

Cultural diversity in the social valuing of parkland: Networking communities and park management

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Abstract

The paper focuses on cultural diversity and the social valuing of parkland as a consequence of local urban park use. The paper is based on a study investigating whether the social values attributed to parklands are intrinsic, are generated by the cultural perspectives of the different communities who use them, or are simply generated by management approaches. The study assesses the perceptions and uses of public open space by Aboriginal, Anglo-Australian and recently migrated communities inside and outside park boundaries in the Georges River area. The preliminary results of this study identifies the impacts on each cultural group, how these groups value the public open spaces in their area and how they respond to current management approaches. The paper concludes with an outlook on how to develop research tools to support and encourage a multicultural approach to park management and create community networks that recognise opportunities and provisions at parks in an ethnically diverse¹ multicultural Australia.

Introduction

Multi-dimensional political, social, economic and cultural transformations are taking place in Australian society. Due to this, the traditional concept of parklands is being questioned from many perspectives. A range of cultural groups are attempting to integrate into Australian society while at the same time maintaining various elements¹. Park management is realising that the social values attributed to parklands aren't intrinsic but are instead generated by the cultural perspectives of the societal groups using the area. This paper suggests that there is a need for sound evidence-based policy formulation that allows for the diversity of social experience in relating to management provisions. Despite substantial literature in the social sciences on cultural diversity, there are only limited studies that identify how such diversity is able to shape the social values ascribed to parklands.

Park agencies and their staff are

¹ This paper has made some generalizations in attempting to investigate minority groups. One of these is the inclusion of Aboriginal groups as an ethnic minority it recognizes that what applies to migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds doesn't necessarily apply to Aboriginal communities but also that there is significant overlap in the exclusion of these groups social valuing of parks.

aware of the cultural diversity issue. However, ways culture can shape attitudes can be a difficult concept to identify and evaluate. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and other state level park agencies have commenced investigations into how distinct ethnic groups perceive and use parks (Thomas, Martin, 2001; Thomas, Mandy, 2001; Market Solutions, 1995). Fairfield, Liverpool, Bankstown, and rural Moree government councils have established 'place management' programs to engage local community groups in relation to planning the use and maintenance of public places. Sydney Parks Group (http://www.centennialparklands.com.au/about/parklands/associations/sydney_parks_group) and others (Wearing & Costa, 2001; Wearing & Huyskens, 2001) have argued there are few studies that investigate how culture can shape park usage and the diverse expectations of ethnic and indigenous groups. This research has addressed this issue demonstrating how ethnic communities in Australia differ markedly in their use of parkland and the values they attach to it, Understanding the value of parkland to different communities enables new guidelines and tools for the design and management of public parklands.

