LSC6140 Landscape Research Dissertation

Representation and Collaboration. Ethnic diversity in professional landscape practice and the accessibility of urban nature for British BAME communities.

Adam Bowley

MA Landscape Architecture 2019 – 2020

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University of Sheffield

Registration # 170137577

Acknowledgements

In memory of Mum & Dad (1948-2018)

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Abstract

Accessibility to urban nature is becoming associated with many physical and mental health benefits. In the UK, research indicates that British Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities have less accessibility to these benefits due to historical and socio-economic factors. Creating and managing public spaces, landscape architecture is uniquely placed as a discipline to challenge the status quo. However, there is low ethnic diversity within the profession.

The author proposes these circumstances are indicative of structural racism and the continuation of a Eurocentric narrative of land-use. To function as an effective force for change, landscape architecture must mirror the multicultural society which it seeks to serve.

A literature review explores the connection between structural racism and land use, British BAME communities' access to urban nature, and professional ethnic diversity. Asking "What does equity look like?" the relevance of theories of spatial justice, cultural competence and landscape preference are explored. Case studies in the American and British contexts assess how this is currently being achieved followed by examples of landscape practice and research.

A variety of sources suggest that there is a relationship between ethnicity and frequency of greenspace use in the UK. Research indicates that there is a link between white, university educated professionals and a preference for ecological aesthetics that is not shared by many BAME groups. White dominance within landscape architecture, potentially hinders designers' ability to collaborate across cultural boundaries. A combination of professional reform and decentralised initiatives are suggested as methods of working toward cultural competency within the industry, and empowering ethnic minority groups to shape the environments in which they live.

1.0 Introduction

This dissertation takes the form of enquiry by literature review and case study, enabling academic research and real-world examples to be analysed in tandem. Research indicates the co-occurrence of high-density urban living and poor access to parks and greenspace (urban nature) for British BAME communities. Landscape architects are well suited to redress this imbalance, but are they hindered by low ethnic diversity within the profession itself? This dissertation attempts to draw together the threads of structural racism, land use, and theories of spatial justice, to identify how British landscape architecture can evolve to reflect the communities it is committed to serve.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

Aim: Highlight how structural racism limits BAME communities' access to urban nature. Explore how professional diversity within landscape architecture is fundamental to challenging this experience in the arena of public spatial design.

Objectives:

1. Define structural racism, its historical links with land use, and how it impacts British BAME communities' access to and benefit from urban nature.
2. Reflect that U.K. landscape architecture is lacking in professional ethnic diversity.
3. Identify principles that may help landscape architects challenge ethno-spatial inequality in the public realm.
4. Explore how this has been attempted through case studies in America and Britain.
5. Discuss how ethnic diversity within landscape architecture can help to resolve the poor provision of urban nature in British BAME communities.

1.2 Research questions

Issues of ethno-spatial inequality in landscape architecture are prominent in the American public discourse. A comparison of American and British contexts aims to revel how British landscape practitioners can learn from the American experience and move toward building an ethnically representative profession.

A dual case study approach poses the following questions:

USA

How have US landscape professionals developed cultural competency to address ethnic inequalities in the profession?

UK

Does lack of ethnic diversity in British landscape architecture affect its ability to meet the needs of BAME communities?

1.3 Method

- Enquiry by literature review & case study

This dissertation screened and reviewed literature in the areas of landscape theory, urban planning, race equity, and human geography to investigate the links between BAME access to urban nature and the ethnicity of landscape designers. Because academic research did not investigate professional demographics, journal articles, reports and online resources were used to assess current developments in landscape architecture.

Key words: Environmental equity, ethnicity, urban greenspace, BAME, greenspace accessibility, greenspace quality, preference, spatial justice

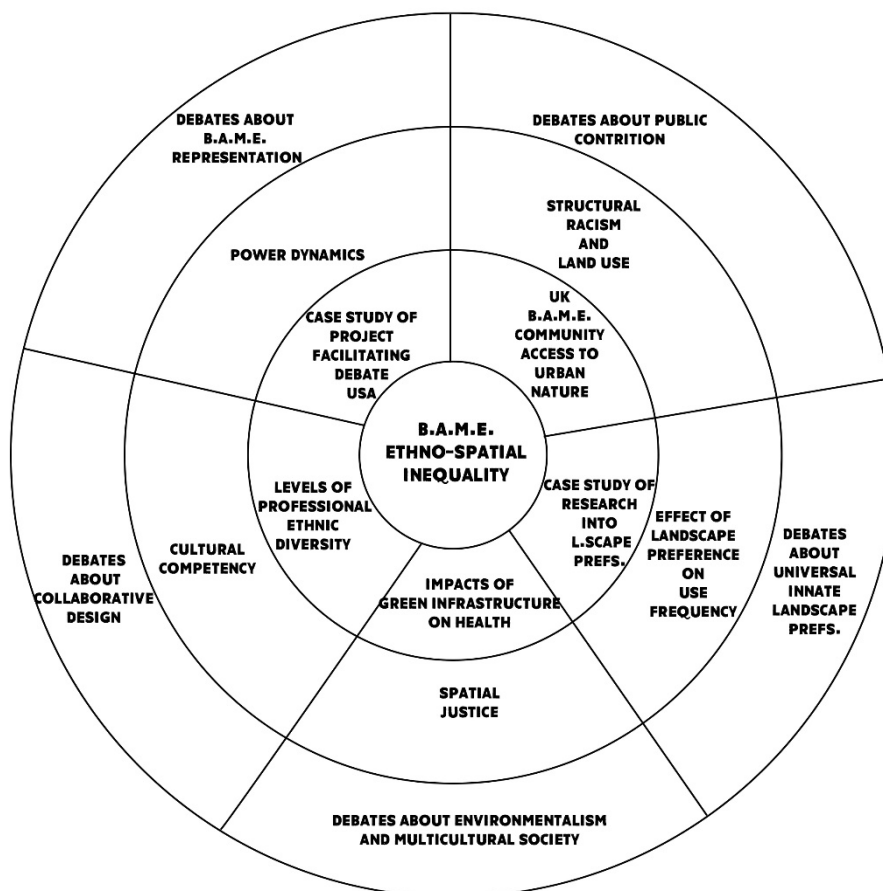The literature map below illustrates key themes of the project.

Fig.1 Literature map

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Structural racism and land use

Structural racism refers to **"*a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity*"** (Aspen Institute, 2018). In Eurocentric cultures, this manifests as power structures favouring white people, culture, aesthetics, and political values, derived from European colonialism (Pokhrel, 2011).

Land based inequalities are inevitable outcomes of these societal structures, where land and resources fall under the control of the dominant ethnic group. In the U.S. it has been documented that ethnic minority communities are disproportionately exposed to pollutants, and other environmental injustices (Brulle and Pellow, 2006). This phenomenon has been linked to the legacy of segregation and discriminatory patterns of land distribution (Bullard, 2018), with some studies indicating stronger correlations between race and environmental hazards than economic factors alone (Bryant and Mohai, 2019).

British research is sparse, although links have been made between air pollution and deprivation (Namdeo and Stringer, 2008), and ethnicity (Brainard *et al.*, 2002). However, this may be due to the concentration of BAME communities in urban areas, rather than historical legacies of state sanctioned segregation. To understand if this is an economic phenomenon or indicative of systemic inequalities, it is helpful to explore connections between European colonialism, land use and race.

European colonialism from 1500s onwards, resulted in the unprecedented exploitation of worldwide resources. Assertions of European superiority justified the seizure of land, displacement of indigenous peoples, and transatlantic slavery (Curtin, 1974) resulting in an international division of labour that continues to favour Eurocentric cultures. In Australia, the seizure of aboriginal land was justified through their depiction as uncivilised savages (Buchan and Heath, 2006). Transatlantic slavery fuelled the agricultural plantation industries of the Caribbean and Americas, creating a nation state that continues to struggle with racial issues.

Current spatial inequalities within Eurocentric cultures may be perceived as a continuation of this legacy. In the U.K., ethnic minority groups are more likely to live in deprived urban neighbourhoods than the white majority (Jivraj and Khan, 2013), and less likely to visit parks and urban greenspace (CABE, 2010) . As a result, BAME communities have reduced access to the health and wellbeing benefits provided by urban nature (Mitchell and Popham, 2008; Jorgensen and Gobster, 2010; van Dillen *et al.*, 2012; Kondo *et al.*, 2018), despite potentially being among the primary beneficiaries of these facilities.

2.2 BAME access to urban nature in the UK

Disparity in access to nature has been observed in British BAME communities compared to white Britons (CABE, 2010, Pitt, 2019). Boyd *et al.*, (2018), identified ethnicity as a primary factor limiting access to greenspace. Evidence suggests that UK BAME groups have high rates of diabetes and cardiovascular disease (Randawa, 2007), conditions which may be improved by accessibility to greenspace (Mitchell and Popham, 2008; van Dillen *et al.*, 2012).

