Gendered Experiences in the Wild:
An Investigation of Constraints to Women's Progression in Outdoor Recreation

by

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Abstract

Traditional masculine narratives of outdoor recreation participation encourage domination of the natural world, and have supported narrow conceptualizations of outdoor recreationists. This legacy encourages competitive and exclusionary environments that are difficult to navigate, and disproportionately affects individuals with certain socio-demographic characteristics. The benefits derived from these activities are well-documented but continue to remain inaccessible for some people. The social construct of gender plays a particularly important role in the formation of outdoor recreation experiences yet, few qualitative studies have investigated women's progression within outdoor recreation activities. Women are uniquely positioned to encounter, perceive, and negotiate leisure constraints, which alters their potential to engage in outdoor recreation activities. In adopting an interpretivist paradigm, the purpose of this research was to explore women's experiences in outdoor recreation activities, and to understand the constraints that influence women's developmental processes in activity engagement through the recreation specialization framework. Six women from different women's only outdoor recreation groups in Alberta, Canada participated in the study through two focus groups and three semi-structured interviews. Reflexive thematic analysis was employed to develop five themes: (a) searching for journey, (b) pivotal moments in one's journey, (c) deterring and defeating spaces (d) internal influences, and (e) community crafting. Results from this study offer insight about the potential gaps within the recreation specialization framework. This research contributes to the existing body of literature in leisure and recreation that warrants more critical examinations of the role of community to support women's outdoor recreation journeys.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Janelle Goodine. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Encountering gendered experiences in the wild: An investigation of constraints in women's developmental process of outdoor recreation", Pro00115763, 1/27/2022.

Dedication

For our motherly earth, from which companionship stems.

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To the women in this study: You are kindred spirits. You are the *raison d'etre* for this work and your words woven throughout these pages were cultivated from creating a much-needed sense of community during a difficult quarantine. Thank you for reminding me that, "if you get into a meadow with wildflowers, you're in heaven."

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Treaty Acknowledgment

The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/ Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

I find it difficult to outwardly identify as an outdoor recreationist. A daunting narrative that has regularly manifested throughout my life is that outdoorism is primarily reserved *for the boys.* Nature is projected as having an innate brutality that has mainstreamed rugged depictions that seek challenges in the natural environment. These depictions often conform to, and reinforce, masculine definitions of outdoor recreation that focus on competition and exploitation, which do not align with my own motivations for participation. In many cases, this misalignment of motivations employs a self-destructive mechanism that makes me question my belongingness in natural settings. The favouring of these masculine representations of outdoor recreation have often made me feel excluded from the outdoor recreation narrative, and creates an environment where I feel unable to present an authentic version of myself within outdoor spaces.

I find a certain toxicity embedded in the outdoor recreation legacy, through the attitudes and behaviours of individuals that continue to project these narratives – including in my own life. I am privileged to have gained opportunities to develop an emotional attachment to natural areas and their inhabitants through my companions and my education. In attempting to share this love with my mom, I have found that my initial discomfort of the outdoors is also deeply engrained within her own perceptions of belongingness in recreational settings. I am often crushed by the self-deprecating language and self-imposed doubt that she uses to describe her own skills and knowledge[1]. These often include statements like "I am not in good enough shape do that", "I would just be slowing you down", and "what if something happens to us out there?".

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[1] I did not write this to garner any sort of sympathy for my mother. Instead, I must insist that she is a powerful and brilliant woman and should be commended for her strength and compassion in connecting my story to hers.

I feel that her negative statements stem from the need to adhere to traditional descriptions of outdoorism that have rigid motivations for participation and oppose frivolous pursuits.

Outdoor recreation is a form of recreation "that occurs in, and depends on the natural environment" (Morse et al., 2022, p.2). Understanding the concept as a transformative experience, expands the definition to serve in the interest of the natural environment (Morse et al., 2022). Recreation can be understood as "the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing" (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association/ Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, 2016, p.34). The benefits of outdoor recreation are well-documented in the literature, and particularly for women, can provide an outlet for maintaining connectedness to nature and their social relationships (Lee et al., 2007). Outdoor recreation has been shown to enhance women's quality of life (Llyod & Little, 2005); on the individual scale, it has enriched women's lives, and can contribute to women's enjoyment of, and satisfaction with, activities like birdwatching through these outdoor experiences (Lee et al., 2015). The processes that influence women's abilities to capture the host of benefits described in leisure and recreation literature warrants further research to understand how gender affects their engagement throughout their *progress* within outdoor recreation.

