

# **British Columbia Parks and The Indo-Canadian Community: Implications and Policy Recommendations.**

**By Tara Stamnes**  
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Report prepared at the request of The Green Party of British Columbia, in partial fulfillment of  
Geography 419: Research in Environmental Geography, for Dr. David Brownstein

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## Executive Summary

With high immigrant populations, park use has been seen to decrease overall. It is important that policy makers bolster immigrant and ethnic populations' park use, as it can provide societal and individual benefits, along with supporting the Green Party of British Columbia's 6 Core Principles that focus on diversity, inclusion, and environmental mindedness. Providing adequate and accessible opportunities is fair and equitable, and follows the structure of good policy under the Green Party of British Columbia.

Informed by a lengthy literature review, results from an online survey, and guidelines provided by the study partner, the Green Party of British Columbia, the policy recommendations for this study are threefold as stated below:

1. **The creation and distribution of a program plan aimed at the Indo-Canadian community that would target family inclusion in parks and outdoor recreation.** Of the three, this recommendation is informed most in depth by the literature and survey results, which focus on family, relevant activities, and ethnic awareness.
2. **The suggested subsidization of pre-existing and future programs for immigrant and ethnic populations in parks.** Funding is the major challenge for those programs that already exist, and subsidization through the form of grants or otherwise could help alleviate this issue, and allow for the insured longevity of such programs for the future.
3. **Further research.** As this is a complex, and sensitive topic, it is naturally impossible to include all the relevant information and sub-information in a single study, calling for the deepened understanding in topics such as the difference of age demographics, and their effects on park use, along with a more substantive survey which could help in generating more holistic data results for the Indo-Canadian population.

The study methods used included a literature review and online survey. The literature opened up information regarding under-representation theory, allowing reads and policy makers to understand the deep importance of cultural context in framing perspectives around nature, outdoor recreation, and parks. The study exemplifies how one's religion, location of origin/ancestry, and other cultural factors can shape understandings of outdoor activity and environmental awareness. It is important to have a multi-faceted understanding of why different cultural groups may use parks differently than seen in the typical North American pattern, which allows for more suitable policies, along with greater cultural awareness. The online survey conducted illuminated some key trends in Indo-Canadian park use and value bases in British Columbia. The importance of family in outdoors recreation, particular barriers (particularly lack of knowledge), and commonly participated-in activity types were all illuminated through the survey's resultant data. Each of these points and more were considered in the creation of policy recommendations, and are important for deeper understanding in the topic of changing ethnic demographics in British Columbia and park use.

## Introduction

Policy makers in British Columbia must focus attention to new and established immigrant populations and their interactions with nature in order to create all-encompassing park policies in the province. BC's highly multicultural population begs the question of its inherent effect on park use, and how this may change with changing demographics. By using the Indo-Canadian population of the Lower Mainland Region as an example, this study will follow these considerations in order to build policy recommendations for the Green Party of Canada, which will ultimately focus on the inclusion of Indo-Canadian families in parks through various avenues. Human park use is beneficial for environmental care, the economy, and for individuals' physical and mental health. Overall, lower immigrant park use calls for needed governmental policies and programs that will bolster outdoor recreation in municipal and provincial parks for not only the Indo-Canadian community, but for multicultural communities in general. Evidence from pre-existing literature and conducted surveys in this study point to policies that are aimed specifically at creating opportunities which should respect cultural differences through the inclusion of native attitudes and practices, while promoting the persistence and importance of traditional Canadian outdoor activities. With their various merits, programs already in existence can be used as a good starting point for implementation for policy makers such as the Green Party of Canada. An open mindset and insight into the deeper cross-cultural barriers for park use will be needed to implement these policies dutifully.

To begin this study, I will outline the methods used along with their analysis, including an in-depth literature review, and my own data produced through the conduction of an online survey. The methods and their concurrent analyses will allow for a deeper understanding of the proposed recommendations as will follow. Following the Methods and Analysis section, I will outline the framework for the policy recommendations, and then explain the three policy recommendations themselves: a program plan, subsidization of pre-existing programs, and further research. Each of these policy recommendations takes the Green Party's considerations, including their 6 Core Guiding Principles, and their policy-building guidelines, into account in order to make the recommendations relevant. Through this approach, the policy recommendation formation for the Indo-Canadian community will be specific, though highly applicable to other ethnicities as well.

## Methods and Analysis

### Literature Review

#### *Study Background: Site, Population, and Changing Demographics*

Vancouver's Lower Mainland Region enfold a highly ethnic population. Approximately 45% of British Columbians are from an ethnic (non-Caucasian or Aboriginal) background, which is very high compared to similarly sized (population) cities in the Pacific Northwest such as Portland, which has only a ~25% ethnic population (QuickFacts). While many backgrounds are part of this ethnic

makeup, it was important to consider scale in this study, and the population has been narrowed to a single ethnic community in Vancouver. The Indo-Canadian population is the second largest immigrant community in the Lower-Mainland-Southwest Development Region of British Columbia, which contains Metro Vancouver and approximately 76% of British Columbia's immigrants (Census 2006, np). While immigrant numbers in British Columbia have been declining since their highs in the 1990s, the Indo-Canadian demographic continues to grow substantially in cities such as Surrey, leading it to be an important study group for policy makers (Demographic Information, np). With generally such high numbers of immigration, policy makers such as the Green Party of British Columbia are trying to understand why it is that "visitor numbers to... parks are declining" (Yanchyk, 3). Subsequently, it is important to understand how to most efficiently and respectfully bolster visitor numbers to receive the many benefits that come with park use.

