

THE INITIAL PLACEMENT of MINORITY ACCOUNTING DOCTORAL GRADUATES: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the initial employment placements of 2,431 U.S. accounting doctoral graduates with degrees conferred over the two decades from 1987 to 2006. Although minority graduates appear to place at significantly lower-ranked accounting schools than their non-minority peers, detailed analysis of placements indicated that this difference was confined to top-tier doctoral program graduates, who often placed at non-doctoral granting schools. In a follow-up survey of the reasons for such placements, these graduates reported that they selected the placements primarily for personal and lifestyle reasons rather than race-based factors. Therefore, although minority accounting doctoral graduates do place, on average, at lower-ranked schools than non-minority graduates, for many minority graduates, this may be a consequence of lifestyle choices rather than a direct response to discrimination and bias. Future research should address in detail the factors driving placement of graduates of top-tier doctoral programs, such as mentoring, to further understand these varying outcomes.

Key words: Accounting, doctoral graduates, minorities, initial placement, faculty

INTRODUCTION

The career progress of minority professionals is frequently in the news because of an increasing emphasis in American society on achieving equality and combating bias. Social movements intended to highlight the difficulties minorities face are growing and fueling more interest in minorities' employment status, both in the professions and in academia (Lynch-

Alexander, 2017). These issues, which are at the forefront of public consciousness, have sparked protests by students (Vollman, 2016).

Academia, which is often on the front wave of important social developments, has been attempting to address these issues. In higher education, a wide variety of institutions and disciplines are focusing on increasing the representation of minorities in the professoriate and the student body. Faculty diversity is important because a more diverse student body does not necessarily lead to success for underrepresented minority students; minority student success also requires a diverse faculty (Lynch, 2013; Lynch-Alexander, 2017). The need for a more diverse faculty has been the subject of recent research in many disciplines, including the biomedical sciences (Gibbs, McGready, Bennett, & Griffin, 2014), computer science (Tapia, 2010), economics (Darity & Kreeger, 2014; Faria, Loureiro, Mixon, & Sachsida, 2016; Price & Allen, 2014), geography (Adams, Solís, & McKendry, 2014), law (Deo, 2014), medicine (Campbell, Rodríguez, Beitsch, & Saunders, 2014), public health (Kreuter et al., 2011), and STEM (Teo, 2014).

However, minority faculty in American higher education remain seriously underrepresented (ACE 2012; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Moshiri & Cardon, 2016). Some institutions, such as Harvard, the University of Washington, and the University of California, Berkeley, are working hard to achieve a more balanced representation of minority faculty (Lynch, 2013). Of course, these institutions have resources available that many other higher education institutions do not. For less well-heeled universities, hiring underrepresented minority faculty may be much harder. As recent research has highlighted, minority doctoral students (Shavers & Moore, 2014; Minefee et al., 2018) and minority faculty face difficulties in majority-white institutions (Killough, Killough, Walker, & Williams, 2017), and this may affect minority students' willingness to accept jobs at certain institutions.

In AACSB business schools, research has shown that the racial gap for students is even wider than the problematic gender gap (Moshiri & Cardon, 2016). Less than 13% of all recent U.S. doctoral degrees and less than 7% of recent business doctoral degrees are conferred on minorities (AACSB, 2010; Chronicle, 2013). Less than 6% of business faculty are underrepresented minorities (AACSB, 2015). There is thus an ongoing imperative to increase the number of minority faculty in order to encourage minority students to enroll and succeed in higher education, among other benefits (Allen et al., 2002; Booker, Hill, & Wright, 2009; Hammond, 1995; Kennedy & Schumacher, 2005; Leppel, 2001; Moshiri & Cardon, 2016; Stewart, Williamson, & King, 2008; Waters, 1991), and efforts to increase the number of minorities entering the academic pipeline and to encourage their progress along its path (Williams June, 2011; Waters 1992) are being made. While programs such as The PhD Project have successfully increased the number of minority accounting doctoral graduates (Milano, 2005), little is known about whether these graduates have gone on to successful academic careers, and early employment steps along the academic pipeline, such as initial placements, have not been studied at all.

Research indicates that racial bias may continue to influence employment and promotion within academia. Studies have described many challenges that accumulate disadvantage for minorities in academia (Viernes Turner, González, & Wood, 2008), in business academia (Blanco & de la Rosa, 2008; Mishra & McMahon, 2006), and in accounting academia (Baldwin, Lightbody, Brown, & Trinkle, 2012; Hammond, 1995; Tinker & Fearfull, 2007; Weisenfeld & Robinson-Blackmon, 2007). This problem is not confined to the United States (Van der Merwe & Schutte, 2017). The Pathways Commission highlighted the crux of the problem of attracting and retaining minority faculty, which has implications for minority students as well: "The lack of diversity in the academy provides fewer role models and mentors for students, which, in turn, results in fewer minority students being attracted to the profession" (2012, p. 109).

It is possible that minority graduates are being excluded from employment in research-oriented positions at doctoral institutions, or that they are choosing to work at less research-oriented schools to avoid potential race-specific problems at research-oriented schools; either of these

possibilities would stratify the initial placement market, segregating minorities into lower placements within the pipeline. But how do these possibilities play out in accounting? The chronic shortage of accounting faculty may provide greater opportunities and overcome biases seen in other disciplines (AACSB, 2010; Behn, Carnes, Krull, Stocks, & Reckers, 2008; Leslie, 2008; Mauldin, McManis, & Breaux, 2011). Therefore, to understand the careers of minorities in accounting academia, it is important to investigate equality in initial placements while controlling for the quality of graduates' doctoral schools.

Studies of careers in accounting academia have long established the strength of the relationship between the quality of a graduate's doctoral program and their early career placements (Fogarty & Saftner, 1993; Fogarty, Saftner, & Hasselback, 2011; Maranto & Streuly, 1994). Therefore, this article presents an historical study that compares initial placements of minority and non-minority accounting doctoral graduates from similarly ranked accounting doctoral programs. Equity in hiring practices would dictate that minority and non-minority graduates from similar quality doctoral programs should earn similarly ranked initial placements.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The academic pipeline begins with doctoral studies and progresses through graduates' initial placements, ending with their eventual tenure and promotion to the higher academic ranks. Early career paths are thus vital to academics' eventual success. Pipeline theory has been widely used in the higher education diversity literature to understand career paths (Allen et al., 2002; Flowers & Jones, 2003; Trower & Chait, 2002; Viernes Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002), but it has rarely been used to examine business or accounting faculty.