Despite the growing number of women participating in outdoor recreation, a continued gender gap has been observed in North America (The Outdoor Foundation, 2021; 2022). Outdoor recreation continues to reflect Western conceptualizations of the binary nature of gender, which has broader implications to the ways that women are able to engage in outdoor-based activities (e.g., Warren, 2015). It is well-documented that women face more constraints than men while engaging in outdoor recreation (e.g., Ghimire et al., 2014; Shores et al., 2007).

However, it remains relatively unknown how the role of gender influences women's progression in outdoor recreation activities, particularly in the opportunities experienced by women to achieve mastery in an outdoor recreation activity. In this way, women may not be able to realize the spectrum of outdoor recreation benefits throughout their lifetime As such, this research explores the roles of gender in the developmental process of outdoor recreation.

This chapter explores topics related to women's outdoor recreation journeys by reviewing literature about the factors that influence their involvement in nature-based recreation activities. I discuss the theoretical underpinnings employed to describe and contextualize women's experiences in the broader context of recreation and leisure, including recreation specialization, constraints in leisure, and gender studies. Afterwards, I discuss the methodological underpinnings of this research through employing reflexivity (Chapter 2). Key findings and concluding discussion are reported in Chapter 3 and 4, respectively. Throughout this narrative, I address and provoke a critical discourse that surround equity, diversity, and inclusion that extend beyond my own personal desire for equality as a middle class, white woman.

Literature Review

The Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

The benefits of outdoor recreation are thought to cumulatively contribute to a chain of causality that produces other benefits (Manning, 2011). On a societal scale, maintaining and developing the direct interactions with the natural world that outdoor recreation provides can garner additional support for pro-conservation attitudes and behaviours (Needham & Little, 2013). Humans are primarily responsible for the loss of biodiversity, stemming from major sources including land-use changes, climate change, pollution, exploitation, and the spread of

invasive species (IPBES, 2019). Experiences with the natural world can support the development of conservation behaviours that focus on biodiversity and habitat protection (Soga & Gaston, 2024). In Alberta, outdoor recreation participants are more likely to support conservation initiatives such as the acquisition of land to protect natural environments and ecosystems services compared to their non-participating counterparts (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, 2015). On an individual level, these benefits are most notably observed through improvements to health, well-being, and enhancements in self-development (Eigenschenk et al., 2019).

Individuals may also obtain other benefits throughout their *journey* in outdoor recreation. Repeated engagements in an outdoor recreation activity can contribute to a person's central identity and increase feelings of achievement in self-actualization (Jun et al., 2015). A person's desire for mastery in the activity can influence their preferences and motivations for participation (McFarlane, 1994), transform environmental attitudes (Salz & Loomis, 2005) and behaviours (Thapa et al., 2006), and provide conservation support for resource managers (Oh & Ditton, 2008). Few studies have captured the relationships between people's progress in outdoor recreation and the factors that impede their likelihood to receive these benefits (Kim et al., 2019). To begin to address this knowledge gap, this research focuses on understanding women's developmental process in outdoor recreation and the factors that may influence this progression.

Inequalities in Outdoor Recreation

Benefits derived from outdoor recreation opportunities are thought to be disproportionately accessible to individuals with certain socio-demographic characteristics (Stanley, 2020). Many recreation experiences exist primarily "in serving the interests of the

dominant ruling group" (Humberstone, 2000, p.25). In this case, the group is defined by the most privileged individuals in Western societies that continue to benefit from the destructive legacies of colonisation (McAvoy, 2002) and the heteropatriarchy (Humberstone, 2000).

