Intersectionality and planning at the margins: LGBTQ youth of color in New York

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Through an intersectional lens, this article reflects on the dialog between planning and gender, feminist, and queer studies to analyze the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth of color (YOC) community in New York City (NYC). The community is subject to multiple disenfranchisements, given their ethno-racial status, class, age, gender, and sexual orientation. This community’s limited access to safe public spaces and amenities, housing, health services, job training, and other opportunities is an urban planning challenge insufficiently understood or addressed. Our methodology includes participant observation and analysis of an LGBTQ YOC tour of West Village in NYC, interviews with LGBTQ individuals and NGO staff, life stories, observations in LGBTQ-friendly meetings and facilities, and content analysis of LGBTQ reports and media coverage. The research shows the agency of an LGBTQ youth group as a resilient community organization effectively participating in planning processes and exerting rights to public space and services. Finally, it offers recommendations to planners and policy-makers to facilitate the recognition and expansion of rights to the city for LGBTQ, particularly YOC, by committing to understanding their unique conditions and needs and expanding their access to safe housing and public spaces, poverty reduction programs and job opportunities, and health and social support services.

Keywords: intersectionality; youth of color; LGBTQ; West Village; New York City; tour

Manhattan is home to many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people of color. Many partook in ‘a queer migration for personal “sexile” from their places of origin’ (Roque Ramírez 2010, 108) to New York City (NYC) to escape the alienation they felt from their communities or country’s laws and institutions. Despite certain advantages that some LGBTQ youth of color (YOC) have in NYC versus their places of origin, the community is disproportionately poor, house-insecure or homeless, and institutionally challenged for inclusion (May 2015).

While gender, feminist, and queer studies have contributed to expand planners’ awareness of sexist, patriarchal, and homophobic biases (Doan 2011), the effects of ethno-racial status, class, and age on LGBTQ YOC’s disenfranchisement have only started to be considered, leaving them largely outside the planning purview. Focusing on LGBTQ YOC in NYC, this article builds on intersectionality theory (Crenshaw 1991) to understand the connection between the multiple axes of disenfranchisements producing the conditions LGBTQ YOC are facing in NYC (ethno-racial status, gender, age).
Intersectionality also helps us to push the conversation between traditionally separated disciplinary fields (planning and gender, feminist, and queer studies) – to understand how societal and planning institutions affect this marginalized population. The research explores how LGBTQ YOC are experimenting the city and using place-based queer struggles to mobilize their community and allies. Their efforts have helped to construct community organizations and coalitions, participate in planning and policy-making processes, and wield their right to public spaces and services.

The study demonstrates that queer-phobic discrimination is still prevalent in NYC and that LGBTQ YOC are more disparagingly marginalized than their White counterparts. It also shows the agency of the LGBTQ YOC community and urge planners to facilitate the recognition and expansion of queer citizenship (Frisch 2002; Parker 2012; Nusser and Anacker 2013), particularly focusing on expanding their access to safe housing and public spaces, poverty reduction programs and job opportunities, and health and social support services.

Methodology
Our study was primarily inspired by a 2010 tour we participated in run by FIERCE, an organization building leadership and power among LGBTQ YOC in NYC. The tour introduced LGBTQ concerns and landmarks in the West Village. We used the lessons and observations from the tour to examine the life experiences of LGBTQ YOC in NYC, in particular the West Village, and their access to the right to the city. We visited the tour sites several times afterwards to observe the spaces in their everyday life. These engagements informed our analysis on the pedagogical significance and potential of the tour as an advocacy, organizing, and educational instrument for the needs of LGBTQ YOC in NYC. We conducted 25 semi-structured interviews of LGBTQ YOC from ages 18 to 33 living in NYC to assess their experience as minoritized individuals (Sassen 2004) and the influence that places like the West Village have on their identity and lives. We also obtained six life stories from LGBTQ YOC in frequent contact with the West Village and living in NYC for over 2 years.

Dialog between planning and gender, feminist, and queer studies
Gender, feminist, and queer studies have challenged the discipline to rethink the inclusiveness of their current understanding of equity (Fainstein and Servon 2005; Oswin 2008). Critiques by LGBTQ activists and scholars have noted that LGBTQ generalizations are mostly based on the experiences of gay White males (Riggs 2010) and thus leave the experiences and needs of LGBTQ women and people of color largely unaccounted for, perpetuating their subordination (Anzaldúa 1999; Browne 2011; Riggs 2010). Yet, more understanding is needed about the interplay of gender/sexuality (Jackson 2006) and place/space (Agnew 2011) with other minoritized identity markers, such as ethnicity, race, age, and class (Grossman et al. 2009; Kanai 2015).

LGBTQ YOC often face a blend of racism and gender and sexual discrimination that heightens their conditions of social exclusion. Many develop ‘double consciousness’ (Du Bois 1903), a process that creates inner struggles in people because of the contempt they get from society because of their race, gender, and sexuality; but also feeds their resiliency facing institutionalized social exclusion (Falcón 2008). Scholars have started to analyze the ways ethnic and racial inequalities and transgender and homophobia shape the experiences of LGBTQ women (Doan and Higgins 2011). Beyond causing a repressed...
identity, this type of silencing can lead to unplanned single parenthood, sexually transmitted diseases, or lack of preparation for the labor market, effects that ultimately disempower them (Acosta 2008).