The beginning of the accounting academic pipeline is the doctoral program (Fogarty & Ruhl, 1997; Maranto & Streuly, 1994). Along with individual preference factors such as location, family/spouse support, and teaching preferences (Eaton & Hunt, 2002; Kida & Mannino, 1980; Stammerjohan, Seifert, & Guidry, 2009), the quality of the doctoral program influences the next step on the pipeline, the initial placement. Graduates of more prestigious doctoral programs are more likely to gain initial appointments in highly ranked institutions (Fogarty & Hogan, 2013; Fogarty & Saftner, 1993; Fogarty et al., 2011; Maranto & Streuly, 1994). Faculty employed in highly ranked institutions are then likely to have greater publishing output, which is necessary for further career success (Maranto & Streuly, 1994; Fogarty, 2004; Fogarty & Ruhl, 1997; Fogarty & Yu, 2010). This, in a nutshell, is pipeline theory applied to academicians.

While initial employment may be strongly influenced by doctoral program quality, placements vary considerably across all graduates from similarly ranked programs, and variance is particularly strong across graduates from top schools (Smeets, Warzynski, & Coupe, 2006). This variance may be due to mediation of doctoral program quality by other factors that affect job placement, such as the extent of faculty support; graduates who receive considerable faculty support in terms of networking and strong letters of recommendation may place higher (Smeets et al., 2006; Stammerjohan et al., 2009), and graduates from the same program with less developed vitas, less engagement with eminent faculty, and fewer non-dissertation research projects may place lower (Ellis, 2001).

Placement in doctoral versus non-doctoral granting institutions is also influenced by personal choice factors. Accounting doctoral graduates who accepted placements at non-doctoral granting schools rated family reasons, geographical location, and likelihood of gaining tenure significantly higher than graduates with doctoral placements, whereas those who accepted positions in doctoral granting departments gave higher emphasis to research support and teaching load (Bitter, 2000; Eaton & Hunt, 2002; Kida & Mannino, 1980; Stammerjohan et al., 2009). According to Stammerjohan et al. (2009), graduates hired by better-than-expected schools, given their doctoral program quality, similarly placed an emphasis on research support whereas those placing lower than expected focused more on personal factors such as quality of life and teaching/research mix.

The effect of initial placement factors on minority accounting students' employment decisions has not yet been studied, and the few studies that specifically study minority accounting academics have not formally explored either patterns of early employment or the factors influencing acceptance of particular placements.

Existing studies in non-business disciplines indicate that minorities often have initial employment at lower-ranked institutions (Beasley, 2011; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002) and then achieve tenure and promotion at slower rates than non-minorities (Allen et al., 2002; Altbach, Lomotey, & Rivers, 2002; Jackson, 2008; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002). Such patterns have also been observed in U.S. accounting schools (Baldwin et al., 2012; Tinker & Fearfull, 2007; Weisenfeld & Robinson-Blackmon, 2007). These outcomes are driven by both institutional/social factors within doctoral programs and employing institutions and by graduates' individual choices (Gregory, 2001). As minority students often experience less-active mentor support within their doctoral programs (Gildersleeve, Croom, & Vasquez, 2011; Gonzalez, 2006; Hammond, 1995; Viernes Turner & Thompson, 1993; Weng & Gray, 2017), they may be less likely than non-minority students to have the vitas and support necessary to receive placements at top-ranked schools.

Academic minorities face additional challenges within employing institutions, including bias in hiring, isolation/marginalization, language/accent discrimination, racism/classism, lack of mentors, and tokenism (Viernes Turner et al., 2008). Bias in hiring can take one of two forms: special hire conditions, which increase hiring opportunities for minorities, or discrimination, which reduces hiring opportunities for minorities (Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004). The rarity of minorities in most academic departments produces tokenism, and minority faculty often face greater service demands (Allen et al., 2002; Moshiri & Cardon, 2016; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Turner, 2003; Viernes Turner et al., 1999; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002) and additional role stresses due to expectations that they "be model academic citizens who are the exception to other minorities" (Gregory, 2001 p. 129). To avoid these demands and to develop their careers within a more supportive academic environment, minority graduates may choose employment based less on the prestige of the employer and more on factors such as lifestyle and the presence of other minority faculty within the institution (Beasley, 2011; Carter & O'Brien, 1993; Turner, 2003; Viernes Turner et al., 1999). Minority doctoral graduates are also more likely to be employed in primarily minority-serving institutions (Trower & Chait, 2002). While many of these minority-serving institutions are held in high regard, at the time, they tended to be ranked lower in terms of research output.

In order to investigate whether minority accounting doctoral graduates are entering the academic pipeline on an equal footing to their non-minority classmates, this study investigated initial placements of twenty years of graduates grouped by the quality of their doctoral degrees.

RQ: Were minority and non-minority graduates that were trained at similarly ranked accounting doctoral programs between 1987 and 2006 likely to attain initial appointments at accounting schools of similar prestige?

METHOD

This study utilizes two separate research methods to address the research question. First, the study examined the entire population of 1987–2006 accounting doctoral graduates who obtained initial placement at U.S. academic institutions and compared the initial placement of minority and non-minority graduates for each tier of doctoral schools. Second, the study surveyed minority graduates to explore whether factors identified in the literature as potentially influencing minorities' initial placement choice were affecting employment decisions in accounting academia.

Archival Research Method

We identified the holders of the 3,213 U.S. accounting doctorates conferred during the twenty-year period from 1987 through 2006 using the *Accounting Faculty Directory* (Hasselback, 2007) and doctoral programs' online listing of graduates. Extensive research was conducted to ensure that only those with doctorates in accounting were included. Initial placements for these graduates were also determined via the directories for 1987–2007 (Hasselback, 1987–2007) and online searches. Graduates who were members of an underrepresented minority group were identified through data supplied by The PhD Project and additional online searches; the identification of minority graduates prior to the beginning of The PhD Project in the early 1990s was particularly difficult. Underrepresented minorities include African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans. Asians are not separately identified, as they are not underrepresented in accounting academia (Leslie, 2008).