The activity setting is of particular importance for outdoor recreation pursuits. As McAvoy (2002) recounts, many of the institutions that have aided the development of parks and protected places in North America have created policies and practices that have supported the "conquest of the West" (p.384). Many of the *Fathers* responsible for park and protected area creation, such as John Muir[2] and Gifford Pinchot[3], are respected due to their contributions towards environmental protection (National Parks Service, 2018; 2021). Many Indigenous communities view these formally designated protected areas as representations of "lost land, deception, continued oppression, and the death or near death of a culture" (McAvoy, 2002, p.390). As such, it is important to recognize the existence of multiple realities that shape our attitudes and beliefs surrounding outdoor recreation opportunities. These impacts have continued effects within outdoor recreation settings, including those outside of parks and protected areas. As Ritzman (2020) states, "the white-dominated land and conservation work, outdoor recreation culture, and the environmental movement as a whole further [perpetuates] racism". Subsequently, these spaces have contributed to the veil of ignorance present in upholding these destructive traditions. For many, the dominant rhetoric suppresses and discredits the knowledges and lived experiences of individuals with differing worldviews. Western viewpoints traditionally embedded in social dominance theories are continuously promoted in various institutional

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[2]John Muir is commonly regarded as the *Father of National Parks* system in the United States and founded the Sierra Club (National Parks Service, 2021).

[3] Gifford Pinchot was the first head of the United States Forestry Service and widely considered the *Father of Forestry* [emphasis added] (US National Parks Service, 2018).

settings that normalize oppression (Ergner, 2020). This type of knowledge production pushes an ideology where:

> Human beings are set over against the world in which they live, making them the detached, subjective observers of objective nature and then taking a further step away in denying human kinship with the rest of creation. Thus, we are made human spectators, indeed aliens, in our own home. (Klaassen, 1999, p.141)

In Klaassen's (1999) observation, the environment becomes a separate entity to humans, one that is susceptible to manipulation; individuals prescribe the conditions in which the components of the natural world are permitted to exist within their axiological ideology. Additionally, the devaluation of other identities and the omission of other social realities is another consequence of this narrative. For instance, Aldo Leopold's[4] (1949) work, *The Land Ethic,* uses an umbrella term *we*, when exclusively addressing the role of *man* in developing an ethic that serves to benefit the natural environment. Humberstone (2000) recounts how the Enlightenment period of the 18th Century is largely responsible for the dichotomic nature of gender in Western societies:

> Through the construction of sets of binaries, masculinity became associated with science, rationality, objectivity and Culture. Whilst femininity became equated with emotionality, subjectivity, irrationality and Nature. These hierarchical dichotomising principles have done much to separate woman from man and to underpin taken-for-granted divisive assumptions of appropriate and expected behaviours and attributes of male and female. (p.32)

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[4] Aldo Leopold is largely recognized as the *Father of Wilderness Ecology* (Aldo Leopold Nature Center, 2021).

In this dichotomic nature of gender, women and nature are similarly aligned in ways that encourage exploitation. The hierarchical nature developed under the patriarchy distinctly separates man from nature, and in turn allows for the largely unquestioned destructive practices of the Anthropocene. In this perspective, women are also likely to become objects within the male gaze, forcibly suffering the blow from the "normative canon" that promotes an ideal conception of the female body (Ponterotto, 2016, p.133). In turn, the consequences behind the destructive forces of this *othering* become intrinsically linked to direct interactions in natural settings – or lack thereof.

Critical investigations exploring these relevant phenomena in people's recurring recreation pursuits are needed to change the dominating narratives that find continued support in field of recreation. As such, my research will be predicated on the importance of engaging in the reflexivity related to human-nature relationships. I will investigate the potential constraints that are formed through the various sources discussed above that affect women's developmental processes in outdoor recreation activities. While I acknowledge that more complex examinations of socio-demographic characteristics are needed to understand and contextualize people's engagements in outdoor recreation activities (e.g., recreation specialization; see below) in recreation specialization studies by engaging in theoretical frameworks such as intersectionality, my work solely focuses on gender. The reasons and limitations in centering the social construct of gender are discussed in subsequent sections.

