

Engaging and Connecting
Non-traditional Minority Audiences and National Parks:
Literature Review and Critical Analysis

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The purpose of this literature review and critical analysis is to synthesize the academic research directed at non-traditional racial minority audiences and their relationship to National Parks. By integrating the literature from Ethnic Studies, Chicano/a Studies, Communication, Environmental Studies, Natural Resource Management and Social Sciences, this review attempts to provide new perspectives and best practices associated with engaging people of color with nature in general and National Parks in particular.

Historical Perspective on Literature Reviews

There are several reviews of literature on the topic of ethnicity and race in recreation and leisure studies (e.g., Allison, 1988; Gomez, 2003; Floyd, 1999; Gramann & Allison, 1999; Hutchison, 2000; Johnson, Bowker, English, & Worthen, 1997; Sasidharan, 2002), and outdoor recreation specific experiences (Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002). The concepts of race, ethnicity,

and culture have come to the forefront of social science and natural resource management over the last several years to address growing issues of diversity and outdoor recreation. Debates about the role of ethnicity and culture have sparked a movement towards research that is directly applicable to social issues relating to recreation resource management. For instance, topic areas such as attitudes, preferences, participation patterns and styles, constraints, meaning (e.g., nature, experiences), and general recreation behavior associated with diverse racial and ethnic groups have seen an increase in funded research and dollars for specialized training for public land agencies.

Studies conducted on women and leisure constraints have made significant contributions to the leisure literature (e.g., Arnold & Shinew, 1998; Henderson & Stalnaker, 1988; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1993; Roberts, 1998; Shaw, 1994). Additionally, set in motion in the 1980s, there is a growing body of literature relating specifically to women and outdoor recreation and experiential learning outdoors (Henderson & Roberts, 1999; Mitten, 1992; Roberts, 1998; Warren, 1996). These studies have included research related specifically to women of color in the outdoors (Roberts and Drogin, 1993; Rodriguez & Roberts, 2005). A few studies have looked at gender and ethnicity to further understand how these variables intersect among park visits and outdoor recreation experiences (Johnson, Bowker, & Cordell, 2001; Roberts & Henderson, 1997; Taylor, 1992; Virden & Walker, 1999). In general, research suggests that gender and ethnicity do influence at least some of the meanings attached to parks as well as the environmental settings that are preferred for outdoor recreation. Furthermore, females continue to express safety issues as a greater concern than males, and a higher level of uneasiness and discomfort continues to exist for the majority of ethnic minorities surveyed in different geographic and regional settings. Broadly, the most common variables cited in the literature between women and people of color

relate to fear of harassment or violence/concern for personal safety and lack of discretionary funds. In most cases, there is an absence of an interaction effect; this may indicate ethnic groups maintain gender differentiation in regard to attitudes and experiences relating to outdoor recreation and park visits overall.

There are three other facets of research that have been noted in the literature as lacking. First, studying the effects of race, class, and gender, collectively, have been deficient in the literature (Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002), this combination is rare and just beginning to be explored, represents a “fertile area for inquiry” (Shinew, Floyd, McGuire & Noe, 1995; Sasidaran, 2002). Second, more empirical work about the differences between and especially within minority groups must be conducted due to lack of cultural homogeneity (Chavez, 1992; Floyd, 1999; Gramann, 1996; Woodard, 1988). Following a structured and far-reaching review of literature related to racial and ethnic minority use of national parks, an emphasis for future research needs suggested “the role of discrimination in minority decisions regarding park use has not received adequate research attention” (Floyd, 1999; Floyd, 2001). Third, extending research in race and ethnicity by exploring the complex dynamic of *culture* will be extremely important to aid our understanding of diverse groups. That is, any analysis of race and ethnicity should include consideration of contexts – such as, the particular historical and social settings, and the particular cultural features of groups to understand the environment in which collective action is organized and in which experience takes place (Reynolds, 2011; Ember & Ember, 1996). According to Oetting, Swaim, and Chiarella (1998), strong identification grows out of the individual’s ability to meet cultural conditions and the corresponding ability of the culture to meet the person’s needs. Additionally, the evolutionary nature of culture is also geographically expressed as meanings can overlap and shift based on social conditions and experiences in a

particular area (Sasidharan, 2002). Based on the review by Sasidharan (2002), culture consists of a unique system of “signs and symbols,” embedded in a range of activities, social structures, and societal organizations and this system is a product of cultural, political, economic, and/or generational factors. Additionally, and an important element of the present study, culture is a concept that can be used to explain people’s behavior.