Research commissioned and published by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), discovered that although poor provision of quality greenspace occurs at greatest frequency in deprived, urban areas with large BAME communities, low levels of use were not the result of economic deprivation alone (CABE, 2010; Snaith 2015).The study *Urban Green Nation*, attempted to accurately record the location, quality, use and management of greenspace across the country.

Prominent conclusions included:
- **People value their parks and green spaces.** In a 2009 survey 95 % considered greenspace access very or fairly important.
- **Access to urban nature in deprived areas is poor**. "The most affluent 20% of wards have five times the amount of parks or general greenspace per person than the most deprived 10 % of wards."
- **BAME groups have less access to good quality, urban nature**. Wards with almost no BAME residents have six times as many parks in comparison to wards with BAME populations over 40%.
- **High quality green space correlates with greater use.** Poor quality provision in deprived areas resulted in low levels of physical activity.

Community Green, the second stage of this research, examined the impact of greenspace provision on BAME communities in deprived urban areas across the U.K. (CABE Community, 2010):

- **Public greenspace may positively contribute to health, but many spaces are unused.** Under 1% of respondents in social housing used the available greenspace on their estate.
- **There is concern about safety in public greenspaces.** Results varied in relation with ethnicity. 67% of Bangladeshi respondents reporting feeling unsafe in their local space.
- **Perceptions of high quality may lead to increased use and associated health benefits.** Indicators of increased quality included seating, events, play and catering facilities. 60% of participants correlated good facilities with potential wellbeing improvements. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian interviewees reported the highest levels of greenspace use for exercise.
- **Greenspace use is place specific.** Local communities are best placed to decide what provisions are suitable. Ethnic group was recorded as the strongest predictor for use. This is likely to be due to shared cultural values and social ties. BAME groups were more likely to use greenspaces for social reasons than their white counterparts.

These results support findings that demonstrate a correlation between limited greenspace access and ethnicity. GIS based research in Leicester, concluded that Hindu/Sikh communities had the least access to quality greenspace (Comber, Brunsdon and Green, 2008). In Bradford, comparative results showed that access to greenspace was lowest in deprived Asian/Asian British areas (Ferguson *et al.*, 2018). However, findings also included the contradictory discovery that the highest percentages of street tree cover occurred within deprived, Asian areas. The authors concluded that the built environment had the strongest influence on the quantity of street trees, suggesting that road and building density should be assessed concurrently with ethnographic and greenspace data, to better understand the interdependence of these relationships.

Although the co-occurrence of deprivation and limited greenspace for British BAME communities is commonplace, other authors propose various reasons for low use. Theories include, the perceived notion that visiting nature is a white British activity (Agyeman and Spooner, 2005), lack of awareness of facilities (Adomako & Davis, 2000), failure of design to meet user needs (Rishbeth, 2001, 2004), and fear of attack (Burgess, 1995, 1998).

2.3 Diversity in British Landscape Architecture

In 2017 the Landscape Institute (L.I.) commissioned an independent survey into its membership. The survey recorded a white professional membership of 95%, contrasting with 82% representation in the general population (Landscape Institute, 2018). A handful of opinion pieces and declarations in response to #blacklivesmatter, indicates support for ethnic diversity within the profession, with the L.I. pledging to increase diversity, and social responsibility within the sector (Chrouch, 2020, Landscape Institute, 2020).
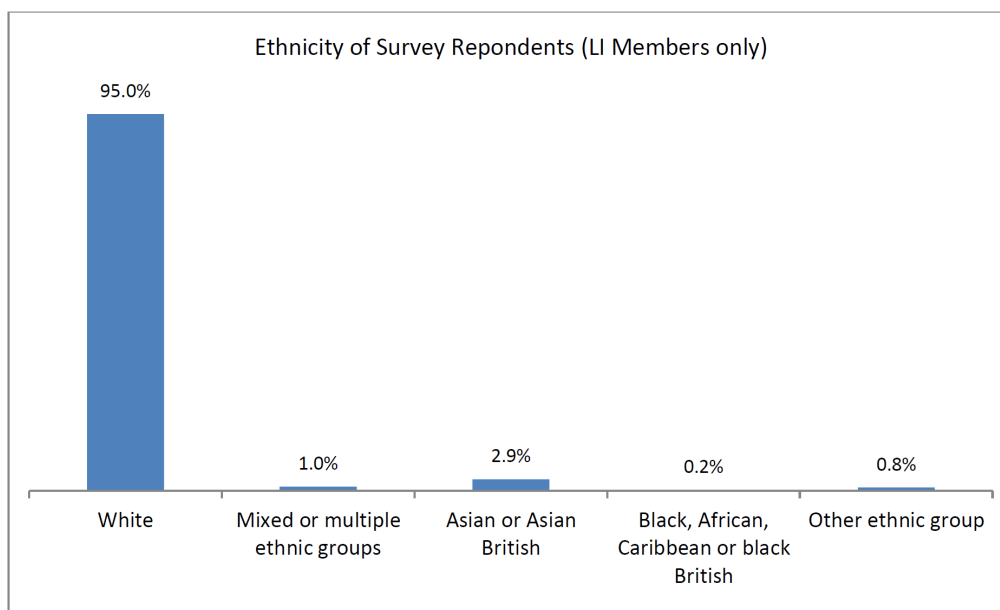
Landscape Institute, (2018)

Fig.2 Ethnic Survey of L.I. members

2.4 What would equity look like? Spatial justice & cultural competency
Spatial justice
Defined as " the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them ", spatial justice has a direct relevance to the practice of landscape architecture (Soja, 2016). Professionals operating in the public realm, make decisions on the provision and quality of urban nature and are therefore directly involved in its equitable distribution.

Soja (2016) proposes three points 1) humans are social and temporal beings, 2) space is socially produced and can be socially changed, 3) space and social activity influence each other.

In the context of greenspace equity this can be interpreted as both empowering the end user and highlighting how design and management decisions can influence space. It also implies that space is contested, and when coupled with the definition above, indicates that spatial justice is both process and outcome.

The transferable concept in this analysis is the recognition that poor provision of urban nature for BAME communities, is a result of previous processes of injustice. Therefore, through continued processes of social engagement, the production of urban nature that is suited to these communities can be achieved.

Contrition
The Aspen Institute Ascend Fellowship propose that an act of contrition is the first step toward dismantling structural racism in the U.S. Public acknowledgement is proposed as the building block for a new society:

"A social contract committed to dismantling inequity and building a nation free of structural racism in policy and deed" (Aspen Institute, 2020).

An act of contrition is also required in Britain. The U.K. has profited extensively from human exploitation in the form of transatlantic slavery and colonialism (National Archives, 2019). Britain relied heavily on internal migration within the Empire in the aftermath of global war (Spencer, 1997). The backlash (Atkins, 2018) created by the presence of BAME communities belies the fact that Britain was intrinsically tied to an

ethnically diverse empire. The concept of a *white* Britain is false, all those living under the Empire were part of Britain regardless of their ethnicity or location (Andrews, 2019). Current urban demographics reflect a wide cultural composition, 40.2% of London residents are from BAME backgrounds, with Asian and Black populations of 18.5% and 13.3% respectively. In the West Midlands 10.8% of residents identify as Asian and 3.3% as Black (Great Britain, 2018).

Cultural Competency

In the U.K., statutory requirements for public consultation are set out in The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Great Britain, 2004), and Planning Act 2008 (Great Britain, 2008), however, these requirements have been critiqued as ineffectual or tokenistic, and blind to the complex power dynamics present in some multi-cultural areas (Rishbeth, Ganji and Vodicka, 2018). For consultation to be effective, practitioners must be able to competently collaborate across cultural barriers.

"Cultural competency… is the ability to work effectively with difference, in cross-cultural situations…*cultural proficiency* is practice that *proactively* engages diversity and promotes inter-cultural relations."
Agyeman, 2012

Agyeman (2012), proposes that planning and urban design professionals need to possess cultural competency to work toward an intercultural society. Describing a developmental process from cultural destructiveness to cultural proficiency, Agyeman argues that until this practice has become fully integrated into the mainstream, professionals have an ethical duty to actively promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of public design.

Echoing similar voices in urban planning (Sandercock, 2004; Harwood, 2005), Agyeman comments that cultural competency will inevitably result in recognising differences in need and provision of distinct groups. Equality in this context is therefore equality in treatment of need, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to design.