Recreation Specialization

The recreation specialization framework was originally developed to describe the variation and heterogeneity of the range of outdoor recreation activity participants. Recreation

specialization refers to "a continuum of behaviour from the general to the particular, reflected by equipment and skill used in sport and activity setting preferences" (Bryan, 1977, p.175). The perspective examines the attitudes and behaviours of recreationists within specific natural settings to provide more suitable and diversified experiences for outdoor participants (Scott & Shafer, 2001). McIntyre & Pigram (1992) expanded the construct to include recreation involvement, applying an affective attachment and previous history in the activity to the framework. More recently, recreation specialization has evolved in its conceptualization, reflecting a *developmental process*, comprising of affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions (Scott & Shafer, 2001). This process more specifically examines the complexities relating to an individual's "progression in behaviour, attitudes, and preferences" that comprise an activity (Scott & Shafer, 2001, p.319).

The recreation specialization dimensions collectively contribute to a cohesive characterization of an individual's degree of specialization and reflects an individual's engagement in, and commitment to, a recreation activity. As individuals progress to more specialized stages of development, their engagement in recreation activities transforms (Iraurgi et al., 2021), and the motivations behind participation shift (McFarlane, 1994).

The affective dimension recognizes the importance of recreation to an individual. It describes an individual's psychological attachment (e.g., emotional connection) to the activity. It serves to characterize the centrality of the activity in a person's life by identifying its importance relative to their identity, other activities, and opportunities presented. The choices made by the recreationist reflect their desire to choose an activity over other opportunities.

The behavioural dimension incorporates the past and present actions of a recreationist that are relevant to the activity. It reflects the length and degree of involvement in the activity

(Scott & Shafer, 2001). Variables that characterize this aspect of outdoor recreation include existing participation and frequency of engagement, equipment purchase and use, and awareness of and within specific recreational settings. The behavioural dimension includes broader involvement, such as a person's involvement within outdoor community and their sources of knowledge. This includes possession of related books, subscriptions to magazines, engagement in relevant social media groups, and other relevant commitments.

The cognitive dimension of recreation specialization focuses on the acquisition of technical skills and knowledge building. An increase in these elements may be reflected by a decreasing dependence on equipment, although this can vary by activity (Scott & Shafer, 2001). The development of skills and knowledge relating to the recreation experience varies in consideration of the activity type. For instance, anglers moving into higher stages of specialization may develop an increased awareness of the ecological factors that affect the population dynamics of their targeted fish species (Bryan, 1977; Gray et al. 2015). Individuals may alter existing attitudes and behaviours in order to support of conservation initiatives in favour of future angling opportunities (Bryan, 1977; Oh & Ditton, 2008).

Currently, there is no standardized approach to measure recreation specialization (Harshaw et al., 2020). Studies in the field commonly operationalize the framework with a variety of approaches, some of which have been unable to capture the relative importance of each of the dimensions (Harshaw et al., 2020). As such, an individual's progression may not necessitate an equal contribution of the dimensions (Needham et al., 2009), contrary to what has been assumed by some authors. For instance, an individual may become less reliant on technical skill development by purchasing better equipment. Thus, low levels of skill and/or knowledge (i.e., cognitive dimension) may be compensated for through the use of specialized equipment (i.e.,

behavioural dimension). An individual's progression may place particular importance upon certain aspects within each of the dimensions, thus warranting further investigation at an individual level.

Following the influential work of Bryan (1977), many studies have continued to classify individuals into broad categories of user types- typically from novice stages to advanced stages of specialization. Few examinations have sought to distinguish how individuals might differ within each specialization category. Many studies have set statistically-defined boundaries between categorizes (e.g., cluster analysis), which raises questions about the effectiveness of employing rigid groupings to classify participants. These methodological choices may conceal valuable information regarding an individual's degree of engagement in a particular activity. As such, the traditional application of the framework may conceal valuable information that requires the exploration of other investigatory approaches.

Exploratory approaches to understand these variations may help to develop a more comprehensive, critical, and nuanced, examinations of the phenomena at the individual level. Therefore, a central objective of this research is to explore how a person conceptualizes each of the dimensions in shaping their personal user experience. The concept of specialization progression will be deconstructed within meaning-making methods, as it has been assumed that advancement in recreation is a desirable path (Scott & Shafer, 2001); were this true, we would expect that a majority of outdoor recreation participants to become specialized, which is not the case. Backlund & Kuentzel (2013) recount that assuming "the unidirectional nature inherent in the progression trajectory idea" may conceal the complex "processes of growth, maintenance, and attrition" involved in recreation participation (p.298). As Scott and Shafer (2001) have noted, "little has been written about the antecedents of progression" (p.321); this seems to be the

case 22-years after their observation. As such, the way that progression can be conceptualized within the past, present, future of individual's lived experiences necessitates investigation. Thus, more nuanced approaches are warranted in understanding the complexity of recreation specialization.