### *Importance of Study*

With the apparent decline of park use with higher ethnic or immigrant populations, as seen throughout the literature, the consideration towards whether or not it is important to include these populations in parks may arise (Stodolska and Walker, 2213). Park use can be seen as important for many reasons and has been studied widely in the fields of recreation ecology and recreation geography. The argument that immersion in nature or outdoor recreation can lead to a deeper care for the environment is substantiated by many scholars and organizations alike (Parks Canada, 3; Buckley, 399). Park use can perhaps help relieve detachment from nature that seems to exist today as a result of high amounts of urbanization worldwide. There are also perceived economic benefits including tourism profits and socio-economic benefits including employment, investment opportunities, and reduced healthcare costs (Uptal, 311; Parks Canada, 3).

Beyond the environmental and societal benefits of park use, there is also inherent value in parks for immigrants at the individual level. Canadian academic literature discusses the importance of outdoor activities and national parks in Canadian identity, and how immigrant inclusion in these activities is key for unifying Canadian citizens (Conservation, np; Yanchyk, 2; Geddes, 96). Studies have indicated connecting through recreation services can reduce social isolation in a new country and allow immigrants to learn about their surrounding culture (Yu, 251; Forde, 127). Thus overall, outdoor recreation can be a source for inter-cultural friendships and understanding for immigrants (Blattel, 10).

Park use can also bolster physical, psychological, and emotional health, boosting self-esteem and strength (Yanchyk, 5; Forde, 127; Blattel, 10; Yu, 251). Bolstering spirituality is also a benefit received from park use and outdoor recreation. National and Provincial Parks can be a source of artistic expression or provide a sense of peace or stress relief (Parks Canada, 6-7). All of these benefits could help to combat the perceived mental health disturbances caused by immigration and bi-cultural identity formation, as displayed in one study, thus making park use a specifically beneficial remedy

for immigrants (Sodhi, 1992). In sum, policy makers can understand and promote park use as beneficial for the environment but more so, for immigrants' individual health and inclusion in Canadian society.

### *Under-Representation Theory*

Much of the recreation ecology literature that exists today on immigrant park use discusses the theory of under-representation. This theory in recreation depicts the idea of public policy managers and academics assuming that with increased immigrant populations, comes decreased use in parks (and therefore a lack of immigrant representation in these spaces) (Madsen, 295). The theory generally looks at perceived constraints for recreation, and in turn, builds policies that try to take away these particular barriers (Stodolska and Walker, 2014; Yanchyk, 1). These barriers can include different value sets, poor resource access (including knowledge, expenses, language, and transportation), or lack of opportunity (Geddes, 83; Madsen, 295; Yanchyk, 7; Yu, 251). Though oftentimes accurate, these assumptions can be reductionist in practice, and many scholars have pointed out that it is important to be aware of the issues surrounding under representation theory (Kloek et al, 58).

Though under-representation theory can be helpful in understanding some of the immigrant barriers to park use, policy makers must understand its inherent shortcomings. Recreation geographers now understand that recreation is seen through various different lenses based on one's culture. Studies by Blattel and Madsen et al. both suggest that assuming there is a single understanding of park use would be a reductionist practice (Blattel; Madsen et al., 296). Cultural collective identities also play a key role in building understanding of recreation: "the local ideals, hierarchies, and assumptions underpin... the uses of and interactions with environments" (Hughes 272; Madsen et al., 296). The same activities may have different meanings for various multicultural groups. Geddes discusses how Chinese immigrants often saw wilderness as the "antithesis of civilization" (34). "...Indo-[Canadians]...based their lifestyles on the traditions, values, beliefs, and expectations of their collectivistic culture" which differs from the perceived individualistic traditional outdoors activities seen in North America (Sodhi, 189; Geddes, 1). In order to involve immigrant communities in these traditional activities, there is a need to fuel a better understanding of the "certain characteristics" that Madsen et al. mention will frame recreation and park use for immigrants (291).

Stodolska and Walker, Kloek et al., Geddes, and Forde each talk about a similar group of cultural factors affecting recreation/park attitudes that must be considered, including: religion, previous locationality, immigration generation (first or second generation immigrants), type of education, language, socio-economic class, and acculturation/bi-cultural identity formation (Stodolska and Walker, 14; Kloek et al., 56; Geddes, 51; Forde 135). Each of these will affect this particular study in a unique way, two examples of which are particularly important in the Indo-Canadian context include religion and previous locationality, meaning an immigrant's native homestead including location,

physical geography, and culture (Uptal 65-67). Details on each of these and their subsequent effects on recreation understandings can be seen below.

- a. **Religion:** Being a key facet of life in India, Religion can play a big role in understandings of the environment and therefore recreation for Indo-Canadians. Assuming the majority of Indo-Canadian immigrants come from Sikh (based on the high Punjabi population in the City of Surrey [Demographic Information, np]), or Hindu religion, policies should be implemented in a way that reflects their specific religious values specifically towards the importance of interconnectedness and aims of harmony between living and non-living things in both religions (Palmer and Finlay, 132-137; Singh, np; Hughes, 272; Mansingh, 65-74; Radharani, 499).
- b. **Previous Locationality:** This topic is also of great importance, as India is a highly diverse country geographically and culturally, which can lead to completely different relationships with outdoor recreation and park use. Regularized relationships and experiences with space can change perceptions of nature and recreation (Uptal 65-67). One study showed that those who were used to areas with nature-based tourism or had ample recreation activities in their native region connected more similarly with parks as the majority of Canadians (Uptal, 311; Pal, 380). Thus, perhaps extra efforts to include those with higher unfamiliarity to these activities should be considered by policy makers.

