R. W. (2012). Failure is not an option for Black women: Effects of organizational performance on leaders with single versus dual-subordinate identities. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(5), 1162-1167.

“As a young Black woman, I am often not seen as an expert when on construction sites.”

—Black woman

Expertise left untapped

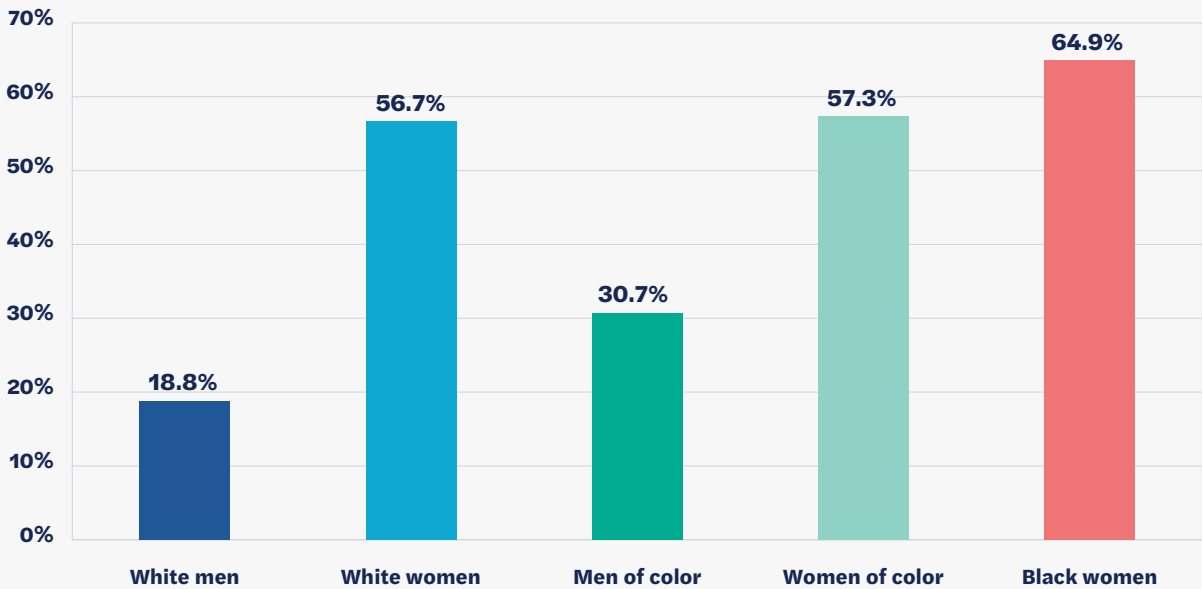
One clear pattern that emerged regards to whom questions are addressed. Prior research has found that while men who are experts typically exercise *more* influence, women who are experts typically exercise *less* influence.⁵⁰ Our research pinpoints how this plays out for women of all racial/ethnic groups, and that it affects men of color, too.

“I’ve had clients refer all their questions to my 20-something male intern, when I was a 40-something owner of my company.” —Woman of Asian descent

“Even as a seasoned (30+ year) professional, when I am with a male, even a much younger male colleague, often clients and other professionals will address questions and remarks to the male instead of me.” —Native woman

More than half of women of color and white women, along with 30.7% of men of color, reported having questions addressed to someone else when they were the expert, yet only 18.8% of white men reported the same. Black women again had a worse experience: 64.9% reported that they had questions addressed to someone else.

Questions addressed to someone else



⁵⁰ Thomas-Hunt, M. C., & Phillips, K. W. (2004). When what you know is not enough: Expertise and gender dynamics in task groups. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(12), 1585-1598.doi: 10.1177/0146167204271186

“I have been interrupted and talked over in presentations to the male partners at the firm, only to have my ideas and drawings credited to a younger male staff person.”

—White woman

Stolen idea

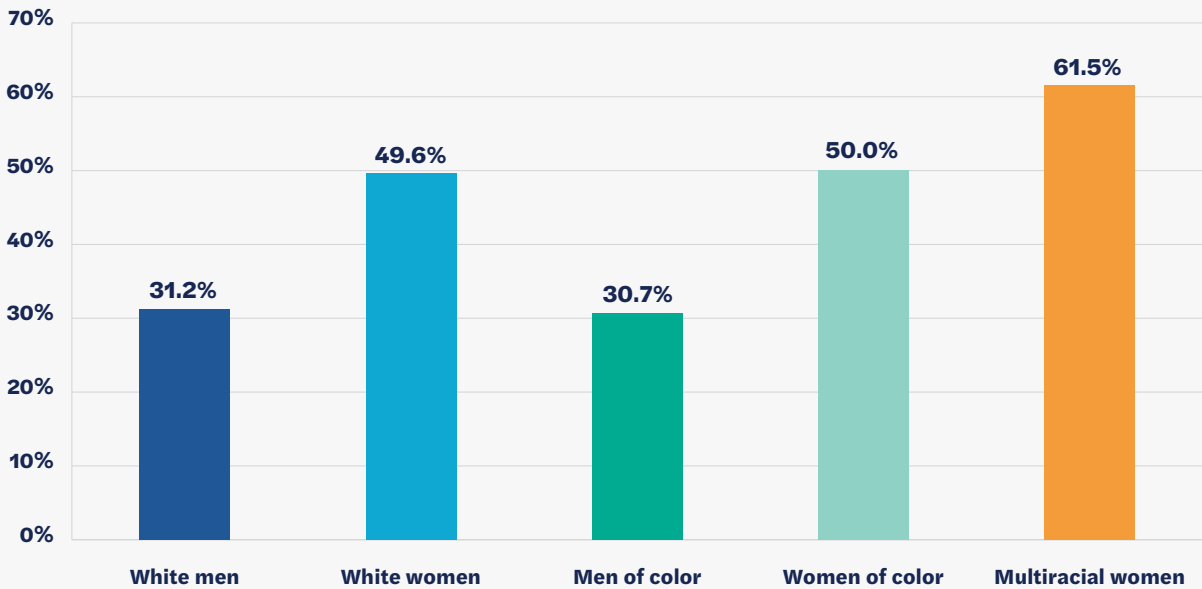
Other people get credit for ideas women originally offered.⁵¹ This stems from confirmation bias: We see what we expect to see,⁵² so if we were not expecting a great idea to come from a woman, we are less likely to pay attention when it does, leaving the opportunity open for someone else to pick it up and repeat it.

“We have a firm-wide women's initiative... And they said that one of the number one complaints from the women architects was that they would bring something up in a design meeting; it would be ignored. Then, a man would say it, and then people would recognize it.” —Woman, race/ethnicity unspecified

“Both men and women in the more senior positions listen, hear, and accept thing I've said before ONLY when it comes from a male colleague.” —Multiracial woman

Half of women of color and white women reported having their ideas stolen, compared to less than a third of white men and men of color. Multiracial women reported an even worse experience: Almost two-thirds reported that they had an idea stolen.

Stolen idea



“Even though I am now a partner in my firm, I still get ‘he-peated’ in meetings.” —White woman

⁵¹ Williams, J. C., & Dempsey, R. W. (2014). *What works for women at work: Four patterns working women should know*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

⁵² Nickerson, R. S. (1998). Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises. *Review of General Psychology*, 2(2), 175-220.

“Situations like client meetings, job site visitations, conferences, social events, etc., are usually venues where minority workers are more likely to be embarrassed, barred entry, asked to leave, be overlooked, assumed to be admin, assumed to be service staff... This can be tiring and humiliating.”

—Black woman

Mistaken for administrative or custodial staff

The most dramatic example of lack of fit is when women and people of color in the architectural profession are mistaken for support staff.

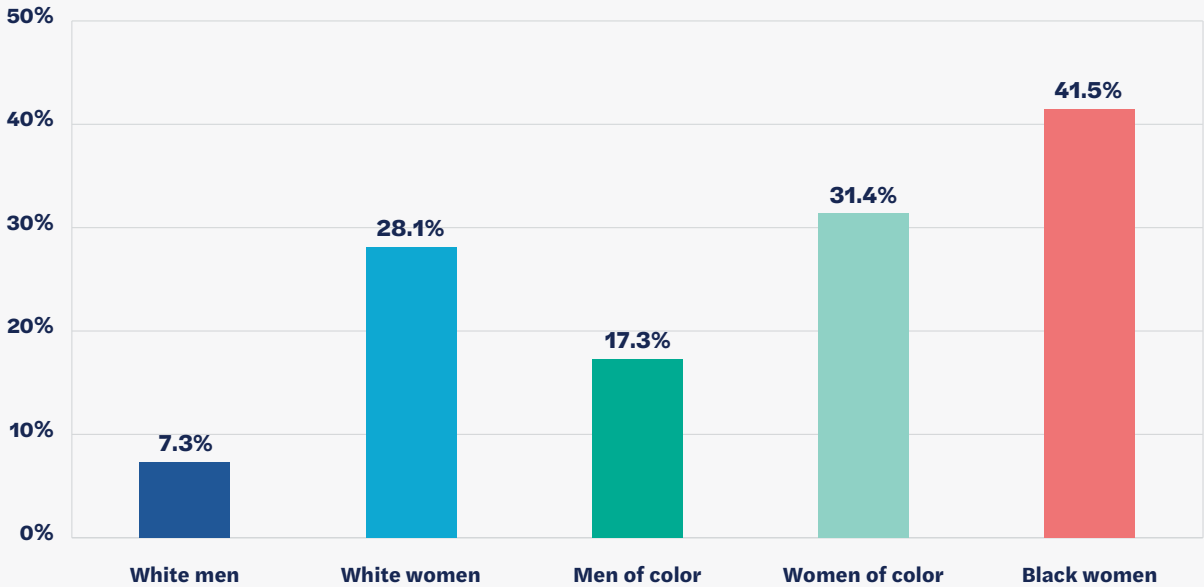
People in administrative and custodial positions in the profession of architecture are as essential as licensed architects. However, prior studies have shown that even scientists who are university professors in lab coats clearly identifying their status report regularly being assumed to be custodial staff—and that this for them led to a variety of reactions ranging from hurt to hilarity.⁵³ This pattern played out for participants in our study as well.

“There was one time I was chatting with a Black female coworker. At the time, she and I were the only non-white employees in the office... One of the firm's principals walked up to us and said, ‘Stop distracting the help!’” –Multiracial woman

Women and people of color are reminded that they don’t fit the presumed mold of an architect not only by colleagues but also at job sites and in meetings.

Almost a third (31.4%) of women of color, as well as 28.1% of white women, reported being mistaken for a administrative or custodial staff, compared to 17.3% of men of color and 7.3% of white men. Once again Black women reported the most bias; 41.5% reported that they were mistaken for an administrative staff person.

Mistaken for administrative or custodial staff



53 Williams, J.C., Phillips, K.W., & Hall, E.V. (2014). Double jeopardy? Gender bias against women of color in science. WorkLife Law, UC Hastings College of the Law. San Francisco, CA. Available at: https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Double-Jeopardy-Report_v6_full_web-sm.pdf

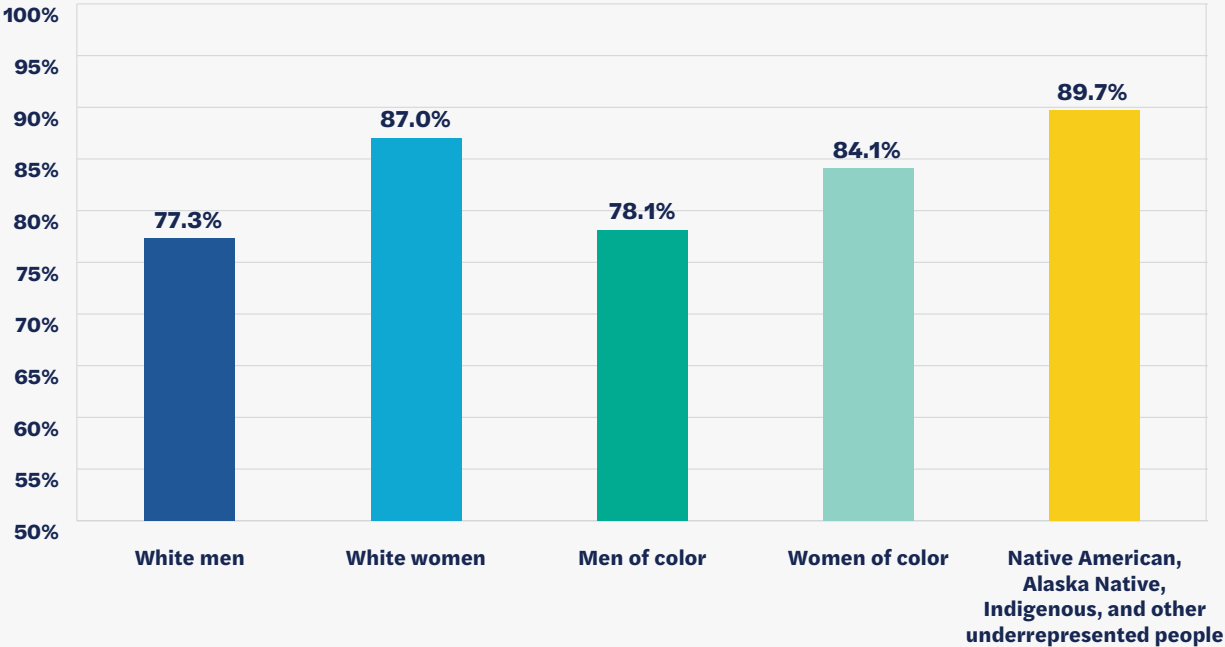
Asking for promotion

The prevailing narrative is that women don’t apply for jobs unless they meet 100% of the qualifications, while men apply if they meet around 60% of the requirements.⁵⁴ WorkLife Law has not found this to be true in engineering,⁵⁵ but we did find it in the architecture profession. When people do wait to ask for the promotion, it may reflect political savvy: the knowledge that one will be held to higher standards, as reflected in this quote.

“[A] qualified female applicant [was] passed over for [a] slightly less impressive male applicant. There may have been a legitimate reason but I never heard what it was, if it existed.”
—White woman

Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented people were the group most likely to wait until they had met all of the requirements before asking for a promotion—at almost 90%. A high number of white women and women of color also reported waiting, significantly higher than white men and men of color.

Wait to ask for promotion



⁵⁴ Mohr, T.S. (2014). Why Women Don't Apply for Jobs Unless They're 100% Qualified. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2014/08/why-women-dont-apply-for-jobs-unless-theyre-100-qualified>

⁵⁵ Williams, J.C., Li, S., Rincon, R., & Finn, P. (2016). Climate Control: Gender and Racial Bias in Engineering? Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Climate-Control-Gender-And-Racial-Bias-InEngineering.pdf>; Williams, J.C., Korn, R. M., Rincon, R., Finn, P. (2018) Walking the Tightrope: An Examination of Bias in India's Engineering Workplace. Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/Walking-the-Tightrope-Bias-Indias-Engineering-Workplace.pdf>

MATERNAL WALL BIAS

Bias against mothers includes both assumptions that mothers *will* put their children over work, and that they *should* do so.⁵⁶ The classic study gave participants two identical resumes; the only difference was that one listed membership in the PTA. The study found very strong levels of bias: The mother was 79% less likely to be hired, half as likely to be promoted, offered an average of \$11,000 less in starting salary, and held to higher performance and punctuality standards.⁵⁷

The same pattern of bias against mothers documented in lab studies appears to be playing out in the profession of architecture as well.⁵⁸ Among women in the profession, 64% say that women’s opportunities diminish after they have children—and 59% report that women’s pay is worse as well. The 2018 Equity in Architecture survey found that women who report being the primary caregiver receive the lowest salaries.⁵⁹ Men with secondary caregiving roles get a salary bump, but women in secondary caregiving roles do not see a similar increase.⁶⁰ In households with a male and female earner, this creates a financial incentive for male architectural professionals to be secondary caregivers, and for women architectural professionals to be primary caregivers.⁶¹ This highlights an important point: Many of the “choices” mothers make reflect their responses to discrimination.

A lot of attention has been paid to the issue of women dropping out of the profession due to work-life balance. Indeed, women drop out even before they have children for these reasons: 70% of women reported that women leave the field because the long hours make it difficult to start a family, according to the 2016 Diversity in the Profession of Architecture report.⁶²

One narrative in the profession of architecture is that women are driven out of the field due to the long hours or work. However, data from the 2018 Equity in Architecture survey⁶³ and from this study show that most architects and designers are working 45 or fewer hours per week, and respondents to the our survey tended to say that their firms have family-friendly hours. This evidence highlights the role of discrimination based on motherhood, not work-family conflict.

Working long hours as a social display of commitment and sacrifice to one's art is encouraged in schools of architecture as far back as the charrette tradition started in L'École des Beaux Arts.⁶⁴ This romantic ideal falls apart where it meets the real demands of balancing work and family, for both men and women. For women, however, there is a presupposition that they will prefer taking care of family obligations, and they pay the price for that bias in the workplace.

⁵⁶ Williams, J. C., & Dempsey, R. W. (2014). What works for women at work: Four patterns working women should know. New York, NY: New York University Press.

⁵⁷ Correll, S. J., Benard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(5), 1297-1338. doi: 10.1086/511799

⁵⁸ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

⁵⁹ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

⁶⁰ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

⁶¹ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

⁶² The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

⁶³ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

⁶⁴ Arnaud, M. What is a Charette? *The Charette*. Retrieved from: <http://dli.library.cmu.edu/charette/what-charette>

In 2018, before COVID-19, 87% of architecture firms offered some type of remote work, 83% of firms offered flexible working hours, and 63% offered parental flexibility.⁶⁵ However, the extent to which full-time remote work was available to architects and designers was unclear. Many firms were already prepared for the transition to remote working: In 2019, 90% of firms of all sizes reported that they were ready for telework.⁶⁶ However, some firms faced more difficulty: For example, a San Francisco architect who works for a small firm noted that remote work had been infeasible for her because the firm was reluctant to add to overhead by buying individual licenses to key software. But now they have them, she and her colleagues have been working remotely for months.

This architect does not have children. She and her one other colleague in their 30s had been planning to bring up telework before the pandemic but expected an uphill battle due to generational issues. Since collaboration is highly valued in the profession of architecture, the norm pre-pandemic was to have some element of in-person work. However, now that firms have already had to make the difficult transitions, there may be a silver lining in that parents will have an easier time accessing the flexibility they need to excel in their careers and take care of children at the same time.

Maternal Wall bottom line

Some women opt out—but many others are pushed out by Maternal Wall bias, which often affects mothers who perform exactly the same after they have children as they did before, yet find their access to high-quality work jeopardized. Maternal Wall bias is very strong: the differences between men and women in this arena are some of the largest in our report, and the impacts of Maternal Wall bias ripple throughout all of the workplace systems. Mothers leave the architecture profession not only in search of work-life balance, but also because they feel their careers stalled out due to discrimination against mothers in the form of pay inequity, lack of opportunities, and assumptions about their priorities.

“The concept that we all must work 60 to 80 hours because ‘that’s the way it is’ structurally sets up women and nontraditional setups, people who are caring for their relatives, completely eliminates them from being able to participate in this profession fully or advance fully to change that profession.” —Woman, race/ethnicity unspecified

⁶⁵ Baker, K., Mentz, J., Riskus, J., & Russo, M., (2019). Compensation Report 2019. The American Institute of Architects.
⁶⁶ Baker, K., Mentz, J., Riskus, J., & Russo, M., (2020). The Business of Architecture 2020. The American Institute of Architects.

“Not getting a raise or paid equally with my male peers right after getting back from maternity leave; there was perception that as a newly working mother I wouldn’t be able to put the same effort.”

—Woman of Asian descent

Commitment and competence questioned

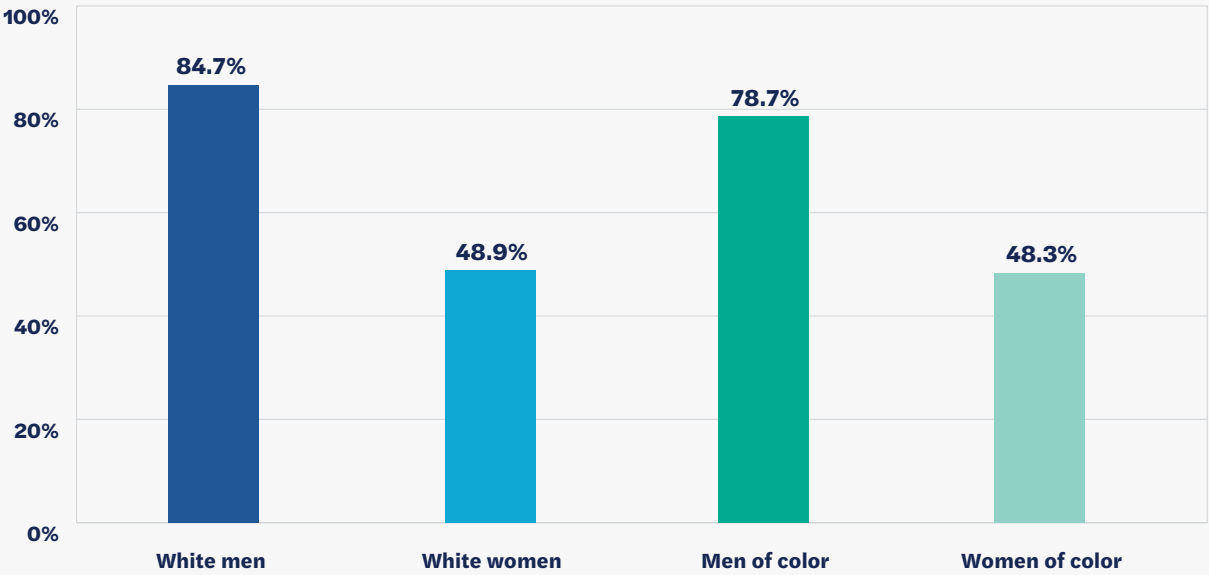
In professions across the U.S., mothers commonly report having to prove themselves all over again after taking maternity leave.⁶⁷

“Returning to work after having a baby and trying to fit in nursing is one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do... Needing to set more boundaries around my time and availability seemed to negatively impact my position and the perception of my abilities, despite the years I had already put in ‘proving’ myself.” —White woman

In the architecture profession, we found a large discrepancy between the experiences of men and women after they had children.

84.7% of white men and 78.7% of men of color reported that having children did not change colleagues’ perceptions of their workplace competence and commitment, compared to 48.3% of women of color and 48.9% of white women—a very large differential.

Did not have commitment and competence questioned



67 Williams, J. C., & Dempsey, R. W. (2014). *What works for women at work: Four patterns working women should know*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Prescriptive bias

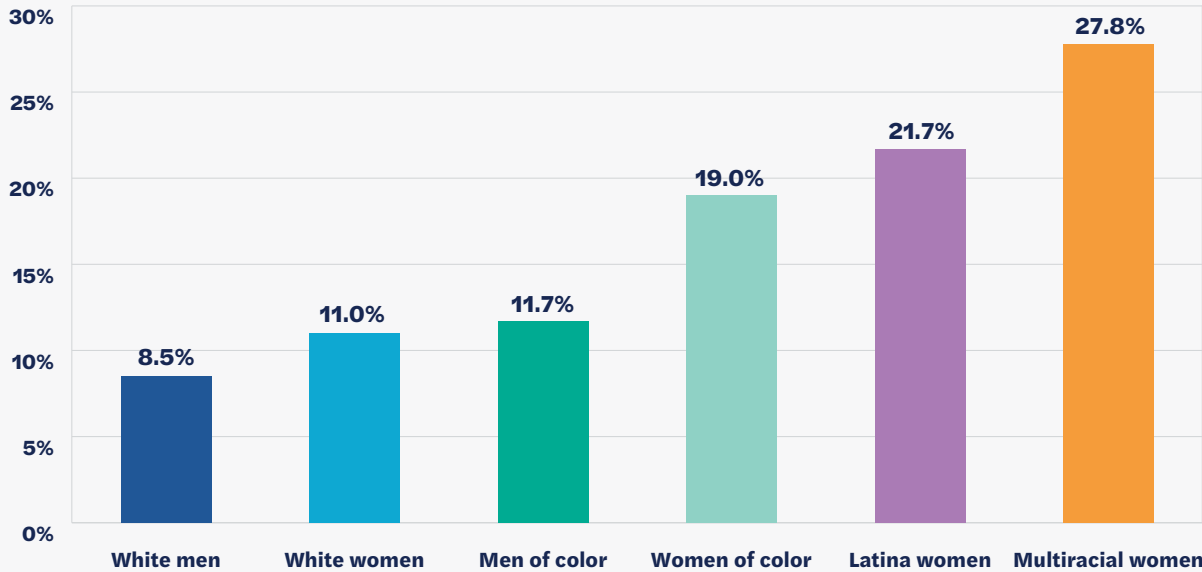
Prescriptive stereotypes about mothers give the false impression not only that all mothers will put children ahead of work but that they should do so. This stems from the concept of the ideal mother as someone who is always available to her children.⁶⁸

“Being told to go home during lunch to breastfeed my baby when back from maternity leave by a co-worker.”
—*Latina woman*

“I had a client... ask me if I had children and I said yes. I was there making a presentation for their project and he said, ‘Well, who’s making lunch for them?... You mean they don’t eat their mother’s home-cooked food? Unbelievable!’ and I really went down on his blacklist.” —*Woman of color*

About a fifth of women of color reported that they had heard colleagues say mothers should be working fewer hours, compared to 8.5% of white men, 11% of white women, and 11.7% of men of color. White women and men of color reported experiences that were not significantly different from either white men or women of color. Multiracial women and Latina women were most likely to report hearing from colleagues that mothers should be working less, at 27.8% and 21.7% respectively.

Mothers should work less



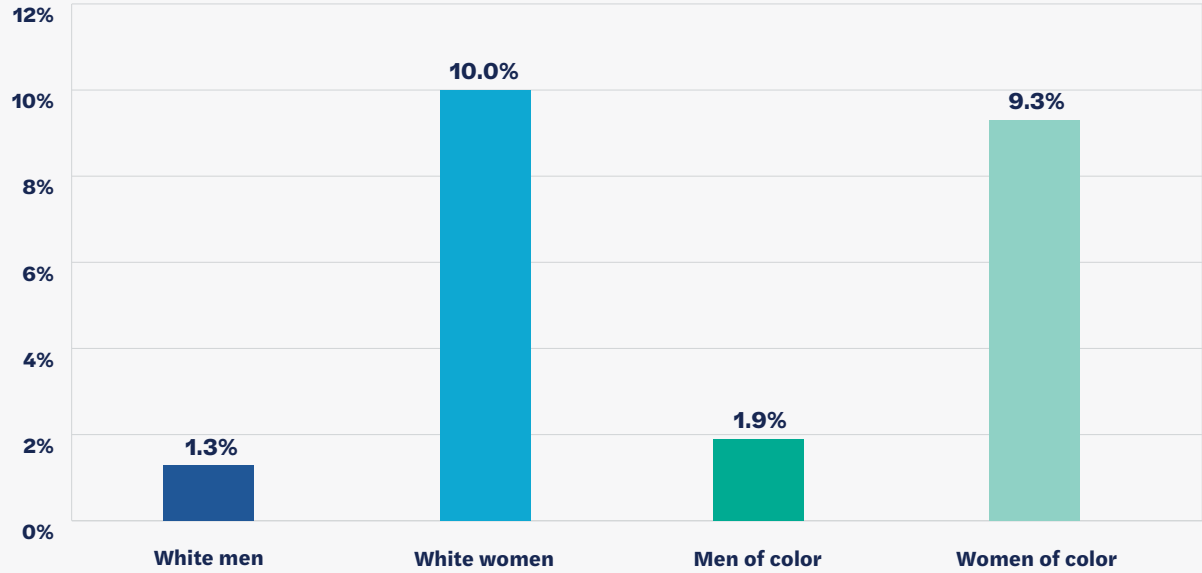
68 Kobrynowicz, D., & Biernat, M. (1997). Decoding subjective evaluations: How stereotypes provide shifting standards. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 33(6), 579-601.

Women were also more likely to face concerns from colleagues that they would have too many children—10% of white women and 9.3% of women of color reported this versus virtually no men.

“I once had a contractor ask me how many kids I was planning to ‘pop out’—when I was pregnant with my second of three children.” —*White woman*

“Our interior designer will be on maternity leave as we approach CDs so we will have someone fill in for her. Damn women and babies, am I right? Hahaha’ —*My supervisor*”
—*White woman*

Have too many children



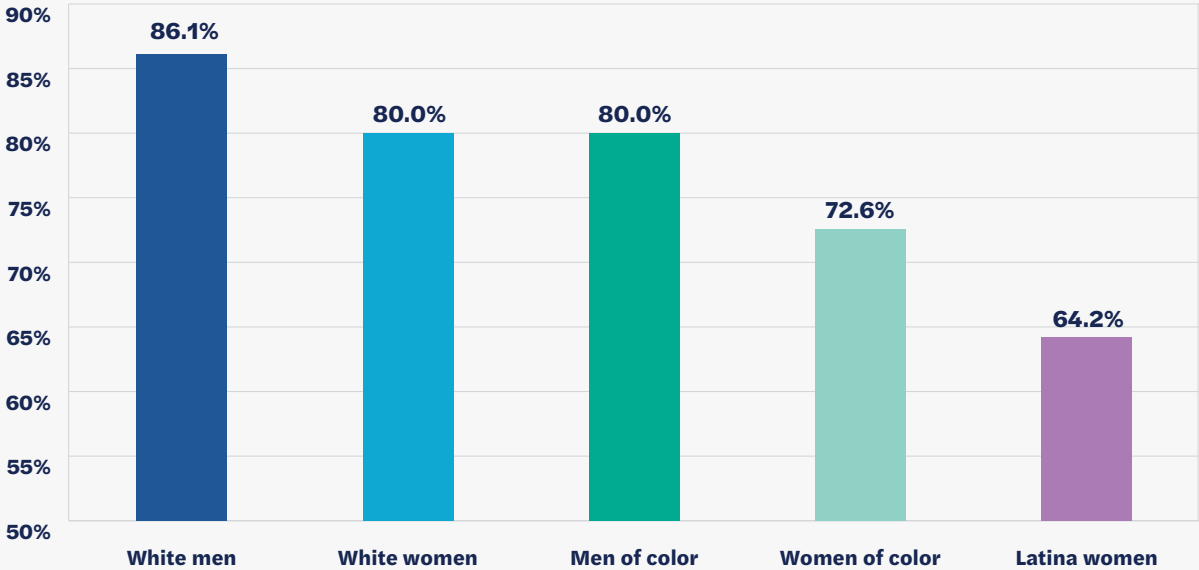
Flexibility stigma

When the ideal worker is defined as someone devoted to work, those who fail to live up are stigmatized. The “flexibility stigma” reflects bias triggered by taking leave or adopting a flexible schedule.⁶⁹ The 2018 Equity in Architecture study found the flexibility stigma was widespread: 70% of respondents believed that using the available work-life benefits in their organization would jeopardize their chances of promotion.⁷⁰

The data suggest that family-friendly policies and working hours are present in many architectural firms.

Most survey respondents reported that their workplace had family-friendly policies and hours. White men were more likely to report family-friendly policies and hours than women of color. White women and men of color fell in between—at 80%, their response was not statistically different from either white men (at 86%) or women of color (at 73%). Latina women were least likely to report family-friendly workplace hours and policies, at only 64%. Women of color who took our survey were slightly less likely to have children than men of color and white people—taken together, these two pieces of information suggest that women of color may face more barriers to combining a career in the profession of architecture with parenthood than men of all racial/ethnic groups or white women.

Family-friendly hours and policies



⁶⁵ Crosby, F. J., Williams, J. C., & Biernat, M. (2004). The maternal wall. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(4), 675-682. doi: 10.1111/j.0022-4537.2004.00379.x; Epstein, C. F. (1981). *Women in Law*. New York: Basic Books; Stone, P., & Hernandez, L. A. (2013). The all-or-nothing workplace: Flexibility stigma and “opting out” among professional-managerial women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(2), 235-256. doi:10.1111/josi.12013

⁷⁰ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

“I took leave after having a child and when I returned there was no longer meaningful work for me at the firm.”

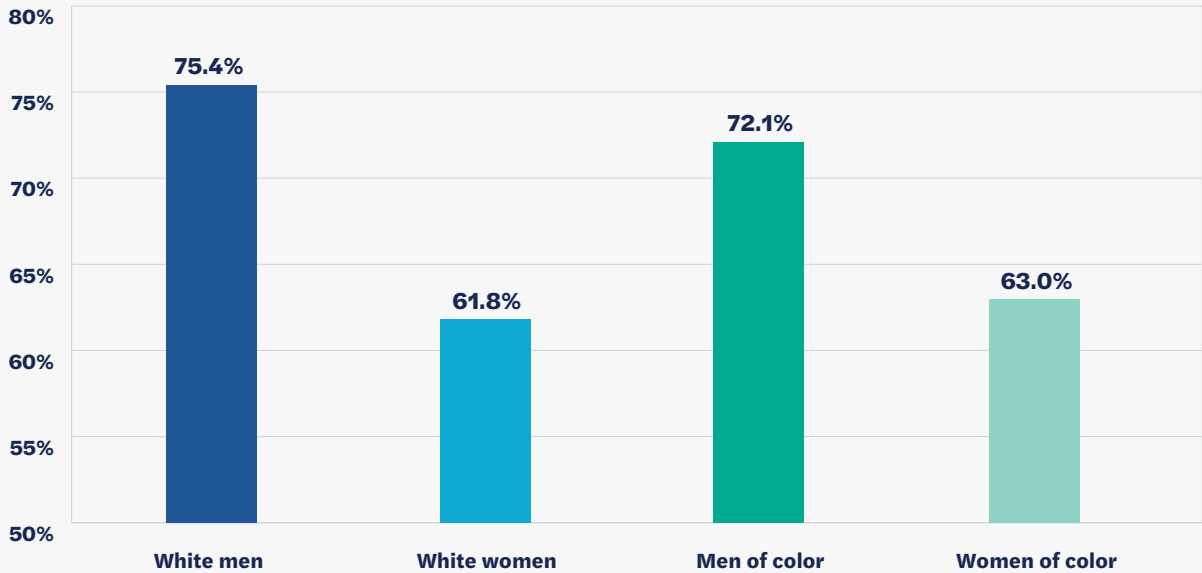
– White woman

“Part-time and flexible arrangements exist and are promoted by HR and you won’t get fired, BUT women who use them find themselves sidelined or, in at least one case, harassed by another more senior woman about her perceived lack of commitment following having a child.”

—White woman

Even if the official policies support flexible arrangements, people do not necessarily feel free to use them. White men and men of color were most likely to say that asking for flexible arrangements would not hurt their careers, at rates significantly higher than white women and women of color.

Asking for flexible arrangements would not hurt career



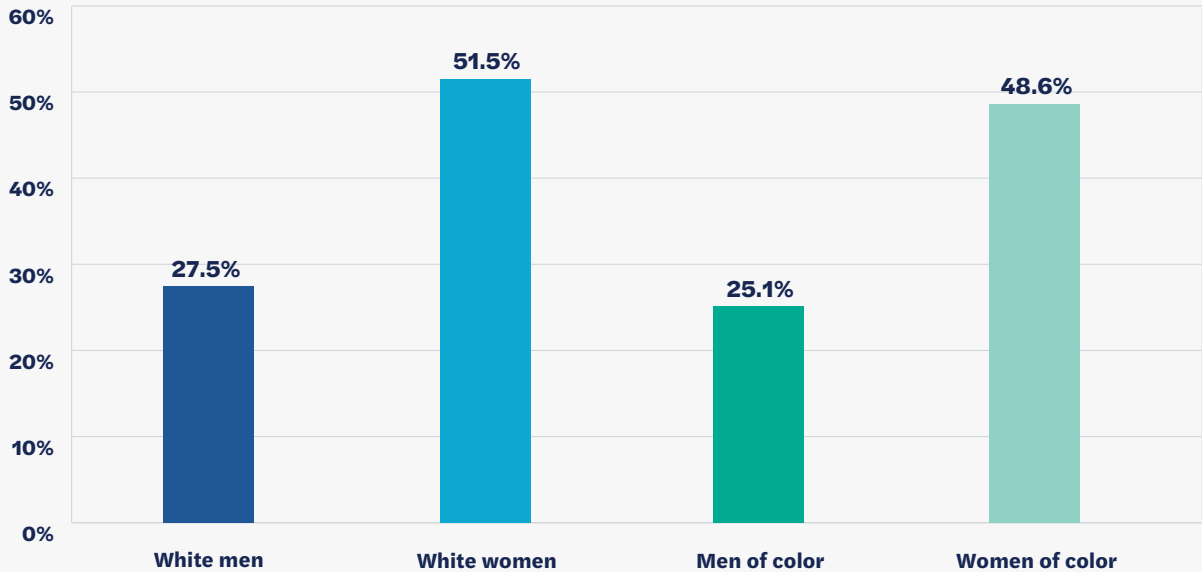
Yet women reported negative career consequences for actually using the leaves and flexibility firms made available.

“The more important thing is, it’s not the leave, I think it’s knowing that you can leave... when you have to walk out of a meeting before it’s over and you don’t have the confidence that you’ll be welcome back in the next day, it becomes very discouraging.” –Woman of Asian descent

“My salary raises during the years after returning from maternity leave (I have three children) are always lower than other years, even though I perform consistently and my performance reviews are consistently good.” –White woman

Women also felt they would be disproportionately penalized for taking family leave: Half of white women and women of color report this versus only a quarter of white men and men of color.

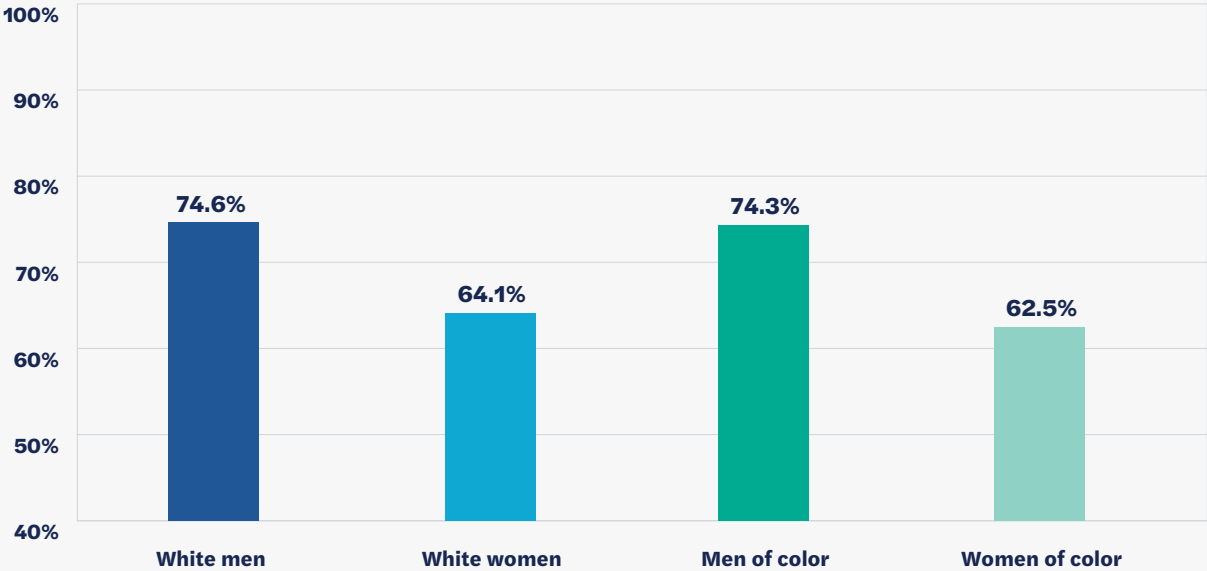
Taking family leave would hurt career



There were no significant differences in who felt free to take time off after a competition or deadline: 74.6% of white men, 74.3% of men of color, 64.1% of white women, and 62.5% of women of color reported feeling free to take time off after a deadline or competition.

One narrative in the profession of architecture is that great design requires intense dedication, which makes less dedicated people (or those who have family care responsibilities) drop out. Our research did not support this idea.

Free to take time off after a deadline or competition

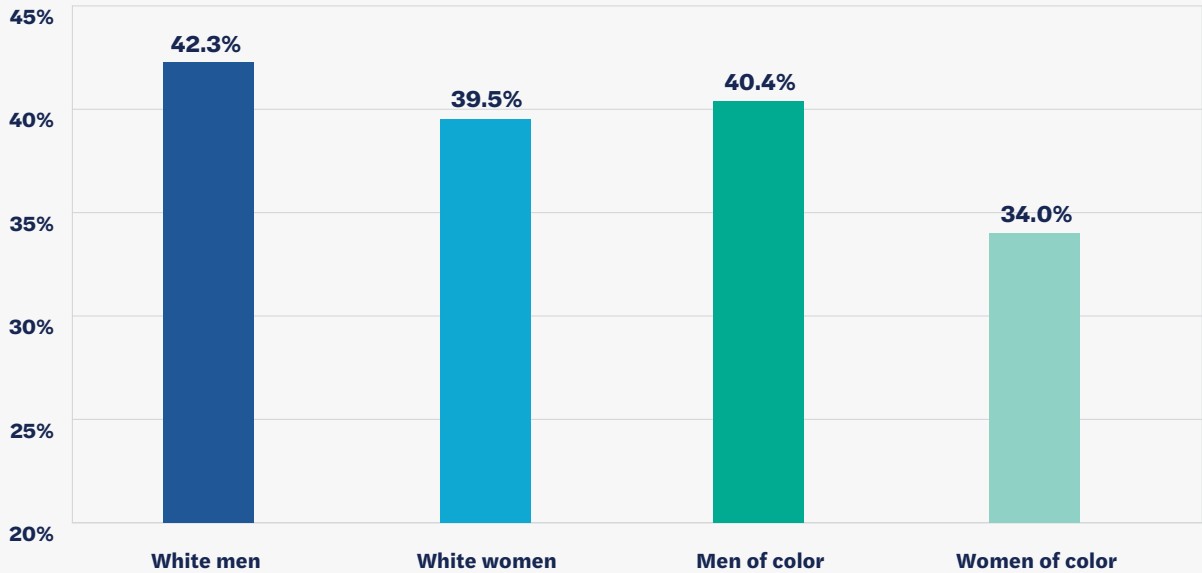


Parents in the profession of architecture

Maternal Wall bias affects different groups of women differently. Women of color who took the survey were slightly less likely to have children than other groups. Women of color in our dataset skewed younger, but this did not explain the differences in number of parents. In fact, women of color who were between 10 and 29 years into their careers were much less likely to have children than similarly aged men of color and white men and women. This suggests that women of color see less of an option to combine the practice of architecture and motherhood than white women (and men of all racial/ethnic groups) do.

The 2018 Equity in Architecture survey found that employees who practice architecture in firms are less likely to be mothers, while sole practitioners are more likely to have children.⁷¹ It appears that women are leaving firms to found their own firms as a way to access the kind of flexibility many firms are not offering.⁷²

Have dependent children

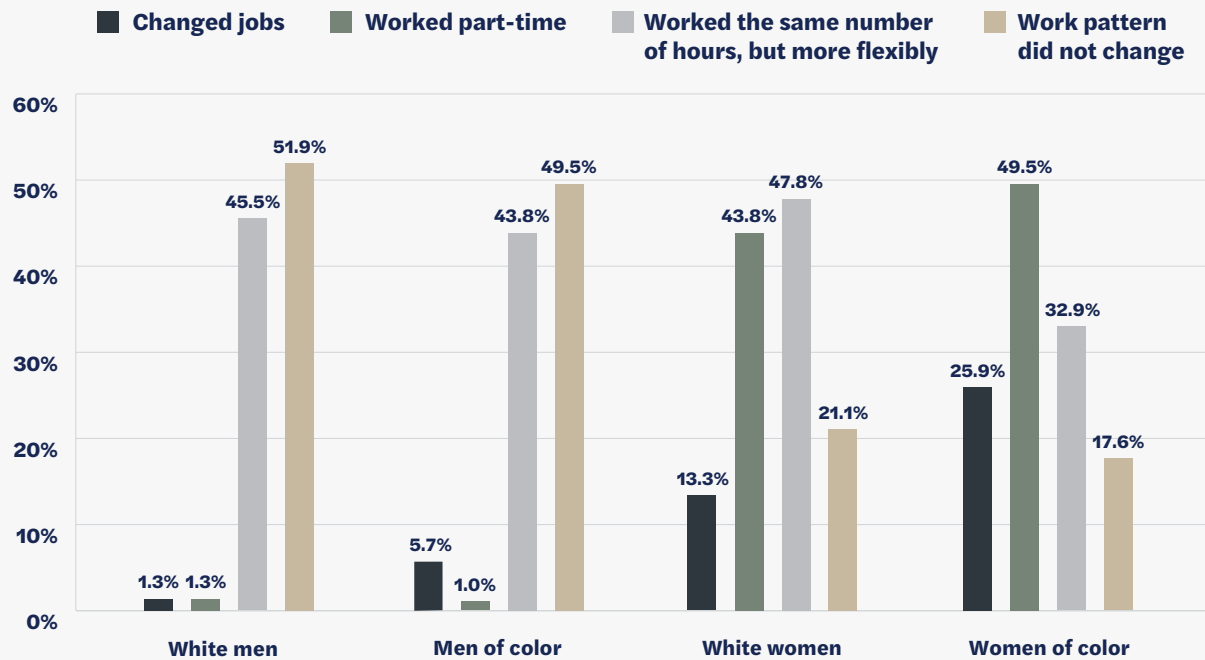


⁷¹ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

⁷² Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

On our survey, parents reported whether their work patterns changed after they had children and returned from leave. Women were much more likely than men to change jobs or work part-time. Men were much more likely to report that their work hours did not change. There were other notable differences between white women and women of color. Higher shares of women of color changed jobs or shifted to part-time work after parental leave, while for white women, larger shares shifted to flexible work schedules. There may be a number of factors behind this worthy of further examination.

Work pattern after parental leave



People without children

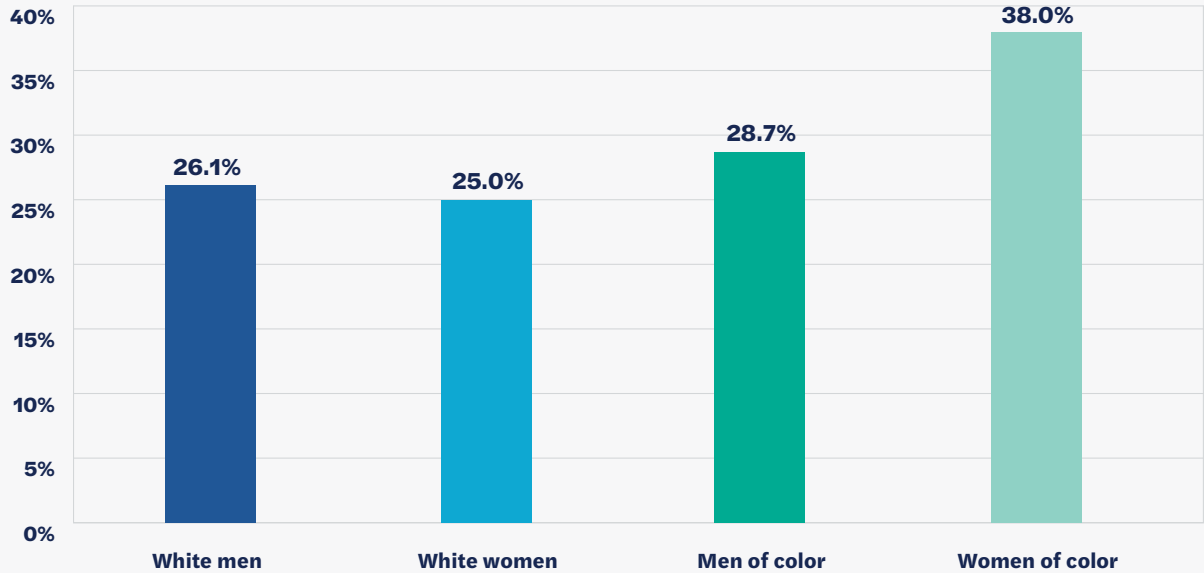
Maternal Wall bias can affect non-parents, too. Sometimes, it is assumed that people without children have no life, so they can work longer hours and pick up the slack for people with children.⁷³

“Oftentimes mothers at workplace express that they work flexible hours and step back from 40 hours work schedule, but leave the rest of the team members that have no family or children to finish up the work.” –Woman of Asian descent

“[A]s a woman who does not have children, some duties like evening activities or last-minute deadlines fall to me because others must go home to their children... I feel like this isn’t fair to me... because I am not compensated or rewarded for my ‘open schedule’ and extra availability.” –White woman

All professionals have life and home priorities, even if they are not oriented around children. Not recognizing this is unfair and bound to produce a backlash against mothers. Moreover, the stereotype that women without children have “no life” disproportionately burdens women of color. Of people without children, 38% of women of color said they were expected to work longer hours because of perceptions that they don’t have a life outside of work, compared to only a quarter of white men, white women, and men of color.