Gender Studies in Outdoor Recreation

The developmental process of recreation specialization varies by socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., Iraurgi et al., 2021, Lee et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2008; Randler, 2021; Rutter et al., 2021). Recreation specialization provides a means of characterizing individuals' engagement in outdoor recreation activities. Much of the work has not addressed people's identities, and has instead incorporated broad socio-demographic characteristics to describe participants. Numerous studies have examined the roles of gender in outdoor recreation participation/engagement (e.g., Warren, 2015). Rogers and Rose (2019) assert that gender is the "most [widely] researched aspect of social justice" (p.39) within the sphere. Many of these investigations have followed binary conceptualizations of gender imposed within traditional Western perspectives. These types of studies include examinations that focus on both participation in outdoor recreation and tourism activities (Kling, 2020; Stanley, 2020) and outdoor education (Humberstone, 2000, Rogers & Rose, 2019) to explore the role of gender within outdoor recreation experiences. Collectively, this body of work determines that gender plays a role in shaping individuals' experiences related to the natural world.

The relatively few examinations of recreation specialization that have explicitly investigated the relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and specialization have addressed gender (e.g., Lee et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2008; Randler, 2021), race and ethnicity

(Rutter et al., 2021), and physical ability (Iraurgi et al., 2021). Studies focused on gender have been comparative in nature and examined larger trends in recreation specialization between men and women. Typically, these studies conclude that women are less likely to advance into higher degrees of specialization compared to men (Moore et al., 2008; Randler, 2021). Few studies have integrated a socialization perspective within the framework of recreation specialization but have failed to garner sufficient support for the inclusion (e.g., Ditton et al., 1992, Kuentzel & Heberlein, 1997, Scott & Godbey, 1994). Gender has been found to play a role in the importance of outdoor recreation in maintaining social connections (Lee et al., 2015). However, as Lee et al. (2015) recount, this generalization does not capture the full complexity of commitment exerted by the participant on the activity. In their study of birdwatchers in the United States, these authors note important distinctions between the style of birdwatching employed by men and women. Their results indicate that women are more likely to possess a sentimental attachment or heightened affective dimension to birding while men were most interested in the behavioural, or competitive nature of the activity. Lee et al. (2015) conclude that "participation in birdwatching is gendered" (p.60), but they note that similar levels of commitment were found between men and women. This contrasts with the research of Moore et al. (2008), who found that men were slightly more committed to the activity of birdwatching and identified significant differences in birding attitudes and behaviours between men and women. Together, these studies reveal that women are more likely to be introduced to the activity later in life (Moore et al., 2008), participate less frequently in birding activities in general (Moore et al., 2008), and tend to spend less time on skill development (Moore et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2015).

Aside from birdwatching, hunting, and angling, little is known about the role of gender within an individual's personal development in various recreation activities. Thus, a central

objective of my research will investigate recreation specialization in women's outdoor recreation experiences to develop deeper understandings of the processes that evoke individualistic differences in the framework. While these studies discuss the role of constraints in the framework of recreation specialization, Kim et al. (2019) note that there is still a requirement to investigate the relationship between constraints and how they affect people's advancement in outdoor recreation activities.

Constraints In Outdoor Recreation

Constraints impose limitations to individuals' outdoor recreation participation. These limitations stem from both external and internal forces placed upon an individual that may alter their relationship to a recreation activity. The leisure constraints model developed by Crawford and Godbey (1987) initially applied to investigations to understand barriers to family leisure. The framework presents three types of constraint: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Together, these encapsulate potential barriers that "[affect] the relationship between leisure preferences and participation" (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p.122). Walker and Virden (2005) extended early conceptualizations of the constraints model by incorporating the micro and macrolevel factors that can describe individuals characteristics.