## Online Survey

### *Survey Content and Distribution*

An online survey was conducted with the overall objective of obtaining relevant local data for Indo-Canadian populations the Lower-Mainland-Southwest-Development Region, specifically for Metro Vancouver. A survey is the best method for this as it will require little time on the participant side, allowing for maximized data input with minimum effort for the participant, in order to reduce barriers to participation. The survey conducted was anonymous, as identifying the individual was not deemed necessary. Distribution of the survey occurred through various different avenues. I first utilized the personal linkages that I had myself, along with circulating the survey link via e-mail to various organizations including EcoSikh ([www.ecosikh.org](http://www.ecosikh.org)), The Voice Group, an Indo-Canadian publication service including a newspaper, and various other publications ([www.voiceonline.com/about-us](http://www.voiceonline.com/about-us)), the Indo Canadian Friendship Society of British Columbia ([www.icfsbc.com](http://www.icfsbc.com)), the United Summer Soccer Association ([www.ussa.ca](http://www.ussa.ca)), and the Indo-Canadian Times newspaper ([www.indocanadiantimes.com](http://www.indocanadiantimes.com)). While a few of the organizations who were contacted never responded, The Voice in particular responded well, and sent the online survey link in an e-mail to their members under the “Weekly Events” portion of their e-mail newsletter. As it was hard to increase participation, some sort of incentive for organizations to circulate such a survey may be helpful in future research. Participants

were also found using social media outlets, specifically Facebook, through location of groups such as the Sikh Students' Association of UBC and the UTSAV UBC Indian Students Association. Though care was be given to spreading the survey across the Indo-Canadian community, survey participation was participant-dependent and therefore the results may not be completely accurately representative of the entire Indo-Canadian population in British Columbia. I would estimate that the majority of the respondents were of a younger age, due to the survey's higher accessibility for second or third generation immigrants as it is in English, along with the fact that it was distributed to many of my own peers who were the most likely to participate (due to higher connection/accountability) and are of a similar age to my own.

The survey itself has two sections. The first section is intended to retrieve general immigrant information including previous locationality and a broad understanding of Canadian identities of participants and generally held values. The second section focuses on park participation questions, including reasons for lack of use, activities, who the participants attend parks with, etc. See Appendix A for the questions found in the Survey.

### *Key Findings*

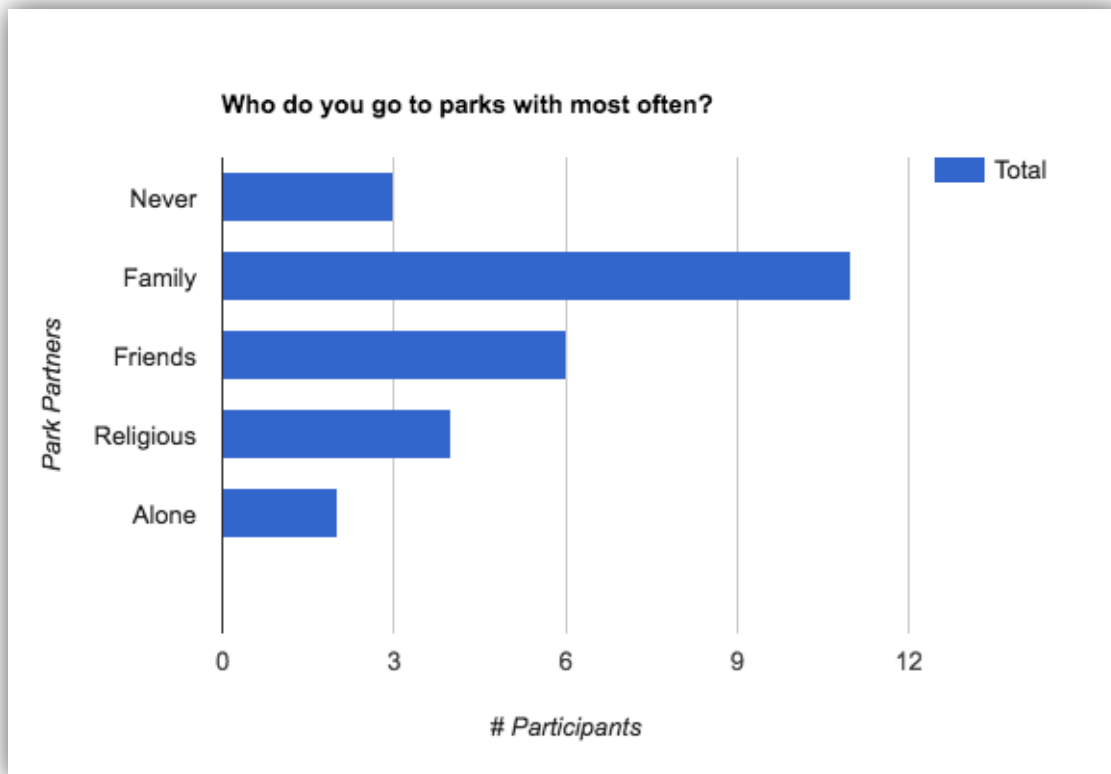
The online survey conducted received a total of 20 responses. Three of the survey respondents did not give consent upon reading the online consent form, which brought total complete responses down to 17. Several clear trends were found in the generated data from the survey. Trends, graphs, and statistics have been pulled from the raw data, which can be found in Appendix B, with all of the survey answers in their original downloaded workbook format.

The first important trends can be drawn from the first page of the survey, which aimed at acquiring general immigrant information from the survey participants. It is important to begin with the fact that almost all (12 out of 17) of the survey participants were second generation immigrants, meaning their parents moved from India to Canada, and they were born in Canada. As mentioned earlier, this is likely due to the probably younger nature of the participant group. This could affect the study in various ways, for example, as most participants were presumably born and raised in Canada, they are likely to have fewer problems with language barriers, and perhaps have been more connected to Canadian culture through schooling and general interactions. This sentiment is echoed later in the question associated with barriers to park use, where there were 0 participants who saw language as a barrier for participation, whereas in some other studies, it has been. Most participants' Indian heritage (12 of the total 17) originated from the state of Punjab, meaning them or their parents were born in this state. Other origin states included Rajasthan (3 participants), Himachal Pradesh (1 participant), and Kerala (1 participant). As discussed in the Literature Review section, previous location can have a great impact on the participants' relationship with outdoor recreation and parks. Punjab's primary landscape is agricultural flatland and their economy is derived almost completely from agriculture as well ("The Climate..." 1). This likely infers that there are few outdoor recreation activities similar to



those in British Columbia, as the landscapes are drastically different. Thus, we can conclude that previous locationality may be a good indicator as to why lack of knowledge around outdoor recreation activities is a distinct barrier as will be discussed below. When asked on a scale from 1-100, how strongly they identify as Canadian, participants in this survey stated 78 on average. This number is probably fairly high due to a high integration into Canadian culture, as most participants were second-generation immigrants. With this being said, feelings of “Canadianness” could be improved, and we can potentially see how through a deeper understanding of the participants’ park use preferences.

