Increasing Intercultural Understanding between Park Managers and African American and Latino Users of Urban Parks

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Diversity in U.S Cities

- Minority population in major urban areas has significantly increased in recent years.
- Minorities account for at least 1/3 of residents in seven of the largest metropolitan areas (U.S. Census for Chicago - 37% African American/26% Latino).
- Large urban centers also serve as destination points for the majority of immigrants arriving in U.S.
Ethnic and racial diversity of American population expected to increase through the next century

In many urban areas, racial and ethnic groups will outnumber the non-Hispanic Whites – this already exists in some areas

- Examples?
Projections predict the White proportion of the U.S. population will decline from 72% to just over 50%

- African Americans will increase from 12% to 14%
- Latinos will increase from 13% to 24%
- Asians will increase from 4% to 8%
Urban Parks and Minority Users

- Urban parks serve the outdoor recreation needs of an increasingly diverse population.

- One of the challenges for urban park staff is to meet the needs and expectations of culturally and ethnically diverse groups.
Urban park staff challenged by diverse users due to the variety of their environmental ethics and values, the range of their recreation preferences, and the multiple of languages that must be considered.

These challenges can lead to misunderstandings between minority visitors and park staff.
Use of Urban Parks by Minority Recreationists

- Studies suggest there are unique park visitation patterns, constraints, and motivations among minority park users (Gobster, 1998; 2002, Tinsley, Tinsley & Croskeys, 2002)

- Previous studies have shown that minority park visitors come from farther away, and are more likely to visit parks in large, family-oriented groups than Whites
Differ on preferences for specific park features - Asians more likely to show a preference for scenic beauty, African Americans for facilities, maintenance and sport-orientation, and Whites for trees and other park vegetation

Differ on constraints - Asians more concerned about parking and park access problems, Whites about crowding, user conflict, and safety, and African Americans about the prejudicial behavior of others
Study Design

- Two study sites selected
  - **Marquette Park** (serves primarily African Americans) covers more than 300 acres and features numerous shelters, a field house, paths for cycling, running and walking, a playground, open areas, a nursery, track, lagoon, horseshoe pits, spray pool, archery range, theater, ice-skating rink, some athletic fields, and a golf course
  - **Piotrowski Park** (serves primarily Latinos) features baseball diamonds, tennis and volleyball courts, walking/running paths, and a large playground and offers numerous activities, including volleyball and basketball clinics for children and teenagers

- On-site questionnaire surveys distributed to park visitors
- Both English and Spanish versions of the survey used in Piotrowski Park
- Surveys distributed throughout the week and weekend to ensure variety of park users were sampled
Study Design

- Field personnel matched dominant user group (U of I students from Chicago area)
- Surveys read to respondents
- $50 gift certificates used as incentives
- Over 90% response rate at both parks
  - 199 completed surveys in Marquette Park
  - 202 completed surveys in Piotrowski Park
Survey Instrument

Information Collected from Surveys

- Assess current use of parks (frequency of visits, use of programs and facilities, activities engaged in during visits, modes of transportation to and from the park, social patterns of use, distance to park from place of residence)

- Identify the preferences, needs and expectations of minority users (likes and dislikes of natural environmental characteristics, facilities, safety issues, provision of recreational opportunities)
Survey Instrument

- Access types and levels of interaction minority users have with park staff (frequency of interactions, perceptions of discrimination, perceived fairness of treatment)

- Investigate cultural and personal dimensions of conflict
Findings – Sample Characteristics

Age of the respondents

- Below 20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61 and over

Gender of the respondents

- Female
- Male
Findings – Sample Characteristics

Marital status of the respondents

Education of the respondents
## Findings – Sample Characteristics

### Employment status of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Marquette</th>
<th>Piotrowski</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time or self employed</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Income category of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Category</th>
<th>Marquette</th>
<th>Piotrowski</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-$9,999</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$14,999</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000-$19,999</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$29,999</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$39,999</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-$49,999</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$59,999</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-$69,999</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000-$79,999</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused to answer</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings – Park Visitation

Frequency of park visit in summer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Marquette</th>
<th>Piotrowski</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a month</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About once a month</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a month</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About once a week</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost daily</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Park visit companion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Companion</th>
<th>Marquette</th>
<th>Piotrowski</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By yourself</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With friends</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With spouse</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Children</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With grandchildren</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With other family members</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Findings – Most Common Activity in Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marquette</th>
<th>Piotrowski</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>Playing with kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing basketball</td>
<td>Walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting/relaxing</td>
<td>Sitting/relaxing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking/socializing</td>
<td>Talking/socializing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing with kids</td>
<td>Watching organized sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking/BBQing</td>
<td>Jogging/running</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking</td>
<td>Playing basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogging/running</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog walking</td>
<td>Playing soccer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing baseball</td>
<td>Playing baseball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings - Importance of Park Facilities and Services