Doctoral graduates were only included in the study if they met the following conditions: (1) the doctorate was earned in accounting in the United States between 1987 and 2006; (2) an initial tenure-track placement in a U.S. academic institution was identified; (3) the initial position was not with the doctoral alma mater; (4) employment began within ± 2 years of graduation; and (5) the placement was not in a field outside of accounting. Given these parameters, the initial U.S. academic placements of 2,431 graduates from 95 accounting doctoral programs were identified. Of the graduates included in this study, 125 (5.14%) are underrepresented minorities. Of these, 98 (4%) are African American, 24 (1%) are Hispanic, and 3 (0.12%) are Native American.

Identifying accurate information about graduates, minority status, initial placements, and dates was a time-consuming process. For that reason, we limited our study to the population of accounting doctoral graduates from 1987 through 2006. While information about more recent graduates exists, the time cost of gathering the minority status, initial placement place and date, and other data is high and trails the graduation dates by years. Fortunately, this population represents a historical period of data that is useful for understanding how these graduates, who are now mostly in mid-career, were initially placed.

The prestige of each graduate's doctoral school and initial placement school were determined using two measures. First, following past studies of initial placements in accounting, schools were classified according to whether they granted doctorates in accounting: doctoral granting or non-doctoral granting. This classification assumes that doctoral granting schools are more research focused and thus more prestigious, and that non-doctoral granting schools are more teaching focused (Collins, Reitenga, Collins, & Lane, 2000). Second, schools were individually ranked using the Chan, Chen, and Cheng (2007) ranking system, which provided a global ranking of accounting programs based on faculty publications in 24 accounting journals between 1995 and 2005.¹ The Chan et al. (2007) rankings of all schools range from first (top) to 1,087th. Schools unranked by Chan et al. (2007) are recorded as 1,088th. The Chan et al. (2007) rankings, which facilitated a finer comparison of the relative status of employing institutions than the doctoral versus non-doctoral categorization, were particularly appropriate for use here because they include the broadest range of journals and are contemporary with this population of graduates.

The 95 doctoral programs represented in the data were partitioned into top-tier, middle-tier, and bottom-tier groups. Doctoral programs identified in the current study were ordered using the rankings in Chan et al. (2007). The doctoral programs in the top 25th percentile were classified as top tier, the bottom 25th percentile were classified as bottom tier, and all other doctoral programs

¹ Chan et al. (2007) graciously provided the authors with a spreadsheet with all of the school rankings (not just the limited rankings published in their study).

are classified as middle tier.² Distributions of graduates were compared using chi-square statistics and ranks of programs were compared using *t* tests.

Survey Research Methodology

As noted in the literature review above, quality of doctoral institution is only one factor (albeit a critical one) that is thought to influence a graduate's initial employment. To further investigate other factors that affect the initial academic placement of minority PhDs in accounting academia, the minority accounting doctoral graduates identified in the empirical data in this study were surveyed about their initial job search experiences and their eventual decision about their first employer. The survey first asked subjects about institutions they chose *not* to work for; given the quality of these graduates' degrees, it was likely that they received multiple offers (Fogarty & Hogan, 2013). This portion of the survey consisted of statements with Likert scale responses ranging from 1 for *strongly agree* to 4 for *neutral* to 7 for *strongly disagree*. A number of statements explicitly asked about race-specific workplace factors identified in the literature, such as discrimination, marginalization, tokenism, and different work expectations (e.g. *During the job search, I chose not to accept a particular offer because I believed I would feel marginalized at that school/department*). The remainder of the statements addressed general matters of fit without explicitly mentioning race. Such statements addressed mentors, a supportive academic environment, and isolation (e.g. *During the job search, I chose not to accept a particular offer because I perceived a lack of a likely mentor*). As part of the survey, respondents were invited to provide open-ended comments to explain their decisions.

Surveys were emailed to 120 of the 125 minority graduates included in the archival study (a very small number of the original minority graduates were deceased, had left academia, or were otherwise no longer available to contact). Responses were received from 37 graduates, giving a response rate of 30.83%.³ Respondents were disproportionately from top-tier doctoral schools (41% of respondents were from top-tier schools, while only 31% of minorities with accounting doctoral degrees were from top-tier schools) and the middle tier was slightly underrepresented (41% compared to 51%). While the percentage of survey respondents in initial placements at non-doctoral schools was slightly higher than that in the larger sample of all minority graduates (41% compared with 36%), the average rank of the employers of the survey respondents was greater than in the larger sample (305 compared to 389).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A comparison of the rank of the doctoral programs of the minority (rank = 86) and non-minority (rank = 82) graduates showed no significant differences. On average, the graduates attended similarly ranked doctoral programs. Minority and non-minority graduates overall received similar quality doctoral education.

A total of 36% of minority graduates (45 graduates) and 41% of non-minority graduates (943 graduates) were initially placed at doctoral granting accounting institutions. The remaining 64% (80 graduates) of minority graduates and 59% (1,363 graduates) of non-minority graduates

² All analyses were also completed using four quartile-based tiers. However, as the results of the two middle quartiles did not differ substantially, the two middle quartiles were combined to give the three tiers described above.

³ This response rate compares favorably with that of the previous minority survey of accounting academics conducted by Weisenfeld and Robinson-Blackmon (2007), which achieved a 26.9% response rate. According to Alrech and Settles (1985, p. 432), this was an unusually high rate: “[m]ail surveys frequently get a 5 to 10 percent response rate and rarely exceed 30 percent” (as quoted in Weisenfeld & Robinson-Blackmon, 2007).

accepted employment in non-doctoral institutions. However, when the rank of the employing institutions was considered, initial placements differ significantly between minority and non-minority graduates ($p = .029$), with minorities initially placing at institutions with an average rank of 389 and non-minorities initially placing at institutions with an average rank of 331—significantly higher (see Figure 1). Despite having graduated from similar quality doctoral programs, minority accounting doctoral graduates commence their academic careers at significantly lower-ranked institutions than their non-minority peers.

Doctoral Tiers

Minority faculty trained at top-tier doctoral programs were significantly less likely ($p = .028$) to attain initial placement at a doctoral granting school than their non-minority peers (46% compared to 64%), as shown in Table 1. Minority graduates from the middle-tier schools were equally likely to be employed in doctoral schools as non-minorities (34% compared to 35%). While a higher percentage of minority graduates from bottom-tier schools were placed at doctoral schools than their non-minority classmates (23% compared to 13%), this difference is not statistically significant. Thus, the likelihood that minority and non-minority graduates from similarly ranked doctoral programs attain initial appointments at doctoral granting accounting schools appears to vary according to the prestige of the doctoral program: minority graduates from higher-ranked schools are less likely than non-minorities to be placed at doctoral granting schools. To repeat, *minority graduates who attended higher-ranked doctoral programs are less likely than non-minorities who attended similarly ranked programs to gain initial placement at doctoral granting employing institutions.* This is a startling result that is examined more closely in the next analysis.

