

**OUTDOOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: BLACK, INDIGENOUS, WOMEN OF
COLOR'S EXPERINCES & PERSPECTIVES ON PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR
RECREATION IN THE AMERICAN OUTDOORS**

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On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.

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Abstract

Research on outdoor recreation participation consistently shows that White individuals participate in outdoor recreation/leisure activities more than Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) (Humphrey 2020; Lee and Scott 2016; Li and Wen 2023). In this paper I investigate aspects of outdoorsy culture and barriers that impact Women of Color's participation in outdoor recreation in the American outdoors. I conducted six interviews with women of color who rock climb and recreate outdoors. Findings included stereotypes of outdoorsy culture, experiences of racism and sexism, and barriers such as financial and access to skill development. Stereotypes of outdoorsy culture were images consisting of White, male, athletic physiques, and associated with extreme or intense activities. The women I interviewed also experienced varying degrees of racism and sexism largely in the form of questioning their skills and knowledge. Lastly, participants expressed the costs and financial burden associated with outdoor recreation as a barrier as well as the struggles accessing skill development whether it was due to cost, or others who are more experienced unwillingness to share knowledge. Aspects of outdoorsy culture can make outdoor recreation undesirable and inaccessible to many BIPOC possibly contributing to the unequal participation in outdoor recreation.

“One thing I’ve learned in the woods is that there is no such thing as random. Everything is steeped in meaning, colored by relationships, one thing with another.”

– Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

Research on outdoor recreation participation consistently shows that White individuals participate in outdoor recreation/leisure activities more than Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) (Humphrey 2020; Lee and Scott 2016; Li and Wen 2023), the percentages of White individuals visiting national forests, parks, and national wildlife refuges is close to 70% of all visitors (Humphrey 2020). The unequal participation in outdoor recreation is rooted in larger systems of inequality, including legacies of settler colonialism and violence against BIPOC in the United States of America (U.S.) (Humphrey 2020; Lee et. al. 2022; Spence 1999). The contextualization of history and theorization of the American wilderness deepens our understanding of the lands that people interact with, and how ideology produced and shaped the culture of the American outdoors including historical violence and exclusion, stereotypes and socialization, and barriers. Lack of racial diversity in the outdoors is harmful to everyone. Having more people with diverse backgrounds, identities, and perspectives on outdoor environmental and social issues can give great insight into problems and solutions. The inequities that we face in the outdoors were not random, they are consequential of settler colonialism and a culture that is exclusionary by design.

In this paper, I investigate aspects of outdoorsy culture and barriers that impact Women of Color’s experiences. Through the literature review, I argue the legacy of settler colonialism and historical violence have created an outdoor culture that exudes BIPOC, furthermore I investigate a cultural/racial-ethnic argument (Humphrey 2020; Floyd 2002; Lee et. al. 2022) that interprets unequal participation as BIPOC not wanting to participate. Additionally, I explore

Armstrong and Green's (2022) four mechanisms: physical access, economic access, relational or cultural access, and social psychological perceptions. I then detail the qualitative research project I designed to further interrogate aspects of outdoorsy culture that give insight to the unequal participation problem. I find that experienced Women of Color climbers perceive outdoorsy culture as White, exclusive, and hierarchical, experience various forms of racism and sexism, and face barriers of economic access and access to skill development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, following the COVID-19 Pandemic in combination with the popular resurgence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement, outdoor industries among many others shifted to have more diversity and inclusion initiatives due to social pressures calling for social justice and equality (Bruton 2023; Wagner 2022). Despite a general move towards more diversity and inclusion initiatives, the rates of diverse participation have not increased. A study conducted by Resource Systems Group (RSG) and Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (WYSAC) with data collected by the National Park Service on racial and ethnic demographics of National Park visitors found that BIPOC are heavily underrepresented in outdoor spaces (2019). Research on outdoor recreation participation consistently shows that White individuals participate in outdoor recreation/leisure activities more than BIPOC (Humphrey 2020; Lee and Scott 2016; Li and Wen 2023) the percentages of White individuals visiting national forests, parks, and national wildlife refuges is close to 70% of all visitors (Humphrey 2020).

The exclusion of BIPOC in outdoor spaces is shown in visitor rates and outdoor marketing (Frazer 2018; Humphrey 2020; Martin 2004). In one study that looked at 2,192 images from outdoor magazines from between 2011 and 2014, White models were represented in more than 95% of the images in each sport magazine (Frazer 2018). In the same study, when

looking at gender representation in outdoor magazines, men were found to be depicted more than, in some cases making up more than 70% of models depicted (Frazer 2018).

Colonization and Theorization of the Wilderness: Historical Erasure

The American outdoors was built upon colonial ideas of wilderness. To achieve a romanticized colonial vision of nature, wilderness had to be absent of people and people's histories, "a wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain" (Wilderness Act 1962). Thus Indigenous people were removed, ancestral lands dispossessed, histories erased, and history whitewashed (Humphrey 2020; Spence 1999). Colonial powers acquired the land we now call the United States through violent means of settler colonialism in which from Indigenous people's land and resources were stolen. How many relate to land and nature is largely impacted by settler colonial ideologies. The Doctrine of Discovery ¹served as the reasoning and authority to colonize North America was based in White supremacist ideology (Miller et. al. 2012). The goal was to possess land and control resources; to extend the reach of the English Crown, land, resources, and people were exploited (Miller et. al. 2012). Land relationship has largely been influenced by western conceptualizations. Nature became something to be conquered and exploited.

During Western expansion, the West was romanticized as a place of natural wonders. In 1872 Yellowstone National Park being established as the first natural "Wonderland" (Spence

¹ Law students, organized and supervised by Cornell's Legal Information Institute, define the Doctrine of Discovery as "a principle in public international law under which, when a nation "discovers" land, it directly acquires rights on the land" (Wex Definitions Team 2022)

1999) Nature parks were made to preserve uninhabited landscapes (Kantor 2007) so that they may remain a still picture in time, nature untarnished by man. A “vanishing Native” narrative is often used to push the rhetoric of pristine wilderness (Spence 1999). Wilderness without human history was the perfect place for the White Colonial America imagination.

Historical Violence and Exclusion and Its Legacy

A historical contextualization that highlights the history of violence and exclusion in the outdoors is one explanation for why BIPOC do not participate in the outdoors at the same rate as their White counterpart. For a large part of America’s history an exclusivity of the outdoors deliberately kept BIPOC away from public lands, national parks, and forests (Humphrey 2020; Lee et. al. 2022). In addition to historical segregation and exclusion, many BIPOC who did venture into the outdoors were often met with violence (National Park Service 2023; Rowland-Shea et al. 2022).