Professional ethnic diversity is also posited as integral to cultural competency. Therefore, a culturally competent landscape architecture profession is necessarily

ethnically diverse. However, it is overly simplistic to conclude that a non-white practitioner is culturally competent by virtue of their ethnicity and vice versa. All practitioners need to be able to collaborate interculturally. A combination of diverse practitioners, cultural education, and real-world collaboration can be understood as embodying the process of spatial justice.
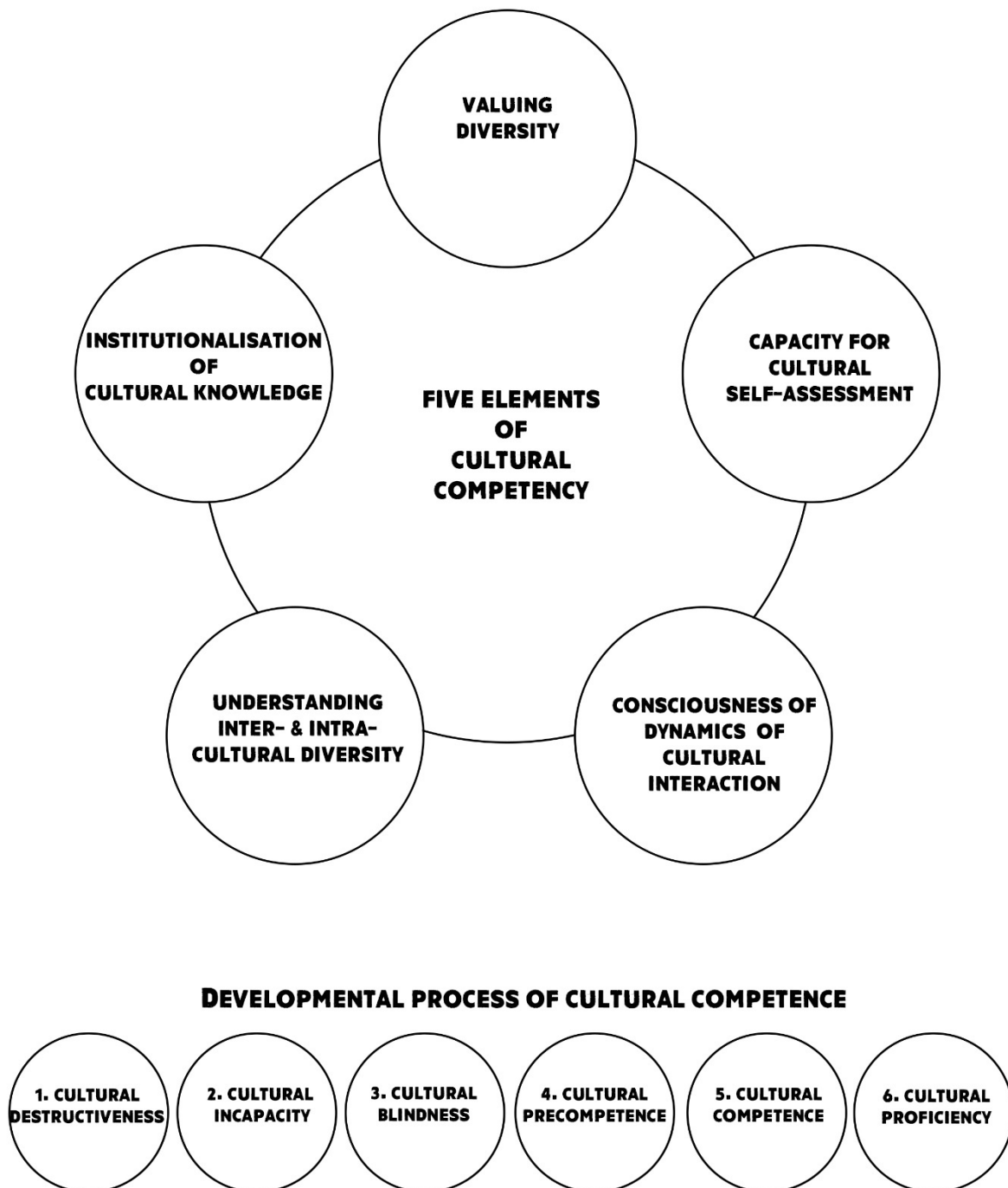

Fig.3 Stages of cultural competency

Preference

Multi-cultural society exhibits a range of preferences and traditions that reflect the diversity of life. In order to avoid racial stereotyping, caricatured landscape design, and unintentional exclusion, some authors assert the importance of recognising differences in landscape tastes, age and social identities, rather than ethnicity alone (Rishbeth, 2001; Kloek *et al.*, 2017).

Advocating a design approach that challenges the inequalities in public space design by facilitating participation, social exchange, multi-use spaces and the strategic inclusion of micro-retreats, Rishbeth, Ganji and Vodicka (2018) call for high level collaboration between spatial design professionals, educators and ethnographers.

Despite research trends that seek to identify universal human preferences for idealised forms of nature (Kaplan, 1987; Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989; Appleton and J., 1996; Gobster *et al.*, 2007), identifiable aesthetic group preferences have been recorded in relation to gender (Van den Berg, 2010), ethnicity (Aitken & Wingate 1990; Clamp & Powell, 1982;) and university level education (Hoyle, Hitchmough and Jorgensen, 2017; Rodriguez, Peterson and Moorman, 2017; Southon *et al.*, 2018).

The impact of these preferences, particularly those of white landscape professionals for the ecological aesthetic, may result in the unintended exclusion of certain ethnic groups (Snaith, 2015). An awareness of these biases is an integral part of cultural competency, that seeks to avoid the perpetuation of ethnic spatial inequalities.

3.0 Case Studies

The prominence of race inequality, in the American public discourse, has resulted in a proactive approach to addressing issues of land equity, and low ethnic diversity within American landscape architecture. Although these concerns are shared by British practitioners, there is a noticeable absence of comparable action, and self-organising groups. The following case studies review how issues of ethnic diversity and ethno-spatial equity are addressed in the American and British professions. Assessment of the national context is followed by an individual study from each country. The findings of both studies are discussed in section 4, to ascertain how progress can be made to improve access to urban nature for British BAME communities.

3.1 American context & research question

Ethnic land-based inequity is a prominent theme in modern American landscape architecture, reflecting a nation coming to terms with the legacies of slavery and racial segregation (Aspen Institute, 2020). Cultural competency is a vital tool for professionals to serve the needs of communities, where landscapes have historically been racially inscribed. The following research question asks:

How have US landscape professionals developed cultural competency to address ethnic inequalities in the profession?

3.1.2 British context & research question

Despite being among the groups that may receive greatest benefits from public greenspace (Boyd *et al.*, 2018), British BAME communities have poorer access to urban nature in comparison to their white counterparts (CABE, 2010). As designers and managers of public space, landscape architects are well placed to meet this need. However, there is low ethnic diversity within the profession itself (Landscape Institute, 2018). The following research question asks:

Does lack of ethnic diversity in British landscape architecture affect its ability to meet the needs of BAME communities?

3.1.3 Case study- American context

American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

"*Committed to welcoming and serving all people and communities and treating them fairly and equitably.*" (ASLA, 2020) ASLA aims to mirror the communities it represents. The society is aware that lack of ethnic diversity within its membership is a liability for a spatial design profession, with graduate demographics perpetuating existing membership trends. In 2015, ASLA acknowledged by 2043 the USA is predicted to become a majority-minority nation (ASLA, 2015). ASLA pledges to boost resources and initiatives to increase the recruitment of minority students and professionals, with the aim of achieving parity of representation, with national norms, by 2060.

Ethnicity statistics of U.S. Landscape Architecture Graduates & Population trends
Landscape Architecture Graduates 2017
White 54%, 3% Black,   0.3 % American Ind., Asian 24%   Other 11.7%   Hispanic 7%

U.S. Population 2012
White 63%, 12% Black,   1% American Ind.,   Asian 5%   Other 2%   Hispanic 17%

Projected U.S. Population 2060
White 43%, 13% Black,   1% American Ind.,   Asian 8%   Other 5%   Hispanic 31%
Source ASLA, 2018

ASLA Diversity and Equity Summits

Annual Diversity Summits have been held and led by African American and Latinx landscape professionals since 2013, with the purpose of understanding how to attract and sustain a diverse field of practitioners.

The summits propose solutions to the challenges faced by underserved and marginalised communities (ASLA, 2019). Important themes include socio-spatial and ecological context, community engaged design, and capacity building.

A series of webinar discussions to support the summits was initiated to disseminate findings and solutions to ASLA members. This proactive approach has covered topics of gender inequality, diversity inclusion, Black Landscapes, and Latin American Landscapes.

In her Designing for Inclusion webinar, Aleisha Kwon-Hammett, presented practical methods for achieving public space equity (Kwon-Hammett, 2019). The central aim was to facilitate challenging conversations around public space and inclusivity, through sustained community engagement. People-skills and networking were perceived as essential professional attributes.