Structural constraints are represented as those elements that restrict one's opportunities to engage in outdoor recreation based on individual circumstances, societal influences, lack of resources and personal obligations (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Individual restrictions such as income, time, and family roles can prominently impact leisure interactions (Ghimire et al., 2014; Shores et al., 2007). Equally important are the barriers rooted in the development of recreation experiences that occur on the activity site. These factors may include lack of services, poorly

maintained natural areas, and the overcrowding of users (Ghimire et al., 2014). Interpersonal

constraints refer to an individual's social interactions – including the absence of relationships

that promote (or support) participation within outdoor recreation opportunities (Ghimire et al.,

2014). Intrapersonal barriers include individual's psychological characteristics and physical

abilities (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Several factors contribute to intrapersonal constraints,

including individual attitudes, social norms, and beliefs. These relate to one's feelings of

discomfort in natural environments stemming from a sense of belonging and perceptions of self

within the activity itself (Ghimire et al., 2014). This includes disability, which may restrict or

deny participation depending on the activity (Ghimire et al., 2014).

Microlevel factors are comprised of "individually oriented factors" (Walker & Virden,

2005, p.201), such as personality traits, that contribute to intrapersonal and interpersonal

constraints. The possession of these factors affects an individual's ability to negotiate for

constraints. Macrolevel factors encapsulate "socioeconomic, sociocultural, and sociostructural

factors" (Walker & Virden, 2005, p.201), like gender and culture, and may alter leisure

preferences through interpersonal and structural constraints. Gender may influence the

development of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours relating to outdoor recreation experiences

(Walker & Virden, 2005). One's motivations in establishing leisure preferences vary based on

the microlevel and macrolevel factors that a person encounters throughout recreation pursuits

(Walker & Virden, 2005).

In general, socio-demographic characteristics influence how an individual will

encounter, perceive, and negotiate for these constraints (Little, 2002). Literature indicates that

women are more likely than men to encounter constraints in recreation opportunities (Ghimire et

al., 2014). In addition, women negotiate these constraints differently, and have been found to

utilize several negotiation strategies to mitigate these barriers (Little, 2002). The complex nature of these constraints, and how they mutually reinforce each other through societal norms and historical discrimination will be discussed in subsequent sections. Typically, constraints impose three types of reactions that influence the recreation experience through: prevention, reduction, and transformation.

Supporting the Dominant Body

Opportunities in outdoor recreation have been repeatedly criticized for reinforcing the ideals of hegemonic masculinity (e.g., Humberstone, 2000; Stanley, 2020). Outdoor pursuits are often depicted through a singular lens that asserts control over nature. This conquering of wilderness follows social dominance theory, which continues to "[legitimize] myths that justify the uneven distribution of power and status within society" (Milfont et al.,2013, p.1128). In this instance, *dominance* is rooted in colonialism and the heteropatriarchy, which places the "white male interest" (Humberstone, 2000, p.26) as the primary beneficiary of outdoor recreation. Thus, the continued trend to "further [favor] traditionally masculine modes of engagement with nature" (Kling et al., 2020, p.233) reveals the detrimental role of the industry in restricting one's place within natural settings.

Toxic traditionalism, as outlined by the Red Nation (2019), describes the destructive legacy of following tradition without acknowledging its ability to "silence any opinion, identities, or views that are contradictory" to the dominant ruling. Therefore, these opportunities have often been created for the privileged "white, male, straight, muscular, and able bodied" individuals who constitute the conventional notion of "legitimate outdoorspeople" (Stanley, 2020, p.244). However, a common thread depicts the outdoor recreation experience as an ultimate challenge, pushing individuals past their physical and mental limits. For instance, Evans

et al. (2020a) describe the agreement of four female professionals who have encountered outdoor recreation situations where they felt compelled to "push themselves to, sometimes, unsafe limits" (p.7) in adventure pursuits to earn a place within the *fraternity* of a recreation activity.

