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## Racial representation in the planning profession in South Africa: Some scenarios

### Summary

The planning profession in South Africa, along with the majority of other institutions dating back to the previous dispensation, is to a large extent dominated by whites. Given the role which planners can play in the reconstruction and development of the country, and concomitant governmental pressure, the profession must become more representative of the country's population at large. The question is, however, how long it will take to bring about significant changes in the composition of the planners' corps under specified conditions. In this article various scenarios are examined, based on certain assumptions and on variations in the output of graduates from the various planning schools. The most important conclusion is that the composition of the planning population is not going to change overnight. Neither is there a quick-fix solution to the problem. The exploration indicates that a drastic change in the demographic composition of the planning profession lies beyond the professional lifetime of the majority of white planners of the present generation.

**Keywords:** Planning profession, demographic composition, South Africa.

### RASSEVERTEENWOORDIGING IN DIE BEPLANNINGS-PROFESSIE IN SUID-AFRIKA: ENKELE SCENARIO'S

Die beplanningsprofessie in Suid-Afrika, soos die meerderheid ander instellings wat uit die vorige bedeling dateer, is in samestelling in 'n groot mate blank-gedomineerd. Gegewe die rol wat beplanners kan speel in die rekonstruksie en herontwikkeling van die land, asmede druk van owerheidsweë, is die profesie genoop om meer verteenwoordigend van die bevolking te wees. Die vraag is egter hoe lank sal dit neem om beduidende verandering in die samestelling van die beplannerskorps te weeg te bring onder bepaalde omstandighede? In dié artikel word verskillende scenario's ondersoek wat gebaseer is op sekere aannames en 'n variasie in die lewering van swart graduandi deur die verskillende beplanningskole. Die vernaamste afleiding wat gemaak is, is dat die samestelling nie oornag verander kan word nie. Daar bestaan ook nie 'n maklike oplossing vir die probleem nie. Die ondersoek dui daarop dat 'n drastiese verandering in die demografiese samestelling van die beplanningskorps moeilik te voorsien is gedurende die dienstydyperk van die huidige geslag blanke beplanners.

**Sleutelwoorde :** beplanningsprofessie, demografiese samestelling, Suid-Afrika.

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## Introduction

It hardly requires in-depth analysis to realise that the planning profession in South Africa, likewise all other professions, is to all intents and purposes, dominated by whites. It is to a lesser degree male-dominated, since only 20% of the practising town and regional planners involved in a survey by Badenhorst (1995), some five years ago, were female. This ratio is, however, continually improving, since one-half of the students enrolled nation-wide in town and regional planning in 1994 were female. This figure fell back to 41% in 1997 (*Table 1*), which is probably only a temporary phenomenon. Since the same survey revealed that 54% of town and regional planners were Afrikaans-speaking, vis-à-vis 33% English-speakers, the profession is less linguistically dominated than in terms of gender or race. Furthermore, if an extended definition of planners is applied including those holding qualifications in areas other than town and regional planning, such as development planning, which typically draws more black students, as well as foreign qualifications, the linguistic domination is even less severe now than it was five years ago.

All spheres of South African society are under pressure to restructure so as to become more representative of society at large. It could well be argued that the pressure on the planning profession is even greater, given the pivotal role which planners can play in the reconstruction and development of the country and its people. The crucial question is: How long will it take to effect changes in the racial composition of the body of planners under given conditions at the entry level of the profession?

The aim of this paper is, first, to present a number of scenarios to illustrate the change in racial composition of the planning profession that can be expected/effectuated under varying conditions. To achieve this, the paper firstly makes a projection of the size of the planning population in the near future. This projection is based solely on the assumptions guiding the exercise (See Assumptions), and excludes any reference to the economy's future capacity to accommodate any particular number of planners. Secondly, the paper forecasts the racial composition of the future planning population based on varying black/white ratios at the level of entry into the profession (*Table 3*). Before setting out the assumptions on which the analysis is

based, a brief description of the present situation in terms of enrolments and graduates will be provided.

### Present situation

The situation in terms of the gender and race of students enrolled in the seven departments of town and regional planning in the country is reflected in *Table 1*.