Kwon-Hammett, presented three key elements in cultivating lasting relationships:

1) Build Empathy
2) Nurture self-awareness (become aware of biases, stereotypes, attitudes - educate yourself in relation to the community you are in)
3) The community is an equal partner. Projects are created, developed, and implemented collaboratively.

In his presentation on Latin American Landscapes, Gabriel Montemayor, highlighted the land-based inequality faced by indigenous populations (Montemayor, 2019). During the 'Reduccion', Native American people were violently relocated for the purposes of their 'civilisation'. Religious landmarks were subjugated by erecting churches and European settlements in their place (Gabbert, 2012). Today, sprawling urban slums, derived from colonial grid city frameworks, contain little public space. Marginalised communities experience health problems exacerbated by their lack of access to quality greenspace, and exposure to pollutants, typical of inequalities observed in studies of cities across the Global South (Rigolon *et al.*, 2018).

Although Landscape Architecture remains a minor profession, practices such as the Bogota based Architectura Expandida, explicitly work in peripheral urban contexts, that prioritise community engagement and knowledge sharing, in a stand against prevalent political power structures (Architectura Expandida, 2020).

A common thread throughout the Diversity Summit discussion topics and webinars, is one of context. Landscape architects need to be able to navigate historical, cultural and site context to work effectively with any given community.

The above initiatives indicate that ASLA are moving in this direction, although the efficacy of the association has attracted criticism. Kofi Boone attributes lack of progress in recruiting black landscape architects as a failure of U.S. educational institutions to connect with black communities (Boone, 2017). Lamenting that there are only two undergraduate landscape programmes at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Boone notes that no interventions have been launched by ASLA to revert this decline.

Independent initiatives
Black Landscape Architects Network
Top down systems of reform may inadvertently reinforce white dominance in the industry, by continuing colonial patterns of education and control (Shahjahan, 2011). The Black Landscape Architects Network (BlackLAN), was formed as a social support network for black students and professionals. The membership extends beyond its African American base to include international members. It functions on an invitation only basis, and provides:

"Black Landscape Architecture professionals and students from around the world networking to promote opportunity, highlight accomplishments and mentor students." (Smith, 2018)

The loose organisation of the network enables it to function responsively. Utilising the tools of social media, the Black Landscape Architects - Student Network provides a variety of multi-disciplinary resources, conferences, panel discussions and studios to its membership (Black Landscape Architects - Student Network, 2020). Glen LaRue Smith, a founding network member, comments in both his 2018 PUSH studio blog post and podcast with Everything but the Building, that the visibility of African American practitioners and educators is an essential component in drawing black students into the profession (Smith, 2018; Everything but the Building, 2020). Smith also announced plans to create an open resource website for the network, although membership of the BLAN will remain restricted to the black diaspora.

Fig. 4 Black Landscapes Matter in eight propositions (Boone, 2017)

The Urban Studio

From its three branches in Washington DC, Austin Texas and South-Central Los Angeles, The Urban Studio focuses on encouraging young people of colour into the industry. Formed in 2019, the not-for-profit collective has completed several youth engagement initiatives. In Washington D.C., a three-month stormwater management design programme for two African American majority wards, was completed by a cohort of High School students, that convened on weekends to learn landscape design principles and skills.

Elijah Small, a programme assistant and High School senior commented:
"*Representation matters. Role models help shape our goals. Programs like Studio DC, managed and staffed by professionals of colour, will undoubtedly change the makeup of planning, design, and development staff rooms; and by effect, our communities.*"
(Small, 2020)

3.1.4 Project example U.S.A.

Nauck Town Square; Hood Design Studio

The process of **contrition** and **collaborative resolution** are powerful tools in addressing ethno-spatial equality. But how does this look practice?

Hood Design Studio

Formed in 1992 as a social art and design practice, the foci of the Oakland based practice are art/fabrication, design/landscape, and research/urbanism (Hood Design Studio, 2020). Under the guidance of Walter Hood, landscape design projects explore the multiple interpretations and identities of place and community.

Project Overview

A key element of the wider Nauck Village Center Action Plan (2004), the initiative to develop Nauck Town Square proposes to create a public space that serves as the "social and cultural heart of the neighbourhood" (Arlington County Board, 2018). The plan sits within the wider Four Mile Run Valley Initiative, which seeks to resolve the conflicting interests of a mixed-use urban zone, where industrial, commercial, cultural and amenity parkland facilities are situated along a river corridor.

Situated to the north of the river valley, the town square is proposed to provide the cultural anchor for a series of developments in the Action Plan including housing, commercial, traffic and historical preservation initiatives. As one of the first settlements of African American soldiers and freed slaves after the Civil War, the local authority recognise the importance of celebrating and retaining local heritage, whilst attracting development and successfully integrating new residents into the community (Arlington County Board, 2004).

Community Engagement

2006

The community were consulted at several stages throughout the life of the project. In 2006 a design charette comprised four public meetings with the following progression: Developing Conceptual Models, Considering Alternatives, Evaluating Options and Making Recommendations (Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. 2006). During this initial phase, Arlington County were yet to fully acquire the land to fulfil their vision. Design proposals included formats for a plaza featuring an open-air structure or public building as a focal

point (Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. 2006). At this stage, a local history recording project was incomplete. The intention was for the public art element of the project to take inspiration from these findings.

2015-17

Land acquisition was completed nine years after the initial public design consultation. At this juncture Hood Design Studios were invited to utilise the community design model to co-create a unique vision for the town square. Walter Hood reflects that early on in this process discussions focused on the Freedman's Village of Arlington Cemetery (Green, 2020). Intended as a temporary settlement, the site evolved into a thriving community with churches, homes and hospitals between 1863-1900 (U.S. Army, 2020). Nauck is home to many descendants of the Village and as such, holds a cultural heritage of national importance.

What makes this project especially poignant, is the historical context of the emancipation proclamation and the founding of the community. The engagement of the modern population to co-create a public space, can be interpreted as a physical manifestation of integration in a post-segregation society.

Walter Hood in his own words:

"*I immediately began to ponder the semiotics of this term used to describe black and brown people. What does it mean to be F-R-E-E-D! It took a lot of nerve for me to start this conversation since it was something I had never entered into a conversation with a community about. I can't describe the kind of excitement and conversation that began from there*."
(Green, 2020)

Final Proposal

During the design process, several iterations were vetted through public consultation. The final plans proposed a public meeting area with a stage for outdoor events, and a prominent sculpture of the word FREED, created from replica badges worn by free African Americans in the late 1800s. Trees are formally arranged to create a stylised bosque, and metal walkways traverse bioswales that collect surface water runoff. Seating is positioned liberally throughout to encourage socialising.

The proposition is successful at integrating a community driven experience within a stylised natural environment. Ribbons of bioswales, provide ecosystem services and echo the river corridor restoration proposals of the wider Four Mile Run Valley Initiative (Dover Kohl & Partners, 2018). The sculpture functions as social commentary, stating a positive affirmation that is at odds with a society in which people are not equal. The universality of the word FREED is relatable to park users, regardless of background. Crucially, the community perceived inclusivity as vital to the square's success:

"a place to communicate and get to know each other better… not just for black people but other groups also. Because we live next to people and don't even know their names…."

Oscar Green, Nauck Community Project 2012 (Hood Design Studios, 2017)

Nauck Project summary
The Nauck Town Square Project engages with a dialogue of racial inequality by referencing a historical occurrence of contrition and questioning its efficacy in a modern context. As an African American designer Walter Hood was able to address a difficult topic and engage the community. However, does every landscape project in a black neighbourhood need a black designer? In this instance, there is potency in a black designer challenging the status quo within a public space that is tied to the history of the black diaspora. Hood's cultural competency and ecological skill as a landscape architect enable him to engage history within an ecosystem services aesthetic, that supports renovations along the river corridor.

The literality of the project's sculpture, may provide grounds for criticism, if interpreted as an example of symbolic reference (Rishbeth, 2001). It is feasible to imply that the sculpture places undue emphasis on the African American diaspora as victims of the transatlantic slave trade. Critics may suggest that positive outcomes could be reached through affirmations that did not rely on exploitation. Pre-empting this response, Hood describes his decision as a deliberate act to open a public debate about the nature of the African American experience. Black people did not come to the country as economic migrants. They were violently displaced from their home and identity to suffer "300 years of bondage" (Hood Design Studios, 2017). The nature of the sculpture calls for public debate, persisting inequalities must be resolved and the process of reconciliation begun in earnest.