Time and Other Obligations

The expectations of womanhood are not detached from the field of outdoor recreation. Women face significant constraints in participation including financial limitations and time restrictions (Ghimire et al., 2014). Women are more likely to encounter financial limitations due to the observed pay gap between the gender binary (e.g., Drolet & Amini, 2023). As previously noted, mitigating these constraints may be difficult, and may affect the development of technical skills (Lee et al., 2015). Financial limitations can affect the ability to purchase equipment (Little, 2002) that could contribute to women's capability to specialize in the recreation activity. The inability to separate from family obligations is commonly cited as a factor that can impede outdoor participation (Doran et al., 2020; Evans et al., 2020a; Little, 2002). It is well-established in literature that women tend to have less time for leisure and recreation compared to their male-counterparts due to the expectation to take on more family obligations leading to an unequal division of labour (e.g., Little, 2002; Kamp Dush et al., 2018). In some cases, women feel that the separation from family obligations, such as divorce, is necessary to gain leisure time (Little, 2002). This is due in part to the difficultly of prioritizing self above care obligations, subsequently evoking emotions of guilt (Little, 2002). Negotiation strategies include the requirement to compromise between responsibilities and leisure regardless of one's dedication to the activity (Doran et al., 2020). Other constraints include little time for leisure due to employment and professional opportunities (Little, 2002). Thus, exploring how these obligations

serve in restricting the development of a women's behavioural dimension is important for advancement opportunities in activities.

Representation in the Outdoors

The observed lack of representation of marginalized people in media relating to outdoor recreation continues to present as a potential barrier for participation in outdoor recreation (e.g., McNiel et al., 2012; Stanley, 2020). Men hold most of the leadership, provider, and policy-making positions within the outdoor industry (Humberstone, 2000; Rogers & Rose, 2019). Women are subjected to "powerful imageries of exclusion" within their participation of outdoor recreation, that can impact the ways that they "construct the social meanings" of recreation and leisure (Stanley, 2020, p.243). Thus, the absence of role models within the outdoor industry influences a woman's potential willingness to engage in a recreation activity. There is an overt disconnect between the perceived and actual number of women occupying spaces in outdoor recreation positions. In their investigation of women's leadership experiences, Rogers and Rose (2019) examined a particularly sexist event encountered by a research participant. The participant described an event where male counterparts were quick to denounce the accomplishments of women in leadership roles when the lack of women representation at an outdoor leadership conference was criticized. Although women occupy leadership positions, they are often devalued in their roles due to differing definitions and motivations behind outdoor recreation pursuits (Rogers & Rose, 2019). A negotiation strategy for this type of constraint could include the creation of groups focused on community engagement that create shared outdoor recreation experiences for marginalized populations (Stanley, 2020).

Wilderness advertisements that highlight outdoor recreation opportunities often promote stereotypical gender norms throughout their imagery (Kling et al., 2020). Women presented in

outdoor settings are seldomly positioned as being "actively engaged" in outdoor recreation (McNiel et al., 2012, p.46). McNiel et al. (2012) conclude that women are typically illustrated as a consumer in wilderness areas and are shown in passive roles that encourage "short-term engagement" (p.46) in low-intensity activities (Kling et al., 2020). In contrast, media portrayals of men often center around challenging and rigorous pursuits (Kling et al., 2020). Additionally, women are infrequently recognized as solo recreationists, instead being placed in traditional heteronormative relationships or depict images of motherhood (Kling et al., 2020). In a case study that examined the lives of four female professional athletes, Evans et al. (2020a) highlighted the collective experiences that contribute to the heightened "awareness of the sexual dynamics and the physical appearance expectations" (p.7) involved in activity participation. Women are also predisposed to the dominant assumption of being cisgender in Western society and are often viewed as possessing less physical strength based on their biological sex assigned at birth (Evans et al., 2020a). The definition of womanhood is rarely questioned in these studies. The implications of this are discussed in the limitations section of this paper. As a result, women recreationists are placed in a challenging position, that forces them to simultaneously encompass characteristics assigned from both traditional masculine and feminine categorizes. Thus, they are set to impossibly high standards that do not recognise the fluidity of gender.

An Outsider Even on the Outside

Fear is frequently cited in literature as an emotion that influences women's participation in outdoor recreation and can pose significant intrapersonal constraints (Ghimire, 2014; Shores et al., 2007). As Rogers and Rose (2019) recount, a frequent outcome in constraint literature focused on gender is that "women perceive themselves as less competent than their male counterparts" (p.46). Comfort in outdoor settings is influenced by outdoor experiences that are

cultivated at an early age (Wesely & Gaardner, 2004). However, Warren (2015) notes that there are distinct differences in the ways that recreation opportunities are presented to younger audiences. Denny (2011) compares the imagery between Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts handbooks as an example to note the distinctive gendering that occurs at early stages of development in outdoor recreation. Subsequently self-doubt and lack of confidence are often expressed as constraints encountered by women in outdoor recreation activities (Rogers & Rose, 2019). A potential negotiation in this sphere is for individuals to establish a community of like-minded individuals that provide a sense of safety and comfort (Doran et al., 2020).