Three key findings were uncovered within the park use portion of the survey. The first of these trends looks at whom the participants were attending parks with. The most common park use partner were family, as 11 of 17 participants said they go to parks with their families most often with their families, followed by going with friends, religious community members, and finally, going alone (refer to Figure 1).

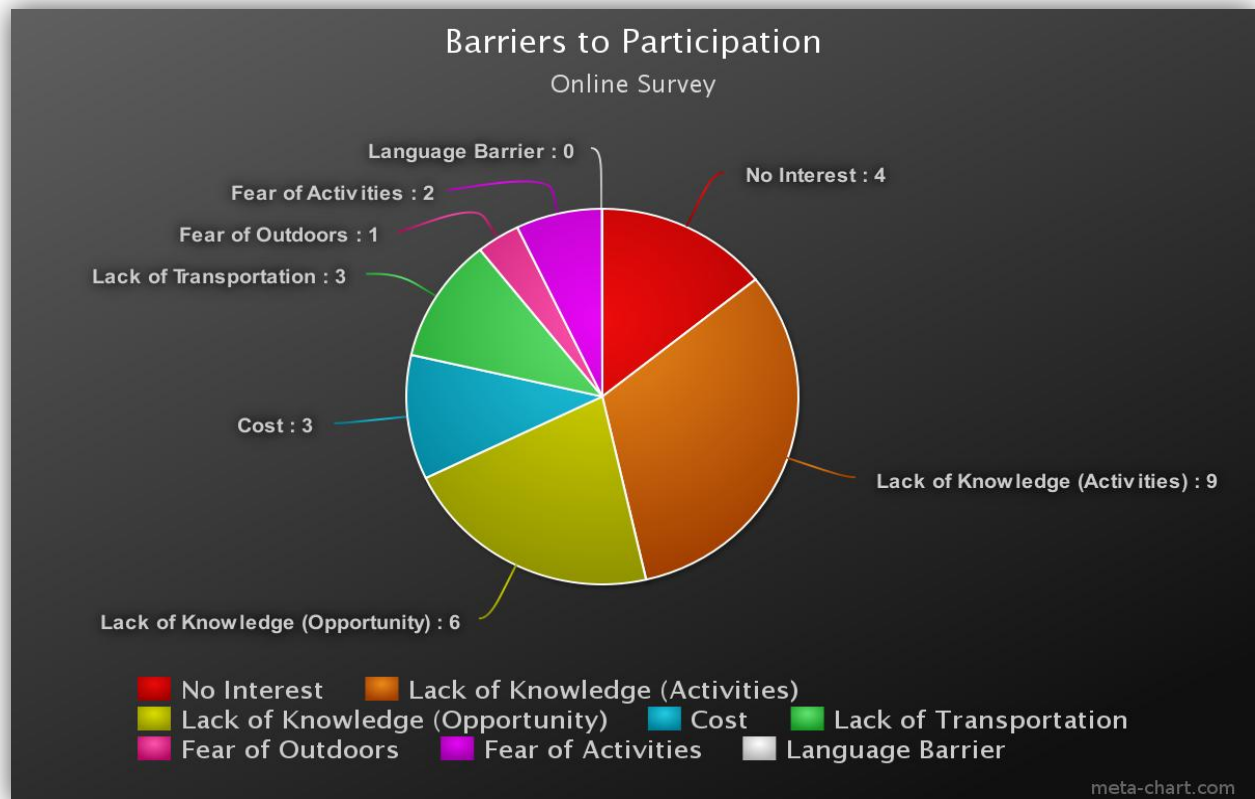


**Figure 1. Survey answer statistics depicting the most common partners for park use within the Indo-Canadian survey participants.**

While participants could pick more than one partner for this question, it is evident that the overwhelming majority attend parks with their family, that park use is a family activity within this Indo-Canadian population. This is in line with the literature, which we have seen discusses the collectivistic nature of Indo-Canadian communities in comparison with the typical North American individualistic culture. The importance of family is further exemplified throughout the study, in the section, which

looks at values. Family was outstandingly the most important value, and received an average score of 86/100 when asked about its importance, compared to 60/100 for religion, or 53/100 for outdoor recreation. Overall, this study points out the importance of family not only in Indo-Canadian culture, but in the use of parks by Indo-Canadians as well.

The second key trend found within the park use survey involved the participants' perceived barriers to park use. Participants were given 8 barriers to park use, based on previous study's most common barriers. Of these 8 barriers, lack of knowledge of either activities or opportunities around activities was chosen by over half of the survey participants (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Breakdown of perceived barriers to park participation.**

This lack of knowledge may stem from earlier discussion around previous locationality due to lack of experiences in immigrants' home states/locations. Lack of knowledge may also stem from lack of targeted marketing towards the Indo-Canadian population, lack of connection to the outdoor recreation culture. Fear was another key barrier for participation, which can be seen as inherently connected with lack of knowledge as well; with lack of knowledge comes lack of experience, and therefore an increased intimidation factor for outdoor recreation activities or spaces.

Lack of knowledge is also seen specifically in particular activities. In Figure 3, the activities, which were outlined in the survey, are shown, with their corresponding participant numbers. We can see that some activities, like walking, hiking, running, and cycling are commonly done. With this in mind,

some activities were only engaged by 1-2 participants, including rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, snowshoeing, and mountain biking (See Figure 3). Many of these activities could be considered typical outdoor activities in Canadian culture, and it is important to boost knowledge of these activities so that experiences are more accessible for the Indo-Canadian population. An increase in participation in these experience may help to improve the strength of participants' self-identifying as Canadian. Increasing outdoor recreation activities can also allow for the rewarding with other previously mentioned individual and societal benefits that come from such participation. Ergo, it is important to build recommendations that reflect the results both from this survey, and from the themes found in the literature.