One example of historical violence is the case of Eugene Williams, a 17-year-old- Black teenager, who was murdered on Lake Michigan after enjoying a day with friends on the water. It was the summer of 1919, and after the raft he built drifted into the “White Section” of Lake Michigan, a man began throwing rocks at the teen, causing head trauma, which ultimately led to Eugene’s drowning (CRR19 2022; Humphrey 2020). The legacy of trauma and settler colonialism continues to affect spaces like the outdoors to this day.

From slavery to segregation, systemic boundaries have historically been placed on Black peoples’ mobility and what spaces they have been allowed to occupy. When those boundaries were overstepped, even if they were done so unknowingly, in many instances it resulted in violence or imprisonment. This threat limited African Americans’ ability and desire to explore spaces that were outside of what they knew for certain were safe and has impacted African American communities’ interaction with these spaces today. This history is reflected in the small numbers of African Americans that we see visiting national parks today (National Park Service 2023).

BIPOC exclusion of outdoor spaces has been used to create the outdoors as White spaces, enforcement of exclusion has often been supported by policy and law enforcement. Since People of Color has been long excluded, many cases within the last few decades have shown how BIPOC are often unwelcomed and are met with violence or criminalization when they enter public outdoor spaces.

The nation's recent reckoning with racism and violence against Black people has brought environmental injustices and disparities into long-overdue focus. The stories of Christian Cooper, threatened with violence and arrest while birdwatching in Central Park, and Ahmaud Arbery, murdered while jogging down a tree-lined street in coastal Georgia, are among the countless stories of Black, brown, and Indigenous people who, while seeking to enjoy the outdoors, have been threatened, killed, or made to feel unsafe or unwelcome (Rowland-Shea et al. 2022).

Historical violence and exclusion legacies continue to affect BIPOC's participation in the outdoors, BIPOC were not welcome in nature and green space, and the stigmas of exclusion and violence carried out continue to have consequences. In addition to exclusion, BIPOC are more likely to live in "nature deprived" communities, than White people (Rowland-Shea et al. 2022). Nature deprived communities are communities that have little to no access to green space and nature (Rowland-Shea et al. 2022). In addition to the unequal access to nature and green space, BIPOC also face criminalization in green spaces, one major example being Central Park, in New York city. Central Park was once the site of a thriving Black neighborhood called Seneca Village (The Central Park Conservancy 2018). To make space for Central Park, Seneca Village land and homes were taken by the government through eminent domain, which allows the government to take private land for public use (The Central Park Conservancy 2018).

The residents of Seneca Village were displaced by the end of 1857, and Central Park was then built on the ground of a demolished Black Neighborhood (The Central Park Conservancy 2018). In addition to the removal of the Black residents of Seneca Village, Central Park was

envisioned as green space for White elites, far from BIPOC, immigrant, and working-class communities (Lee et. al. 2022). BIPOC who entered Central Park were often met with criminalization (Lee et. al. 2022).

One example what was greatly publicized in the media of criminalizing BIPOC for being in green spaces is The Central Park Five, also known as the Exonerated Five. In 1989, five Black and Latino teenagers were wrongfully arrested and convicted of brutally assaulting and raping a White woman, due to racial profiling and prejudice, essentially the crime of being Black and Brown in the park at night (Lee et. al. 2022). The outdoors has a long history of not being safe spaces for BIPOC due to racial profiling and criminalization.

The outdoors and greenspaces are often referred to as White spaces. A “White Space” is a setting or space that is perceived and considered to be formally and informally “off limits” to anyone who is not racialized as White (Anderson 2015). The outdoors and wilderness were created to be a White Space from its inception, the forced removal of Indigenous people and whitewashing of history, as well as segregation and exclusion that aimed to keep those spaces White.

In addition to the historical violence, many BIPOC to this day still experience violence and stigmas in the outdoors. Many BIPOC feel hyper surveilled and are criminalized for participating in the outdoors because they disrupt the “White Space.” For example, in 2020 a Black man, Christian Cooper, who was birdwatching in Central Park was falsely accused of threatening a White woman and her dog after he told her that her dog should be in a leash in the wildlife section of the park (Gross 2023).

Race & Culture in the Outdoors

The simple cultural/racial-ethnic argument (Humphrey 2020; Floyd 2002; Lee et. al. 2022) for why BIPOC do not access the outdoors and outdoor leisure activities is reliant on the dismissal of structural exclusion. The cultural/racial-ethnic argument argues that BIPOC simply “do not want” to participate in outdoor recreation and be a part of outdoor spaces due to it being deviant from their culture’s social norms (Humphrey 2020; Floyd 2002) Moreover, it continues a rhetoric and stereotype that BIPOC don’t climb or hike or do anything outdoorsy because being outdoorsy is a White person thing. Some argue that trauma passed down through generations shaped attitudes toward the outdoors (Ho and Chang 2022).

A cultural argument (Humphrey 2020) suppresses critical reasoning for why BIPOC do not engage with the outdoors as much as White people do. Rather than looking at issues like access, systemic racism, and violence in the outdoors, the cultural argument distracts us from understanding the lack of diversity and access. Lack of participation in the outdoors is often “chalked up to cultural factors, which in turn gives people less of a sense of urgency to enact change in our outdoor recreation system” (Humphrey 2020). Some research argues that the reason for this cultural difference stems from historical racial oppression, exclusion, and violence, which has prevented BIPOC from “developing cultural disposition and environmental attitude that appreciate parks and the great outdoors” (Lee et. al. 2022). A cultural explanation for the unequal participation of BIPOC in comparison to White people can also explain how the outdoors and outdoor spaces and activities have been racialized and socialized as “White Activities” though the cultural explanation is often oversimplified without historical contextualization.

Going deeper into how space can be racialized and socialized, Armstrong and Greene (2022) argue that meaning is assigned to spaces which influences how people interact with

navigate through spaces. When entering White spaces, BIPOC often engage in performance or negotiation (Anderson 2015), code switching is one example of this. By engaging in performance or negotiation, BIPOC attempt to be accepted into White spaces and navigate and endure challenges such as covert and overt racism (Anderson 2015). Lack of representation of BIPOC in White space such as the outdoors means that BIPOC often do not see themselves represented or reflected in outdoor recreation in spaces and activities and the existence of BIPOC is disruptive or abnormal to the White space. In relation to the outdoors, the meanings people associated with outdoor spaces varies among visitors depending on race and gender (Armstrong & Greene 2022). For White individuals, the outdoors is a place of adventure and romantic ideas of man and nature a “wilderness” playground made for White bodies (Ho and Chang 2022) while for BIPOC the outdoors is a place of unknown dangers.

Current Barriers

Armstrong and Green (2022) found four mechanisms that serve as barriers of public and outdoor space for BIPOC: physical access, economic access, relational or cultural access, and social psychological perceptions.