Transgender and queer theories have gone beyond feminist theory in challenging the hetero-patriarchal convention that identifies “heterosexuality as “natural” and homosexuality as the deviant and abhorrent “other”” (Browne and Nash 2010, 5; Nagoshi, Nagoshi, and Brzuzy 2014). For LGBTQ YOC, particularly women, there are additional degrees of marginalization to those frequently borne by LGBTQ White males. The queer agenda has not sufficiently considered the impact that LBGTQ minoritized ethno-racial identity or lower socio-economic class has in both people’s subjective experience and their access to social institutions. As a result, most LGBTQ civil rights struggles disproportionately privilege White, middle- or upper-class queers (Riggs 2010). As race and class play their traditional roles of inclusivity and exclusivity, LGBTQ YOC are often denied recognition by their White, more affluent LGBTQ counterparts.

Interest is also growing about the interface of socio-gendered demographics with place and space (Cahill 2007). As spaces/places get queered, they open opportunities for resistance and transgression to spatial ethno-racial and hetero-patriarchal normatives (Doan 2011). In the past several decades, the LGBTQ community has become an active participant in urban place making, despite the fact that planning usually operates on a hetero-normative framework (Doan 2011; Doan and Higgins 2011; Forsyth 2001). The spatial presence of LGBTQ has manifested in various forms and has been mostly self-led. Some neighborhoods have become ‘queer-ghettos’ or ‘queer-friendly,’ while others remain hetero-normative neighborhoods where some LGBTQs reside (Brown 2012; Gorman-Murray and Waitt 2009). Yet, in his study of the gay male presence in the Castro District of San Francisco, Castells (1983) argues that claiming a territorial base for LGBTQ is crucial for political organization and subcultural self-definition. LGBTQ neighborhoods across US, UK, and Australian cities have declined in the last decade (Gorman-Murray and Waitt 2009). Some see the decline as a sign of mainstream acceptance of LGBTQ individuals no longer needing spatial community-building efforts. Others see it as a sign that tourists (mainly heterosexual) and marketing organizations have taken over LGBTQ neighborhoods and have diminished the safety and affordability for LGBTQ.

Our study area – NYC’s West Village (located in Manhattan’s Community Board 2, Council District 3; for boundaries see Figure 1) – is a place caught up in tensions between a queer-friendly and a post-queer neighborhood. Tourism and gentrification in the area are transforming the community and exerting displacement pressures on LGBTQ YOC. These pressures, as analyzed below, are finding resistance in organizations such as FIERCE and their allies.

The compounding link: intersectionality

Intersectionality is based on the premise that the impact of oppression varies in degree and nature depending on the intersection of subordination sources such as race and gender (Crenshaw 1991; Brown 2012; Denis 2008). Twenty-five years ago, intersectionality started as an exploration of how the experiences of women of color are different from those of White women or men of color, with their oppression further compounded by both gender and ethno-racial status. It has evolved to analyze the experiences of other groups with multiple markers of minoritized identity (LGBTQ Blacks or women, immigrants, the
disabled) and social relations of privilege/subjugation within different structural systems (law, religion, immigration, health, prison; Carbado et al. 2013).

Intersectionality suggests that LGBTQ YOC face different dynamics than those of their White counterparts in the socially mediated spaces they experience (O’Neill Gutierrez and Hopkins 2015). Yet, the intersectionality of non-conforming sexual orientations with other minoritized identity markers cannot be ‘measured and assessed for their separate contributions in explaining given social outcomes’ for LGBTQ YOC (Baca Zinn and Thorton Dill 1996, 329), as they compose a complex matrix of domination and subordination (Collins 1999; García-López 2008). The intersectionality of ethno-race, gender, and age with sexual orientation inherent in this community complicates its conditions of discrimination (Brown 2012; Grossman et al. 2009; Valentine 2007).

As intersectionality has helped to analyze the differential experience of women of color and to advocate on their behalf, it can also help planners understand and better respond to LGBTQ YOC’s planning needs ‘by interrogating the inter-locking ways in which social structures produce and entrench power and marginalization, and by drawing attention to the ways that existing paradigms that produce knowledge and politics often function to normalize these dynamics’ (Carbado et al. 2013, 312). We agree with Crenshaw’s (1991, 108) suggestion that ‘intersectionality offers a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identities and the ongoing necessity of group politics.’ It can be deployed to analyze or shape unexpected coalitions or to explain why some rhetorics of solidarity are not realized (Roberts and Jesudason 2013). Intersectionality can be used as a heuristic and analytic tool to create social change (Carbado et al. 2013, 311 and 312). In effect, grassroots groups in NYC, like FIERCE, are doing just that – giving LGBTQ YOC a strong voice to express their multiple identities.

Figure 1. Location of the West Village in Manhattan, NY. Google Maps.
and become active agents shaping the evolving urban fabric and social make-up of the city.