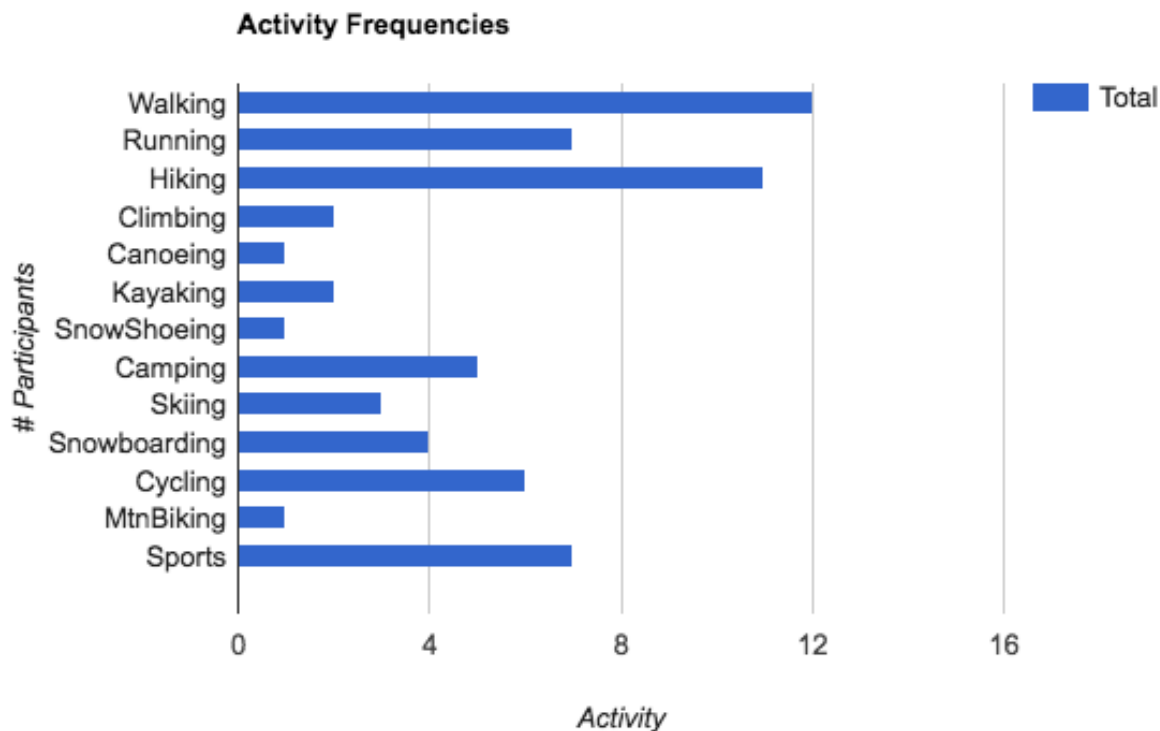


Figure 3. Breakdown of activity participants.

## Policy Recommendations

### Considerations: Multi Criteria Decision Making Analysis

#### *Policy Considerations*

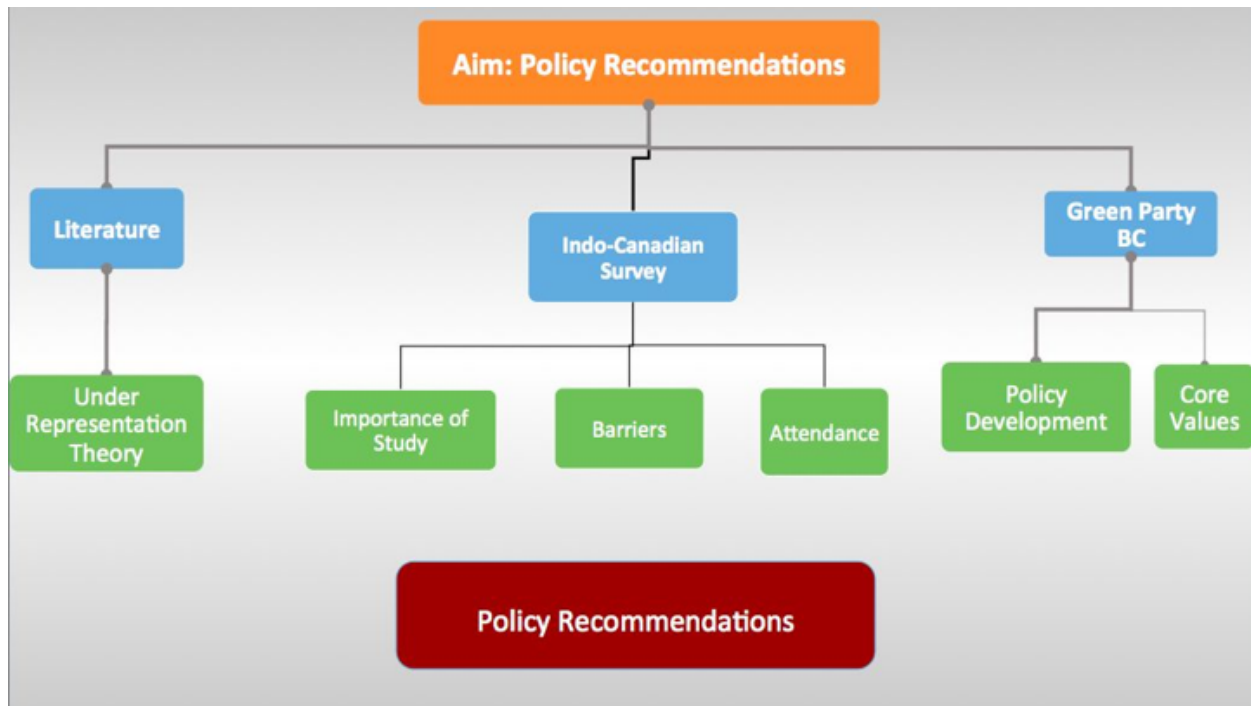
While creating policy recommendations for this project, there were three components of information I had to consider. The first two components include both the information found within the literature review, and the online survey for the conducted study. The third component of information had to do particularly with my partner, in how the policy recommendation would align with their values and processes. Specifically, the Green Party of British Columbia representative requested for the project to hone in on the Party's 6 Core Principles (Our Six Core Principles, np):