Have no life



⁷³ Williams, J. C., Multhaup, M., Li, S., Korn, R. M. (2018). You Can’t Change What You Can’t See: Interrupting Racial & Gender Bias in the Legal Profession. American Bar Association & Minority Corporate Counsel Association. Available at: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/you-cant-change-what-you-cant-see-print.pdf>

Fathers

Whereas mothers pay a “motherhood penalty,” in the U.S., fathers typically get a fatherhood bonus: higher salaries and greater likelihood of being hired or promoted.⁷⁴ This again reflects a breadwinner-homemaker model: She has a family to take care of, but he now has a family to support.

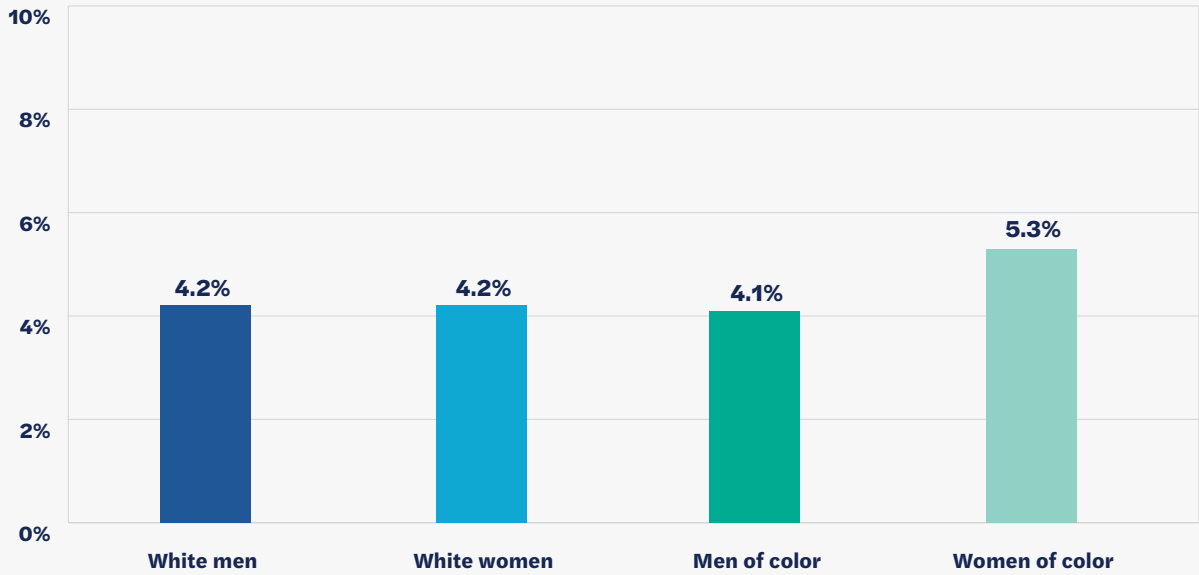
“The firm actually prefers men with children and rewards those men who have a wife (stay-at-home is better) and kids with better projects, larger pay increase, and promotions.”
—Woman of Asian descent

We asked respondents if they have heard colleagues suggest that fathers should be working more hours. The answer was a resounding no: Only 4% of white men, men of color, and white women, and 5% of women of color, had heard colleagues make statements like this.

Although breadwinners without caregiving responsibilities are seen as more valuable workers than men without children,⁷⁵ fathers who play an active role in family care are less likely to be promoted or get raises, and are more likely to be pushed out of the workplace.⁷⁶ This flexibility stigma is actually a femininity stigma: Fathers who care for their children are seen as less masculine and get penalized for it in the workplace.⁷⁷

“I think white men are not supported for paternal leave. I spent two weeks each with my newborn children. It is something I wish I was able to do.” —White man

Fathers should work more hours



⁷⁴ Correll, S. J., Benard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(5), 1297-1338. doi: 10.1086/511799

⁷⁵ Correll, S. J., Benard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(5), 1297-1338.

⁷⁶ Rudman, L. A., & Mescher, K. (2013). Penalizing men who request a family leave: Is flexibility stigma a femininity stigma? *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(2), 322-340. doi: 10.1111/josi.12017; Vandello, J. A., Hettinger, V. E., Bosson, J. K., & Siddiqi, J. (2013). When equal isn't really equal: The masculine dilemma of seeking work flexibility. *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(2), 303-321. doi: 10.1111/josi.12016

⁷⁷ Rudman, L. A., & Mescher, K. (2013). Penalizing men who request a family leave: Is flexibility stigma a femininity stigma? *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(2), 322-340. doi: 10.1111/josi.12017; Vandello, J. A., Hettinger, V. E., Bosson, J. K., & Siddiqi, J. (2013). When equal isn't really equal: The masculine dilemma of seeking work flexibility. *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(2), 303-321. doi: 10.1111/josi.12016

TUG OF WAR BIAS

Tug of War bias occurs when bias against a group fuels conflict within it.⁷⁸ This pattern reflects different assimilation strategies women and people of color may adopt in an attempt to fit in, and different ways different members of these groups perform their identities.⁷⁹ For example, when work is a boys’ club, some women join up, aligning with men against other women. Similarly, people of color may find that it’s politically advantageous to distance themselves from other people of color, aligning instead with white people. These office politics reflect that dominant groups get advantages from in-group favoritism. By contrast, non-dominant-group members may help perpetuate systems of inequality that disadvantage them.⁸⁰

Non-dominant-group members also face three types of threats when it comes to supporting other group members.⁸¹

- “Favoritism threat” refers to the worry that if, for example, a Latina woman supports another Latina woman, it will look like favoritism.
- “Collective threat” refers to when, for example, a Black person worries that it will reflect poorly on them if another Black employee performs poorly.

- “Competitive threat” refers to when, for example, a woman thinks that if another woman performs well, she will look worse in comparison.

These threats make the politics of supporting another out-group member very different from supporting a member of the in group.

The survey found that Tug of War bias exists in the architecture profession. Women report conflict with other women, and people of color report conflict with other people of color. Women of color face double jeopardy: complicated politics both with other women and with other people of color.

Tug of War bottom line

Tug of War bias arises when non-dominant groups in biased workplaces run into conflicts with each other: Women and people of color have to put in more effort to navigate successfully through these types of workplaces, with women of color facing workplace politics substantially more complicated than white men’s. Our research found that Tug of War bias was less prevalent in the architecture profession than the other types of bias. However, for those who do face this type of bias, it can have a considerable derailing effect on their careers.

⁷⁸ Intragroup conflict among women: Derks, B., Van Laar, C., Ellemers, N., & de Groot, K. (2011). Gender-bias primes elicit queen-bee responses among senior policewomen. *Psychological Science*, 22(10), 1243-1249. doi: 10.1177/0956797611417258; Derks, B., Ellemers, N., Van Laar, C., & De Groot, K. (2011). Do sexist organizational cultures create the Queen Bee?. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(3), 519-535.; Duguid, M. (2011). Female tokens in high-prestige work groups: Catalysts or inhibitors of group diversification? *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 116(1), 104-115. doi: 10.1016/j.obhdp.2011.05.009; Duguid, M. M., Loyd, D. L., & Tolbert, P. S. (2012). The impact of categorical status, numeric representation, and work group prestige on preference for demographically similar others: A value threat approach. *Organization Science*, 23(2), 386-401. doi: 10.1287/orsc.1100.0565; Ellemers, N., van den Heuvel, H., de Gilder, D., Maass, A., & Bonvini, A. (2004). The underrepresentation of women in science: Differential commitment or the queen bee syndrome? *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(3), 315-338. doi: 10.1348/0144666042037999; Ely, R. J. (1994). The effects of organizational demographics and social identity on relationships among professional women. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39(2), 203-238. doi: 10.2307/2393234; Kanter, R. M. (1977). Some effects of proportions on group life: Skewed sex ratios and responses to token women. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(5), 965-990. doi: 10.1086/226425; Parks-Stamm, E. J., Heilman, M. E., & Hearn, K. A. (2012). Motivated to penalize: women's strategic rejection of successful women. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34(2), 237-245. doi: 10.1177/0146167207310027; Staines, G., Tavis, C., & Jayaratne, T. E. (1974). The queen bee syndrome. *Psychology Today*. 55(7).; Van Laar C., Bleeker D., Ellemers N. and Meijer E. (2014), Ingroup and outgroup support for upward mobility: Divergent responses to ingroup identification in low status groups. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 44(6), 563-577, doi: 10.1002/ejsp.2046. Intragroup conflict among people of color: Duguid, M. M., Loyd, D. L., & Tolbert, P. S. (2012). The impact of categorical status, numeric representation, and work group prestige on preference for demographically similar others: A value threat approach. *Organization Science*, 23(2), 386-401. doi: 10.1287/orsc.1100.0565; Carbado, D. W., & Gulati, M. (2013). *Acting white?: Rethinking race in post-racial America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.; Opie, T. R., & Phillips, K. W. (2015). Hair penalties: The negative influence of Afrocentric hair on ratings of Black women's dominance and professionalism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 1311.

⁷⁹ Carbado, D. W., & Gulati, M. (2000). The fifth black woman. *J. Contemp. Legal Issues*, 11, 701.

⁸⁰ Jost, J. T., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology*, 25(6), 881-919.; Jost, J. T., Pelham, B. W., & Carvallo, M. R. (2002). Non-conscious forms of system justification: Implicit and behavioral preferences for higher status groups. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38(6), 586-602.

⁸¹ Duguid, M. M., Loyd, D. L., & Tolbert, P. S. (2012). The impact of categorical status, numeric representation, and work group prestige on preference for demographically similar others: A value threat approach. *Organization Science*, 23(2), 386-401. doi: 10.1287/orsc.1100.0565

It doesn’t always happen...

We asked respondents whether the women in their workplaces support each other. Often, they do.

“I felt more support and recognition from the seniority of my own race. As for others, even [if] I did good job all along, I was just given more work to do [rather] than being recognized for what I did.” –*Woman of Asian descent*

“What I see is wanting to make sure every other Black person in the office is doing their part. We’re carrying everyone else’s burdens; if one of us goes down, all of us go down.” –*Black woman*

All demographic groups agreed that women generally support each other, with no significant differences between groups.

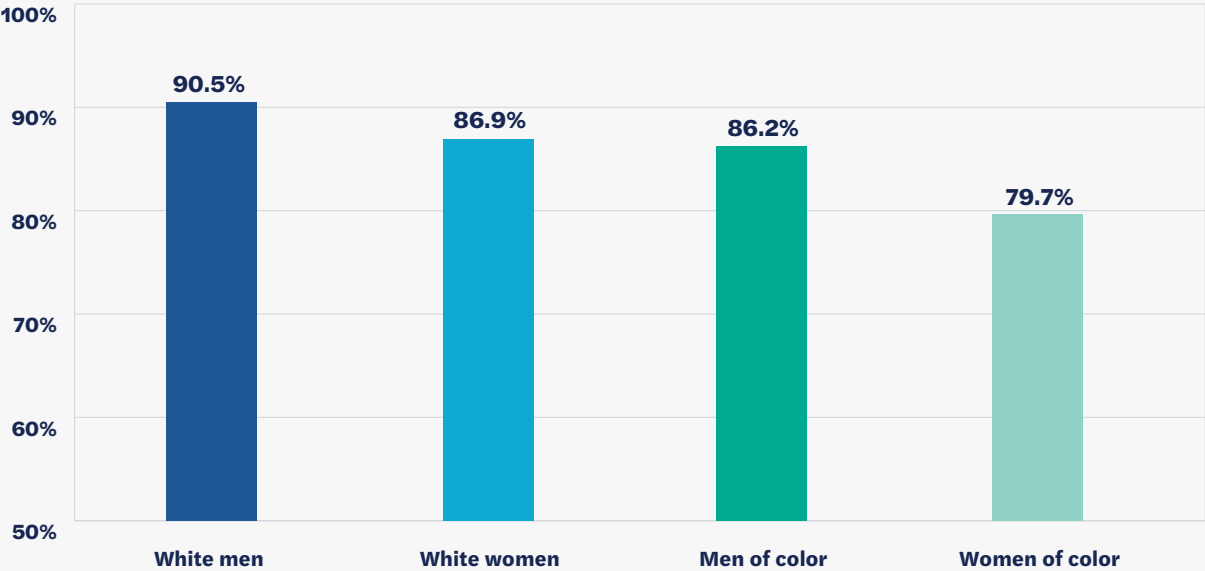
Sometimes there are sharp limits on this support. Junior women often find that senior women don’t help them as much as they think they should—often because the senior women are themselves still embattled by gender bias.⁸²

“More senior women in your workplace does not mean that women will receive the appropriate mentorship they expect.” –*White woman*

Also, of course, it may be politically costly to support other women.

“A co-worker made chauvinistic comments at another co-worker, and I did not have the courage at the time to speak up for her.” –*White woman*

Women support each other



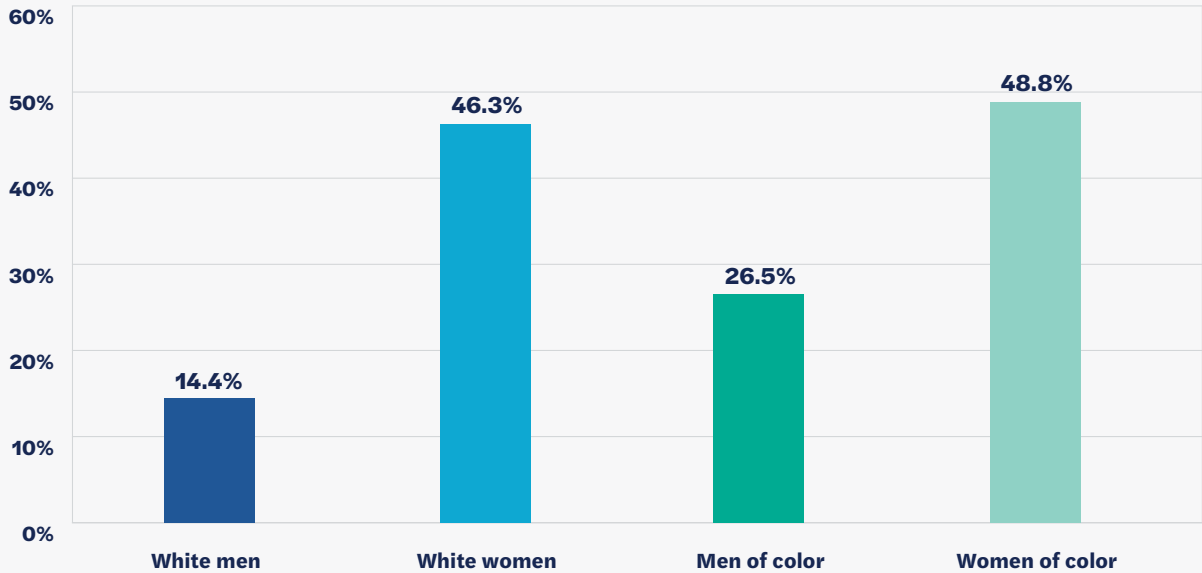
⁸² Williams, J. C., & Dempsey, R. W. (2014). *What works for women at work: Four patterns working women should know*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

... but sometimes it does

The ideal of gender solidarity dims when women are asked whether women are in conflict with other women over how to fit in at their workplace.

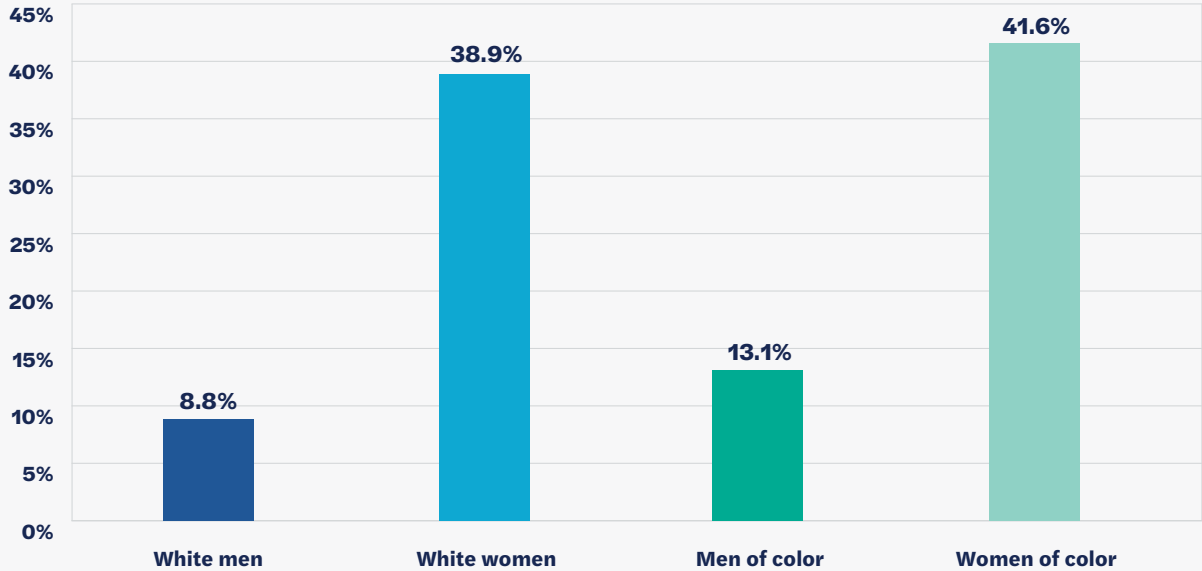
About half of women architectural professionals reported that women face conflicts; much lower percentages of men observed this trend.

Women in conflict with women



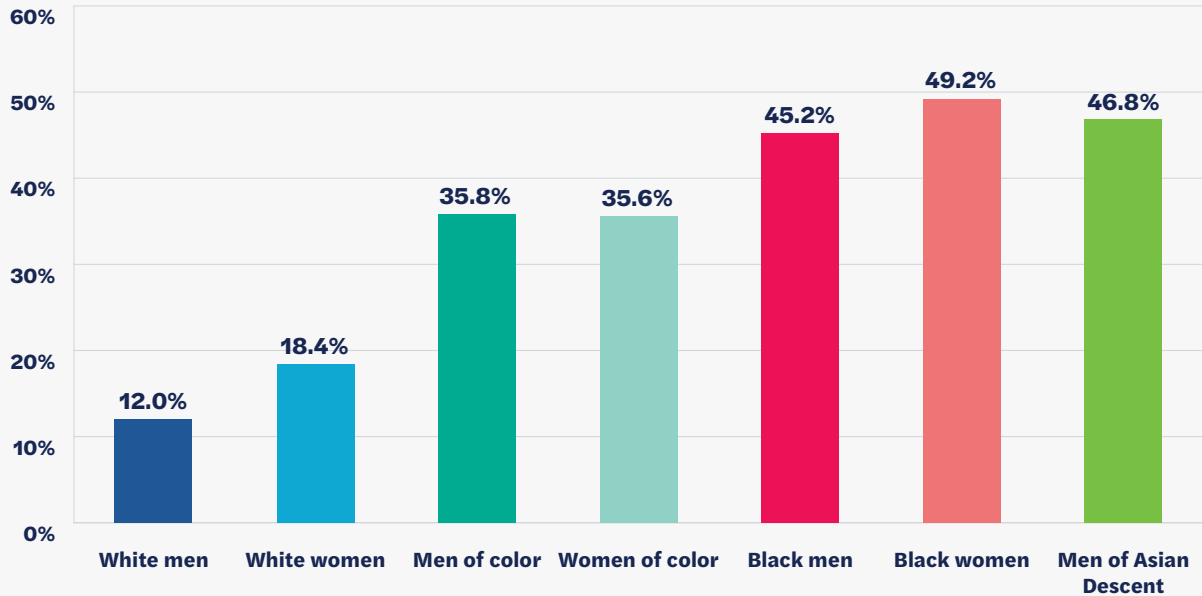
Women also have to worry about being judged based on the performance of other women: 41.6% of women of color and 38.9% of white women reported that their success at work depends on the success of others of their gender, as compared with 8.8% of white men and 13.1% of men of color.

My success depends on the success of others of my gender



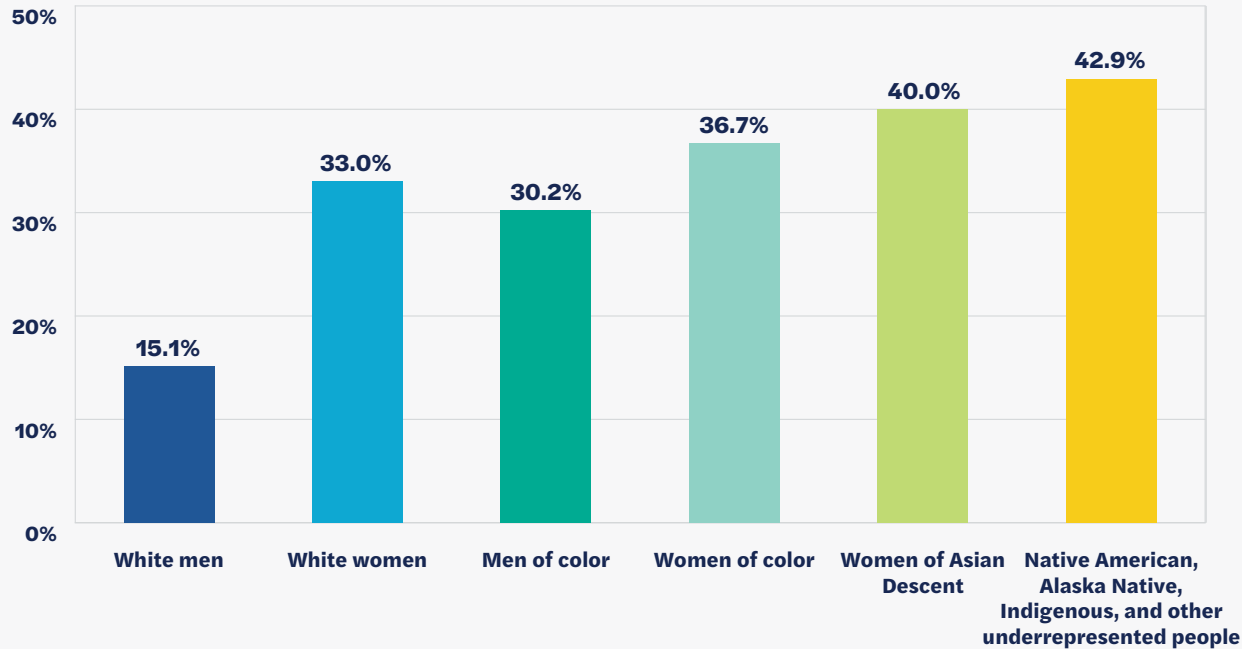
Architectural professionals of color also reported conflict with other people of color: 35.8% of men of color and 35.6% of women of color reported that people of color face conflicts with each other due to their different choices about how to fit in to the majority white workplace. Only 18.4% of white women and 12% of white men noticed these conflicts between people of color. The three groups that reported the most of this type of conflict were Black women, men of Asian descent, and Black men.

People of color in conflict with people of color



Around a third of women of color, white women, and men of color reported that women and architectural professionals of color have to compete with others in their own groups for career-enhancing opportunities, but only 15.1% of white men recognize this pattern. The groups reporting the most intra-group conflict were Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals and women of Asian descent.

Competition within groups for career-enhancing opportunities



“As women, we have to operate in a ‘man's world,’ be able to laugh and take jokes, and to experience unconscious bias and aggressions that should not be part of the workplace.”

—Woman of Asian descent

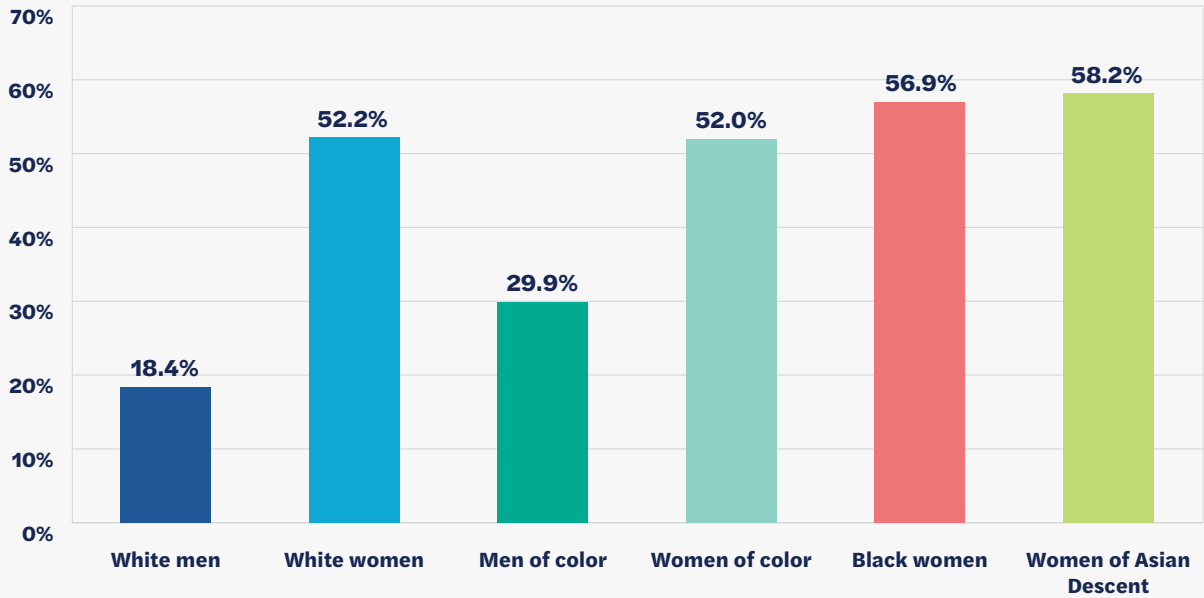
Joining the boys’ club

Problems also arise in workplaces where there is tokenism: room for only one woman or one person of color at the top. In these kinds of workplaces, non-dominant-group members can end up in conflicts or competition with each other: If there is room for only one at the top, ambitious women and people of color will compete for that spot. Research also documents “strategic distancing”: In male-dominated workplaces, some ambitious women see aligning with the boys’ club and against other women as a politically savvy move.⁸³ This is not simply the issue of a "queen bee" with a personality problem—research shows that “queen bee” behavior is actually a response to a biased environment.⁸⁴

“Right from my first job in the ’90’s, there have been male colleagues who make it clear that there is a boys’ club that governs behavior.” —White woman

Some women’s response to the boys’ club is to mimic traditionally masculine behaviors, which has led to resentment and negative views from other women. Half of white women and women of color reported that women have assimilated to the way men run

Women assimilate to the way men run careers



their career and their lives. Men were much less likely to report this: Only 29.9% of men of color and 18.4% of white men did. Women of Asian descent were the most likely to report this, followed by Black women.

⁸³ Ellemers, N., van den Heuvel, H., de Gilder, D., Maass, A., & Bonvini, A. (2004). The underrepresentation of women in science: Differential commitment or the queen bee syndrome? *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(3), 315-338. doi: 10.1348/0144666042037999; Derks, B., Van Laar, C., Ellemers, N., & de Groot, K. (2011). Gender-bias primes elicit queen-bee responses among senior policewomen. *Psychological Science*, 22(10), 1243-1249. doi: 10.1177/0956797611417258; Van Laar C., Bleeker D., Ellemers N. and Meijer E. (2014), Ingroup and outgroup support for upward mobility: Divergent responses to ingroup identification in low status groups. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 44(6), 563-577, doi: 10.1002/ejsp.2046

⁸⁴ Ellemers, N., Van den Heuvel, H., De Gilder, D., Maass, A., & Bonvini, A. (2004). The underrepresentation of women in science: Differential commitment or the queen bee syndrome?. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(3), 315-338.; Staines, G., Tavis, C., & Jayaratne, T. E. (1974). The queen bee syndrome. *Psychology Today*. 55(7).; Derks, B., Ellemers, N., Van Laar, C., & De Groot, K. (2011). Do sexist organizational cultures create the Queen Bee?. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(3), 519-535.

Bias pass-throughs

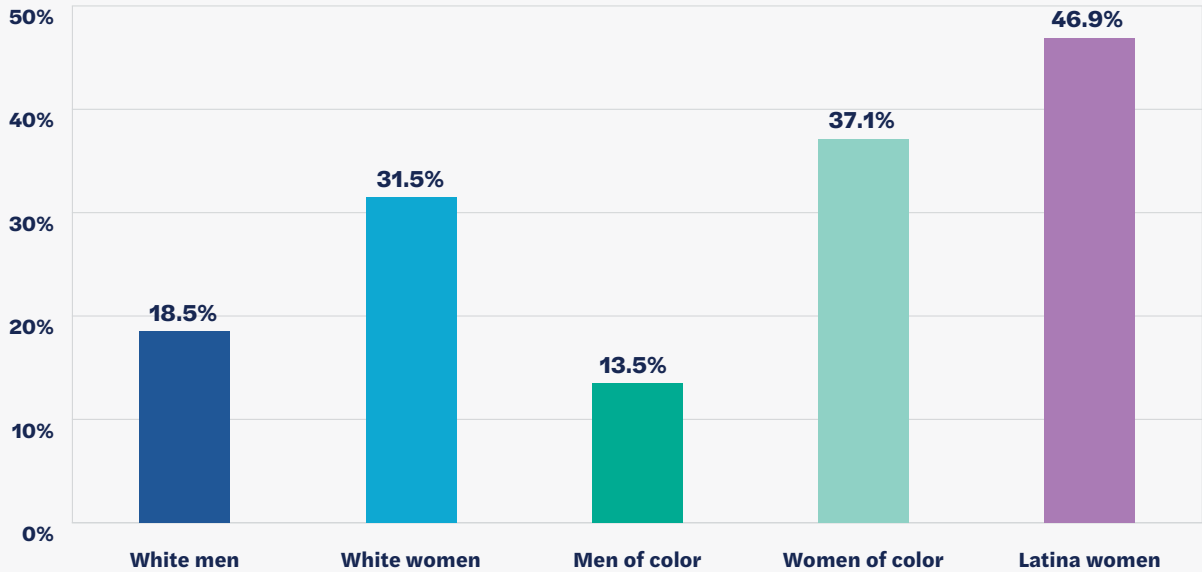
The other three patterns of bias can also be passed through from woman to woman.⁸⁵ For example, a woman may apply harsher standards to other women on the grounds that “that’s what it takes to succeed here as a woman,” passing through the Prove-it-again bias that she herself experiences.

“... [T]he principal in charge was also a woman ... , she told me that ‘women need to perform twice as well as men to be considered equal,’ and that she was only being so hard on me because she saw my potential to become a great architect.”
—White woman

Over a third (37.1%) of women of color and 31.5% of white women reported that some women don’t understand the commitment it takes to succeed in their career, while only 18.5% of white men and 13.5% of men of color reported the same. Latina women reported this pattern more than any other group.

One common and often unnoticed pass-through is when women or professionals of color find it hard to get the kind of support from admins that is readily available to white men. Our survey data suggests this occurs in the profession of architecture.

Women don't get what it takes



85 Williams, J. C., & Dempsey, R. W. (2014). *What works for women at work: Four patterns working women should know*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Architectural professionals of color reported more difficulty than their white counterparts in getting administrative support in the workplace. Twenty-five percent of women of color and 24.4% of men of color reported difficulty getting administrative support, compared to only 12.2% of white men and 18.7% of white women. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals and Black men reported the most difficulty getting administrative support.

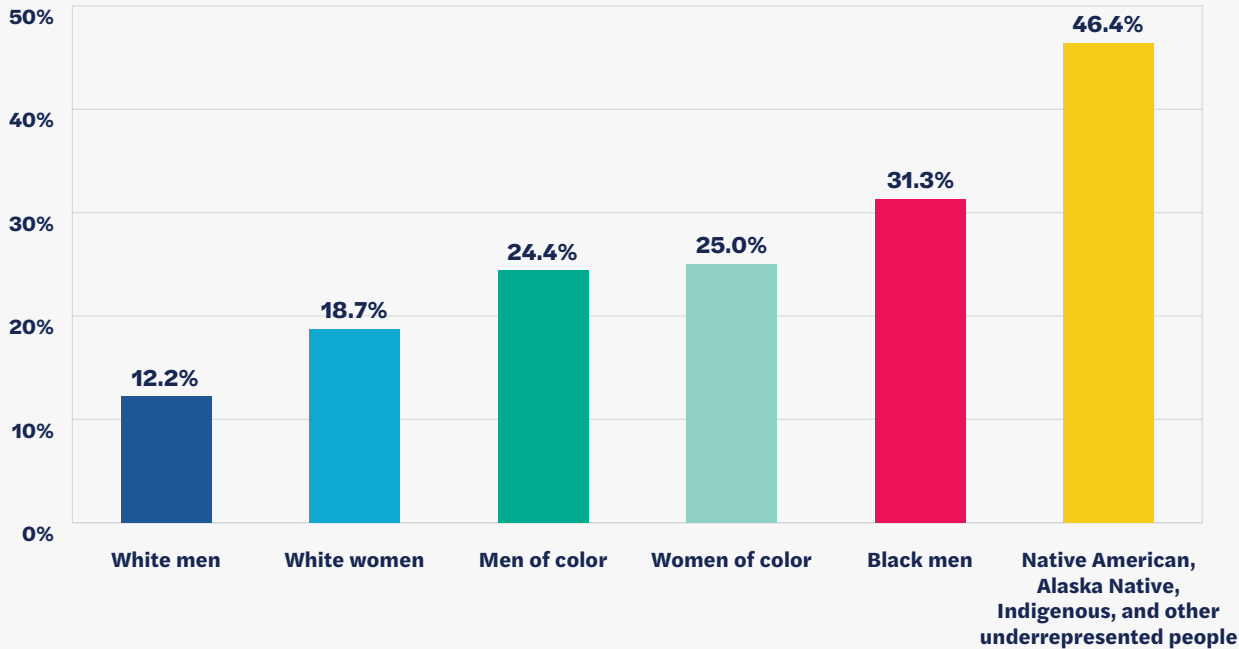
Tightrope bias can be passed through when women judge each other as too masculine (“assimilate male behaviors”) or too feminine (“not understanding what it takes to succeed in their career”) (discussed above). This can go as far as blaming other women for sexual harassment.

“From my experience women just need to behave professionally, compassionately, and firm... I believe there would be a lot less sexual harassment if women acted and responded appropriately.” —White woman

Maternal Wall bias can also be passed through when women are critical of the way other women handle motherhood:

“My boss at a previous firm was a woman... She always promoted the men in her group over the women, and told the (extremely talented) women in the group that they should stay home with their babies and take care of their husbands.” —White woman

Difficulty getting admin support



RACIAL STEREOTYPING

People of color in majority-white workplaces face additional patterns of bias based on racial stereotypes. Because these patterns play out differently for people in different racial and ethnic groups, we focus in this section on the unique experiences of architects and designers of color broken down into racial and ethnic groups.

Past research on diversity in the architecture profession has focused on structural barriers that people of color face: the steep cost of an architecture degree, a lack of knowledge about the profession of architecture as a career, and few role models for people of color in the profession.⁸⁶ Bias has been understudied but—it turns out—plays an important role.

Black architects and designers and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals faced the highest levels of bias in most of the areas we studied, with Latino/a architectural professionals, architectural professionals of Asian descent, and multiracial architectural professionals all reporting uniquely high levels of bias in certain areas.

Racial stereotyping bottom line

In addition to the four basic patterns of bias, architects and designers of color also face bias and stereotyping due to race and ethnicity. This means that architectural professionals of color, and women of color to an even higher degree, have to work to navigate more complicated politics in the workplace in order to achieve the same level of success as white people.

Black architectural professionals

Throughout this report, we have highlighted the fact that Black women face an elevated level of bias in architecture careers. Black people are underrepresented in the profession: according to *The Directory of African American Architects*, as of December 2020 there were 2,378 licensed African American architects in the United States: 502 women and 1,876 men.⁸⁷

Black architectural professionals, and Black women in particular, reported some of the highest levels of bias in our study. Their experiences stood out, even compared to other architects and designers of color.

Black architectural professionals reported some of the highest levels of Prove-it-again bias: They had to prove themselves over and over in order to get the same respect and recognition other groups are given automatically in the workplace.

Black architects and designers also faced higher levels of Tightrope bias than other groups. They reported having to conform to an even narrower range of behaviors, and Black women were expected to change their appearance and demeanor in order to fit in.

“... I have been the victim of racial bias on multiple occasions ... As a result, the way that I socialize, my interests outside of work, my dialect and tone, and my expectations often differ from the norm and make me very uncomfortable.”

—Black woman

⁸⁶ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

⁸⁷ *The Directory of African American Architects*. Retrieved 10/12/20 from: <http://blackarchitect.us/>

More Black women than any other group spoke about being unable to express justified anger in our qualitative data.

“It feels like the way I communicate disappointment or whatever, is typically characterized in an angry manner that is inappropriate. The person next to me could have said the same thing in the same way, but the fact that I said it.” —Black woman

Black architectural professionals also faced more exclusion: Over half of Black women were left out of the informal information-sharing networks at their workplaces, compared to only one in five white men (see [page 108](#) for more details on exclusion in architecture workplaces).

Black architects and designers, and Black women especially, reported some of the lowest levels of belonging of any groups.

In the United States, white people have less contact with Black people: This means they are more likely to rely on stereotypes when they do interact.⁸⁸ Black people are stereotyped as less competent⁸⁹ and as lazy,⁹⁰ which can lead to hyper-scrutiny and to extra work to disprove the stereotypes.

"There are constantly comments about me being a Black female architect, ‘educated,’ and trying to move up ‘too quickly.’ I was not given a raise following licensure, nor is my other specialty in urban planning recognized.” —Black woman

“I think many firms hire to fill their ‘diversity quota’ and many people end up as tokens. Luckily, I have moved on/left those former employers.” —Black woman

“...Being the only Black woman in my department and one of three in the entire office, I feel that all of my moves are being watched.”
—Black woman

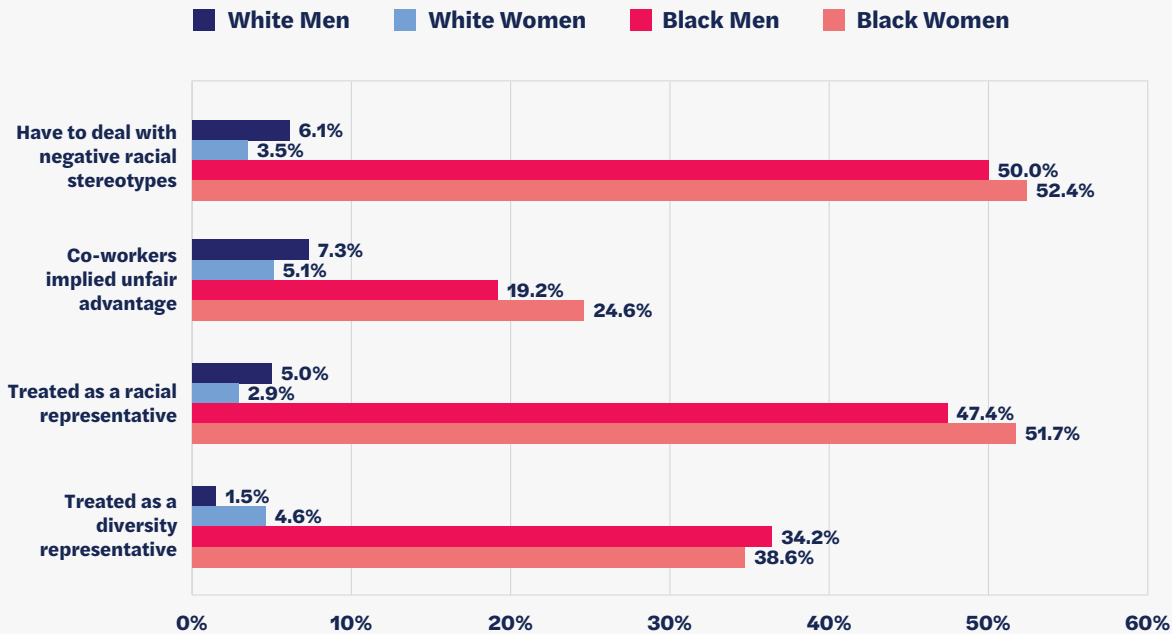
⁸⁸ Smith, E. L. B., & Nkomo, S. M. (2003). *Our separate ways: Black and white women and the struggle for professional identity*. Harvard Business Press.

⁸⁹ Biernat, M., & Kobrynowicz, D. (1997). Gender- and race-based standards of competence: Lower minimum standards but higher ability standards for devalued groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(3), 544-557. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.72.3.544

⁹⁰ Ghavami, N., & Peplau, L. A. (2013). An intersectional analysis of gender and ethnic stereotypes: Testing three hypotheses. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 37(1), 113-127.

- Black architects and designers reported racial bias at stunningly high levels.
- 52.4% of Black women and 50% of Black men reported having to deal with negative racial stereotypes at work, compared to 6.1% of white men and 3.5% of white women.
 - 24.6% of Black women and 19.2% of Black men reported that co-workers implied they have received unfair advantages at work due to their race, compared to 7.3% of white men and 5.1% of white women.
 - 51.7% of Black women and 47.4% of Black men reported being treated as representatives of their race, rather than as team members with unique skills and expertise, compared to 5% of white men and 2.9% of white women.
 - 38.6% of Black women and 34.2% of Black men reported being treated like their main function was to provide diversity, rather than to do work, compared to 1.5% of white men and 4.6% of white women.

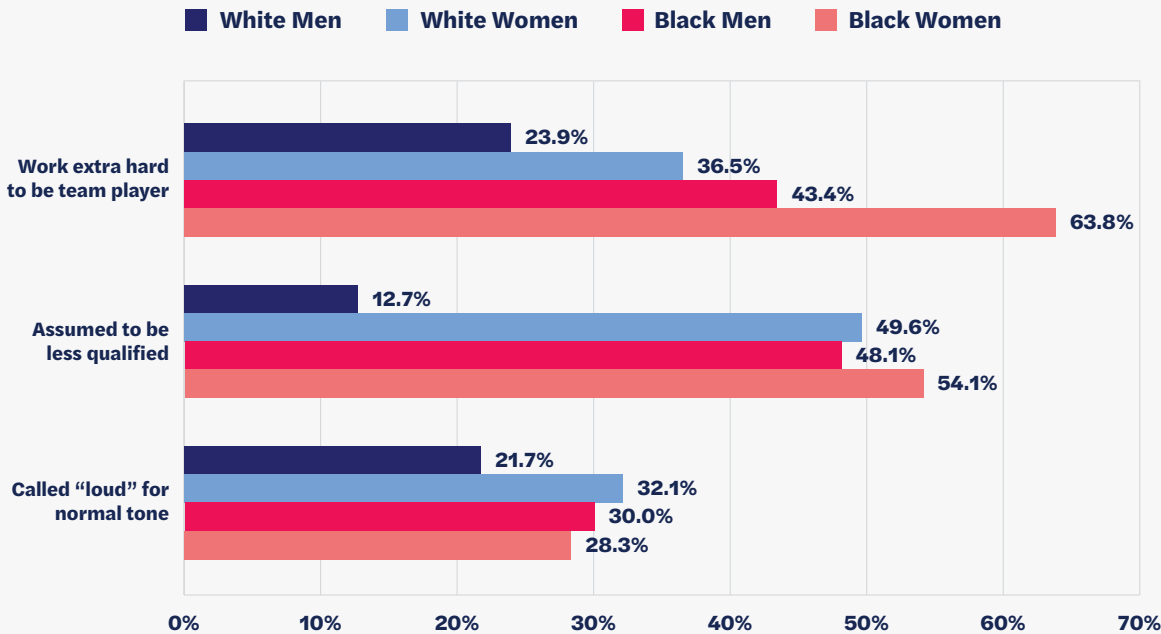
Racial bias



Black architectural professionals also reported that racial stereotypes are prevalent, with nearly two-thirds of Black women reporting they have to work extra hard to be seen as team players—at a rate sharply higher than white architectural professionals.

- 63.8% of Black women and 43.4% of Black men reported having to work extra hard to be seen as a team player at work, compared to 23.9% of white men and 36.5% of white women.
- 54.1% of Black women and 48.1% of Black men reported that others in the workplace assume that they are less qualified than their peers, even if they have the same credentials, compared to 12.7% of white men and 49.6% of white women.
- 28.3% of Black women and 30% of Black men reported being called “loud” when using a normal tone of voice, compared to 21.7% of white men and 32.1% of white women.

Stereotypes



“I have been consistently mistaken for other colleagues of similar race/ethnicity. We look nothing alike.”

—Black man

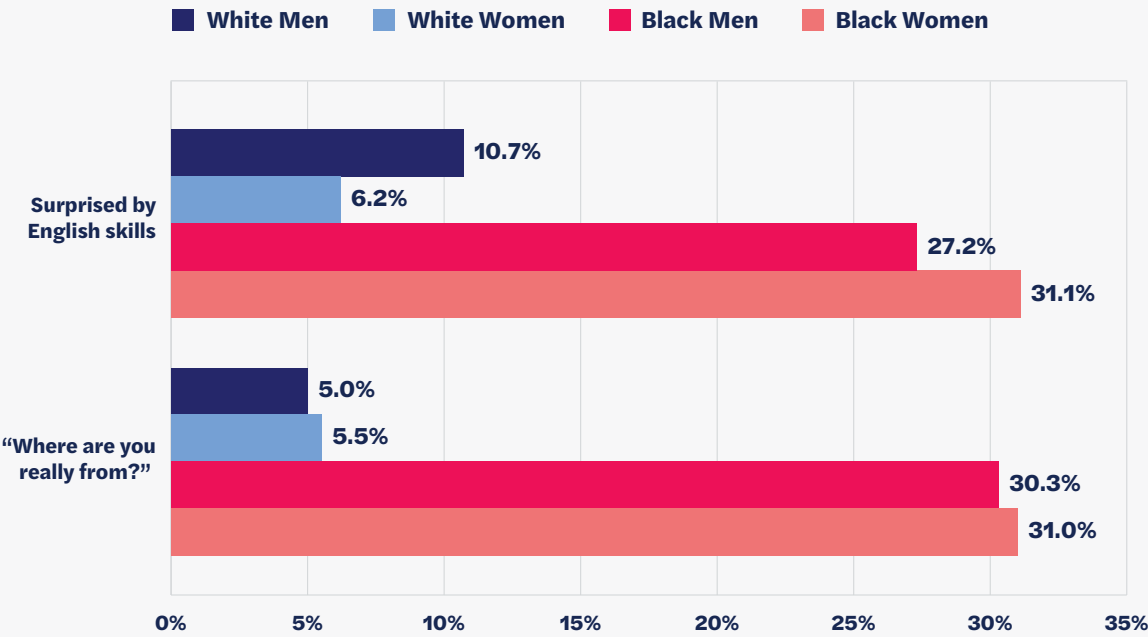
Many Black survey respondents also reported being treated like they don’t belong in their workplaces:

- 31.1% of Black women and 27.2% of Black men reported that co-workers were surprised by their English skills, compared to 10.7% of white men and 6.2% of white women.
- 31% of Black women and 30.3% of Black men reported being asked, “Where are you really from?” compared to 5% of white men and 5.5% of white women.

Prior research shows that Black women in professional workplaces report feeling demeaned, isolated, and disrespected.⁹¹ One survey found that Black women are mentally checked out at their jobs at a rate 75% higher than white men.⁹² Some architectural professionals in this study reported disrespect.

“I have experienced behavior that is unbecoming, like being patted on my head by my CEO. I was sitting down. It was in a public place, and I was just mortified.” –Black woman

Don't belong



⁹¹ Williams, J. C., & Dempsey, R. W. (2014). *What works for women at work: Four patterns working women should know*. New York, NY: New York University Press.; Williams, J. C. (2014). Double jeopardy? An empirical study with implications for the debates over implicit bias and intersectionality. *Harvard Journal of Law & Gender*, 37, 185.

⁹² George, S. (2019). The Gender Gap Is Just the Tip of the Iceberg for Black Women, *Great Place to Work*. Retrieved from: <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/diagnosing-quit-and-stay-among-black-women>

Black people face stereotypes based on appearance, too: Natural hairstyles can trigger competence-related stereotypes.⁹³ One study found that Black women who wear natural Afrocentric hairstyles are seen as less professional than Black women who wear Eurocentric hairstyles.⁹⁴ The qualitative data in this study revealed that this occurs in the architecture profession as well.

“I did deal with hair comments when I was interning... I think they don’t mean anything of it but when you’re the only person in the office who looks the way you do, it’s intimidating... And after being full-time, just being told that you’re a work of art because of your hair, it just doesn’t feel right.” —*Black woman*

“My white boss once said, ‘Girls should not present with dreads,’ in response to a presentation given by an African American male with dreads.” —*Latino man*

Latino/a architectural professionals
Latino/a individuals are underrepresented in the architecture profession, and some Latino/a architects and designers feel they are treated as tokens.

Latino/a architectural professionals also face the stereotype that people from Latin cultures are lazy.⁹⁵

“Comments about Latin cultures being lazier than other cultures... [and] comments about my accent in a diminishing way.” —*Latina woman*

This stereotype feeds the Prove-it-again dynamic.

“I’ve realized that people of color or of Hispanic/Spanish/Latin American ethnicities do have to outperform just a bit more than white counterparts... in a white-dominated workplace...” —*Latino man*

Latino/a architects and designers also sometimes feel they need to explain their culture to colleagues.