Fig.5 Four Mile Run Valley, restoration map

Fig.6 Four Mile Run Valley, restoration cross-section

Fig.7 Design Charette participant
Arlington County Board, (2018)
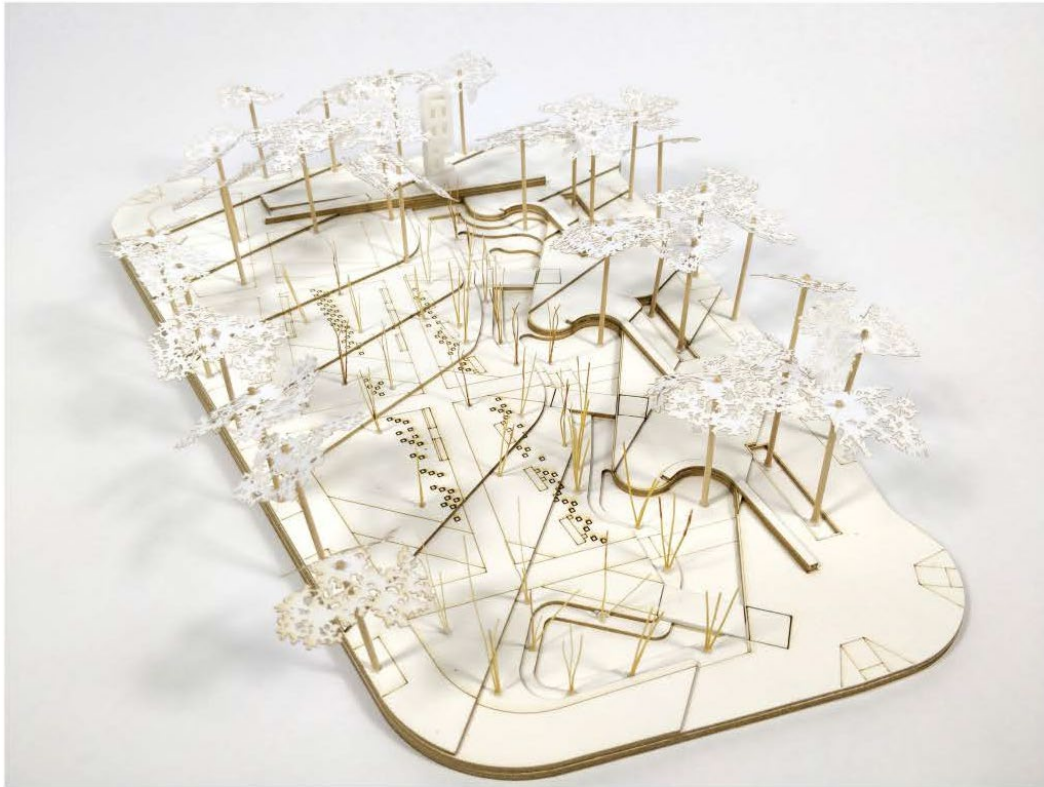
Site Plan

1. STAGE
2. FREED SCULPTURE
3. BOSQUE
4. BIO-SWALE
5. BIO-RETENTION PLANTER
6. BENCHES
7. CHESS TABLES
8. RAISED METAL WALKWAY
9. SEATWALL
10. LAWN
11. BIO-RETENTION
12. MOVABLE CHAIRS

S KENMORE ST

HOOD

Nauck Town Square Landscape Design

Fig.8 Nauck Town Square Design Proposals, Hood Studios
Hood Design Studio, (2017)

Fig.9 Nauck Town Square Visualisations, Hood Studios
Hood Design Studio, (2017)

3.1.5 American context - findings

Analysis of the American context reveals a professional body that is aware of the implications of lack of diversity and is actively working toward resolving them. In Agyeman's (2012) terms, this indicates *self-assessment* and awareness of *cultural dynamics,* and a developmental stage of *cultural precompetence*. The Diversity Summits established by ASLA provide a national support network for BAME practitioners and facilitate the creation of solutions on their own terms. The supporting C.P.D. workshops, disseminate the importance of nuanced cultural awareness and the collaborative design. Decentralised control and empowerment of ethnic minorities within and without ASLA, reveal a pragmatic approach to redressing white dominance. Decentralising power appears to be a core approach of BLAN, intended to encourage the expression of difference.

The Nauck Town Square Project is an effective example of how landscape architecture can provide ecosystems services, facilitate debate, and honour social heritage. There is just enough ambiguity in Hood's sculpture to allow for multiple interpretations at a cursory glance. However, the intent becomes clear on closer inspection. Community engagement was central to the project's development.

Although progress is still to be made, the current situation is encouraging, evidencing the dynamic processes and outcome of spatial justice (Soja, 2016).

3.2 Case study – British context
Landscape Institute

In 2017 the Landscape Institute created a Diversity and Inclusion Group to address issues relating to equal pay, gender, sexuality and ethnicity representation (Landscape Institute, 2017). Whilst the establishment of this group is a necessary step towards a representative profession, the main areas of discussion centre around gender and sexuality. Greater emphasis could be placed on resolving the underlying causes of a lack of ethnic diversity. The 2018 Corporate Strategy (Landscape Institute, 2018), lists "socially and environmentally aware" and "relevance and inclusive growth" as goals and values, falling short of acknowledging the depth and impact of racial inequality. It is only as a result of the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, that the L.I has issued a statement pledging to resolve ethnic inequalities within its membership and professional activities (Landscape Institute, 2020).

Critically assessed, the L.I. statement may be interpreted as a product of politically correct, social compliance. Although, L.I. has been aware of its low ethnic diversity for some time, proactive initiatives to address this have been few. The author has found little evidence of a contrition-based approach that builds toward a representative professional model, focused on achieving cultural competency.

Notable L.I. activities aimed at increasing ethnic diversity within the profession, during the period January 2017 - June 2020 include:

- 27th February 2017, first meeting of L.I. Diversity and Inclusion Group
- 2017 – Membership and Education Reviews conducted by independent consultants
- 2nd May 2018, State of the Landscape Review – issued
- May 2018, Future State of the Landscape – L.I. response to membership review issued
- 7-8th June 2019, #LI90 Festival of Ideas: Transforming Landscapes, Challenging Boundaries – speaker led conference
- 26th October 2019, Just Landscape? Diversity, Ethnicity, Representation – one day, speaker led conference

The initiatives outlined above, provide recognition that ethnic inequalities do occur within the public realm, supporting earlier research findings (CABE, 2010; Wolch, Byrne and Newell, 2014). However, there does not appear to be much significant action beyond this. Acknowledging that professional trends often reflect the parent culture, this conclusion may be the result of collective amnesia regarding Britain's imperial past, and limited discussion of racial inequality within the public discourse.

Black Environment Network (BEN)

In lieu of a self-organising, group of British landscape professionals, an assessment of BEN, may provide evidence within the UK to increase race equity within the environmental sector. Founded in 1987 with the intention to *"enable full ethnic participation in the built and natural environment"*, BEN operates as a catalyst organisation to facilitate transformative projects. The network engages directly with ethnically diverse communities, and supports established organisations, to work towards cultural proficiency (BEN, 2020).

BEN aims to increase BAME awareness and representation by engaging with media networks and policy makers to promote environmental activities within ethnic minority communities (BEN, 2002). At a national level BEN has successfully worked with a broad range of arts, environmental and heritage groups including Women's Environment Network, Natural England, Environment Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage.

In an address to the Urban Design Alliance in 2002, Judy Ling Wong, proposed an model for creating meaningful collaboration with socially excluded communities, (Ling Wong, 2002). Intended to build and maintain a sustainable dialogue between stakeholders and design professionals, Wong's model focuses on the dynamics of groups of people and people and place. Here, partnership enables the complexities of life to be explored in the process of place making.
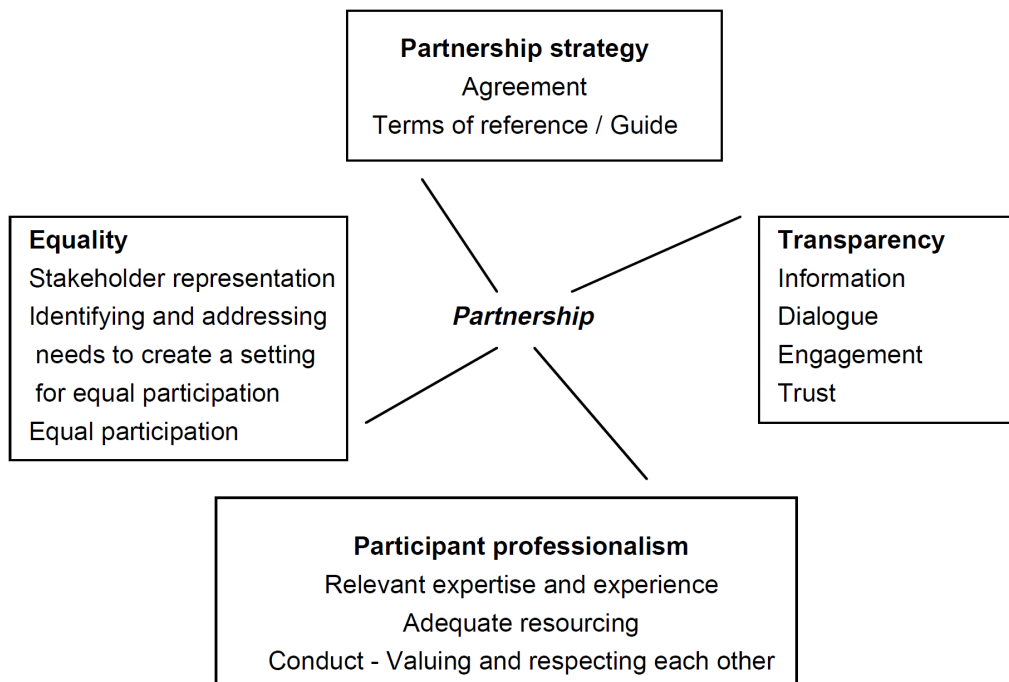
Fig.10 Partnership Diagram, BEN (Ling Wong, 2002)