When considering initial placement employer rank, which is a finer measure of initial placement quality than whether or not the institution has a doctoral program, only the top tier showed a statistically significant difference (see Figure 2). For top-tier doctoral graduates, non-minorities (rank = 157) achieved initial placements at significantly higher-ranked institutions than minority (rank = 305) graduates ($p = .000$). This reinforces the prior finding: the likelihood that minority and non-minority graduates trained at similarly ranked doctoral programs are attaining initial appointments at doctoral granting accounting schools varies by the prestige of the doctoral program. No significant difference was found for middle- and bottom-tier graduates, but minority graduates from top-tier schools initially place in significantly lower-ranked institutions than their similarly trained non-minority classmates.

Factors Affecting Differential Placements for Top-Tier Doctoral Graduates

In order to understand the potential drivers of the racial difference in initial placements observed in the top tier, further analysis was conducted on the top-tier placements.

Placement in doctoral versus non-doctoral granting schools. As noted above, top-tier minority graduates were more likely to place in non-doctoral granting institutions than non-minorities. Further analysis (as shown in Figure 3) of initial placements for the top-tier doctoral graduates placing in doctoral schools indicated that the rank of minorities' initial placements did not differ from that of their non-minority peers (55 compared to 57). The difference comes from those top-tier graduates whose initial placements were in non-doctoral schools: top-tier minorities placed in non-doctoral schools attained an initial placement rank significantly lower than that of non-minorities (519 compared with 332). In other words, the lower *overall* placement rank of top-tier minority graduates was being driven by the relative difference in placement rank for those gaining employment *at non-doctoral schools*. Minority graduates from top-tier doctoral programs who placed in doctoral granting schools tended to place similarly to their non-minority counterparts. However, those who placed in non-doctoral employing institutions initially placed at significantly

lower-ranked institutions than their non-minority classmates with initial placements at non-doctoral employing institutions.

Placement in minority-serving institutions. Minority graduates may have lower-ranked initial placements because they accepted employment at primarily minority-serving institutions, which are often ranked lower relative to non-minority-serving institutions (Baldwin et al., 2012). Minority-serving institutions include historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities.⁴ Of top-tier doctoral graduates, 13% of minorities placed at minority-serving institutions, compared to only 1% of non-minority graduates ($p = .000$). The minority-serving institutions employing top-tier minority graduates had an average rank of 904. This may be another contributor to the lower-ranked placements of top-tier doctoral graduates: a significantly greater proportion of minorities accepted employment at minority-serving institutions.

Minority initial placements at non-doctoral granting accounting schools. Further insights into the factors that influenced top-tier minority graduates' choice of first employer were derived from survey findings.⁵ The survey invited respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement (using seven-point Likert scales where 1 is *strongly agree* and 7 is *strongly disagree*) with numerous statements from the literature about the initial placement position accepted and reasons for rejecting other offers. Respondents were also given an opportunity to provide open-ended comments about important factors influencing their decision to accept or reject an offer.

On average, top-tier respondents accepting appointments at non-doctoral schools disagreed with the race-specific statements regarding reasons for rejecting offers. Such statements addressed concerns about being discriminated against (mean 5.55), marginalized (6.11), or perceived as a token minority (5.88; see Figure 4). Instead, reasons for rejecting offers focused on institutional factors that may or may not have been racially determined, including a lack of a supportive environment (2.44), lack of a likely mentor (2.67), and the perception that they would feel isolated (2.56).

The second group of questions addressed the factors influencing respondents' acceptance of their initial position. This section again contained statements explicitly addressing race-related factors, statements addressing general matters pertaining to fitting into an institutional environment, and statements addressing personal matters, such as needs of family, geographical location, and cost of living.

Statements examining racial factors that had been identified in the literature, such as responsibility to the community, the institution's commitment to diversity, and cultural sensitivity elicited largely negative responses. For example, respondents indicated disagreement with statements that they had chosen a position because of the school's commitment to diversity (mean 5.87), culturally sensitive programs (5.44), opportunity to work with minority students (5.00), to give back to their community (4.56), or because of a feeling of responsibility to the community (4.55). However, a small number of respondents did state that racially related reasons had had some influence on their decision. For example, in the open-ended comments, one top-tier non-doctoral

⁴ HBCUs were identified using a list published by the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whhbcu/edlite-list.html>. Hispanic-serving institutions were identified using HACU's member list found at <http://www.molis.org/hsis.asp>. Native-serving institutions were identified using the list of Tribal Colleges and Universities found at <http://www.aihec.org/colleges/TCUroster.cfm>.

⁵ While all minority graduates were surveyed, we only consider the results for top-tier doctoral graduates placing at non-doctoral schools, as this was the group for which placement reasons are important to understanding whether the findings are racially driven.

placement graduate explained that they had accepted their position because “The School ... offered me the opportunity to work with some of the finest young black minds on the planet.” However, the respondent clearly indicated earlier in their open-ended comments that this was not the sole reason for selecting this position.

Greater support was evident for non-race explicit statements about the academic climate at the initial employer (see Figure 5). While the non-doctoral placement respondents disagreed that they accepted places because of mentor support (mean 5.66) or research support (5.22), overall they slightly agreed that their decision to accept an appointment was positively influenced by their perception that it would be a supportive academic climate (3.00) and the collegiality of the faculty (3.00). However, the strongest agreement was indicated for statements suggesting that they chose a particular initial placement because of personal factors, such as the area’s quality of life (mean 2.44), opportunities/needs of a spouse or family (1.78), and desirable geography and/or weather (3.67).

The explanations provided by respondents gave strong support to the quantitative results reported above, with many responses referring to personal factors, particularly location, as the primary factors affecting their choice of position. (For example, one respondent said, “Location. The university was located in my desired state.” Another responded, “It was close to home.”) The majority of respondents, however, gave both personal and institutional reasons for their decision, indicating that although personal reasons such as location were significant, they were often not the only determinants. One respondent said, “[T]he accounting program is highly ranked and I wanted to have an opportunity to teach at a high-ranking school. Lastly, my spouse is from the area and we have a lot of family support and we wanted to be near family especially for our young children.” Another respondent replied, “I believed that the collegial environment would be supportive of my tenure and promotion. Also my parents were ill and I wanted to be near them if possible.”