1. **Participatory Democracy:** Working to create proportionally elected governments that represent and engage citizens.
2. **Sustainability:** Using natural resources wisely to protect the rights and needs of future generations.
3. **Social Justice:** Acknowledging that all humans have a fundamental right to health, wellbeing, and freedom.
4. **Respect for Diversity:** Protecting and valuing all cultures and individuals while conserving variety in the natural world.
5. **Ecological Wisdom:** Learning to live within the physical and biological limits of our Earth and to protect its life-giving nature.
6. **Non-Violence:** Safeguarding people's security and freedom through cooperation and consensus building.

Of the 6 Core Principles, I found principles 2-5 particularly relevant for this topic while Principles 1 and 6 are not particularly applicable (Participatory Democracy and Non-Violence). The policy recommendations must also follow the Green Party of British Columbia's understanding and framework of policy development. The Green Party defines policy as the "course of action or inaction chosen by a set of public authorities to address a given problem or interrelated set of problems" (Pal, np). Good policy therefore, is threefold in that it addresses a relevant problem, follows the 6 Core Principles, and provides solutions based on evidence.

The recommendations provided will follow both the methods used in the study and these principles, along with following the guidelines around good policy development. In order to combine all of these considerations, a Multi Criteria Decision Making Analysis (MCDMA) was used to combine different factors found in the literature, online survey, and Green Party guidelines to create holistic, all-encompassing policy recommendations (see Figure 4). Multiple Criteria Decision Making is simply a

way of looking at different criterion that need to be evaluated in order to make a decision, and in this case, policy recommendations (Köskalan, M, et al, np).



**Figure 4. The Multi Criteria Decision Making Matrix used in this study. Policy Recommendations were constructed based on the green-coloured considerations, which fall under the literature, the online survey, or the guidelines provided by the Green Party of BC.**

As discussed, policy makers such as the Green Party of Canada should be looking deeper than just under-representation theory to analyze the barriers that exist for immigrant park use. Moving past assumptions of a singular view of representation can help broaden cultural understanding and move policies forward that will successfully include immigrants in traditional Canadian outdoor recreation in parks. Culture-specific factors such as locationality, religion, etc. play a large role in shaping environmental perspectives. Incorporation of religion into park policy may be hard due to the separation of religion and state, though many smaller considerations can be built towards religious beliefs including scheduling around Indo-Canadian festivals such as Diwali, Holi, Vaisakhi, etc. Policies should aim to emulate or collaborate with immigrants' native outdoor recreation activities, and if these are sparse, as they likely will show to be for new Indo-Canadians, then policies and programs should focus on building knowledge and confidence in participating in outdoor recreation in parks.

## Recommendations

### *Creation and Distribution of a Program Plan*

The first recommendation informed through the prior analysis involves the creation and distribution of a program plan aimed at the inclusion of Indo-Canadian families in parks and outdoor recreation activities. The program creation is twofold; first, the planning of the actual activities themselves must occur. Activities should be based around the understanding the literature infers that improving the lack of knowledge shown in Figure 2 that may be caused by previous locationality, specifically, the flat agricultural state of Punjab. To increase knowledge, activities that are most accessible and least participated in are likely the most easily implemented in a program plan. Based on the online survey results, mountain biking, snowshoeing, and canoeing could each be good examples of such activities as they can occur in many different parks, and include little necessary equipment or technical skill. Pairing these activities with other more commonly done activities such as walking, hiking, or camping may be good to mix the familiar with the unfamiliar to boost confidence and feasibility. The program plan itself should include different activity options, which would each include things such as necessary equipment/gear, a budget, optimal locations, and the duration. The idea of the program is that it would be implementable on several different scales, as the users of the program would not necessarily be fixed.

Second to the creation of the activity plan for the program, the marketing and distribution of the program must be considered. When asked if they would rather participate in community, government, or self-led programs, the most common answer among survey participants was community-led (8/10). Cost has also been considered a key concern for the Green Party of BC, and consequently, they would prefer the least costly avenues for such a program. With both of these factors in mind, distribution should pertain to community partnerships such as NGOs or other organizations (see Figure 5 for a short list of suggested partnerships) who have existing funding and partnerships enabling the implementation of such programs. External organizations, such as RangiChangi Roots, can also have great benefits as they may provide a specific cultural understanding, with their organization focusing on multicultural inclusion and interaction. This can lead to a better understanding of the cultural differences that shape perspectives around nature, as mentioned in the literature, along with helping to reconcile the issues around costs. Along with external organization partnerships, government-community partners like schools and community centres. These locations will provide the maximum output in the least amount of spaces, as community centres and schools have a wide reach, and often run family-oriented programs. These two locations also have a high connection to some aspects of government, leveraging the possible connections the Green Party may already have in such areas.

Marketing of the program should also be culturally and demographically specific. The program mentioned is directly aimed at family inclusion due to the survey results described previously, which

showed that family ranked as both the highest key value for survey participants and the most common partner for park participation. Cultural awareness is critical in creating accessible and approachable programming, and should consider things such as language (and marketing materials in second languages), religious festivals (planning around them), and specific cultural facets such as attire, mannerisms, etc. Social media is a key outlet for marketing these programs, especially to younger participants, as it is easy to find culturally specific groups on websites such as Facebook, or Instagram. Also, social media, and online communications in general, provide a unique opportunity for analytics, as many programs such as Facebook or Google offer free analytic programs, revealing the reach of marketing techniques. Along with all of this, with future research may come additional considerations for marketing, including age and immigrant generation demographics (refer to recommendation 3).