This syncretic approach is indicative of cultural proficiency (Agyeman, 2012). Participant Professionalism, is particularly relevant in British landscape architecture, with a 95% white professional membership ratio. It could be suggested that "Relevant Expertise and Experience" implies the ability to collaborate with a range of socioeconomic and ethnic groups. How can this be achieved in an ethnically monocultural, professional milieu?

Other Initiatives

Climate Reframe is an online listing resource that promotes British BAME climate experts, professionals, and advocates in the UK. This initiative is crucial in addressing the environmental concerns of BAME communities. The absence of landscape architects from the listing is unsurprising. However, this may reflect the low profile of the profession within the general population (Climate Reframe, 2020).

The Commitment is a charitable project that seeks to secure pledges from citizens and government in response to the climate change crisis. In a national survey they found that BAME groups report greater action in responding to climate change than white

British. Statistically, BAME groups were more likely to reduce air travel, consume less meat, or purchase an electric or hybrid car (The Commitment, 2019).

Although the relevance of these initiatives might appear tenuous, they reflect the growing presence of talented BAME professionals working within the British environmental sector. Landscape Architects are conspicuous in their absence, suggesting more effort is required in diversifying a profession which is becoming increasingly relevant in the climate crisis.

3.2.1 Research project example U.K.
The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park: Whose Values, Whose Benefits? *A case study exploring the roles of cultural values in ethnic minority underrepresentation in UK parks.* (Snaith, 2015)

The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is heralded as a masterful transformation of a post-industrial landscape, embodying the spirit of ecological restoration, and fulfilling the needs of an ethnically diverse catchment area. In her PhD research, Snaith assesses how successful the park is in achieving these aims, and to what extent the park is an expression of white professional landscape aesthetics and ideologies.

Snaith sets both the park project and issues of poor greenspace provision for British BAME communities within an academic framework, exploring a range of hypotheses behind current levels of inequality. The empirical research methods used to discover the landscape preferences of established ethnic communities within the park's catchment area, indicates how landscape practice could work towards collaborative design based on the creation of inclusive cultural heritage (Ling Wong, 2002).

Objectives

Research objectives were focused on evaluating the links between the production of the park by design 'elites' and the ethnic composition and preferences of end users, within the catchment area. Prompted by research suggesting that there was a causal link between these factors, influencing underuse of parks in the U.S. by ethnic minority groups, (Byrne and Wolch, 2009), the identified research gap questioned:

"*Could people of minority ethnicities be under-represented as users of British parks because of a failure by those producing and regulating park space to recognise that their own spatial practices / preferences are culturally based, and not universally shared, particularly on ethnic dimensions*?" (Snaith, 2015)

Research was conducted using a mixed methods approach. Qualitative surveys used photographs to indicate overall local trends. Focus groups targeting long standing ethnically distinct communities, collected data on landscape preference and age, education, gender, to discover the correlations between these variables. The design professionals responsible for the creation of the park were interviewed, to ascertain how much the project was influenced by pre-existing assumptions about the park's physical and social settings. The objective of these methods was to discover conflicts in interest and preference between design professionals and user groups, and how far these can be linked to underlying ideologies.

Hypothesis

Snaith's hypothesis explores the assertion that parks and public spaces created by dominant social groups, are likely to mirror their tastes and ideologies. Because public space is contested (Massey, 2005), this is problematic and likely to lead to exclusion of ethnic minority groups within a majority white culture. Snaith asserts that in the British context, this is likely to reinforce dominant narratives of class, politics, and ethnicity, culminating in an experience of public space formed by Anglo-protestant values.

Literature review: Hypotheses & Landscape Preference Theory

Snaith classified the literature to be reviewed according to various hypotheses that attempt to explain the poor provision and use of green space for BAME communities within white dominant cultures. Whether hypotheses sited economic deprivation

(CABE,2010) , proximity (Payne, Mowen and Orsega-Smith, 2002), social norms (Gobster, 2002) or discrimination (Roberts and Chitewere, 2011) as the most significant factor in explaining park use demographics, they tended to indicate underlying racial inequalities within the parent culture.

Within the British context Rishbeth (2001) observed that trends for construction heavy park design in other countries contrast starkly with U.K. norms. Survey research in a South London park revealed that African and Asian respondents were less inclined to perceive 'wildness' favourably, in contrast to white participants (Rishbeth, 2004). Several studies indicated a preference for group or family use within some ethnic communities (Morris, 2003; CABE 2010). The threat of violence and racism is noted as significant factor restricting the use of greenspaces in studies in the UK and the U.S. (Burgess, Harrison and Limb, 1988; Livengood and Stodolska, 2004; Seaman 2002)

Snaith uses Massey's interpretation of territory and space to advocate a departure from empiricist notions that public spaces are objectifiable vessels for the human experience. Massey's view portrays a dynamic human relationship with space. It is neither fixed nor equitable, but a continually changing process of negotiation and interrelation (Massey, 2005).

Lefebvreian ideas of *conceived* and *lived* space were used to explain the dynamics between the designated and actual use. For example, the Olympic Park is conceived by its designers as an ecological playground where residents can commune with nature. In reality, the majority of users from the local area spend most of their time supervising their children and socialising in the built amenity play areas of the park. For these users, the *lived* space of the park is at odds with how the designers *conceived* their ideal use of the park.

Social context: Catchment & Preference Surveys.
The ward profile data for a 1.6 km park catchment area, indicated an heterogenous population comprised of ethnically distinct long-term communities
Quantitative questionnaires and qualitative focus groups were used to discovering the park preferences and needs of the local communities. Utilising representational photography of discernible landscape types, participants were asked:

"If all these parks were within a 10-minute walk of your home, which one would you visit most?" (Snaith, 2015)