Theoretical constructs that frame our understanding of ethnic minority participation

Researchers have explored a variety of theories regarding the lack of participation among American people of color in outdoor nature based activities including marginality, assimilation, ethnicity (i.e., subcultural) hypotheses, socio-cultural meaning, personal community hypothesis, ethnic boundary perspective, and discrimination hypotheses (Floyd, 2001, 1999). There has been a wealth of scholarship debating the pros and cons of these positions. More specifically, debates about the role of ethnicity and culture have sparked a movement towards research that is directly applicable to social issues and recreation resource management.

As noted in his Social Science Research Review, Floyd (1999) affirms that for the NPS to serve an increasingly diverse public and to prepare for a more ethnically pluralistic society, a more thorough, science-based understanding of factors affecting minority use of the national parks is critical. Following a structured and far-reaching review of literature related to racial and ethnic minority use of national parks, an emphasis for future research needs suggested “the role of discrimination in minority decisions regarding park use has not received adequate research attention” (Floyd, 1999, p. 18).

In preparing a questionnaire on this topic, for instance, Gomez (2002) asserts “Perceived discrimination scales should include items regarding avoidance actions, rejection actions, verbal or physical attacks by an institution or person in the dominant society” (p. 136).

Also needed is research providing baseline information on perceptions that minority groups hold towards national parks. Floyd notes that by focusing on general issues such as attitudes towards natural resources and behavior of ethnic minorities regarding outdoor recreation or on specific issues such as attitudes and behavior toward specific parks, resources, facilities or programs, results would be extremely beneficial for a variety of purposes (e.g., research, management implications).

Regarding constraints to participation, a great deal of leisure research has been based on a model representing a hierarchical series of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints that affect leisure choices (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). This suggests that individuals move from proximal constraints, which affect preferences, to distal constraints, which affect participation. Unfortunately, this evolving generalized model of leisure constraints has not directly addressed race/ethnicity as an important factor affecting recreation preferences and participation (e.g., Parry, Shinew & Arnold, 2001; Philipp, 1995). Likewise, Jackson (2000) asserts that despite the accomplishments of constraints research over the years, there are several divergent yet interconnected criticisms regarding research on leisure constraints. For instance, relating to the worth of this current study, Jackson notes there has been an over-reliance on quantitative methods of data collection with indication that qualitative methods need to be incorporated into research and second, it is important to recognize broader contextual issues for recreation and leisure such as value systems and how best to turn constraints into opportunities to develop new interests and pursuits.

Drawing on Rational Choice Theory, deVries and deBruin (1996) studied perceived constraints using cluster analysis to classify respondents based on the similarity of the perceived applicability of a range of constraints to participation in selected recreational activities. Differences in behavior between the resulting clusters and the way the clusters differ in terms of several “social-structural characteristics” (i.e., demographic variables) were analyzed. An important conclusion is that “studying patterns of perceived constraints is a more viable approach than studying the effect of each perceived constraint separately” (p. 143). Second, findings show perceived constraints are related to demographic characteristics and, third, results support the Rational Choice Theory in which “real” (versus perceived) constraints are considered an important source of variation in interpersonal behavior.

Integrating characteristics from a variety of theoretical models pertaining to race/ethnicity, culture, and constraints to help shape research questions, Roberts and Rodriguez (2009) conducted an exploratory study for RMNP evaluating data from focus group interviews across different cultural groups residing along the Front Range of Colorado (i.e., Hispanics or Latinos, Native Americans/Indians, Asians/Asian Americans, African Americans/Blacks). Findings show each group values the outdoors/natural environment in very positive yet differing ways (e.g., in religious or spiritual ways). While results were analyzed both within groups and between, in general, sample reported constraints include: Distance (“too far to travel to RMNP”), food caters to “white tastes and preferences,” language barriers, costs, perceptions of RMNP, and varying degrees of comfort relating to the dominant visitor being from a white/European background. Recommendations for outreach and communication with ethnic minorities revolved around marketing issues, lack of people of color in photographs/media, enhanced representation of minority staff, sponsor special events and park celebrations appealing

to minority cultures (e.g., “PowWow”, “jazz in the park”) (Roberts and Rodriguez, 2009). Erickson (2001) examined park meanings and history as constraints to visitation to Rocky Mountain National Park by members of the African American community. She conducted 47 interviews in both Denver and at the park with visitors. Her content analysis consisted of partitioning the interviewees into six groups based on their leisure constraints to park visitation, the meanings they ascribe to the park, and previous experiences they had in natural areas. The results of this study demonstrated that both historical and cultural constraints, as well as park meanings, served as “major constraints” to park visitation by African Americans (Erickson, 2001).