The West Village: epicenter of LGBTQ struggles

Once an Italian neighborhood in Manhattan, the West Village is also known for the legendary Stonewall Inn and Christopher Street that became famous during the Gay Rights Movement. On 27 June 1969 NYC police officers from the Public Morals Section tried to shut down the Stonewall Inn frequented by LGBTQ patrons. A struggle ensued between police officers and patrons, lasting a couple of days as more LGBTQ and allies joined. The Stonewall rebellion prompted political demonstrations challenging the police action and its underlying cultural contempt against LGBTQ expression. It also ignited an assertive and militant community activism that rallied increased solidarity and political action by the LGBTQ community and allies and helped bring political and legal progress for the community. The strength and determination shown by LGBTQ in the rebellion changed the way many in the community thought of themselves and how they interacted with others within city spaces. As a result, Christopher Street became known as the birthplace of the Gay Rights Movement and an emblematic queerscape in NYC (Rutledge 1992; Sears 1997). Today the West Village is marketed as a tourist destination that celebrates queerness. Moreover, Stonewall and its surroundings are one of the few locations on the list of US national registered historic places that make any reference to LGBTQ history (Dubrow 2003).

LGBTQ YOC in NYC are attracted to the West Village because of its history and current character. It is more sexually permissive than other neighborhoods; houses a sizable LGBT population; and has a concentration of youth, health, and homeless services.

LGBTQ YOC: subjects of marginalization

By the early 1990s, public expressions of queerness became more widely accepted in many countries, giving way to gay media representations, repeals of discriminatory legislation, and civil acknowledgement of same-sex civil partnerships and marriages (Badger 2013; Brown 2009). These changes, however, have not necessarily translated into better living conditions for LGBTQ YOC, who continue to face indifference, misunderstanding, or outright discrimination (Doan 2011). The emphasis on marriage and the insistence on ‘not-about-AIDS’ rhetoric (Román 2000) in queer politics deviate attention and resources from the most pressing needs of LGBTQ YOC: ‘housing, employment, access to health care, clothing, food, and other basic needs’ (FIERCE 2010, 10).

Concomitant with the economic crisis, there has been a rise in homelessness and rates of HIV infections among LGBTQ YOC. An increasing number of LGBTQ youth are coming out at younger ages and finding themselves homeless or marginally housed. While only approximately 3% to 5% of the total US population identify as LGBTQ, a nonrandom sample of homeless youth agencies from across the USA found that providers estimated 40% of homeless and at-risk youth accessing their agencies’ social services were LGBTQ (Durso and Gates 2012; Ray 2006). This is also true in NYC. Homelessness creates greater vulnerability to poverty and worsens LGBTQ YOC’s ability to access or retain services or employment, which contributes to their remaining poor (Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum 2013; Dworsky 2013).

We found that homeless LGBTQ YOC in NYC have either been kicked out of their homes after their parents found out they were queer or they ran away from home to be able
to express their queerness more openly and safely. Our interviewees shared with us the dilemmas they faced coming out to themselves and their families. Participants felt that LGBTQ YOC tend to come out later than their White counterparts because of the ‘culturally implicit messages that tell you to go the other way’ – the hetero way. One of our interviewees shared that he came out to his friends when he was 23 and to his family when he was 26: ‘I slowly started to tell friends and did what most men of color do when they come out, the indirect “bi” way – eventually people figured it out. I never told people: “I’m gay.’ He explains,

my White friends say that’s really late, but friends of color think that’s early… People of color think that coming out is a ‘white thing’ and that living on the ‘DL’ (down-low) is the norm. Not coming out is not a sign of weakness or a lack of pride. It is what it is. Culturally it is impossible for people.

He wondered if that was just his generation (he is 33 years old). The men he dates find him to be brave, because ‘we just don’t have a lot of role models. Every gay on TV is White, except for Ru Paul.’ Interviewees also expressed that having safe places to explore their sexual identities is key in helping to come out to themselves and their families.

Often the services that LGBTQ youth access are insensitive to their gender and sexuality and closed at night (FIERCE 2010). Our LGBTQ YOC interviewees expressed that there is a lack of safe public places to openly be queer without fear. One informant said, ‘You go to the Center for health services, but not to hang out.’ One Latina intimated that when she and her partner lived in a public housing project in Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn), they were always very careful to not be affectionate near their apartment windows because another LGBTQ friend living in the neighborhood had warned them of various hate crimes. This reminded us of Roque Ramírez’s (2010, 104) call about the need to ‘write more critically about how patriarchal and heteronormative latinidades, in addition to racism, misogyny, and class oppression, figure in the lives and deaths of these queer bodies.’

LGBT orientation is usually unwelcome in the households of YOC. Similarly, in their own neighborhoods, LGBTQ YOC tend to downplay their sexual orientations because they want to be accepted and not marginalized. Safety is also a big concern. For LGBTQ YOC, coming to terms with their identity also means balancing the cultural norms of machismo and femininity common within minoritized ethno-racial groups (Arguelles and Fernández 1997; Rhue and Rhue 1997). Our interviewees agreed that places such as the Christopher Street Pier (the Pier) and LGBTQ bars that play their music (e.g., hip-hop) make it easier for them to cope with their identities.