The images depicted a range of landscape styles from highly naturalistic to heavily designed. Intermediate levels of intervention corresponded with definable landscape styles and presence of paths, seating and bult facilities.
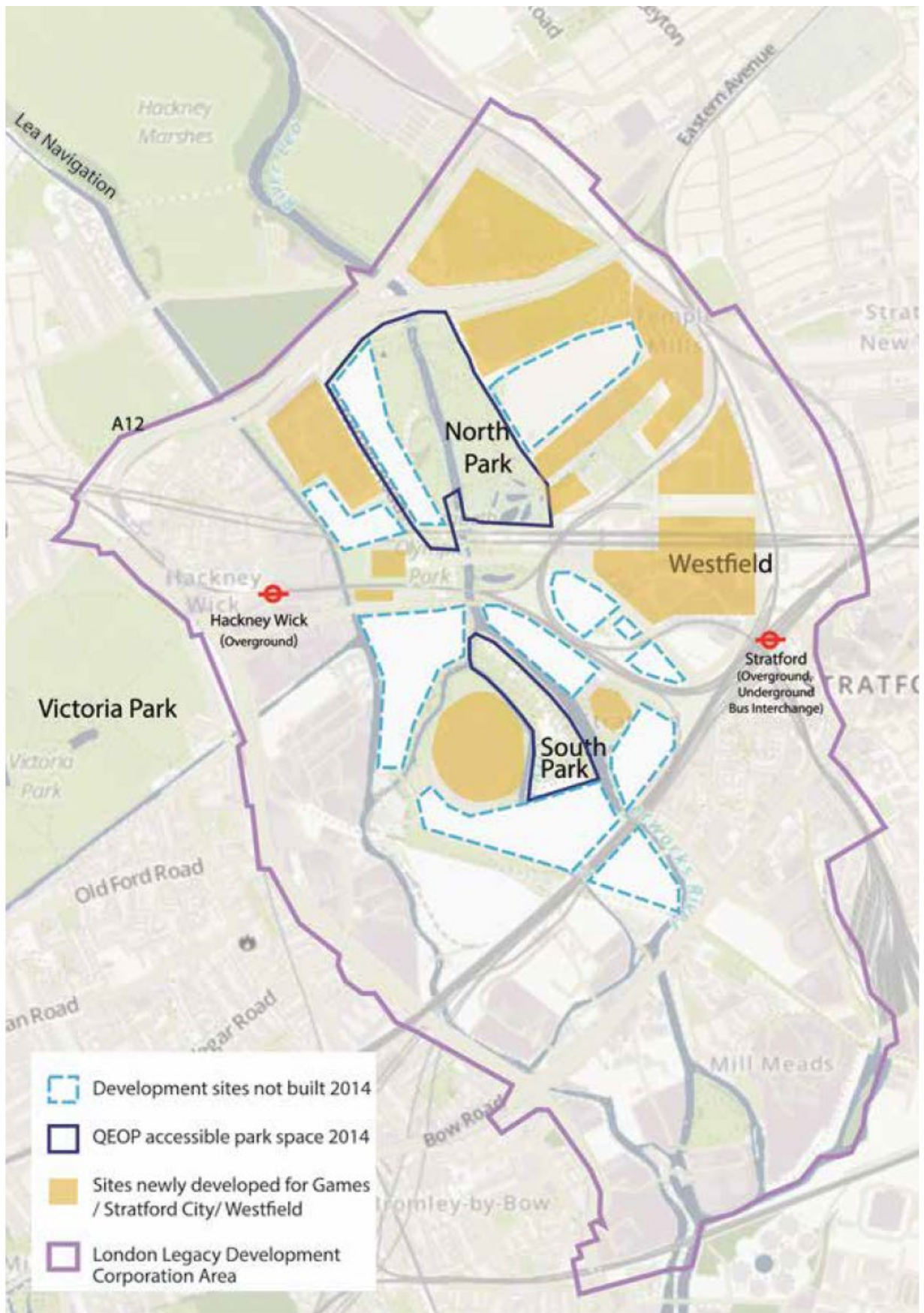
Fig.11 Olympic Park plan (Snaith, 2015)

Results

Survey questionnaires revealed the strongest correlation between landscape preference and ethnicity. University education was seen to be a significant factor in ecological landscape preference largely among the white British. The gardenesque image of St. James Park had the highest rate of selection at 58%. Wildflower/Wasteland was the least preferred, selected by only 15% of participants.

Focus group findings, were in accord with the quantitative survey results. There was a tendency within the BAME groups to favour managed landscapes and dislike wildness and mess. Similarly, white British respondents favoured managed landscapes, but there was a greater preference for ecological landscapes among university graduates. Bangladeshi heritage groups showed the strongest aversion to ecological aesthetics. British/Caribbean participants stated notable preference for a geometric knot garden, that was reimagined as a maze and opportunity for play. Snaith identifies this as an example of lived space, with participants ascribing a use different to that intended by its designer.

The findings support the notion that there is a relationship between ethnicity and landscape preference. The strong relationship between university educated white British and appreciation for a wild, ecological aesthetic, reinforces the claim that this is a learnt behaviour, associated with the legitimate tastes of the dominant elite.

Observation counts of park users found that the ecological landscapes of the North Park were most popular with white users. The construction and facility heavy interventions in the South Park, resulted in noticeably higher use by non-white users. The South Park showed a percentage of approximately 60% non-white to 40% white users, in line- with the surrounding demographic, in contrast with a 70-75% white majority in the North Park. These indicative findings support the theory that ethno-racial preferences influence park use, and that design can influence use along ethnic lines.

North Park 2014

South Park 2014
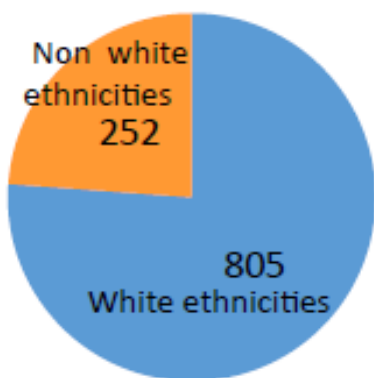
North Park user counts

South Park user counts

Fig.12 User counts, North Park vs South Park (Snaith, 2015)

St James' Park (Victorian Gardenesque)

Geometric Garden

Meadow/Wasteland

Fig.13 Landscape preference survey images, examples (Snaith, 2015

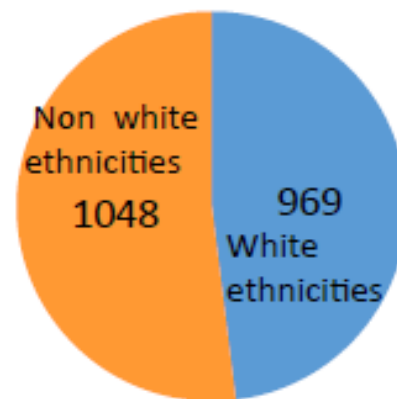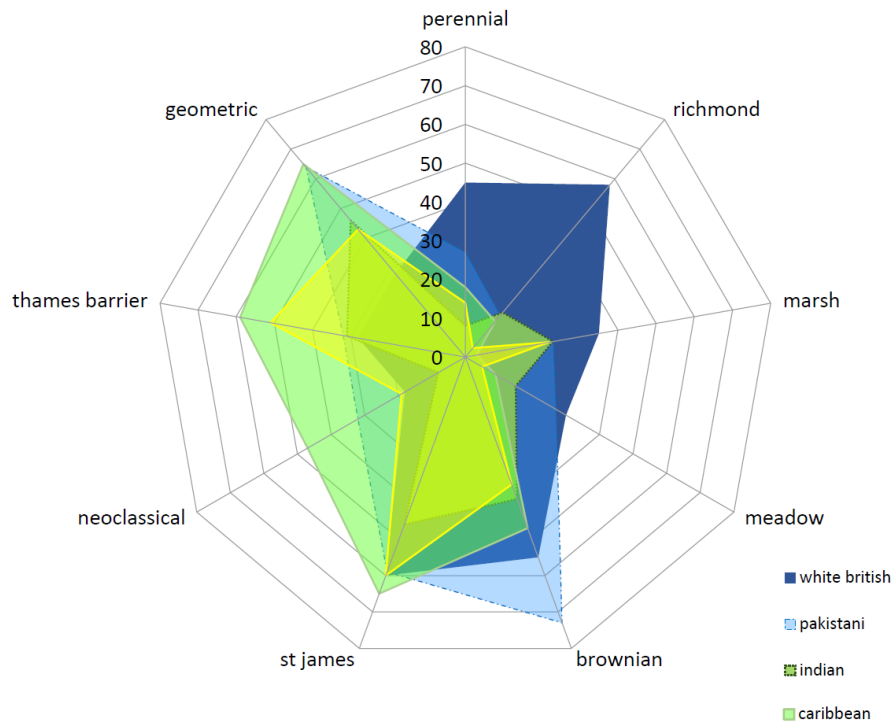| Image Reference	Overall Rank (r) & % selecting		White British		British Bangladeshi		British Pakistani		British Indian		British Caribbean		Chi-Square	Cramers V
	r	%	r	%	r	%	r	%	r	%	r	%		
St James's Park	1	60	1	60	1	60	3	59	1	46	1	65	n/a	n/a
Brownian	2	49	3	55	4	35	1	73	7	8	4	47	0.061	n/a
Geometric Garden	3	47	7	28	3	43	2	64	2	43	1	65	0.011	0.299
Thames Barrier Park	4	42	7	28	2	51	4	32	3	31	3	59	0.035	0.266
Neoclassical	5	26	9	18	6	19	5	32	7	8	4	47	0.012	0.298
Perennial Flower Garden	6	25	4	45	7	14	6	27	7	8	6	18	0.006	0.314
Richmond Park	7	23	2	58	9	3	9	14	5	15	7	12	0.0000	0.523
Marsh	8	21	5	35	5	22	8	23	4	23	9	3	0.022	0.279
Meadow /Wasteland	9	17	6	30	8	5	6	27	5	15	8	9	0.021	0.281
Average %	33%		40%		28%		39%		22%		35%			
Average Nr. Images Chosen	3		3-4		2-3		3-4		2		3			

Fig.14 Park preference by ethnicity (Snaith, 2015)

Fig.15 Park preference by education and ethnicity (Snaith, 2015)