The most striking feature of the information in *Table 1*, is the drop in the number of students registered for the various programmes in town and regional planning between 1994 and 1997 at the universities. The figure dropped from 402 in 1994 to 339 in 1997. The major slump occurred in 1997, as the enrolment figure for 1996 stood at 390 (Badenhorst, 1997). However, the decline in the numbers of students (and female students in particular) entering the various programmes cannot be construed as a long-term phenomenon (Badenhorst, 1998).

From the contents of *Table 1*, it also appears that Africans have almost doubled their share of the enrolment figures, viz. an increase from 10,5% in 1994 to 19,2% in 1997. In absolute terms, however, this progress is not very significant as it involves only 23 more students. The doubling of the figure for Coloureds occurred from an even smaller base. At the same time the share of whites dropped by almost 10% to 72,3%. In total, the share of blacks (Africans, Coloureds and Asians) increased from 72 (18%) in 1994 to 94 (28%) in 1997.

The survey of planning departments (Badenhorst, 1997) focused only on those programmes in town and regional planning accredited for registration purposes with the South African Council for Town and Regional Planners. It therefore excluded Technikon, as well as the Masters programme in development planning at the University of the Witwatersrand, which have since gained accreditation. According to Muller (1998), approximately 30 students enrolled this year in the development planning programme, of whom an average of 20 would typically proceed to study for the Masters degree. The number of graduates in 1997 was a round one dozen.

A question on the number of graduates in 1996 was included in the 1997 survey of town and regional planning departments (Badenhorst, 1997). However, due to incomplete information

Table 1: Gender and race of students in town and regional planning

Institution (Universities of)	Gender				Race								Total		
	Male		Female		African		Asian		Coloured		White		1994	1997	
	1994	1997	1994	1997	1994	1997	1994	1997	1994	1997	1994	1997			
Pretoria	45	43	57	31	1	6	•	•	•	•	101	68	102	74	
Witwatersrand	38	42	37	34	20	34	15	13	•	3	40	26	75	76	
Potchefstroom	40	57	44	21	1	1	•	•	•	•	83	77	84	78	
Natal	20	18	22	12	13	14	8	5	2	•	19	11	42	30	
Stellenbosch	13	13	14	12	•	•	•	•	2	5	25	20	27	25	
Cape Town	13	9	15	16	5	3	•	•	3	1	20	21	28	25	
Orange Free State	33	18	11	13	2	7	•	•	•	2	42	22	44	31	
<i>Total</i>	<i>No.</i>														
	<i>%</i>	202	200	200	139	42	65	23	18	7	11	330	245	402	339
		50,3	59,0	49,7	41,0	10,5	19,2	5,7	5,3	1,7	3,2	82,1	72,3	100	100

Source: Badenhorst, 1998

returned on the question, the potential number of graduates per annum had to be calculated or deduced from the enrolment in the relevant year and in the previous year, viz. 1996 enrolments in the semi-final year for 1997 graduates, and so on. A graduation rate of 90% for the former was assumed.

Table 2: Final year enrolment: Town and regional planning-students

	1996		1997		1998*		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African	21	17,1	13	12,2	24	20,7	58	16,8
Asian	6	4,9	5	4,7	4	3,4	15	4,3
White	91	74,0	85	79,4	82	70,7	258	74,6
Coloured	5	4,0	4	3,7	6	5,2	15	4,3
Total	123	100,0	107	100,0	116	100,0	346	100,0

\* Calculated from 1997 enrolment in semi-final year of study.  
Source: Badenhorst, 1998

From *Table 2* it can be calculated that some 312 graduates in town and regional planning could potentially have been produced in the three-year period ending in 1998 ( $346 \times 0,9$ ). The capacity of the seven departments of town and regional planning at South African universities to accommodate more students is nonetheless assumed to be higher as will be indicated.

## Assumptions

In order to construct the various scenarios with regard to future racial representation in the planning profession, a number of assumptions had to be made. In another paper, Badenhorst (1998), applied a different size to the initial body of planners (1 200 vis-à-vis 2000) and a rate of entry into the profession of 120 planners per annum vis-à-vis 150 per annum in the present case. The outcomes of the two sets of calculations were remarkably consistent in so far as the rate of change in racial composition is

concerned. Sensitivity analysis showed that the model is not very sensitive to reasonable variations.