As clearly stated by Berry and Gordon (1993), natural resources professions are changing; their constituents and the values they represent are different than they once were in the past, and indisputably show signs of continued rapid change. As these scholars indicate, special-interest groups of resource users still exist yet are no longer the majority as a greater proportion of the general public has increased use and interest in park and natural area management. This includes the fact that both the people residing in urban areas and urban issues themselves continue to rise in importance for federal agencies managing public lands. Additionally, more women and people of color are increasingly represented among the ranks of resource management professionals than ever before (Berry & Gordon, 1993). Consequently, as old values and practices conflict with new ones, “painful change is obviously under way” (Ibid., p. 5).

A key ingredient of these two aforementioned concepts (i.e., communication as a powerful tool and role of resource managers as leaders) is determining the best approach for marketing to diverse audiences. As indicated by Bright (2000), “the job of recreation

professionals is not only to provide opportunities for achieving benefits, but to get the word out” (Ibid., p. 12). Including outdoor recreation in national parks, benefits such as peak experiences, family solidarity, cultural values, preservation, and conservation, are often most understood by a select few. As aptly noted in his work on social marketing, Bright (2000) affirms these benefits, and others, are understood by recreation professionals, academics, and students yet a large proportion of the general public may not experience these benefits to their full potential without techniques designed to educate and influence them regarding opportunities available.

Furthermore, studies utilizing mixed methodologies have great potential for examining use and/or non-use of national parks by people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds (e.g., Floyd, 1999; Machlis, 1996; Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002; Wicks & Norman, 1996)). For example, as noted by Floyd (1999), researchers recognize the limitations of standard social survey methods and have begun to employ focus groups and in-depth interviewing as alternative methods. These methods have their limitations as well. Hence a pragmatic and superior strategy would be to combine multiple methods of research drawing upon both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This would provide a more wide-range of understanding of ethnic minority use of national parks or an increase in knowledge of constraints to participation.

Research that draws upon both quantitative and qualitative methods are more likely to provide a greater understanding, present a more complete picture, and contribute to better decision-making processes (e.g., Creswell, 1994). This would ultimately benefit park managers as well as education and interpretation specialists because this makes the most efficient use of both approaches in understanding the social phenomena under consideration. Inherent in this assumption is that combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study through

triangulation (e.g., using multiple methods of data collection and analysis) adds to the scope and depth of possibilities to the study.

Park constraints and opportunities associated with ethnic minority populations

Urban parks have been a central component of Latino/a neighborhoods (also known as *barrios*) in the United States. A majority of the literature in Chicano/a Studies and Latino/a Studies have focused on the major constraints to park access and usage. The first constraint is a history of park segregation. De facto forms of segregation existed in schools, parks, theatres, and swimming pools in Southwestern cities prior to World War II. Parks prohibited Mexican American access until the 1944 federal court case of *Lopez v. Sercombe* desegregated city parks and recreational facilities in San Bernardino, California (Alamillo, 2006; Romo, 1990). The second constraint is park inequity. An acute deficit of park space has created a crisis in many urban cities. In the city of Los Angeles open space areas have been used for roads, freeways, and government offices instead of urban parks. Even parks have been sacrificed to freeways. For example the Pomona Freeway was constructed through the middle of Belvedere Park and later a Sheriff's station was built on the park premises (Diaz, 2005; Gamez, 2002). A third constraint is the lack of culturally relevant programming in urban parks. One study examined Whittier Narrows Parks that attracted over 65 percent Latino/a residents yet the park's visitor center failed to produce culturally relevant programs for its park users (Torres and Valle, 2000). A fourth constraint is nativist opposition against immigrants using public parks. Public opposition by local park residents has led some cities to charge high fees and prohibit immigrants from using parks, especially to play soccer (Price and Whitworth, 2004; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). Despite these constraints, Latino/as are avid park-goers (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). In a few cases Latino/as

have constructed and reclaimed some parks as their own cultural spaces (Bonilla, 2005; Pulido, 1996; Peña, 2007). The most famous is Chicano Park located underneath the Coronado Freeway in Barrio Logan near downtown San Diego (Cockcroft, 1984; Avila, 2009). Chicano Park was built by local residents of Barrio Logan and artists painted murals on freeway columns and cultural workers organized culturally relevant programs for local residents.