Physical Access. The first mechanism, physical access, is the physical limitations of being able to access an outdoor space. Physical access became limited first through the removal of Indigenous peoples from ancestral lands to achieve a “pure wilderness” (Humphrey 2020; Kantor 2007; Spence 1999). Then the enforcement of outdoor spaces as White spaces through segregation and exclusion that was often enforced through violence (CRR19 2022; Humphrey 2020; National Park Service 2023; Rowland-Shea et al. 2022). Many outdoor spaces that are

considered “wilderness” are far from people, which requires people to both have means of transportation and free time to be able to access it.

Economic Access. Costs and fees associated with gear and transportation is one of the biggest barriers barring people from the outdoors and outdoor sports (Humphrey 2020). Costs include gear, entrance fees, taking paid leave, travel costs, and time. Outdoor activities like climbing requires expensive gear to navigate climbing terrain safely, harness, climbing shoes, rope, helmet, hardware, belay devices etc. Winter sports require clothing that can withstand the elements, and expensive gear like, snow gear, skis, snowboards, etc. and furthermore places to engage in these sports are remote making travel cost expensive. Access to high-quality gear is an important consequential barrier (Cameron 2022). Budget gear can be difficult to obtain with popular outdoor brands refusing to drop prices out of fear of changing brand perceptions (Cameron 2022). Limitations of used gear and discount gear exist in is the perceived and real quality, performance, and longevity of gear (Cameron 2022). Often used gear and discounted gear still carry high costs, making it only slightly more accessible than full priced gear while also being difficult to find. Acquiring gear can be difficult in both cost and knowledge about what gear to buy and where can be unaccusable to many who do not have extra money to spend.

Acquiring Skills. Having access to tools and mentors associated to learning outdoor skills can be costly especially when considering taking classes in skill development. Skills pertaining to outdoor recreation can usually be acquired through classes, which usually cost money, or through knowledgeable friends and family. Acquiring skills become difficult when costs are high, and if the individual trying to learn does not know anyone who can teach them the skills needed which would be at a relatively reduced cost when compared out most classes offered by certified instructors.

Current Study

Settler colonialism, historical violence, and exclusion are important for contextualizing the current issue inequality in outdoor spaces. I constructed qualitative research study to further investigate the question, what experiences and conditions influence the unequal participation in outdoor recreation and outdoor sports? Historical contextualization frame historical violence of the displacement of Indigenous peoples of spaces that people now recreate in, as well as the violence that Women of Color faced and continue to face when entering outdoor spaces. The American outdoors has for long been a White space, diversifying the space and reconciling traumatic histories of land dispossession and violence against BIPOC is a large step toward social justice and equality. My study aimed to interrogate the experiences and perspectives of Women of Color on diversity and inclusion in the outdoors.

METHODS

Sample

As previously established above, BIPOC participation in outdoor recreation is lower than the rates of White Individuals participation. By interviewing Women of color who participate in outdoor activities regularly, ranging from women who work in the outdoor industry to women who go outdoors on the weekends, allowed for greater reflection on the experiences coming into outdoor recreation participation and the continuation of participation from an intersection of race and gender. The criteria of rock climbing as a common activity among the participants allowed for some standardization as various activities/sports have different cultures, skills and experiences within each sport.

I recruited participants through convenience sampling and recruitment criteria was based on the following parameters: identifying as a woman of color, being between the ages of 18-40,

regularly participating in outdoor recreation activities, and participating in rock climbing for more than one year. Interviewing Women of Color allowed access to unique perspectives from the intersection of being both a Person of Color and a woman in a sport (climbing) that is dominated by White Men. Age criteria was based on participants being able to legally consent (being over 18) and up to 40 to control for greater variable of differing experience based on age.

I used both convenience sampling and snowball sampling to recruit participants. I reached out to women that I had previous contact with and if they would be willing to participate. In addition to directly contacting women a flyer containing research participation information was distributed in climbing gyms in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. All women have either lived and or worked in the American Southwest. One participant, Vive, lives in Tennessee, I met her while she was working in an outdoor climbing guide capacity in Colorado, and I contacted her directly. I used convenience sampling due to limited time available for recruitment and data collection. In addition, this is a non-probability research project which allowed for convenience sampling which is a non-probability method. Thus, generalizability is limited as participant sample cannot be justified as an accurate representation larger society.

Data Collection

As the primary researcher I drew on qualitative interview research methods to ask Black, Indigenous, Women of Color about their experiences in the outdoors and outdoor recreation as well as their perspectives on outdoor diversity and inclusion issues. This allowed for the collection of in-depth data on experiences which would be difficult to achieve in a survey.

I asked participants to take part in a single session semi-structured interview following an interview guide lasting approximately 90-minutes. I conducted interviews over Zoom and in-

person. I recorded and transcribed interviews; I de-identified transcriptions and gave pseudonyms to participants to protect participant confidentiality. All participants were asked to sign a Colorado College IRB approved consent form that informed them of their rights and details of the research project. No deception was used at any point in this research, all participants were informed the projects purposes before being interviewed.

I developed relevant interview questions by using academic literature on diversity and inclusion in the outdoors and with the intent to collect detailed data on experiences and perspectives on representation, access to the outdoors and skills, and inclusion in the outdoors.

I conducted all interviews using a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix I) and deviated for probing questions specific to the participant. I identify as a Woman of Color who participates in outdoor recreation and rock climbs. Sharing a similar identity of being a woman of color who rock climbs may have allowed respondents to feel better understood in their responses due to my ability to understand technical terminology and slang pertaining to rock climbing as well as understanding the culture of the sport and outdoor recreation.

Data Analysis

I used an online AI program to transcribe recordings and cleaned manually, including deidentifying the transcriptions. I imported transcribed interviews into NVivo12, a data analysis software used for qualitative research. NVivo12 was used to aid in creating substantive coding schemes that emerged from the interview data. “Coding is an analytical process used to identify concepts, similarities and conceptual reoccurrences in data” (Chun Tie, Birks, Francis 2019). The coding schemes that emerged as stereotypes of the outdoors, which includes race, gender, body type, gear, and intensity of the activity; experiences of racism and sexism; and barriers of outdoor recreation what includes cost and acquiring skills. Coding schemes emerged through the

analytical process based in grounded theory methodology of inductive coding. I produced an initial coding scheme through an initial analysis, through further analysis I refined coding schemes. I used grounded theory as an inductive method for formulating theory (Charmaz 2006, Chun Tie, Birks, Francis 2019) with special attention to how they theory can fit into the substantive area in which it will be used, understandability beyond the realm of academia, generalizability to a broader substantive area, and control (Evans 2023). A grounded theory methodology allowed for analysis and theory to be derived from the data that has been collected (Chun Tie, Birks, Francis 2019). I selected quotes as evidence and bolded sections to highlight and emphasize key words or themes that are being discussed in the analysis.