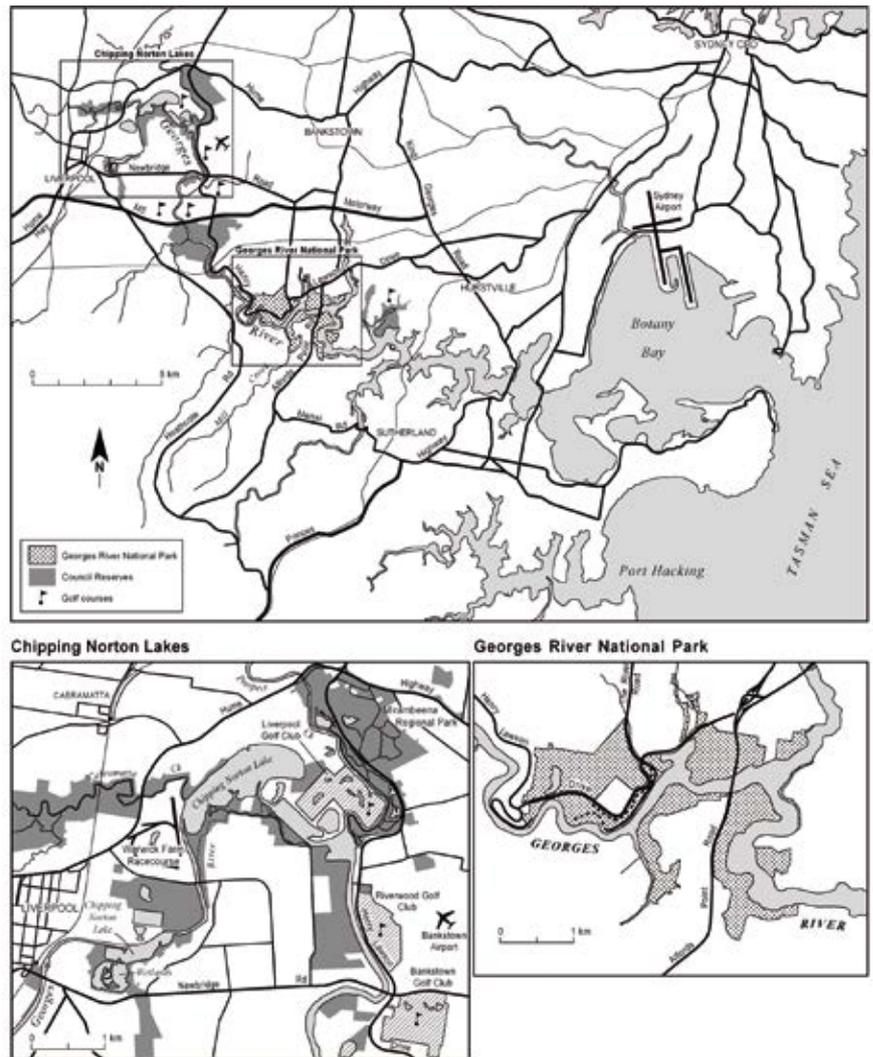
Many Parks staff such as those in the NPWS where the case study for this paper is situated must obtain derived resources that will make the rhetoric of culturally diverse user populations a more 'visible' reality. They will then 'see' and respond to these resources as relevant and representative data. Local government have called for data that will impose a human perspective on the diverse citizen experiences and expectations of parks. They realise that citizenship is multi-faceted, and that one of its most important facets is refracted through the experience of cultural diversity. However, in terms of the ethnic groups depicted in census data for their region, this facet may not be representatively addressed. Each of the SUPER group partner agencies (see http://www.centennialparklands.com.au/about/parklands/associations/sydney_parks_group) requested studies that will access data that can be readily used to enable more culturally sensitive planning and practice, that will meet the needs of culturally diverse users. Research of this kind will seek to foster more productive relations between the varied cultural groups who simultaneously, and perhaps competitively, use the parks, and will also highlight any communities that are under-represented in terms of usage patterns.



Local councils have recently been advised to conduct these studies in a manner that better informs public space policy-making [eg Spackman et al. 2001]. There are many fringe suburban areas in major cities in Sydney and around Australia, where the ethnic composition of the population is rapidly changing. Therefore, there is need to provide data and evaluate methodologies that will be used in these contexts. However, population change is not only affecting urban areas. Culturally diverse regional areas, particularly on the coast, are finding that internal migration, refugee settlement and growing international tourism are challenging the accepted local patterns of cultural dominance. These patterns are often reflected in policy development and the cultural frames that sustain these.

The lack of useful data regarding cultural diversity and park perceptions is not only a concern in Australia. There have been calls in the United States (Magill, 1992) to recognise cultural homogeneity of National Parks Services employed across the country. Consequently, social valuing of parks by management structures has been minimal (Twight and Lyden, 1989) and therefore a lack of understanding has occurred, that has disallowed agencies to properly reflect the cultural diversity of park users. In San Francisco in 1999, the US NPS held a national conference, *Mosaic in Motion*, to address this issue. They have since been encouraging their staff and partner agencies to obtain more data on local situations (NPS, 2001). In the United Kingdom, a similar process has also been occurring through the *Groundwork* program. Here, the diverse ethnic composition in some areas is being recognised as a significant impact on parkland use. In the UK, a push to develop methodologies that identify relevant diversity and incorporate implications into the planning process has recently emerged (Rishbeth 2001; Bollens 2002). Research (Gobster, 2002, Tinsley, Tinsley and Croskeys, 2002) suggests that better informed parks management is able to design and manage of parks and move away from the assumption that all visitors are similar, and that their

Figure 1: Georges River Research Area



values, motivations and expectations are homogeneous.

Aims

The study attempted to gain a better understanding of how open public spaces function in the process of social negotiation and interaction in suburban and rural life, particularly in situations where migration is generating rapid cultural changes. This paper summarises the research results and produces an outline/model and a set of guidelines to enable park authorities and managers to better understand the cultural diversity in their user communities, and plan more inclusive, diverse and effective management strategies.

This study focused on South Western Sydney where there are numerous distinct ethnic groups that use parks in varying ways. The

area includes the Georges River and its surrounds, from Casula in the west, through to Salt Pan Creek and Riverwood in the east (as shown in Figure 1). This region consists of a range of parklands including a national park and various council-managed public recreation reserves (see Davies, Mulholland & Pipe 1979). The ethnic cultural groups identified as both sizeable and culturally distinctive include, Older Anglo-Australian residents, Aboriginal residents (some traditional owners, some more recent immigrants from rural NSW), Vietnamese Australians and recent immigrants of Muslim Lebanese origin.