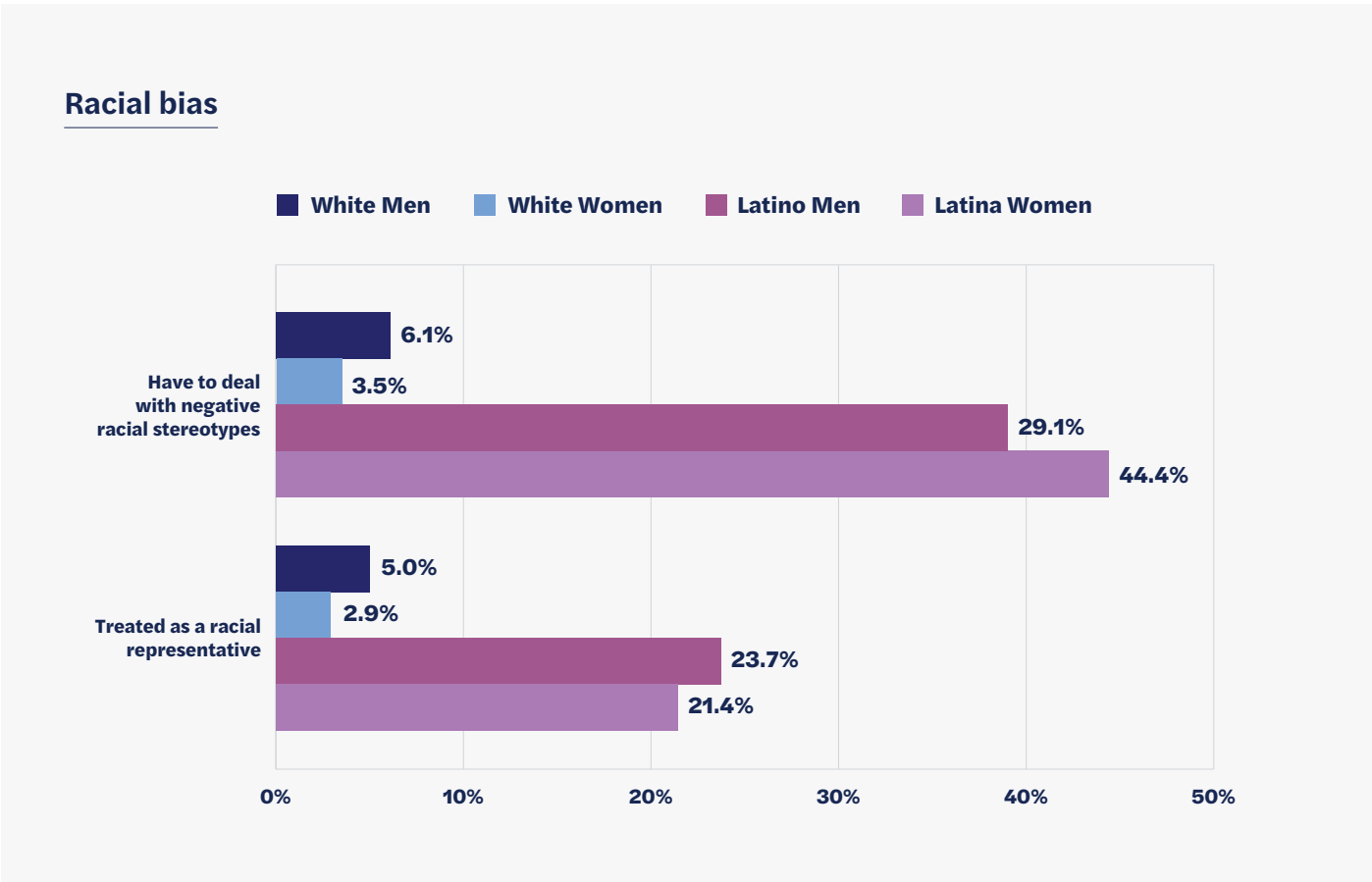
“...I do explain aspects of my culture, but it is a culture share since the office has a diverse culture with different religions... It's never been hostile the past few years so far, just more like a sit down and tell-me-because-I-never-met-a-white-female-Puerto Rican-who-grew-up-in-Texas-who-knows-how-use-tools scenario.” —*White Latina woman*

“[I’m] referred [to] as the ‘Mexican’ architect in the office... I feel I'm the Mexican token in the office. It's good to show that the office is ‘diverse.’”
—*Latino man*

⁹³ Maddox, K. B. (2004). Perspectives on racial phenotypicity bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 8(4), 383-401.
⁹⁴ Opie, T. R., & Phillips, K. W. (2015). Hair penalties: The negative influence of Afrocentric hair on ratings of Black women's dominance and professionalism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 1311.
⁹⁵ Williams, J. C. (2014). Double jeopardy? An empirical study with implications for the debates over implicit bias and intersectionality. *Harvard Journal of Law & Gender*, 37, 185

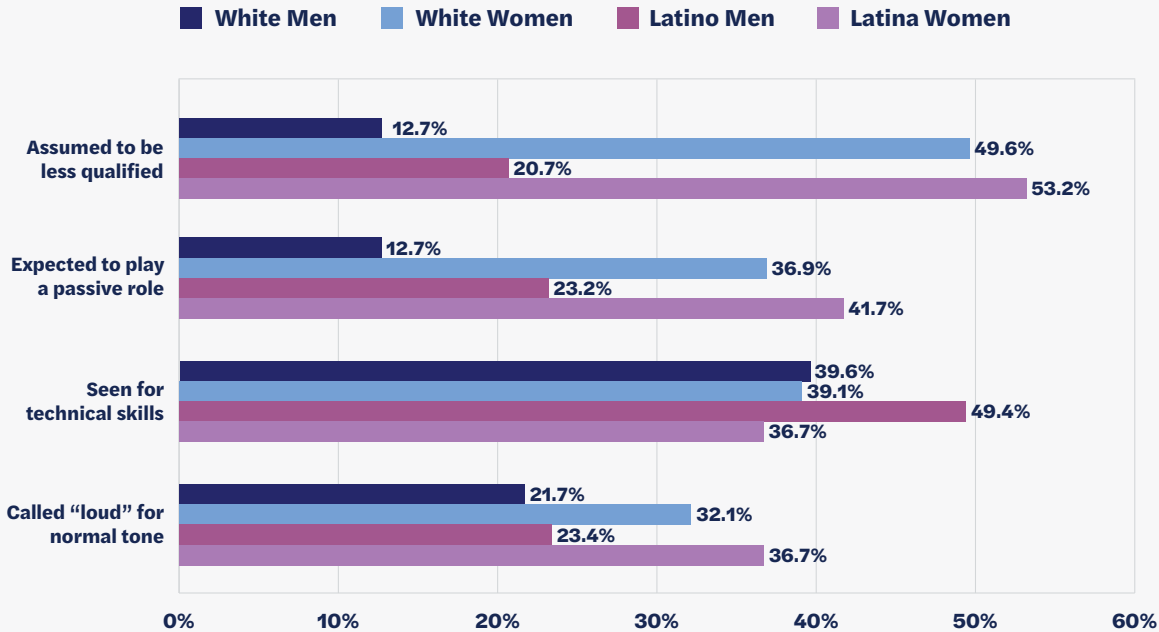
Racial bias was reported by Latino/a men and women at a rate sharply higher than white men and women.

- 44.4% of Latina women and 29.1% of Latino men reported having to deal with negative racial stereotypes at work, compared to 6.1% of white men and 3.5% of white women.
- 21.4% of Latina women and 23.7% of Latino men reported being treated as representatives of their race, rather than as team members with unique skills and expertise, compared to 5% of white men and 2.9% of white women.



- Latino/a architectural professionals, and Latina women in particular, also reported high levels of stereotyping:
- 53.2% of Latina women and 20.7% of Latino men reported that others in the workplace assume that they are less qualified than their peers, even if they have the same credentials compared to 12.7% of white men and 49.6% of white women.
 - 41.7% of Latina women and 23.2% of Latino men reported that they are expected to play a passive, quiet role at work, compared to 12.7% of white men and 36.9% of white women.
 - 36.7% of Latina women and 49.4% of Latino men reported being seen for their technical skills rather than as management material, compared to 39.6% of white men and 39.1% of white women.
 - 36.7% of Latina women and 23.4% of Latino men reported being called “loud” when using normal tones of voice, compared to 21.7% of white men and 32.1% of white women.

Stereotypes



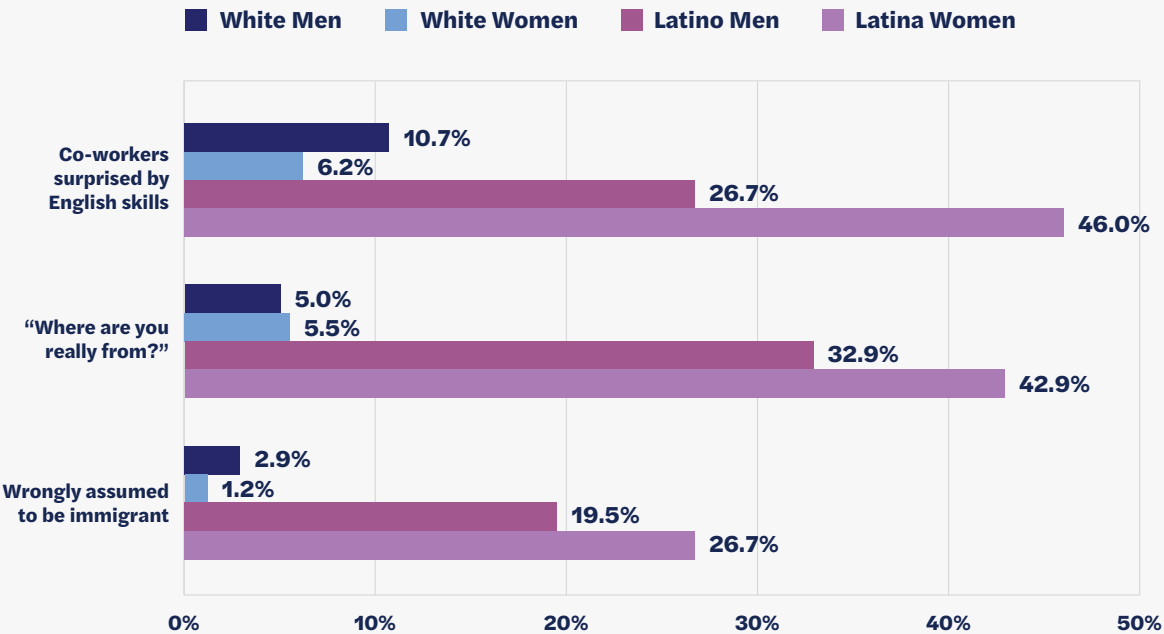
Research also shows that Latino/a workers are stereotyped as being “forever foreigners,” i.e., immigrants suited for low-level work. Accent discrimination can exacerbate this.⁹⁶ This stereotype also showed up in our findings.

“Only person in office with English as a second language. Had an employee mocked by one of the principals for his strong accent, he was let go for performance.” —*Latina woman*

“People think I’m an immigrant and think less of me because I speak English with an accent. Despite having the same and sometimes more credentials than locals... I’m assigned less prominent and exciting jobs that those who are born in this country.” —*Latino man*

- 46% of Latina women and 26.7% of Latino men reported that co-workers were surprised by their English skills, compared to 10.7% of white men and 6.2% of white women.
- 42.9% of Latina women and 32.9% of Latino men reported being asked, “Where are you really from?” compared to 5% of white men and 5.5% of white women.
- 26.7% of Latina women and 19.5% of Latino men reported that they were wrongly assumed to be immigrants, compared to 2.9% of white men and 1.2% of white women.

Forever foreigner



⁹⁶ Browne, I., & Misra, J. (2003). The intersection of gender and race in the labor market. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29(1), 487-513.; Roman, E. (2000). Who exactly is living la vida loca: The legal and political consequences of Latino-Latina ethnic and racial stereotypes in film and other media. *Journal of Gender, Race & Justice*, 4, 37.; Segura, D. A. (1992). Chicanas in white-collar jobs: “You have to prove yourself more.” *Sociological Perspectives*, 35(1), 163-182.

Architectural professionals of Asian descent

Architectural professionals of Asian descent faced some of the strongest Tug of War bias. Both men and women of Asian descent were impacted strongly by conflict between people of color in the workplace, while women of Asian descent also experienced Tug of War based on gender.

“I have been told... that I get taken on project interviews because I'm a double ‘token’ minority: a woman and a racial minority... People don't want to believe that I could be given those opportunities because of my skills or abilities.”

—Woman of Asian descent

“One of the issues with racism is that people come to you... they characterize you before they know you. ... People always used to tell me that they were amazed at my ability, this was early on, at my ability to speak English; they assumed I had come from China, instead of being born in the U.S.”

—Woman of Asian descent

The “model minority” stereotype—that people of Asian descent are competent, hardworking, and successful—may seem to be flattering, but it can present challenges. Sometimes people of Asian descent are judged as inadequate if they don’t overperform, particularly in technical roles.⁹⁷

People of Asian descent are stereotyped as competent, but not sociable.⁹⁸ They are expected to be good at math, but lacking when it comes to warmth and social skills.⁹⁹ In the workplace, this can mean that people of Asian descent are seen as a good fit for technical but not leadership roles.¹⁰⁰ There were observations in this study that supported that this perception is present in the architecture profession as well.

⁹⁷ Rosette, A. S., de Leon, R. P., Koval, C. Z., & Harrison, D. A. (2018). Intersectionality: Connecting experiences of gender with race at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 38, 1-22.; Williams, J. C. (2014). Double jeopardy? An empirical study with implications for the debates over implicit bias and intersectionality. *Harvard Journal of Law & Gender*, 37, 185.

⁹⁸ Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(6), 878-902. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.82.6.878; Lin, M. H., Kwan, V. S., Cheung, A., & Fiske, S. T. (2005). Stereotype content model explains prejudice for an envied outgroup: Scale of anti-Asian American stereotypes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(1), 34-47.

⁹⁹ Ghavami, N., & Peplau, L. A. (2013). An intersectional analysis of gender and ethnic stereotypes: Testing three hypotheses. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 37(1), 113-127.

¹⁰⁰ Lai, L., & Babcock, L. C. (2013). Asian Americans and workplace discrimination: The interplay between sex of evaluators and the perception of social skills. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34(3), 310-326.; Rosette, A. S., de Leon, R. P., Koval, C. Z., & Harrison, D. A. (2018). Intersectionality: Connecting experiences of gender with race at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 38, 1-22.

“I felt at my workplace, and sometimes in front of clients, the stereotype of the model-minority and math-competent Asian was at play.”

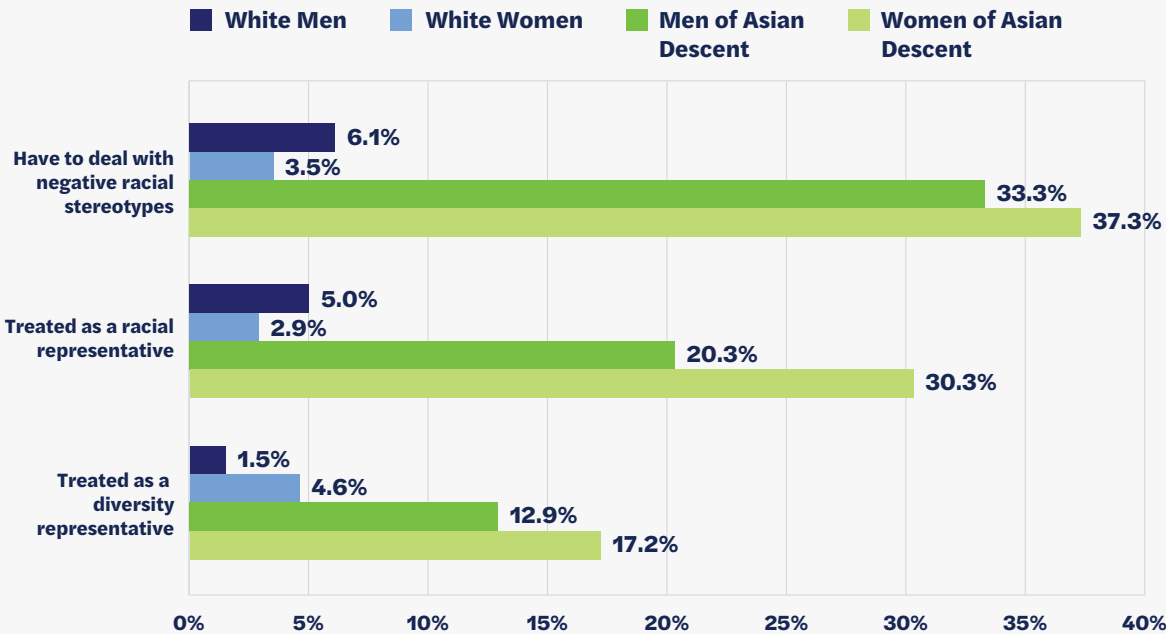
—Man of Asian descent

Architectural professionals of Asian descent reported facing racial bias in the workplace at sharply higher rates than white architectural professional.

- 37.3% of women of Asian descent and 33.3% of men of Asian descent reported having to deal with negative racial stereotypes at work, compared to 6.1% of white men and 3.5% of white women.
- 30.3% of women of Asian descent and 20.3% of men of Asian descent reported being treated as representatives of their race, rather than as team members with unique skills and expertise, compared to 5% of white men and 2.9% of white women.
- 17.2% of women of Asian descent and 12.9% of men of Asian descent reported being treated like their main function was to provide diversity, rather than to do work, compared to 1.5% of white men and 4.6% of white women.

“I no longer see architects as respectful humans but racist, sexist, and elitist. White males dominate and promote their own kind, speak their own language, and they keep minorities like I down as technical architects. So I left.”
—Woman of Asian descent

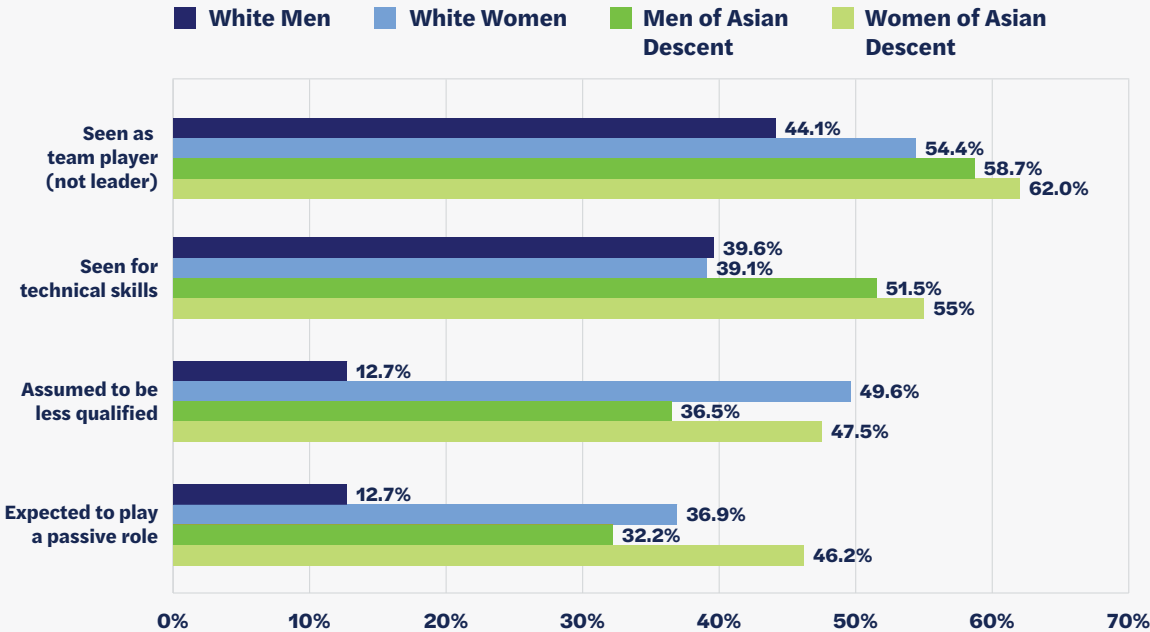
Racial bias



Architectural professionals of Asian descent also reported that stereotyping is commonplace.

- 62% of women of Asian descent and 58.7% of men of Asian descent reported being seen as team players, rather than as leaders, compared to 44.1% of white men and 54.4% of white women.
- 55% of women of Asian descent and 51.5% of men of Asian descent reported being seen for their technical skills rather than as management material, compared to 39.6% of white men and 39.1% of white women.
- 47.5% of women of Asian descent and 36.5% of men of Asian descent reported that others in the workplace assume that they are less qualified than their peers, even if they have the same credentials, compared to 12.7% of white men and 49.6% of white women.
- 46.2% of women of Asian descent and 32.2% of men of Asian descent reported that they are expected to play a passive, quiet role at work, compared to 12.7% of white men and 36.9% of white women.

Stereotypes

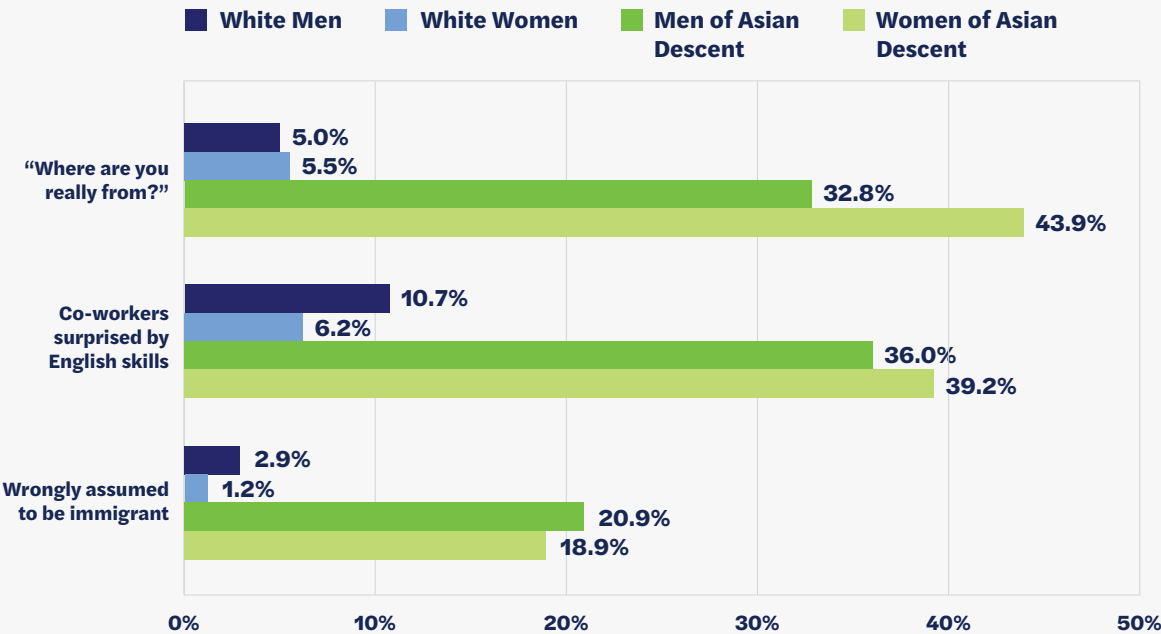


People of Asian descent also face a stereotype that they are not true Americans: They are “forever foreigners.”¹⁰¹ Research shows that they are more likely to be asked, “Where are you really from?”¹⁰² and to be faced with surprise at their English-language skills.¹⁰³ This study demonstrated this stereotype exists in the architecture profession as well.

“In a certain way, people expect you to speak for your race, or they don’t recognize, in a weird way, your race. ‘How do the Chinese feel about that?’ Well, I really don’t know! I grew up in a suburb in New Jersey!” –Woman of Asian descent

- 43.9% of women of Asian descent and 32.8% of men of Asian descent reported being asked, “Where are you really from?” compared to 5% of white men and 5.5% of white women.
- 39.2% of women of Asian descent and 36% of men of Asian descent reported that co-workers were surprised by their English skills, compared to 10.7% of white men and 6.2% of white women.
- 18.9% of women of Asian descent and 20.9% of men of Asian descent reported that they were wrongly assumed to be immigrants, compared to 2.9% of white men and 1.2% of white women.

Forever foreigner



¹⁰¹ Tuan, M. (1998). *Forever foreigners or honorary whites?: the Asian ethnic experience today*. Rutgers University Press.

¹⁰² Armenta, B. E., Lee, R. M., Pituc, S. T., Jung, K. R., Park, I. J., Soto, J. A., ... & Schwartz, S. J. (2013). Where are you from? A validation of the Foreigner Objectification Scale and the psychological correlates of foreigner objectification among Asian Americans and Latinos. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 19(2), 131.

¹⁰³ Tran, A. G., & Lee, R. M. (2014). You speak English well! Asian Americans' reactions to an exceptionalizing stereotype. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 61(3), 484.

Multiracial architectural professionals

Multiracial people are underrepresented both in the architecture profession and in research on people of color. In this report, people who indicated that they identify as more than one racial/ethnic group are included as multiracial individuals.

Multiracial architectural professionals faced some of the strongest levels of bias based on assignments. In particular, multiracial women reported doing the most office housework: literal housework, administrative work, and emotion work. On top of doing the most office housework, multiracial women also reported the least access to design work.

“Being taken seriously as a woman architect of color is tough. Either I’m an interior designer or I’m too young to know what I’m talking about.” –Multiracial woman

Multiracial women also reported higher levels of Maternal Wall bias, even higher than other women of color. They were particularly likely to be told that mothers should work less so they can be home with their children more.

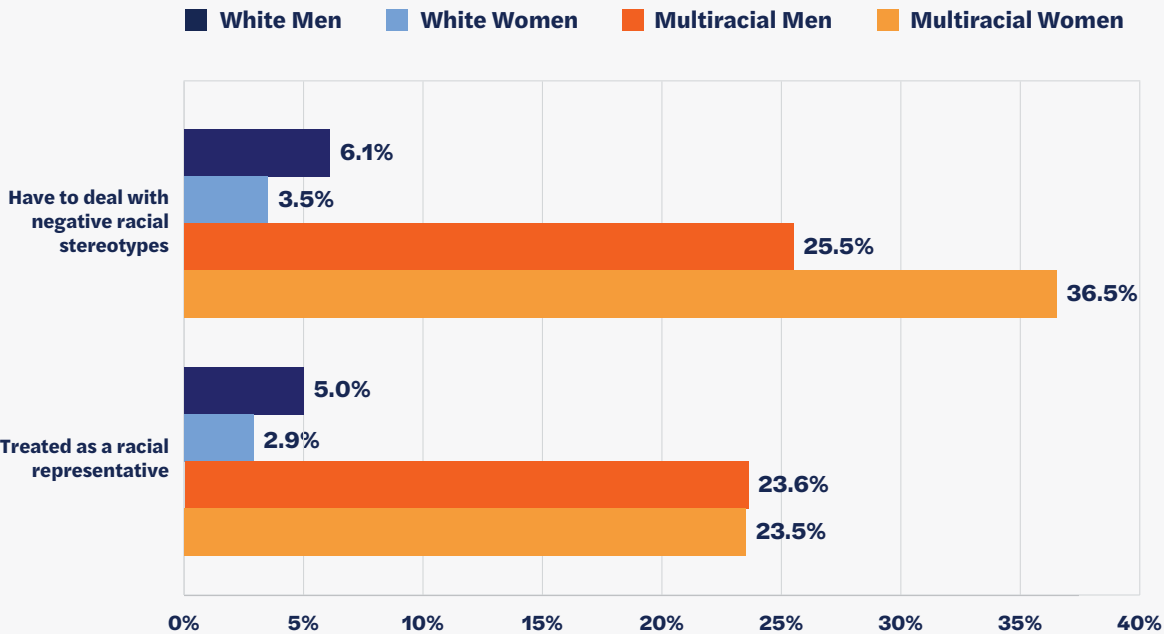
Like other architectural professionals of color, some felt treated as tokens.

“Was told once we needed someone to sit there and look good for a meeting by a female superior.” –Multiracial man

Multiracial architects and designers also reported racial bias in their workplaces:

- 36.5% of multiracial women and 25.5% of multiracial men reported having to deal with negative racial stereotypes at work, compared to 6.1% of white men and 3.5% of white women.

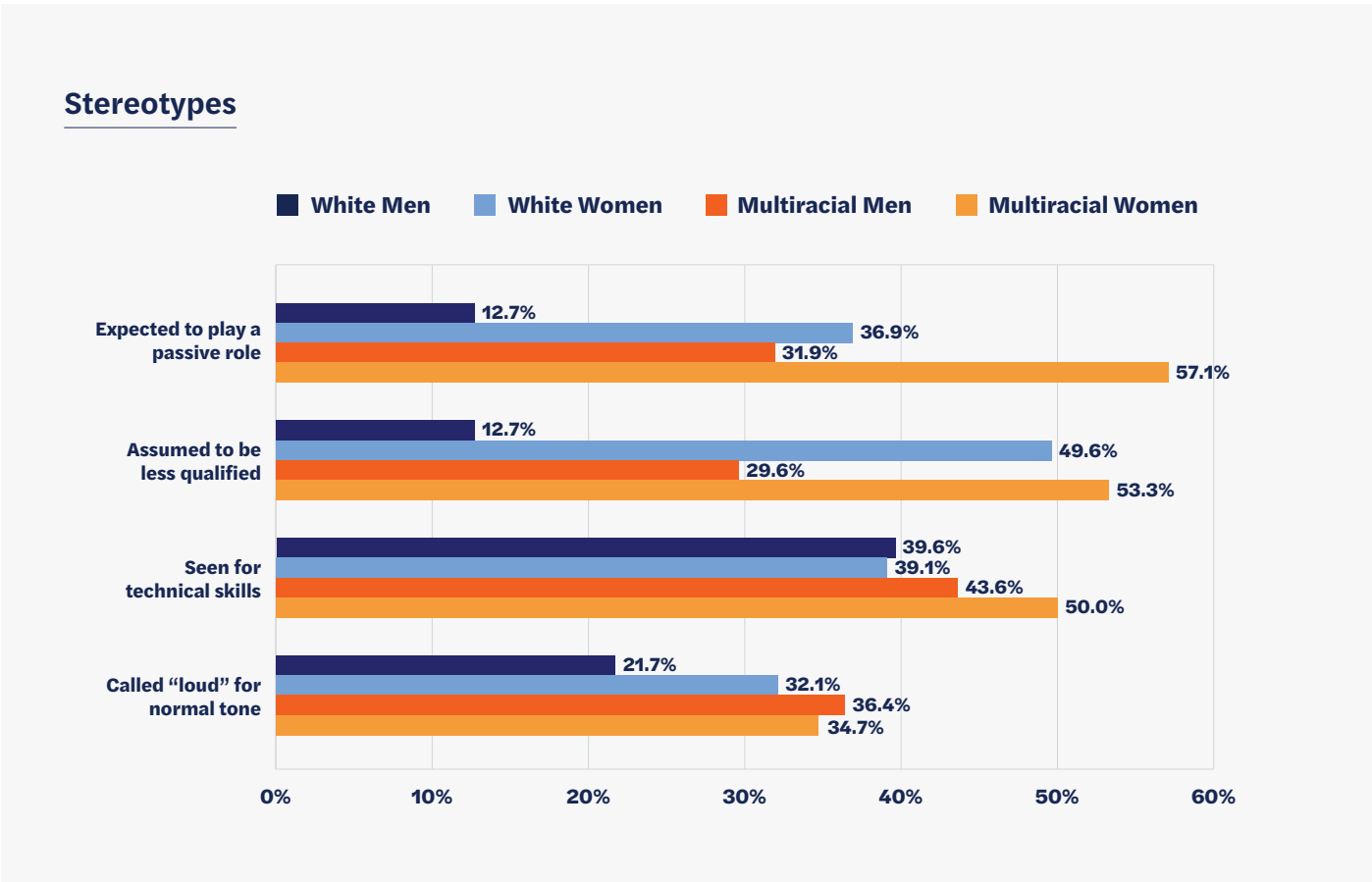
Racial bias



- 23.5% of multiracial women and 23.6% of multiracial men reported being treated as representatives of their race, rather than as team members with unique skills and expertise, compared to 5% of white men and 2.9% of white women.

Multiracial architectural professionals also reported high levels of stereotyping.

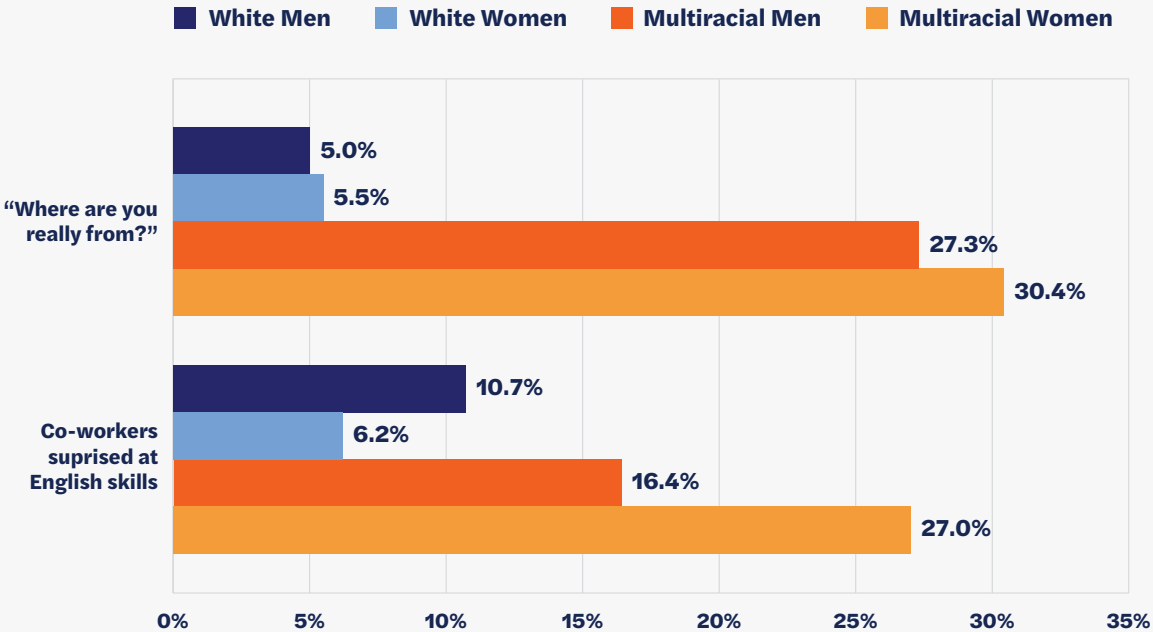
- 57.1% of multiracial women and 31.9% of multiracial men reported that they are expected to play a passive, quiet role at work, compared to 12.7% of white men and 36.9% of white women.
- 53.3% of multiracial women and 29.6% of multiracial men reported that others in the workplace assume that they are less qualified than their peers, even if they have the same credentials, compared to 12.7% of white men and 49.6% of white women.
- 50% of multiracial women and 43.6% of multiracial men reported being seen for their technical skills rather than as management material, compared to 39.6% of white men and 39.1% of white women.
- 34.7% of multiracial women and 36.4% of multiracial men reported being called “loud” when using normal tones of voice, compared to 21.7% of white men and 32.1% of white women.



Multiracial architects and designers also reported that they are treated like they don't belong in the architecture profession.

- 30.4% of multiracial women and 27.3% of multiracial men reported being asked, “Where are you really from?” compared to 5% of white men and 5.5% of white women.
- 27% of multiracial women and 16.4% of multiracial men reported that co-workers were surprised by their English skills, compared to 10.7% of white men and 6.2% of white women.

Don't belong



Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals

Our survey respondents included 14 individuals who identified as Native American or Alaska Native, seven individuals who identified as Middle Eastern or North African, five individuals who identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 12 individuals who identified other racial or ethnic groups using a write-in option. In order to protect participant privacy, we are not able to share survey results from any of these individual groups.

Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals faced the highest levels of bias in many of the areas we studied. This group contains people of many different backgrounds, including some of the most marginalized groups in the United States. Thus, it is not surprising that this group reported high levels of bias across the board.

Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architects and designers reported high levels of Prove-it-again bias: They had to prove themselves over and over to get the same amount of respect and recognition automatically given to other colleagues.

“I find I have to work four times as hard to get a fraction of the respect given to others who just sit at the table.”

—Other underrepresented woman

Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported some of the highest levels of Tightrope bias. They were the least likely to be seen as leaders, faced a particularly narrow range of acceptable behaviors, and reported the most pushback for justified expressions of anger.

Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architects and designers reported unfairness in their workplace systems as well: They reported the least satisfaction with their compensation, and fewer than half reported being paid fairly, compared to 84.1% of white men. They also reported doing the most behind-the-scenes work and having the least access to design work.

Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported more unfairness in the performance evaluations and hiring processes of their organizations as well, even higher than other architects and designers of color.

Perhaps as a result of experiencing many types of bias in the workplace, Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported the lowest levels of belonging in the workplace.

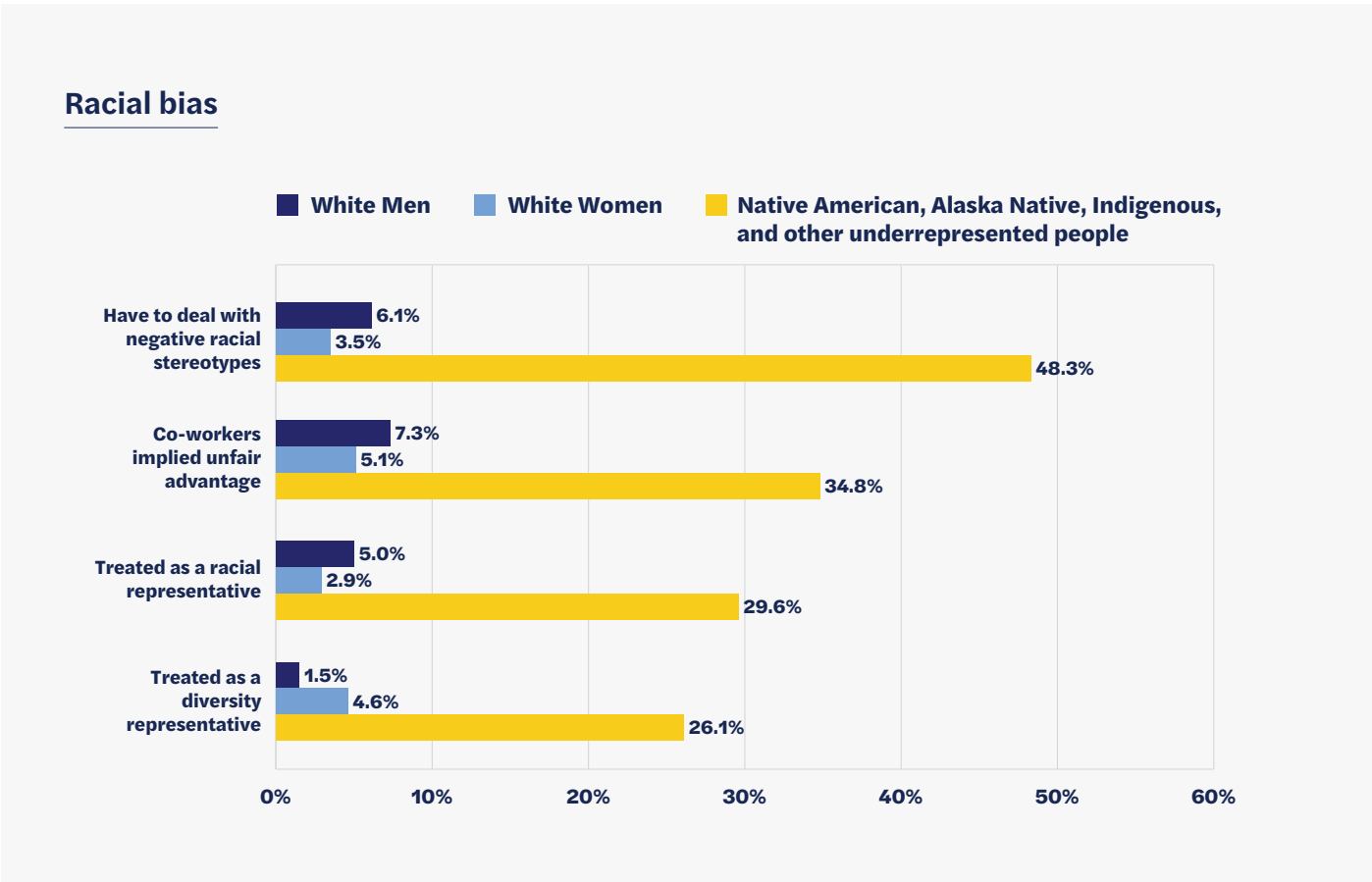
Some reported being treated as tokens.

“I am put on teams for the fact of my Native American heritage and not given any architectural responsibilities except for cultural liaison.”

—Native American man

Although the group of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals covers a wide variety of backgrounds and ethnicities, they also tended to report high levels of bias.

- 48.3% of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported having to deal with negative racial stereotypes at work, compared to 6.1% of white men and 3.5% of white women.
- 34.8% of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported that co-workers implied they have received unfair advantages at work due to their race, compared to 7.3% of white men and 5.1% of white women.
- 29.6% of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported being treated as representatives of their race, rather than as team members with unique skills and expertise, compared to 5% of white men and 2.9% of white women.
- 26.1% of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported being treated like their main function was to provide diversity, rather than to do work, compared to 1.5% of white men and 4.6% of white women.

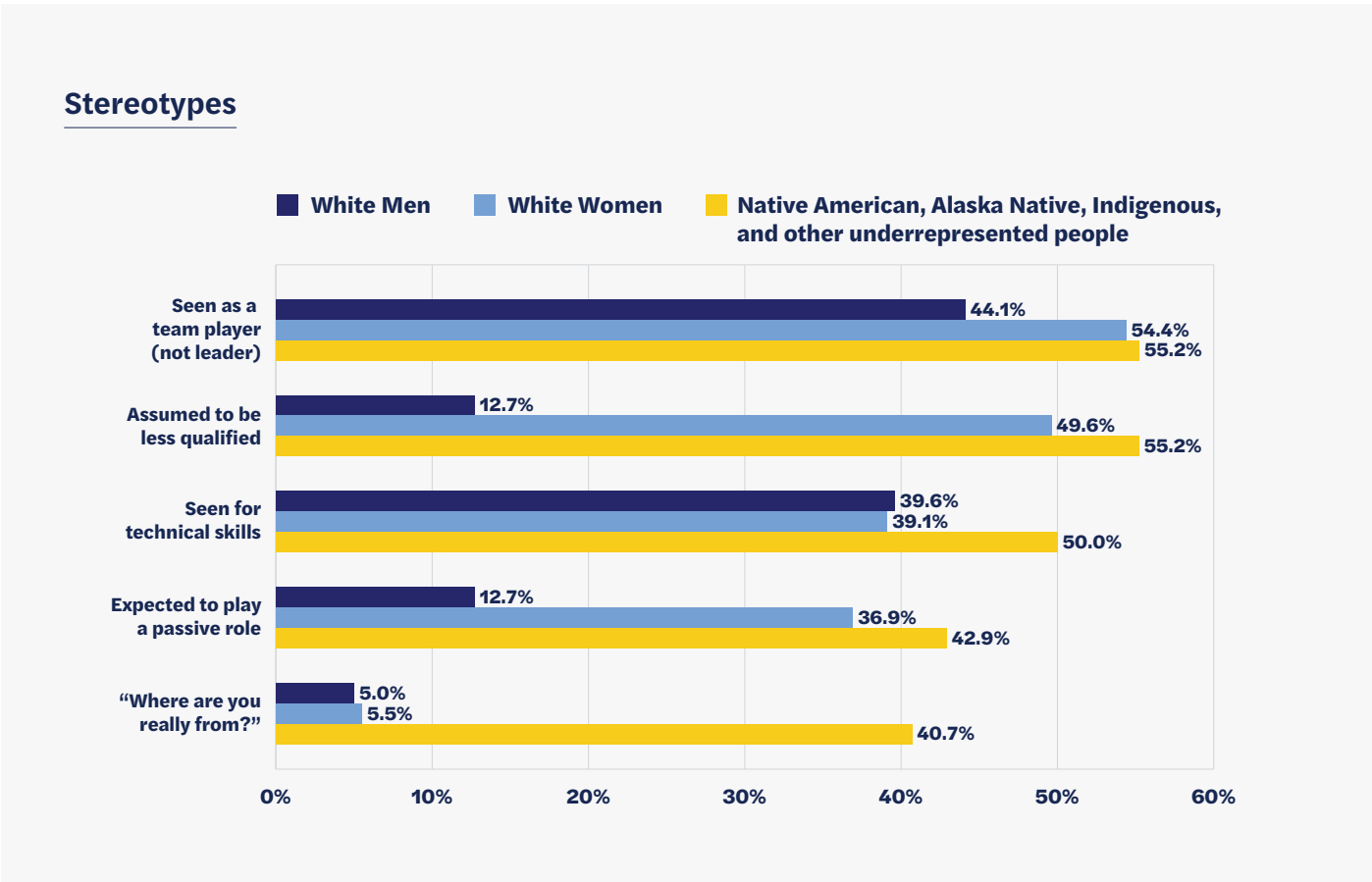


Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals also reported stereotyping.

“When people find out that I am an immigrant from Pakistan, they often ask me if I had an arranged marriage.”
—*Pakistani woman*

- 55.2% of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported being seen as team players, rather than as leader, compared to 44.1% of white men and 54.4% of white women.
- 55.2% of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported that others in the workplace assume that they are less qualified than their peers, even if they have the same credentials, compared to 12.7% of white men and 49.6% of white women.
- 50% of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported being seen for their technical skills rather than as management material, compared to 39.6% of white men and 39.1% of white women.
- 42.9% of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported that they are expected to play a passive, quiet role at work, compared to 12.7% of white men and 36.9% of white women.
- 40.7% of Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported being asked, “Where are you really from?”, compared to 5% of white men and 5.5% of white women.

Cultural appropriation can create an uncomfortable workplace environment, particularly for Native Americans.



“Often, as a Native American architect, my employers have tried to take advantage of my culture and use it in their own promotions and imply that I gave consent by using my photo. Marketing staff have literally made up a stereotypical history for me to use in pursuing a project—a history that they thought would make me more appealing to the potential client. There seems to be feeling that it is acceptable to ‘use’ non-dominant cultures as a marketing strategy and/or theme.”
—*Native American woman*

WORKPLACE PROCESSES AND POLICIES

All of the types of bias we have discussed up until this point play out in everyday workplace interactions, but bias also plays out in formal business systems and policies. This study asked respondents about fairness in the workplace processes and policies in their organizations, including hiring, compensation, performance evaluations, sponsorship, and promotions. The pattern was clear: White men reported different, better experiences than other groups. In some systems, women of color reported much worse experiences than white women and men of color as well.

Assignments: Access to the Glamour Work

Design work allows an architectural professional to highlight their distinctive vision, with control over the façade and overall shape of the building the most visible elements. While other aspects of architectural work are vitally important to the success of a project, they may be seen as less prestigious or less desirable than a role that is involved in the design of exteriors. In all professional workplaces, younger professionals typically do more of the less-prestigious work. In industry after industry, our research has found that while many white men transition seamlessly to higher-profile work, women and people of color often remain stuck with less-prestigious assignments.

In small firms, typically architectural professionals play a variety of roles. But in larger firms where roles are more specialized, women often find themselves channeled into less prestigious work. Issues with equitable division of assignments in the architecture profession have made their way into the mainstream media as well. In an article aptly titled “I Am Not the Decorator: Female Architects Speak Out,”¹⁰⁴ Maddy Samaddar-Johnson describes the problem:

“I’ve seen younger women with architecture degrees pushed into more drafting, more into interiors and landscapes, while the men seem to think they are ‘better’ at designing the building structure and are given more face time with the clients. A woman in large firms may be kept in the background.”

Many of the women architects and designers we spoke with both in individual interviews and focus groups noted that women tend to get channeled into non-design roles, and the women designers who spoke with us typically headed their own studios or practiced with their life partners. One major architectural firm had not a single woman design partner. A woman who has practiced at three different large firms noted that lead designers typically were white men. Time and again, “I found myself doing the grunt work: bathrooms, tile patterns, column covers,” elevators, central stairwells, loading docks. “You’ve become the public bathroom queen,” a colleague joked. Other less-prestigious work is the BIM (building information modeling) work and construction administration, where men of color sometimes cluster in large firms.

Construction administration is important, but it occurs after all the big design decisions have been made by someone else.

¹⁰⁴ Pogrebin, R. (2016). I Am Not the Decorator: Female Architects Speak Out. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/13/arts/design/female-architects-speak-out-on-sexism-unequal-pay-and-more.html>

Past research in other professions shows that both women and people of color professionals get less access to the “glamour work”¹⁰⁵ and that women of all racial/ethnic groups often are assumed to be a good fit for the “office housework.” Office housework includes not just less-prestigious work but also literal housework and administrative work.¹⁰⁶

“Several women said clients often assume that a female architect in a room is there to take notes or serve coffee.”¹⁰⁷

Women do not enter the architecture profession to make coffee, take notes, or to design building cores and bathrooms. So when they’re relegated to these roles, they often leave. The AIA’s Diversity in the Profession of Architecture study reported that over a quarter of those who left the field of architecture cited being unhappy with the work they were doing as a reason for leaving.¹⁰⁸ Often people assume that women leave the field because they have children, when in fact they left because they felt unable to access high-quality work. Some women conclude that if they are going to be stuck in the undesirable roles forever, they might as well “vote with their feet”—and leave.¹⁰⁹

Comments from participants in this study reflect this dynamic.