Participants

Data comprised of six interviews with different Women of Color who participate in outdoor recreation regularly and rock climb. All analysis refers to each person by their pseudonym.

Table I: Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Self-Identified race/ethnicity	Age	Location
Adele	Asian - Thai	22	Colorado
Lyndsey	Hispanic	27	New Mexico
Salena	Mixed Race- Indigenous	31	Colorado
Velouria	Bi-Racial Latina- Mexican & White	21	New Mexico
Vive	Bi-Racial- Black	34	Tennessee
Vanessa	Hispanic- Northern New Mexican	29	New Mexico

RESULTS

Stereotypes of the Outdoors

Stereotypes are over-generalizations which can be in the form of images and beliefs held on physical attributes and behaviors which are assigned to groups of people. In the case of the outdoors, stereotypes pertaining to who participates in the outdoors, what they look like and what they do can create a monolithic generalization of all people who are in the outdoors. When I asked participants what a stereotypical outdoorsy person looked like and does many described race, gender, body type, and clothes and gear. Generally, they described the stereotypical outdoorsy individuals as “very White, male and masculine, thin fit physiques, and favoring particular brand clothing and gear brands.

Racialized Outdoors: “That’s a White person thing” “Brown people don’t...” A racial image or stereotype of what an outdoorsy person looks like, can be especially harmful for people who are not racialized as White. Due to the drastic difference in participation outdoor recreation by race, as pointed out by Humphrey (2020), Lee and Scott (2016) and Li and Wen (2023), White people have become the face of the outdoors. Thus, media and physical representation in the spaces are heavily White which might lead many to believe that BIPOC do not participate in outdoor recreation or at least are seen as an anomaly. Lack of representation in the outdoors is often reflected in rhetoric like, BIPOC are not outdoorsy or that the outdoors is a white person thing. Stereotypes that the outdoorsy culture is White and that BIPOC do not enjoy being in the outdoors contributes to the experience of BIPOC feeling unwelcome in a space or feeling like as a BIPOC person cannot try something. Participants, when asked what a stereotypical outdoorsy person looks like, described the image in their head which often a person that is racialized as

White. Vive who identifies as a Mixed-Black women and who has been rock climbing and hiking in the outdoors for many years, as well as working in the outdoor industry described this image as, “Very White. And for me, it feels like it's always been pretty generic in terms of how I've seen American outdoor culture, it was, White men or people just hiking, and generic, REI clothes.” Adele, who identifies as Thai and has been rock climbing outside and hiking since she moved to Colorado for college said, “**I would picture them as a White man, or a White girl,** to be honest, because I don't really see People of Color, just casually backpacking when I do that.” This is not to say that there are not BIPOC that backpack and do other outdoor activities, but Adele felt like she only saw White people when she was in the outdoors. Only seeing White people can contribute to the rhetoric of the outdoors being only a White person thing. Adele also told me about her roommate who jokingly teases her that climbing and wearing outdoor brand sandals is a White person thing.

I said to my roommate that I'm going to go climbing, they would jokingly [say], **No, that's the White thing in you... Because, I'm half White...they [say], that's the White thing.** You're so White for doing that. And I was like, okay...When I'm wearing my flip flops are the Teva [...] they [say] oh that's a White person thing...

The rhetoric of “it’s a White person thing” can be discouraging to BIPOC as it situates a person of color who participates in outdoor activities as an anomaly, or commonly implies must be White in some way. Some participants struggled more with the White images that came to mind when describing what an outdoorsy person looks like, sometimes hesitating before answering or saying they felt bad saying before describing outdoorsy as White. Velouria who identifies as Latina, said “I can’t help but picture more White people and I know there are people of color that are outdoorsy and stuff, but stereotypically, they like granola and they’re pretty White. Sometimes they wear sandals”. The image invoked for Velouria of outdoorsy people was not intentional as she herself is a woman of color who participated in outdoors activities with

other BIPOC yet the image she imagined was White. There were a few instances where participants rejected racial and physical stereotypes and said that people do not have to look a certain way to be in the outdoors or to be considered outdoorsy. Some participants that participate in outdoor BIPOC affinity spaces seemed wearier of describing a White people as the stereotypical outdoorsy person, as they were actively trying to dismantle the stereotypes and rhetoric that White people are the only ones that can enjoy the outdoors, or you have to look on way to be in the outdoors.

Big Strong Men. In addition to race, respondents imagined the gender of the outdoorsy people they envisioned. Among stereotypical American gender roles women are supposed to take care of the home and be soft and delicate, while men are the strong protectors and providers. When asked what a stereotypical outdoorsy person looks like, Vive said she imagines a “Tall, White dude, brown hair. Those REI pants, those zip off pants.” Similarly, Velouria said “My image is a burly bearded dude. I don’t know, I mean in terms of an image of a man who is outdoorsy.” Both descriptions focused of masculinity in terms of being tall and burly. Men continue to dominate outdoor representation especially in media as pointed out by Frazer (2018), many stereotypes of the outdoors being rough mirror societal gender roles that say women are gentle and must stay at home, while men are rough and go outside.

Body Type. Some participants described the body types of the outdoorsy people they imagined. They imagined outdoorsy as being thin or having an athletic physique. When participants imagined the gender of the outdoorsy person being male, they used words like burly and tall. However, when gender was not specified, participants used words like thin or fit. Selena said what she thinks her family imagines an outdoorsy person to be “They think people who go outside look alike... I would think, it's someone who is White, someone who is thin, someone

who is very active.” The outdoorsy body type image is influenced by what society expects a physically active person to look like, which is often associated with being thin. Another participant, Lindsey who identifies as Hispanic, when asked if she feels represented by outdoor marketing, said “I feel like a lot of the advertisement is really thin Hispanic woman, of course, if you're an outdoors person, and you're doing all these things, you're going to be thinner or whatever.” Thin and fit body types tend to be associated with outdoor activities due to the perception of experiencing the outdoors as a physical activity along with minimal body type diversity in outdoor marketing. The images of being thin and fit can be difficult to cope with if you do not fit into body expectations.

Gear & Clothes. Another reoccurring theme was what kind of gear and clothes people have in the outdoors and what that means about them. Gear could be perceived as socio-economic status signifiers as some brands are more expensive and some are cheaper, and more expensive brands are often thought of as better. When asked what they imagine outdoorsy people to look like, some participants listed well known gear brands that are known to be expensive and specific clothing items including sun shirts with air vents, sandals, and flip flops. Selena described how she feels there are social norms or unspoken rules in the outdoors on what you wear and what gear you have.

Someone who has, all the good, all the nice clothing, you know, they're wearing North Face and Patagonia and Eddie Bauer and they have really expensive foods, and they have all the gadgets... there's also, the untold rules, you need to have this kind of gear to be out here. That's not a rule that's written, but it's an implied... norm... You hike in these clothes, you don't hike in these clothes, you have this kind of car, you don't have this kind of car.