Overall, the project sought to:

- ❖ Provide parkland managers with tools that identify the range of culturally diverse parkland uses.
- ❖ To map different uses and value types of culturally defined groups



and to effectively incorporate this information into planning and interpretation processes.

- ❖ Identify the manner that the various ethnically and geographically defined social groups use and value urban and regional/rural parkland and define the gaps between views and in current management regimes.
- ❖ Expand knowledge on how cultural diversity can affect views about parkland types and nature in urban and regional areas.
- ❖ Analyse how open public spaces have enabled migrating and indigenous communities to negotiate with their new home and new countrymen.
- ❖ Identify the importance of gender, age, disability and contextual (eg urban/rural) dimensions of cultural difference within and between groups.
- ❖ Evaluate how management approaches in regard to parks have changed regarding the processes of attachment to place.
- ❖ Develop better tools for management to operationalize diverse ethnic social valuing of parks such as cultural mapping, interpretation opportunity spectrum.

This project undertook a detailed and focussed study in the Georges River National Park and surrounds and was developed through an ARC Linkage Grant with NPWS.

Background

This research addresses a set of vital issues for park managers and environmental planners. Australian environments continue to be at risk of inappropriate and over-use. There is therefore a need to better understand the ways the Australian population perceives their environment and its conservation. ABS statistics demonstrate that the population is not static. The number of residents born overseas in Australia at June 2000 constituted 24% of the total population, or 4.5 million people. This reflects an 8% increase since 1995 (ABS 2001). At June 2000, 12.5% of the Australian population was born

in Europe and the former USSR, 6.3% were born in the United Kingdom and Ireland (ABS, 2002) and 6% were born in Asia (ABS, 2001). These figures reflect the changing nature and increasing cultural diversity of the Australian population.

The earlier Eurocentric groups that frequented and supported the establishment of National Parks and other public open spaces (Turner 1988) have aged/died and today represent a smaller proportion of the Australian population. A related concern in many western countries is that the public sector's funding budget is shrinking and consequently there are fewer guarantees of public funding for environment, conservation and parklands. Much of the literature focusing on investigating user diversity in the USA and UK is predicated on the growing urgency to gain public support and funding for parklands (DTLGR 2002).

As the population changes, the optimism of the early 'multicultural' rhetoric has dissipated and Australia is being faced with a situation where tensions between ethnic groups is becoming increasingly evident (Callan, 1986; Tascón, 2008). In December 2005, clashes between Lebanese and 'Australian' groups erupted in the Sydney suburb of Cronulla, on the site of Cronulla Beach, after simmering tensions resulted in a physical confrontation between a lifeguard and an individual of Lebanese descent. This led to ongoing violent confrontations between the two groups which lasted a few weeks and culminated in substantial numbers of Australians meeting at Cronulla Beach one weekend and attacking people who appeared to be of Lebanese descent. Tensions have severely heightened over the last two years through public campaigns about border security and international conflicts. These have 'othered' many ethnic groups in the eyes of Eurocentric Australia. There is a need to better understand (a) how different backgrounds shape responses between ethnic communities to each other and to their new environments; (b) if and how open spaces offer immigrant populations the opportunity

to negotiate new situations and build relations and; (c) how public open spaces should be used to foster more productive interactions between ethnic groups (particularly as they change over time). The Georges River area has been a site for ethnic tension. This study has in turn sought to investigate the extent to which this tension is evident in public open spaces.

This investigation begins to examine the importance of how cultural diversity can shape personal views and uses of parks and also links theoretical findings to a set of accessible tools for park managers. The study investigates the views and park uses by Anglo-Australians, Aboriginal people, the established immigrant groups, the Vietnamese, and recent-immigrant groups such as the Lebanese Muslims. The findings provide a platform to further investigate the differences within groups such as class, age, sex, and relations between groups. Formation of generalisations and stereotypes about cultural or ethnic groups as essentialised and homogenous are therefore effectively avoided.

It provides the basis to identify the ways that different communities use open public spaces in the broader process of constructing and maintaining group identity and cohesion. Generated knowledge from a landscape perspective has enabled the study to look beyond the boundaries of a single park, and instead frame findings in terms of a broader study. This permits investigation into how participants move between parks, and also how 'natural' areas like storm-water channels/drainage easements and vacant lots are being used.