Geographers have analyzed park constraints as an environmental justice issue. The disproportionate exposure of toxic waste and hazardous waste to nonwhite residents and their lack of access to clean air, fresh water, and open green space have been interpreted by some geography scholars as examples of environmental racism (Pulido, 2000; Peña, 2003; Bullard and Johnson, 2000; Boone et al, 2009). A majority of research on environmental justice issues have been limited to city parks and open green space, with very few studies on urban national parks. One exception is Jason Byrne's (2007) study of park visitors to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA). Created in 1978, SMMNRA was part of the "parks to people" initiative that sought to introduce national parks to disadvantaged nonwhite urban populations (Foresta, 1994). Byrne found that people of color visit SMMNRA in much lower rates than whites. Byrne found two major constraints for Latino/a park users. (1) The English only park signage (2) perception of SMMNRA as a neighborhood park exclusively for white affluent residents.

Leisure Studies scholars have long been preoccupied with how and why people use parks (Gomez, 2002; Martin 2004; Mowen et al., 2005; Payne et al., 2002; Schelhas, 2005; Shinew, et al., 2004). The problem with leisure research studies is they frame explanations as simply a function of personal characteristics, rather than the characteristics of parks themselves (Byrne and Wolch, 2009). Some examples of park characteristics that might impact park visitation include

park aesthetics, presence of security, lighting, signage, landscaping, park facilities, lack of information about neighborhood trails, and people who use them. White privilege also helped to ensure that national parks remain out of reach to nonwhite park users. Byrne's study of SMMNRA found that "Whites exhibited a degree of territoriality." (2007: 112). Byrne also found that "Latinos may perceive some parks to be racialized landscapes; that a lack of Spanish-language information about parks may constrain their use; and that although Latinos possess a strong desire to access urban nature spaces, racial formations in Southern California may influence their leisure decisions and ability to access urban nature in Los Angeles." (2007: 142). When asked if they would visit SMMNRA a few respondents "believed that if they visited the SMMNRA they would encounter racism." (2007: 155). Further research is needed into how racial formations affect park use and other leisure activities. Critical Race theory offers a promising approach towards examining the role of race and whiteness in the field of recreation, parks and leisure studies (Crenshaw 1995; Arai et al., 2009). Martin's (2004) analysis of magazine advertisements found representations of "whiteness" that racialized outdoor recreation for white people at the expense of nonwhites. Nina Roberts found examples of color and power evasiveness in the national park experiences of racial minority groups and argues that educators, parks and recreation professionals are obligated to "comprehend whiteness in relations to creating a more racially and socially just environment for people we work with and those we teach." (2009, 506).

The challenge has been to understand how ethnic identity relates to a set of culturally-based recreational preferences and behaviors, and reinforces the idea that comprehending ethnic identity is an important factor in successfully serving the public – particularly visitors to wilderness areas. Simply providing an opportunity and a program is not sufficient for

participation to occur. Allison (1993) maintains that an understanding of various perceptions and values held by ethnic minorities is central to our understanding of their outdoor involvement. The dimensions of access to programs and services (e.g., availability, affordability, and acceptability), for instance, must all be considered when developing strategies to foster program participation among racially and culturally diverse participants (Allison, 1993). Furthermore, although the association between ethnicity and gender as it pertains to outdoor recreation and environmental programs have been explored independently, researching this relationship has begun to receive more attention (Floyd, 1999; Henderson, 1998; Roberts, 1996; Rodriguez & Roberts, 2005, 1999).