Selena expressed clear understanding of social norms in the outdoors on what clothes and gear someone might have. It is normal to see people wearing brand name outdoor clothes and athletic wear. When asked what outdoorsy people look like, Lindsey said “I guess typical, REI

gear, wearing the green pants, a nice shirt, but the ones that air out, a backpack or camel pack, hiking boots... And that's what I picture the typical dress attire kind of thing.” Brand gear and outdoor brand clothing is not a requirement for going into the outdoors, yet the participants picked up on the specific brands that people wear and use. Adele described what outdoorsy people wear, “they wear flip flops, you know, those Teva or other brand shoes. They would, they would have carabiner with them all the time. **They have this Hydroflask bottle, North Face or Osprey, whatever backpack brand, you know**” The gear and clothes that are outdoorsy are heavily tied to the brands that make them. Selena, who has worked in the outdoor industry for many years, explained a hierarchy of gear.

I think that **there's a lot of perception around what kind of gear you should have, what kind of things you should be wearing**, or bringing to the crag² ... within hardware, **there's a hierarchy of , what gear is nicer and better**, like Petzl and Black Diamond, and then you start going down, the list... if you have the cheaper kind of hardware people [say] oh, you have that” versus a Petzl gear, you know?

Selena described outdoor culture as being capitalistic at time focusing on the cost and brand of gear and then perceiving someone based on the type of gear they have. The hierarchy of gear can affect how someone is seen by others in the outdoors. People with more affordable gear brands may be perceived as less outdoorsy or less knowledgeable and skilled than those with expansive gear brands.

Perception of Extreme activities. One consistent issue that came up in the interviews was how outdoor recreation activities and sports are perceived as extreme or intense. Many participants described their family’s relationships with nature and the outdoors; walks around the neighborhood, gardens, relationships with local green spaces and traditions. There seemed to be a disconnect between the language of outdoorsy and outdoor recreation to casual time in nature

² Crag refers to a small rock area in which people climb at.

like gardening and a stroll. Participants associated language like outdoorsy and outdoor recreation with extreme and intense feelings towards certain activities in the outdoors.

Some participants even felt like they were not outdoorsy or did not relate to what they think is outdoorsy culture due to not desiring extreme or intense experiences. Velouria described how she felt she doesn't relate to outdoor culture due her preferring a more relaxed experience of nature.

I don't relate to it very much. I don't think it really applies to me, and in terms of what I think it's fine... I don't really want an intense experience of nature like backpacking I enjoy camping. I enjoy all that but... I don't have time to go more than a day away, for me. So yeah, I don't think I necessarily relate.

For many of these women outdoor culture felt tied to doing difficult activities in the outdoors, things associated with intensity and ruggedness. Not participating in the intense or extreme activities can feel invalidating, like in the case of Velouria where she felt disconnected to outdoor culture, or outdoorsy because she does not participate in what she sees as intense activities. Selena described how within the sport of climbing there is a hierarchy based of perceived extremeness of the activity.

I'm a rock climber. And even in in those worlds...there's a hierarchy. If you're boulder versus if you're sport climber versus if you're trying to climber versus if you do alpine climbing versus, if you're a multi-discipline climber. Do you ice climb? Do you dry tool? And I would say, that exists in the outdoors as a whole... **if someone were to say, "I'm outdoorsy" and [they say] "oh, what do you do?" [and you say] "oh, I go hiking." It's like, okay, that's not outdoorsy, versus someone [saying] "I do backpacking, and I do, like, skiing, and I do mountaineering and stuff like that"**

Selena was critical of the outdoor hierarchy and even expressed that she felt that if she were to tell people about the more intense or extreme activities she did participate it might make them feel bad or less validated in being outdoorsy. Selena was also against any ranking of being less or more outdoorsy, for her, if you enjoy being outside in any capacity, then you are

outdoorsy. In contrast, Vanessa felt the American outdoor culture is about the extremes, but that the extreme is not necessarily a reality for many people.

American culture would be being out in the mountains or doing a really extreme sport. And maybe that's what it is because Americans, I guess, are kind of perceived as extremists in a way and we do everything big. But I also know that a very small percentage of people actually do participate in really extreme sports like that.

The perception that outdoor recreation is extreme or difficult can keep people from trying different forms of outdoor recreation, as they may not perceive it to align with their interests or comforts. A culture that is based on who can do the hardest hike or climb, who is stronger, or who has the most experience in all the different sports and different skills in each sport, can be very intimidating and unappealing to many people. However, the outdoors can provide many different experiences: from a casual walk to extreme mountaineering. Yet, perceptions of outdoor culture focus on the extremes, creating a hierarchy of activities that can feel invalidating for those who appreciate more casual experiences. Therefore, the hierarchical nature of outdoor culture is inherently not welcoming or inclusive.

Experiences: Racism and Sexism

Racism. Participants spoke to varying degrees of experiencing racism in the outdoors, from not ever noticing racism to extreme cases of experiencing violence. Vive describes occasions in which she would be in rural towns near climbing spots she was visiting, and she would feel unwelcomed as a Black woman, as people were rude to her, and there were images that can be interpreted as racist symbols, including the Confederate flags and pro-Trump flags. Many places that were more conservative felt unsafe for Vive as a woman of color. Selena described an event in which a White man approached her and her mother while on a hike after he heard them speaking Spanish to each other.

He started asking if my mom was a US citizen. I [said], what does that matter to you? And [he said], oh, I'm just wondering. And I [said], Okay, bye and he [said], so you're US citizen or not? And [I said], what, why does that matter to you? [I kept] walking. I [said], enjoy your walk, leave us alone. And I remember getting really angry.

Selena's experience of trying to enjoy a hike with her mother only to be singled out by a White man questioning her mother's U.S. citizenship status was upsetting. Selena also described her experience growing up in the South where certain outdoor recreation areas felt segregated due to some parts requiring entrance fees and others not. Either way, in some spaces Selena described "if you rolled in there, as a brown person, you would just get mean mugged and look the other way, until you felt so uncomfortable that you left."

Not all participants felt they had experienced racism in outdoor contexts, those who did not, usually reasoned that they are good at not noticing that type of thing or lived in diverse areas where more people are BIPOC.

Sexism Many of the women described instances in what they experienced sexism while engaging in sports or in the outdoors. This included instances of being told, sometimes from young ages, that they were impressive "for a girl", or that they did certain things "like a girl." Vanessa, when asked if she had experienced or seen racism or sexism in the outdoors, she said,

I think definitely more sexist, that I've experienced. Wow, she's doing that so good for a girl...Just because she's a woman doesn't make her. I don't know. Make it more impressive... **Whoa, she's doing that really great for a woman.** No, we always do incredible stuff. I just don't think it's as publicized you know, because we do really great stuff. And I just I think... the outdoor industry is such a heavily male dominated, just in general. And we and women are getting a lot more spotlights and stuff and we are getting our names out there. But you know, we're living in the shadows of men doing stuff.