The study compares views and different park uses, and discovers how and why participants choose one type of park over another. This, combined with an understanding of open public space use, will provide management with a better scope in the policy phase of park management.

Method

The study for this project was carried out during 2002 in the Georges River area with the assistance of Dr Johanna



Kijas, who worked as a research assistant on the project. Ten to fifteen participants from each of the selected resident groups were interviewed in regards to the way they use parks. Some were asked to photograph the places they liked or disliked and to explain their reasons. Many of the participants mapped their movements, between the parks in the area and their homes, and within the park boundaries. On the basis of their personal histories or their experience in an overseas homeland, participants were asked about their current use and views of parks, and about what they hoped and expected from parks.

Findings

The longer-term residents offered valuable histories of environmental change in the study area, and also demonstrated how their surroundings have impacted and shaped their lives. In different ways, the immigrant groups explained that their views of parks have been moulded by experiences from rural or overseas homelands. Areas of common interest that arose within each group focused around the need to care for children, and also involved a religious or spiritual desire to be close to nature. It became apparent that each group possessed a very unique understanding of 'nature'.

The study identified differences in attitudes and usage that can be attributed to both cultural differences and to the group's dynamic relationships to each other and to the land. For example, Muslim participants were eager to utilise parks in the evenings for cultural and religious reasons, particularly during Ramadan with its dawn to dusk fasting. Muslim families often prefer to break their fast with family and friends in a parkland setting, but the closing hours and poor lighting of many parks makes this difficult. On the other hand, Vietnamese and Anglo-Australian groups indicated a different pattern of daily use. They preferred to access parks in the early morning hours, for collective or individual exercise. Anglo neighbours of parks often sought more lighting for security.

Another area of difference held

by the groups was the homeland culture and history influences on views of nature. The Muslim participants, mainly from Lebanon (which like Australia has a significant area of arid land within its borders), held a view of nature that included man-made and decorative water-related elements such as fountains. The older Vietnamese Australians suggested that the history of fierce guerrilla warfare in Vietnam, in which thick jungle was often a cover for opposing fighters and dangerous animals, left them feeling uneasy in dense Australian 'bush'. Many young men and women felt unsafe in bushland, and both Muslim and Vietnamese respondents perceived Australian open spaces as being 'empty' and 'lonely'. The perceptions of other ethnic groups were often expressed in spatial terms. For example, the Anglo interviewees suggested the river or bush was more dangerous for the recent migrants than for themselves because they attributed their greater familiarity with the bush to be a representation of national belonging.

Groups undoubtedly deploy different approaches as to how they behave towards people who look and behave differently to themselves. These open public lands can therefore exist as sites of inclusion or exclusion in the complex processes of social negotiations between groups. Work undertaken by the research team on the historical geographies of racial segregation in rural towns in NSW (Byrne, 2002; Goodall, 1996) suggests parallels in the way access and acceptance in public open spaces is asserted, policed and challenged. Investigation of what is accepted as 'normal' park behaviour and the sanctions exercised by authorities like park agencies against aberrant or different cultural expressions, offers an important insight into the spatial parameters of power in situations of tension.

Young Anglo teenagers expressed a preference to activities that took them deep in to the bush, while the Arabic speaking park visitors indicated the desire to 'just want to have picnics'. Muslim youths preferred visiting parks in quiet, peaceful areas

for contemplative periods close to nature. They felt that Anglo youth or park visitors were more inclined to participate in noisy, non-reflective park activities. Muslim women were shocked at the behaviour they witnessed of Anglo-Australians in relation to wasting water. See Table 1 for a review of different groups values for the parkland and Table 2 for how this might conflict with park management approaches.

Each of the groups expressed fears about both the 'bush' and the 'river', and often illustrated their stories with an account of a drowning accident or a lost child as Australian settlers have long done in the past. Importantly, the stories of these victims (often apocryphal) are now circulating on the Georges River and are frequently given an ethnic descriptor. In this way the story becomes a parable reflecting a particular group's unfamiliarity or negligence with the Australian environment. Even the recently immigrant groups identify such victims as belonging to one of the 'other' groups, and the way these stories are told is yet another way in which complex social relationships are being charted in spatial terms.

In this same park arises the issue of age and generational difference in park use. There was extensive evidence of young people's use of densely wooded, 'bushy' and secluded areas of the park for unauthorised but regular parties. These parties are reported to involve large numbers of youths, typically from a similar Anglo-Australian background as the neighbouring residents. The youths' activities aren't reported to be violent or anti-social. They simply reflect the predictable desires of adolescents to escape adult supervision and create places under their control which allow freedom for experimental socialisation. However, complaints from neighbours about the noise are still prevalent and park managers remain concerned about the resulting disturbance of the natural habitat.