In NYC, safe places for LGBTQ YOC are restricted – mostly limited to places in Manhattan. One of our interviewees, originally from California, said that the LGBTQ community in NYC is ‘more racially polarized, the Lesbian community is very racially polarized and the safe spaces are always racially polarized.’ Another interviewee shared that she only feels comfortable holding hands in public in Manhattan’s West Village, East Village, Lower Eastside, Chelsea, and Hell’s Kitchen neighborhoods. She added that places such as Central Park and Union Square are not necessarily ideal places for LGBTQ YOC to congregate because they are too intertwined with the general public and they may run into people they are not out to. These comments illustrate the type of mental maps (Lynch 1960; Gregory, Johnston, and Pratt 2009) of a city’s geography intersectional sexual minorities need to create for themselves to navigate a terrain that is neither fully accessible nor safe for them. 14

Seeing the many gay rainbow flags along Christopher Street may convey a sense of inner group cohesion and solidarity within the LGBTQ community in the West Village.
However, according to our informants, the ‘accepted’ gay community tends to be White middle-class and not necessarily tolerant of LGBTQ YOC. Discrimination for them tends to manifest in unspoken stares hinting ‘you don’t belong here!’ and other undeclared tactics of street privilege, like how the north side of Christopher Street is tacitly the LGBTQ YOC side, while White-middle class LGBTQ and heterosexuals tend to walk on the south side of the street. Even within the LGBTQ community, LGBTQ YOC struggle with the unspoken ethno-racial and class dynamics that make them feel marginalized and invisible. We heard stories of how the White clientele of some LGBTQ bars reacts to LGBTQ YOC by giving them unwelcoming stares or ignoring them completely. As one of our interviewees expressed, the sentiment toward the presence of LGBTQ YOC in the West Village is almost like: ‘there goes the “hood”!’ We also heard stories of subtle ways LGBTQ bars are unwelcoming to LGBTQ YOC by the music playlists and the liquor they stock. 15

Dealing with inner group divides is further exacerbated by the increase of gay hate crimes in NYC. From 2011 to 2012, reports of hate crimes against LGBTQ and HIV-positive people in NYC rose by 4%. A study of hate attacks by a group of 15 anti-violence groups in 16 states, including New York’s Anti-Violence Project (NCAVP 2014), found that attacks against LGBTQ have been increasing in New York since 2010, even as they have plummeted around the country. New York saw 398 attacks in 2010, 451 in 2011, and 470 in 2012. In 2013, LGBTQ unauthorized immigrants, transgender people, and people of color were most at risk for severe violence in the nation, with 90% of homicide victims as people of color (NCAVP 2014). Geography also makes a difference for safety and media attention (Kitzinger 1999): when a young African American gay man was shot dead in the Village in May 2013, an African American transgender woman said, ‘This happens every day in my community. I live in the projects,’ she said. ‘It needs to happen in the Village to get any attention’ (Katz 2013). Violence and the fear of violence can further silence and isolate individuals, fracturing the possibility of group solidarity (Weldon 2006).

The significance of intersectionality clearly emerges in these findings, with the people most at risk of anti-LGBTQ hate violence

at the intersection of multiple forms of oppression and discrimination including racism and citizenship status. Anti-LGBTQ hate violence can no longer be viewed in isolation from other forms of violence that our community members are experiencing based on their identities (NCAVP 2014, 2).

LGBTQ YOC: agents of change

In the 1960s, gay rights leaders were mainly White men and women. Today young LGBTQ YOC are part of the struggle for greater inclusion. For instance, in 2000, LGBTQ YOC came together to form FIERCE, a local social justice advocacy group for LGBTQ YOC, to challenge the redevelopment on the Christopher Street Pier in the Hudson River Park. They comprise mainly Latino/as and African Americans between the ages of 13–24 living in the New York Metro Area. They have helped to secure city resources to address the needs of homeless and low-income LGBTQ YOC in NYC. FIERCE (2009) reached out to over 5000 LGBTQ YOC in homeless shelters, high schools, on the Pier, and service agencies across NYC.

FIERCE conducted a national LGBTQ youth needs assessment in 2009 to identify the major challenges facing LGBTQ youth and received 62 survey responses from LGBTQ youth programs housed in social justice organizations across the country. 16 Notably, in the
midst of the mainstream LGBTQ organizing efforts for marriage equality, most survey
respondents saw marriage equality as the least urgent issue. One respondent stated,

I personally feel like marriage equality has consumed LGBTQ organizing, despite the fact that
while many youth here support it, they’re not asking to get married when they walk in the
door… they’re asking for housing, employment, access to health care, clothing, food, and
other basic needs. (FIERCE 2010, 10; see Figure 2)

To advocate for the needs of LGBTQ YOC, FIERCE builds power for their
community through leadership development, organizing skills, and increasing political
awareness. Representatives train their members to be active stewards of their community
by offering 'out-of-the-closet or not' LGBTQ YOC a safe place and social network where
they feel accepted and comfortable to explore their feelings and build up their self-esteem
and capabilities to become community organizers. They also fight marginalization by
lobbying local NYC city council members, are actively involved in Community Board 2,
sit on the Board of the Hudson River Park Trust, and belong to the Right to the City
coalition. Their activities, public events, and participation in demonstrations for equality
are designed to challenge and educate mainstream society about issues around
homophobia and the status of LGBTQ YOC.