Women's accomplishments and skill are often minimized and overshadowed by their gender. Lindsey grew up in the outdoors, but when she was offered help with her skills to help men they would often refuse and continue to struggle with tasks like starting a fire. Lindsey felt

that she hadn't experienced racism in the outdoors but felt that gender would often come into play.

They're either [a] super male figure, or just the guys that are, they know it all kind of thing, **or they don't want a woman to take charge**... I know how to do all these things. I feel like a lot of the time, I'm kind of just whatever about it, go ahead, do it, but I know how to do these things. And I think that that factor of me being a woman, I don't know if necessarily my race comes into it. But I think being a woman, it's just kind of, oh, don't worry, the guy's got it kind of thing. Okay, so I think that whole picture kind of always pops into my head when it comes to that.

Intersectional Experiences of Women of Color. Many of the women said that in different situations their skills or experience would be questioned, often by White men. Vive, who works in the outdoor industry as a climbing guide described her experiences with older White men in which they regularly question her skills and knowledge in the outdoors.

And this has happened multiple times where it's a random White dude. It's always older, just come over and certainly questioning the things that I'm doing. And it makes me feel like they don't see me as a leader or a teacher. And I don't know why, **I don't know if it's because I'm a woman, [or if] I'm a woman of color.**

Other participants described the common phenomenon of a man questioning what you are doing or telling you what to do as mansplaining. Velouria defined it as "it's just men assuming they know more about the activity than you do and putting you down in a way that assumes you don't know your stuff about what you are doing." Many of the women were frustrated by this as they have extensive experience in the outdoors and in climbing. Selena who is a certified Single Pitch Instructor, had an experience in a gear shop when she went to buy cord material to build climbing anchors, the sales representative questioned her on what she is using it for, if she knew how to use it, and generally making her feel like she had to prove herself to this man to be able to buy her cord.

I felt like he was grilling me in order to sell me the material. And if I was a White dude, would [he] even questioned whether I knew how to build an anchor ³or not? This is so stupid. And I remember feeling really annoyed and not wanting to go back to that shop.

In describing experiences with sexism, the women I interviewed reflected on past experiences where they received unsolicited advice or questioning of their knowledge and skills from men, and often, White men. Experiences like these left many women feeling frustrated and uncomfortable.

Barriers: Cost & Acquiring Skills

Cost. Many participants referenced the cost and financial burden associated with gear and access as one of the greatest barriers to accessing outdoor recreational sports for BIPOC and those of lower socioeconomic status. For climbing there are costs associated with starting gym membership and renting or buying gear. Velouria described how she thinks accessing rock climbing as a beginner is difficult without money, due to usually needing to start in a climbing gym, where they pay, at minimum, to be there, and then they might face additional fees to rent gear from the gym like shoes and/or a harness, unless they can buy their own gear.

Anyone can climb... I think having money to climb... [is] a thing, because you know, most people aren't just going to go outdoors, buy a fresh pair of shoes, buy gear and just start climbing, usually start in a gym, and you have to rent shoes, rent a harness, [buy] a day pass, you know, and all of those things do cost money...I think that that kind of deters people a little bit.

Often outdoor gear is seen as an investment, both for gear being associated with high costs and committing to owning gear for long term continuation in the activity or sport, unless you can find gear secondhand or at discount prices. But a beginner in the sport might not know where to find discount or secondhand gear or how to check quality of the gear. Even if they

³ A climbing anchor a system that is attachment point for a climber to a rock wall.

obtain gear, they often still face costs like monthly gym memberships and costs to maintain the gear they did purchase. Vanessa suggested that it is difficult to pay for expensive gear due to the state of the economy.

I don't think they tailor to everyone's economic class you know, because outdoor sports can be very expensive and gears' really expensive and, in this economy, I don't know who can afford to do anything, so I think that can definitely hinder accessibility.

Outdoor sports and activities are often a luxury and a privileged due to the time and money that is required to participate regularly or more than once a season. The costs associated with maintaining outdoor recreational hobbies is often seen as unnecessary expenses. To grow within a sport or recreation activity skills develop over extended periods of time often through the help from friends or professionals. Velouria said how she had to pay to learn skills pertaining to climbing, “I didn’t know what a Z-clip⁴ was until I took an \$80 class. I didn’t know what back-clipping⁵ was. I didn’t know any of that before I have taken the classes.” Participants usually identified multiple barriers to the outdoors and how they can compound. Having to pay for gear, skill development, and outdoor trips while also having free time for hobbies like outdoor recreation and working to make the money to be able to afford all the associated expenses is difficult for many in this economy.

Acquiring Skills. The second barrier that came up in interviews was the cost of classes to access skill development as well as the unwillingness of more experienced people to share knowledge and skills. Many of the participants talked about how they struggled asking questions in the beginning of their journeys to learn, moreover when they did ask questions they would be

⁴ A Z-clip refers to a dangerous clipping technique in lead climbing when a climber mistakenly clips the wrong section of the rope into a quickdraw exposing the climber to a dangerous fall.

⁵ Back-clipping refers to a dangerous clipping technique in lead climbing in which the climber clips their rope into a quickdraw in the wrong orientation, exposing the climber to potentially unclipping during a fall on that carabiner.

dismissed, and people would not take time or effort to explain. In more formal learning settings, they spoke about the commitments to taking a formal class with a professional, which includes financial cost and time. Other participants said that they struggled asking questions as a beginner and felt that those with more experience and knowledge would talk as if they expected them to understand. Vanessa described a difficult experience in which she was trying to learn from a friend. Vanessa felt he did not take time to teach her or answer any of her questions when she was very willing to learn.

I was trying to learn, be a sponge and just absorb whatever he had to tell them. And he, wasn't really willing to take the extra five minutes and explain why we tied this knot over here, instead of clipping this over there... that was a little frustrating. And I remember asking him a question too, why the anchor looked that way? And he said, just because it does. I don't know if that's a great explanation, you should probably explain that a little bit better.

In contrast to the negative experiences, the women also spoke about informal mentors along their journey who took the time to teach and answer questions what left more positive impacts on the experiences of learning. Velouria had a positive experience learning from family friends that were willing share knowledge as well as give her gear what she believes greatly impacted her continued participation in the sport.

