

Invite, Include, and Involve!

Racial Groups, Ethnic Groups, and Leisure

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Introduction

All people recreate. Most of us read books and/or magazines, take walks, watch television, tend gardens. Some people enjoy high-risk activities, such as bungee jumping, others prefer to participate in karate at the local boys' club or bingo at the local senior center, while others prefer family-oriented leisure activities such as miniature golf. Whatever the leisure activity and however the leisure profession delivers that service to the public, it is necessary for leisure professionals to think about who they serve. This chapter focuses on leisure services for ethnic and racial groups. Not meant to summarize all the leisure literature as it relates to racial and ethnic groups, the focus is on literature and theories that relate to differences among these groups.

A Changing Sociodemographic Profile

The demographic profile of the United States is changing toward a more racially and ethnically diverse population (Gramann; 1996). By the year 2025, the U.S. population is expected to increase by 50 million, of whom 17 million will be Hispanic American, 14 million African American, and 10 million from other groups (Dwyer, 1994). Hispanics are expected to become the nation's largest "minority" group (Davis, Haub, & Willette, 1983). While growth of racial and ethnic groups is widespread, concentrated areas exist. For example, although Hispanics are found across the United States and its territories, the

majority of Hispanics reside in four states: California, Texas, New York, and Florida (Marin & Marin, 1991).

Increased diversification within states is expected. The Hispanic population, for example, is estimated to rise from 30% to 48% of California's population by the year 2040 (Lawrence, 1998). The numbers within other racial and ethnic groups have and will continue to change. Asians and Pacific Islanders, for example, grew from 3.8 million in 1980 to an estimated 6.9 million in 1989, an 80% increase (O'Hare, 1990). During the same time frame, the African American population grew by 14%. Racial and ethnic group growth is an important development and one worthy of attention by leisure service professionals.

There are many variables that interact with race and ethnicity, such as age and social class, that are addressed elsewhere in this text. Managers and programmers are responsible for understanding how these demographics influence the leisure behavior of particular groups and the ability to serve a diverse user base. Imagine, for example, that you are offering a youth program or a domestic-tourism event in California, where a large number of Hispanics reside. If you offer your services only in English and employ only English speakers, you are missing a large portion of the people potentially served and, subsequently, money and program longevity.

As managers, we think we know what kinds of services particular groups need and how they should be delivered; however, we may be surprised. Chavez (1995), for example, found that many Hispanics participating in traditional outdoor-recreation activities (such as horseback riding), plan to participate in adventure travel (such as hang gliding) and other typically White outdoor-recreation pursuits (such as camera safaris). Thus, agencies are advised to plan on an increasingly diverse user base in these areas. Have we inadvertently stereotyped other racial and ethnic groups away from a range of activities they might find rewarding? With changing demographics, it is essential for programmers to acquire and maintain an updated profile of their current and potential constituents.

Definitions

Sociologists think of *race* as a social construct. For them, race denotes a group of people who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as possessing certain distinctive and hereditary traits.

An *ethnic group* or *ethnicity* is also a social construct. But whereas race is based on the perception of physical differences, ethnicity is based on the perception of cultural differences. An ethnic group is a group of people who perceive themselves and are perceived to share cultural traits such as language, religion, family customs, and preferences in food.

Race and ethnicity are *labels* that people create and apply (Light, Keller, & Calhoun, 1989). The words *race* and *ethnicity* are sociological, that is, these are social constructs and labels used out of convenience. Consider for example, the label *Asian American*. Though we conveniently group a large number of people into this category, it does not mean each member of this group is exactly alike.

There are many subgroups that get included in the label *Asian American* including Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Malaysian. Within each of these subgroups exists a great deal of diversity. Leisure literature suggests that you not make the mistake of treating all members of a racial or ethnic group as homogeneous (Baas, Ewert, & Chavez, 1993; Carr & Williams, 1992; Chavez, 1993; Gramann, 1996) for in-group differences exist (Chavez, 1993; Dwyer & Gobster, 1996; Heywood & Engelke, 1995). Yet it is easier for us to use terms like *Asian American* or *Native American* than it is for us to identify each subgroup or individuals within those subgroups. This chapter uses the generic terms of convenience, race and ethnicity, but does not assume group homogeneity.