“We don't have one single senior female designer here and all the junior staff being mentored to take over those roles are men.”
—*White woman*

“...I have witnessed how the type of work a woman is permitted to excel at falls within the band of tasks that are [related...] to people management, caretaking, and mothering. At my firm we are ushered into PM roles, while the men are allowed to be ‘visionary’ designers.” —*White woman*

“I know my girlfriend, who is also an architect, is more often put on interior design projects rather than architectural projects.” —*Multiracial man*

¹⁰⁵ Williams, J.C., Li, S., Rincon, R., & Finn, P. (2016). Climate Control: Gender and Racial Bias in Engineering? Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Climate-Control-Gender-And-Racial-Bias-In-Engineering.pdf>; Williams, J. C., Multhaup, M., Li, S., Korn, R. M. (2018). You Can't Change What You Can't See: Interrupting Racial & Gender Bias in the Legal Profession. American Bar Association & Minority Corporate Counsel Association. Available at: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/you-cant-change-what-you-cant-see-print.pdf>; Williams, J.C., Phillips, K.W., & Hall, E.V. (2014). *Double jeopardy? Gender bias against women of color in science*. WorkLife Law, UC Hastings College of the Law. San Francisco, CA. Available at: https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Double-Jeopardy-Report_v6_full_web-sm.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Williams, J.C., Li, S., Rincon, R., & Finn, P. (2016). Climate Control: Gender and Racial Bias in Engineering? Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Climate-Control-Gender-And-Racial-Bias-In-Engineering.pdf>; Williams, J. C., Multhaup, M., Li, S., Korn, R. M. (2018). You Can't Change What You Can't See: Interrupting Racial & Gender Bias in the Legal Profession. American Bar Association & Minority Corporate Counsel Association. Available at: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/you-cant-change-what-you-cant-see-print.pdf>; Williams, J.C., Phillips, K.W., & Hall, E.V. (2014). *Double jeopardy? Gender bias against women of color in science*. WorkLife Law, UC Hastings College of the Law. San Francisco, CA. Available at: https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Double-Jeopardy-Report_v6_full_web-sm.pdf

¹⁰⁷ Arieff, A. (2018). Where Are All the Female Architects? *New York Times Opinion*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/15/opinion/sunday/women-architects.html>

¹⁰⁸ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ Focus group of architects conducted by J.C. Williams.

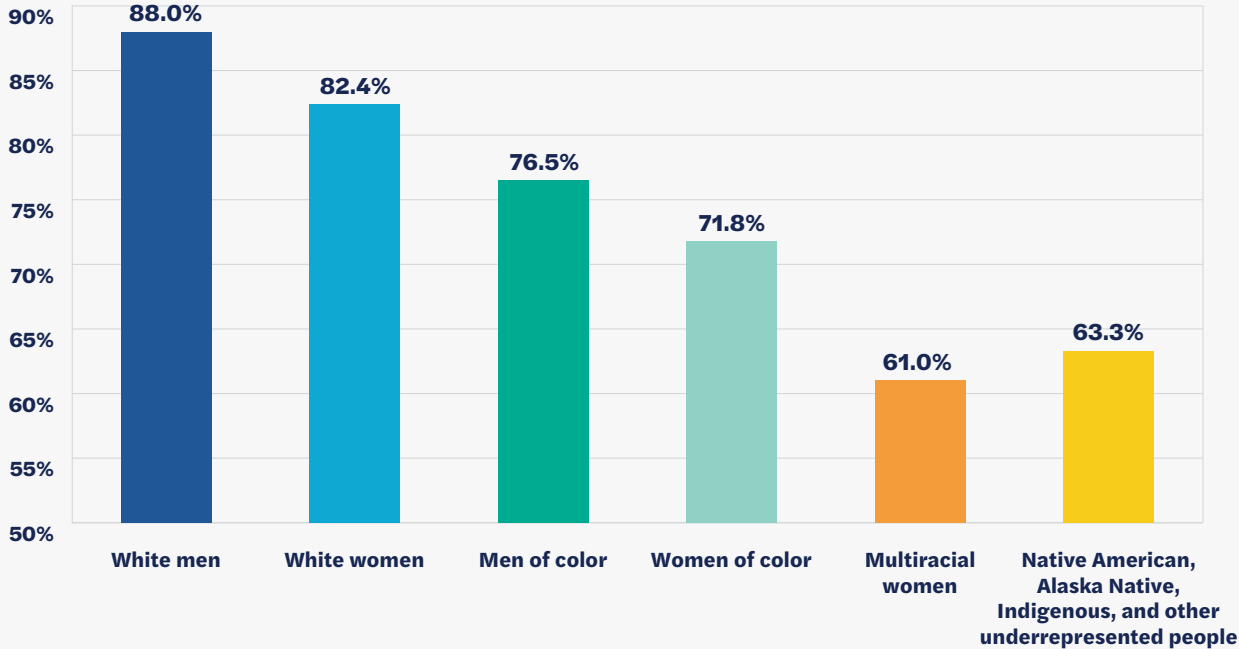
“Women are given the bad projects. Men are given the juicy jobs, and then they complain about any little setback. Women just get the job done and receive less recognition.”

—Latina woman

The quantitative survey data diverged somewhat from the qualitative data: The majority of women architects and designers did report being able to develop and present design ideas.

White men were significantly more likely than women of color and men of color to report being able to develop and present design ideas. White women fell in between, reporting experiences that were not significantly different than those of white men, men of color, or women of color. Multiracial women and Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals were the least likely to report being able to develop and present design ideas.

Allowed to develop design ideas



Women and architectural professionals of color also report less access to desirable work in general:

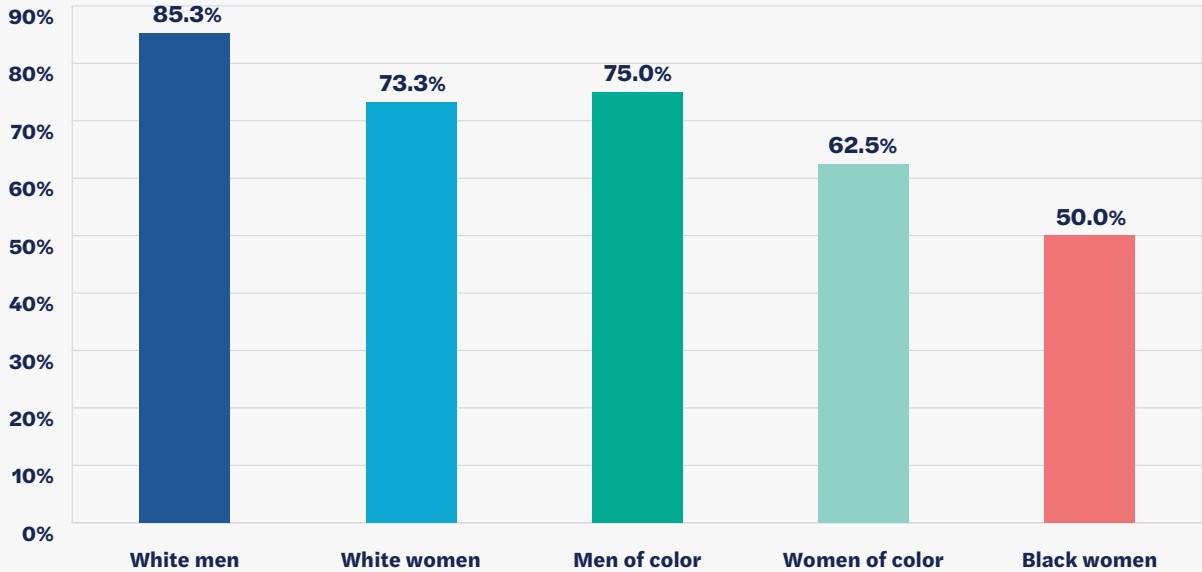
“We do a lot of work in Asia so we have a lot of folks who are Asian Americans or who are Asians working here... They get asked to translate and they spend hours translating, they’ll translate whole sets of drawings and things like that, and then all the guys pick up the drawings and go to the meeting in Asia.”
—Woman, race/ethnicity unspecified

“Brotherhood/male fraternity type behaviors allow men to be more involved or allowed first dibs on projects, speaking engagements.” —Multiracial woman

85.3% of white men reported access to the glamour work, a number significantly higher than all other groups. Women of color broadly, and Black women specifically, reported the least access to desirable assignments, followed by white women and men of color.

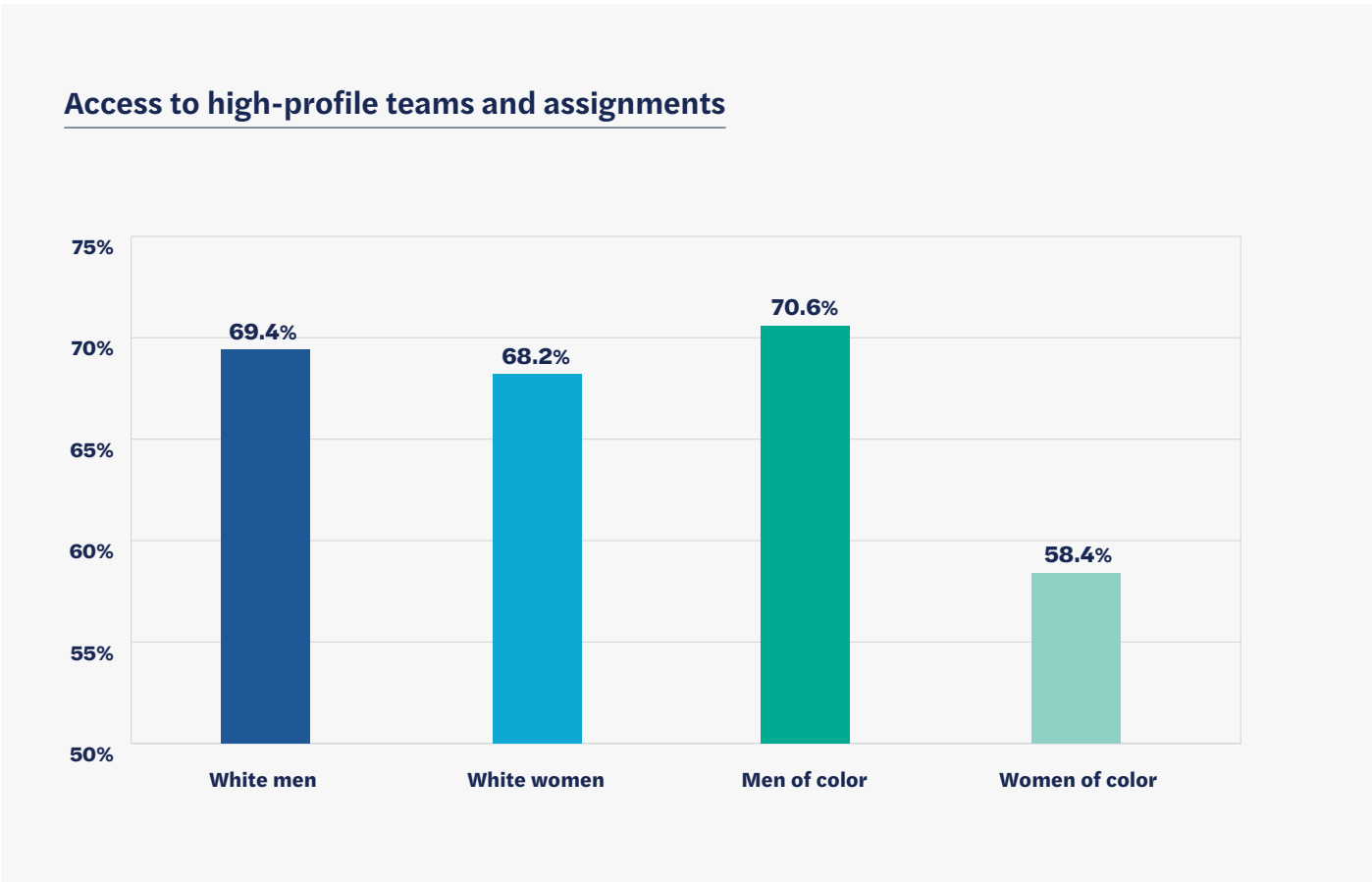
“I’ve been always given work that required more attention and work and not something that I really wanted to do. All the projects which no one wants to do ended up on me somehow.”
—Indian woman

Access to desirable assignments



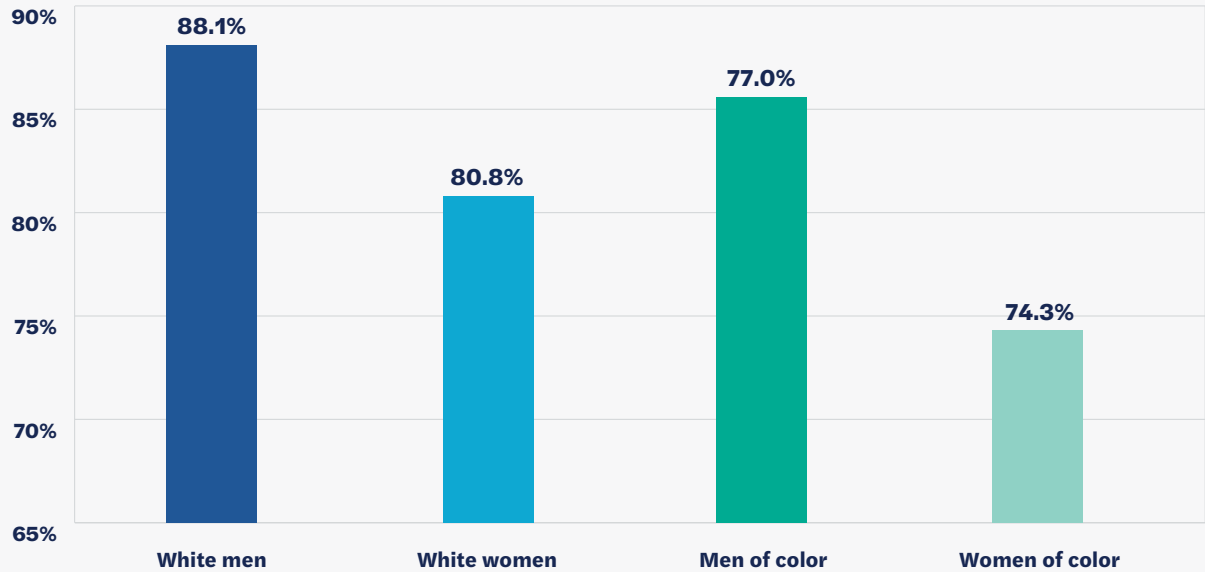
Our prior research has found that white men are the most likely to report access to high-profile teams and assignments such as design work, client-facing meetings, site visits, and speaking engagements. The same pattern did not hold in the architecture profession, where men of color, white men, and white women all reported equal levels of access. Women of color reported significantly less access to the high-profile teams and assignments than all other groups.

“I am passed up for projects that would advance my knowledge level and help advance my career and given the same easy projects. I have had arguments and [been] given excuses and told I am difficult when seeking more advanced project materials.” —*Latina woman*



White men were more likely than all other groups to report being expected to do a level of work appropriate to their years of expertise. Only 74.3% of women of color, 77% of men of color, and 80.8% of white women agreed.

Work is appropriate for my level



Assignments: Doing the office housework

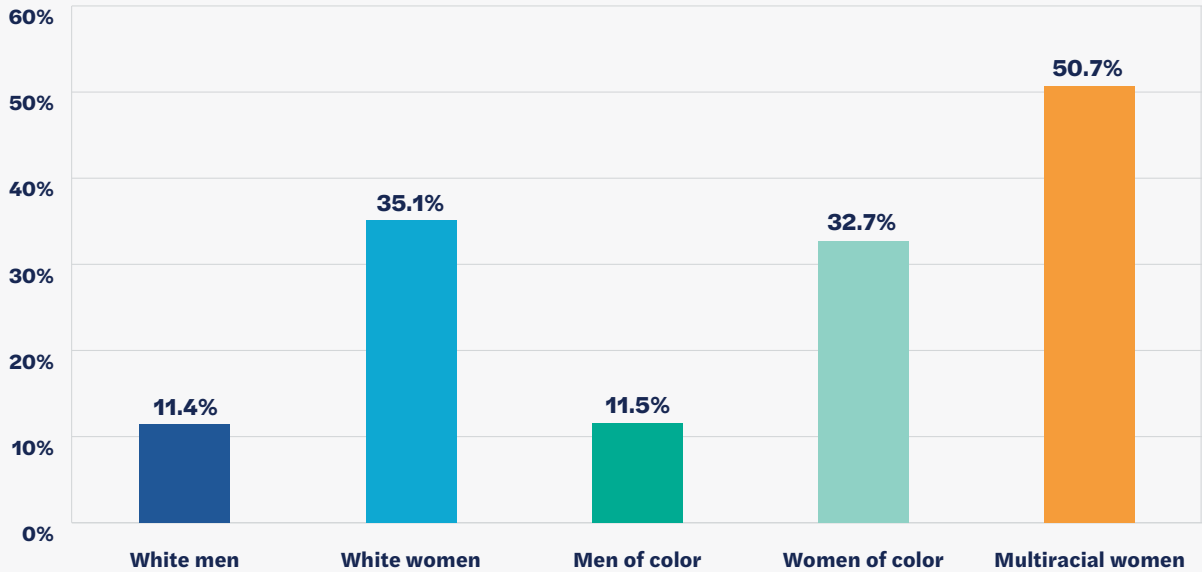
Women face strong pressures to do organizational citizenship work—work that makes you a good team player but does not lead to promotion.¹¹⁰ Research shows that women do more of these tasks, called office housework, and they get less credit for doing them. This study reveals this happens in the architecture profession as well.

“I have always received glowing reviews... but my job duties are often administrative, graphic design oriented, or intern-level work. I was denied a merit raise because I haven't demonstrated higher-level/managerial skills, although I haven't had an opportunity to demonstrate these skills.”
—White woman

One type of office housework is literal housework: planning parties, cleaning up after meetings, and ordering food. Women of all racial/ethnic groups do larger loads of office housework than men: 35.1% of white women and 32.7% of women of color reported having to do more of the literal housework than similarly situated colleagues, whereas only 11.4% of white men and 11.5% of men of color reported the same. Multiracial women reported doing even more office housework.

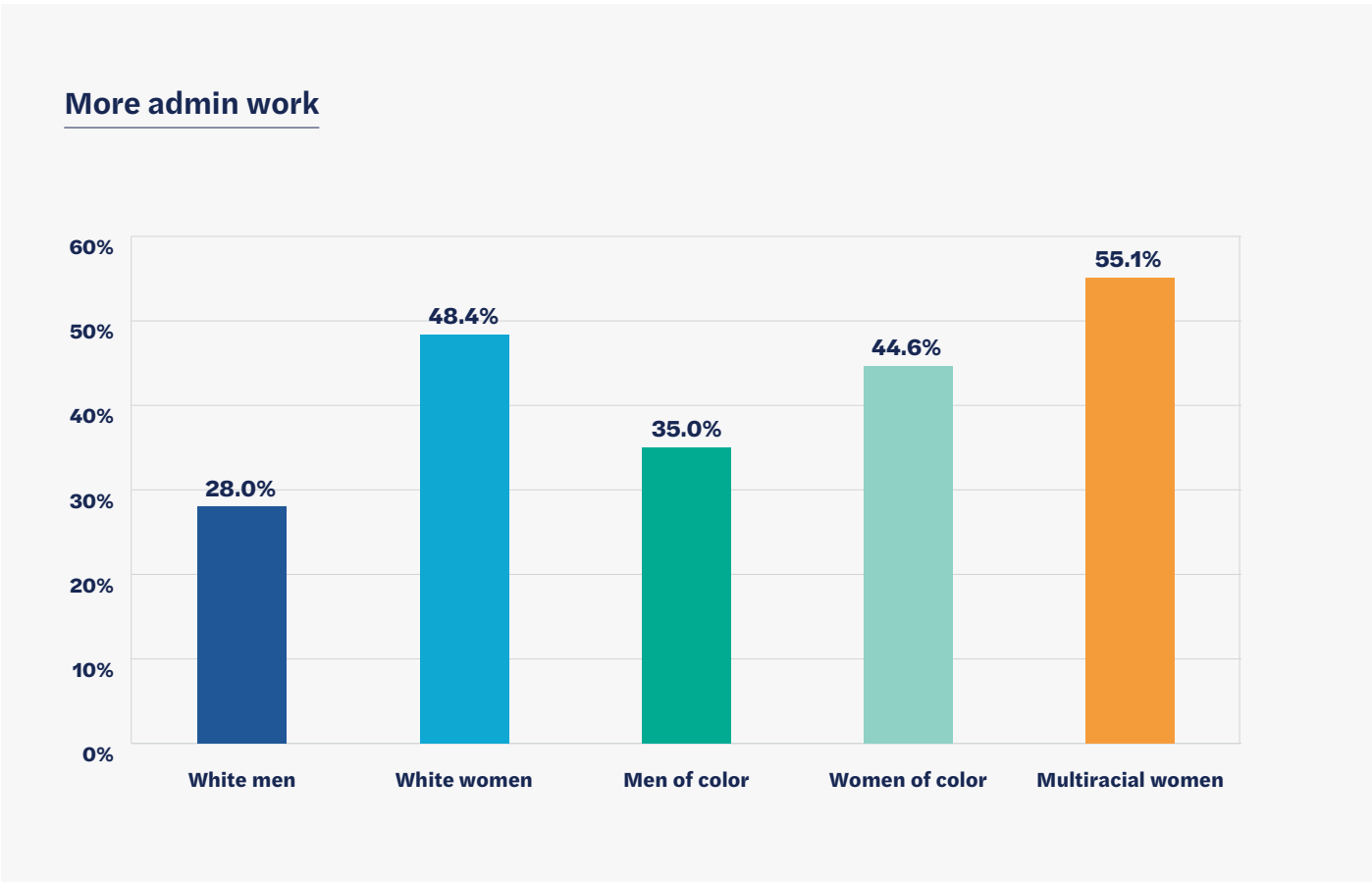
“We had a fairly large tower, a lot of the design, it was still technical work, but more exciting details seemed to go to the guys. That sort of housekeeping stuff, a lot of filing stuff was almost all women, all of the zoning analysis was all women, literally meeting minutes, coming up with agendas.”
—Woman, race/ethnicity unspecified

More literal housework



¹¹⁰ Allen, T. D. (2006). Rewarding good citizens: The relationship between citizenship behavior, gender, and organizational rewards. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36(1), 120-143. doi: 10.1111/j.0021-9029.2006.00006.x; Babcock, L., Recalde, M. P., Vesterlund, L., & Weingart, L. (2017). Gender differences in accepting and receiving requests for tasks with low promotability. *American Economic Review*, 107(3), 714-47. doi: 10.1257/aer.20141734; Guarino, C. M., & Borden, V. M. (2017). Faculty service loads and gender: Are women taking care of the academic family?. *Research in Higher Education*, 58(6), 672-694.

The second type of office housework is administrative work: coordinating meetings, taking notes, or sending follow-up emails. Again, women report doing more than men. Nearly half (48.4%) of white women and 44.6% of women of color reported having to do more administrative work than similarly situated colleagues, whereas only 28% of white men and 35% of men of color reported the same. Multiracial women again reported doing the most of this type of administrative work.



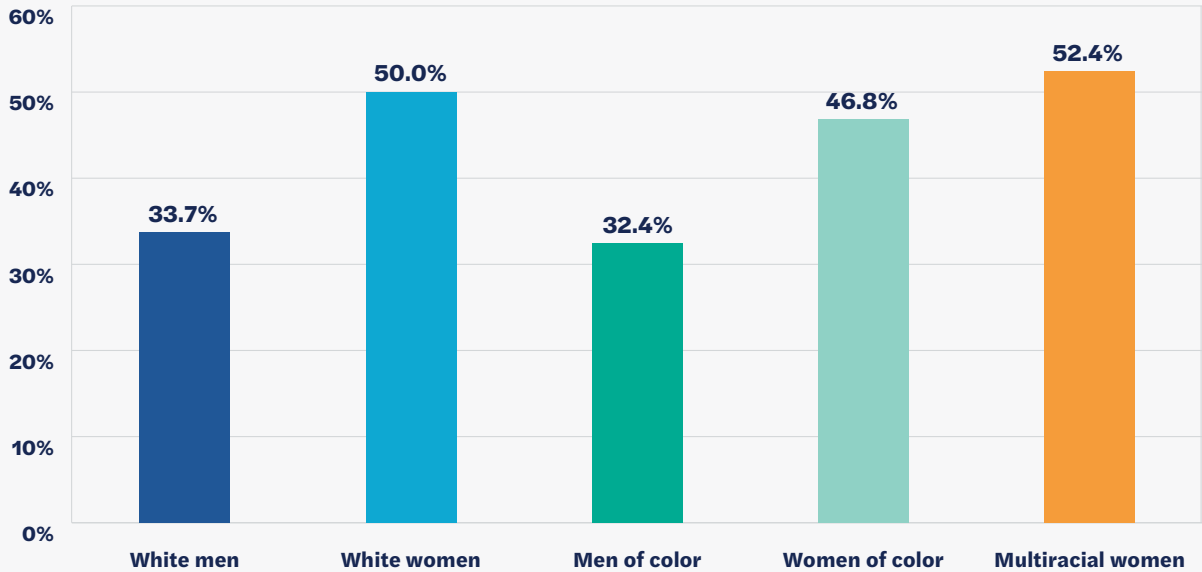
A third type of office housework is emotion work: calming someone who is upset, playing peacemaker, or helping others manage their emotions. Women report doing more of this work than men, and multiracial women once again reported doing the most. More than half (52.4%) of multiracial women, 50% of white women and 46.8% of women of color reported doing more of the emotion work than similarly situated colleagues, while only 33.7% of white men and 32.4% of men of color did.

“Whether we are pushed to it or not, very often in interiors we choose to go to the places where we can be most effective or respected... It’s a larger structural problem that puts value on certain things and doesn’t put value on other things...”
—Woman, race/ethnicity unspecified

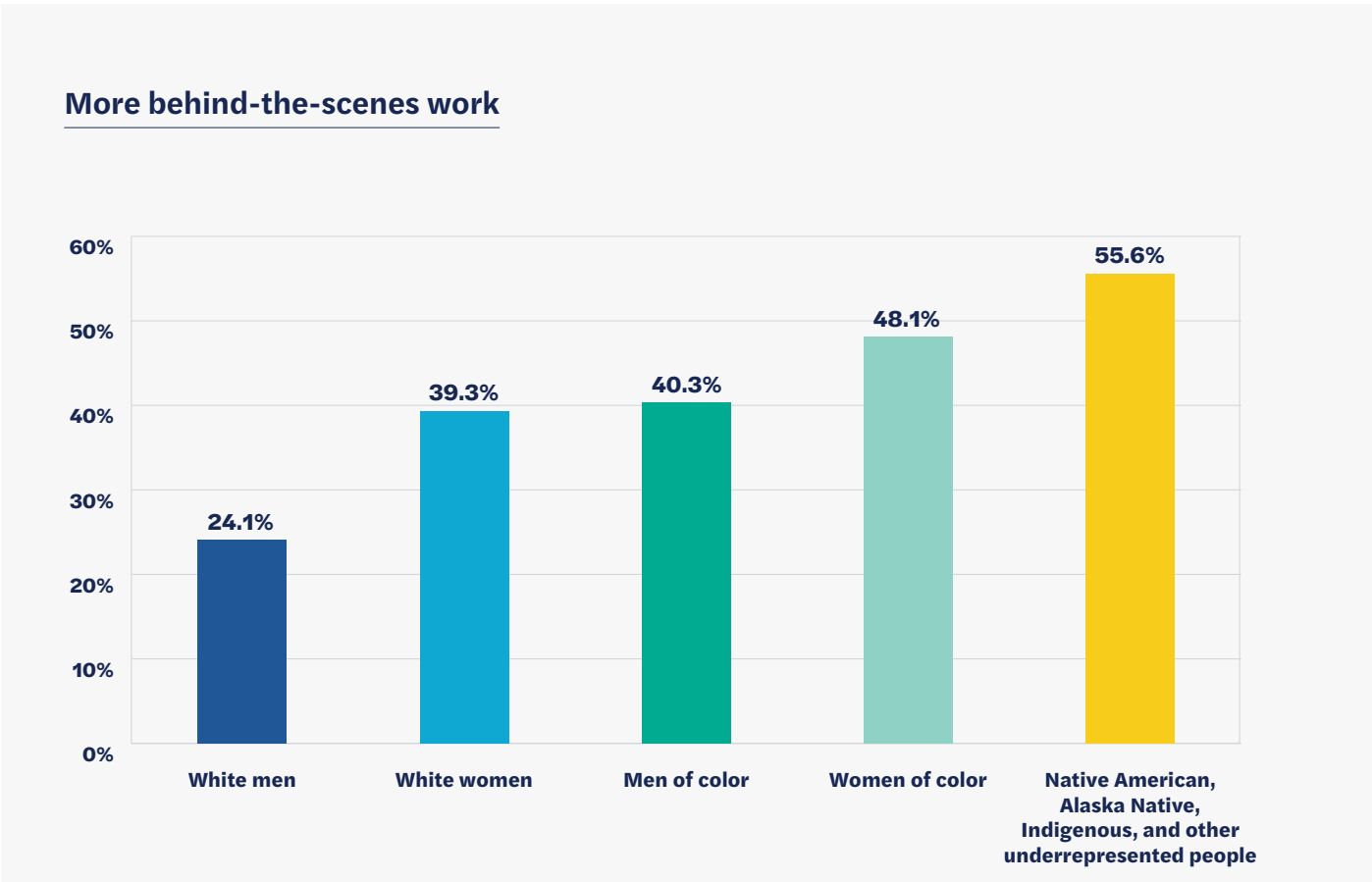
“I did a lot of the dirty work... I would do coordination and not go to coordination meeting. They’d always say they couldn’t live without me... and I didn’t get a promotion and I didn’t feel actually valued, didn’t get the glamorous design work I wanted.” —Woman, race/ethnicity unspecified

“I asked for a promotion and raise based on taking on a superior’s work for a specific project. I was told that... many of these hours were dedicated to running the firm’s volunteer projects (hence, not valuable to them, though they are heavily marketed), and that my salary was appropriate for someone at my level.” —White woman

More emotion work



The last type of office housework is behind-the-scenes work, for example, making PowerPoints for others to use for speaking engagements, preparing working drawings, or preparing marketing materials. White men reported doing the least behind-the-scenes work. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported doing the most behind-the-scenes work, followed by women of color, men of color, and white women.



Hiring

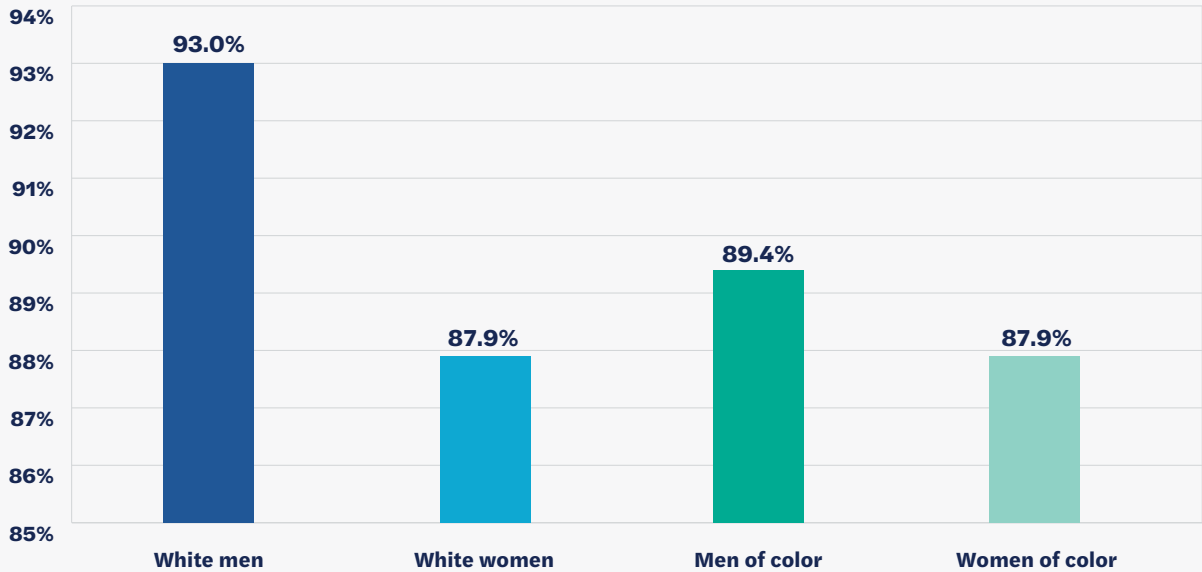
The first step into a career in the profession of architecture is getting hired. The Diversity in the Profession of Architecture report found discrepancies in the perceptions of different groups when it came to hiring women and people of color. Although many firms reported using some bias mitigation strategies in the 2018 Equity in Architecture survey—such as considering both past performance and potential, considering both personality and skillsets, and having clear hiring criteria—the field of architecture still has room for improvement.

This study showed once again that, on a group level, the experience of white men differs from that of all other groups.

Nearly all white men, 93%, reported that their organization was open to hiring people from all sorts of backgrounds, a number significantly higher than the 87.9% of women of color and 87.9% of white women who reported the same. Men of color fell in between, with the response not significantly different from that of white men, white women, or women of color.

“I think many firms base hiring on candidates who look like them, alumni nepotism and flat-out bias... Architecture needs an overhaul.” —Black woman

Firm hires people from all backgrounds

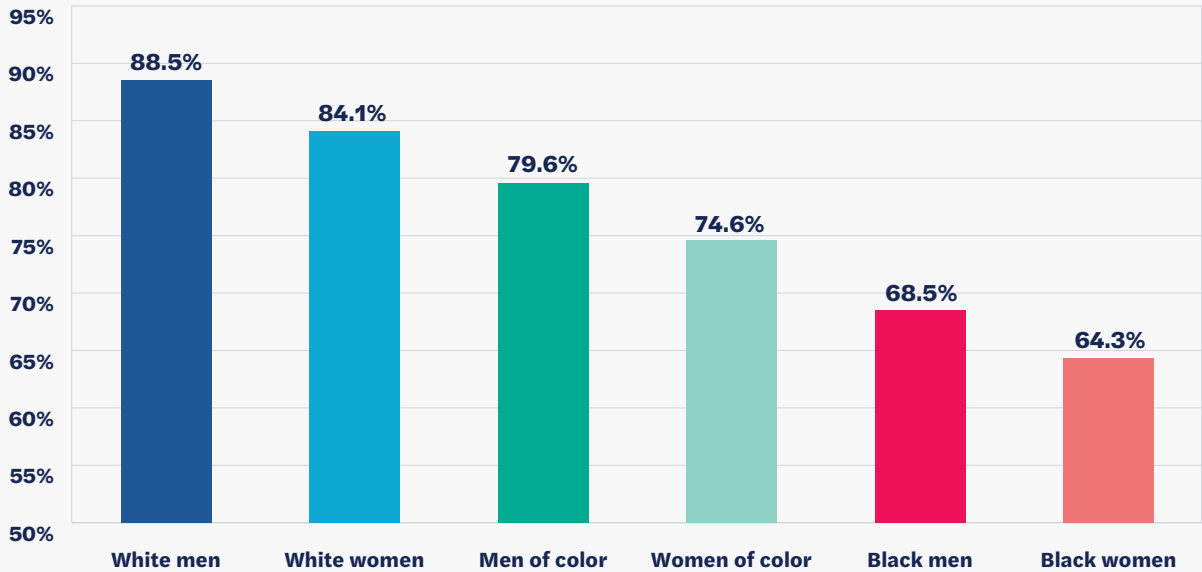


111 The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

112 Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

In the same vein, white men were most likely to report that someone like them had a good shot at getting hired at their organization, with women of color and men of color significantly less likely to agree. White women fell in between, reporting experiences that were not significantly different from white men, men of color, or women of color broadly. Black women and Black men were least likely to report that someone like them had a good shot of being hired, and the disparity between white men and Black women was particularly dramatic: 24 percentage points.

Someone like me can get hired



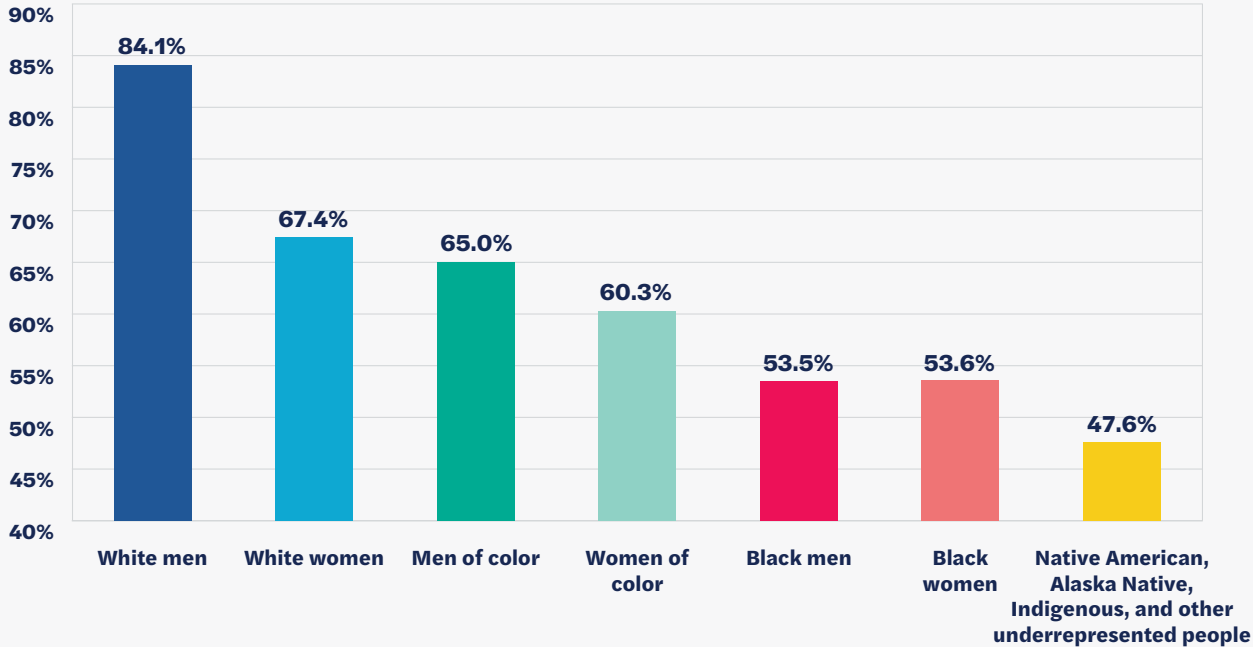
Compensation

Architectural professionals in general are paid less than other professionals with similar levels of education.¹¹³ Yet, within the architecture profession, white men are paid significantly more than women and people of color, with Black and African American respondents reporting the lowest pay, according to the 2018 Equity in Architecture survey.¹¹⁴ This study also found a gender pay gap that widened with seniority. Even going back to school didn’t help: Women with a master’s in architecture were still paid less than men with just a bachelor’s degree.¹¹⁵ Multiple surveys on the architecture profession have identified low pay and pay inequity as top factors in individuals switching firms and even leaving the profession.¹¹⁶ The 2016 Diversity in the Profession of Architecture survey found that half of women architectural professionals do not think men and women in comparable positions are paid equally. Similarly, over a quarter of people of color don’t believe that people of color are paid as much as white people in comparable positions.¹¹⁷

Our survey found sharp divergences between perceptions of fairness in compensation among architectural professionals. 84.1% of white men thought their pay was fair, compared to 60.3% of women of color, 65% of men of color, and 67.4% of white women. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architects and designers, Black men, and Black women reported the least fair compensation systems in their workplaces.

“...[A] new unlicensed male designer with only a bachelor's degree was hired recently, getting paid over \$10,000 more than me. I am licensed, have a master's degree, and do better work

I get paid fairly



and am more knowledgeable in our field of work than him, have worked here for over 10 years.” –Multiracial woman

“Women are generally paid less and it all depends on how good you negotiate for the salary that you receive.” –Indian woman

¹¹³ Dickinson, D. (2017). The Uneasy Relationship Between Architects and Money. *Common Edge*. Retrieved from: <https://commonedge.org/the-uneasy-relationship-between-architects-and-money/>

¹¹⁴ Pitts, A., (2017). Equity by Design Metrics: From “Equal Pay for Equal Work” to Pay Equity. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/blog/2017/7/2/eqxd-metrics-from-equal-pay-for-equal-work-to-pay-equity>

¹¹⁵ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

¹¹⁶ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>; The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

¹¹⁷ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

“I was being paid less than a man with half my years of experience and that wasn't licensed...When I confronted the bosses, they said they hadn't noticed the pay gap...”

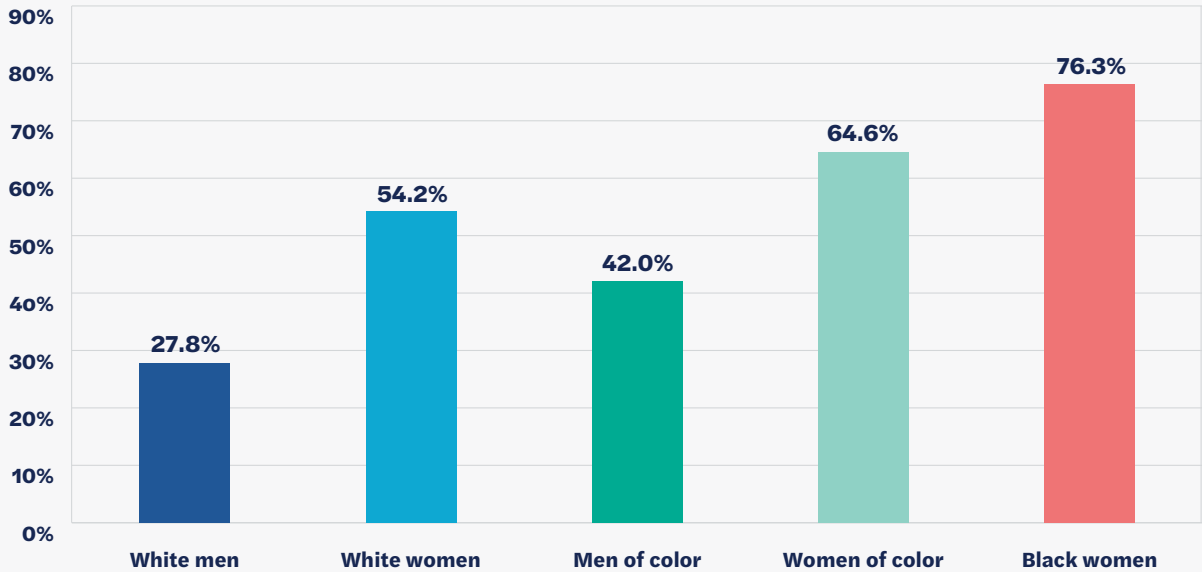
—Multiracial woman

Divergences were even larger when architectural professionals were asked whether they thought they were paid less than similarly situated colleagues: 64.6% of women of color, 54.2% of white women, and 42% of men of color agreed. Only 27.8% of white men reported the same. Once again, the largest divergence was between white men and Black women—over three-quarters of whom reported being paid less than similarly situated colleagues.

Pay inequity has lifelong consequences:

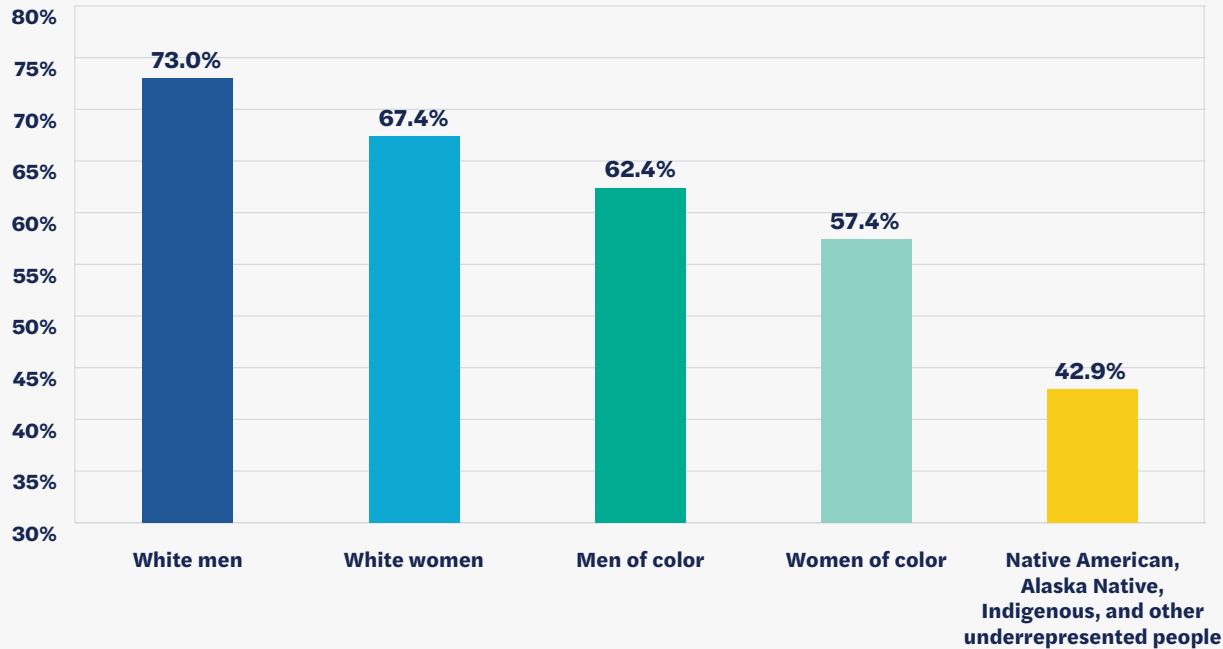
“I eventually got a raise that puts me at that the level of average earner, but I constantly think about how much less money I have earned and will earn over time... Statistically, it will take me much longer to pay off my student debts and I will retire with much less security.” —White woman

I get paid less



White men also reported being more satisfied with their compensation than other groups. 73% of white men, but only 57.4% of women of color, 62.4% of men of color, and 67.4% of white women were satisfied with their compensation. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals reported being the least satisfied.

Compensation satisfaction



Performance evaluations

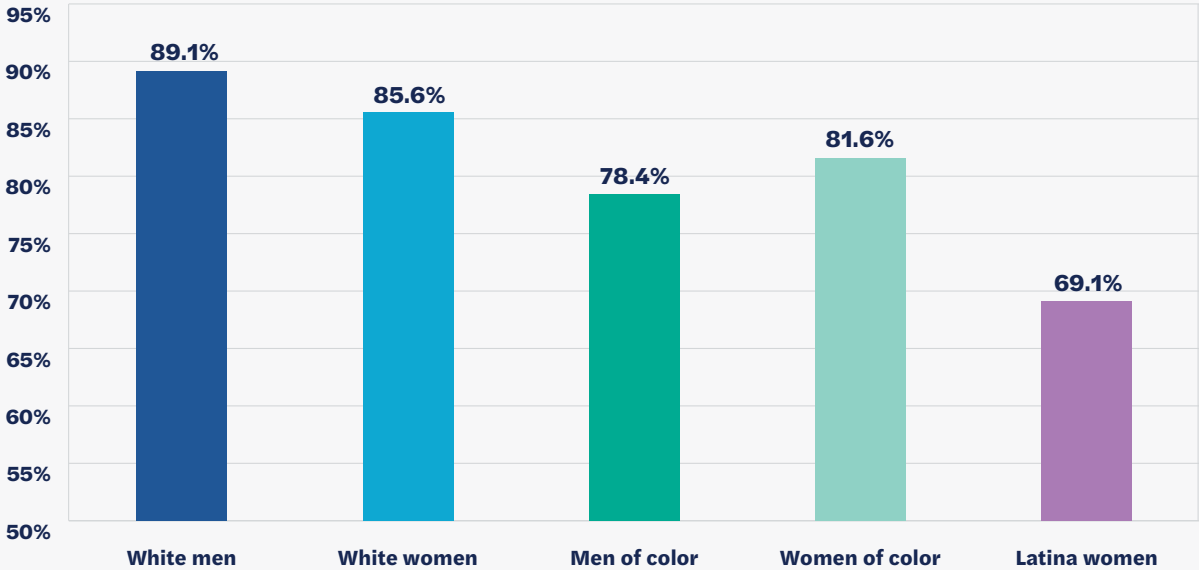
Performance evaluations are an important factor in determining who gets good opportunities, raises, and promotions. Unfortunately, bias often creeps into performance evaluations.¹¹⁸ The 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey identified key practices that firms are taking to mitigate bias in their performance evaluations: Using written evaluations, regularly scheduled reviews, and considering both past performance and potential were all popular measures.¹¹⁹

This study found that white men architectural professionals consider their performance evaluations to be fairer and more helpful than other architectural professionals.