CONCLUSION

Minorities and non-minorities earn accounting doctorates from similarly ranked doctoral institutions. However, the analysis of the initial placements of all U.S. accounting doctoral graduates from 1987 to 2006 indicates that minority graduates gained initial placements at significantly lower-ranked accounting schools than their non-minority peers—a grim-sounding statistic. A detailed examination of this difference provides a more positive picture.

First, the quality of the U.S. accounting doctoral degrees received by minority and non-minority graduates did not differ, either in total or by doctoral program tier. Second, the initial placements for the minority and non-minority graduates of all but the top-tier doctoral programs did not differ. Third, although a lower proportion of top-tier minority graduates gained initial employment at doctoral granting accounting schools, those who do gain such initial placements were placed at schools of equal prestige to their non-minority peers. Thus, the only minority group to have significantly lower initial placements than their non-minority doctoral school classmates were the 21 top-tier doctoral graduates who placed at non-doctoral granting accounting schools.

When surveyed, the responses of the top-tier minority doctoral graduates indicated that the reasons for their initial placement differed from those indicated in the broader research addressing minority faculty in academia. Despite widespread references to racial discrimination in the academic literature, the minority accounting doctoral graduates who had taken lower-ranked placements strongly disagreed that this was a significant factor influencing their initial placement decision.

In the same vein, research also commonly indicated that minorities are more likely to choose a placement where they can directly contribute to their minority community. While responses to these statements were mixed, evidence does not suggest this was a strong factor in the non-doctoral placement respondents’ decisions to accept particular appointments. Thus, perceptions of institutional attitudes toward race—discrimination or racial bias, in the forms of marginalization or

tokenism, or direct support for diversity—do not appear to be significant factors that influenced top-tier minority accounting doctoral graduates' initial placement decisions.

Likewise, a desire to work with minority students or in a minority community did not appear as a significant factor driving the decision of the greater proportion of top-tier doctoral graduates who accepted positions within minority-serving institutions. Rather, the top-tier minority accounting doctoral graduates taking appointments at non-doctoral granting schools indicated that their reasons for taking lower initial placements were primarily related to personal choice factors and perceptions of a collegial and supportive environment, and that racially related factors had not influenced their decisions.

Previous studies examining the placement decisions of accounting doctoral graduates have consistently found that factors such as geography, spousal needs, and collegiality are among the most important influences for graduates taking their initial employment at non-doctoral schools (Bitter, 2000; Eaton & Hunt, 2002, Kida & Mannino, 1980; Baldwin et al., 2012). The top-tier minority doctoral graduates' initial placement decisions appear to be made using the same reasoning as the decisions of non-minority graduates, reported in the prior literature; minority doctoral graduates' decisions were not likely influenced by issues specifically pertaining to their race. Therefore, the racially segregated academic pipeline that appears to exist when all graduates are considered as one cohort is not supported by a more detailed examination that takes into account the quality of doctoral programs and the actual reasons that minority graduates accept initial placements.

However, if many minorities from top-tier accounting doctoral programs placed lower because of personal choice factors and perceptions of a collegial and supportive environment, why is this not also true for doctoral graduates from other, lower-tier programs? What was it about the top-tier programs (if anything) that affected the minority graduates' decisions about initial placement differently from minority doctoral graduates from lower-tier programs? If, for example, these graduates experienced (or did not experience) a collegial and supportive environment in graduate school, perhaps that positive or negative experience drove their desire for a collegial and supportive environment in their initial placement.

In contrast, if underlying racism existed during the historical period measured in this study and affected the decision-making of the top-tier accounting doctoral graduates, it should be examined more closely. It seems highly unlikely that top-tier programs were systematically racist and the other 75% of programs were not.

Further research is needed to explain these results. Whatever reasons minority graduates had for choosing to work at less research-oriented schools, the long-term effects are the same: the initial placement market for top-tier doctoral program graduates were stratified, and minorities were segregated into lower placements within the pipeline.

Current research confirms minority accounting PhD graduates are making greater progress in academy than that indicated in many other disciplines. Although the rates of minorities are increasing they have not attained parity with population rates or academia in general. While minority accounting graduates seem to have patterns of employment and promotion comparable to the non-minority graduates, they are attending lower ranked schools than earlier minority graduates and are attaining employment in lower ranked institutions than their non-minority peers (Baldwin et al., 2012).

Limitations

One of the obvious limitations of this research is the small number of minority graduates examined. As more minorities earn accounting doctorates, perhaps a tipping point will be achieved that will affect the initial placement opportunities and choices of these graduates.

Another limitation is the difficulty in identifying the underrepresented minority graduates. Gaining accurate information about minority status, especially for faculty not directly involved in

The PhD Project, and gaining correct information about initial placement institution and date required an extraordinary amount of research time and effort. Having such data available to more researchers as the number of minorities in accounting academia increases would be a step in the right direction.

This study included the population of accounting doctoral graduates from 1987 through 2006. This is a historical period of data that is useful for understanding how these graduates, who are now mostly in mid-career, were initially placed. Future research should consider more recent cohorts of doctoral graduates to determine whether these patterns persist or whether other patterns of initial placement emerge.

Future Research Directions

Interestingly, many minority doctoral graduates emphasized the importance of a collegial and supportive faculty in their choice of initial employer. However, most business deans reported that underrepresentation was caused by a dearth of qualified applicants rather than by applicants' perception of campus climate, composition of search committees, or design of reward systems (Moshiri & Cardon, 2016), or by the school's geographic location, its supportiveness, and the reasonableness of its tenure and promotion process, all of which respondents in our study identified as important to their decision-making. More research is needed to determine why the deans' perceptions about hiring underrepresented minorities does not match the reported experiences of underrepresented minorities. Clearly, there is more to learn here (Roy, 2013), because leader attitudes are important to solving the shortage of faculty of color (Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris, 2007). Perhaps similar research with heads of accountancy schools and departments will shed new light on accounting-specific issues in hiring minority accounting graduates.

Future research should address more recent doctoral graduates and the actions institutions are taking to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in their doctoral programs (Ghose, Ali, & Keo-Meier, 2018); it should perhaps also address specific challenges faced by minority doctoral students and faculty at majority-white institutions (Shavers & Moore, 2014).

