

# Cultural and Ethnic Minority Use of Open Space

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**E**thnic minority and cultural uses are an increasing aspect of open space and parks in the United States. Park managers and designers need to take it to consideration the cultural uses and preferences when designing parks.

There are many survey studies that can help park managers identify overlooked preferences, barriers, and useful patterns when designing for different cultures or ethnic minorities. However these are broad generalizations and do not tell us much about preferences among individuals within these categories.



## Who are Ethnic Minorities?<sup>1</sup>

- People who were born outside of the United States
- Ethnic minorities can include people born within the country but have parental roots in another country.
- People who have parents of different ethnic backgrounds.
- Also indigenous ethnic minority groups.

## Why is this important?

- Physical environment has a positive or negative effect on peoples perceptions of everyday life.
- Landscapes have a strong symbolic dimension. They can be seen as familiar, alien, welcoming or excluding.
- In order to treat people equally it is important to respond to their diversity.
- The future of open spaces is dependent upon it.
- If majority of people do not see their needs and issues addressed in open space, open spaces may not be protected or expanded.

<sup>1</sup> Rishbeth, Clare Ethnic Minority Groups and the Design of Public Open Space: an inclusive landscape?



<http://depts.washington.edu/uwsp/shibaura/4%20Greenlake%20Basketball.jpg>

## Common Cultural Uses of Parks<sup>1</sup>

### African Americans

- Open spaces used mostly for sport.
- High Preference for social and relaxing benefits.

### Whites

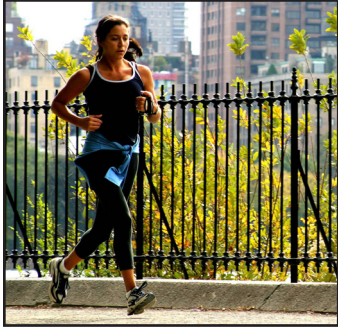
- More likely to use park on their own.
- Walking, jogging
- 50% value parks for their aesthetic qualities.

### Chinese

- Rare in parks..
- Mostly elderly men, socializing or doing Tai Chi
- See park as an aesthetic element of gorgeous design, not an expanse of green space for recreation and sport.

### Hispanics

- Use parks in large social groups
- Food is involved
- Social and relaxation are highly rated elements.



<http://thomashawk.com/hello/209/1017/1024/Central%20Park%20Jogger4.1.jpg>

## Common Cultural Preferences<sup>2</sup>

### Urban Recreational Parks

- African Americans

### Wildland Parks

- Whites

### Individual pursuits such as biking, walking and jogging

- Whites

### Passive Activities such as sitting and relaxing

- Latino, Asian, and African American

### Common valued attributes: Lakes, Ponds, and Zoos

- Asians, Latinos, African Americans and Whites

### Natural Environment

- Asians, Latinos and Whites

### Cultural Facilities

- African Americans



[http://www.exmsft.com/~davidco/Travel/China/images/b%20tai%20chi%20IMG\\_2995%20copy.jpg](http://www.exmsft.com/~davidco/Travel/China/images/b%20tai%20chi%20IMG_2995%20copy.jpg)



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<sup>1</sup> Rishbeth, Clare Ethnic Minority Groups and the Design of Public Open Space: an inclusive landscape?

<sup>2</sup> Lanfer, Ashley Graves and Madeline Taylor, Immigrant Engagement in Public Open Space: Strategies for the New Boston Barr Foundation

## Strategies for Park Design<sup>1</sup>

Draw on universal principles of design

- Concept of the loop. The idea of coming full circle, beginning where one begins is a common quality appreciated across cultures.
- Impulse to protect and care for larger and older trees with in a neighborhood.

Incorporate natural elements that echo home patterns

- Spaces can be designed with elements that incorporate cultural and spatial resonance.

Accommodate particular user groups

Leave room for adaptation

## Strategies for Park Management

Adapt the culture of park management

- Diversity of park staff, ability to speak different languages, available and appropriate signage, are all important elements.

Examine park rules

- It is important to make sure that rules of the park do not exclude certain cultural activities.

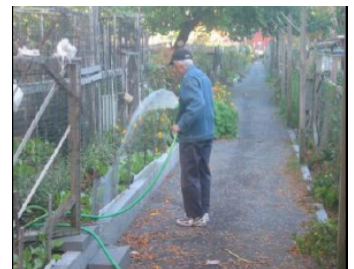
## Strategies for Park Programming

Get the word out

Encourage people to come together for cultural celebrations



<http://www.ilichuan.org/Main/Images/Picnic04/Picnic%20060.jpg>



[http://www.barrfoundation.org/usr\\_doc/Immigrant\\_Engagement\\_in\\_Public\\_Open\\_Space\\_final.pdf](http://www.barrfoundation.org/usr_doc/Immigrant_Engagement_in_Public_Open_Space_final.pdf)



[http://www.barrfoundation.org/usr\\_doc/Immigrant\\_Engagement\\_in\\_Public\\_Open\\_Space\\_final.pdf](http://www.barrfoundation.org/usr_doc/Immigrant_Engagement_in_Public_Open_Space_final.pdf)



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<sup>1</sup> Lanfer, Ashley Graves and Madeline Taylor, Immigrant Engagement in Public Open Space: Strategies for the New Boston Barr Foundation

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