This situation is similar to the interests in exploratory intercultural socialisation reported by non-Anglo youth of both Muslim and Vietnamese



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Table 1: Different cultural groups and their valuing of parkland

	Aboriginal	Lebanese and Palestinian Muslims	Vietnamese	Established Anglo-Australian
Relationship to area	Gangangara and Tharawal Land Councils, some members traditional owners, some immigrants from rural NSW.	The study area contains substantial numbers of Lebanese, Palestinian, Iraqi and Afghani Muslims.	This is an established community, many having arrived in the mid 1970s and early 1980s.	Many old Bankstown residents are of Irish extraction. But there is also a new, younger demographic.
Landscape Element – water/river	A part of cultural heritage expressed and demonstrated their concern for whole river rather than small parks/land.	Their interest in water is intense and religious.	Fishing has been embraced as a homeland activity in Australia.	Some have intense attachment but few stock phrases to express their feelings. Fishing a common male expression of association. New - drawn by improved river quality, and new interest in 'riverfront' land.
Nature	Cultural sites and sense of responsibility for overall environmental quality.	Their histories of cultural expression include an appreciation of man-made gardens, with an emphasis on fountains and ponds. The care of the environment has been a point of active communication between Anglo-Australian groups and Muslims, eg 'Clean Up Australia' activities and in water conservation public programs.	The guerrilla warfare, has had a heavy impact on their view of 'nature', as opposing fighting forces and their land mines, were often sheltered by thick jungle vegetation.	White settlers feared thick 'bush' because it might hide Aboriginal owners. Now a sense of confidence arising from familiarity is seen to distinguish them from 'new' migrants, sometimes in a gesture of national assertiveness.
Recreational use	Aboriginal people have memories of using parks and rivers around the eastern portion of the study area during the 1960s. Many people lived in the Herne Bay housing commission areas (low cost state housing). They remember swimming and exploring around the Salt Pan Creeks and playing along the stormwater channels and the railway bridge across the creek. Their use of local open spaces wasn't confined by the park boundaries [Chester iv 1995, 2002, Ely iv]. Today, Aboriginal women relate their memories of park use to children's recreational and sporting activities, but nevertheless express a sense of exclusion and insecurity about their presence in many parks.	The religiously active Muslim community holds strong interest in taking part in ritual activity. This requires access to parks and being 'close to nature'. However, their past use has been obstructed due to the ways their religion and culture shape their daily routines. During Ramadan, when Muslims fast from sunrise to sundown, community members often like to break their fast with extended family members and friends. Parks make good places to do this. However, the closing hours and the lack of adequate lighting at some parks make such gatherings extremely difficult.	Fishing/ family gatherings. The identification of fishing as a homeland activity suggests it's been eagerly embraced in Australia. An inexpensive and relatively accessible activity, they've often found it frustratingly due to restrictions. For example, fishing licences, regulations that restrict the size of fish caught, etc. Fishing is seen as a way to learn from Australians and as a way to cultivate home memories among younger family members. Fishing is moreover a gendered activity in Vietnam. Women did fish actively, though did so in more private, domestic situations, ponds in village or on own farm.	Walking. Family picnics and gathering with friends. Some bush walking, camping and appreciation of indigenous 'nature'. Young people use GRNP as a retreat from parental authority: 'cubby houses' of extensive size and scale built by mainly Anglo mid-late teenaged youth. Neighbours often regard these constructions as 'vandalism', even though bush is seldom being damaged. Instead, youths are seeking to create the illusion of a world excluding adults. Use of parklands by local government etc for public celebrations and anniversaries like Australia Day. These have added a nationalistic dimension that is associated with 'multiculturalism' and with assimilatory rituals like citizenship ceremonies.

backgrounds. Parks have been social arenas for many generations and as a result, park managers at the Georges River National Park have expressed strong interests in better understanding the cultural needs of diverse groups in order to encourage their legitimate goals into less destructive activities.