Another frequently used term is *minority*, another socially constructed term of convenience. This label can be misleading in that it suggests small numbers where large numbers of people may exist. It also diminishes and defines a group status relative to the majority. Rather than using the *minority* term, some prefer *people of color* or *people of difference*.

Phrases often change and go in and out of favor. An example is Afro American which changed to Black American and then changed to African American. You need to educate yourself about the particular populations you serve and the appropriate and preferred terms to use. Some groups have multiple term preferences. For example, "Hispanics" have multiple terms that they may prefer individually; these include Central American, Chicano, Cuban American, Hispanic, Latino/a, and Mexican American. While it is easier to use one term in a chapter such as this one (which uses Hispanics for this group), you will need to confer with your constituents to find out their preferences.

Four other terms need to be defined. *Racism* is the belief that some races or ethnic groups are inherently inferior and others inherently superior. Racism can be manifested in either *prejudice* and/or *discrimination*. Prejudice can be defined as a predisposition to like or dislike people for their real or imagined social characteristics while discrimination refers to the act of disqualifying or mistreating people on the basis of their group membership (Light et al., 1989). The final term is *institutional discrimination* which refers to the policies and programs that systematically deny opportunities and equal rights to members of particular groups. Though institutional discrimination more typically refers to policies and actions in the political arena, in schooling and in housing, it can also occur in leisure services. This chapter asks you to examine how well you, and the organization for which you work now or in the future, guard against racism and discrimination at personal and organizational levels.

Why Study Race and Ethnicity?

The study of race and ethnicity is an important task for leisure research and leisure-service delivery. To serve the changing population requires some level of knowledge about the interaction of race, ethnicity, and leisure. As leisure programmers and managers, you need to understand cultural variability in both leisure activity behavior and its meaning.

Cultural Variability

Racial and ethnic groups are attracted to and continue participation in particular activities because of the meaning of the activity or the place it occurs. For example, some Hispanics reported that particular outdoor-recreation sites were reminiscent of their homeland and some Asians indicated they harvested bracken fern primarily because they love the mountains (though they also picked the ferns to use in foods). You can best serve your clientele by knowing why they use your services. Do not presume that racial and ethnic groups attach similar meanings to a place or service that you do.

Hispanic and Asian recreationists tend to participate in outdoor recreation activities in large groups (Chavez, 1992, 1993; Simcox, Pfister, & Hodgson, 1989). This pattern may continue for at least two reasons: (1) cultural beliefs about extended family participation in activities and (2) continued growth patterns predicted for these groups. If you are going to program an activity for large groups, you need to consider designing the activity and/or place with them in mind. In addition, you also need to consider the social aspects of the activity—the cultural beliefs that induce these groups to participate with extended family members.

Beyond group size, the type of recreation activities engaged in differ among groups. One example of this can be found in Carr and Chavez' (1993) description of "barbecuing" for Hispanic groups as compared to White groups. Though in both instances we would call it *barbecuing*, the activity itself and the facilities needed vary greatly. For example, the typical Hispanic-group barbecue included a large number of people, on-site food preparation, and an entire day in duration. This case of barbecuing differed from what was "known" as barbecuing for Whites, which was thought to be a family of four, home-prepared food, and a brief visit to the barbecue site. What other changes are in store in what we "know" of a particular activity? Think back to the 1970s when roller-skating was an activity done on city streets or at roller rinks, and each skate had two rows of wheels. Now look at roller skates that have in-line wheels, and realize that an industry and services have sprung up in the wake of this change—such as skate parks and roller-hockey rinks. Some skates with wider wheels are now being used on outdoor trails. You will probably see evidence of change, including changes generated by racial and ethnic groups, in as many arenas as you can imagine.

Ethnic groups may tend to recreate in specific places (Simcox et al., 1989). Overall forest use is primarily by White people but some racial and ethnic groups are found at specific areas (Chavez, Winter, & Mainieri, 1993, 1994). Site observations suggest that there may be recreation enclaves (Chavez, 1993). That is, groups of Mexican Americans located in one area, some Central American groups in another area, some Asian groups located in yet another—all along the same recreation corridor, all using the river for water play and the area for barbecuing. Thus, program participants may prefer to recreate with others they perceive to be similar to themselves and may look for places where they feel comfortable and welcome. Your task will be to accommodate as many of those desires as possible.