In terms of climbing, it was taking classes to learn how to belay and lead belay. It was my dad's friends who are really good climbers, and they know their shit. **They were willing to help us and to teach us and give us their equipment that they didn't need, and that really helped up maintain our love of climbing...** I remember both of my teachers for belaying, they were both very nice. I would stress that lead climbing was not a very easy class to take. It was a 6-hour class and it cost a lot of money. And it was something that you kind of had to want, if you really deeded to take the class. I would say it was **positive I had a lot of luck in terms of knowing people in the sport.**

For Velouria, knowing someone helped her stay in the sport of climbing to help her learn and grow in the sport as a beginner. Despite the support from a family friend to progress in the sport, she also had to take classes and that cost both time and money. Knowing someone in the sport

can be a positive experience if they are willing to answer questions and share knowledge. If they are unwilling to teach and help others learn when they ask or if they assume that someone automatically knows what they are talking about it can be quite a negative experience for the learner. Selena described how she developed skills over time, which included finding people who she trusted and would not judge her for asking questions.

Throughout time, for sure, asking for help. Finding people that I trusted, who I felt wouldn't judge me for not knowing things that I felt are so basic in these outdoor spaces ... So it was really hard for me to ask for help, I think at the beginning, but I started doing it more and more. And as I did that, I started learning different information. And I found one or two mentors in my life who were willing to teach me things.

Many of these women were introduced to outdoor sports like climbing from friends, and that they did not grow up camping, hiking, or climbing like they do now. Generally, people in the outdoors are introduced outdoor skills when they are young, from programs like boy scouts, summer, or from parents, so that when they become older many of their skills and knowledge is thought of as common knowledge. This can lead to beginners who come into the activity or sport later in life to feel like they were expected to know something and feel judged for that. Creating spaces where people feel comfortable asking questions with knowledgeable people who are willing to take the time to explain can help people learn skills without the higher cost associated with taking classes with professional instructors.

DISCUSSION

The issues of diversity and inclusion that came up in the interviews and in analysis shed light into the greater systems of inequality found throughout our society, but especially here in outdoor spaces, including stereotypes, social hierarchy, sexism, racism, and socioeconomic class inequalities. I found that outdoorsy schemas and stereotypes consisted of White male images, thin and athletic physiques, and specific brand clothing and gear. In addition to this, there are

restrictive social norms specific to what a person should and shouldn't be or look like. Restrictive social norms make cultures and spaces exclusive, as an outsider if it is difficult to come into a new space and relate to the culture, they may feel left out, not represented, or unwelcomed, leading to not furthering participating in the culture. People who are not White men, that look physically athletic, and who do not own brand gear and clothes are excluded from what is imagined to be outdoorsy, making it difficult to see themselves as active participants in the culture. Anderson (2015) discussed how the outdoors is racialized as White, in this study, I similarly found that participants described the outdoors to be White in the stereotypes and schemas they imagined when asked "what does an outdoorsy person look like and do?" While many of the women I interviewed described the outdoors as White, many also were actively trying to deconstruct that narrative by saying you don't have to look like anything in particular to be outdoorsy. In addition, I found that the outdoor world is hierarchical, often only validating extreme sports and participation as outdoorsy. Many of the women I interviewed were making the effort to reframe outdoorsy as any enjoyment in nature including but not exclusive to home gardens and casual strolls outdoors. Challenging and deconstructing a White imagination of the outdoors that envisions the wilderness as void of humans and dangerous is crucial to a future in which includes People of Color.

I also found that participants had experiences with various forms and degrees of racism and sexism, often in the forms of abusive racialized language, mansplaining, and being undermined. Some participants identified situations in which they experienced racism in the outdoors while others felt that they lived in diverse areas, so racism was not as prevalent. Collectively, all the women had identified experiencing sexism. Some women identified experiences as being more an issue of gender than race, but sometimes were unsure if it was

because of one or both race and gender. Most of the sexism in the outdoors they experienced was in the forms of mansplaining, men questioning their abilities and skills, or minimizing their accomplishments through rhetoric like “you are good, for a girl.” Women and girls are often subjected to societal expectations that dictate can and can’t do, and how they look.

One of the major barriers to outdoor participation they women discussed was cost of gear and time. Cost of gear was an interesting issue since gear is also subjected to the hierarchical culture of the outdoors. You can be perceived to be outdoorsy and more or less skilled, depending on the gear you own. People who own more expensive brand gear are often perceived as having more skills or given expert status.

Armstrong and Green’s (2022) four mechanisms that are barriers of public and outdoor space for BIPOC are physical access, economic access, relational or cultural access, and social psychological perceptions. These mechanisms can influence experiences to various degrees depending on location, identities, and the culture. Through the interviews I found that Armstrong and Green’s (2022) four mechanisms combined in various ways. For example, the cost of gear is an issue of economic and social psychological perception as it was found that people will perceive you based on the gear or clothes you are wearing in the outdoors. Another example is economic access and relational or cultural access when trying to acquire skills, most of the way skills are acquired is through paying for it through classes from an instructor or needing to know someone who already has the skills and are willing to share.

Many women shared what helped them navigate many of these barriers, including finding community, building friendships with people that were willing to share knowledge, and finding recourses and support from programs that are working to diversify the outdoors. Some participants found recourses like – social media (which shared information readily) and affinity

groups or programming (which provided community and recourses to many historically excluded communities) — to be vital in their enjoyment and continuation in the sport of rock climbing.

Limitations of This Study

Some limitations of this study include being able to reality generalize the experiences of Women of Color in the outdoors, some participation criteria being vague, and potential researcher and participant biases. The use of convenience sampling meant that different races and ethnicities were not represented equally. Most women who participated in the study identify as Hispanic or Latina, though the sample had a fair amount of racial and ethnic diversity among participants, racialized experiences cannot be presented as monolithic as experiences of all People of Color.

Another limitation is in the recruitment criteria of “regularly participating in outdoor activities.” The definition of “regular” was never stated and was a self-identified criterion rather than a specified number of days or time spent in the outdoors per year or month. Some women who took part in this study have worked in the outdoor industry and participate in outdoor recreation often, while others would participate less due to time and work commitments what could have impacted their responses. Someone who works in the industry and is outdoors multiple times a week may have more experiences and perspective on the culture as they are exposed to it more compared to someone who goes out once a week for shorter durations.

My role as a researcher was influenced by my own identities of being Women of Color who rock climbs and participates in outdoor recreation in various forms. This can be viewed as a strength in many ways due to my personal understanding of the topics, though this also means I could be susceptible to confirmation bias. Biases of participants could also have affected the data, due to some having higher engagement in diversity and inclusion initiatives therefore being

more cognizant of racial inequalities in the outdoors beyond personal experiences. In addition to this, the women who participated were very willing to take part in this project and may have presented information in ways that they believed could benefit the study. Many participants expressed how they wanted give me information that what useful, often saying, “I’m not sure if this answers the question correctly or is what you want,” I would try to reassure participants that I am not looking for one kind of response and even if it is completely different than what another person has said, their experiences and perspectives are valuable to the project.