Implications

Nature itself has only recently been recognised as being influenced by social and cultural background. However, this view has been long established in the work of John Berger, particularly following his *Ways of Seeing* along with a substantial body of work in history (Cronon 1992, 1995), anthropology (Ching & Creed 1997, Strang 1997) and geography (Massey 1993, 1994). The question of what is regarded as 'natural' and particularly, what is 'native' is of direct relevance in an investigation of how a 'national' park is understood and valued in comparison to a recreational or floral display park. Conservation and protection may be as dependent on the positive values that are placed on indigenous environments, as they're on the punitive nature of any regulatory legislation. In Australian contexts, Tom Griffith (1996) has argued that much of the representation of 'native' bushland has depended on erasing the evidence and narratives of human occupation and alteration. 'Settler-colonisers' have sought to justify their land tenure by depicting settlement and later agriculture as a struggle against a pristine 'Nature'. There have been persistent tensions within the National Parks and Wildlife services within Australia and in other 'settler colonies' like the USA and Canada. These tensions exist between the staff that wish to recognise the role and conserve the evidence of human history in shaping and remaking 'natural' environments, and the staff committed to 'salvaging' and conserving an allegedly 'prehuman' environment as 'wilderness'. This process has major implications for the way in which indigenous histories and contemporary relations to parklands are seen in Australia. This process also suggests

Table 2: Examples of cultural groups social valuing versus park management approach

	Managers NPs and Councils	Users
Ablution blocks	Vulnerable to vandals, need to be protected from vandals. Unreliable technology requires high maintenance, etc.	Hygiene, kids (mothers in all cultures), ritual (Muslims).
Opening times	Safety of visitors and staff, staffing shortages, ease of surveillance etc, means daylight opening only.	Muslims ask for later closing times to allow family gatherings in Ramadan after dusk; neighbour groups want better lighting and access, for both security/safety and for own use.
Education	Need to teach migrants to appreciate 'native' nature and to conserve. Need to teach the recognition of the fragility of environment that may look sharp and tough-it may not appear either fragile or valuable. Fears that community use might overtax park resources. Preference to close access rather than to compromise.	Migrants want to use parks to perform activities that will help them to remember homeland, to feel comfortable with new neighbours. However, these may not involve recognition of qualities of 'indigeneity'. Desire to use parks and look after them, but in own terms.

there will be differences between the ways that Anglo-Australians and recent immigrants view 'bushland'. Anglo-Australians may have a long commitment to endorsing colonisation in Australia, and recent immigrants may be less concerned about justifying their tenure over land against claims by indigenous owners.

Perceptions of parks held by traditional parkland managers (cf. Wearing and Brock, 1991, Wearing and Bowden 1999) and those of public users and non-users need to be reconciled. The implications of the research have identified a gap between users' social valuing and management approaches (see Table 2). The next

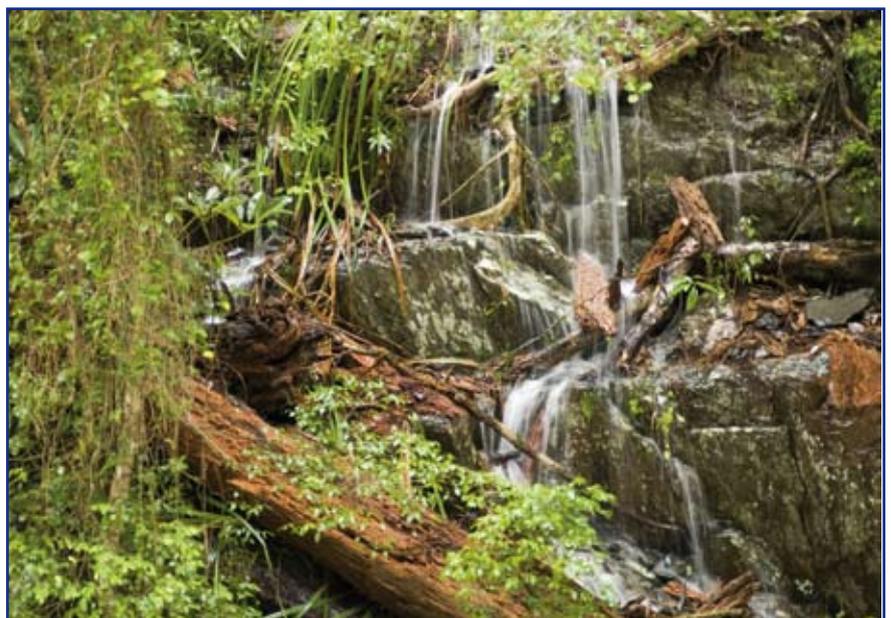


Table 3: Evaluation of visitor management models

Visitor Management Models	Level of Sophistication	Range of Contributing Stakeholders	Application by Heritage Managers
Tourism Optimization Management Model (TOMM)	Very high	Very high	Low
Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC)	Very high	High	Moderate
Visitor Impact Management Model (VIM)	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP)	High	High	Low
Visitor Activity Management Planning (VAMP)	High	High	Low
Recreational Carrying Capacity Model (RCC)	Low	Low	Moderate
Recreational Opportunity spectrum (ROS)	Moderate	Low	High

Adapted from McArthur (2000).

step is to help to bridge this gap. The research project will inform park managers wishing to identify culturally diverse visitor expectations and to develop management plans which will facilitate more inclusive, constructive intercultural usage of their parks.