“I disagreed with my boss in a meeting and was cut off from contributing my designs I had been working on in retaliation. I was put under ‘developmental review’... In the review, I was criticized for every little mistake I made and asked if I had personal problems.” —White woman

Almost 90% of white men reported that they get fair performance evaluations, a number significantly higher than for men of color, women of color, and white women. Latina women reported the least fair evaluations, at only 69.1%—a full 20 points below the report from white men.

Fair performance evaluations



¹¹⁸ Williams, J. C., Multhaup, M., Li, S., Korn, R. M. (2018). You Can't Change What You Can't See: Interrupting Racial & Gender Bias in the Legal Profession. American Bar Association & Minority Corporate Counsel Association. Available at: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/you-cant-change-what-you-cant-see-print.pdf>; Williams, J.C., Li, S., Rincon, R., & Finn, P. (2016). Climate Control: Gender and Racial Bias in Engineering? Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Climate-Control-Gender-And-Racial-Bias-In-Engineering.pdf>; Snyder, K. (2014, August 26). The abrasiveness trap: High-achieving men and women are described differently in reviews. *Fortune*. Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2014/08/26/performance-review-gender-bias/>; Monica Biernat et al., *The Language of Performance Evaluations: Gender-Based Shifts in Content and Consistency of Judgment*, 3 SOC. PSYCHOL. & PERSONALITY SCI. 185 (2012).; Jampol, L., & Zayas, V. (2020). Gendered White Lies: Women Are Given Inflated Performance Feedback Compared With Men. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 0146167220916622.

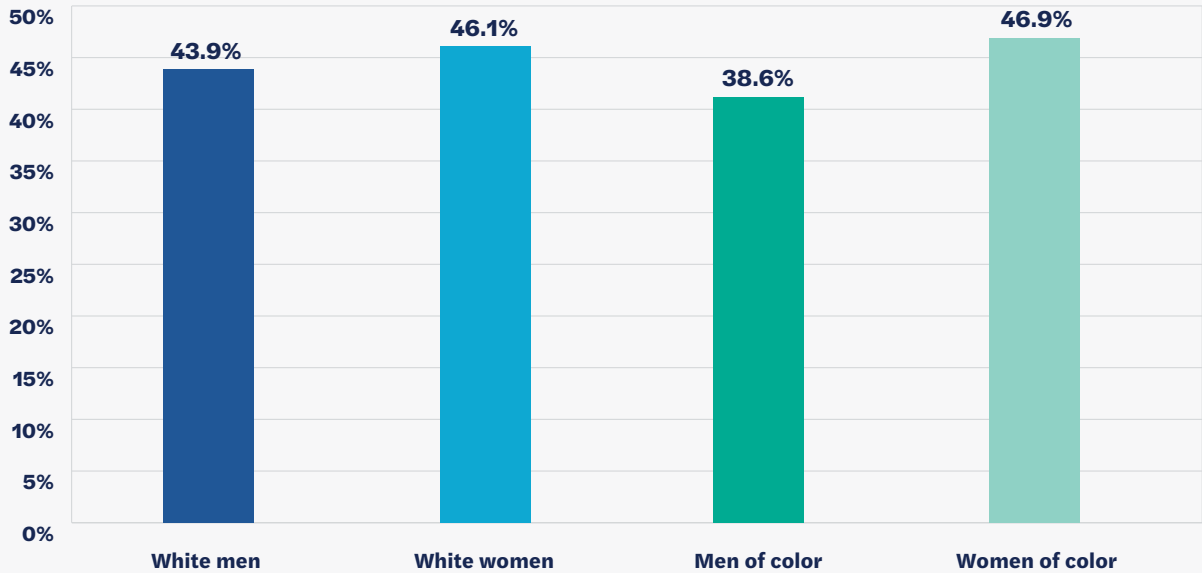
¹¹⁹ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018> Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>; The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

A recent study of performance evaluations in tech companies found that 66% of women received negative personality feedback in their reviews, compared to only 1% of men, reflecting that the tightrope women often need to walk between competence and likeability.¹²⁰ We also found some evidence of this pattern in the architecture profession.

“When they label your personality, it affects how you work in a team. If the majority of the team is of one makeup and you’re not, if there’s a challenge, you’re likely to be the one dinged or tagged with the problem in the team.” –Black woman

While our quantitative data trended in the expected direction—46.9% of women of color, 46.1% of white women, 43.9% of white men, and 38.6% of men of color reported having their personalities discussed in their evaluations—these differences were small and not statistically significant.

Personality discussed in performance evaluations



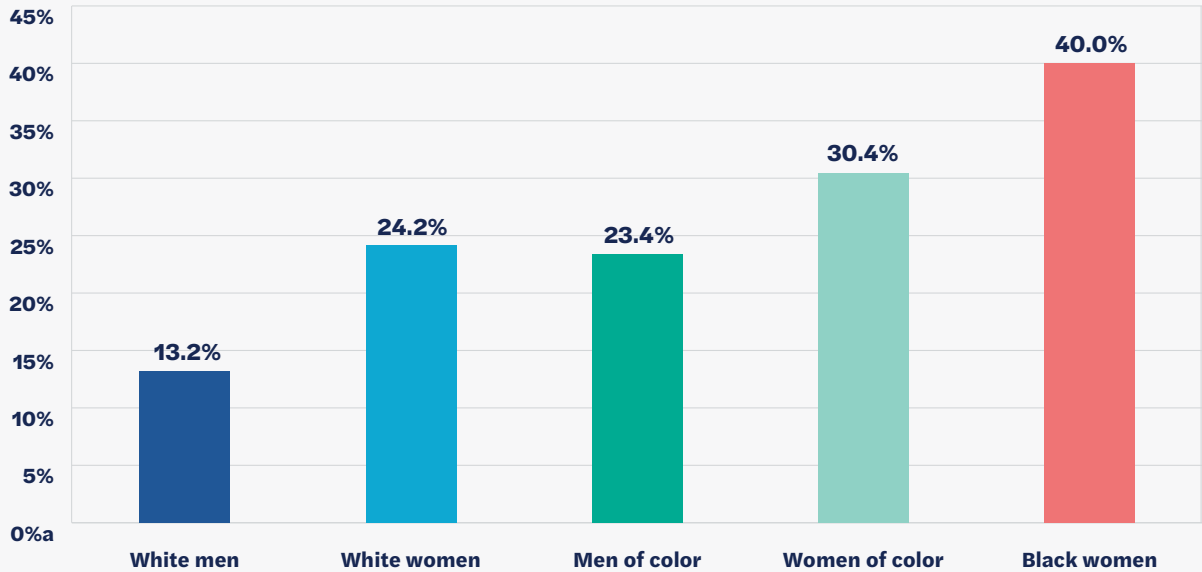
¹²⁰ Snyder, K. (2014). The abrasiveness trap: High-achieving men and women are described differently in reviews. *Fortune*. Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2014/08/26/performance-review-gender-bias/>; Cuddy, A. J., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2008). Warmth and competence as universal dimensions of social perception: The stereotype content model and the BIAS map. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, 40, 61-149.; Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J., & Glick, P. (2007). Universal dimensions of social cognition: Warmth and competence. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 11(2), 77-83.; Fiske, S. T., Xu, J., Cuddy, A. C., & Glick, P. (1999). (Dis) respecting versus (dis) liking: Status and interdependence predict ambivalent stereotypes of competence and warmth. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(3), 473-489.

Performance evaluations can provide helpful feedback that allows employees to improve their performance and develop in their careers—but only if the feedback is honest. A recent study found that women are more likely to be told “white lies” in their reviews, which means they are less able to use that feedback to learn and grow.¹²¹

We found this pattern in the architecture profession as well: 30.4% of women of color, 24.2% of white women, and 23.4% of men of color reported getting less honest feedback in their evaluations, compared with only 13.2% of white men. Black women reported getting the least honest feedback.

“During my annual review it wasn't about my work performance... I was being criticized for not helping my male colleague (who has 10 more years of experience than me and gets paid \$25K more) pass his licensing exams. I didn't realize it was my responsibility to train the senior project managers—I thought they were supposed to train me.” –Woman of Asian descent

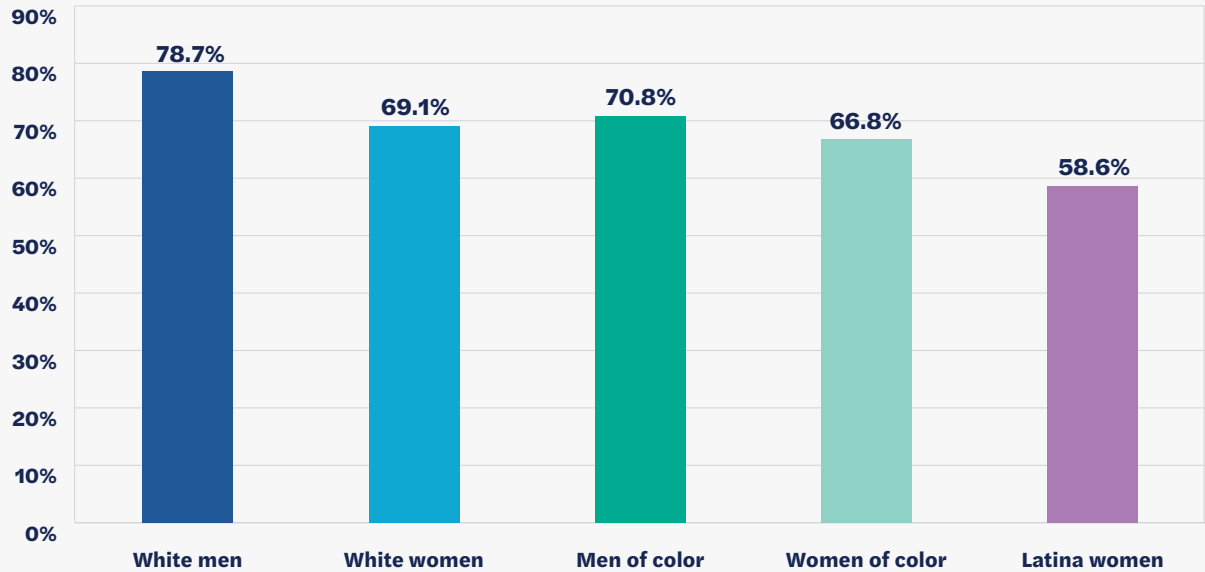
Less honest feedback



¹²¹ Jampol, L., & Zayas, V. (2020). Gendered White Lies: Women Are Given Inflated Performance Feedback Compared With Men. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 0146167220916622.

White men were also the most likely to report constructive feedback: 78.7% of white men reported getting constructive feedback that could help them advance in their careers, compared to only 66.8% of women of color and 58.6% of Latina women. Men of color and white women fell in between, not significantly different from either white men or women of color.

Constructive feedback



“My professional experience has been very positive and rewarding, and I recognize my success has come from the many mentors I have been fortunate to have had, including many older white men.”

—Latina woman

Sponsorship and networking opportunities

A sponsor is a person who is willing to spend political capital to help protégés’ careers. A mentor is a much bigger term that can include both people who are extremely invested in the protégé, and those who only give occasional advice. Having a sponsor can be extremely helpful, especially for women in predominantly male fields.¹²²

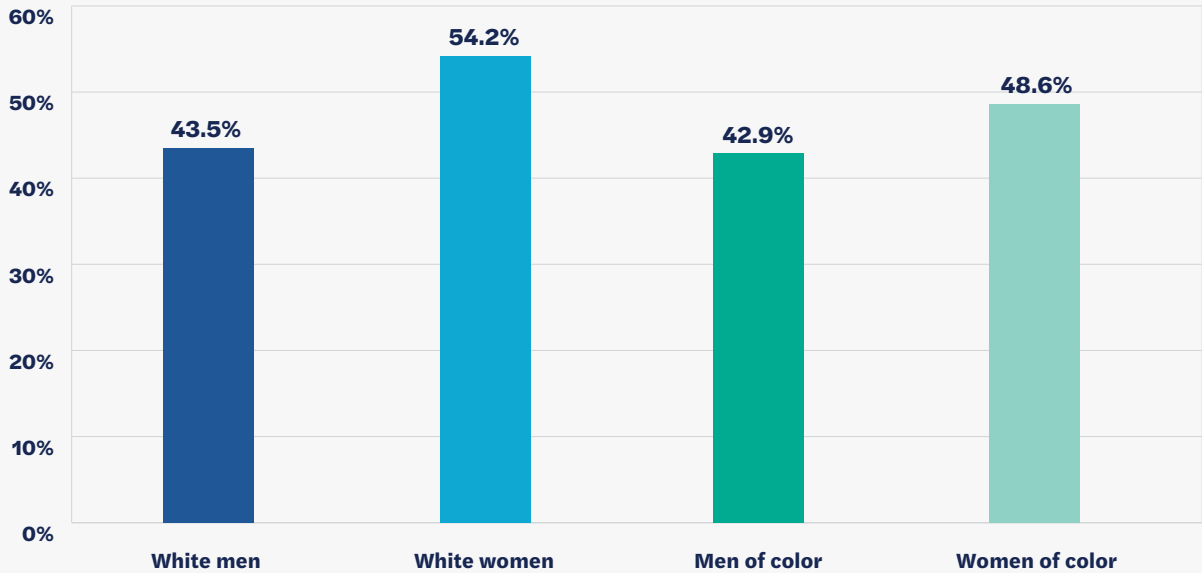
“Having a sponsor (white, male, 50s) who has known me for my whole career, to whom I now report directly, has made a significant impact on my access to opportunities, new exciting projects, and growth within the company... my sponsor was able to not only see my strengths but willing to leverage his power to help me grow.” –Multiracial woman

Since people tend to support those in their networks, and networks tend to be made up of people who are similar,¹²³ it is particularly difficult for women and people of color to find mentors and sponsors in workplaces where most people at the top are white men.

The architecture profession did not show the pattern documented in the social science literature. There was not a demographic disparity with regard to mentorship or sponsorship. However, we did find significant differences between groups with respect to networking opportunities.

43.5% of white men, 42.9% of men of color, 48.6% of women of color, and 54.2% of white women reported having career-supporting sponsors in their workplaces.

Have a sponsor



¹²² Berscheid, E., & Walster, E. H. (1969). Rewards others provide: Similarity. *Interpersonal attraction*, 69-91.; Burt, R. S. (2009). *Structural holes: The social structure of competition*. Harvard University Press.; Brewer, M. B. (1996). In-group favoritism: The subtle side of intergroup discrimination. *Codes of conduct: Behavioral research and business ethics*, 160-171.

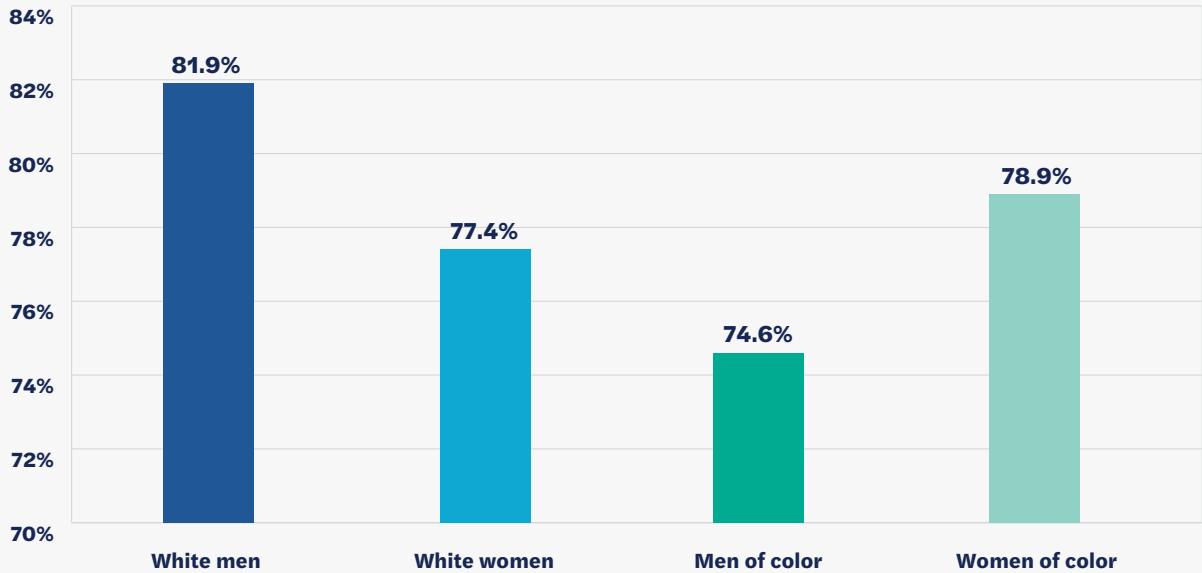
¹²³ Burt, R. S. (2009). *Structural holes: The social structure of competition*. Harvard University Press.

“The men go out to lunch, women are usually not invited... I had to reach out to other branches to find mentors here. Luckily the women in leadership there took me under their wing. I felt I had to go around our system to find a way to the career I want.”

—White woman

In contrast to the share who reported having a sponsor, more architectural professionals reported having mentors: 81.9% of white men, 77.4% of white women, 74.6% of men of color, and 78.9% of women of color reported having good mentors in their workplaces.

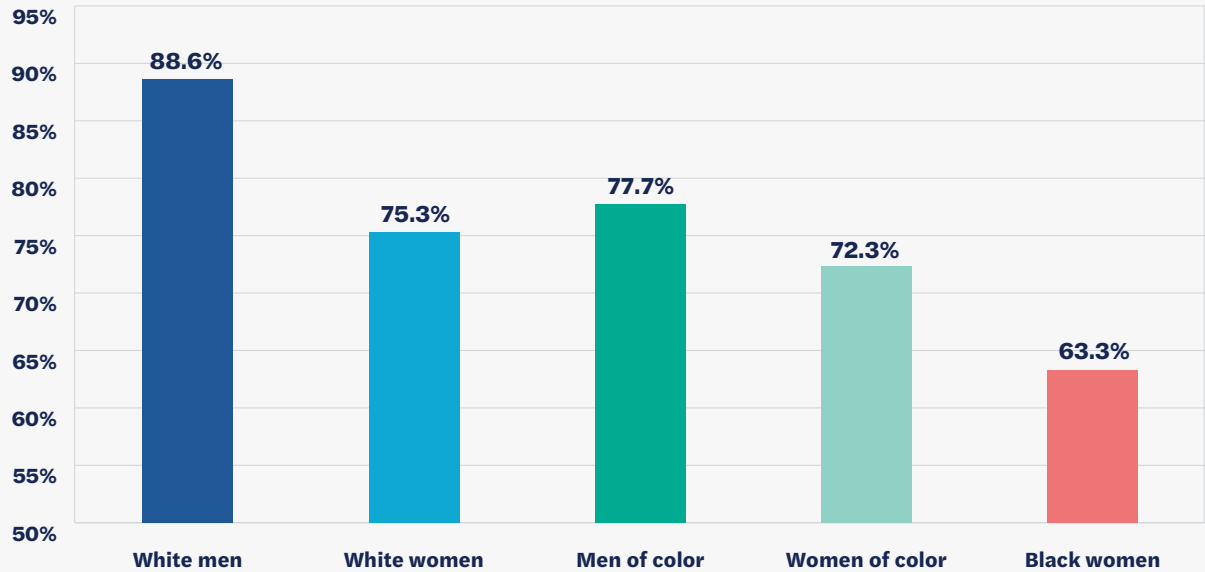
Have good mentors



Access to networks is also a crucial factor in getting ahead in the workplace. Formal networks (like AIA) and informal networks (like happy hours or private Slack channels) help determine who gets career-enhancing work.

White men were significantly more likely than other groups to report access to networking opportunities in their workplaces, at 88.6%. By contrast, only 72.3% of women of color, 75.3% of white women, and 77.7% of men of color reported having access to networking opportunities. Black women reported the least access to networking opportunities.

Access to networking opportunities



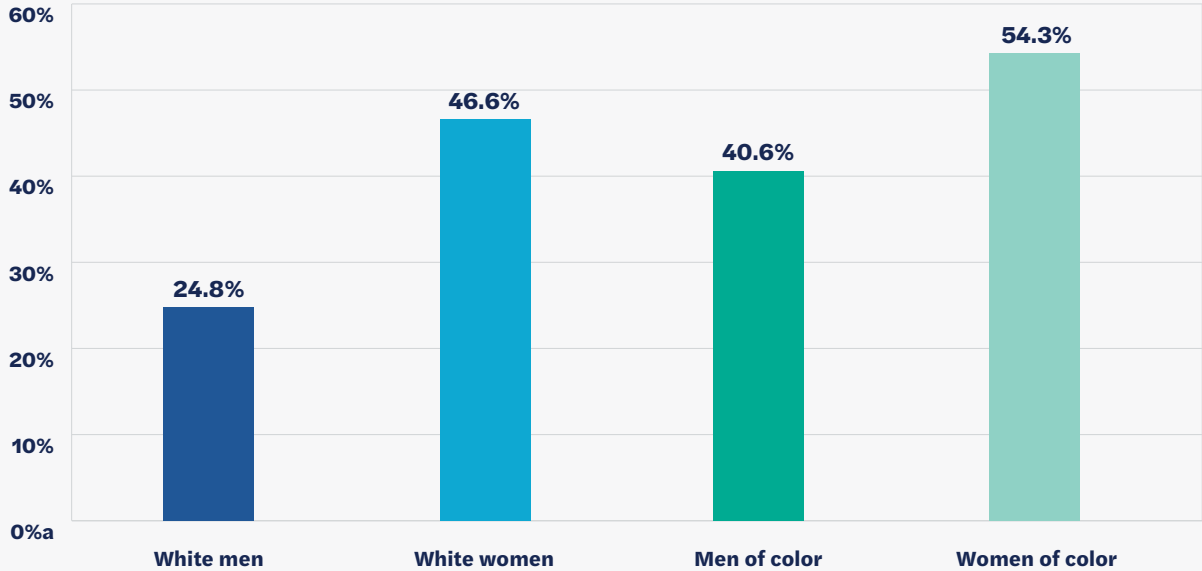
Exclusion

Previous research shows that women of color, and Black women in particular, feel isolated or excluded at work.¹²⁴ People tend to favor their own group, both in social situations and when it comes to sharing workplace information, like good assignments that are going to be coming up.¹²⁵

The 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey documented the importance of strong relationships within one’s firm. Relationships within the firm were a key factor in professional advancement, and about 10% of respondents reported that their greatest pleasure in working comes from being respected and valued.¹²⁶ This study explored the way individuals feel left out in architecture workplaces, with important implications for inclusion.

Once again, the experiences of white men differ from those of other groups. Over half (54.3%) of women of color, 46.6% of white women, and 40.6% of men of color reported that there were unwritten rules about how to get ahead in the workplace that they didn’t know, while others seemed to know these rules. Only 24.8% of white men reported the same.

Unwritten rules I don't know



¹²⁴ Williams, J.C., Phillips, K.W., & Hall, E.V. (2014). *Double jeopardy? Gender bias against women of color in science*. WorkLife Law, UC Hastings College of the Law. San Francisco, CA. Available at: https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Double-Jeopardy-Report_v6_full_web-sm.pdf

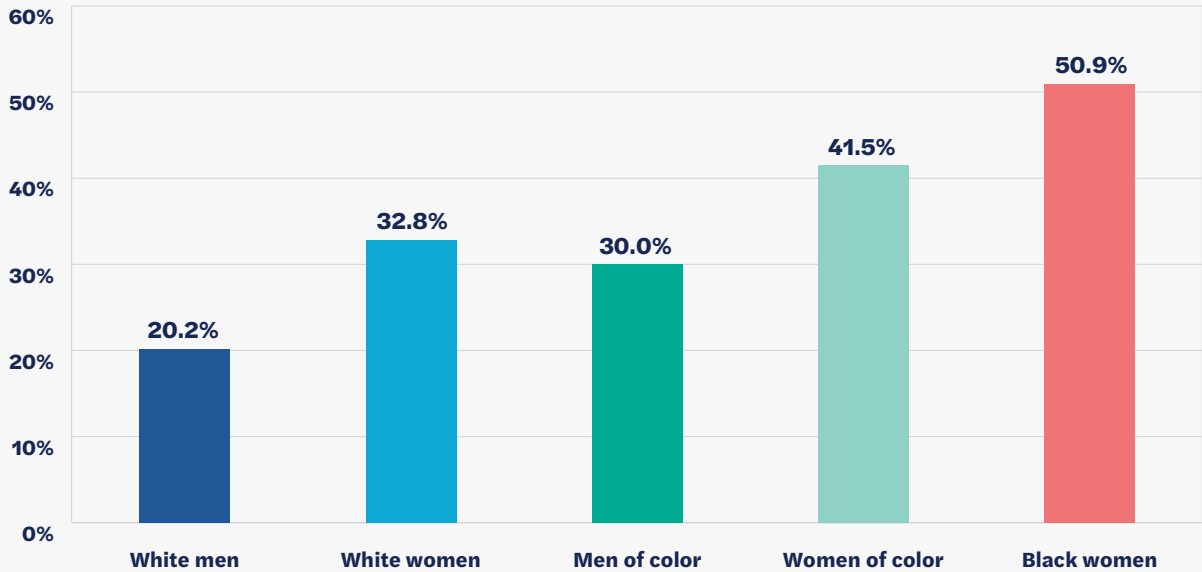
¹²⁵ Brewer, M. B. (1996). In-group favoritism: The subtle side of intergroup discrimination. *Codes of conduct: Behavioral research and business ethics*, 160-171.

¹²⁶ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). *Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report*. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

Similarly, 41.5% of women of color, 32.8% of white women, and 30% of men of color reported that colleagues share important information with others but not with them, compared to only 20.2% of white men. Black women reported being left out when it comes to important workplace information more than any other group.

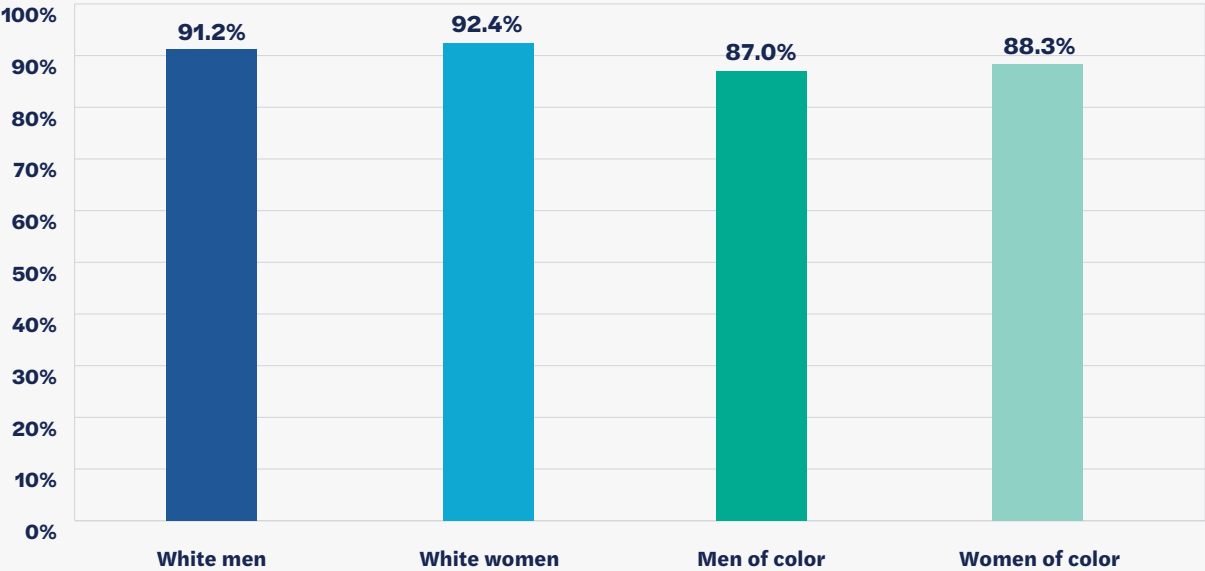
“As I get older it has become increasingly harder to deal with the majority white male culture in the workplace.”
—Woman of Asian descent

Left out of information sharing



Some good news: The vast majority of survey respondents felt welcome at informal gatherings in their workplaces, with no significant differences between groups.

Welcome at informal gatherings



“I left a job because I felt that there was no chance of promotion within that firm, and have done so many times in my 25-year career...”

– White woman

Promotions

Women and people of color are underrepresented in the profession of architecture, particularly further up the career ladder. The 2016 Diversity in the Profession of Architecture report found a common perception that women and people of color are less likely to be promoted to senior positions, and suggested providing clear written criteria as a potential solution.¹²⁷ The 2018 Equity in Architecture survey similarly found that many people in the profession do not know what the promotion criteria are, and that more than 10% of respondents identified “unwritten criteria” as a promotion factor.¹²⁸

Our survey also found patterned differences in perceptions of fairness and transparency in promotions.

“Other people with less education and experience have been promoted over me.” —*Man of Asian descent*

“... [W]omen and POC get the shaft end for promotions every year. A young, white, tall, male was recently promoted over four women who had been leading teams here for years and were senior to him.” —*White woman*

“Women are promoted when there is no other option but to promote them, in their late 50s. Men are promoted in their late 30s to the same roles, even if it is a stretch.”

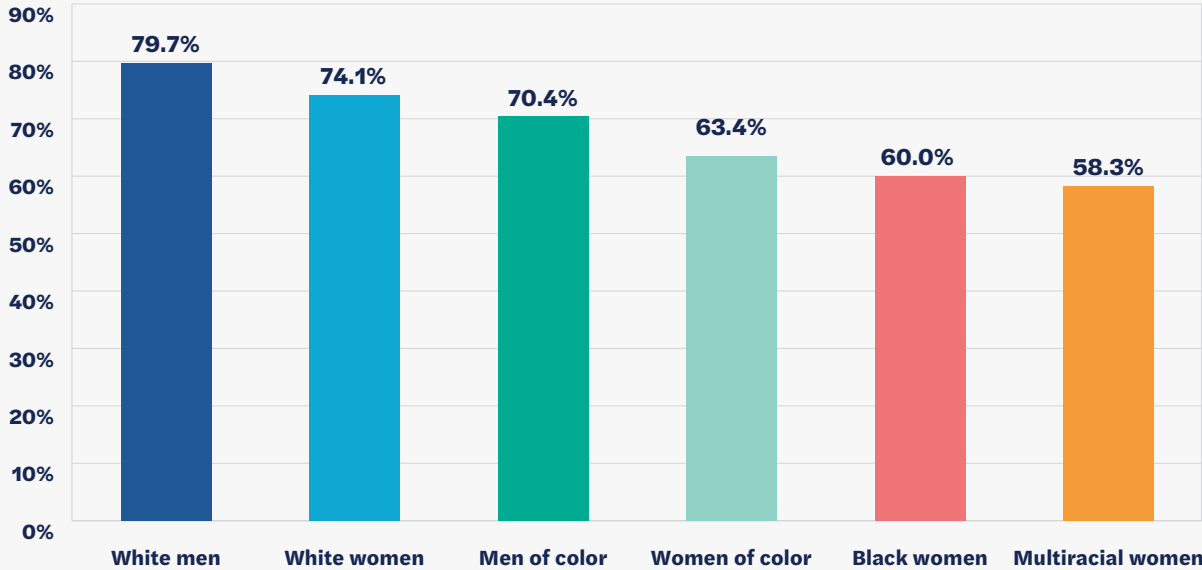
—*Latina woman*

¹²⁷ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>
¹²⁸ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

White men again reported different experiences from other groups when it came to promotions. White men were more likely to say that they have been given the promotions they deserve: 79.7% of white men agreed, compared to 63.4% of women of color, 70.4% of men of color, and 74.1% of white women. Multiracial women and Black women were even less likely to report feeling they got the promotions they deserved.

“Generally, there is a fair amount of nepotism and sexism in the industry. Skill and knowledge are often not as valued as having an ‘in’ with someone in power.” –*Multiracial woman*

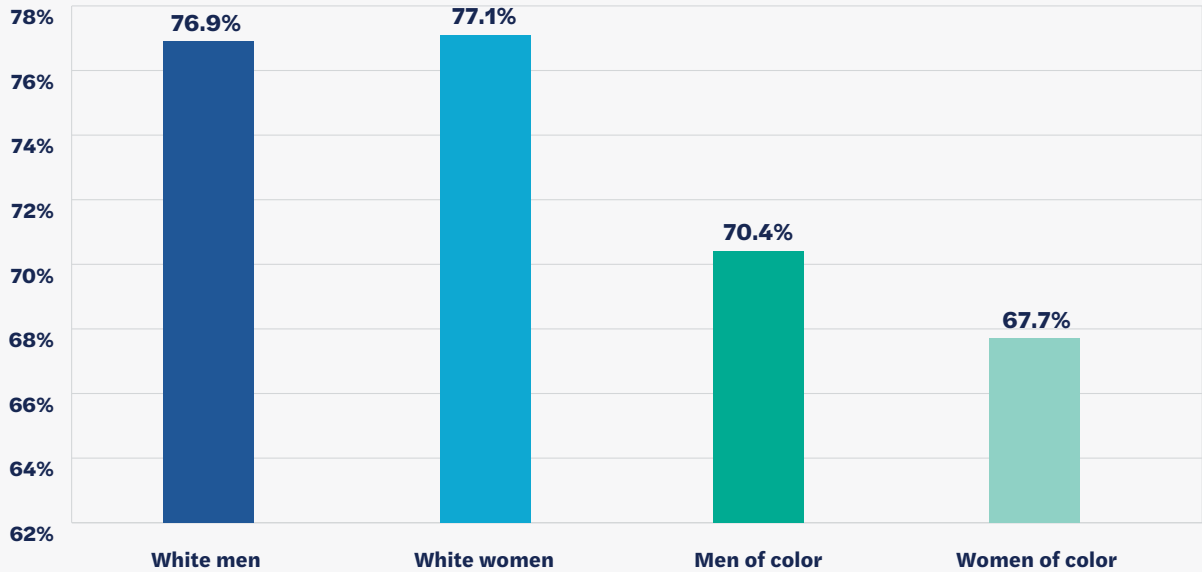
Been given the promotions I deserve



White architectural professionals were significantly more likely than women of color or men of color to report being rewarded for taking risks. The Likert scale data and the percentage data show slightly different patterns for this question: The average score of white men was the highest, and the average score of white women was slightly (but not significantly) below white men.

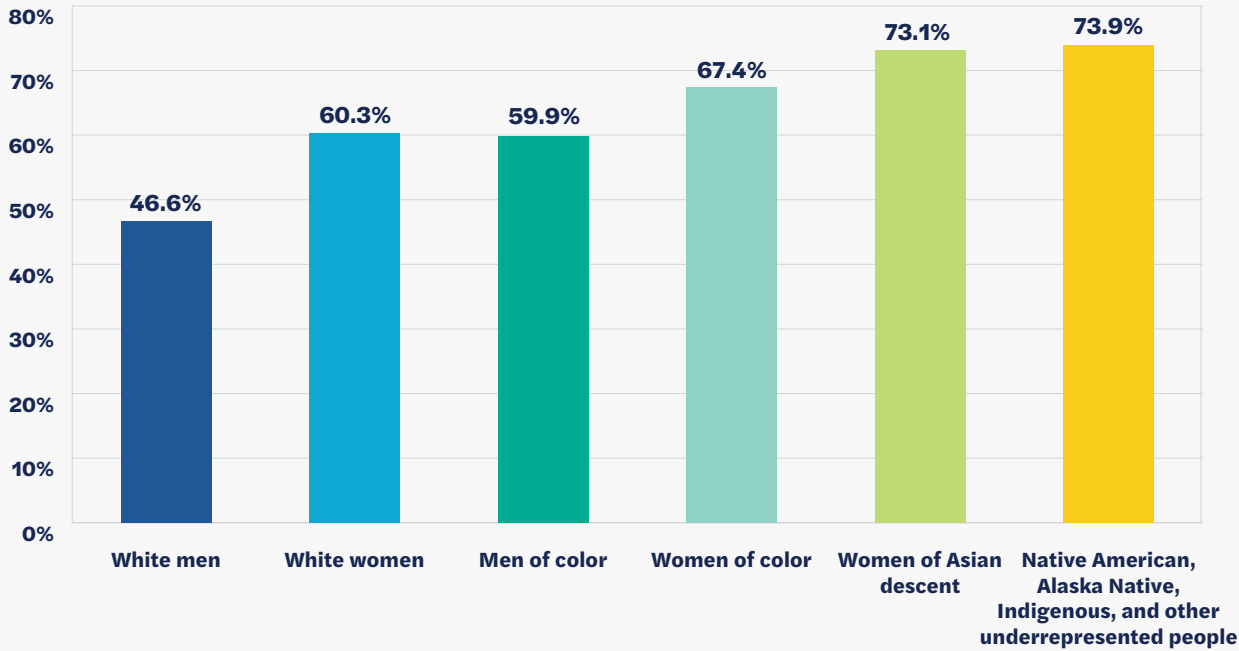
“Promotions and institutional support are given to people who are well-liked which usually means people who don't challenge the norm and [it] seems unrelated to job performance.”
—White woman

Rewarded for taking risks



In further evidence that white men as a group typically feel more room to maneuver (and perhaps more room to be their authentic selves) than other groups, only 46.6% of white men reported that the way to get ahead in their workplaces is to “fit in” with the majority group, compared to 67.4% of women of color, 60.3% of white women, and 59.9% of men of color. Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented architectural professionals and women of Asian descent reported needing to fit in the get ahead more than any other groups.

Need to fit in to get ahead



SEXUAL HARASSMENT

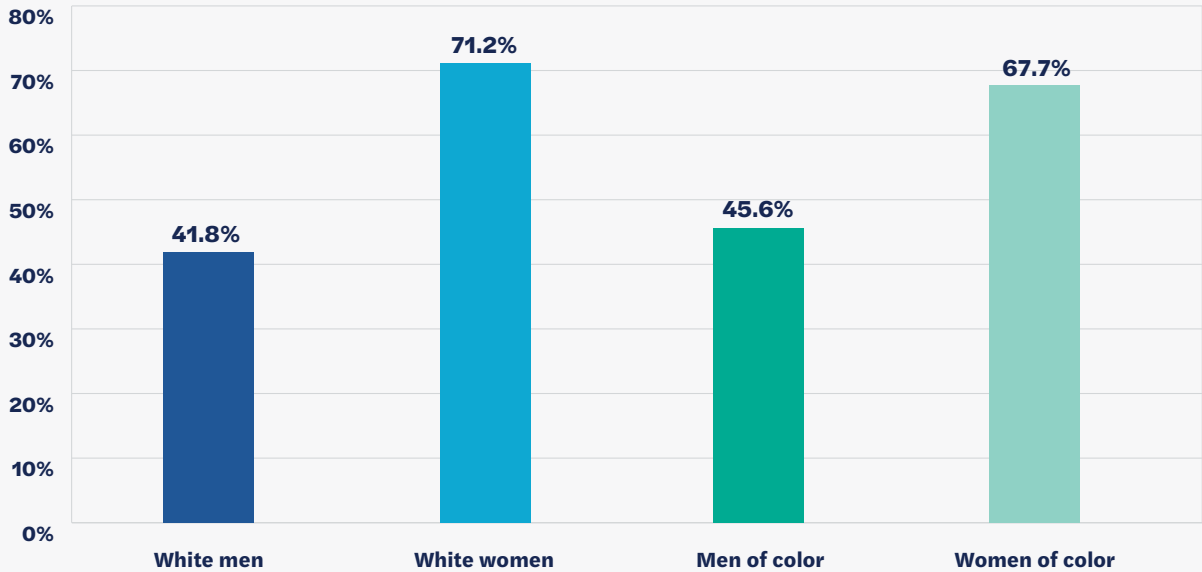
As a result of the #MeToo movement, there has been a flood of concern around sexual harassment in the profession of architecture.¹²⁹ An anonymous crowdsourced document detailing stories of misconduct in the architecture profession was widely disseminated—but criticized for a lack of quality control and potential for defamation suits in surfacing the sexual harassment problem.¹³⁰ *Architectural Record* and *Engineering News-Record* conducted a survey on sexual harassment in the profession of architecture, design, engineering, and construction, and found that approximately two-thirds of architectural professionals reported sexual harassment, with almost 30 percent experiencing unwanted physical contact.¹³¹

Our survey data confirmed that sexual harassment is commonplace in the architecture profession. Because of the sensitive nature of these questions and the low prevalence of some of these experiences, to protect participant privacy we did not disaggregate women of color and men of color into separate racial/ethnic groups.

Overall

Most women architectural professionals reported encountering some type of sexual harassment in their workplaces. Over two-thirds of white women and women of color reported at least one form of sexual harassment, while 41.8% of white men and 45.6% of men of color reported the same.

Sexual harassment



¹²⁹ Pogrebin, R. (2018). 5 Women Accuse the Architect Richard Meier of Sexual Harassment. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/13/arts/design/richard-meier-sexual-harassment-allegations.html>

¹³⁰ LaBarre, S. (2018). Exclusive: Why I Started A “Shitty Architecture Men” List. *Fast Company*. Retrieved from: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90164300/exclusive-why-i-started-a-shitty-architecture-men-list>

¹³¹ Oriaku, A. (2018). Two-thirds of architects experience sexual harassment, new survey says. *The Architect’s Newspaper*. Retrieved from: <https://archpaper.com/2018/10/sexual-harassment-architecture/>

“...A co-worker asked if I knew how to dance. I said ‘Yes, I learned at an early age to dance salsa and merengue.’ His reply: ‘I bet you probably dance on tables. Latinas are so sexy!’ He smiled as I rushed my way out the kitchen, not knowing what to say or how to react.”

—Latina woman

Forms of harassment

Sexist comments were the most common experience.

“On a work field trip, after drinks, a co-worker told me out of earshot of others that he wished I were sharing a room with him.”

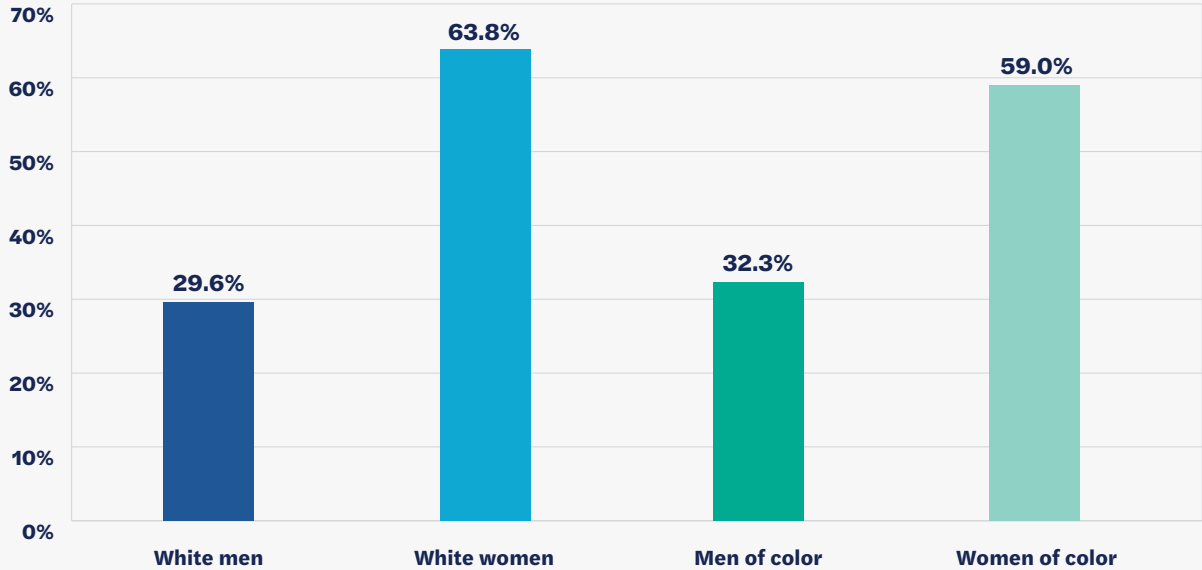
—White woman

“A couple of times I have heard seniors overshare about past girlfriends’ appearance or what they did with them...”

—Latino man

Almost two-thirds of white women and women of color reported hearing uncomfortable sexist comments in their workplaces. Men are also discomforted by sexist remarks, a point often overlooked: Nearly a third of men of color and white men reported hearing uncomfortable comments.

Uncomfortable sexist comments

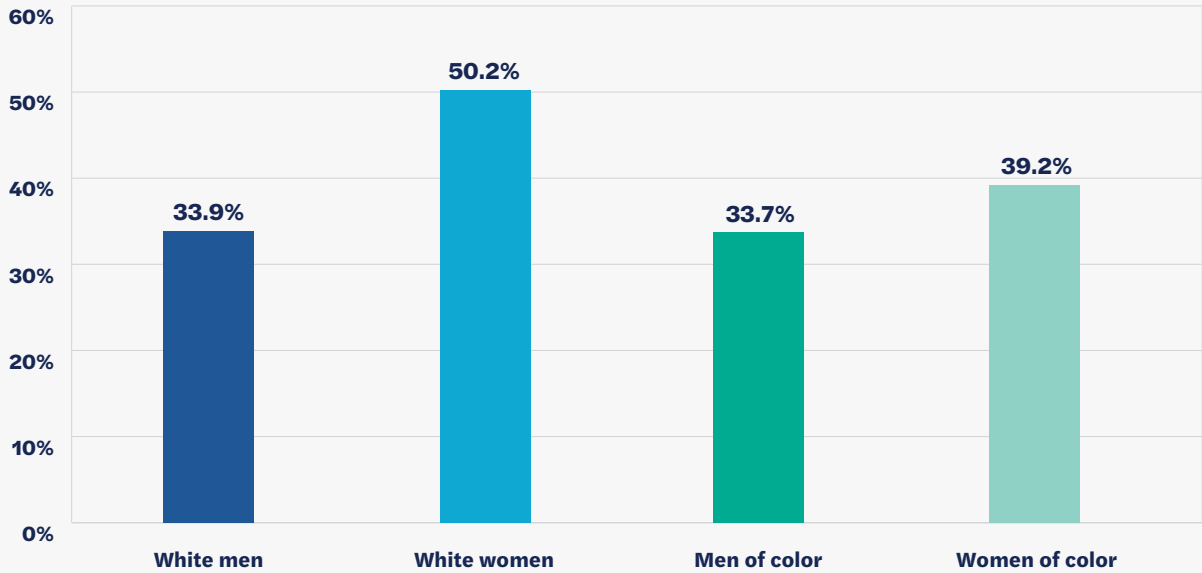


The next most commonly reported form of sexual harassment was uncomfortable sexual jokes and stories:

“I had a male co-worker make a joke about me sleeping with another male co-worker. We were in the car on the way to a meeting and there was another male co-worker with us. I was so angry and humiliated. It was false and inappropriate. I’ll never forget that.” – *White woman*

Half of white women, 39.2% of women of color, 33.9% of white men, and 33.7% of men of color reported hearing sexual stories or jokes in their workplaces.

Uncomfortable jokes or stories



“My boss' desktop background was a nearly-nude swimsuit model, and our office had pin-up girls in the shared space.”

—White woman

Sexual images are another form of sexual harassment in the workplace:

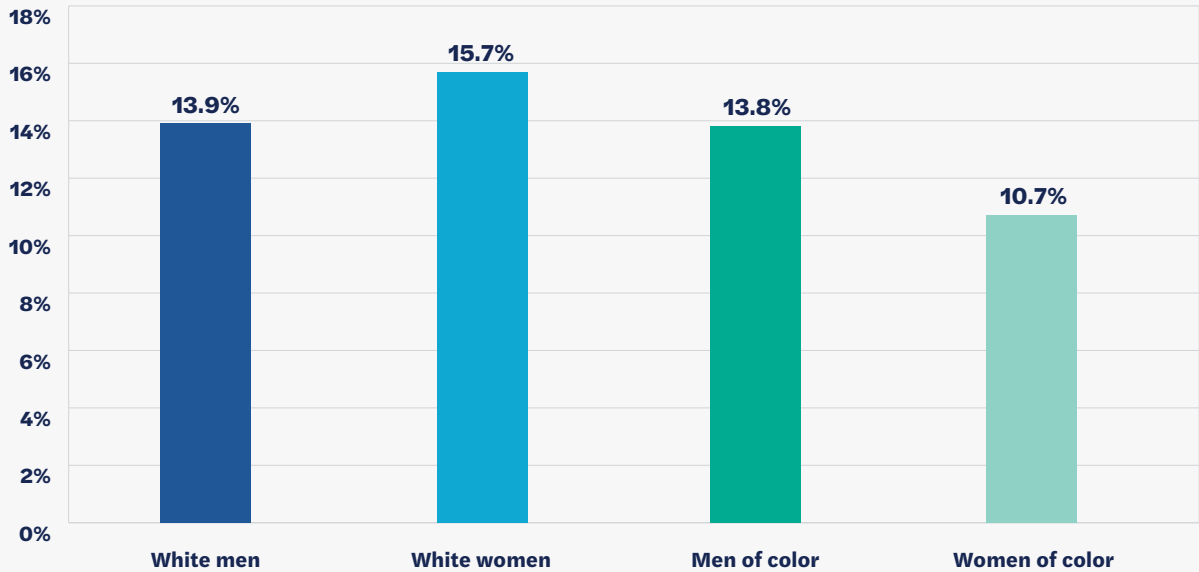
“At my previous job, my manager sat in a lunch meeting and sent nude selfies—I saw all of them...” —Multiracial woman

Nearly one in six white women and 10.7% of women of color reported seeing sexual or inappropriate images in their workplaces, along with 13.9% of white men and 13.8% of men of color.