Although research on outdoor recreation has occurred in some capacity for over forty years, little to no attention was paid early on to under-represented minority audiences in outdoor settings (Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002). Minority recreation patterns, preferences, attitudes, and behavior only came to the attention of social scientists and natural resource professionals with the onset of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission Report of 1962 (Hartmann & Overdevest, 1989; Johnson, Bowker, English & Worthen, 1997; Manning, 1999). Recognizing the needs and demands of ethnic minorities, recreation researchers did not really begin giving much serious attention to different racial and ethnic groups until the late 1970s and more so during the early '80s. Nonetheless, since this time, there is by no means a proliferation of research on race, ethnicity, and culture in this field.

Recent studies on National Park outreach practices

The National Park Service has sharpened their focus regarding outreach and engagement of minority audiences within the last decade. There have been a growing number of studies that

have helped to extend the reach of the NPS to minority communities (Eichenger, et.al., 2011; Roberts, 2007; Rodriguez and Roberts, 2002), understanding public attitudes regarding parks (Kyle, et.al., 2011; Taylor, et. al., 2011), and new programs designed to engage minority youth with National Parks (Bowser and Brown, 2011; Stanfield, et.al, 2011, Teel, et.al, 2011).

Strategies from these studies include youth climate change ambassadors, culturally sensitive internships and work-study programs, and “deep” engagement practices as logical strategies for future NPS efforts. Such strategies to truly engaging underserved populations must involve program development that invites, involves and includes in a way that develops genuine confianza (trust) and respeto (respect), two key components for successful engagement of Hispanic communities (McChesney, Gerken and McDonald, 2005; Williams and Florez, 2002). Hispanic communities have an intuitive sense that half-hearted efforts and shallow engagement will be considered insulting and will further alienate community members.

Communication and community outreach scholar Sue Senecah (2004) introduces the practical theory of “Trinity of Voice” – access, standing and influence as an effective standard to analyze environmental policy development and address citizen’s needs to have a meaningful role in their communities. Senecah argues that access to information, standing or respect, and the ability to influence decision-making leads to trust, which is the benchmark of effective and socially legitimate programming. Members of the Hispanic community who have a sense of ownership in local park programs brought about a “trinity of voice” (access, standing and influence) will be more likely to utilize park services and engage in park programs. Using Senecah’s trinity of voice as a framework for our discussion, this section focuses on ways to overcome barriers faced by the Latino/a community and outlines opportunities and strategies to engaging Hispanic communities with park programs.

Access: Providing Hispanic communities with better access to parks and park programming means reaching out to them in a meaningful and genuine way. Social marketing aims to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences members by offering a package of benefits, reducing barriers, and focusing on the target population's *needs* and *wants* with regards to the behavior. Successful social marketing emphasizes involving the target community, tailoring messages specifically, and creating partnerships among diverse groups. (Van Duyn, M., et. al., 2007). Building on social marketing research that emphasizes influencing behavior and drawing from literature in the fields of leisure studies, environmental communication, environmental science and resource management, education, and Chicano/a studies. We suggest developing an education and outreach communication plan that outlines a media campaign using social and traditional media outreach. For example, using Spanish language radio and newspaper to publicize NPS events and programs will attract more Latino/as to National Parks. Although some techniques and approaches are appropriate for all Latino communities, it is important to distinguish among different Hispanic sub-groups and modify your outreach plan so social marketing techniques are at a grass root community level (Lopez, et. al., 2005; Whitt-Glover, M., Crespo, C. & Joe, J., 2009; Williams, B., & Florez, Y., 2002). Hispanics are not a monolithic group with different cultures that have different needs based on their social, historical, political and linguistic histories.

Research on successful targeting of Hispanic communities reveals that the most effective means of information exchange is informal word of mouth promotion by a trusted member of their community such as a role model or cultural leader (Bryne, 2007; McChesney, Gerken & McDonald, 2005; Van Duyn, M., et. al., 2007; Wong et. al. 2004). Community members recognize the value of traditional media (radio and TV) in community campaigns but want media

messages to include culturally appropriate information and advice in their native language on channels that use those languages and feature people that “looked like them” (Bay Area Open Space Council, 2004; McChesney, Gerken & McDonald, 2005; Van Duyn, M., et. al., 2007). Print materials are not as effective as radio or television in outreach efforts, however print strategies such as advertisements on the sides of busses or in Latino/a magazines used in combination with other media outlets can have a positive impact (Bryne, 2007; Lopez et. al., 2005; Wong et al. 2004).