Incorporating cultural diversity into visitor management

The next step in this paper is to develop a Cultural Opportunity Spectrum (COS) Model to provide a management approach that will integrate the social values of communities into the management planning process. The idea of a Cultural Opportunity Spectrum is introduced as a logical and defensible re-formulation of the original Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)². The modification of the ROS framework is not new and has been attempted previously with some success in other contexts such as the Tourism Opportunity Spectrum (Butler and Waldbrook, 1991), the Ecotourism Opportunity Spectrum (Boyd and Butler, 1996) and the Interpretation Opportunity Spectrum (Wearing & Archer 2002). Despite the existence of a number of fairly sophisticated and comprehensive frameworks, their implementation by park agencies have not been widespread, neither in Australia nor internationally (Newsome et al, 2002). Frameworks such as LAC, TOMM and VERP are expensive to implement and require basic research

on baseline conditions and causal processes associated with impacts, as well as continual monitoring of conditions associated with key indicators. These costs have meant a movement back to systems like the ROS. Many of these visitor management models are difficult to integrate and implement if approaches to cultural diversity in daily management are included. Here, the authors have chosen to provide an example using the COS to encourage further research into ways that Visitor Management Models can be examined to achieve the inclusion of cultural diversity in their construction and use. McArthur (2000) provided a qualitative assessment of the management model used by heritage managers (Table 3) that suggests that the ROS is the only one that has been applied regularly by managers. As a result, we have used this model as an example of how we may include cultural data into visitor management models.

What can the COS achieve for planners and managers?

The COS is a planning tool that enables managers to take research data on the different social values that divergent cultural groups hold for parks and integrate it into the park management. It takes a regional perspective in linking culturally diverse user markets with management approaches. Specifically, it is hoped the COS will:

1. Enable management to be better focused in order to meet diversity in social valuing of parklands for organisational and user needs.
2. Enable management to determine where changes in facilities and services are most needed and where they are not required.
3. Assist in the strategic management and planning process by providing an overview of cultural needs and opportunities within a region.
4. Better match facilities and services to users' cultural needs, preferences and experiences, thereby ensuring higher levels of user satisfaction and enabling user activities to be more oriented towards conserving public open spaces.

One of the major difficulties for planners and managers in dealing with the changing and dynamic nature of outdoor recreation, is having models that can be applied to daily management solutions. There is need for new approaches or modifications to existing planning models that can maintain and also improve the effectiveness and efficiencies resource allocation to a changing market. The authors have proposed a strategic and integrated framework to plan and manage the changing demand. This reflects the social valuing of parkland by ethnic groups in society which is based on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (Clark and Stankey 1979) and is developed from our research related to ethnic groups' social valuing of a park. The shift away from manager perceptions of resource user wants (Wearing and Huyskens 2001) and towards visitor-based management frameworks requires the development of approaches that accommodate

² The COS has been developed to help with the development, delivery and continuing appraisal of policy and planning in parks that takes into account social valuing by ethnic groups of parks and their facilities. The model is based on and incorporates elements from the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (Clark and Stankey 1979) and provides a management framework for specifically addressing cultural use of parks. Termed the Cultural Opportunity Spectrum (COS), it comprises six factors: audience; physical setting; cultural setting; resource-related activities and opportunities; infrastructure and services; and management parameters. The six factors of the COS model give consideration to both supply and demand side elements, and when integrated with each other, allows park managers to identify, develop and manage the range of opportunities based on ethnically diverse groups' social valuing of the park.



cultural user needs within management frameworks. The purpose of this paper is to outline how an existing framework that is extensively used in worldwide management planning has been modified to enable direct application within existing park management structures. It is hoped

that other forms of management structures that advance these ideas will be developed in the future.

The future

One of the major challenges facing park managers is matching the available tools to the desired recreation

experiences of visitors with opportunity settings best suited to providing those experiences (Clark and Stankey 1979). Clark and Stankey's (1979) statement is still true today as there are more cultural diverse user groups evident in urban parks (many NSW NPWS National Parks and in the Sydney Metropolitan

Table 4: Cultural visitor groups—Georges River National Park, NSW.