When planning leisure services for racial and ethnic groups, you should think about why they might use your service or how you might attract members of these groups to your agency and its areas and resources. Can your agency offer a leisure activity or site that is meaningful to a variety of racial- and ethnic-group members? Is there some service your agency can provide that would enhance the cultural beliefs of a group? Current participation patterns may not fully reflect the preferences of a group but might be the result of limited resources for travel, fear of discriminatory behavior, and lack of knowledge, experience, or equipment (Dwyer & Gobster, 1996).

Theories About Different Participation Patterns

Much of the early work that investigated the relationship between ethnicity and race and leisure participation focused on outdoor recreation behavior (O'Leary & Benjamin, 1982; Washburn & Wall, 1980). Washburn and Wall (1980) conducted one of the earliest studies; they concluded that Whites preferred wildland activities and that Blacks preferred urban-recreation experiences. Recent research on the recreational activities of Hispanic Americans indicates that they tend to participate in a different array of recreational activities and prefer to participate in larger groups (Chavez, 1993; Chavez, Winter, & Mainieri, 1993, 1994; Hutchison, 1987). Dwyer (1994) compared the participation patterns of Whites, Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian Americans and found important differences among the groups.

There have been several hypotheses proposed and tested to help explain these differences in ethnic and racial participation patterns. The first is the *marginality hypothesis*, which states that the underparticipation of ethnic and racial groups results primarily from limited economic resources. This marginal position leads to disadvantages for racial and ethnic group participants such as fewer recreational opportunities, lack of access to transportation, underdeveloped program availability, and lack of program sensitivity to meet particular needs and interests. The marginal position is often the result of historical and ongoing patterns of discrimination.

A second competing explanation, called the *ethnicity hypothesis*, suggests that ethnic and racial participation patterns result from culturally based differences in value systems, norms, and leisure-socialization patterns. Thus, the African Americans' preference for urban recreation experiences over wildland settings is due to their socialization from other family members. Similarly, the tendency for Hispanics to participate in larger, often extended family units results from their strong cultural emphasis on the extended family unit (Hutchison, 1987).

Both explanations have been reviewed and subjected to empirical testing (Allison, 1988; Floyd, 1991, 1998; Gramann, 1996; Gramann & Allison, 1999). For example, investigators have attempted to identify the extent to which social class (e.g., socioeconomic status) influences participation patterns. Several researchers found that even when variables such as income, gender, area of residence, and household size were statistically controlled, ethnic and racial differences in participation patterns persisted (Dwyer, 1994; O'Leary & Benjamin,

1982; Stamps & Stamps, 1985; Washburn & Wall, 1980). These types of studies suggest that marginality alone may not provide strong explanatory power of racial and ethnic differences. Other studies provide support for the ethnicity thesis. For example, Dragon (1986) identified salient differences in the meanings attached to the use of national parks by American Indians and Whites. Allison and Geiger (1993) found that although older Whites and Chinese Americans preferred similar recreational activities, the meaning of the activity differed by group. Thus, both groups enjoyed watching television, but the Chinese Americans used it primarily to help them improve their English-speaking skills.

There is merit to each of these theories, however each alone has not been able to explain the myriad of observed racial and ethnic differences. Other alternative explanations include *selective acculturation* and *perceived discrimination*. Selective acculturation (Keefe & Padilla, 1987) suggests that ethnic groups “choose” strategic traits from the dominant culture that help them function more effectively (e.g., English-language skills, schooling, economic activity) but maintain distinct cultural values in other life domains. Thus, cultural traditions (e.g., music choices, rearing practices, leisure choices) may remain rooted in the values and norms of the particular ethnic and racial group. Perceived discrimination suggests that some ethnic groups do not participate in various leisure programs because they believe they are unwelcome. Research by several investigators (Chavez, 1991, 1993; Gobster & Delgado, 1992; West 1993) suggests that several racial and ethnic groups have experienced and/or perceive varying levels of discrimination and bigotry in outdoor recreation environments.