**FIERCE tour of the West Village**

Around 35 tour participants attended our FIERCE-led tour of the West Village, including
current and potential FIERCE donors, among others. The tour shed light on the struggles
LGBTQ YOC face in NYC – even in a neighborhood that was the epicenter of
the Gay Rights Movement and remains gay-friendlier than most other neighborhoods.
FIERCE uses the tour as an awareness-raising and fundraising tool that showcases the work that it has achieved in the past and the need for continued advocacy. This is congruent with the growing appreciation of walking tours and walking interviews as methodologies to elicit people’s relationships to places in the fields of geography, planning, and policy-making (Evans and Jones 2011).

The meeting point was FIERCE’s headquarters in Chelsea, an adjacent gay-friendly neighborhood. The pre-tour program included introductions of FIERCE staff and members and of all the tour participants. Everyone was invited to state his/her name, organization, and preferred gender pronoun (he, she, we, they...). The diversity emanated in the latter part of the introductions served to give a glimpse into the a-stereotypical complexity of identity for LGBTQ YOC.

After the introductions, FIERCE showed a self-produced documentary about the Pier’s redevelopment process. It included LGBTQ YOC’s testimonies and highlighted the Pier’s place as an LGBTQ landmark and safe-haven dating back to the 1960s. The Pier embodies queer pride, diversity, and political histories; it has become a safe place for self-expression. Despite the gentrifying pressures in the neighborhood, FIERCE and their allies have been able to fight against displacement and defend access to the Pier with some success. Though the Pier and surroundings have been redeveloped, FIERCE obtained a seat on the Board of the Hudson River Park Trust in 2009 and successfully advocated for extended park hours in the Pier so that LGBTQ YOC can have a safe place to socialize at until 1 am. They also secured extended bathroom facilities on the Pier after the Hudson River Park facilities close at 8 pm.

The walking tour was guided by five FIERCE members and started at the Christopher Street subway entrance and ended on the Pier. At each of the locations in Table 1, a guide discussed a ‘FIERCE Fact’ associated with the place, which was either a community development success story or related to an issue they were currently advocating for to fulfill a community need. They also shared their personal perspectives on the tensions and discrimination that LGBTQ YOC experience in the spaces along the tour path.

Implications of the tour for planning

The visited sites, the explanations by different FIERCE members, and their personal testimonies granted the tour a performative and pedagogical significance (Iraza´bal and Gómez-Barris 2007; Kosofsky Sedgwick and Frank 2003; Perry and Medina 2011). It was performative (emotional, sensual, embodied) primarily for FIERCE members to further liberate themselves from socially and self-oppressive conditions. It was pedagogical as an instrument to educate planners, policy-makers, and other community agents about the need for LGBTQ YOC social recognition, inclusion, and access to socio-spatial, cultural, political, and economic opportunities.

Identities and institutions are shaped and informed by forms of embodiment that produce space (Iraza´bal and Dyrness 2010; Harrison 2000; Malmström 2011). Performing actions in defiance of a system they consider unjust, FIERCE tour guides engaged spaces as a means through which to visualize the plight of LGBTQ YOC facing injustices in current city policy and practices. The tour’s appropriation and redefinition of spaces allowed FIERCE members – even if only momentarily – to express an embodied transgression. These ephemeral practices in public space helped realize spaces of freedom and hope. The temporary suspension of imposed and internalized oppression was rehearsed there through the practices performed in spaces whose meanings were collectively constructed as part of emancipatory struggles. These performances helped
Table 1. FIERCE’s LGBTQ Walking Tour Locations, Descriptions, and LGBTQ Connections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tour Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>LGBTQ Connection (‘FIERCE’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stonewall Inn.</td>
<td>Site of the rebellion that started the Gay Rights Movement in NYC in 1969.</td>
<td>Some gay bars face difficulties renewing their contracts because of neighborhood’s reduced tolerance for noise and the presence of LGBTQ groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Gay Liberation Monument in Sheridan Square.</td>
<td>Four bronze sculptures.</td>
<td>FIERCE appreciates the monument, but feels the statues do not acknowledge LGBTQ diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Northern Dispensary.</td>
<td>An historic hospital where Edgar Allan Poe was once a patient.</td>
<td>FIERCE is advocating for the right to convert it into a shelter and clinic for LGBTQ youth and FIERCE’s future headquarters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Transit PATH train station on Christopher Street.</td>
<td>Transit link between Manhattan and the state of New Jersey.</td>
<td>LGBTQ YOC suffer police harassment at and near this site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mobile clinic in front of St. Veronica, Roman Catholic Church.</td>
<td>The church approached the city to be able to park the vehicle in front of the building without having to pay the parking fees some neighbors wanted to impose on the mobile clinic.</td>
<td>FIERCE applauds the church’s support for the mobile clinic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lucille Lortel Theatre.</td>
<td>FIERCE and its members met here before Community Board meetings to discuss strategies about the redevelopment of the Christopher Street Pier.</td>
<td>FIERCE partnered with the theatre to help with its organizing efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bailey-Holt House.</td>
<td>The previous site of a gay homeless shelter, now converted into condos.</td>
<td>FIERCE perceives the closing as a sign of gentrification, and supports the creation of a new LGBTQ homeless shelter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Christopher Street Pier/Pier 45.</td>
<td>The Pier is an LGBTQ landmark and redevelopment commenced in 2000.</td>
<td>FIERCE successfully advocated for the reduction of curfew hours, the extension of hours of operation for bathroom facilities, the provision of porter potties on the Pier, and the organization of events at the Pier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pier 40.</td>
<td>Being renovated into a parking lot with other mixed uses.</td>
<td>FIERCE is exploring this site as another potential location for its future headquarters with a community center for LGBTQ YOC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LGBTQ YOC rehearse what it would mean to permanently subvert the meanings of imposed identities and to reinscribe citizen normativity in space and the polity in a manner that included them and helped them realize their queer citizenship.