Further Directions

Continuation of this research could include various sample configurations and analysis. This could include interviewing BIPOC who are newer to the outdoor as well as BIPOC who say they do not participate in outdoor recreation to better understand if outdoor recreation is unappealing due to the culture of the outdoors or if barriers like cost and physical access influence lack of participation. A comparative study between BIPOC and White people who participate in outdoor recreation could delve deeper into outdoor culture and diversity in the outdoors to better investigate if outdoorsy culture is perceived differently by race and/or gender.

One unexpected finding is the negative effect of America’s transportation infrastructure on accessing physical outdoor spaces. Two participants who had experienced outdoor cultures in other countries (Mexico and Thailand) found that accessing transportation in the U.S. is extremely difficult, as you need a car to access most outdoor spaces. In contrast, their experiences in Mexico and Thailand, they can access outdoor public land with ease using public transportation. This could be another reinteresting avenue of research to further understand the construction of the American outdoors compared to the outdoors of other countries.

CONCLUSION

This study illuminated the experiences of Women of Color who participate in outdoor recreation (i.e. rock climbing) and what factors might contribute to the unequal participation in outdoor recreation. The combination of cost and access to skill development impact accessibility and the continued participation in outdoor recreation. Once overcoming initial barriers people must then cope in outdoor culture which is White and hierarchical. Throughout this paper, I situated the reality many people face when trying to access the outdoors. The legacy of settler colonialism and violence as well four mechanisms presented by Armstrong and Green (2022). In this study, I aimed to investigate outdoorsy culture and barriers to BIPOC participation through the experiences and perspectives of Women of Color. This led me to finding stereotypes and schemas related to the outdoors, specifically stereotypes and schemas related to the people that enjoy outdoor recreation. Continual racism and sexism that Women of Color experience in the outdoors invalidates the accomplishments and knowledges they hold, which can make outdoor spaces unwelcoming or undesirable. Furthermore, stereotypes of outdoor culture are very exclusive. Many people who enjoy the outdoors and nature do not fit into the stereotype of a White man with brand gear and clothes. Those who do not fit into the stereotype, being a White man with brand gear and clothes, are often perceived or accused of “acting White” or trying to be White. Though it is understood that BIPOC do participate in outdoor recreation, the image of White people, the image of the outdoors being White is harmful, as it can make the outdoors seem unwelcoming to people who are not White. The continuation of challenging and dismantling stereotypes related to race, gender, activities, and abilities in relation to participation in outdoor recreation is crucial to making the outdoors a more diverse and inclusive space.

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APPENDIX

*Appendix I:***Interview Guide:****Demographics:**

Name:

Age:

Race:

Ethnicity:

Class:

Hometown:

Main residence:

Main environment (Urban, rural, suburban)

What Outdoor Activities do you do?

Approximately how long have you participated in each activity?

Intro Questions:

1. Can you tell me about your first memory in nature?
2. How do you see yourself in relation to nature?
3. How do you feel the term wilderness?
4. How does your family participate outdoor recreation?
 - a. Why not?
5. What do you think the “American outdoor culture is”?
 - a. How do you relate to it?
6. What do you think the stereotypical outdoorsy person looks like and does?
 - a. What do you think makes someone “outdoorsy”?
7. How outdoorsy would you rate yourself from 1 – 10?
 - a. Why?
 - b. If relative, who do you compare yourself to?
8. Have you heard about land acknowledgements in the outdoors?
 - a. What do you think about them?
 - b. Are they important to you?
9. How much do you consider the cultural history of an outdoor space when you visit?
10. How much do you consider your own positionality when entering outdoor spaces?
 - a. How? Why?

Experiences In the Outdoors:

1. Can you describe the first time you rock climbed?
 - a. Indoors?
 - b. Outdoors?
 - c. Did you have any worries or concerns? How did you cope with them?
 - d. What made you like and/or dislike the experience?
2. Have you encountered any language that you feel excludes people from participating in the outdoors?
3. Have you encountered or experienced racist or sexist language in the outdoors?
 - a. How did it make you feel?

4. Have you encountered or experienced racist or sexist language in climbing?
 - a. How did it make you feel?
5. Have you experienced overt racism in outdoor settings?
 - a. Can you describe that experience?
 - b. Did that effect how you interacted with the outdoors? How?
6. Have you experienced covert racism (micro aggressions) in an outdoor setting?
 - a. Can you describe that experience?
 - b. Did that effect how you interacted with the outdoors? How?
7. Have you ever felt minoritized in a climbing and/or outdoor setting?
 - a. Can you describe that experience?
8. Have you ever felt unsafe in an outdoor setting or in climbing?
 - a. What was that experience like?
9. Do you have safety concerns when you go into the outdoors?

Representation:

1. What made you interested in outdoor activities and climbing?
 - b. Did you have any friends or family doing the same activities when you started?
 - c. Was there any media that influenced interest?
 - i. Movies/tv shows?
 - ii. Outdoor influencers?
 - iii. Social media?
2. How much do you feel represented by outdoor marketing brands/companies?
3. How much do you think representation matters in media (social media, tv shows movies)?
4. How much do you think representation matters in outdoor settings? (ex. seeing someone that looks like you doing the same thing in the same space, identity based groups)
5. What spaces would you consider a “white space”?
 - a. What makes a “white space”?
6. How do you feel when you are in a “white space”?

Access & Exclusion culture:

1. How accessible do you think the outdoors and outdoor recreation is to BIPOC?
2. What do you think is the reason more BIPOC don't participate in outdoor recreation?
 - a. What barriers do you think hold people back from participation?
3. What do you think makes the outdoors more accessible?
4. How did you learn and develop skills pertaining to outdoor recreation?
 - a. Who did you learn from?
 - b. Can you describe that experience?
5. Was there anyone influential in your experiences?
6. How inclusive do you think most outdoor spaces are?
 - a. What do you think makes it inclusive?
 - b. What do you think makes it exclusive?
7. How inclusive do you think climbing is as a sport?
 - a. What do you think makes it inclusive?
 - b. What do you think makes it exclusive?
8. Have you ever experienced or seen “gatekeeping.”?

- a. What did that look like?
9. How inclusive do you think language (lingo and slang (technical terminology) pertaining to outdoor recreation is?
 - a. Why? Why not?
10. Have you experienced “Beta-Spraying?”
 - a. What was that experience like?
11. Have you participated in any outdoor programs?
 - a. Were they identity based? Skill based?
 - b. Describe that experience for you?
12. Have you ever heard or said “that’s a white person thing” pertaining to outdoor activities and climbing?
 - a. What does it’s “a white person thing” mean to you?
 - i. Has this ever discouraged you to participate in outdoor activities?
 - b. Who says, “it’s a white person thing?”
13. What do you think would make the outdoors a more diverse and inclusive space?