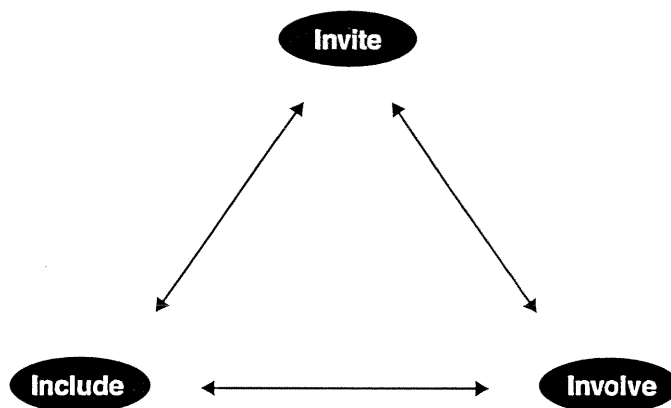
Important research continues to explore the relationship between race and ethnicity and leisure. Regardless of the explanations that could be used, your task will be to find ways to serve racial and ethnic groups in your programs and activities. You will need to ask yourself what barriers exist in your program that might dissuade or prevent different groups from engaging in particular activities. In turn, you need to think about what programs or services you and your agency can offer to offset the barriers.

Regardless of the explanations that could be used, your task will be to find ways to serve racial and ethnic groups in your programs and activities. One tool you can use is termed the “*T*” *triad*—invite, include, and involve.

Invite, Include, Involve!

One of the most effective tools your agency can use to help ensure that members of different racial and ethnic communities feel welcomed to your program is to make strategic plans to invite, include, and involve them (see Figure 5). What does this mean? An important first step is to *invite* racial and ethnic groups to use your services. One simple way to invite ethnic groups is to be sure your literature, brochures or posters, includes racial and ethnic minority-group members in the photographs. A simple step, yet effective. Is this enough? What does it truly mean to invite at all levels of organizational life?

Another triad point is to *include* racial and ethnic groups in the leisure field. Why should we include them? How do we go about including them?

Figure 5 The "I" Triad

What does it truly mean to include at all levels of organizational life? Who is responsible for doing this? How do we get agencies to include ethnic groups in meaningful ways? One way to include racial and ethnic groups requires hearing what they have to say about your services. For example, it requires asking their opinions about using a community center or recreating at a city park.

The final triad point is to *involve* ethnic groups in the leisure field. If they are included, are they not involved? What does it mean to involve them? Who is responsible for doing this? For many agencies, it is done at a superficial, symbolic, or rhetorical level. Brochures, for example, may be symbolic if we really do not involve racial and ethnic groups in decision making. To involve racial and ethnic groups requires even more effort. To involve them means to get them on your board of directors, to hire them into management positions and front-line areas. How do you move beyond symbolism? What barriers have you seen in action? How do you combat them? If you are not actively involved in the process, you are accepting the status quo, and continuing the patterns evidenced to date.

The following is an example of an effort to invite, include and involve racial and ethnic minorities in leisure. Included in it are samples of markers for which you and your agency should look.

Example of an "I" Triad Success

The effort in southern California was to serve Hispanic recreationists at a site located within an urban-proximate

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National Forest. The site needed renovation; it had been constructed in the late 1920s and was meant to serve up to 250 individuals. There were the typical barbecue tables placed hundreds of yards apart, each with a barbecue grill, and a trash dumpster located in each of four parking lots. By the mid-1980s the barbecue area was receiving up to 1,700 individuals at one time. Earlier studies at this area showed that primarily Hispanics visited it (actually several subgroups of U.S.-born Hispanics, Mexico-born Hispanics, and Central America-born Hispanics) who typically came in family groups of 12 or more. Most of the barbecue tables were located away from the nearby river and often were in the sun. The site customers avoided the small tables by recreating at the water's edge, under the shade. The site managers wanted to redevelop the barbecue area and wanted it to serve the Hispanic clientele. This is an example of inviting this ethnic group—the managers are seeking to serve them.

Inviting is a good first step but more work is required for the remainder of the "I" triad, to include and involve. For these steps social scientists of the Pacific Southwest Research Station participated. The first efforts were to evaluate what the literature indicated about these customer groups. Of most interest were the studies that examined development preferences of Hispanic outdoor recreationists as compared to Whites (Baas et al., 1993; Chavez, 1998b; Chavez, Baas, & Winter, 1993). These studies indicated that Hispanics at specific outdoor-recreation sites had expressed desires for site facilities and amenities, including tap water, flush toilets, large barbecue grills, large tables, groups of tables, and trash cans.