The specific assumptions on which this paper is based are as follows:

- An extended definition of planning was assumed to include town and regional planners, development planners and those holding other professional planning qualifications.
- The body of planners was assumed to total 2 000, of whom 1 900 (95%) are whites and 100 (5%) are blacks. (According to Giudicci (1998) a total of 821 people are presently registered with the South African Council for Town and Regional Planners as professional planners and 273 as planners-in-training. She estimates the former to represent slightly more than one-half of practising town and regional planners.)
- The absorption of planning graduates into the workforce was accepted as 100% (See Introduction).
- The age structure of the planning population was adapted from the 1993 age structure of town and regional planners (See Badenhorst, 1995).
- The entry rate into the planning profession was assumed to be 150 per annum (120 town and regional planners and 30 development planners and other professionals).
- It was assumed that 40% of the entrants into the profession are younger than 24 and 60% 25 - 29 years.
- The period of forecast was taken as 45 years, viz. the time it takes a person who enters the profession in the 20 - 24 years age category to exit the 60 - 64 years category.
- The exit rate of people entering the profession was taken as one per cent per five-year period, i.e. for every 100 entering in 1998 at age 23, 92 will eventually exit at the age of 65 years in the year 2040.
- The category "blacks" includes Africans, Asians and Coloureds.

## Methodology

The cohort-survival method was applied to determine the outcomes of varying conditions relating to racial shares on the entry side of the profession. The population (2000) was divided into five-year cohorts, and the share of blacks in the new cohorts was varied in order to illustrate what effect each case would

have on the racial composition of the planning population for the different time frames. Outcomes were calculated for a 33% share of black entrants, a 50% share, a 66% share, and a 90% share. In order to do this, however, the growth of the planning population had to be projected in terms of the assumptions discussed above.

## Analysis

The results of forecasting the planning populations are summarised in *Table 3*.

Table 3: Projected share of whites

Year	Projected planning population	% Share of whites at various black entry rates			
		33%	50%	66%	90%
1998	2 000	95	95	95	95
2000	2 300	92	90	89	90
2005	3 000	86	80	75	66
2010	3 600	81	73	65	54
2015	4 150	78	68	58	44
2020	4 700	76	64	53	36
2025	5 100	73	61	48	30
2030	5 600	71	58	43	24
2035	5 900	70	55	40	19
2040	6 050	68	52	36	14
2043	6 000	67	50	34	10

Starting off with a planning population of two thousand in 1998, a total of 6 000 planners is projected for the year 2043 (*Figure 1*). The three-thousand mark is expected to be reached by the year 2005, the four-thousand mark by 2013 and the five-thousand mark by 2023 (*Table 3*). After passing the six-thousand level in 2035 and peaking at 6 200 in 2038, the population is projected to drop back to six thousand as the last of the current (white) planners exit at the age of 65.

Figure 1: Projected growth of planning population (x10<sup>3</sup>)

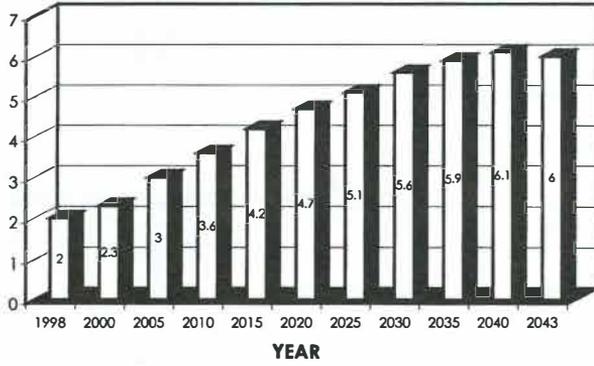
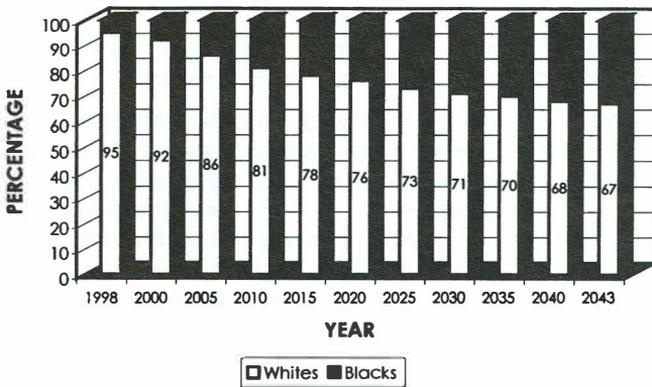