These exercises also helped question stereotypes on the part of tour participants (Iraza´bal and Dyrness 2010). The tour acted as a tool for the transformation of subjectivity (Iraza´bal 2009; Dunst and Edwards 2011) and the attainment of greater autonomy (Tovar-Restrepo 2012), as tour guides rehearsed the passage from marginalized to empowered individuals and collectives. It educated participants with testimonies that assist them in debunking stereotypes and prejudices, simultaneously nurturing empathy and solidarity. For example, several tour participants were deeply touched by the personal stories of family abandonment and other hardships that some of the youth shared, and at the same time impressed by their artistic and political expressions, organizational skills and strategies, the struggles they had engaged in, and the accomplishments they had made. Not only were these YOC empowering themselves to overcome great challenges, they were also giving back to a society that has generally shut them out.

For planners, the transformation of subjectivity facilitated by the tour as a pedagogic tool follows the tradition of Scho ¨n’s (1983) Reflective Practitioner, where he argued that professional schools relied too heavily on scientific knowledge and technical rationality, while giving little attention to ‘reflection-in-action.’ In his following work, Educating the Reflective Practitioner, Schön (1987) detailed a program of reflective practicum education in professional schools, recommending ‘learning by doing.’ The FIERCE tour also follows Friedmann’s (1987) ‘social learning’ tradition in planning, and builds on Freire’s (1968) Pedagogy of the Oppressed, helping to change the consciousness of the oppressed (and that of oppressors) and the conditions that oppress them. The experience is also aligned with hooks’ (2003) ‘teaching to transgress’ and ‘pedagogy of hope’ concepts, which encourage the expansion of co-learning beyond school settings to include community organizations and other public arenas to collectively mobilize for social emancipation. The tour was also an opportunity to validate the particular histories of traditionally minoritized people, in this case of LGBTQ YOC, and expand the possibility of education to liberate and be more inclusive (Harris and Iraza´bal 2012; Sandercock 1998).

The FIERCE tour brought into view the challenges that intersectional subjects face, but also the agency and courage they show. The tour emerged as a transgressive pedagogical tool in the process of piercing through the official discourses of homo-normativity and other tropes of belonging invoked by governments, political parties, service organizations, religious groups, education institutions, and media. Thus, the tour facilitated for its participants processes of ‘performative reflexivity,’ defined by Turner (1986, 24) as a condition by which people ‘turn, bend, or reflect back upon themselves, upon their relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules, and other socio-cultural components which make up their public selves.’ As LGBTQ YOC took turns during the tour to serve as guides, they conveyed to participants a personalized account of the geography of the neighborhood. In relational, affective, temporal, and political terms, they explained to us what the buildings and spaces meant to them individually and collectively, and in relation to their past and present conditions, as well as future possibilities. For us, the performative reflexivity that started with the tour went beyond it, motivating our further exploration and reflection about LGBTQ YOC’s lives in New York, their interactions with places, and the responses of planning to their place-based needs.
By emphasizing the ethno-racial, class, age, and immigrant characteristics of their members, FIERCE’s tour problematized the LGBTQ establishment within the contexts of public space and civic life. The explicit interrogation of the meanings and uses of buildings and spaces along the tour path allowed tour participants to appreciate the contrast between the exclusionary politics of the neoliberal city aggressively trying to expand opportunities for capital accumulation (through the creation of more luxury condos and high-end commercial space) and the struggle of FIERCE and supporters (e.g., the local church and theater), defending the city’s use value and the right of LGBTQ YOC to belong. Their localized critique extended beyond the neighborhood to the city and the nation at large – producing an interscalar platform to construct a shared notion of belonging and mobilize toward an inclusive common future. In sum, the tour exercise opened up venues for political and planning engagement (Iraza´bal and Gómez-Barris 2007). Other community organizations representing disenfranchised groups advocating for their right to the city could also use the tour model to reach planners and policy-makers, raise spatial awareness of their plight among themselves and the larger public, and garner additional professional and community support.