There were more stark disparities between the experiences of men and women when we asked about physical forms of sexual harassment.

“A co-worker was infatuated with me at one point. I did not report it. Luckily he was laid off for a different reason, but I avoided him for a few months between the time he tried to kiss me and the time he's laid off.” —Woman of Asian descent

Sexual images



“At a former employer I was asked by my boss what would happen if he touched my leg while I was wearing a skirt.”

–Black woman

“I had a boss, a partner in the firm, continually place his hands on my back or shoulders when he would pass by me... it wasn't welcomed. I one time shrugged out of his hand on my shoulder... and he noticed. He was definitely upset or mad about it and wasn't so nice to me afterwards.”

—Latina woman

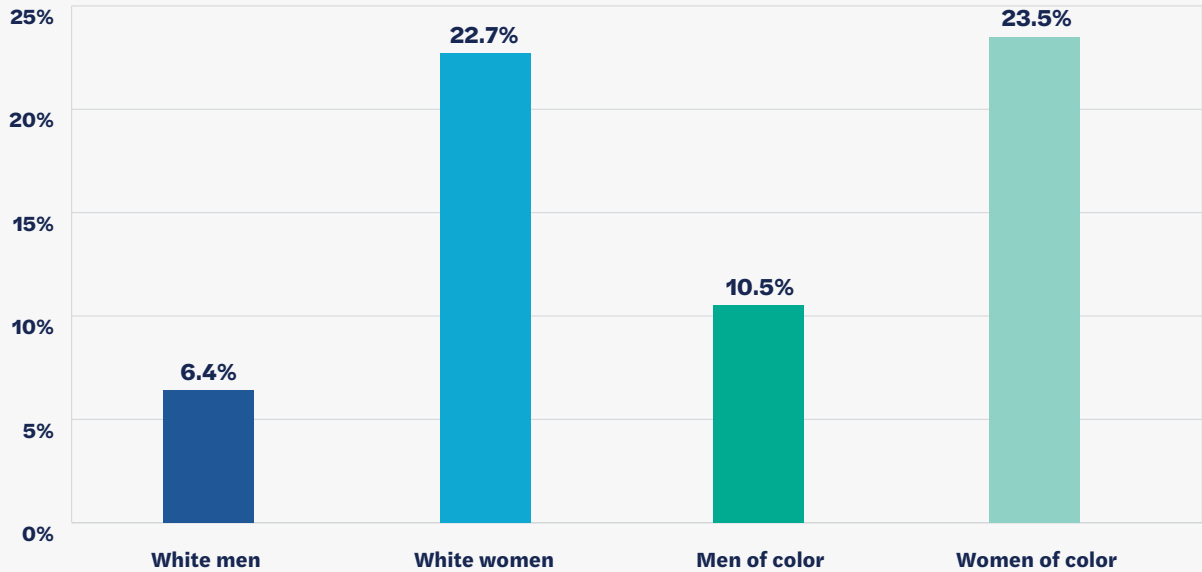
Nearly a quarter of white women and women of color reported unwanted romantic or sexual attention in their workplaces, along with 6.4% of white men and 10.5% of men of color.

A very high number of women reported unwanted physical contact in the workplace, and women in focus groups and survey comments related stories of sexual assault. Most of the unwanted physical contact involved things like backrubs or “getting handsy.”

“This co-worker walked up behind me and grazed his finger slowly down the length of [my] dress's back opening. When I turned around in shock, he smiled and said, ‘That's an invitation.’ Matching his smile I said, ‘... an invitation to be fired or to have your finger broken?’” —Latina woman

“I ha[ve] received unwanted patting on the shoulder/shoulder massage by a male colleague...” —Biracial woman

Unwanted attention



“I was fired after complaining about being assaulted by a senior partner who drove me home from work and forced himself on me.”

—White woman

Over a quarter of white women and women of color, along with 9.1% of white men and 8.1% of men of color, reported unwelcome physical contact on at least one occasion.

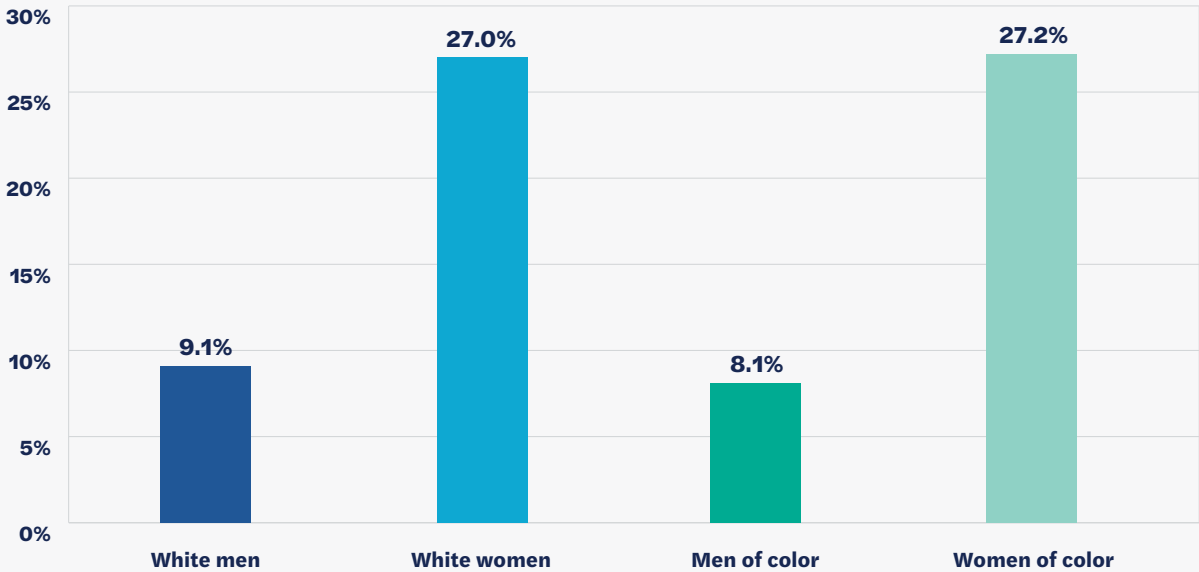
Other research has found that sexual harassment often hurts women’s careers. 46% of women who had experienced sexual harassment on the job reported that the harassment caused them to leave their job—which can negatively affect the long-term arc of their careers. We also found evidence that sexual harassment can lead to lost opportunities in the profession of architecture:

“I have had a supervisor express desire for a sexual relationship with me and simultaneously threaten my significant other. I chose to leave the job and find another.” —White woman

“I worked with an office manager who was very touchy-feely with young women in the office ... One afternoon I became so frustrated with his behavior that I yelled at him not to touch me in the middle of the office. I then went immediately to HR and reported the incident and described his ongoing behavior, for fear of retaliation. The HR manager was entirely unsurprised; to my knowledge, he faced no consequences for this behavior, and it continued—though not toward me, but toward the other women. I left that office within a year...”

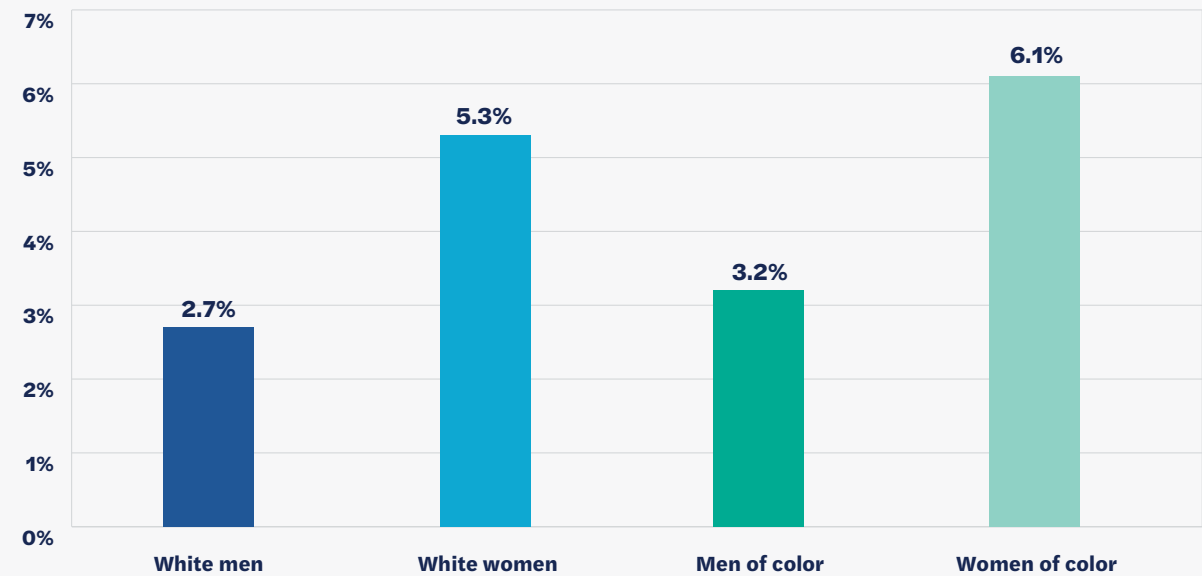
—Multiracial woman

Physical contact



Over 5% of white women and 6.1% of women of color, along with 2.7% of white men and 3.2% of men of color, reported having lost opportunities because they rebuffed sexual advances. These lost opportunities include experiences such as the loss of a high-profile assignment, a denied raise or promotion, or even being forced to change workplaces.

Lost opportunities

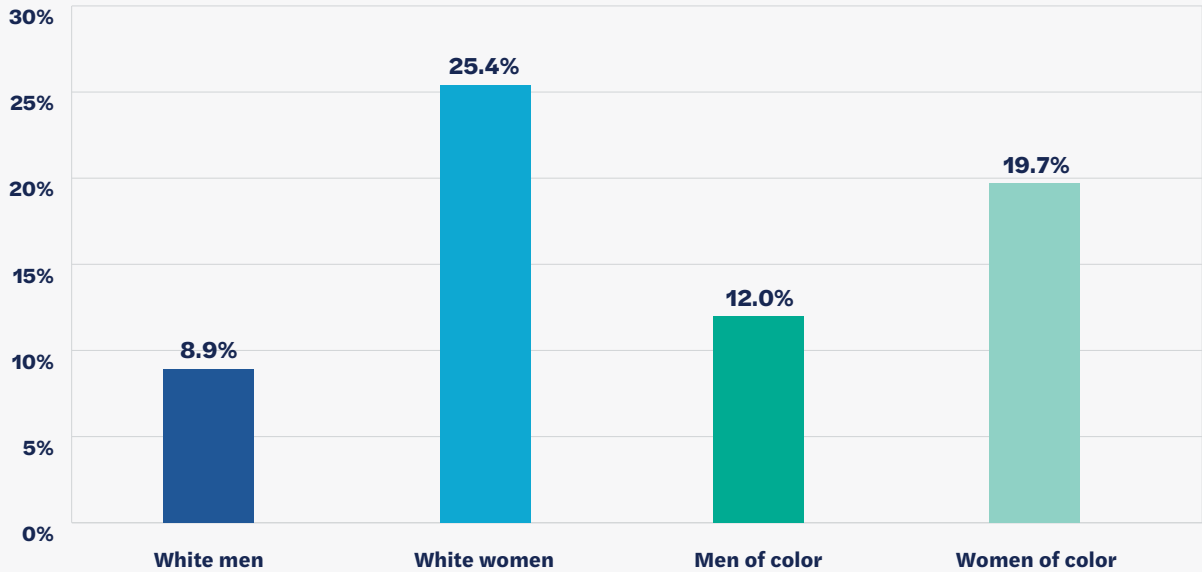


Dealing with harassment

Sexual harassment is draining. Its negative impacts include losses of productivity as well as time, energy, and political capital spent navigating the often-delicate office politics of rebuffing harassment without jeopardizing one’s career prospects.

A quarter of white women and 19.7% of women of color had to spend effort dealing with sexual harassment in a way that would not result in retaliation; 8.9% of white men and 12% of men of color reported the same experience.

Spent effort dealing with sexual harassment

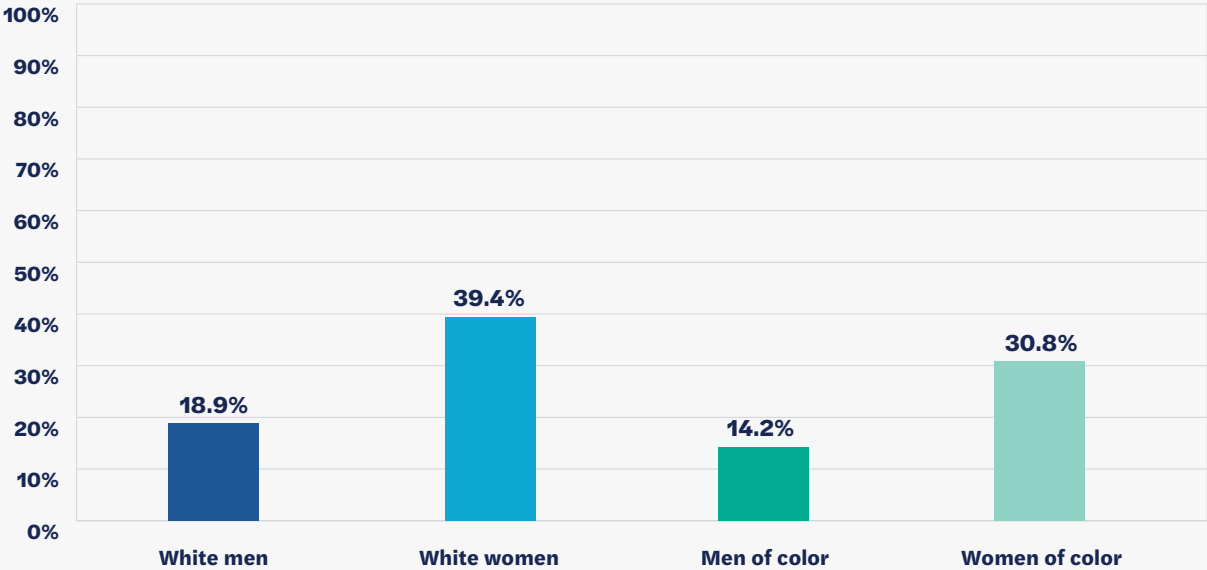


Sexual harassment can also impact employees when the person being harassed is a colleague: 39.4% of white women and 30.8% of women of color, along with 18.9% of white men and 14.2% of men of color, reported having to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace, whether it be harassment they faced themselves or by helping or counseling others who had been harassed. It is important to note that sexual harassment has negative effects on men as well as women.

“My project manager had a crush on me even though we're both married to different people. He made unwanted sexual jokes, would text me late at night, and would get angry if I didn't listen to every instruction he gave me. I was able to leave the team and reported it to HR.” –*White woman*

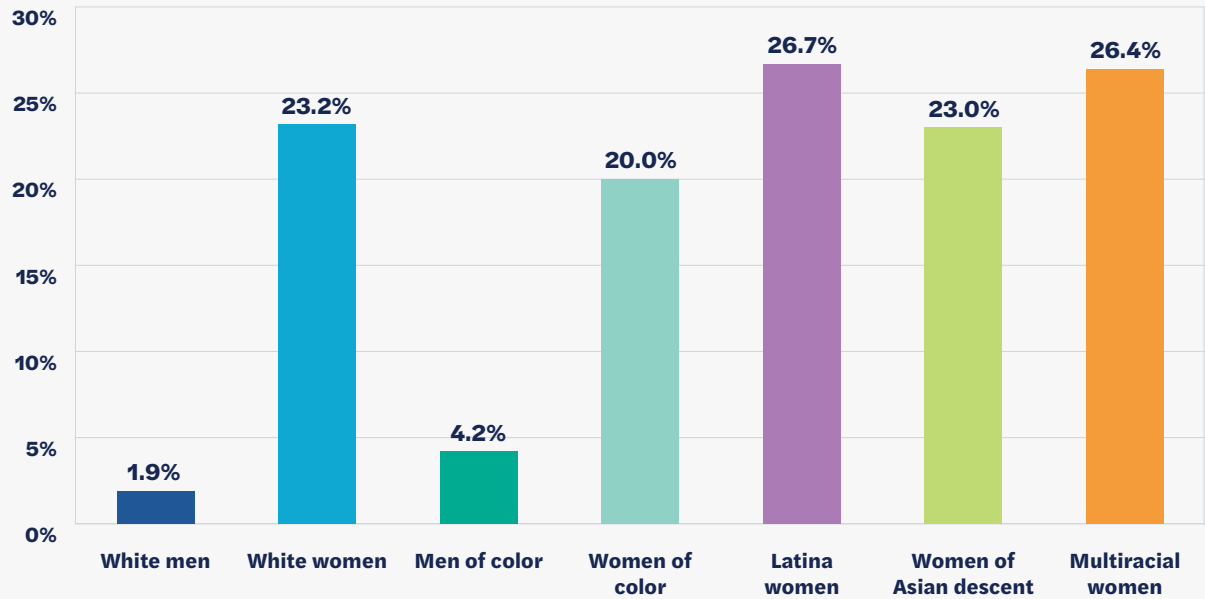
“A married co-worker at my previous job messaged me love songs and told me he loved me. He also followed me out of work to talk to me even when I was clear I didn't [want to talk]. He was reprimanded and moved and instructed to have no contact with me. He later violated this, getting my phone number off our company list and texting me late at night. I reported him again and when he was only going to get a slap on the wrist, I had to threaten my office with legal action in order for them to take it seriously.” –*Multiracial woman*

Had to deal with sexual harassment



Almost a quarter of white women and 20% of women of color reported having to change their own behavior in the workplace to avoid being sexually harassed. This burden falls unfairly onto women: Only 1.9% of white men and 4.2% of men of color reported having to make a change themselves. Latina women, multiracial women, and women of Asian descent were the most likely to report having to change their behavior.

Changed behavior to avoid harassment



Sources of sexual harassment

Architectural professionals report sexual harassment from many different corners. For women, the most common source of sexual harassment was from contractors, followed by co-workers. Men were more likely to report harassment by a co-worker than a contractor. Clients were the least common source of harassment.

Sexual harassment was reported from contractors:

“Late-night unsolicited (drunken?) romantic e-mails from a contractor I was working with, but I ignored them and they stopped—he never approached me in this way in person.”
—Multiracial woman

“I received some cat calls by tradesmen on a construction site while performing construction administration duties.”
—Woman of Asian descent

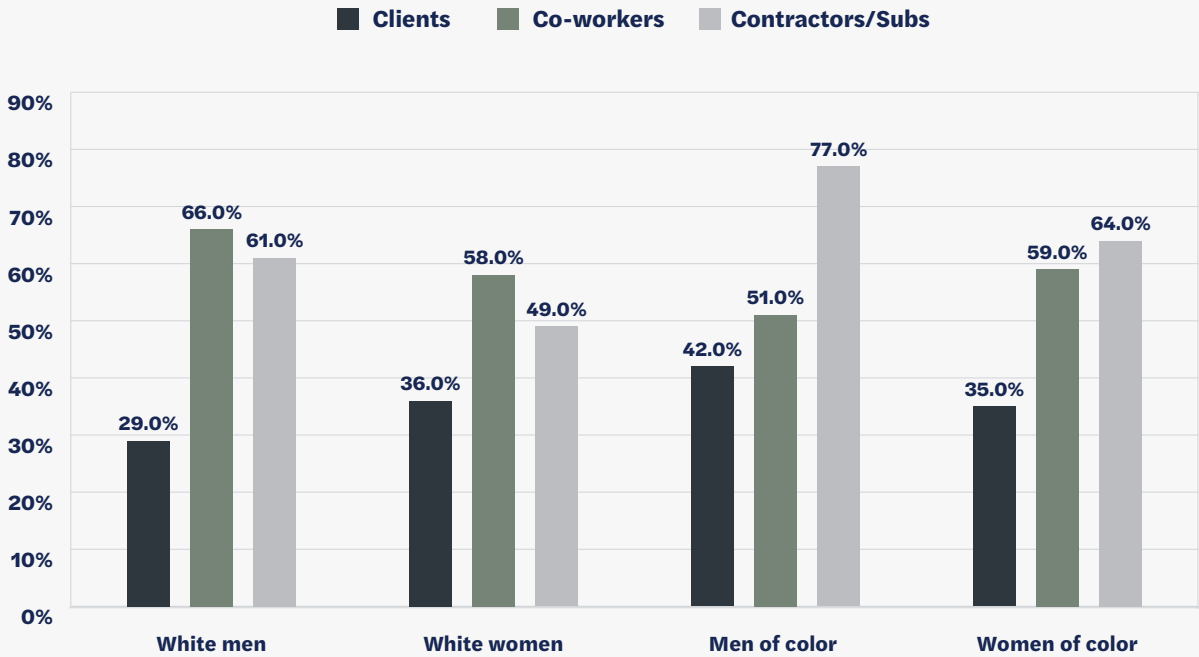
And co-workers:

“Specific incidents of harassment/uncomfortable comments were from a co-worker at a previous firm, of which multiple women left the firm due to these continuous events and no change from management.” —White woman

And clients:

“A client insisted I hug him upon entering the meeting room the second time I met him. My male co-worker who had been working with him for a number of years was given a handshake.” —White woman

Sources of sexual harassment



“As recently as last year, a client swat[ted] me on the butt at the end of a meeting in front of others and acted as if it were completely appropriate.”

—Latina woman

Respondents who had experienced sexual harassment reported the sources of sexual harassment, which can be found in the accompanying chart. Note that percentages do not add up to 100 because most individuals had experienced sexual harassment from more than one source.

What men think

Sometimes sexualized comments between men are written off as “locker room banter,” but the architecture profession is unique among fields we have studied in the prevalence of distaste for sexual harassment expressed by men. ¹³³

“Some male co-workers ... see no problem in sharing the occasional leering comment, ribald joke or pornographic image, assuming since I am also male I will enjoy it. I don't.”

—White man

¹³³ Williams, J.C., Korn, R. M., Rincon, R., Finn, P. (2018) Walking the Tightrope: An Examination of Bias in India's Engineering Workplace. Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/Walking-the-Tightrope-Bias-Indias-Engineering-Workplace.pdf>; Williams, J. C., Multhaup, M., Li, S., Korn, R. M. (2018). You Can't Change What You Can't See: Interrupting Racial & Gender Bias in the Legal Profession. American Bar Association & Minority Corporate Counsel Association. Available at: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/you-cant-change-what-you-cant-see-print.pdf>; Williams, J.C., Li, S., Rincon, R., & Finn, P. (2016). Climate Control: Gender and Racial Bias in Engineering? Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Climate-Control-Gender-And-Racial-Bias-InEngineering.pdf>

OUTCOMES

Bias affects inclusion, people’s intent to stay in their current workplace or in the profession, career satisfaction, and other important outcomes. In terms of outcomes, once again our research found that white men’s experience differs from that of other groups.

Although women are well-represented in the architectural profession pipeline, after graduation the numbers of women in the profession steadily drop off.¹³⁴ While the need for work-life balance and motherhood may be factors that lead women to leave the profession, the findings in this study suggest that when women self-select out of the architecture profession, bias and workplace climate often play a role.

This finding confirms prior research. The 2018 Equity in Architecture survey found that architectural professionals who don’t receive training and those who do not have friends at work are less likely to stay in their current positions, while those who build relationships, receive one-on-one coaching, and have impactful work are more likely to stay.¹³⁵ Equity in Architecture pinpointed three factors’ crucial impact for women: culture and relationships, engagement and impact, and work-life issues. For example, people are more engaged in their careers when their employers call out bias when they see it.¹³⁶ The 2016 Diversity in the Profession of Architecture report identifies work-life balance, compensation, and being unhappy with the work as key issues in why people leave

the profession. That report also found that most employees who are satisfied with their jobs are working in firms that treat all people equally, regardless of their gender, race, or ethnicity, highlighting the importance of feeling a sense of belonging in the workplace.¹³⁷

Belonging and culture fit

Feelings of belonging are linked to increases in job performance and decreases in turnover and sick days.¹³⁸

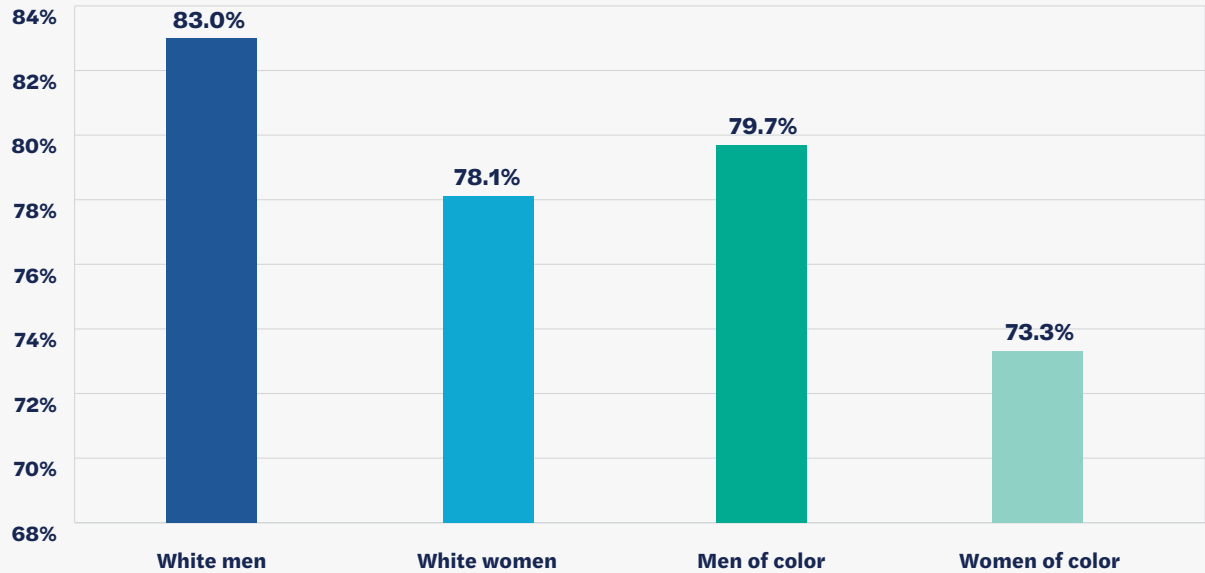
“[I watched] a higher up female colleague being effectively told, ‘We don't really know where you fit in this organization,’ even though she is following the same path as older male colleagues.”
—White woman

“I started my firm in 2011... I encourage an open atmosphere where we can discuss anything—especially uncomfortable ideas, which happens in our work—and that is partly what makes the office a good environment. The other part is our community work.” —White woman

¹³⁴ Duncan, J. (2013). Why are so many women leaving architecture? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/2013/aug/07/women-leaving-architecture-profession>
¹³⁵ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>
¹³⁶ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>
¹³⁷ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>
¹³⁸ Carr, E.W., Reece, A., Kellerman, G.R., & Robichaux, A. (2019). The Value of Belonging at Work. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2019/12/the-value-of-belonging-at-work>

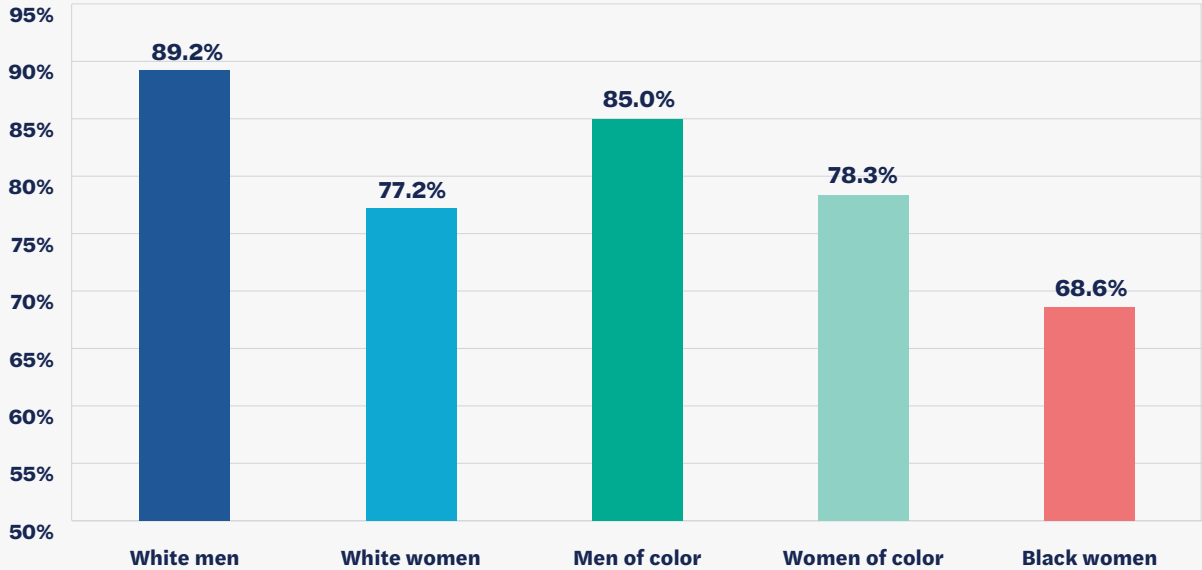
Three questions in our survey explored belonging in architecture workplaces. White men were significantly more likely than women of color to report that their workplace culture was a good fit for them personally; white women and men of color fell in between, with their reported experience not significantly different from either white men or women of color.

Good culture fit



White men were significantly more likely to report having a good sense of what is needed to succeed in their workplaces than white women and women of color, while men of color fell in between with no significant difference in results from white men or women. Black women were the least likely to report having a sense of what is needed to succeed.

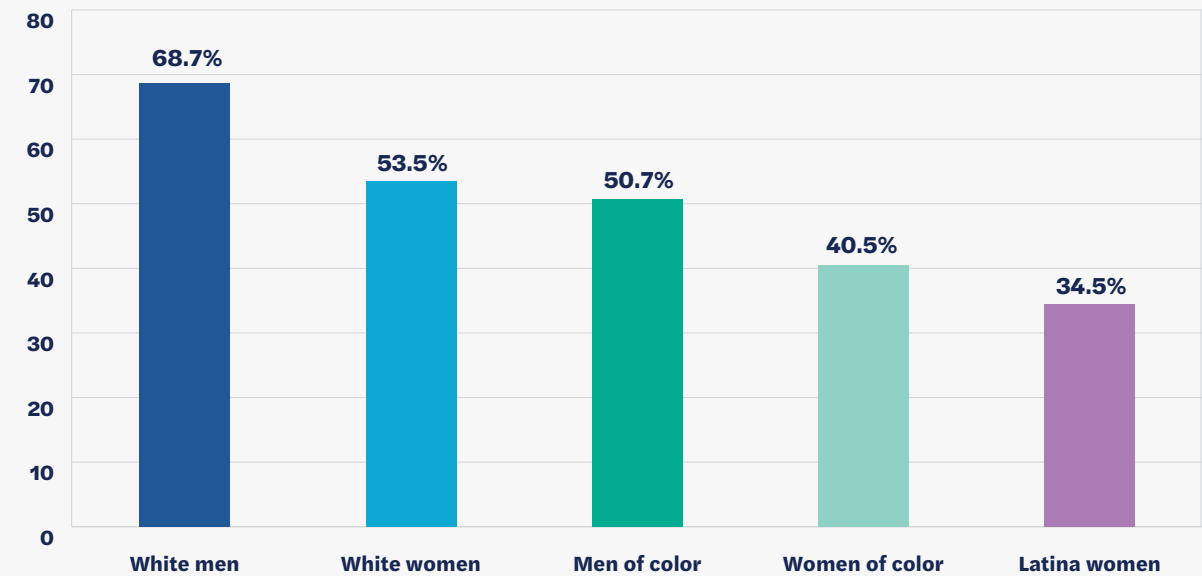
Know what is needed to succeed



Over two-thirds of white men reported that the people who succeed at their firms are like them, compared to only 40.5% of women of color. About half of white women and men of color agreed. Latina women were the least likely to agree—only about a third did.

Latina women are correct: There are not a lot of people like them at the top in the profession of architecture. For example, in a blog post celebrating Latina architects, architect Rebecca Sibley noted, “I am a Latina architect working in a profession where less than 5% of licensed architects are Latinos, and less than 18% are women.”¹³⁹

People who succeed are like me



¹³⁹ Bolaños, C. This Architecture Firm Boast 5 Licensed Latina Architects and Numerous Latinx Staff. The Mujerista. Retrieved from: <https://www.themujerista.com/the-blog/latina-architects-lead-note-worthy-projects-and-helped-shape-architecture-firm#:~:text=%E2%80%9C9CI%20am%20a%20Latina%20architect,are%20women%2C%E2%80%9D%20Sibley%20said.>

Engagement/satisfaction

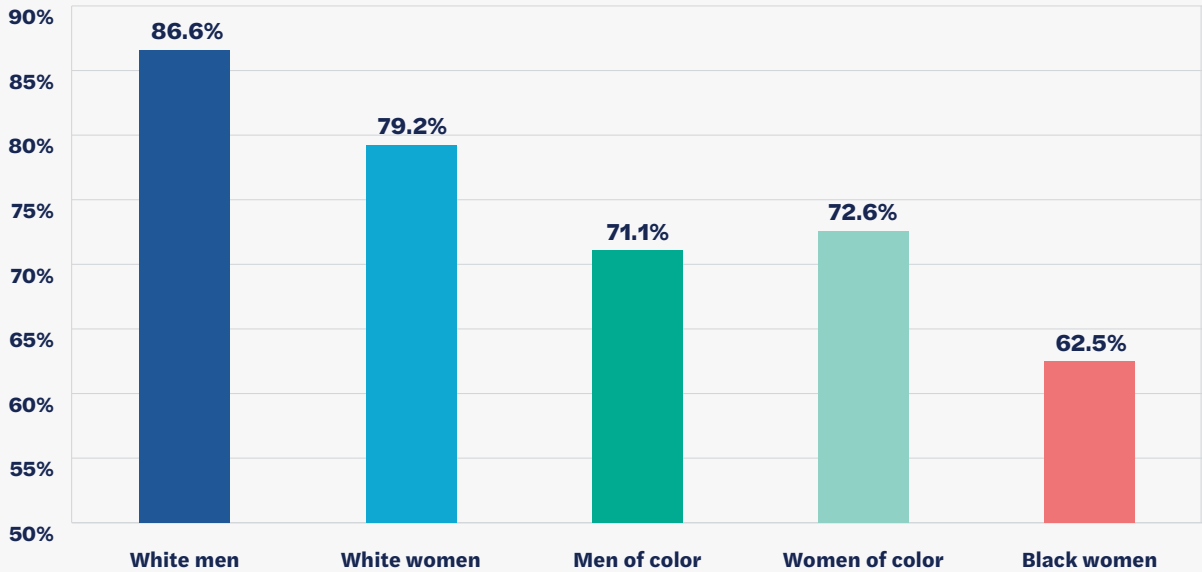
When employees are not engaged at work, it hurts their employers: Disengaged employees cost employers 34% of their annual salaries.¹⁴⁰ On the flipside, organizations that are able to achieve high employee engagement are 21% more profitable.¹⁴¹ Engagement and satisfaction in the workplace are critical components of the employee experience, and organizations would do well to focus on improving these metrics.

The survey showed a disparity between the experiences of white men and those of other groups when it comes to engagement and satisfaction.

“I changed jobs two years ago to go into practice with my husband who is also an architect and my work life changed dramatically for the better! I am equally valued and have a lot more freedom and am much happier... I had previously worked for a very large national firm for approximately 19 years prior and didn't realize how unhappy and unfair it was until I left it.”
—White Woman

A high number of white men, 86.6%, reported being able to do their best work at their organizations, a number significantly higher than men of color, women of color, and white women. Black women again reported more bias than all other groups: Only 62.5% said they felt able to do their best work at their organizations.

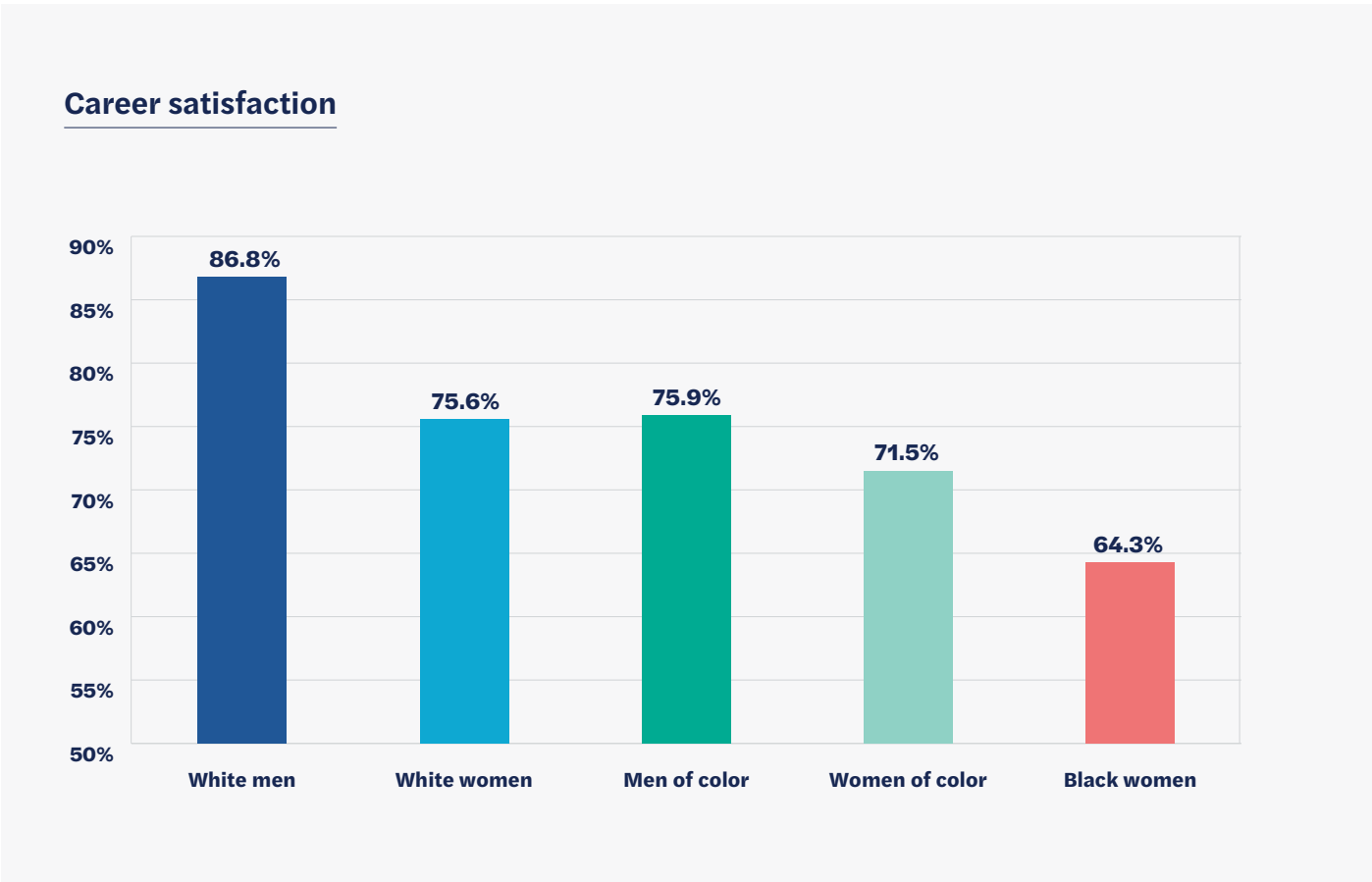
Able to do my best work



¹⁴⁰ Kingo, A.G. (2020). Working Moms' COVID-19-related Anxiety Will Cost the US Economy \$341 Billion. *Working Mother*. Retrieved from: <https://www.workingmother.com/working-moms-covid-related-anxiety-will-cost-us-economy-341-billion>

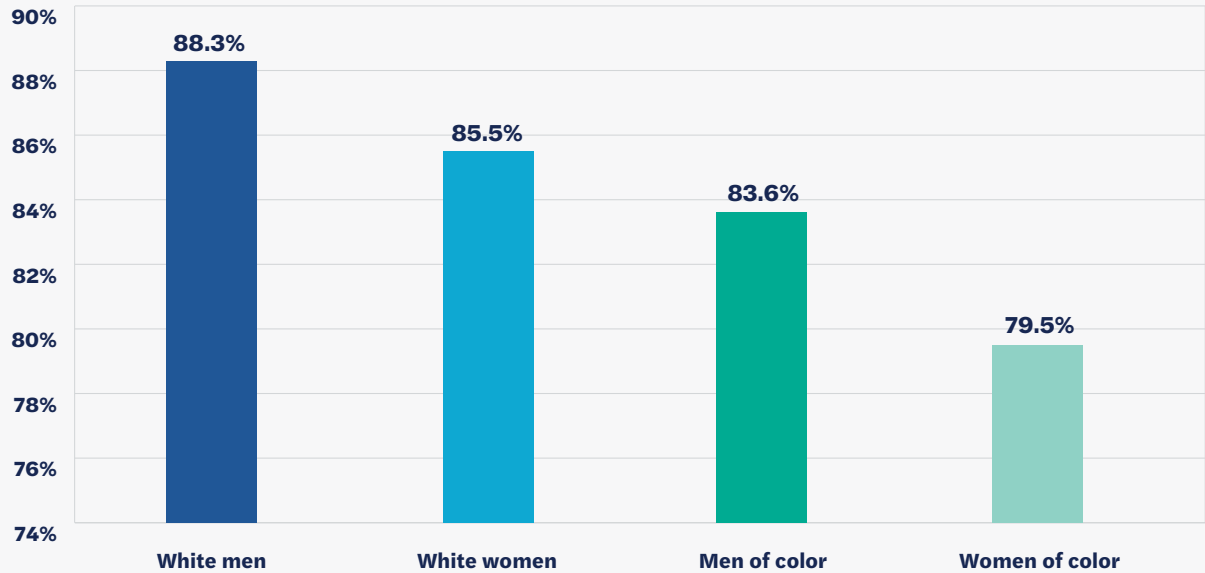
¹⁴¹ Jouany, V. & Mäkipää, M. (2020). 8 Employee Engagement Statistics You Need to Know in 2020. *Smarp*. Retrieved from: <https://blog.smarp.com/employee-engagement-8-statistics-you-need-to-know>

The same pattern was true for career satisfaction at their current organizations. 86.8% of white men were satisfied with their careers, a number significantly higher than all other groups. Only 71.5% of women of color, 75.6% of white women, and 75.9% of all men of color said they felt satisfied with their careers. Again, Black women (64.3%) reported being the least satisfied with their careers at their current organizations.



To more fully explore the issues surrounding engagement and satisfaction, participants were asked about whether they would recommend their organization to a friend. 88.3% of white men agreed, a number significantly higher than women of color and men of color. White women fell in between, not significantly different from any other groups.

Would recommend to a friend



Retention

The costs of losing good employees are substantial: One study suggests that turnover costs average six to nine months of an employee’s salary.¹⁴² The disproportionate attrition among women and people of color impedes the architecture profession’s quest for diversity.

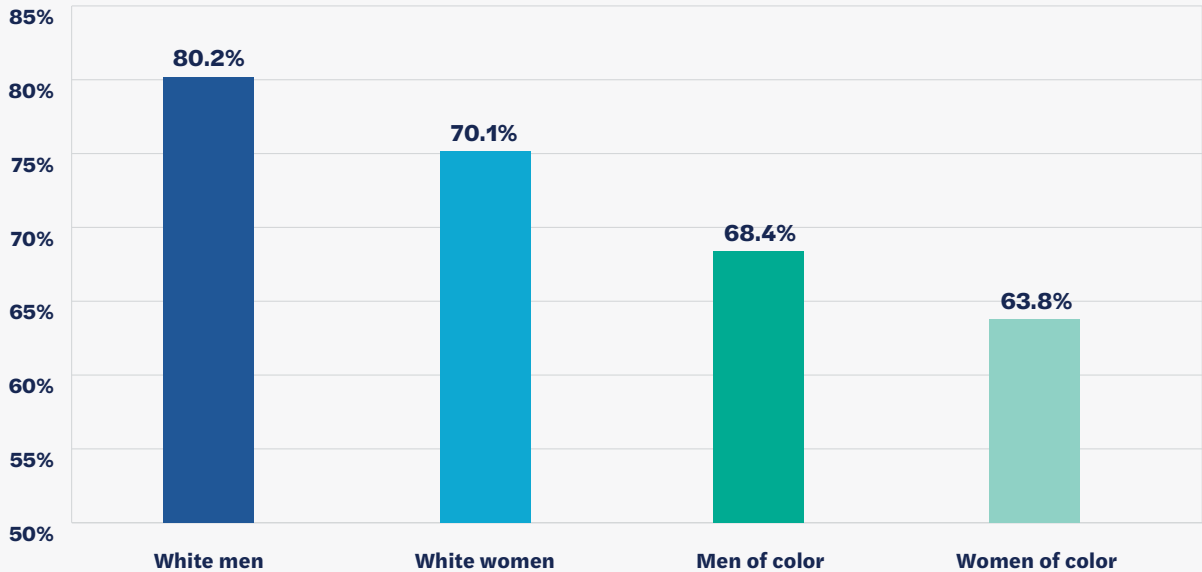
“I don't see a path up for me as a woman in this career anymore, and I'm sure within a few years I will become one of those who make up the statistically alarming number of women who leave the practice mid-career.” –*White woman*

“[I] was passed on for promotion despite my hard work for firm... After four years in the firm, I gave them my resignation with three-weeks’ notice. The white male principal informed me that they are putting me on promotion track. My response to him was, ‘Why now? Why could you not do it sooner when I asked for the promotion?’ ... I left the profession of architecture forever then.” –*Woman of Asian descent*

“...At my previous firm the one principal did not appreciate being challenged and supported only yes-men, so I chose to leave after three years of trying to change a system that did not want to.” –*Woman of Asian descent*

People tend to stay at organizations where they think they can advance. White male architectural professionals are more likely to do so than other groups: 80.2% of white men reported being able to see a clear path for advancement for themselves at their organizations, a number significantly higher than women of color, men of color, and white women.

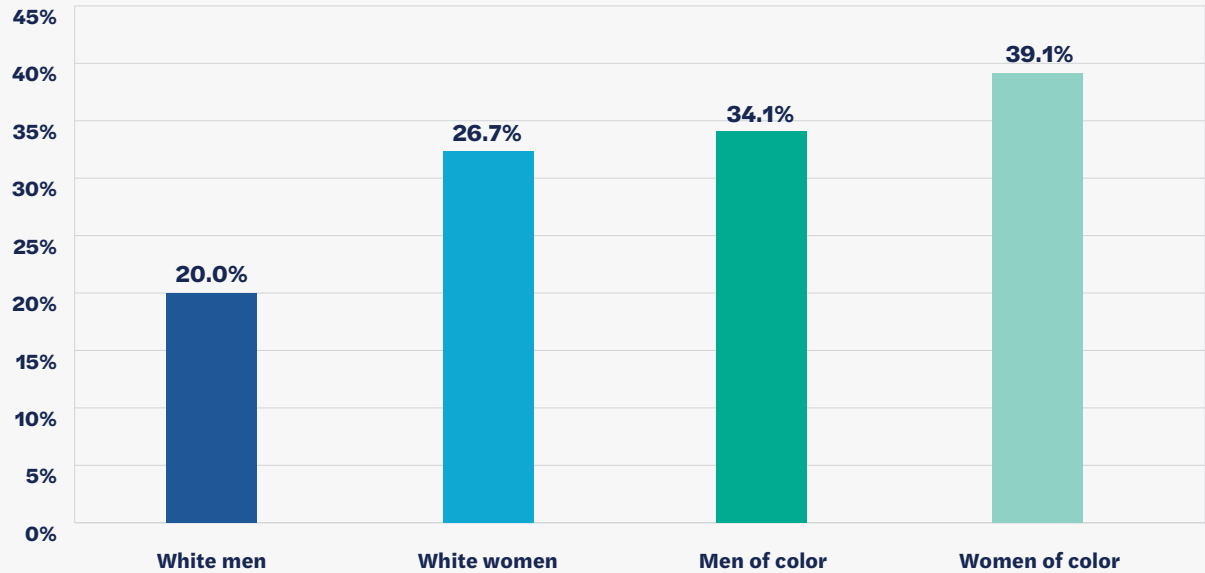
Clear path for advancement



¹⁴² Merhar, C. (2020). Employee Retention – The Real Cost of Losing an Employee. *PeopleKeep*. Retrieved from: <https://www.peoplekeep.com/blog/bid/312123/employee-retention-the-real-cost-of-losing-an-employee>

Only one in five white men reported not being able to see a future for themselves at their current organization, compared to a significantly larger number of women of color and men of color—white women fell between with results that weren’t significantly different from those of white men or people of color.