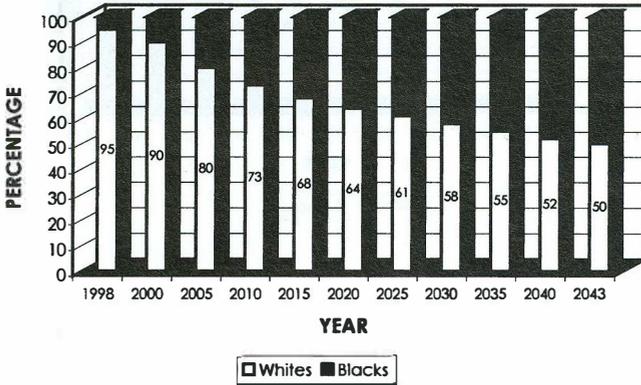
Figure 2 illustrates the effect that a 33% entry of black planners would have on the racial composition of the planning population up to the year 2043 (See also Table 3). This scenario more or less represents the effect the indefinite maintenance of the present level of black entry for a 43 year duration would have on the racial composition of the body of planners.

Figure 2: Racial shares (33% black entry per annum)



The maximum share that blacks can eventually attain in the planning profession under prevailing conditions, i.e. with at maximum one-third of new entrants belonging to this category, is obviously not more than 33% (Table 3).

Figure 3: Racial shares (50% black entry per annum)



In the event of the share of black entrants into the profession being increased to 50%, a position of equal representation would be reached by 2043 when the last members of the present planning population exit the profession (Table 3).

Figure 3 illustrates the outcome of a 2:1 black/white intake on the racial composition of the planning population. In this case equal black/white representation would be attained by the year 2023, i.e. two decades earlier than in the previous scenario (Table 3).

Figure 4: Racial shares (66% black entry per annum)

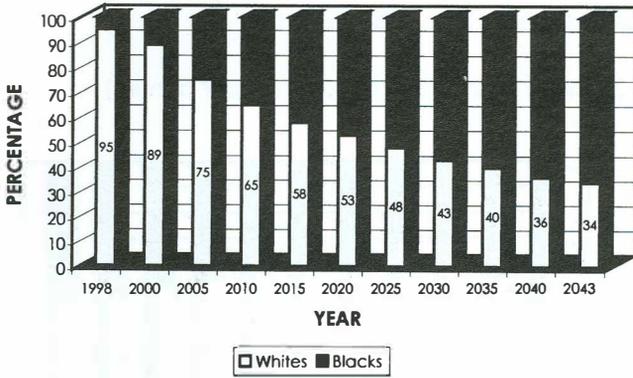
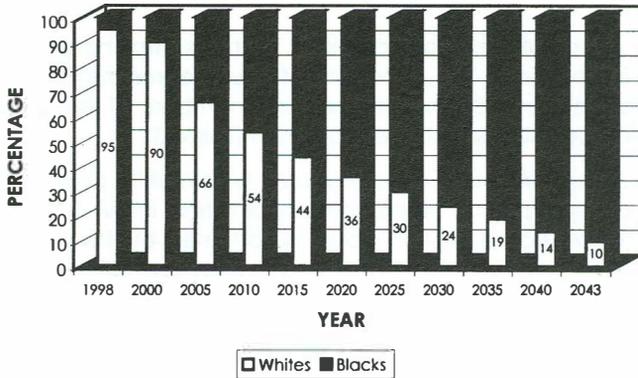


Figure 5: Racial shares (90% black entry per annum)



If the entry of blacks into the profession has advanced to 90% as from 1998, a position of equal representation between black and white planners would be attained by the year 2012. By 2043, nine out of 10 planners would be black, which would reflect the demographic composition of the nation by then (Table 3). By that time, members of the present planning population would have reached retirement age.

## Conclusion

One overarching conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing, is that the racial composition of the planning population in the country is not going to be changed overnight. Nor is there a quick-fix solution to the situation. There is indeed a long and arduous road ahead if a position of equal representation between blacks and whites in the profession is to be achieved. A time in future when the racial composition of the profession will reflect the demographics of the nation at large is indeed a lifetime away for the members of the present generation of planners if the present enrolment trend should continue. It is quite obvious that sustained efforts to set things right are required by all involved in charting the profession's future.

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