Conclusion

With an intersectional lens, this study contributes to expand the queerying, ageing, and ethno-racial competency of planning education and practice, on the one hand, and the ageing, ethno-racial, and planning competency of gender, feminist, and queer studies, on the other (Agyeman and Erickson 2012; Iraza´bal and Punja 2009; Parker 2012). It does so working at the intersection of LGBTQ sexual orientation, ethno-race, and age (and to a lesser extent other minoritized identity markers – gender, class, and immigration status) and space in NYC.

The study particularly expands the ethical call for planners to contribute to progressive struggles for greater rights to the city and socio-spatial justice for minoritized groups (Carpio, Iraza´bal, and Pulido 2011; Iraza´bal and Dyrness 2010; Iraza´bal and Farhat 2008; Kotin, Dyrness, and Iraza´bal 2011). We expose how FIERCE and their allies have resisted displacement and defended access to certain spaces, amenities, and services with relative success. We also discuss the significance of spatial performances – touring – as an instrument for both self-actualization and educating planners and other stakeholders about the need for social recognition, inclusion, and access to spatial and socio-economic opportunities for disenfranchised communities.

As demonstrated by FIERCE, the agency of LGBTQ YOC groups and coalitional allies helps to facilitate the recognition and expansion of queer citizenship in NYC. The challenges, however, cannot be overstated, as unveiled by the examination of their plight with an intersectional lens. Yet, intersectionality can also be an analytic and organizational tool to construct solidarities, coalitions, and political change across systems of power (Carbado et al. 2013; Roberts and Jesudason 2013). Planning education and practice needs to consider an intersectional analysis of oppressed populations with multiple markers of alterity to increase its understanding and recognition of groups like LGBTQ YOC to be better positioned to plan spaces and services with and for them. While the importance of sensitive design and regulation of public space and commercial establishments, historic preservation, affordable housing, job training and provision, and health service delivery for special groups (e.g., women-headed households, the homeless, the poor, people with HIV/AIDS, the drug dependent) has been acknowledged, the particular needs of LGBTQ YOC still remain to be better understood and addressed.
As identified by Fierce’s (2010) survey and confirmed by our research, the most urgent issues facing LGBTQ YOC are LGBTQ phobias, personal wellness and mental health, homelessness, access to safe and social support services, access to safe public space, HIV/AIDS awareness and services, police harassment and violence, access to jobs, and gentrification and displacement. To address these issues, planners should take an intersectional approach, considering programs and policies that are supportive of the needs of LGBTQ YOC. The more these policies are pursued in tandem (intersectionally), the greater the likelihood that synergies may expand their effects. Specifically, planners can focus on a two-pronged approach, considering policies and programs related to poverty reduction and LGBTQ YOC. Poverty reduction policies can aim at preventing people from entering poverty and lifting people out of poverty while being gender and age sensitive. Policies such as the minimum wage or the earned income tax credit can assist both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ employees. LGBTQ YOC-specific efforts can strive to reduce legal inequalities and ensure their access to government benefits and programs. Planning and welfare agencies should also ensure that culturally competent professionals and LGBTQ-relevant regulations are present (Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum 2013, 24).

Political advocacy is also in order. Passing and enforcing nondiscrimination laws can help to prevent poverty by reducing the risk of unemployment and loss of wages and benefits. Currently US federal law, as well as most states’ laws, does not protect LGBTQ from employment discrimination, as they do for other ‘protected classes.’ New York State bars discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public accommodations; however, the only prohibition against discrimination for gender identity is within the realm of public employment (American Civil Liberties Union 2014). Legal protections guarding against job loss or health issues are also needed. Promoting greater health care coverage for LGBTQ can improve their health and income outcomes (Badgett, Durso, and Schneebaum 2013, 25).

Planners should try to expand housing options, including shelters, transitional housing, rental housing, and various forms of affordable housing for LGBTQ YOC. Such programs can be accompanied by supportive services such as counseling, vocational training, and sport and recreation options. Entering NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio made homelessness a key issue in his mayoral platform, promising to address the record number of homeless, estimated at more than 53,000 New Yorkers (Stewart 2014). His administration is making changes to shelter and rent-subsidy programs, but more is needed. Overall, planners can contribute to creating and maintaining safe and inclusive public spaces and socio-spatial climates that are more accepting of LGBTQ identities, thus decreasing the discrimination they face. While the American Planning Association’s committee on LGBTQ issues, Inclusion; the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning’s faculty and student group LGBTQA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and allies); and some planning scholars and practitioners have started to broach the subject, the support and efforts of the mainstream planning community are needed to make a broad and lasting impact.