To include Hispanics in the process we conducted a survey on-site and sought their opinions about the site renovation both before and after it occurred. We used a survey instrument that was available in both English and Spanish and was administered by a bilingual-study team. This information was used by the resource managers in their site renovation plans. The survey assisted resource managers to more easily acquire funding because they involved their Hispanic clientele in the process. Finally, we sought the opinions of the barbecue-area clientele after renovations had been completed to be sure that the renovations fit their needs (Chavez, 1998a). The people at the renovated site were quite pleased with the site renovations and were now using the site facilities and amenities in ways that minimized resource impacts.

This example demonstrates how successful such an endeavor has been and can be. The efforts were getting information from the ethnic-group members, acting on that information, and following up to be sure the actions taken were appropriate.

Questions to Ask

Do the clientele of your program or at your facility "match" the sociodemographic profile of the area? Are there groups you are not serving at all or groups that are underserved? For example, are all the summer campers White but your surrounding residential area 25% Asian? If yes, how can you change the program to strengthen the numbers of Asian participants? What do the different ethnic

groups value? What do they enjoy? If you offer arts-and-crafts programs or music, drama, and dance, how will you ensure all groups will participate? Can you think of approaches that will ensure racial- and ethnic-group involvement? What barriers to inclusion can you think of? Is there a lack of programs that you offer to racial and ethnic groups? Is there a lack of acceptance by the people within the agency? How will you go about including racial and ethnic groups on your advisory board and make it possible for them to participate? You should be able to list the benefits that racial and ethnic groups can expect and the methods you will use to determine if these are derived (Orthner, 1998).

When programming, recognize that racial and ethnic groups are increasingly diverse and dynamic in composition and function, as well as diverse in leisure interests and expectations (Siengenthaler & O'Dell, 1998). When you invite, include, and involve racial and ethnic groups you are improving their quality of life as well as your agency or program.

The "I" triad is a challenge issued to you to be a very active participant in the process of serving and employing racial and ethnic groups in the field of leisure. There are many benefits from the "I" triad including learning about diversity, increasing communication, learning socially appropriate behavior, and developing friendships and social skills (Modell & Imwold, 1998). These benefits are quite varied and the beneficiaries include you, your agency or program, and the racial and ethnic groups you serve.

Strategies for Success

Educate Yourself

To effectively serve racial- and ethnic-group members—to invite, include, and involve them—requires an ongoing educational process. Know who your clientele are, who they might be (they could be people who live nearby or you might work at a travel destination and people come from all over, including other countries), and who you are willing to serve. If you have a site that meets the needs of the average White family group, are you prepared to serve a larger group, as you might get with Hispanic or Asian American customers? Do you have the knowledge and the funding and the personnel and time required to undertake such a task? If yes, how will you know what changes to make? Will you be serving the current clientele only? Agencies are differentially able to serve racial and ethnic groups (Simcox, 1988) for a variety of reasons. To alleviate this inclination, the obvious short answer is to invite, include, and involve racial and ethnic groups when developing opportunities, when renovating sites, and when undertaking any change.

Of the many ways to learn more about your actual or potential customer group, a most frequently used option is customer surveys (current, possible, and planned). What you should include in the survey depends on why you want the information—how will you use the data? At minimum you will need sociodemographic information such as age, gender, race and ethnicity, and income. Some leisure researchers, for example, report correlations between

education level, income, and leisure participation (Floyd, Gramann, & Saenz, 1993). Some sociodemographic information will be available to you from census data or local groups. When using secondary data (that is, data not collected by you or for your specific needs) you should use caution in its interpretation.

Educate Your Agency

According to Dwyer and Gobster (1992), manager and planner uncertainty with racial and ethnic minorities is due to their limited prior experiences serving these groups, few or no ethnic employees on their staffs, and low representation by racial and ethnic groups in recreation planning and public-involvement efforts. Thus, you need to educate your agency.

One step toward education is to hire racial- and ethnic-group members into the agencies (Magill, 1995) at both entry-level and management positions. Another step is to develop multiple service-delivery strategies (Baas, 1992; Chavez, Baas, & Winter, 1993) if your clientele come from more than one racial or ethnic group. Washington (1990) suggests other strategies such as including racial and ethnic groups in project planning, intensifying research into racial and ethnic leisure-activity constraints, and emphasizing an appreciation for racial and ethnic diversity in recreation behavior and preferences. Other strategies include staff training, developing goals related to ethnic diversity and measures of success to meet those goals, expanding the activities or services you offer, promoting your services, and focusing on public awareness. Remember that your job is to facilitate leisure experiences, not just provide leisure activities, with the goal of meeting constituents' experiential needs (Lee, 1999).