Finally, this research looked only at the results of accounting education—at the initial placements of accounting doctoral graduates. Future research should consider the motivations of students who enter accounting doctoral programs. Recent research outside of accounting suggests that family factors are important in encouraging African American students to pursue doctoral study (McCallum 2016). If, in fact, minority students have different motivations than non-minority students for entering a doctoral program, perhaps those motivations also influence their initial placement decisions. A wide range of research questions may be pursued on this topic.

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Table 1

Initial Placement by Doctoral Tiers

<i>Top Tier</i>							
<u>Minority status</u>	<u>Doctoral</u>	<u>Non-doctoral</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Statistic</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>P</u>
Minorities	18 (46%)	21 (54%)	39	Chi-Square	1	4.8436	0.028*
Non-minorities	<u>493 (64%)</u>	<u>282 (36%)</u>	<u>775</u>				
<i>Total</i>	<u>511</u>	<u>303</u>	<u>814</u>				

<i>Middle Tier</i>							
<u>Minority status</u>	<u>Doctoral</u>	<u>Non-doctoral</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Statistic</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>P</u>
Minorities	22 (34%)	42 (66%)	64	Chi-Square	1	0.005	0.943
Non-minorities	<u>400 (35%)</u>	<u>749 (65%)</u>	<u>1,149</u>				
<i>Total</i>	<u>422</u>	<u>791</u>	<u>1,213</u>				

<i>Bottom Tier</i>							
<u>Minority status</u>	<u>Doctoral</u>	<u>Non-doctoral</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Statistic</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>P</u>
Minorities	5 (23%)	17 (77%)	22	Chi-Square	1	1.6432	0.200
Non-minorities	<u>50 (13%)</u>	<u>332 (87%)</u>	<u>382</u>				
<i>Total</i>	<u>55</u>	<u>349</u>	<u>404</u>				

The * indicates significance at the 0.05 level.

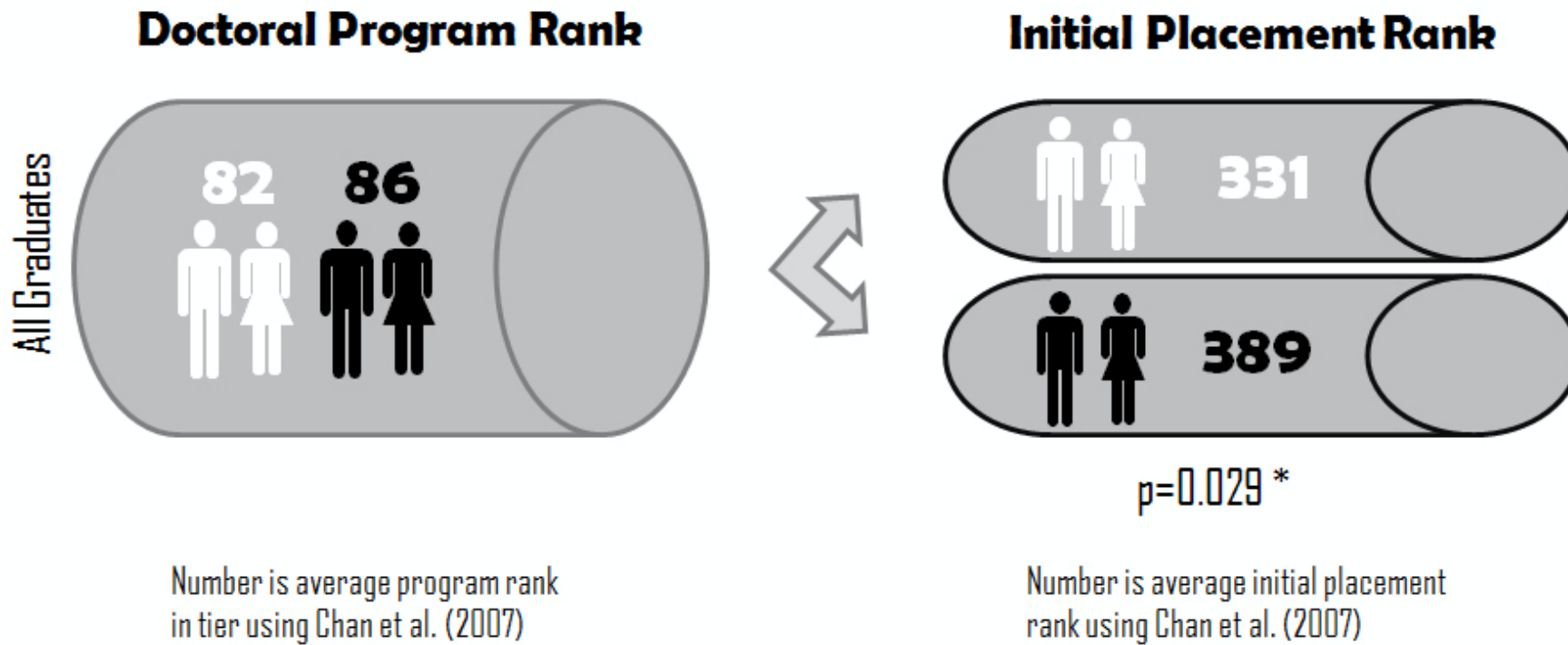


Figure 1. Doctoral program rank and initial placement rank (comparison of minorities and non-minorities).

Note: There were no significant differences in doctoral program rank for graduates of similar quartile doctoral programs.