**Acknowledgements**

We thank FIERCE members, tour participants, and other LGBTQ interviewees for their participation in this study. We also thank Kimberlé Crenshaw and Elizabeth Ribet for their mentoring on intersectionality, Ann Forsyth for comments on an earlier draft, and this journal’s reviewers and editors for their helpful and encouraging comments.
Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes
1. Email: irazabal.zurita@columbia.edu.
2. The census indirectly assesses sexual orientation by asking for heads of households and other adult members. Due to a lack of a permanent address, the estimated 40% of homeless LGBTQ YOC in NYC are not included.
3. Other markers of identity that can compound the discrimination of LGBTQ YOC are origin, citizenship status, English proficiency, and religious affiliation, but fall outside the scope of this work.
4. The authors are heterosexual Latinas acting within the field of urban planning and committed to heed the discipline’s Code of Ethics’ mandate to seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration . . . [and] urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs (AICP 2009).
5. We started recruiting some of the tour participants and our own LGBTQ acquaintances and friends, and expanded through references to other contacts they gave us. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, subjects younger than 18 were not reached.
6. Life story interviews were conducted in one or two sessions of over 1 hour in person or over Skype. Interviewees were not cued with questions but encouraged to talk openly about their life, sexual identity, other identity markers, and their ability to feel safe to express themselves in NYC.
7. The American sociologist Du Bois developed the concept to describe how the inner struggles of Blacks developed from the contempt they got from White America.
8. Reforms supported by White LGBTQ include civic partnership, marriage, and parental privileges (e.g., parental rights, prison and medical visitations, insurance, and inheritance).
9. The original adjectives used by Gorman-Murray and Waitt (2009) are ‘gay’ and ‘post-gay’ ghettos, but we preferred the more inclusive term queer.
10. In parallel, feminist scholars have used bell hooks and others to explore how early feminism cannot speak for all women equally.
12. For example, gay men, minority women, and young persons continue to be disproportionally affected by HIV/AIDS: 62% of newly diagnosed males in the first half of 2010 were gay, 93.4% of women were Black and Latinas, and 30.2% of all diagnoses were persons of ages 20–29 (NYC Health 2011).
13. NYC’s homeless agency Safe Horizon (2014) identifies their client demographics as 42% African American and 37% Hispanic.
14. For intersectional mapping, see Rodó-de-Zárate (2014).
15. For instance, playlists would not include hip-hop or R&B and stocked liquor does not include Hennessy or other drinks associated with the preferences of LGBTQ YOC.
16. They sent 88 invitations.
17. We learned about the tour through an email sent to the Planners Network’s New York Chapter list-serve.
18. The following characteristics are ‘protected classes’ by federal anti-discrimination law: race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, veteran status, and genetic information.

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References


ABSTRACT TRANSLATIONS

Interseccionalidad y planificación en los márgenes: juventud de color LGBTQ en Nueva York

A través de una óptica interseccional, este artículo reflexiona sobre el diálogo entre la planificación y los estudios de género, feministas y queer para analizar la comunidad joven LGBTQ de color en Nueva York. La comunidad está sujeta a múltiples privaciones de derechos civiles debido a su estatus etnoracial, y de clase, edad, género y orientación sexual. Este acceso limitado de la comunidad a comodidades y espacios públicos seguros, la vivienda, los servicios de salud, el entrenamiento para el trabajo y otras oportunidades

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es un desafío de planificación no suficientemente comprendido o abordado. Nuestra metodología incluye observación participativa y análisis de un tour de jóvenes LGBTQ de color en el West Village en la ciudad de Nueva York, entrevistas con individuos LGBTQ y personal de ONG, historias de vida, observaciones en instalaciones y reuniones amigables para personas LGBTQ, y análisis de contenido de informes y cobertura mediática LGBTQ. La investigación muestra la agencia de un grupo de jóvenes LGBTQ como una organización comunitaria resistente participando efectivamente en procesos de planificación y ejerciendo derechos al espacio y a los servicios públicos. Finalmente, ofrece recomendaciones a planificadores y diseñadores de políticas para facilitar el reconocimiento y la expansión de derechos a la ciudad para las personas LGBTQ, particularmente a los jóvenes de color, comprometiéndose a comprender sus condiciones y necesidades únicas y a expandir su acceso a vivienda y espacios públicos seguros, programas de reducción de la pobreza y oportunidades de trabajo, y a servicios de salud y apoyo social.

**Palabras claves:** interseccionalidad; juventud de color; LGBTQ; West Village; Ciudad de Nueva York; tour

**边缘的相互交织性与规划：纽约中的LGBTQ少数族裔青年**

本文透过相互交织性的视角，反映规划与性别、女性主义与酷儿研究之间的对话，以分析纽约LGBTQ的少数族裔社群中的青年。该社群因其族裔—种族身份、阶级、年龄、性别与性倾向，因而受到多重的公民权剥夺。这一社群获致安全的公共空间与设施、住宅、健康服务、职业训练及其他机会的有限管道，是不被充分理解及处理的城市规划挑战。我们的方法论，包含对纽约市西城区中的LGBTQ少数族裔青年游览行程之参与式观察及分析、访谈LGBTQ个人及NGO成员、生命故事、对LGBTQ友善的聚会和场所中进行观察，以及对LGBTQ报导及媒体覆盖率进行内容分析。研究显示，LGBTQ青年团体之能动性，作为一个具有弹性的社群组织，有效地参与规划过程并且行使享有公共空间及服务的权利。最后，本文透过承诺去理解LGBTQ，特别是少数族裔青年的特殊境况及需求，并扩张他们取得安全住宅及公共空间、降低贫穷计画与工作机会、以及健康和社会支持服务的管道，对规划者与政策制定者提出建议，以促进对他们的认可，并扩张他们的城市权。

**关键词**：相互交织性; 少数族裔青年; LGBTQ; 西城区; 纽约市; 游览