No long-term future



FIRM CULTURE

The 2018 Equity in Architecture survey found that culture was noted as a top reason for taking a job by 28% of men and 31% of women.¹⁴³ Participants rated their firm’s key values, and less than 20% reported that their firm valued the workplace culture and relationships. The 2016 Diversity in the Profession of Architecture report similarly found that about half of respondents rated the culture of their firm as an important factor in job satisfaction.¹⁴⁴

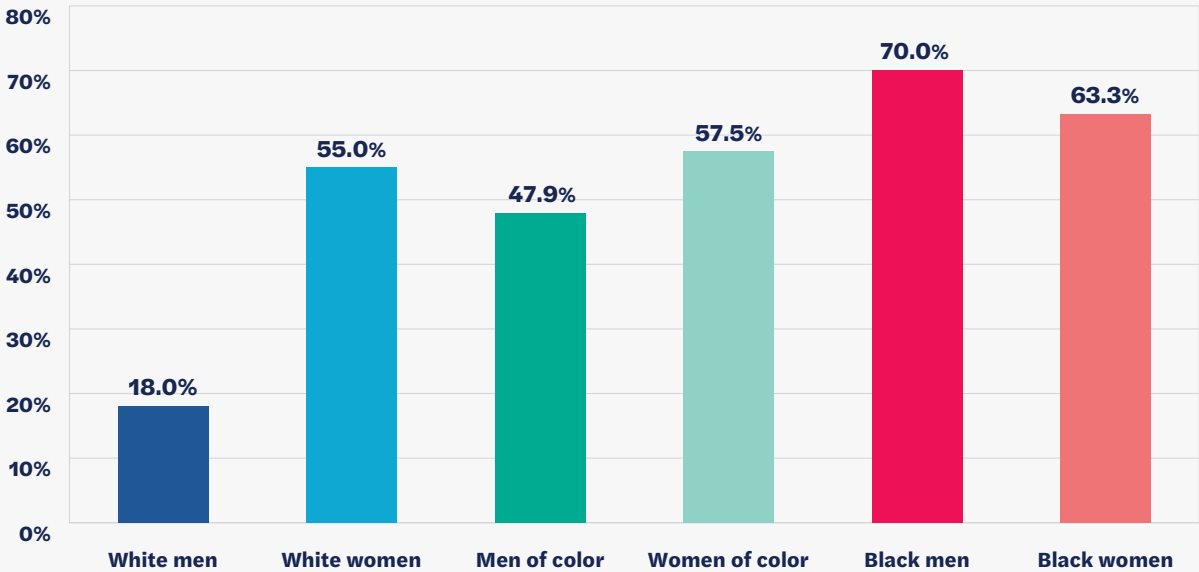
Our findings confirmed the importance of culture.

“Culture, respect, and equal opportunity mean everything—and even means the difference between keeping or losing employees.” —*Latina woman*

“Working in a small architecture firm in New England where all of the other employees were white and male, I experienced quite a bit of male culture even though I felt my colleagues were all ‘good guys.’ They were just pretty clueless about how others would perceive their actions and comments.” —*Multiracial woman*

Firm culture plays a role even before people are hired. About half of women of color, white women, and men of color reported thinking about the gender and racial makeup of firms when they were making a decision about a job offer, whereas only 18% of white men report thinking about it. Black men and Black women were even more likely to report thinking about the firm makeup.

Thought about gender and racial makeup before accepting job

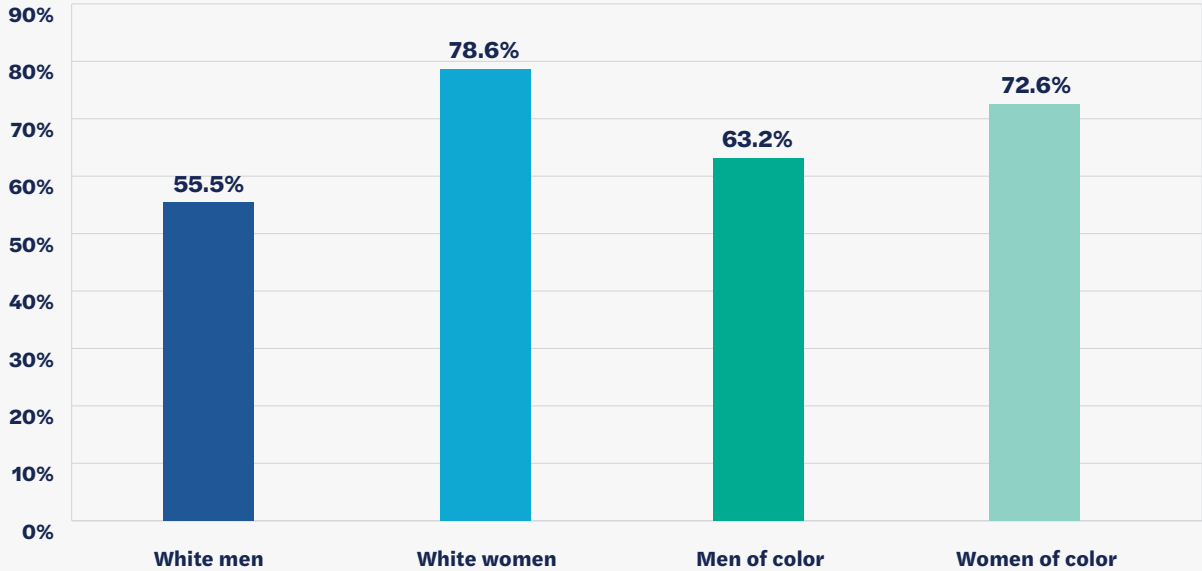


¹⁴³ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

¹⁴⁴ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

Around half of white men reported they considered leaving a firm because they were unhappy with the culture, compared to a significantly higher number of white women, women of color, and men of color.

Left or considered leaving because of culture



**“I’m the sole owner of my own small firm...
I aim [to have] an open, tolerant, flexible,
and fair firm where everyone has equal
opportunity to succeed. I think my staff
recognizes that and rises to the opportunity. ”**

–White man

Seniority

Survey respondents shared how long they have worked in the architecture profession. Men were a little more likely to have been working in the profession for longer, and women were more likely to have been working in the profession for shorter periods of time—especially women of color. The demographics of our survey respondents match the larger profession of architecture: A more diverse group can be found in schools of architecture and entering the field, so there are more women and people of color at the lower levels than at the top.

There was no clear effect of seniority on experiences of bias. A few findings emerged: People with more seniority were slightly more likely to report feeling like they belong at their workplace, and to report they have a long-term future at their workplace. These findings are not particularly surprising; it makes sense that employees who have remained at a firm for a long time and gained seniority feel that they belong. The main patterns of bias were not reported at different levels by people of different levels of seniority.

These results were not simply due to the fact that men are more likely to have been working in the architecture profession for longer. Analyses showed no clear pattern even after separating demographic groups (for example, younger women of color did not report more bias than older women of color, or vice versa).

Although the quantitative data did not show an effect of seniority, several survey respondents commented on the impacts of ageism in the workplace:

“I have received comments and questions (some as direct as ‘How old are you?’) from my team members who may not feel I’m qualified, not based on knowledge and experience, but solely on age.” —*White woman*

“Don’t forget ageism: I was laid off from my previous firm two years ago after working there for 17 years... Of the nine of us who were laid off, seven were over the age of 50 and six were women.” —*White woman*

One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that younger people attribute bias to their race/ethnicity or gender, while older people attribute the same experiences to their age.

“Ageism is becoming an issue at my age, over 55. I find the older I get the less likely I am considered for employment. This is a big problem in our profession.”

—*Latino man*

CONCLUSION

The profession of architecture has come a long way since the 1960s when women were beginning to enter the field in greater numbers.¹⁴⁵ Despite decades of progress, however, women and people of color remain underrepresented, particularly in upper-level positions.¹⁴⁶ The current research sheds some light on an important reason that women and people of color leave their firms—and the field entirely.

Architectural firms can make progress on bias by using the tools that businesses commonly use to address any major business problem: evidence, goals, and metrics. Well-intentioned people can sincerely wish for inclusion, but if their organizations do not build evidence-based, metrics-driven bias interrupters into hiring, work assignments, performance evaluations, and meetings—in addition to meaningfully addressing work-life concerns—progress will remain stalled.

¹⁴⁵ Goldhagen, S.W. (2013). Crashing the Boys' Club. *Architectural Record*. Retrieved from: <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/5828-crashing-the-boys-club>; Stratigakos, D. (2014) Building on the Past: A History of Women in Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://ap.buffalo.edu/news/2014/womeninarchitecture.html>

¹⁴⁶ NCARB by the numbers (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2020/demographics>

Background

Background

In 1985, only a quarter of architecture students were women, and women represented fewer than 10% of NCARB record applicants.¹⁴⁷ By 2019, women received 47% of the degrees awarded by accredited architecture schools,¹⁴⁸ and almost two out of every five newly licensed architects were women.¹⁴⁹

Racial progress has not kept track with gender progress. In 2017, only 2% of licensed architects in the United States were African American.¹⁵⁰ The numbers are even worse for women; as of October 2020, there are only 499 African American women licensed as architects in the United States.¹⁵¹ Numbers are improving, however: The 2020 National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) by the Numbers report found that racial and ethnic diversity in the architecture profession improved across all career stages, with the largest gains for Hispanic or Latino/a people and people of Asian descent.¹⁵² And over half of the new women NCARB record holders in 2019 were women of color.¹⁵³

While these numbers point to gradual improvements to a more diverse workforce in the architectural profession, the numbers are far from parity. Much attention has been paid to demographic

breakdowns—how many women there are in schools of architecture, working in architecture firms, becoming licensed, etc. This headcount is important because it documents that there is a problem. But it doesn’t tell us what went wrong, or how to fix it.

In addition to the demographic breakdowns, a 2019 study revealed the relative low pay of women and people of color in the architecture profession.¹⁵⁴ White men are paid more than other groups in the profession of architecture, while Black and African American people report being paid the least.¹⁵⁵ Women can’t overcome the pay gap by going back to school: Women with a master’s degree in architecture are still paid less than men with only a bachelor’s degree.¹⁵⁶ While these outcome measures are important, they do not explain which workplace processes and interactions lead to low pay.

“...The older I get, the more I realize how built into our culture sexism actually is. I got all the way through grad school before realizing that the world would see me as anything less than fully capable, simply because I am not a man.”

—White woman

¹⁴⁷ Chang, L.C. (2014). Where Are the Women? Measuring Progress on Gender in Architecture. ACSA. Retrieved from: <https://www.acsa-arch.org/resources/data-resources/where-are-the-women-measuring-progress-on-gender-in-architecture/m>; <http://ap.buffalo.edu/news/2014/womeninarchitecture.html>

¹⁴⁸ Goldhagen, S.W. (2013). Crashing the Boys’ Club. *Architectural Record*. Retrieved from: <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/5828-crashing-the-boys-club>; National Architectural Accrediting Board. 2019 Annual Report on Architecture Education. Retrieved from: https://www.naab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019_NAAB-Annual-Report.pdf

¹⁴⁹ NCARB by the numbers (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2020/demographics>

¹⁵⁰ Warekar, T. (2017). Black architects, long underrepresented, are celebrated in a new exhibit. *Curbed New York*. Retrieved from: <https://ny.curbed.com/2017/1/27/14403988/nyc-center-for-architecture-say-it-loud-exhibit>

¹⁵¹ The Directory of African American Architects. Retrieved 10/12/20 from: <http://blackarch.uc.edu/http://blackarchitect.us/>

¹⁵² NCARB by the numbers (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2020/demographics>

¹⁵³ NCARB by the numbers (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2020/demographics>

¹⁵⁴ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>; The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

¹⁵⁵ Pitts, A., (2017). Equity by Design Metrics: From “Equal Pay for Equal Work” to Pay Equity. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/blog/2017/7/2/eqxd-metrics-from-equal-pay-for-equal-work-to-pay-equity>

¹⁵⁶ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

Equity by Design, a group founded with the goal of addressing the barriers to success faced by women in the profession of architecture, has done pathbreaking work on gender issues in the profession of architecture for nearly a decade. When Equity by Design began their work in 2011, half of architecture students were women, but only 18% of licensed architects were women. Their initial work on “the missing 32%” sought to examine the issues surrounding women in the architecture profession. Over the past nine years, their work has centered the experiences of women and people of color in the architecture profession and has provided data to document the difficulties these groups have faced for decades. The 2018 Equity in Architecture survey, studying the experiences of over 14,000 individuals in the architecture profession, set the stage for this study to build on their findings. The Equity by Design team’s work has been instrumental in outlining the steps toward equitable practice and has provided leadership in moving beyond the simple headcount into exploring the reasons why women and people of color are underrepresented in the architecture profession.

The American Institute of Architects has also put a substantial amount of work into identifying the challenges faced by women and people of color. In 2014, the AIA, in partnership with NCARB, ACSA, and the architectural collaterals, issued a follow-up survey to a 2005 report on diversity in the profession. The survey focused on key issues for women and people of color: perceived representation, advancement challenges, work-life balance, satisfaction, the pipeline, and retention.¹⁵⁷ The study provided important insight

into the reasons behind the underrepresentation of women and people of color in the architecture profession.

Motherhood in the profession of architecture has received a lot of attention: Work-life balance and family issues, and mothers that leave the profession or start their own firms are all popular topics of discussion. Numerous articles online highlight the issues that mothers face.¹⁵⁸ Mothers in the architecture profession earn less than women without children, although fathers experience a pay bump.¹⁶⁰ Even the AIA’s Diversity in the Profession of Architecture survey highlights the role of motherhood: Some of the top obstacles they identify are the long hours, work-life balance, and lack of flexibility.¹⁶¹ While motherhood is an important factor, women also leave the architecture profession due to issues unrelated to motherhood, such as a lack of recognition for their contributions.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ Goldhagen, S.W. (2013). Crashing the Boys’ Club. Architectural Record. Retrieved from: <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/5828-crashing-the-boys-club>

¹⁵⁹ Reagan, C. (2016). A Day in the Life of an ArchiMom. *Architect Magazine*. Retrieved from: https://www.architectmagazine.com/aia-architect/aipractice/a-day-in-the-life-of-an-archimom_o; Morley, J.B. 3 Mother Architects Winning at Both Parenting and Planning. *Architzer*. Retrieved from: <https://architizer.com/blog/inspiration/industry/mother-architects/>; Espinosa, C. The Architect Mum: Balancing Architecture and Motherhood. Retrieved from: <http://www.godwinaustenjohnson.com/blog/the-architect-mum-balancing-architecture-and-motherhood/>; LePage, M.R. Mothers in Architecture. *EntreArchitect*. Retrieved from: https://entearchitect.com/podcast/entearch/mothers_in_architecture/; Quirk, V. (2012). My Motherhood + Architecture Adventure/Samara Greenwood. *ArchDaily*. Retrieved from: <https://www.archdaily.com/280034/the-workfamily-equation-by-samara-greenwood>; Sampson, K. (2018). Motherhood and Architecture: Benefits, Challenges and Balance. *Cathi Colla Architects*. Retrieved from: <https://cathicollaarchitects.com/news/motherhood-and-architecture-benefits-challenges-and-balance/>

¹⁶⁰ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

¹⁶¹ The American Institute of Architects. (2016). Diversity in the Profession of Architecture. Retrieved from: <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

¹⁶² Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

Equity by Design’s 2016 Equity in Architecture study identified specific “pinch points” that hinder women’s progress in the field, including education, licensure, working caregivers, and the glass ceiling.¹⁶³ Others have pointed out the inequitable distribution of sponsorship and mentorship.¹⁶⁴ Anecdotal evidence is that women are assumed to be there to make coffee and take notes, they have their authority questioned, and they face a system that constantly makes it clear that women don’t belong.¹⁶⁵

The problem of sexual harassment in the architecture profession gained attention as the #MeToo movement exploded in late 2017. Soon after, five women detailed their experiences of sexual harassment by prominent architect Richard Meier.¹⁶⁶ Architectural professionals quickly disseminated a document detailing misconduct experienced by an anonymous crowdsourced audience in hopes of sparking reform.¹⁶⁷ The document was followed by a large-scale sexual harassment survey conducted by *Architectural Record* and *Engineering News-Record*.¹⁶⁸ The survey found that approximately two-thirds of architects—and 85% of women—had experienced some form of sexual harassment at their jobs. Nearly 30 percent had experienced unwanted physical contact. Although nearly three-quarters of architects reported experiencing harassment themselves or hearing about it from a co-worker, two-thirds said that leadership organizations were not yet taking the issue seriously.

¹⁶³ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Asperin, L., Mandel, J., Denis van-Dijl, S. (2016). Equity by Design: Metrics, Meaning & Matrices. Equity in Architecture Survey. <http://eqxdesign.com/analysis>

¹⁶⁴ Goldhagen, S.W. (2013). Crashing the Boys’ Club. *Architectural Record*. Retrieved from: <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/5828-crashing-the-boys-club>

¹⁶⁵ Arieff, A. (2018). Where Are All the Female Architects? *The New York Times Opinion*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/15/opinion/sunday/women-architects.html>

¹⁶⁶ Pogrebin, R. (2018). 5 Women Accuse the Architect Richard Meier of Sexual Harassment. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/13/arts/design/richard-meier-sexual-harassment-allegations.html>

¹⁶⁷ LaBarre, S. (2018). Exclusive: Why I Started A “Shitty Architecture Men” List. Fast Company. Retrieved from: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90164300/exclusive-why-i-started-a-shitty-architecture-men-list>

¹⁶⁸ Oriaku, A. (2018). Two-thirds of architects experience sexual harassment, new survey says. *The Architect’s Newspaper*. Retrieved from: <https://archpaper.com/2018/10/sexual-harassment-architecture/>

Methodology

Methodology

Survey participants

1,346 individuals in the architecture profession completed the Workplace Experiences Survey, a 10-minute survey of bias in the workplace. Participants answered survey questions about their experiences at their current or most recent employer.

Participant recruitment strategies focused on recruiting equal numbers of men and women, and on oversampling people of color. The gender and racial/ethnic makeup of survey participants is as follows:

	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino/a	Asian or Asian-American	Two or more races	Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented
Men	278	99	102	91	68	21
Women	310	70	79	129	82	17

Full participant demographic and employment information is as follows:

Race/ethnicity

	Number of Participants
White	589
Black or African American	169
Hispanic or Latino/a	181
Asian or Asian-American	221
Two or more races	150
Native American, Alaska Native, Indigenous, and other underrepresented	38

Gender

	Number of Participants
Man	666
Woman	689
Another Identity	3

Disability status

	Number of Participants
Have a disability co-workers know about	58
Do not have a disability co-workers know about	1,301

First-generation college student/professional status

	Number of Participants
First generation	538
Not first generation	822

Firm size (number of employees)

	Number of Participants
1	93
2–19	399
20–99	365
100+	498

Seniority

	Number of Participants
0–9 years	386
10–19 years	369
20–29 years	289
30+ years	317

Family care responsibilities

	Number of Participants
Dependent children	528
Elder care	218
Other family care	145
No care responsibilities	604

Scales

The report focuses primarily on the individual day-to-day experiences of bias faced by those in the architecture profession. As such, results are reported by question, grouped into sections reflecting the superordinate pattern of bias. However, for some of our statistical analyses, these individual questions were formed into scales. The types of bias we study are multifaceted: For example, Tightrope bias includes expectations about leadership ability, interruptions, pushback for assertive behavior, and more. To fully capture the experiences encompassed in each pattern of bias, we created a composite variable, or scale, that incorporates different questions that address the same central issue (for example, the questions addressing Prove-it-again bias were used to create a Prove-it-again scale). These scales were used in the regression analyses to examine the impacts of bias.

Analyses

Most of the quantitative survey data was collected using a 1–6 Likert scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree. The sexual harassment questions and demographic questions used relevant answer choices. To examine differences in the experiences of gender and racial/ethnic groups, we conducted one-way ANOVAs. To examine the impacts of the patterns of bias on outcome measures, simultaneous multiple regression analyses were conducted using the aforementioned scales, and controlling for race/ethnicity and gender.

We did not achieve sufficient statistical power to examine each gender and racial/ethnic group independently. Even when the Likert scale means were dramatically different, the low sample sizes made it difficult to achieve statistical significance when conducting ANOVAs for some groups. This study set out to examine the unique experiences of different underrepresented racial/ethnic groups in the architecture profession; it is difficult for us to study these groups simply because of their underrepresentation. Therefore, when

individual gender and racial/ethnic groups have experiences that differ from men or women of color as a whole, we highlight those differences in the report, even when the number of participants in the group made statistical significance impossible.

Reporting

For ease of understanding of our predicted report audience, we present the data in the form of percentages of agreement with each question. Although much of the data was collected on a Likert scale of 1–6, we recalculated percentages by using 1–3 (strongly disagree to slightly disagree) on the Likert scale as “no” and 4–6 (slightly agree to strongly agree) on the scale as “yes.” We report the percentages in the text, but all statistical analyses were conducted on the original Likert scale data.

Qualitative data

To begin our study of the architecture profession, we conducted focus groups and one-on-one interviews with architectural professionals. The experiences of these architectural professionals were used to confirm that the patterns of bias exist in the architecture profession, and to add variables of interest that are specific to the profession into the Workplace Experiences Survey (for example, questions focused on the allotment of design work). The survey also included two open-ended text boxes for participants to share more information about their experiences. These three sources of qualitative data—focus groups, interviews, and open-ended survey questions—are used throughout the report to provide detail and nuance to the quantitative data. Survey comments are presented verbatim, while focus groups and interviews were transcribed as closely as possible to the original speech.

Bias Interrupters:

Tools for architecture firms

Bias interrupters

TOOLS FOR ARCHITECTURE FIRMS

Architecture firms can improve their diversity metrics, foster a culture of belonging, and make progress toward eliminating bias by using the same tools that businesses use to solve any major problem: evidence, goals, and metrics. Research shows that diverse workgroups perform better and are more committed, innovative, and loyal.¹⁶⁹ Gender-diverse workgroups have higher collective intelligence, which improves the performance of both the group and of the individuals in the group, and leads to better financial performance results.¹⁷⁰ Racially diverse workgroups consider a broader range of alternatives, make better decisions, and are better at solving problems.¹⁷¹ Bias, if unchecked, affects many different groups: modest or introverted men, LGBTQ+ people, individuals with disabilities, professionals from nonprofessional backgrounds (“class migrants”), women, and people of color. We’ve distilled the huge literature on bias into simple steps that help you and your firm perform better.

We know now that workplaces that view themselves as being highly meritocratic often are *more* biased than other organizations.¹⁷² Research also shows that the usual responses to workplace bias—one-shot diversity trainings, mentoring, and networking programs—typically don’t work.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ E.g., Dahlin, K. B., Weingart, L. R., & Hinds, P. J. (2005). Team diversity and information use. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(6), 1107- 1123. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2005.19573112>; Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46(2), 229-273. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2667087>; Jehn, K. A., Northcraft, G. B., & Neale, M. A. (1999). Why differences make a difference: A field study of diversity, conflict and performance in workgroups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(4), 741-763. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2667054>

¹⁷⁰ Richard, O. C., Barnett, T., Dwyer, S., & Chadwick, K. (2004). Cultural diversity in management, firm performance, and the moderating role of entrepreneurial orientation dimensions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(2), 255-266. <https://doi.org/10.5465/20159576>; Woolley, A., & Malone, T.W. (2011). What Makes a Team Smarter? More Women. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2011/06/defend-your-research-what-makes-a-team-smarter-more-women>; Glass Lewis. (2016). In-Depth: Board Gender Diversity. <http://www.glasslewis.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-In-DepthGender-Diversity.pdf>

¹⁷¹ Phillips, K. W., Northcraft, G. B., & Neale, M. A. (2006). Surface-level diversity and decision-making in groups: When does deep-level similarity help?. *Group processes & intergroup relations*, 9(4), 467-482. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430206067557>; Antonio, A. L., Chang, M. J., Hakuta, K., Kenny, D. A., Levin, S., & Milem, J. F. (2004). Effects of Racial Diversity on Complex Thinking in College Students. *Psychological Science*, 15(8), 507-510. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0956-7976.2004.00710.x>; Richard, O., McMillan, A., Chadwick, K., & Dwyer, S. (2003). Employing an innovation strategy in racially diverse workforces: Effects on firm performance. *Group & Organization Management*, 28(1), 107-126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601102250022>

¹⁷² Castilla, E. J. (2016). Achieving meritocracy in the workplace. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 57(4), 35.

¹⁷³ Kalev, A., Dobbin, F., & Kelly, E. (2006). Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmation action and diversity policies. *American Sociological Review*, 71(4), 589-617. doi: 10.1177/000312240607100404

What holds more promise is a paradigm-changing approach to diversity: Bias interrupters are tweaks to basic business systems that are evidence-based and can produce measurable change. Bias interrupters change systems, not people.

Bias Interrupters apply to every firm, regardless of size, geographic location, or employee demographics—but there isn’t a one-size-fits-all fix. Each toolkit contains a menu of bias interrupters to pick and choose from, depending on the needs of your firm.

Printed here are six toolkits for architecture firms, with information for how to interrupt bias in the following business systems:

- 1. Hiring
- 2. Assignments
- 3. Performance evaluations
- 4. Meetings
- 5. Family leave
- 6. Workplace flexibility

For additional worksheets and information visit BiasInterrupters.org.

Our three-step approach

1. Use metrics:

Businesses use metrics to assess whether they have progressed towards any strategic goal. Metrics can help you pinpoint where bias exists, and assess the effectiveness of the measures you’ve taken to prevent or combat bias. (Whether metrics are made public will vary from firm to firm, and from metric to metric.)

2. Implement bias interrupters:

Bias interrupters are small adjustments to your existing business systems. They should not require you to entirely abandon your current systems.

3. Repeat as needed:

After implementing bias interrupters, return to your metrics. If they have not improved, you will need to ratchet up to stronger bias interrupters.

Interrupting bias in HIRING

The Challenge

When comparing identical resumes, “Jamal” needed eight additional years of experience to be considered as qualified as “Greg,” mothers were 79% less likely to be hired than an otherwise-identical candidate without children, and “Jennifer” was offered \$4,000 less in starting salary than “John.”¹⁷⁴ Unstructured job interviews do not predict job success,¹⁷⁵ and judging candidates on “culture fit” can screen out qualified candidates who don’t look the same as majority of your existing employees.¹⁷⁶

Our study of architects and designers found disparities between the experiences of white men and other groups when it comes to hiring, indicating that this is a key issue architecture firms should focus on if they want to attract top talent.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Bertrand, M. & Mullainathan, S. (2004). Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination. *American Economic Review*, 94(4), 991-1013. doi: 10.1257/0002828042002561; Benard, S., & Correll, S. J. (2010). Normative discrimination and the motherhood penalty. *Gender & Society*, 24(5), 616-646. doi: 10.1177/0891243210383142; Correll, S. J., Benard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(5), 1297- 1338. doi: 10.1086/511799; Moss-Racusin, C. A., Dovidio, J. F., Brescoll, V. L., Graham, M. J., & Handelsman, J. (2012). Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(41), 16474-16479. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1211286109

¹⁷⁵ Dana, J., Dawes, R., & Peterson, N. (2013). Belief in the unstructured interview: The persistence of an illusion. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 8(5), 512.

¹⁷⁶ Rivera, L. A. (2016). *Pedigree: How elite students get elite jobs*. Princeton University Press.

¹⁷⁷ Williams, J.C., Korn, R.M., & Maas, R. (2021). *The Elephant in the (Well-Designed) Room: An Investigation into Bias in the Architecture Profession*.

Interrupting bias in HIRING

A Solution

1. Use metrics

Businesses use metrics to assess whether they have progressed towards any strategic goal. Clear metrics can help you pinpoint where bias exists, and assess the effectiveness of the measures you’ve taken. (Whether metrics are made public will vary from firm to firm, and from metric to metric.)

For each metric, examine:

- Do patterned differences exist between majority men, majority women, men of color, and women of color? (Include any other underrepresented group that your firm tracks, such as military veterans, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, etc.)

Important metrics to analyze:

- Track the demography of the candidate pool through the entire hiring process: from the initial pool of candidates considered, to who survives resume review, who gets invited to interview, who survives the interview process, who gets job offers, who accepts those offers, and who doesn’t. Analyze where underrepresented groups are falling out of the hiring process.
- Track whether hiring qualifications are waived more often for some groups.
- Track interviewers’ reviews and/or recommendations to ensure they are not consistently rating majority candidates higher than others.

Keep metrics by: 1) individual supervisor; 2) department; 3) location if relevant; and 4) the firm as a whole.

2. Implement bias interrupters

All bias interrupters should apply both to written materials and in meetings, where relevant. Because every firm is different, not all interrupters will be relevant. Consider this a menu. To understand the research and rationale behind the suggested bias interrupters, read the [Identifying Bias in Hiring Worksheet](#), which summarizes hundreds of studies.

Empower and appoint

- Empower people involved in the hiring process to spot and interrupt bias by using the [Identifying Bias in Hiring Worksheet](#). Read and distribute to anyone involved in hiring.
- Appoint bias interrupters. Provide HR professionals or team members with special training to spot bias, and involve them at every step of the hiring process. Training is available at [BiasInterrupters.org](#).

Interrupting bias in HIRING

A Solution

Assemble a diverse pool

- Limit referral hiring (“friends of friends”). If your existing firm is not diverse, hiring from your current employees’ social networks will replicate the lack of diversity. If you use referrals, keep track of the flow of candidates from referrals. If referrals consistently provide majority candidates, consider limiting referrals or balance out referral hiring with more targeted outreach to ensure a diverse candidate pool.
- Tap diverse networks. Reach out to underrepresented candidates where they are. Identify job fairs, affinity networks, conferences and training programs that are aimed at women and people of color in the profession of architecture and send recruiters.
- Consider candidates from multi-tier schools. Don’t limit your search to candidates from Ivy League and top-tier schools. This favors majority candidates from elite backgrounds and hurts people of color and professionals from nonprofessional backgrounds (class migrants).¹⁷⁸ Studies show that top students from lower-ranked schools are often similarly successful.¹⁷⁹
- Get the word out. If underrepresented candidates are not applying to your jobs, get the word out that your firm is a great place to work for women and people of color. One company offers public talks by women at their company and writes blog posts, white papers, and social media articles highlighting the women who work there.

- Change the wording of your job postings. Using masculine-coded words like “leader” and “competitive” will tend to reduce the number of women who apply.¹⁸⁰ Tech alternatives (see: Textio¹⁸¹) can help you craft job postings that ensure you attract top talent without discouraging women.
- Insist on a diverse pool. If you use a search firm, tell it you expect a diverse pool, not just one or two underrepresented candidates. One study found the odds of hiring a woman were 79 times greater if there were at least two women in the finalist pool; the odds of hiring a person of color were 194 times greater if there were at least two people of color.¹⁸²

Resume/Portfolio review

- Distribute the [Identifying Bias in Hiring Worksheet](#). Before resumes or portfolios are reviewed, have reviewers read the worksheet so that they are aware of the common forms of bias that can affect the hiring process.
- Pre-commit to what’s important—and require accountability. Pre-commit in writing to what qualifications are important, both in entry-level and in lateral hiring. When qualifications are waived for a specific candidate, require an explanation of why they are no longer important—and keep track to see for whom requirements are waived.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ Rivera, L. A. (2016). *Pedigree: How elite students get elite jobs*. Princeton University Press.

¹⁷⁹ Dale, S. B., & Krueger, A. B. (2002). Estimating the payoff to attending a more selective college: An application of selection on observables and unobservables. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117(4), 491-1527. doi: 10.1162/003355302320935089; Dale, S., & Krueger, A. B. (2011). *Estimating the return to college selectivity over the career using administrative earnings data* (No. w17159). National Bureau of Economic Research.

¹⁸⁰ Gaucher, D., Friesen, J., & Kay, A. C. (2011). Evidence that gendered wording in job advertisements exists and sustains gender inequality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(1), 109. 10.1037/a0022530

¹⁸¹ <https://textio.com/>

¹⁸² Johnson, S. K., Hekman, D. R., & Chan, E. T. (2016). If there's only one woman in your candidate pool, there's statistically no chance she'll be hired. *Harvard Business Review*, 26(04). Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2016/04/if-theres-only-one-woman-in-yourcandidate-pool-theres-statistically-no-chance-shell-be-hired>

¹⁸³ Norton, M.I., Vandello, J.A., & Darley, J. (2004). Casuistry and social category bias. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 817-831. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.87.6.817; Brewer, M.B. (1996). *In-Group Favoritism: The Subtle Side of Intergroup Discrimination*. *Behavioral Research and Business Ethics*, 160- 170. Russell Sage, New York.; Tetlock, P. E., & Mellers, B. A. (2011). Intelligent management of intelligence agencies: beyond accountability ping-pong. *American Psychologist*, 66(6), 542.

Interrupting bias in HIRING

A Solution

- Ensure resumes or portfolios are graded on the same scale. Establish clear grading rubrics and ensure that everyone grades on the same scale. Consider having each resume or portfolio reviewed by two different people and averaging the score.
- Remove extracurricular activities from resumes. Including extracurricular activities on resumes can artificially disadvantage class migrants. A recent study showed that law firms were less likely to hire a candidate whose interests included “country music” and “pickup soccer” rather than “classical music” and “sailing”—even though the work and educational experience was exactly the same.¹⁸⁴ Because most people aren’t as aware of class-based bias, communicate why you are removing extracurricular activities from resumes.
- Avoid inferring family obligations. Mothers are 79% less likely to be hired than an identical candidate without children.¹⁸⁵ Train people not to make inferences about whether someone is committed to their job due to parental status and don’t count “gaps in a resume” as an automatic negative.
- Try using “blind auditions” where the evaluators don’t know who they are reviewing. If women and candidates of color are dropping out of the pool at the resume or portfolio review stage, consider removing information that would indicate demographics before review. This way, candidates can be evaluated based solely on their qualifications.

Interviews

- Use structured interviews. Ask the same list of questions to every person who is interviewed. Ask questions that are directly relevant to the job the candidate is applying for.¹⁸⁶
- Ask performance-based questions. Performance-based questions, or behavioral interview questions, (“Tell me about a time you had too many things to do and had to prioritize.”) are a strong predictor of how successful a candidate will be at the job.¹⁸⁷
- Try behavioral interviewing.¹⁸⁸ Ask questions that reveal how candidates have dealt with prior work experiences, as research shows that structured behavioral interviews can more accurately predict the future performance of a candidate than unstructured interviews.¹⁸⁹ Instead of asking, “How do you deal with problems with your manager?” say, “Describe for me a conflict you had at work with your manager.” When evaluating answers, a good model to follow is the STAR¹⁹⁰ model: The candidate should describe the Situation they faced, the Task that they had to handle, the Action they took to deal with the situation, and the Result.
- Do work-sample screening. If applicable, ask candidates to provide a sample of the type of work they will be doing in the job they will be filling.

¹⁸⁴ Rivera, L. A., & Tilcsik, A. (2016). How Subtle Class Cues Can Backfire on Your Resume. *Harvard Business Review*: <https://hbr.org/2016/12/research-how-subtle-class-cues-can-backfire-on-your-resume>

¹⁸⁵ Correll, S. J., Benard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty?. *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(5), 1297-1338.

¹⁸⁶ Thorngate, W., Dawes, R., & Foddy, M. (2009). Judging merit. New York, NY, US: Psychology Press

¹⁸⁷ Bock, L. (2015). *Work Rules!: Insights from Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead*. Hodder & Stoughton.

¹⁸⁸ Boring, J. (2016). How to Create Behavioral Interview Questions That Don't Give Away The Answer. ERE. <https://www.eremedia.com/ere/how-to-create-behavioral-interview-questions-that-dont-give-away-the-answer/>

¹⁸⁹ Torrington, D. (2009). *Fundamentals of human resource management: managing people at work*. Pearson Education.

¹⁹⁰ Doyle, A. (2020). How to Use the STAR Interview Response Method. The Balance Careers. <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-star-interview-response-technique-2061629>

Interrupting bias in HIRING

A Solution

- Develop a consistent rating scale and discount outliers. Candidates’ answers (or work samples) should be rated on a consistent scale, with ratings for each factor backed up by evidence. Average the scores granted on each relevant criterion and discount outliers.¹⁹¹
- If “culture fit” is a criterion for hiring, provide a specific work-relevant definition. Culture fit can be important, but when it’s misused it can disadvantage people of color, class migrants, and women.¹⁹² Heuristics like the “airport test” (Who would I like to get stuck in an airport with?) can be highly exclusionary and not work-relevant. Questions about sports and hobbies may feel exclusionary to women and to class migrants who did not grow up, for example, playing golf or listening to classical music. Google’s work-relevant definition of “culture fit” is a helpful starting point.¹⁹³
- “Gaps in a resume” should not mean automatic disqualification. Give candidates an opportunity to explain gaps by asking about them directly during the interview stage. Women fare better in interviews if they are able to provide information upfront, rather than having to avoid the issue.¹⁹⁴
- Provide candidates and interviewers with a handout detailing expectations. Develop an Interview Protocol Sheet that explains to everyone what’s expected from candidates in an interview, using our tips from the [Hiring Toolkit](#).
- When hiring, don’t ask candidates about prior salary. Asking about prior salary when setting compensation for a new hire can perpetuate the gender pay gap.¹⁹⁵ (A growing legislative movement prohibits employers from asking prospective employees about their prior salaries.¹⁹⁶)

3. Repeat as needed

- Return to your key metrics. Did the bias interrupters produce change?
- If you don’t see change, you may need to implement stronger bias interrupters, or you may be targeting the wrong place in the hiring process.
- Use an iterative process until your metrics improve.

¹⁹¹ Bock, L. (2015). Work Rules!: Insights from Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead. Hodder & Stoughton.; Thorngate, W., Dawes, R., & Foddy, M. (2009). Judging merit. New York, NY, US: Psychology Press.

¹⁹² Rivera, L. A. (2016). Pedigree: How elite students get elite jobs. Princeton University Press.

¹⁹³ Bock, L. (2015). Work Rules!: Insights from Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead. Hodder & Stoughton.: This is how Google defines it: “Googleyness:...enjoying fun, a certain dose of intellectual humility...a strong measure of conscientiousness...comfort with ambiguity...and evidence that you’d take come courageous or interesting paths in your life.”

¹⁹⁴ Hersch, J., & Shinall, J. B. (2016). Something to talk about: Information exchange under employment law. *U. Pa. L. Rev.*, 165, 49.

¹⁹⁵ NWLC. (2018) Asking for Salary History Perpetuates Pay Discrimination From Job to Job. <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Asking-for-Salary-History-Perpetuates-Discrimination-1.pdf>

¹⁹⁶ HR Dive. (2020). Salary History Bans. <https://www.hrdive.com/news/salary-history-ban-states-list/516662/>

Interrupting bias in ASSIGNMENTS

The Challenge

Every workplace has high-profile assignments that are career-enhancing (“glamour work”) and low-profile assignments that are beneficial to the organization but not the individual’s career. Research shows that women do more “office housework”¹⁹⁷ than men.¹⁹⁸ This includes literal housework (ordering lunch), administrative work (scheduling meetings), emotion work (“She’s upset, comfort her.”), and behind-the-scenes work (preparing the PowerPoint for a presentation). When women and people of color don’t have access to the design work, architecture firms miss out on tapping all of their top talent.

- **Glamour work:** In our study of architects and designers, 88% of white men, but only 71.8% of women of color, 76.5% of men of color, and 82.4% of white women reported being able to develop and present design ideas in their firms.¹⁹⁹
- **Office housework:** Nearly 50% of white women and 44.6% of women of color reported that at work they more often play administrative roles such as taking notes for a meeting compared to their colleagues. Only 28% of white men and 35% of men of color reported this.²⁰⁰

When employees become “overburdened” with office housework, it reduces the amount of time that they can spend on more important career-enhancing work, which can hurt their compensation and chances for promotion.

Diversity at the top can only occur when a diverse pool of employees at all levels of the organization have access to assignments that let them take risks and develop new skills. If the glamour work and the office housework aren’t distributed evenly, you won’t be tapping into the full potential of your workforce. Most firms that use an informal “Hey, you!” assignment system end up distributing assignments based on factors other than experience and talent.

If women and people of color keep getting stuck with the same low-profile assignments, they will be more likely to be dissatisfied and to search for opportunities elsewhere.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Williams, J. C., & Dempsey, R. W. (2014). *What works for women at work: Four patterns working women should know*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

¹⁹⁸ Misra, J., Lundquist, J. H., & Templer, A. (2012, June). Gender, Work Time, and Care Responsibilities Among Faculty 1. *Sociological Forum* (Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 300-323). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. doi: 10.1111/j.1573-7861.2012.01319.x; Mitchell, S. M., & Hesli, V. L. (2013). Women don't ask? Women don't say no? Bargaining and service in the political science profession. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 46(2), 355-369. doi: 10.1017/S1049096513000073; Porter, S. R. (2007). A closer look at faculty service: What affects participation on committees?. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 78(5), 523-541. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2007.0027>; Benschop, Y., & Doorewaard, H. (1998). Six of one and half a dozen of the other: the gender subtext of Taylorism and team-based work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 5(1), 5-18.doi: 10.1111/1468-0432.00042; Ohlott, P. J., Ruderman, M. N., & McCauley, C. D. (1994). Gender differences in managers' developmental job experiences. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(1), 46-67. doi: 10.5465/256769; De Pater, I. E., Van Vianen, A. E., & Bechtoldt, M. N. (2010). Gender differences in job challenge: A matter of task allocation. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 17(4), 433-453.doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2009.00477.x

¹⁹⁹ Williams, J.C., Korn, R.M., & Maas, R. (2021). The Elephant in the (Well-Designed) Room: An Investigation into Bias in the Architecture Profession.

²⁰⁰ Williams, J.C., Korn, R.M., & Maas, R. (2021). The Elephant in the (Well-Designed) Room: An Investigation into Bias in the Architecture Profession.

²⁰¹ Babcock, L., Recalde, M. P., Vesterlund, L., & Weingart, L. (2017). Gender differences in accepting and receiving requests for tasks with low promotability. *American Economic Review*, 107(3), 714-47. doi: 10.1257/aer.20141734

Interrupting bias in ASSIGNMENTS

A Solution

Fair allocation of the glamour work and the office housework are two separate problems. Some architecture firms will want to solve the office housework problem before tackling the glamour work; others will want to address both problems simultaneously. We have created a [Road-Map for Implementation](#).

1. Use metrics

A. Identify and track

The first step is to find out if, and where, you have a problem. Find out:

- What is the office housework and glamour work in your organization?
- Who is doing what and for how long?
- Are there demographic patterns that indicate gender and/or racial bias at play?

To do this:

1. Distribute the [Office Housework Survey](#) to your employees to find out who is doing the office housework and how much of their time it takes up.
2. Convene relevant managers (and anyone else who distributes assignments) to identify what is the glamour work and what is the lower-profile work in the firm. Use the [Assignment Typology Worksheet](#) to create a typology for assignments, and the [Protocol](#) for more details.

3. Input the information from the typology meeting into the [Manager Assignment Worksheet](#) and distribute to managers. Have managers fill out the worksheets and submit them, identifying who they assign the glamour work and lower-profile work to.

B. Analyze metrics

Analyze survey results and worksheet for demographic patterns, dividing employees into: (i) majority men, majority women, men of color, and women of color; (ii) parents who have just returned from parental leave; (iii) professionals working part-time or flexible schedules; and (iv) any other underrepresented group that your organization tracks (veterans, LGBTQ+ people, individuals with disabilities, etc.). Identify:

- Who is doing the office housework?
- Who is doing the glamour work?
- Who is doing the low-profile work?
- Create and analyze metrics by individual supervisor.

Interrupting bias in ASSIGNMENTS

A Solution

2. Implement bias interrupters

C. Office housework interrupters

- Don’t ask for volunteers. Women are more likely to volunteer because they are under subtle but powerful pressures to do so.²⁰²
- Hold everyone equally accountable. “I give it to women because they do it well and the men don’t,” is a common sentiment heard from managers. This dynamic reflects an environment in which men suffer few consequences for doing a poor job on office housework, but women who do a poor job are seen as “prima donnas” or “not team players.” Hold men and women equally accountable for carrying out all assignments properly.
- Use admins. If possible, assign office housework tasks to admins, e.g., birthday parties, scheduling meetings, ordering lunch.
- Establish a rotation. A rotation is also helpful for many administrative tasks (e.g., taking notes, scheduling meetings). Rotating housework tasks like ordering lunch and planning parties is also an option if admins are unavailable.
- Shadowing. Another option for administrative tasks is to assign a more junior person to shadow someone more senior—and take notes.

D. Glamour work interrupters

- Avoid mixed messages. If your firm values such things as mentoring and committee work (like serving on the Diversity Initiative), make sure these things are valued when the time comes for promotions and raises. Sometimes firms say they

highly value this kind of work—but they don’t. Mixed messages of this kind will negatively affect women and people of color.

- Conduct a rollout meeting. Gather relevant managers and supervisors to introduce the bias interrupters initiative and set expectations using our [key talking points](#).
- Provide a bounceback. Identify individual supervisors whose glamour work allocation is lopsided, hold a meeting with that supervisor, and bring the problem to their attention. Help them think through why they assign glamour work only to certain people or certain types of people. Work with them to figure out if either: 1) the available pool for glamour work assignments is diverse but is not being tapped fully; or 2) only a few people have the requisite skills for glamour work assignments. Read the [Responses to Common Pushback](#) and [Identifying Bias in Assignments](#) worksheets before the bounceback meetings to prepare. You may have to address low-profile work explicitly at the same time as you address high-profile assignments; this will vary by firm.

If a diverse pool has the requisite skills...

- Implement a rotation. Have the supervisor set up a rotation to ensure fair access to high-profile assignments.
- Formalize the pool. Write down the list of people with the requisite skills and make it visible to the supervisor. Sometimes just being reminded of the pool can help.

²⁰² Heilman M. E., & Chen J. J. (2005). Same behavior, different consequences: Reactions to men's and women's altruistic citizenship. *Behavior Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(3), 431– 441 doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.90.3.431; Allen, T. D. (2006). Rewarding good citizens: The relationship between citizenship behavior, gender, and organizational rewards. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36(1), 120-143. doi: 10.1111/j.0021-9029.2006.00006.x; Babcock, L., Recalde, M. P., Vesterlund, L., & Weingart, L. (2017). Gender differences in accepting and receiving requests for tasks with low promotability. *American Economic Review*, 107(3), 714-47. doi: 10.1257/aer.20141734; Williams, J. C., & Dempsey, R. W. (2014). *What works for women at work: Four patterns working women should know*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Interrupting bias in ASSIGNMENTS

A Solution

- Institute accountability. Have the supervisor track their allocation of glamour work going forward to measure progress. Research shows that accountability matters.²⁰³

If the pool is not diverse...

- Revisit the assumption that only one (or very few) employees can handle this assignment: Is that true or is the supervisor in question just more comfortable working with those few people?
- Analyze how the pool was assembled. Does the supervisor allocate the glamour work by relying on self-promotion or volunteers? If so, that will often disadvantage women and people of color. Shift to more objective measures to create the pool based on skills and qualifications.

If the above suggestions aren’t relevant or don’t solve your problem, then it’s time to expand the pool:

- Development plan. Identify what skills or competencies an employee needs to be eligible for the high-profile assignments, and design a plan to help the employee develop the requisite skills.
- Succession planning. Remember that having “bench strength” is important so that your department won’t be left scrambling if someone unexpectedly leaves the company.
- Leverage existing HR policies. If your organization uses a competency-based system, or has a Talent Development Committee or equivalent, that’s a resource to help employees develop competencies so that career-enhancing assignments can be allocated more fairly.

- Shadowing. Have a more junior person shadow a more experienced person during the high-profile assignment.
- Mentoring. Encourage AXP (Architectural Experience Program) candidates to select an AXP mentor²⁰⁴ who can provide career advice and help them develop the requisite skills.

If you can’t expand your pool, reframe the assignment so that more people could participate in it. Could you break up the assignment into discrete pieces so more people get the experiences they need?

If nothing else works, consider a formal assignment system. Appoint an assignments czar to oversee the distribution of assignments in your organization.

3. Repeat as needed

- Return to your metrics. Did the bias interrupters produce change?
- If you still don’t have a fair allocation of high- and low-profile work, you may need to implement stronger bias interrupters, or consider moving to a formal assignment system.
- Use an iterative process until your metrics improve.

²⁰³ Tetlock, P. E. (1983). Accountability and complexity of thought. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45(1), 74.doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.45.1.74; Tetlock, P. E., & Mitchell, G. (2009). Implicit bias and accountability systems: What must organizations do to prevent discrimination?. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 29, 3-38.doi: 10.1016/j.riob.2009.10.002

²⁰⁴ <https://www.ncarb.org/gain-axp-experience/supervisors-mentors>

Interrupting bias in PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

The Challenge

A recent study of performance evaluations in tech found that 66% of women’s performance reviews contained negative personality criticism (“You come off as abrasive”) whereas only 1% of men’s reviews did.²⁰⁵ Performance evaluations determine who is eligible for raises, high-profile assignments, and promotions, so it is essential that organizations strive to level the playing field for all employees.