Learn to Communicate

Good communication skills are needed if we hope to invite, include, and involve racial and ethnic groups in the leisure opportunities provided. Agencies typically use persuasion and mass media to communicate. Both of these represent communication to, not with, the public (Simcox & Hodgson, 1993). Simcox and Hodgson found that ethnic groups (they focused on Hispanics) have other preferred methods of communication such as primarily interpersonal channels—family and friends. Replicated several times (Chavez, Winter, & Mainieri, 1993, 1994), these results are especially useful to understand the communication patterns and preferences of Hispanics (at least those who reside in the southwestern United States). What may be a preferred method of communication for an agency or other service provider, such as radio or newspaper announcements, may not be the most useful technique to reach all racial and ethnic groups.

After conducting site observations and on-site interviews with outdoor recreationists in southern California, Chavez (1993) suggested several communication techniques:

1. Signs, brochures, and other written publications in multiple languages.
2. Interpersonal-level communication.

3. Efforts to speak the client's primary language.
4. No assumptions that because someone looks like they speak Spanish, they do.
5. No assumptions that people are literate in their primary language.

A common mistake made when translating materials for people who read languages other than English is to do a "simple translation": write the English version and take it to someone that either speaks Spanish or knows a bit of Spanish and ask him or her to translate it. Problems can and will occur with this method. One correcting technique is to use "back translations" (Marin & Marin, 1991). Continuing with the English to Spanish example, you would write the English version, ask a paid expert to translate it for you to Spanish, then pay another expert to translate the Spanish version to English. You can compare the two English versions and get an accurate translation but you will want to be culturally correct as well.

There are myriad ways to use "communication" to invite, include, and involve racial and ethnic groups in leisure pursuits. First, ask yourself if it will take individual or institutional change? Will your approaches to communication focus on the people you are hoping to send messages to, or will they focus on developing and implementing those messages? To include racial and ethnic groups in communications you could survey their opinions about the services that you offer. Until you ask them if your service is up to par, how can your agency know for sure? Can you presume that if they are not using a program or service it is because they do not need it or like it? Maybe they have not heard of it. Keep in mind though, that leisure is a process and that just because people have knowledge about somewhere or something does not mean that they will use it. To involve them in your communications may require your active solicitation of racial and ethnic groups into your decision-making processes. And once you invite and get them there, get and use their input. You need to involve racial- and ethnic-group members in all levels of agency life.

A Challenge to You

Is it enough to invite racial and ethnic groups into leisure pursuits? No. Is it enough to include? No. Is it enough to involve? No. But be satisfied that you are on the way to surviving as an agency or provider by doing so. You need to embrace the sociodemographic changes and have them be a part of everything you do; strive not to let this be an afterthought. Take the lead for your agency or for whomever you work, seek out the literature and ask opinions from others that have tried to serve racial and ethnic groups.

What you are being asked to do may require a fourth "I"—innovate. You and the agency where you will work may need to come up with many new ways to serve the changing population. You may have to develop new programs or offer services that you had not imagined or offer a new slant on the current services and programs.

Be prepared to make mistakes. Others have, you will too. One mistake was made on a national forest in southern California. A professor from a local university sent team members in school-color T-shirts to gather data at a site frequented by Hispanics. This seemed like a reasonable thing to do, except the school's primary color was green—a green very close in color to the green worn by members of the immigration service. You can probably guess the rest, several of the site clientele were leery of speaking to the researchers and others literally ran for the hills. So, the university researchers learned from the mistake and moved on. You too will learn from your mistakes and move on. Remember, leisure is a process, not an outcome. Make it your goal to work on the “I” triad. Invite. Include. Involve.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for you to involve racial and ethnic groups in leisure?
2. What would be gained by racial and ethnic group members conducting leisure research?
3. Is the “I” triad the best way to think about inclusion? What else would you consider?
4. What structural barriers has your agency or leisure outfit placed (inadvertently or not) that impact racial and ethnic groups?
5. Why do you think many of the explanations for the leisure behavior of racial and ethnic groups take an individualistic approach rather than a structural focus? How would you change that?
6. Why has most of the work in this area been conducted in outdoor-recreation arenas? How would you change that?
7. Describe the perfect customer to your leisure venue and describe the perfect management of that venue. Have you included racial and ethnic group members?

Suggested Reading

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