Within the past decade the use of new media (internet, utube, social networking site) to reach targeting audiences has increased dramatically. The internet has become a viable means to strengthen cultural connections, discuss important issues and promote healthy behavioral choices among Hispanic community members (i.e. sites such as www.mundonet.com or www.hisp.com) (Gonzales, 1996; Pergrams & Zaradic, 2006). Outreach efforts that make use of the internet and other new media strategies such as YouTube videos that promote park use and programs or social networking such as FaceBook will become a necessary part of any successful outreach campaign.

Tailoring the message sent to Hispanic communities is as critical as the medium you choose. Understanding the cultural relevance of families, health, religion and environmental concern and building on positive opportunities for engagement will be more successful with this population (Ramirez, A. et. al., 1995). Stories that involve local people engaging with park programs are most effective. All outreach material must be in Spanish and English. Even members of the Latino/a community who are fluent in English will appreciate and recognize the efforts of the park to engage their community ensuing trust and respect for their cultural differences (Bay Area Open Space Council, 2004; Bryne, 2007; Lopez et. al., 2005). When

translating material it is important to do a cultural translation as important messages may become lost or meaningless in literal translations.

Access for Hispanic community members also refers to physical access to the park. In 2003, University of Southern California produced a trail use survey report of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The authors identified lack of transportation as a major barrier for Hispanic communities and suggested the development of an integrated public transportation service to facilitate greater access and reduce the dependence on cars. For example the National Park currently partners with LA Metropolitan Transit Agency to promote public transportation routes and encourage use. Also, Augustus Hawkins Park in south Los Angeles partners with the Transit Agency allowing people to access parks via weekend shuttle from certain neighborhood parks (Bryne, 2007).

Research highlights large family centered activities as the most common use of parks for Hispanic communities. “Gathering” type activities such as cooking, games, or family and cultural events were most common, yet many park facilities do not have the facilities to accommodate such activities. Providing more facilities for non-traditional users such as larger areas for family gatherings and BBQ pits and benches in shady areas close to water would address this cultural use and provide incentive for Latino families to use park services (Bryne, 2007; McChesney, Gerken & McDonald, 2005; Van Duyn, M., et. al., 2007). Finally, Latinos rely on signage when using the park yet few signs are in Spanish (Bryne, 2007; USC Sustainable Cities Program and the National Park Service, 2003). A few changes in signage and park facilities would give community members access to parks and allow them to use local parks in a meaningful way.

Standing. Senecah (2004) uses the term standing to mean “civic legitimacy” (24) that connotes an equality and respect for cultural and multiple perspectives. To have standing is to be placed on equal ground, listened to and addressed in a dialogical manner. We suggest one way to achieve and provide standing to underserved communities is to create environmental programs that address and demonstrate respect for the Hispanic culture.

National Park programs should be tailored to the unique cultural and socio-demographic characteristics of each community and sensitive to individual factors such as time and financial constraints. Activities should be focused, hands-on, purposeful and inclusive. In the Hispanic culture the welfare of family or group is commonly emphasized rather than individual. Hence, group- dominated (instead of individualistic) programs that engage extended families, church and neighborhood communities will be most successful (Bay Area Open Space Council, 2004; Lopez et. al., 2005; USC Sustainable Cities Program and the National Park Service, 2003). Further, Hispanic community members have strong ties to church and community (Lopez, et. al., 2005). Co-sponsored programs by the park and local churches could reach community members and engage them in a manner consistent with their culture and beliefs.

A strong reoccurring theme in Chicano/a Studies literature is the love that Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants have for nature and the value they place on teaching their children about the environment (Bryne, 2007; Lopez, 2005). There is also a strong link between childhood behavior and first experience with nature (Bryne, 2007). A program that gave community member’s the opportunity to share or hear stories from their own people related to park use and nature would help build a green identity for Hispanic communities by drawing on tradition and cultural norms (Lichterman, 1995). Park management should work to enhance the long-standing historical and cultural environmental ethic that exists in the Latino community by

developing bi-lingual conservation education literature and on-going programs as part of their efforts to effectively engage new/non-traditional users (Green et. al, 2002; Ramirez et. al., 1995; Pergrams & Zaradic, 2007; Van Duyn, M. et. al., 2007).