### *Subsidization of Pre-Existing and Future Programs*

There are several examples of programs that already exist/have existed which provide opportunities for multicultural or immigrant groups/individuals to engage in park or outdoor recreation settings. No specific programs such as these were found in British Columbia itself, showing their apparent necessity in the Lower Mainland. With this being said, there are programs across Canada and the United States, which have targeted these groups specifically, as seen in the “Existing Programs” in Figure 5. While some programs do exist, one key barrier to increasing the number of programs available, along with boosting their resiliency, is funding. Adrienne Blattel and the Milton Park Recreation Association in Quebec began one such program by putting on an adult/family canoe-camping weekend for low-income immigrants in the area. In Blattel’s structure, there was a mix of immigrants from various different countries, which served as a positive exchange between cultures and Canadians (Blattel, 10). Through an “educate and experience” approach, as I would call it, this program was highly successful in creating a small community and bolstering interest in outdoor sports. In line with the Green Party’s Core Value, focusing on Ecological Wisdom, supporting programs like this one would be a positive step towards care for nature through immersion. While cost was not seen as a key barrier in the survey results (see Figure 2), it is illuminated in the literature that many outdoor activities can be very expensive, especially when participants are not carrying their own gear – a likelihood in most cases (Blattel, 11). This is a key issue in the longevity of programs, as they have had to depend on individual sponsorship or out-of-pocket money to fund their activities in some cases, which is not sustainable for the long term (Blattel, 11). Governmental subsidization could be a great help in scenarios such as these, perhaps through providing program grants *along* with a program plan such as mentioned in the first recommendation.



Figure 5. List of found pre-existing programs in Canada and the US along with potential partners.

## List of Existing Canadian Immigrant Park Programs and Potential Partnerships



**Potential Partnership:** Rangi Changi Roots is an organization aimed at bringing together many different cultures in order to work together for a fair and healthy climate. They aim to “build bridges between diverse communities, ENGOs, governments and funders that work on human rights and climate issues. (Our Story, Np)



**Potential Partnership:** The Starfish's Nature Immersion program “aims to remove barriers that newcomers face when exploring outdoors by translating outdoor education materials into other languages (Programs, Np).



**Potential Partnership:** The David Suzuki Foundation's Get Back Outside initiative aims at getting kids outside and has worked specifically on engaging new immigrants from Chinese and Indo-Canadian descent (Resources, Np).



**Existing Program:** The “Learn to Camp” program put on by Ontario Parks was featured in Brandy Yanchyk's film about immigrant park participation and has successfully had many first and second-generation immigrant participants. (Learn to Camp, Np)



**Existing Program:** Adrienne Blattel and the Milton Park Recreation Association in Quebec began one such program by putting on an adult/family canoe-camping weekend for low-income immigrants in the area. (Blattel, 12)



**Existing Program:** The New York Immigration Coalition and City Parks Foundation collaborated to create a guide for park groups to initiate and implement immigrant outreach in New York aimed at park involvement. (Partnerships for Parks. 3)



### *Further Research and Considerations*

Such a complex and sensitive topic naturally has many changing and in-depth parts factored into its discussion. While the scope for this project was narrowed strictly to the Indo-Canadian community in the Lower Mainland Region of British Columbia, much more is to be done both for this community, and for ethnic/immigrant communities at large. For the sake of time and scope, several factors were not considered in this study, which are important for a deeper understanding of the Indo-Canadian community and their association with parks in British Columbia. One of these factors is the difference that could arise between age groups in ethnic communities and how that may affect parks/park use. These differences could include park use trends, differences in barriers to use, and different perspectives, and attitudes towards nature and outdoor recreation. Each of these could also change similarly between different immigrant generations due to various factors. As mentioned, the survey participants for this study were generally younger, second-generation immigrants. Of course, the way one approaches park use and outdoor activities changes with age, acculturation, and experience, and survey results would likely change fairly significantly between different age or generation groups.

There are several other areas in which future research could focus on as well. Firstly, it would be beneficial to have a larger scale survey, so as to get more accurate and precise results, which encompass the Indo-Canadian population more holistically. 20 participants in a population of thousands naturally do not necessarily show an accurate picture of an entire, dynamic group, and this must be taken into consideration when analyzing the results. Second, it would be beneficial to index and create a network of all pre-existing immigrant or ethnic programs that exist in British Columbia and Canada. By having a complete index of all the programs, not only could the Green Party of British Columbia benefit through ease of contact, but also programs themselves could have a network where they could share information and strategies, to reinforce the best programs possible. Along with this, indexing programs would allow for better understanding of specific costs associated with programming, and a metric using interaction per dollar would be creatable. Third, looking into specific marketing strategies for family and ethnic programming would be highly beneficial in creating accessible opportunities and distribution of a park program plan for the Indo-Canadian community. Finally, this study could be used as a stepping-stone into analyzing other ethnicities and creating relevant park policy recommendations for other ethnic communities in British Columbia.

## **Conclusions**

Inclusion of the Indo-Canadian community and the large multicultural population in British Columbia Parks is important for many reasons. With the understanding that a larger multicultural demographic usually results in lessened park use, it is important for policy makers and community groups to consider how they can bolster park use by these groups. Inclusion leads to economic benefits, health and personal benefits, and a greater sense of Canadian identity in ethnic populations.