Elite interviews

A series of interviews with lead design professionals revealed attitudes and biases that were consistent with a predisposition to creating a park that embodied the process and aesthetics of ecological restoration, and sustain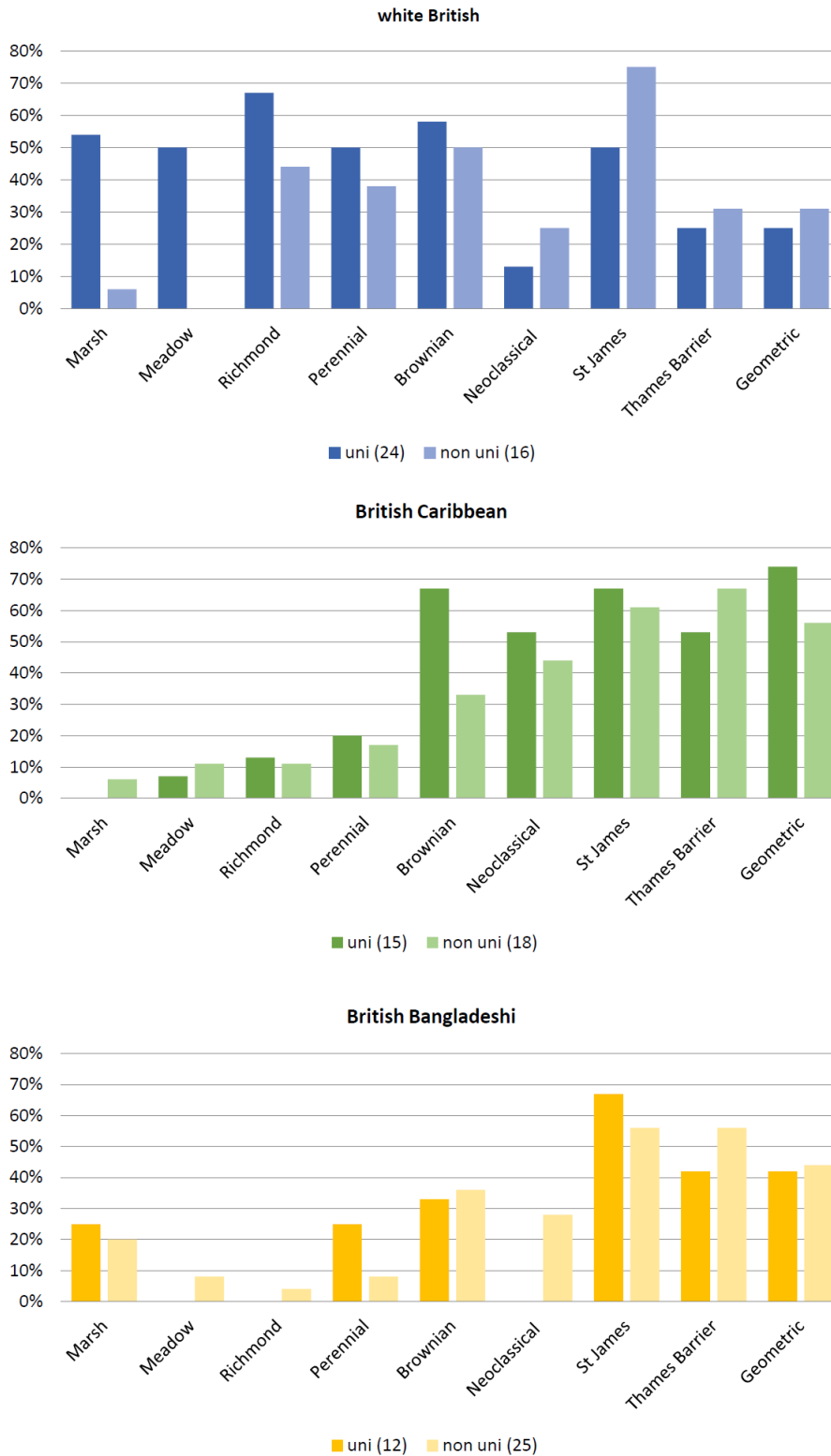ability. The concerns, needs and landscape preferences of the catchment population were not deemed integral or arguably, desirable elements of park design. Despite extensive consultation, public engagement protocol was viewed by one interviewee as 'tokenistic'. The result was that the park was situation on the river, achieving the ecological aims, rather than near to pre-existing walking and cycle routes, thereby making it less accessible to the local population.

As an Olympic site, and statement of national identity, the park and its buildings were intended to showcase British landscape and architectural talent. The landscape was intended to function as a uniform backdrop for a variety of building styles. The North Park was viewed by designers as successfully embodying the sustainable, ecological ethos. Interviewees report that the South Park, with its functionality, seating and play provisions was less favourably perceived by designers and critics alike.

Snaith's concludes that the Olympic Park validates the dominant ecological aesthetics and ideologies favoured by the designers and wider profession. Aligning this with the Lefebrvrian concept of conceived space, greater importance is placed on the objectifiable designation of space and the sanctioned activities therein, rather than the lived end user experience.

The professional perception of South Park was that it fell short of the ecological ideal. However, it is highly used by the local community for play and socialising. Acknowledgement of the preferences and needs of the ethnically diverse catchment area, were largely absent from the elite interviews. The possibility that the beneficiaries of the park may have been excluded by design, was not seen as problematic.

Olympic Park summary

Snaith's assessment of the Olympic Park reveals the dissonance present in British landscape design between professionals and public. Survey and focus groups of the catchment population, demonstrate landscape preferences at odds with the ethos of the North Park. Whether the facility amenities of the South Park remained as a concession to the local community, is a matter of debate.

Snaith's hypothesis was supported by findings revealing the cultural, aesthetic biases of landscape professionals. In terms of cultural competency, one could argue that the park successfully balances the landscape preferences and needs of both white and BAME communities, although evidence from the elite interviews suggests this may be accidental.

3.2.2 British context - findings

More effort is required from the British landscape industry to address issues of race inequality within its membership. Although ethnic composition is comparable to the U.S., the L.I. appears to lack the drive of ASLA in improving ethnic diversity from the student base up. The honourable intentions of the L.I. are clear, and it would be unreasonable to suggest that there is active ethnic discrimination. Bridget Snaith's PhD research indicates that unconscious reproduction of culturally informed landscapes, does have the potential to exclude BAME communities. It is unsurprising that this exists within an ethnically homogenous professional setting.

The success of BEN shows that there is a strong potential for change, and that success is possible through partnership and collaboration. Progress is required to embed cultural competency into the British professional ethos. British landscape architecture already *values diversity*, is *aware* of its short comings and is beginning to emerge from *precultural competence* (Agyeman, 2012). The processes of spatial justice (Soja, 2016) are discernible, but it will be some time before equitable access to urban nature exists for BAME communities nationwide due to the heavy investment required for urban development.

4.0 Discussion

The aim of this dissertation was to assess if the lack of ethnic diversity in British landscape architecture affected BAME communities' access to urban nature. We have seen that poor greenspace provision can be linked to legacies of land inequity, resulting in the concentration of BAME communities in low cost, dense urban areas.

There are various factors affecting frequency of use, including quality, need, landscape preference, and urban form.

Notions that innate preferences exist for naturalistic landscapes are suggested as anachronistic. It is possible to correlate landscape preferences with ethnic group. However, it would be problematic to assume that these were innate, and not the product of circumstance and shared cultural norms.

A predisposition for ecological aesthetics exists within UK landscape professionals due to shared educational experiences, and cultural homogeneity. This may adversely affect their ability to meet the needs of BAME communities that display significantly different landscape preferences. To overcome this, landscape professionals need to internally diversify and learn collaborative techniques to function with cultural competency. This can be interpreted as the dynamic processes and outcome of spatial justice.

British landscape architects can learn from the progress that has been made by their American counterparts. In this context, a combination of professional reform and self-organising practitioners have started to dismantle white dominance by pursuing empowering, decentralised initiatives and support networks.

Representation is a common theme in progressive initiatives. It is difficult to aspire to a profession when you do not see people similar to yourself in the role. Lack of representation can be interpreted as exclusion, particularly for minority groups. The issue of diversity for landscape professionals is a vital step in working toward cultural competency. The ability to deliver culturally competent design is contingent on the acknowledgement of *difference* in preference and need of distinct groups. This is a move away from ideas of universality of design, and one that requires a relinquishing of control, and transition toward sustained collaboration between designer and end user.

It is important to avoid the assumption that professional diversity alone equates with cultural competency. Sustained dialogue with many minority groups, over decades is likely to be required to become culturally proficient. We are still some way from redressing the imbalance in access to, and benefit from urban nature for British BAME communities. Significant progress toward race equity has been made in the British environmental sector suggesting that UK landscape architecture can also achieve this. Promising trends in US professional landscape further support this.

On this basis, I propose a series of equity indicators that may be used to assess progress over time.

Equity indicators:

- Contrition
- Professional representation that mirrors society
- Cultural competency – design for difference, preference and need
- Collaboration – democratisation of the design process

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