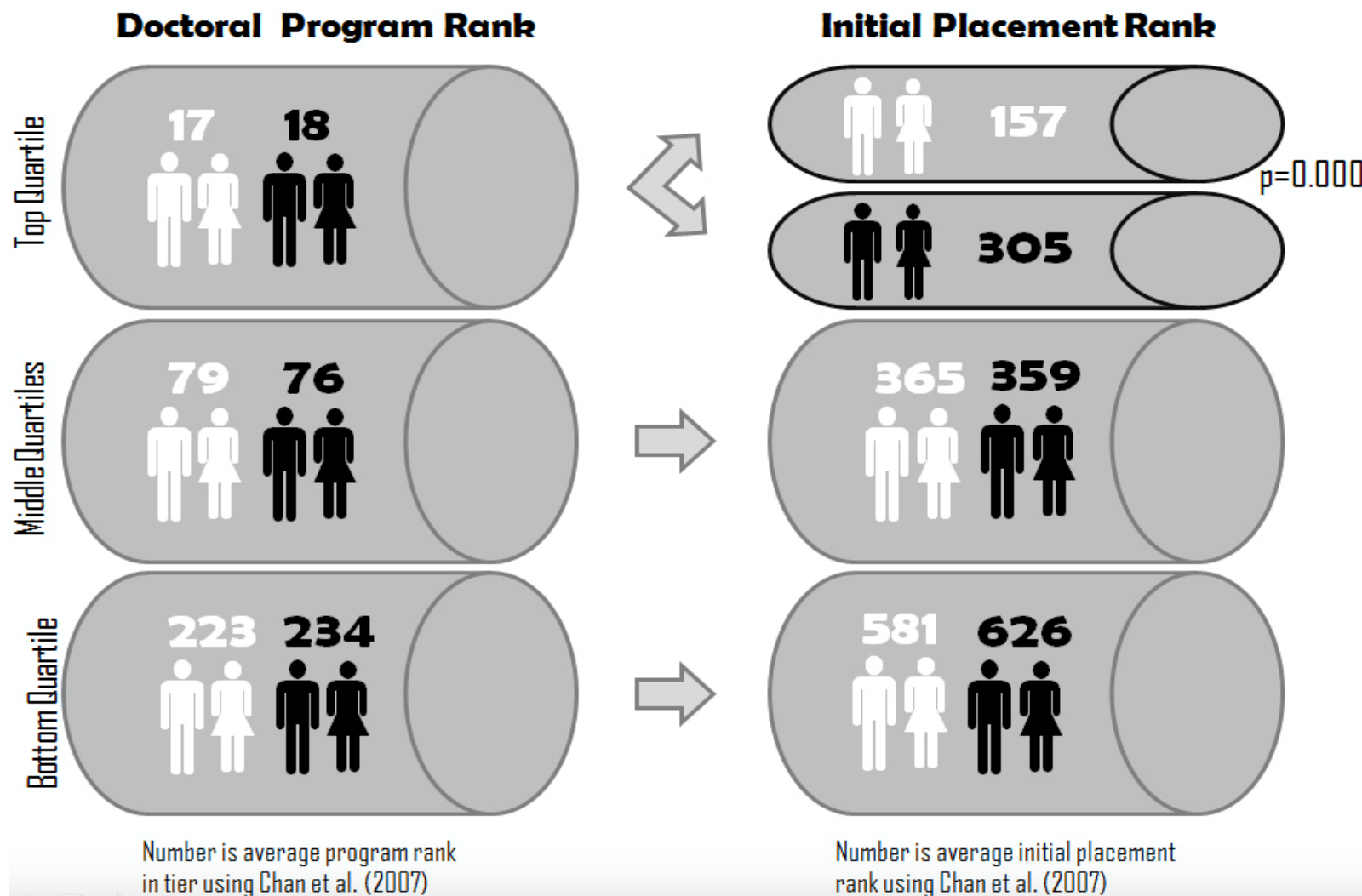


Figure 2. Doctoral program rank and initial placement rank (by doctoral tiers).

Note: There were no significant differences in initial placement rank for graduates of the middle and bottom quartile doctoral programs.

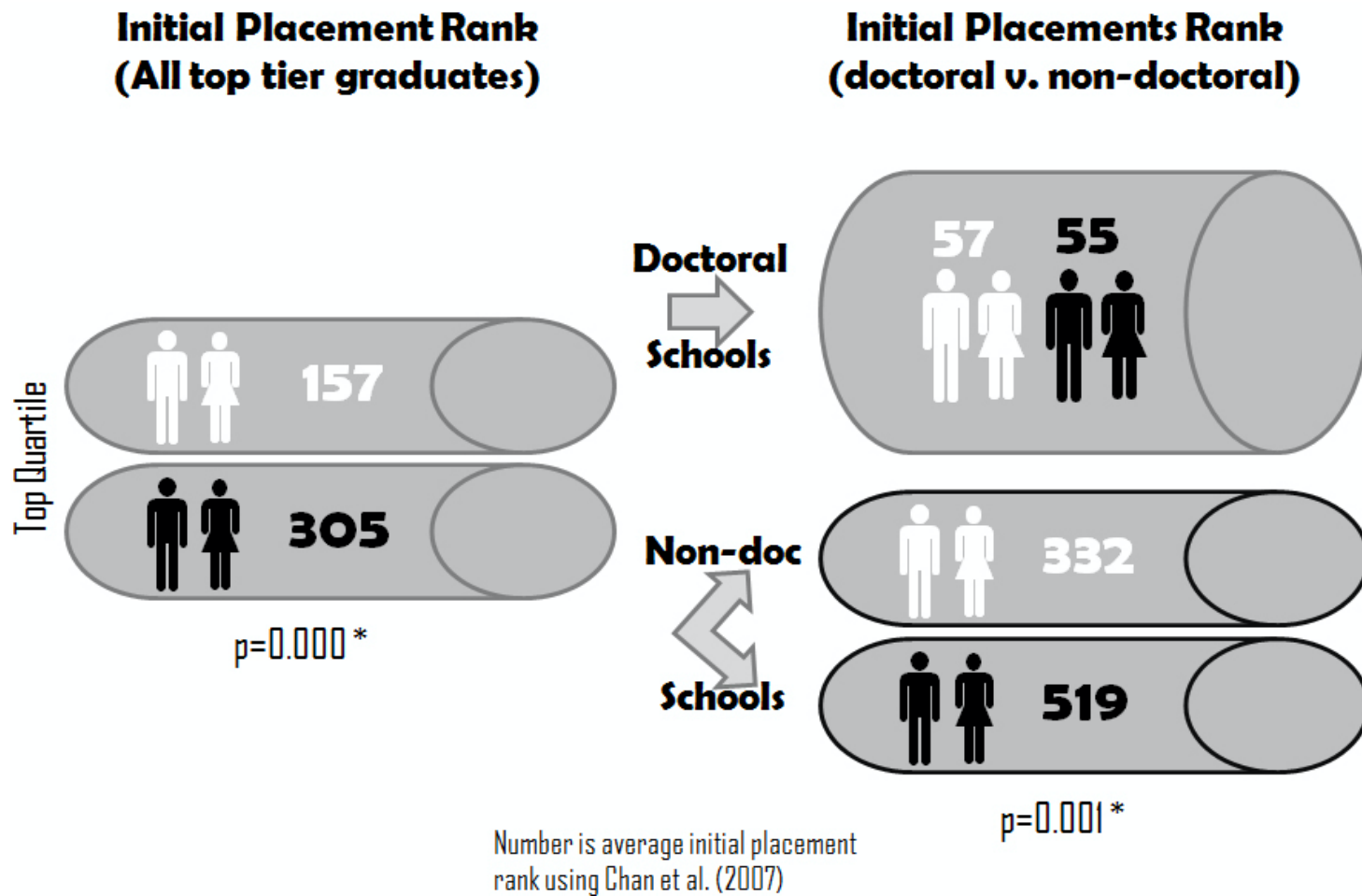


Figure 3. Top-tier graduates' initial placement rank (doctoral versus non-doctoral placements)

Note: There were no significant differences in initial placement rank between minority (55) and non-minority (57) top-tier doctoral program graduates initially placed in doctoral granting departments.