A second approach to engage under-represented communities and promote standing is to create partnerships with existing cultural organizations, local schools and religious organizations. This grass root approach would allow the park service to work directly with local community leaders and gatekeepers to create alliances with local groups and reach targeted communities. Through these alliances the park can learn how to overcome social barriers and better engage Latinos in park programs (Bay Area Open Space Council, 2004; Lichterman, 1995; Lopez et. al., 2005; McChesney, Gerken & McDonald, 2005; Taylor, 2007; Van Duyn et. al., 2007; Wong et al., 2004).

Local schools and universities provide a particular unique opportunity to create alliances and reach out to Hispanic communities. Park programs can work with schools to create internships or scholarships through existing programs such as STEM providing a meaningful experience for Latina/o youth and young adults. Finally, the park can consider the possibility of providing financial support through scholarships, stipend programs, hourly wages, and/or other arrangements to culturally diverse high school and college/university students (Taylor, 2007; USC Sustainable Cities Program and the National Park Service, 2003; Whitt-Glover, Crespo, & Joe, 2009)

Influence. The third component of the trinity of voice is influence. Influence is the outgrowth of access and standing. For community voice to truly be realized, community members must have a direct influence on policy and programs that impact them. Promoting and expanding the role of Latinos in key environmental decision-making bodies would provide the

necessary influence, give them a voice, and provide ownership over park programs. Williams and Florez (2002) argue that Hispanic community members want to be involved in local park programs and would participate in key decisions if asked. Involvement and influence in decision-making of Hispanic community members with park programs could take many forms. One suggested by the literature is to increase representation of Hispanics on the Board of Directors or to create a specific advisory board with the tasks to:

- Identify historical and cultural themes and events that are complimentary to the Hispanic experience,
- Expand parks historical perspective to include the California Hispanic experience,
- Advise on developing park designs that compliment Hispanic recreational and leisure lifestyles,
- Assist in public communication/outreach efforts,
- Recommend employment recruiting techniques to reach Hispanic community,
- Advise on the use of Spanish language in selected facilities / signage (cultural translation),
- Get Hispanic community directly involved in general plan for facilities,
- Host a conference with diversity and recreation as a central theme,
- Identify Hispanic organizations/ non-profits to act as coalitions.

Bryne, 2007; Lopez, et. al., 2005; McChesney, Gerken & McDonald, 2005; Whitt-Glover, M., Crespo, C. & Joe, J. ,2009)

The literature also suggests a way to directly involve the Hispanic community is to rethink how the park service defines pools of applications for jobs. Increasing the number of non-white staff employees and embarking on a program to recruit Latino park staff and

volunteers would give a sense of ownership to the community. (Bryne, 2007; Lopez, R., et. al., 2005; McChesney, Gerken & McDonald, 2005; Ramirez, A et. al., 1995; Taylor, 2007; Whitt-Glover, M., Crespo, C. & Joe, J. ,2009). Placing greater emphasis placed on recruiting and training professionals from various racial and ethnic populations will not only allow those going to parks to feel that their cultural values are respected because park personnel are similar to them, it will increase cultural sensitivity among current professionals creating a healthier working environment. (Li, C. et. al., 2008).

Building on social marketing research that emphasizes influencing behavior and drawing from literature in the fields of leisure studies, environmental communication, environmental science and resource management, education, and Chicano/a studies. We suggest developing an education and outreach communication plan that outlines a media campaign using social and traditional media outreach. By creating partnerships with organizations that already have alliances with non-traditional minority audiences that represent and celebrate their culture, the National Park can genuinely engage with and demonstrate respect this underserved community providing standing as a necessary element of voice.

Conclusion

By integrating the literature from Ethnic Studies, Chicano/a Studies, Communication, Environmental Studies, Natural Resource Management and Social Sciences, we have found numerous constraints exist for racial and ethnic minority groups to visit and use National Parks. Some of these include socio-economic barriers, transportation costs, park meanings, lack of park information, and individual perceptions of park safety and sense of welcome, language of park signage, racial prejudice associated with history of park segregation, provision and management

attitudes, lack of trust of park management personnel. By examining the academic research on the relationship between National Parks and non-traditional racial minority audiences it is clear that more attention has been directed at understanding how and why racial and ethnic minority groups use or do not use National Parks. Future research studies employing mixed methodologies hold the most potential for providing a more complete understanding minority use of National Parks. As the American population become more and more diverse National Parks must think differently to broaden the scope of the programs to meet the needs of diverse groups of people.

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