Parks are important in Canadian culture, and outdoor recreation can play a role in bringing all citizens together through immersion in nature if only the opportunities are presented in relevant and accessible ways to everyone. Through the noted recommendations including a program plan aimed at Indo-Canadian family inclusion in parks and outdoor recreation, subsidization of pre-existing programs, and future research and action for connectivity, policy makers can take various steps forward to creating an inclusive environment in parks. The Green Party of British Columbia has an exciting role in providing excellence and expertise in environmental leadership, and the creation of appropriate policy for multicultural communities and their participation in parks is one avenue, which provides a great opportunity for growth and innovation. Through awareness and understanding, the Party's environmental stewardship can play an imperative role in bringing together the many diverse groups in British Columbia.

## Appendices

Appendix A) Pages 1 – 3 of online survey questionnaire.

Please check your answers below and correct them before continuing.

### General Information

Do you consider yourself an Indo-Canadian?

Yes No

Immigration:

An answer to this question is required.

☐ I was born in India and moved to Canada

☐ My parents were born in India and moved to Canada

☐ My Grandparents were born in India and moved to Canada

☐ Other (please describe)

How strongly do you identify as a Canadian?

I do not feel very Canadian  I feel very Canadian

Which Indian State or territory did you or your family previously reside in?

If resided in multiple states previously, please pick your primary state of residence.

How important is outdoor recreation to you?

An answer to this question is required.

Not Important  Very Important

How important are family relationships to you?

Not Important  Very Important

How important is religion to you?

Not Important  Very Important

How Important are Friendships to you?

Not Important  Very Important

Next

### Park Use Information

In the past year, I have visited a municipal park:

- ☐ 1 - 5 times
- ☐ 5 - 10 times
- ☐ 10 - 20 times
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Don't know

In the past year, I have visited a provincial park:

- ☐ 1-5 times
- ☐ 5 - 10 times
- ☐ 10 - 20 times
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Don't know

In the past year, I have visited a national park:

- ☐ 1 - 5 times
- ☐ 5 - 10 times
- ☐ 10 - 20 times
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Don't Know

Who do you generally go to parks with?

- ☐ I never go to parks
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Religious Community Members
- ☐ I usually go alone
- ☐ Other, please specify...

Type here

What are the barriers to your increased park use?

- ☐ No interest

☐ Lack of knowledge about activities

☐ Lack of knowledge about opportunity

☐ Cost

☐ Transportation difficulty

☐ Fear of outdoors

☐ Fear of activities

☐ Language barrier

☐ Other, please specify...

Type here

Please indicate which recreational activities you have done:

(Within Parks in British Columbia)

☐ Walking

☐ Running

☐ Hiking

☐ Rock Climbing

☐ Canoeing

☐ Kayaking

☐ Snow Shoeing

☐ Camping

☐ Skiing

☐ Snowboarding

☐ Cycling

☐ Mountain Biking

☐ Sports (soccer, basketball, etc.)

☐ Other, please specify...

Type here

Would you rather participate in self-led or community/government-led park activities?

☐ Self-Led

☐ Community-Led

☐ Government-Led (subsidized)

☐ Other, please specify...

Type here

Are there any specific ways that the Government of British Columbia could make parks more accessible to the Indo-Canadian population?

Type here

Back

Submit

## Appendix B) Online Survey Answers.

\* Some empty columns (such as “other”) were removed to make the data more readable.

\* \* Blacked out rows indicate those responses that were terminated due to lack of online consent.

Status	Location	Consent	Do you consider yourself a member of the Indo-Canadian community?	Immigration:	Immigration: other	How strongly do you identify as a Canadian?	Indian State
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	Other (please describe)		50	Rajasthan
					I was born in UK and my parents immigrated here in 1957		
Complete		Yes	Yes	Other (please describe)		95	Punjab
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		70	Punjab
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		50	Punjab
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		100	Karnataka
Terminated	Alberta	No					
Incomplete	Alberta	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		100	Himachal Pradesh
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		75	Punjab
Terminated	British Columbia	No					
Terminated	British Columbia	No					
Incomplete	India	Yes	Yes	I was born in India		65	Punjab
Complete	California	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		76	Rajasthan
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		84	Punjab
Incomplete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		100	Punjab
Incomplete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		100	Punjab
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		69	Punjab
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	I was born in India		50	Punjab
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	I was born in India		65	Punjab
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		88	Kerala
Complete	British Columbia	Yes	Yes	My parents were born in India and moved to Canada		90	Punjab

Survey answers for questions 1-4 of Page 1 of online survey.

How important is outdoor recreation to you?	How Important are Friendships to you?	How important is religion to you?	How important are family relationships to you?
19	23	61	81
90	50	50	90
50	54	80	100
40	18	75	99
80	26	44	100
90	5	29	87
0	22	0	99
50	72	100	86
30	14	34	97
44	56	92	54
50	97	57	70
100	26	50	50
23	22	77	99
70	54	99	80
36	93	59	90
75	51	20	87
50	7	100	100

Survey answers for questions 5-8 of page 1 of online survey.

In the past year, I have visited a municipal park:	In the past year, I have visited a provincial park:	In the past year, I have visited a national park:	Never Go	Go with Family	Go with Friends	Go with Religious Community Members	Go Alone
Don't know	Don't know	Never	1				
1 - 5 times	1-5 times	1 - 5 times					
5 - 10 times	1-5 times	Never		1	1	1	
1 - 5 times	1-5 times	1 - 5 times		1	1		
10 - 20 times	5 - 10 times	1 - 5 times					1
Never	1-5 times	Never		1	1	1	
Never	Never	Never	1				
1 - 5 times	Never	1 - 5 times					
1 - 5 times	1-5 times	5 - 10 times		1	1	1	1
1 - 5 times	1-5 times	1 - 5 times		1	1		
5 - 10 times	Never	Never		1		1	
Never	1-5 times	Never					
1 - 5 times	Don't know	Never		1	1		
Never	Never	Never	1				
1 - 5 times	Don't know	1 - 5 times		1			
1 - 5 times	1-5 times	Never		1			
5 - 10 times	1-5 times	Never		1			

Survey answers to questions 1-4 on page 2 of online survey.





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