- Marquette
  - Overall cleanliness and maintenance
  - General feeling of safety
  - Restrooms
  - Benches/sitting areas
  - Availability of free parking
  - Walking paths
  - Grassy areas
  - Picnic tables
  - Closeness to home
  - Adequate lighting
  - Playgrounds

- Piotrowski
  - Overall cleanliness and maintenance
  - General feeling of safety
  - Restrooms
  - Playgrounds
  - Adequate lighting
  - Benches/sitting areas
  - Ball fields
  - Swimming pools
  - Information on programs and facilities in your own language
  - Field house
  - Staff speaking the same language as yours
Findings – Interaction and Experiences with Park Staff

Interaction with park staff

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Experience with park staff

- Fairly
- Somewhat fairly
- Somewhat unfairly
- Unfairly
Findings – Perpetrators of discrimination in park

Marquette
- White people in the park  
  (Sometimes/Often = 58%; Never/Rarely=42%)
- Other recreationists  
  (Sometimes/Often = 52%; Never/Rarely=48%)
- Local police and law enforcement  
  (Sometimes/Often = 38%; Never/Rarely=62%)
- Latinos in the park  
  (Sometimes/Often = 30%; Never/Rarely=70%)
- Staff  
  (Sometimes/Often = 22%; Never/Rarely=74%)
- Asian people in the park  
  (Sometimes/Often = 15%; Never/Rarely=85%)

Piotrowski
- Asian people in the park  
  (Sometimes/Often = 14%; Never/Rarely=87%)
- African Americans in the park  
  (Sometimes/Often = 14%; Never/Rarely=82%)
- Other recreationists  
  (Sometimes/Often = 12%; Never/Rarely=88%)
- White people in the park  
  (Sometimes/Often = 11%; Never/Rarely=87%)
- Local police and law enforcement  
  (Sometimes/Often = 11%; Never/Rarely=80%)
- Staff  
  (Sometimes/Often = 7%; Never/Rarely=93%)
Findings – Discriminatory Acts in the Park

Marquette
- Verbal harassment (Sometimes/Often = 45%; Never/Rarely=45%)
- Being stopped and/or searched by the police (Sometimes/Often = 45%; Never/Rarely=55%)
- Being denied a service or being given bad service (Sometimes/Often = 40%; Never/Rarely=55%)
- Being physically attacked (Sometimes/Often = 30%; Never/Rarely=70%)
- Other acts of discrimination (Sometimes/Often = 10%; Never/Rarely=90%)

Piotrowski
- Verbal harassment (Sometimes/Often = 20%; Never/Rarely=74%)
- Being stopped and/or searched by the police (Sometimes/Often = 16%; Never/Rarely=80%)
- Being denied a service or being given bad service (Sometimes/Often = 9%; Never/Rarely=90%)
- Other acts of discrimination (Sometimes/Often = 8%; Never/Rarely=86%)
- Being physically attacked (Sometimes/Often = 7%; Never/Rarely=93%)
Findings – Response to Discriminatory Acts

Marquette
- I visit park with a group of people (Agree + strongly agree= 40%; Strongly disagree+ disagree=35%)
- I let park authorities know what happened (Agree + strongly agree= 25%; Strongly disagree+ disagree=35%)
- I still visit park, but I don’t enjoy my visits as much (Agree + strongly agree= 25%; Strongly disagree+ disagree=35%)
- I visit the park less often (Agree + strongly agree= 11%; Strongly disagree+ disagree=62%)

Piotrowski
- I visit park with a group of people (Agree + strongly agree= 57%; Strongly disagree+ disagree=24%)
- I let park authorities know what happened (Agree + strongly agree= 36%; Strongly disagree+ disagree=29%)
- I still visit park, but I don’t enjoy my visits as much (Agree + strongly agree= 29%; Strongly disagree+ disagree=38%)
- I visit the park less often (Agree + strongly agree= 25%; Strongly disagree+ disagree=28%)
Summary – What does this all mean?

Racial and ethnic groups use parks in different ways (e.g., Piotrowski used by families, playing with children listed as the activity they participated in most often, and availability of playgrounds was listed as very important).

Several similarities in what the two groups wanted from their parks (cleanliness, feeling of safety, restrooms).
Summary

- Discriminatory incidents higher in Marquette than in Piotrowski

- Discriminatory incidents impacted their use of the parks (visit in groups, visit less often, do not enjoy visits as much)
Implications

- Implications for practice???
- How can this information be used by practitioners?
- What additional information is needed?
- How can we better meet the needs of minority visitors?
Thank You!!

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