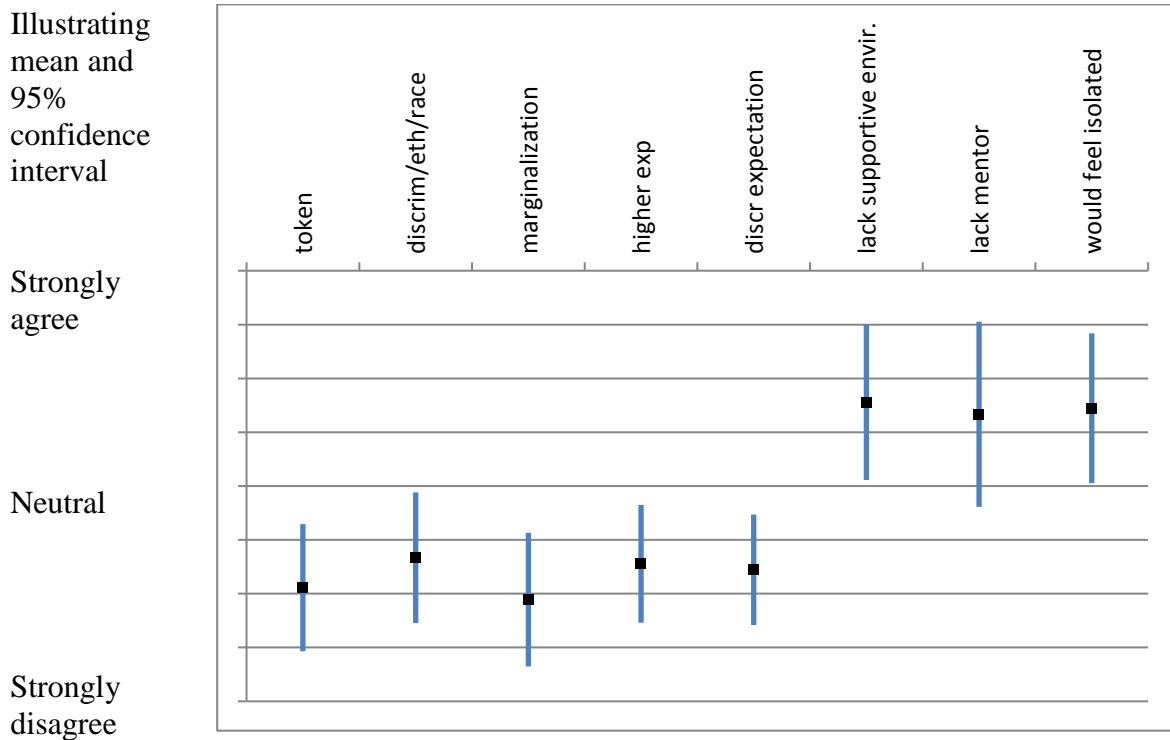


Figure 4. Reasons to reject a job offer (top-tier minority doctoral graduates, non-doctoral placements only)

Illustrating mean and 95% confidence interval

Strongly agree

Neutral

Strongly disagree

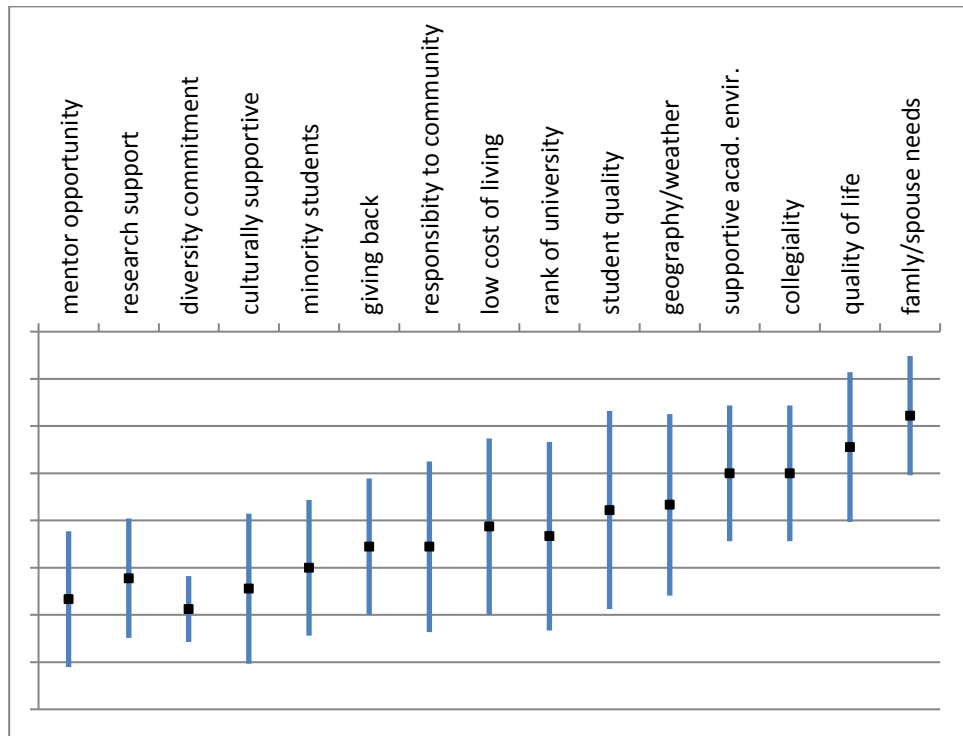


Figure 5. Reasons to accept a job offer (top-tier doctoral graduates, non-doctoral placements only).