Our study of gender and racial bias in the profession of architecture found that men of color and women of all racial/ethnic groups reported getting less fair, honest, and constructive performance evaluations than their white male counterparts.²⁰⁶ Performance evaluations help determine promotions and compensation, so ensuring fairness in this system will have lasting ripple effects throughout architecture firms.

²⁰⁵ Snyder, K. (2014, August 26). The abrasiveness trap: High-achieving men and women are described differently in reviews. *Fortune*. Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2014/08/26/performance-review-gender-bias/>

²⁰⁶ Williams, J.C., Korn, R.M., & Maas, R. (2021). The Elephant in the (Well-Designed) Room: An Investigation into Bias in the Architecture Profession.

Interrupting bias in PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

A Solution

What’s a bounceback?

AN EXAMPLE: In one organization, when a supervisor’s ratings of an underrepresented group deviate dramatically from the mean, the evaluations are returned to the supervisor with the message: “Either you have an undiagnosed performance problem that requires a performance improvement plan (PIP), or you need to take another look at your evaluations as a group.” After implementing this bounceback message, the organization found that a few people were put on PIPs—but that over time supervisors’ ratings of underrepresented groups converged with those of majority men. A subsequent survey of the organization found that employees of all demographics groups rated their performance evaluations as equally fair (whereas bias was reported in hiring—and every other business system).

1. Use metrics

Businesses use metrics to assess whether they have progressed towards any strategic goal. Metrics can help you pinpoint where bias exists, and assess the effectiveness of the measures you’ve taken. (Whether metrics are made public will vary from firm to firm, and from metric to metric.) For each metric, examine:

- Do patterned differences exist between majority men, majority women, men of color, and women of color? Include any other underrepresented group that your firm tracks, such as military veterans, LGBTQ+ people, individuals with disabilities, etc.
- Do patterned differences exist for parents after they return from leave, or architectural professionals who reduce their hours?
- Do patterned differences exist between full-time and part-time employees?

Important metrics to analyze:

- Do your performance evaluations show consistent disparities by demographic group?
- Do women’s ratings fall after they have children? Do employees’ ratings fall after they take parental leave or adopt flexible work arrangements?
- Do the same performance ratings result in different promotion or compensation rates for different groups?
- Keep metrics by: 1) individual supervisor; 2) department; 3) location, if relevant; and 4) the firm as a whole.

2. Implement bias interrupters

All bias interrupters should apply both to written evaluations and in meetings, where relevant. Because every firm is different, not all interrupters will be relevant. Consider this a menu.

To understand the research and rationale behind the suggested bias interrupters, read the [Identifying Bias in Performance Evaluations Worksheet](#).

Empower and appoint

- Empower people involved in the evaluation process to spot and interrupt bias by using the [Identifying Bias in Performance Evaluations Worksheet](#). Read and distribute.
- Appoint bias interrupters. Provide HR professionals or team members with special training to spot bias, and involve them at every step of the performance evaluation process. Training available at [BiasInterrupters.org](#).

Tweak the evaluation form

- Begin with clear and specific performance criteria directly related to job requirements. Try: “She contributes valuable ideas to design discussions, collaborates well with the rest of the design team, and avoids ‘architecture speak’ but instead communicates well with the clients and consultants to advance those ideas in the development of design,” instead of: “She’s a great designer.”

Interrupting bias in PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

A Solution

- Require evidence from the evaluation period that justifies the rating. Try: “This year, he did a great job in helping us win X project, writing a clear client proposal that defined a tight scope and communicated our fee structure in a way that was carefully and strategically considered,” instead of: “He’s great at helping us win projects.”
- Consider performance and potential separately for each candidate. Given the tendency for majority men to be judged on their potential while others are judged on their performance, the two criteria should be evaluated separately.
- Separate personality issues from skill sets for each candidate. Personal style should be appraised separately from skills because a narrower range of behavior often is accepted from women and people of color. For example, women may be labeled “difficult” for doing things that are accepted in majority men.

Tweak the evaluation process

- Level the playing field by ensuring everyone knows how to promote themselves effectively and sending the message that they are expected to do so. Distribute the [Writing an Effective Self-Evaluation Worksheet](#).
- Offer alternatives to self-promotion. Encourage or require supervisors to set up more formal systems for sharing successes, such as a monthly email that lists employees’ accomplishments.
- Provide a bounceback. Supervisors whose performance evaluations show persistent bias should receive a bounceback (i.e., someone should talk through the evidence with them).
- Have bias interrupters play an active role in calibration meetings. In many organizations, managers meet to produce a target distribution of ratings or cross-calibrate rankings. Have

managers read the [Identifying Bias in Performance Evaluations Worksheet](#) before they meet. Have a trained bias interrupter in the room.

- Don’t eliminate your performance appraisal system. Eliminating formal performance evaluation systems and replacing them with feedback-on-the-fly creates conditions for bias to flourish.

3. Repeat as needed

- Return to your key metrics. Did the bias interrupters produce change?
- If you don’t see change, you may need to implement stronger bias interrupters, or you may be targeting the wrong place in the performance evaluation process.
- Use an iterative process until your metrics improve.

Interrupting bias in MEETINGS

The Challenge

Having expertise increases men’s influence—but decreases women’s.²⁰⁷ This is just one way subtle biases play out in meetings.

Men tend to interrupt in meetings more than women.²⁰⁸ This is exactly what we found in our study on gender and racial bias in the profession of architecture: Women of all racial/ethnic groups were dramatically more likely to be interrupted than white men, with men of color falling in the middle.²⁰⁹

Another pattern is that sometimes other people get the credit for an idea originally posed by a woman. In our survey of architects and designers, women—and women of color to an even greater degree—reported this stolen idea phenomenon at a much higher rate than men.²¹⁰

If organizations don’t interrupt bias playing out in meetings, they may lose the talent and insight they pay for.

²⁰⁷ Thomas-Hunt, M. C., & Phillips, K. W. (2004). When what you know is not enough: Expertise and gender dynamics in task groups. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(12), 1585-1598.doi: 10.1177/0146167204271186

²⁰⁸ Smith-Lovin, L., & Brody, C. (1989). Interruptions in group discussions: The effects of gender and group composition. *American Sociological Review*, 424-435. Zimmermann, D. H., & West, C. (1996). Sex roles, interruptions and silences in conversation. *In Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science Series 4* (pp. 211-236).

²⁰⁹ Williams, J.C., Korn, R.M., & Maas, R. (2021). The Elephant in the (Well-Designed) Room: An Investigation into Bias in the Architecture Profession.

²¹⁰ Williams, J.C., Korn, R.M., & Maas, R. (2021). The Elephant in the (Well-Designed) Room: An Investigation into Bias in the Architecture Profession.

Interrupting bias in MEETINGS

A Solution

1. Use metrics

Businesses use metrics to assess whether they have progressed towards any strategic goal. Metrics can help you pinpoint where bias exists, and assess the effectiveness of the measures you’ve taken. (Whether metrics are made public will vary from company to company, and from metric to metric.)

Options for finding out whether you have a problem are listed from least to most time-consuming.

1. Employ new technologies: Who is talking during your meetings?
 - GenderEQ: an app that analyzes the ratio of men and women speaking time
2. Use our [free two-minute downloadable survey](#) to assess bias issues.
3. Appoint a bias interrupter to gather metrics over the course of several meetings. Metrics to gather:
 - Who speaks at meetings: Is it representative of who attends?
 - Interruptions: Is there a culture of interrupting in your meetings? If so, is there a gender or racial difference between who does the interrupting and who gets interrupted?
 - Stolen idea. Research shows that women and people of color report that others get credit for ideas they originally offered much more than white men do.²¹¹ Keep track of who gets credit for ideas offered and who originated them.
 - Are the right people getting invited? Be sure everyone who has a part to play is at the meeting.

- Ideas implemented: Whose ideas get implemented?
- Office housework. Track who takes the notes, who keeps the minutes, who gets coffee, and other office housework tasks.
- Meeting scheduling: Are meetings scheduled at times or at locations that make it difficult or impossible for parents and caregivers to attend?

2. Implement bias interrupters

Because every organization is different, not all interrupters will be relevant. Consider this a menu.

To understand the research and rationale behind the suggested bias interrupters, read our [Identifying Bias in Meetings Worksheet](#), which summarizes hundreds of studies.

- **Rotate office housework tasks.** Women are more likely to be asked to do the “office housework” tasks for meetings: taking notes, scheduling the conference rooms, ordering lunch/snacks for meetings, cleaning up afterwards. If admins are available to do these tasks, use them. If not, don’t ask for volunteers. Instead, figure out a fair way to spread the housework tasks evenly by rotating based on arbitrary criteria (birthday, astrological sign, seniority, etc.). For more bias interrupters about office housework, see the [Interrupting Bias in Assignments Worksheet](#).

²¹¹ Williams, J.C., Li, S., Rincon, R., & Finn, P. (2016). Climate Control: Gender and Racial Bias in Engineering? Center for WorkLife Law. UC Hastings College of the Law. Available at: <https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Climate-Control-Gender-And-Racial-Bias-In-Engineering.pdf>; Williams, J. C., Multhaup, M., Li, S., Korn, R. M. (2018). You Can’t Change What You Can’t See: Interrupting Racial & Gender Bias in the Legal Profession. American Bar Association & Minority Corporate Counsel Association. Available at: <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/you-cant-change-what-you-cant-see-print.pdf>

Interrupting bias in MEETINGS

A Solution

- **Mind the “stolen idea.”** Make sure people get credit for ideas they offered. When you see ideas get stolen, you can say, “I’ve been thinking about that ever since Pam first said it. You’ve added something important, Eric, here’s the next step.”
- **Avoid personality double-standards.** Make sure women and people of color can speak up without backlash. Decades of research have shown that women face social pressures to hedge (for example, “Don’t you think?”). Both women and people of color may face backlash for speaking in a direct and assertive manner.²¹² Have your team read [Identifying Bias in Meetings](#) to help level the playing field.
- **Ask people to speak up.** Women and people of color often face social pressure to speak in a tentative, deferential manner. If someone isn’t speaking up, ask them to weigh in. And if you know someone has expertise in an area, ask them directly.²¹³ This strategy can help class migrants and introverts feel included.
- **Have a policy for interruptions.** Create and enforce an overall policy for interruptions. One option is a no-interruptions policy, where you make it clear that interruptions are not to be tolerated, and ding people when they interrupt. A gentler policy is to keep track of who is continually interrupting and getting interrupted, and talk about the problem.
- **Don’t give interrupters free reign.** If a few people are dominating the conversation, address it directly. Take them aside and explain that your workplace employs a broad range of people because you need to hear a broad range of viewpoints. Point out that some people are good at “shooting from the

hip” while others need to be given more time and space to feel comfortable speaking up. Some may not even realize they’re frequent interrupters.

- **Schedule meetings appropriately.** Schedule meetings in the office, not at the golf course. For an off-site, schedule lunch or afternoon coffee. Overall, stick to working hours and professional locations for work meetings. Otherwise, you’re putting mothers and other caregivers at a disadvantage.
- **Avoid arranging furniture in ways that signal an in-group.** When there is an inner and outer circle of chairs, it can create hierarchy.²¹⁴ Pay attention: Do all the men sit in the inner circle and the women sit in the outer circle, or is race/ethnicity playing a role? If this happens routinely, have everyone trade places with the person in front of them, or rearrange chairs so there is only one circle.
- **Establish agreements for diverse groups.** When meetings are diverse, people may fail to speak up: Individuals belonging to in-groups may fear offending individuals in out-groups, while individuals in out-groups may fear rejection or retaliation. To combat this, simply state at the beginning of the meeting that everyone should try their best to speak in a way that’s respectful and mindful of the diversity of experiences represented in your working group (aka, “politically correct”). Research shows that this simple statement can decrease uncertainty and increase creativity from participants.²¹⁵

²¹³ Kim, S., Phillips, K. W., Thomas-Hunt, M. C., & Cabrera, S. F. (Forthcoming). Giving her the floor: How solicitation helps female experts be more influential Ridgeway, C. L., & Nakagawa, S. (2017). Is deference the price of being seen as reasonable? How status hierarchies incentivize acceptance of low status. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 80(2), 132-152.doi: 10.1177/0190272517695213

²¹⁴ Sandberg, S. (2013). Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead. New York, NY, US: Alfred A. Knopf.

²¹⁵ Goncalo, J. A., Chatman, J. A., Duguid, M. M., & Kennedy, J. A. (2015). Creativity from constraint? How the political correctness norm influences creativity in mixed-sex work groups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 60(1), 1-30. doi: 10.1177/0001839214563975

Interrupting bias in MEETINGS

A Solution

- **Encourage idea contribution.** It’s tough to speak up against a majority opinion—especially for someone who’s not in the majority group.²¹⁶ Research shows that people are more likely to voice different opinions when at least one other person expresses a different opinion—even if the new opinions don’t agree with each other.²¹⁷ Some ideas that make it easier to voice different opinions:
 - Great ideas can come from anywhere. When it comes to design, there is no right or wrong answer—new design ideas encourage innovation and creativity. And, in a situation where multiple designs are to be shared with a client, new approaches are essential to the success of a project.
 - Support people who diverge from the majority. If someone starts to voice an opinion and senses that nobody wants to hear it, s/he will likely pipe down. If you see this happening, say, “Let’s hear this idea out.”
- **Empower people** to spot and interrupt bias by reading our [Identifying Bias in Meetings Worksheet](#). Read and distribute the worksheet to help you understand the rationale behind the steps suggested below.
- Return to your key metrics. Did the bias interrupters produce change?
- If you don’t see change, you may need to implement a stronger bias interrupter.
- Use an iterative process until your metrics improve.

3. Repeat as needed

²¹⁶ Asch, S. E. (1956) Studies of independence and conformity: A minority of one against a unanimous majority. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied*, 70(9), 1-70. doi: 10.1037/h0093718

²¹⁷ Asch, S. E. (1956) Studies of independence and conformity: A minority of one against a unanimous majority. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied*, 70(9), 1-70. doi: 10.1037/h0093718

Interrupting bias in FAMILY LEAVE

The Challenge

In our study of architects and designers, women in the profession of architecture reported being likely to work part-time or even change jobs after having children.²¹⁸ The 2018 Equity in Architecture study found a similar pattern: Women in architecture firms were less likely to be mothers, while sole practitioners were more likely to have children.²¹⁹ Architecture firms can avoid losing top talent by improving their family leave policies.

According to a report by Better Life Lab at New America, nearly half of parents didn’t take two days off work after the birth or adoption of a child.²²⁰ Studies show that paid parental leave can reduce infant mortality rates and improve long-term child and maternal health.²²¹

Family leave is not just about children. While 30% of Americans say they anticipate needing to take leave to care for a new child, twice that many (60%) say they anticipate needing to take at least some family leave in the future (including caring for ill, disabled, or aging family members).²²² In fact, one-sixth of Americans spend an average of 20 hours a week caring for a sick or elderly family member.²²³

The need for family leave policies is already here, and with a rapidly aging population, these needs are only growing.²²⁴ In order to retain the best workers, companies need to step up and create comprehensive leave and work/life balance policies that work. While employers are expected to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding leaves of absence, employers can and should do more to truly support and retain a diverse workforce with caregiving responsibilities.

These best-practice policies may be challenging or impossible for very small firms to implement. Note that the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) does not apply to many small employers²²⁵ although some states require smaller employers to offer leave, or paid leave.²²⁶ Smaller employers may find it impossible to offer the same leaves as larger employers do, although they should offer as much as they can in order to avoid losing valued employees to employers with more generous policies.

²¹⁸ Williams, J.C., Korn, R.M., & Maas, R. (2021). The Elephant in the (Well-Designed) Room: An Investigation into Bias in the Architecture Profession.

²¹⁹ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

²²⁰ A. Lenhart, H. Swenson, & B. Schulte, Lifting the Barriers to Paid Family and Medical leave for Men in the United States, December 2019. *New America: Better Life Lab*. <https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/reports/lifting-barriers-paid-family-and-medical-leave-men-united-states/>

²²¹ Arijit Nandi et al., The Impact of Parental and Medical Leave Policies on Socioeconomic and Health Outcomes in OECD Countries: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature, 96 *The Milbank Quarterly* 434–471 (2018). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1468-0009.12340>; Paid Family Leave Policies And Population Health, *Health Affairs Health Policy Brief*, March 28, 2019: https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20190301.484936/full/HPB_2019_RWJF_09_W.pdf

²²² A. Lenhart, H. Swenson, & B. Schulte, Lifting the Barriers to Paid Family and Medical leave for Men in the United States, December 2019. *New America: Better Life Lab*. <https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/reports/lifting-barriers-paid-family-and-medical-leave-men-united-states/>

²²³ Paid Leave US, “Making Caregiving Work for America’s Families,” https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K_4Eyd6rZi_om8qvRnzAeYiLwmW1Wnyl/view

²²⁴ 10,000 Americans turn 65 every day. - Paid Leave US, “Making Caregiving Work for America’s Families,” https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K_4Eyd6rZi_om8qvRnzAeYiLwmW1Wnyl/view

²²⁵ The FMLA applies to employers with 50 or more employees for each working day over 20 or more calendar workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year. 29 U.S.C.S. § 2611.

²²⁶ State laws regarding leave vary widely by type and by coverage. States may provide several forms of leave for parents including, but not limited to, family leave, pregnancy leave, parental leave, or adoption leave. For example, in California, employers with 5 or more employees are covered under Pregnancy Disability Leave Law and the California Family Rights Act. Cal. Gov’t Codes §§ 12945, 12945.2. In the District of Columbia, all employers with paid employees are covered under the Parental Leave Act, D.C. Code § 32-521.01(1), and employers with 20 or more employees are covered under the D.C. Family and Medical Leave Act, D.C. Mun. Regs. tit. 4, § 1601.1. New York’s Family Leave covers employers with one or more employees for at least 30 calendars days during any year. N.Y. Comp. Codes R. & Regs. tit. 12, § 355.4. Check out your state’s laws by visiting: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/state-family-and-medical-leave-laws.aspx>

Interrupting bias in FAMILY LEAVE

A Solution

1. If you offer disability leave, you need also to offer it for childbirth (otherwise, that’s pregnancy discrimination). Typically, this means that six weeks of leave will be covered by your disability policy for a vaginal birth; eight weeks for the cesarean section.

2. Determine the maximum paid parental leave your firm can afford. Keep in mind that typically few employees will have children in any given year, but without paid leave you will often lose one employee after another when they have children. Don’t assume you will only lose women; increasingly, we hear from men who insist on taking parental leave and walk away from companies that don’t provide it (although men often don’t tell the companies they’re leaving for this reason). Some states have paid laws to help cover the company’s costs and extend the available paid leave time.²²⁷

3. Offer equal parental (not “primary caregiver”) leave and allow intermittent leave. So-called “primary caregiver” leave reflects a breadwinner/homemaker model that does not fit most families today, and opens a firm up to potential liability if someone openly states that primary caregivers are expected to be women, not men. Determine the amount of time your firm can afford to offer equal parental leave to all parents, men as well as women, and adopted as well as birth parents.²²⁸ Also, allow leave to be taken in small chunks rather than all at once; leave-takers can work with their supervisors to create schedules that work for their teams.

4. Offer equal leave for everyone, including hourly workers (who are typically less able to afford replacement care). Again, paid parental leave is critical for helping families balance work and caregiving responsibilities, and is tied to better maternal and child health.²²⁹

5. Offer leave for all types of caregiving responsibilities. Offering leave only to parents risks breeding resentment on the part of those who need to care for elders, or a family member with a disability or illness. If your firm is worried that non-birth-related caregiving leave will be abused, require permission from HR or supervisors to ensure substantial caregiving responsibilities exist.²³⁰

6. Set strong norms that everyone is expected to take their entire paid leave for childbirth/adoption. Leaders need to send a strong message that employees are encouraged to take the full amount of paid leave available to them, and that taking additional unpaid leave will not count against them. The best way to do this is to celebrate a pregnancy/adoption announcement (for employees of any gender identity) by offering a company-logo onesie and group announcement signaling that children are something to be celebrated, not hidden. Once that norm is set, pregnancy/adoption announcements can be followed by having HR (or supervisors, if they are on-message) tell men as well as women that they are expected to take their full leave. Supervisors may need training to do this effectively. If there is a cultural expectation to come back early, then that is exactly what most employees will do. If men are not taking leave, your messaging is not effective, and men who want work-life balance are likely leaving your company for this reason.

²²⁷ Check out your state’s laws by visiting: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/state-family-and-medical-leave-laws.aspx>
²²⁸ For example, Kentucky requires every employer to provide at least 6 weeks of personal leave for adoptions of children under age 7. Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 337.015.
²²⁹ Leave can and should be prorated based on how many hours the part-time employee regularly works.
²³⁰ Some states, such as NY and NJ, provide paid family leave programs. New York State Paid Family Leave; N.J. Stat. Ann. § 34:11B-3.

Interrupting bias in FAMILY LEAVE

A Solution

FMLA

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT requires employees to give their employer 30 days’ notice prior to leave that is foreseeable. Ideally, your employees who can foresee their need for leave will notify you at the same time that they notify their larger network of friends. By creating a workplace culture that is welcoming and encouraging of taking leave, employees will be more likely to give you notice earlier in the process. Consider adding this model policy into your employee handbook, and reference leave availability and your leave transition process in employee onboarding trainings to set the right tone from the start.

7. Eliminate the flexibility stigma. Effective policies depend on cultural shifts in your organization. If you tell employees—and you should—that taking leave won’t undercut their progress in the organization, then walk the talk. Make sure to plan for leaves effectively so that employees don’t feel slighted when they return, and their colleagues don’t feel like they are taking on undue burdens.

8. Don’t violate the Family and Medical Leave Act. It is illegal to interfere with or discourage any employee, regardless of gender, from taking leave under the FMLA. Although employers are not completely forbidden from contacting employees while they are on leave, these calls should be limited to brief necessary business-related calls. Communications to return to work early, weekly status checks, or calls to perform work while on leave can make an employer liable for interference with FMLA rights.²³¹ Calls to employees out on leave should be managed through Human Resources. It is illegal to penalize employees for requesting or taking leave, either before or after they do so.

9. Use a three-meeting model for off-ramping. Effective on- and off-ramping is vital, both to ensure smooth transitions and to eliminate the flexibility stigma.

1. After a pregnancy announcement, the employee’s supervisor should ask for a meeting, congratulate the future parent, hand out the company onesie (see #6 above), and say: “We expect everyone to take their full paid leave—and the entire amount of unpaid leave available to them if they wish. We will develop a transition plan that works for you.” At the initial meeting, assign a leave liaison if you have that program (see #12).

If your employee is an adopting or foster parent, or if your employee is taking family leave for eldercare or medical reasons, the two meetings may be on an accelerated schedule.

2. Three months before the leave is set to start, the employee’s supervisor should schedule a meeting, saying: “Come prepared with a list of all your ongoing projects and who you think might be a good fit to take them while you’re on leave. If no one comes to mind, don’t worry. We can figure it out together at the meeting, even if we need to hire temporary help—your list is just a jumping-off point.”
3. Shortly before the expected leave date arrives, meet again to finalize the plan for transitioning job duties.²³² The supervisor should ask about the employee’s thoughts about post leave (understanding that plans may change). Are they thinking about returning on a part-time or flex schedule? For equity and legal reasons, make sure everyone taking family leave, regardless of gender, is asked the same questions.

10. Don’t forget to ramp up when they return. Often women return for maternity leave and find it is very difficult to gradually work up to their previous workload due to assumptions that they have limited time, and perhaps limited commitment, to work. That’s why it’s important to schedule a meeting immediately when someone returns, with at least two weekly check-ins thereafter, to ensure that an employee returning from leave isn’t being sidelined for projects because colleagues are benevolently (or not so benevolently) concerned about the returned employee’s workload. Doing this helps avoid attrition—and helps prevent Maternal Wall bias from becoming a legal problem.

²³¹ Massey-Diez v. Univ. of Iowa Cmty. Med. Servs., 826 F.3d 1149, 1158 (8th Cir. 2016) (Some courts have found that “asking or requiring an employee to perform work while on leave can constitute interference.”).

²³² A good practice is to have most if not all of the pregnant employee’s work transitioned about a month before their leave is scheduled.

Interrupting bias in FAMILY LEAVE

A Solution

11. The best practice is a gradual-return-to-work policy. The best way to ensure that employees do not return to an overwhelming wall of work, and end up leaving the company, is a gradual-return-to-work policy. Typically these start with a 50% schedule and gradually build back to full-time. Without a formal policy, companies often find that some supervisors handle the return-to-work well, but that others do so poorly, resulting in high attrition.

12. Designate leave liaisons. Create a workplace mentorship program that links leave-takers with mentor colleagues. Mentors then act as guides on issues like off- and on-ramping and the transition into parenthood. Some firms expand these programs by offering employees outside coaching sessions or classes for new parents and paid travel expenses for care support, enabling parents to bring their children on work-related travel. See #9 for more ideas.

13. Broaden the scope of support. Organizations can continue to support all employees beyond leave by offering family caregiving benefits. To start, here are some ideas:

- Flexible and part-time schedules; see our Toolkit for Workplace Flexibility for guidance.
- Get your employees a membership for regular or backup childcare through providers like Care@Work or, better yet, offer on-site childcare.
- You can also offer eldercare services through providers like Bright Horizons.²³³

- Help employees navigate pregnancy and postpartum with platforms like Mahmee or Maven.
- Offer a travel allowance for caregivers on work-related travel and breastmilk overnight mailing services.

14. Schedule the time to review your family leave and work/life balance policies. Like anything else that’s a priority, add discussions on these policies to your strategic plan and budget meetings.

15. If you sense that an employee is struggling to balance work and life, ask what they need. Many employees may be afraid to ask for what they need and instead will leave the firm. Sometimes, a leave may be appropriate, but other times, a temporary shift in work hours or the ability to work from home for a period of time may be sufficient. Employees should feel encouraged to work with the firm to meet the firm’s needs and the needs of their family.

²³³ <https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-solutions/elder-care>

Interrupting bias in FAMILY LEAVE

A Solution

Breastfeeding employees need support as well: All relevant major medical associations in the U.S. recommend breastfeeding for at least the first year of life,²³⁴ and businesses that support breastfeeding employees’ basic needs [realize cost savings](#) from increased loyalty and retention, reduced sick time, and decreased health care and insurance costs. Architectural professionals who are lactating will need to express milk at regular intervals throughout the workday to maintain their milk supply and avoid painful health complications.

Legal protections for lactating employees vary from [state to state](#). As of June 2021, all employees who are eligible for overtime are protected by the federal [Break Time for Nursing Mother’s](#) provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act, but while that may cover many staff members, it typically excludes architects. The PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act ([H.R. 3110](#) and [S. 1658](#)) is under consideration in Congress and would expand coverage of the federal law to include all employees. Nursing architects are often covered by state laws; the majority of states have a law requiring employers to provide private break time and space for pumping, and/or provide reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of lactating employees, which can also include accommodations beyond basic time and space. Lactating employees are also protected from discrimination and may be entitled to accommodations under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (Title VII).

Typically, workplace lactation laws require lactating employees be provided a space to express milk that is not a bathroom and is free from view and intrusion by others. The standards usually apply anywhere the employee is expected to work, including on construction sites, and there are [creative solutions](#) to meet the legal standards in every setting. Of course, best practice lactation spaces exceed the minimum legal requirements and include a comfortable chair, a flat surface to rest the breast pump, electric outlets and close proximity to a sink. The [AIA guidelines for lactation space](#) offer detailed, best-practice guidance.

Depending on what the breastfeeding employee’s needs are, what is provided to other employees, and where the workplace is located, nursing architects may be entitled to reduced billable hour requirements to account for the time spent pumping. Best practice is to adjust hours requirements and any other time-based metrics so as to not penalize employees for addressing this health need.

To learn the law in your state, visit the [Center for WorkLife Law’s workplace breastfeeding law resource](#).

²³⁴ Am. Acad. of Pediatrics, Policy Statement, Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk, 129 PEDIATRICS e827, 32 (2012), available at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2012/02/22/peds.2011-3552.full.pdf>; Am. Acad. Fam. Physicians, Policy Statement, Breastfeeding (2012), <http://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/breastfeeding.html>; Am. Acad. Of Fam. Physicians, Policy Statement, Breastfeeding (1988, 2017 COD); Am. Coll. of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, ACOG COMMITTEE Opinion #756 Optimizing Support for Breastfeeding as Part of Obstetric Practice; Am. Pub. Health Ass’n. A Call to Action on Breastfeeding: A Fundamental Public Health Issue. Policy No. 200714 (2007) <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policystatements/policy-database/2014/07/29/13/23/a-call-to-actionon-breastfeeding-a-fundamental-public-health-issue>

Interrupting bias in WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

The Challenge

Surveys show time and time again that employees want more flexibility at work, with one finding that 96% of white-collar professionals say they need flexibility²³⁵ Workers value workplaces that value them. In one study, attrition was cut in half when workers went remote, and telecommuting employees took fewer sick days and less time off.²³⁶

There is a widespread narrative that women leave the profession of architecture because of long hours—and that long hours are indispensable, so there is nothing to be done about it. This narrative actually doesn’t hold water because most architectural professionals aren’t working wildly long hours.²³⁷ Yet some are—and even those who don’t work long hours all year often have to during a charrette. There is ample evidence that women professionals do have more caregiving responsibilities than male professionals as a group,²³⁸ although increasing numbers of younger men are equal caregivers and are willing to leave their employers for reasons of work-life balance.²³⁹ So it is in the employers’ best interest to retain not only women but all young people by providing time flexibility in the workplace.

When workplaces rely on an outdated model of a breadwinner who is always available for work, not only do they exclude most people working today, they also hurt the company’s bottom line. According to Cisco, their mobile or remote employees have a voluntary attrition rate a third the size of their office-based employees.²⁴⁰ Cisco credits this lower attrition rate with \$75 million in annual savings for recruiting, hiring, and training replacements.²⁴¹ Other studies have found sharp gains in productivity when workplaces move to telework or build-your-own schedules.²⁴²

²³⁵ A. Dean & A. Auerbach, “96% of U.S. Professionals Say They Need Flexibility, but Only 47% Have It,” June 2018. *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org/2018/06/96-of-u-s-professionals-say-they-need-flexibility-but-only-47-have-it>.

²³⁶ S. Mautz, “A 2-Year Stanford Study Shows the Astonishing Productivity Boost of Working From Home,” April 2018. *Inc.*, <https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/a-2-year-stanford-study-shows-astonishing-productivity-boost-of-working-from-home.html>.

²³⁷ Pitts, A., Sheng, R., Nicholson, K., & Monti, M. (2019). Equity By Design: Voices, Values, Vision! 2018 Equity in Architecture Survey Early Findings Report. Retrieved from: <http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

²³⁸ K. Parkert, “Women more than men adjust their careers for family life,” October 2015. Pew Research, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/10/01/women-more-than-men-adjust-their-careers-for-family-life/>

²³⁹ A. Keshner, “More American men clamor for paternity leave: ‘A father shouldn’t have to be lucky to form a bond with his child,’” July 2019. MarketWatch, <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/more-american-men-clamor-for-paternity-leave-a-father-shouldnt-have-to-be-lucky-to-form-a-bond-with-his-child-2019-07-26#:~:text=Some%20high%2Dprofile%20men%20are,afford%20to%20take%20time%20off>.

²⁴⁰ P. Leet, “How Telework Helps Cisco Recruit and Retain Employees,” June 2013. Cisco Blogs, <https://blogs.cisco.com/ciscoit/how-telework-helps-cisco-recruit-and-retain-employees>.

²⁴¹ P. Leet, “How Telework Helps Cisco Recruit and Retain Employees,” June 2013. Cisco Blogs, <https://blogs.cisco.com/ciscoit/how-telework-helps-cisco-recruit-and-retain-employees>.

²⁴² Shana Lynch, “Why Working from Home is a ‘Future-Looking Technology,’” June 2017. Stanford Graduate School of Business, <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/why-working-home-future-looking-technology>.

Interrupting bias in WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

The Challenge

In our study of architects and designers, we found that over a third of women, and approximately a quarter of men, thought that asking for flexible arrangements would hurt their careers. This data was collected before COVID-19 hit, and the long-term impact of the pandemic remains to be seen.²⁴³

The profession of architecture has seemingly had an intensely face-time culture—with the accepted wisdom that because architecture is indisputably a team sport, it had to be done in the office. Because of COVID-19, people now see that this isn't true.²⁴⁴ Even people who long opposed remote work have been working remotely successfully for months. Going forward, this is an opportunity for employers to change norms and understandings. There has historically been an unnoted generational conflict between older architectural professionals who just didn't believe in remote work and younger architectural professionals who believed it was both possible and desirable. Hopefully, remote work during COVID-19 has bridged the generation gap and there will be more flexibility for telework moving forward.

Building a flexible workplace enables employers to promote people based on their talent instead of their schedule.

²⁴³ Williams, J.C., Korn, R.M., & Maas, R. (2021). The Elephant in the (Well-Designed) Room: An Investigation into Bias in the Architecture Profession.

²⁴⁴ Williams, J.C. "The Pandemic Has Exposed the Fallacy of the Ideal Worker," May 2020. *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org/2020/05/the-pandemic-has-exposed-the-fallacy-of-the-ideal-worker>

Interrupting bias in WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

A Solution

1. Recognize the difference between crisis work and full-time/part-time telework. Working remotely in the midst of a crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic, is not the same as telework during normal times. The first steps to successful telework are childcare and a place to work. Organizations designing a permanent telework scheme typically will balance the productivity gains of telework with the innovation gains of in-office work. For tips on creating a telework policy that works for your organization visit: <https://trello.com/remote-work-guide>.²⁴⁵

2. Allow for flex time. Flex times allows employees to start and end work at times of their own choosing, often within limits (e.g., start times between 7–11 a.m.). Don’t assume hourly employees can’t participate: Having one receptionist work 8 a.m. –5 p.m. and another work 9 a.m. –6 p.m., for example, often benefits an organization.

3. Use reduced schedules to expand your talent pool. Offer reduced scheduling to employees without compromising career advancement opportunities by offering proportional pay, benefits, and advancement. This strategy has been used successfully in law firms, enabling part-time attorneys to become partners. Only 18.2% of professional women and less than one-third of men work more than 40 hours per week, so if your workplace isn’t offering a reduced schedule with advancement opportunities, you’re missing out.²⁴⁶

4. Consider offering a wider range of work arrangements. Are you able to make some positions project-based? This enables employees to take on as much or as little work as they want, giving the company their best on select projects. Elite part-time track programs

that continue to offer glamour work assignments to employees with lower hours help level the playing field and ensure that the plum work opportunities continue going to the best-suited for the job. What makes these programs effective is that employees are still able to transition into more senior roles within the organization.

5. Eliminate the flexibility stigma. Don’t stigmatize people based on schedule. Message clearly and often that promotion depends on talent and work, not on “face time” at the office—and practice what you preach.

6. Don’t overvalue overwork. Encouraging your employees to regularly burn the midnight oil hurts more than it helps. Studies dating back to World War I find that chronic overwork (more than 40 hours a week) hurts productivity, and more recent studies find that working less than 40 hours a week can increase productivity.²⁴⁷ In one study, managers couldn’t tell the difference between employees who actually worked 80 hours a week and those who pretended to.²⁴⁸ Pay attention to what an employee’s efforts lead to, not how many hours it takes them to get there.

7. Your benefits send a message; make sure it’s the one you want. Look again at your work culture and employee benefits. Do they match up with the work-life balance values your company claims? Having a power-napping room, dry-cleaning, and free dinner for those who work after 8pm are great, but if those are your only employee benefits, you are sending a strong message that you only value a certain group of employees. Provide a range of benefits that will appeal to employees from different demographics, if that’s what you want to attract and retain.

²⁴⁵ For additional remote work tools: <https://blog.trello.com/topic/remote-work>.

²⁴⁶ Gender Inequality, Work Hours, and the Future of Work; Institute of Women’s Policy Research 2019 (<https://www.empowerwomen.org/es/resources/documents/2019/11/gender-inequality-work-hours-and-the-future-of-work?lang=en>)

²⁴⁷ Jill Duffy, “What wartime ‘munitionettes’ can teach us about burnout,” September 2019. BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190912-what-wartime-munionettes-can-teach-us-about-burnout>; “The Six-Hour Work Day”. Ohio University Online Masters Blogs, <https://onlinemasters.ohio.edu/blog/benefits-of-a-shorter-work-week/>; John McNamara, “Create a culture of working less hours and you’ll boost productivity. Here’s why,” February 2018. Sage, <https://www.sagepeople.com/about-us/news-hub/creating-culture-working-less-boost-productivity/#>

²⁴⁸ Sarah Green Carmichael, “The Research is Clear: Long Hours Backfire for People and Companies,” August 2015. *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org/2015/08/the-research-is-clear-long-hours-backfire-for-people-and-for-companies>

Glossary

Glossary

TYPES OF BIAS

Prove-it-again bias

Some groups need to provide more evidence of competence in order to be seen as equally competent.ⁱ

Prove-it-again bias is a result of descriptive stereotyping: We assume that people will conform to stereotypes about their groups.ⁱⁱ Women,ⁱⁱⁱ Black people,^{iv} Latino/a people,^v and people from lower class-origin backgrounds^{vi} are stereotyped as less competent, so they are forced to prove themselves more than others in professional workplaces order to get the same respect and recognition as white men from elite backgrounds. People of Asian descent are stereotyped as competent, good at technical work, but not leadership material.^{vii} Prove-it-again is a status effect: It impacts people based on gender, race/ethnicity, social class, disability status, LGBTQ status, and more.^{viii}

When Prove-it-again bias it at play, white men get the benefit of the doubt, while women and people of color have to prove themselves repeatedly.^{ix} This helps form an invisible escalator for white men (particularly those from elite backgrounds), while everyone else has to work extra hard.

Prove-it-again can play out in any workplace system. For example, in hiring: Matched resume studies have found that men with upper-class activities on their resumes (like sailing and polo) were called back for a job at a rate more than four times higher than other applicants who had lower-class activities like pickup soccer and country music.^x Or in performance evaluations: Low-status groups may have their mistakes noted and remembered, and have their successes attributed to luck rather than to skill.^{xi}

Tightrope bias

Workplace politics are more complicated for some groups than others. White men are expected to be authoritative and ambitious—behavior that is less readily accepted from other groups.^{xii} Consequently, other groups need to find ways of being authoritative and ambitious that are acceptable to those in

charge. Tightrope bias stems from prescriptive stereotypes, which reflect that people from groups seen as lower in status (and therefore less competent) are expected to “show good judgment” in displaying what is suitably deferential behavior.^{xiii}

Women are expected to be nice, communal, modest, helpful—these are feminine traits.^{xiv} Women face a tradeoff between competence and likeability: If they act in a way that is too masculine, they may be respected, but not liked.^{xv} If they act in a way that is too feminine, they may be liked, but not respected.^{xvi} Women have to walk a tightrope to strike the right balance of competence and likeability, but that’s what it takes to be a professional.^{xvii}

When white men are assertive, they’re seen as good leadership material.^{xviii} When women are assertive, they face an “agentic penalty” because they aren’t conforming to stereotypes that women should be warm, friendly, and nice.^{xix} This penalty plays out in workplace systems as well: An informal study of the performance evaluations of tech companies found that 66% of women received criticisms about their personalities, compared to only 1% of men.^{xx}

Dominant behavior may be expected and rewarded from white men, but research shows that Black men face a penalty for the same behavior.^{xxi} In fact, this effect extend to appearance as well: Black men who are CEOs tend to be baby-faced, compared to white men CEOs who have more mature faces that convey authority.^{xxii} This “teddy bear effect” gives racial reassurance to white people that Black CEOs are not “threatening.” Like women of all racial/ethnic groups, Black men have to walk a tightrope in both appearance and demeanor in order to survive and thrive in professional workplaces.

Black women face different prescriptive stereotypes than Black men and white women.^{xxiii} Black women are expected to be more dominant, so they may be able to act in assertive way without the agentic penalty that white women face—so long as they aren’t seen as “angry Black women.”^{xxiv}

Women of Asian descent may face even worse penalties for assertive behavior than other groups.^{xxv} Research documents pushback for assertive behavior for both men and women of Asian descent.^{xxvi} Showing anger tends to increase the status of a man, but decrease the status of a woman.^{xxvii} However,

racial stereotypes also play a role: In order to avoid workplace pushback and sanctions, Black people have to work extra hard in order to avoid being seen as the “angry Black person.”^{xxviii} Latina women also report that they are perceived as angry or emotional, when in fact they are simply not acting deferential.^{xxix}

Tightrope bias and stereotypes about which groups are communal and helpful also impact the way assignments are allotted.^{xxx} Women of all racial/ethnic groups are more likely to report doing the “office housework,” which includes not only literal housework (planning parties, cleaning the cups), but also administrative work (sending the follow-up email, taking notes, finding a time to meet), emotion work, and behind-the scenes work. Whatever is the undervalued work in a given environment, women are seen as having a particular taste and talent for it. Both women and men of color report less access to career-enhancing “glamour work.”^{xxxi}

Maternal Wall bias

Motherhood triggers the strongest form of gender bias. Being a mother, getting pregnant, or even just being a woman of a certain age can trigger strong negative competence and commitment assumptions at work.^{xxxii} The stereotype is that mothers are less committed to their jobs, because they are more focused on their families.^{xxxiii} On the other hand, if mothers do show strong commitment to their jobs, they can get backlash at work for being “bad mothers.”^{xxxiv}

Maternal Wall bias also includes the flexibility stigma: career-harming bias based on requesting family leave or flexible schedules.^{xxxv} The flexibility stigma affects men as well: Men are supposed to be the breadwinners, and if they instead prioritize family, they may get pushback at work.^{xxxvi} The flexibility stigma for men is actually a femininity stigma: Taking care of children is seen as feminine behavior, and men who do it are seen as too feminine and penalized for it at work.^{xxxvii}

People without children can also face maternal wall bias: They may be asked to work extra hours to make up for those with children, on the assumption that they have no life.^{xxxviii} In this way, maternal wall bias can affect anyone, not just mothers or people with children.

Tug of War bias

Gender bias can create conflict among women:^{xxxix} racial bias can fuel conflict among people of color.^{xl} This is the Tug of War: intra-group conflict among people struggling to succeed in a biased workplace.^{xli} The Tug of War reflects different assimilation strategies women and people of color may adopt in an attempt to fit in, and different ways different members of these groups perform their identities.^{xlii} Tug of War can also reflect tokenism, where women or people of color may feel pitted in competition against each other if there is “room for only one” in a given workplace, or in prized positions.^{xliii}

In addition, the Tug of War includes pass-throughs of the other forms of bias.^{xliv} For example, older women may apply harsher standards to younger women because “that’s just what it takes to succeed here as a woman.”^{xlv} Tightrope bias can also be passed through, if women are critical of other women for being too feminine (“With that little girl voice, no wonder no one takes her seriously”) or too masculine (“She’s such a bitch, no wonder no one likes her”).^{xlvi} Maternal wall can create “mommy wars,” where women judge other women for taking too much or too little time for family, or for having children at all.^{xlvii}

Tug of War bias is based on status; it encompasses any intragroup conflict based on being lower status groups. There is less research on how it plays out by race/ethnicity, but one line of research found a classic tightrope pass-through: Black evaluators were more critical of professionals who wore their hair in Afrocentric styles than Eurocentric styles.^{xlviii}

Racial stereotypes

People of color face bias based on the patterns above, but they also face an additional form of bias based on stereotypes about their racial and ethnic groups.

In the United States, white people have less contact with Black people, which leads them to rely more on stereotypes when making individual judgements.^{xlix} Black people are stereotyped as lazy, intimidating, and threatening—all extremely harmful stereotypes in the workplace.^l Black women across industries report feeling excluded in their workplaces.^{li} In our research, Black women reported being demeaned and disrespected as well.^{lii} Black women face a completely different work environment

than other groups, and one report found that Black women are mentally checked out of their jobs at a rate 75% higher than white men and 20% higher than white women.^{liii} Black women face another set of stereotypes based on appearance: Wearing natural hairstyles is enough to trigger negative competence stereotypes associated with being Black.^{liv}

Latino/a people face harmful racial stereotypes in the workplace as well. They are stereotyped as lazy or hot-headed and prone to emotional outbursts—these stereotypes mean Latino/a people have to put in more work than white people in order to be seen as equally competent and hardworking.^{lv} Latino/a people also face the stereotype of being immigrants who don’t speak English, which means they have a harder time being seen as a good fit for the workplace.^{lvi}

People of Asian descent face the myth of the model minority—the idea that they are hardworking, competent, and successful.^{lvii} This means that they are watched more closely in the workplace for any evidence of the stereotype not being true—they can be punished for any slip up that reveals they aren’t living up to the myth.^{lviii} Although people of Asian descent are stereotyped as competent and hardworking,^{lix} they are assumed to be a good fit for technical roles only, not leadership positions.^{lx} This has been called the “bamboo ceiling”^{lxi}—people of Asian descent have been invited into the workplace to play a certain role, but not to rise to the top. People of Asian descent also face the “forever foreigner” stereotype—the assumption that they are not true Americans, and that they are immigrants who don’t speak English well.^{lxii} A common way this assumption is revealed occurs when a white person asks, “Where are you really from?”^{lxiii}

Research is just beginning to explore the stereotypes that face biracial and multiracial people. Observers have a more difficult time categorizing multiracial people, which raises questions about associated stereotypes and attitudes.^{lxiv} There is evidence that some stereotypes are applicable to all biracial groups—the stereotype of not belonging or fitting in, and of being attractive.^{lxv} Other research finds that Black/White biracial job applicants were rated as having worse interview skills and as less socially skilled than Black applicants.^{lxvi}

OTHER SURVEY VARIABLES

- Belonging:** employee sense of belonging and culture fit.
- Career satisfaction:** employee is satisfied at current workplace.
- Clear path for advancement:** employee sense that there is a path for advancement for themselves at their workplace.
- Engagement:** employee sense that they are engaged with their work.
- Fairness of assignments:** employee sense that they have equal access to career-advancing work.
- Fairness of compensation:** employee sense that they are compensated fairly and comparably to their peers.
- Fairness of hiring:** employee sense that hiring is fair and unbiased at their workplace.
- Fairness of performance evaluations:** employee sense of fair performance evaluations at their workplace.
- Fairness of promotions:** employee sense of fair opportunities for promotion.
- Fairness of sponsorship:** employee sense that they have a workplace sponsor and access to networking opportunities.
- Inclusion:** employee sense that they are included and welcome in their workplace, that they do not feel isolated, and that they are a part of the information-sharing networks.
- Long-term future:** employee sense that they will remain employed at their current workplace long-term.
- Recommend organization to a friend:** employee would refer a friend to their workplace.

ADDITIONAL TERMS

- Boys’ club:** a space or environment that is exclusionary toward people who are not men.
- Elephant in the room:** an important issue that everybody knows about, but is not discussed because it is uncomfortable or controversial.
- Forever foreigners:** a stereotype faced by Asian Americans that they are not “true Americans”^{lxvii}; for example, Asian Americans are more likely than white Americans to be asked “Where are you really from?”^{lxviii}
- Glamour work:** desirable or high-profile assignments; work that leads to career advancement and further opportunities.
- Helpmeet:** a helper.
- In-group:** dominant group; group(s) with traits that are favored or privileged in a given setting (e.g., white men in typical U.S. workplaces). ^{lxix}
- Likert scale:** a rating scale often used in surveys where participants provide a rating, such as rating their agreement with the question from 1-6.
- Locker room banter:** a term typically used to refer to conversation, typically among men, which is sexually explicit or misogynistic in nature.
- Mentor:** someone who advises an individual on a given topic or topics; mentorship can range from offering occasional career advice to deep investment in a person’s success and wellbeing.
- Motherhood penalty:** used to refer to a whole host of penalties by employers (e.g., lower starting salary offers) that result from the negative commitment and competence assumptions triggered by motherhood but not fatherhood. ^{lxx}

- Office housework:** organizational citizenship tasks that are essential to the functioning of a workplace but not career-advancing; office housework includes literal housework (e.g., planning parties and ordering food), administrative work (e.g., taking meeting notes), and emotional work (e.g., playing peacemaker).
- Organizational citizenship work:** tasks that are essential to the functioning of a workplace but not usually a part of one’s formal job description.
- Out-group:** non-dominant group within a particular setting.
- Queen bee:** a woman who aligns herself with men in an environment, strategically distancing herself from other women and maybe even excluding them from important information in order to secure her place at the top.
- Sponsor:** a person who is willing to spend political capital to help their protégés’ careers.
- Worker bee:** an employee who will keep their head down, work hard, and avoid confrontation.

i Foschi, M. (2000). Double standards for competence: Theory and research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 21-42. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.21 Biernat, M., & Kobrynowicz, D. (1997). Gender- and race-based standards of competence: Lower minimum standards but higher ability standards for devalued groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(3), 544-557. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.72.3.544; Foschi, M., Lai, L., & Sigerson, K. (1994). Gender and double standards in the assessment of job applicants. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 326-339.; Foschi, M. (1996). Double standards in the evaluation of men and women. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 59(3), 237-254. doi: 10.2307/2787021; Ridgeway, C. L. (2011). Framed by gender: How gender inequality persists in the modern world. Oxford University Press.

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