Primary Cultural Group	Description	Motivations for Visit	Barrier
Aboriginal	Gangangara and Tharawal Land Councils. Some members are traditional owners, some are immigrants from rural NSW.	Aboriginal people make some use of the areas parklands. Women relate their memories of park use to children's recreational and sporting activities.	Express a sense of exclusion and insecurity about their presence in many parks.
Lebanese and Palestinian Muslims	The study area contains substantial numbers of Lebanese, Palestinian, Iraqi and Afghani Muslims.	To view scenery and enjoy the park ambience with family or friends-with particular interest in ritual activity and getting 'close to nature'. To undertake less strenuous seasonal activities such as Ramadan, barbeques, etc.	Obstructions to their use of parks that relates to the ways in which religious culture and practice shape their daily routines. During Ramadan when Muslims fast from sunrise to sundown, community members often like to break their fast with extended family members and friends. Parks make good places to do this. However, the closing hours and the lack of adequate lighting at some parks make such gatherings extremely difficult.
Vietnamese	This is an established community, many having arrived in the mid 1970s and early 1980s.	Fishing family gatherings. The identification of fishing as a homeland activity suggests it's been eagerly embraced in Australia. An inexpensive and relatively accessible activity, they've often found it frustratingly due to restrictions, eg fishing licences, regulations that restrict the size of fish caught, etc. Fishing is seen as a way to learn from Australians and as a way to cultivate home memories among younger family members.	An inexpensive and relatively accessible activity, they've often found it frustratingly due to restrictions. E.g. fishing licences, regulations that restrict the size of fish caught, etc.
Established Anglo-Australia	Many old Bankstown residents are of Irish extraction. But there is also a new, younger demographic.	Walking, family picnics and gathering with friends. Some bush walking, camping and appreciation of indigenous 'nature'. Young people use GRNP as a retreat from parental authority: 'cubby houses' of extensive size and scale built by mainly Anglo mid-late teenaged youth. Neighbours often regard these constructions as 'vandalism', even though bush is seldom being damaged. Instead, youths are seeking to create the illusion of a world excluding adults.	Lack of relevant facilities for use.



region of adjacent to it). There is need for management tools that can account for the use preferences of these groups. McArthur (2000) work demonstrates that at present, visitor management models are either too complicated, too reliant on a wilderness management approach or not used in management at an onsite level. This research presents an example of how it can be integrated into the most widely used visitor management model in the hope that other models will be developed over time, and the planning and management for cultural use may develop mechanisms that will incorporate cultural diversity into visitor management approaches. Acknowledging this first step will assist NPWS planners and managers in a number of ways. Firstly, visitor facilities may be inappropriately located and may not meet the different needs of cultural visitors. Secondly, there is a need to provide visitors with opportunities that will enhance their experiences and assist in park management and protect park values. These issues are empirically supported by recent visitor studies (Griffin and Archer 2001, Archer and Griffin 2001, Archer and Griffin 2002) that found that the NPWS may not be efficiently and effectively allocating resources where they are most needed for recreation and tourism. Also, visitor needs depend on desired experiences and the types of settings used to maximise those experiences. In response, the Cultural Opportunity Spectrum proposed here provides managers with a framework that identifies, locates and plans for the motivations and opportunities of different cultural groups.

At the strategic level, the COS provides an approach that is based on more than simply the preferences and assumptions of managers that considers opportunities for cultural inclusiveness. In the planning process, the COS incorporates market demand across regions and within individual sites. Through deliberately broadening management's focus to increase awareness of the visitors' perspective, it attempts to connect recreation settings to the needs and satisfactions of targeted ethnic visitor groups in each setting type. Importantly, it also attempts to integrate a planning and management approach for cultural diversity that fits within NPWS strategic and park management processes.

The COS provides a valuable framework for the review and comprehensive inventorying of regional scale cultural opportunity that is based on park systems and individual parks and cultural mix. Because it uses the idea of current ROS zoning applications, and combines input from visitor studies of recreation needs and preferences, the COS allows any gaps to be identified when the distributing opportunities for cultural groups. The park managers are then able to use this information to provide opportunities in areas where research has identified the need for these opportunities that are in short supply. Because recreational use characteristics of an area may change over time, it is important that managers have planning and management tools that can accommodate shifting demands and identify and plan for the consequences of such change. The COS is such a tool, though to

be effectively utilized as a tool for planning and locating opportunities for cultural use, it will require further and continuing investigations on the visitors/cultural groups to a setting and their needs, desired experiences and satisfactions.

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