Fear culminating from external pressures in recreation experiences is derived from both the environment and other participants. As Stanley (2020) maintains, vulnerability and fear in outdoor settings also stems from the *hauntology* derived from historical injustices that have occurred in outdoor settings and persist through generations. A singular event[5] has the capacity to transform a women's entire view of recreation experiences (Wesely & Gaardner, 2004). These types of negative interactions, including sexual assault and/or male violence, have the potential to eliminate any associated feelings of comfort in previously familiar spaces (Wesely & Gaardner, 2004). Coupled with the historical exclusion that denounce a women's place in leisure, many individuals require strategies to negotiate for these constraints (Little, 2002). Additionally, pests and the potential for other wildlife conflicts also contribute to feelings of discomfort or fear in wilderness settings (Ghimire et al., 2014). Individual actions may include modifications in recreation routines, avoiding specific times or isolated areas to pursue an activity, or may completely cease participation if they are unable to negotiate for these

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[5] Wesely & Gaarder (2004) recount that a large proportion of women participants in their study had experienced some form of "harassing behaviours" during outdoor pursuits (p.654). This depicts a stark existence of womanhood, where male violence becomes an assumed reality that will be encountered throughout the lifetime of a women.

constraints (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). "Poorly maintained activity areas" (Ghimire et al., 2014, p.57) which present as a structural constraint, also heighten the fear-based anxiety that surrounds outdoor spaces (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). A reduction in these potential barriers could occur if areas had more adequate lighting, emergency phone services, or incorporated more rangers that do not identify as male (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004).

In conclusion, the current literature posits that an individual's developmental process in outdoor recreation opportunities provides a multiplicity of benefits at both individual and societal levels. Women are more likely to experience constraints to recreation that are intrinsically tied to social and historical discriminations. However, little is known about the enduring role of constraints within a person's outdoor recreation journey. This study is important within the broader context of outdoor recreation as the number of individuals engaging more frequently in outdoor recreation is declining (The Outdoor Foundation, 2022). As the social construct of gender plays a particularly important role in the formation of outdoor experiences, the central objectives of this work are as follows:

1. Investigate the concept of recreation specialization in women's outdoor recreation experiences to develop deeper understandings of the processes that evoke individualistic differences in the framework.

2. Explore how a person conceptualizes each of the three specialization dimensions in assessing their role in shaping the user experience. An individual's progression may place particular importance upon certain aspects within each of the dimensions, thus warranting further investigation on an individual level.

3. Discuss how individuals perceive outdoor recreation specialization progression: How does an individual define their own outdoor recreation experience.

4.   Determine if participants feel that constraints impede their progression in an outdoor recreation activity and at specific points in their specialization journey. This requires an in-depth examination of how individuals encounter, perceive, and negotiate these constraints.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Axiological Positioning

When considering my own positionality, I am often met with a shadowed version of self that casts a silent hatred upon reflexive moments. Diving into these pits of complexity, where I attempt to engage with EDI+ research in outdoor recreation in a meaningful way that contributes to a just world, is difficult. This research incited moments of deep reflection, in which I often questioned the extent to which I have been conditioned by broader systems of oppression, and daydream of the alternative versions of me that exist without rigid boundaries and barriers. Acknowledging the pivotal role of gender in the formation of outdoor recreation experiences legitimizes the continued discrimination and exclusion I have felt as an outdoor recreationist. I would be dishonest to conceal that this work validates a part of my own existence having experienced many of the constraints outlined within leisure and recreation literature. Simultaneously, I struggle to address my own position of privilege as a White, able-bodied, middle-class, cis-gendered women. I recognize that I am able to negotiate many of the constraints that can impede people's outdoor recreation participation more easily than others that are subjected more heavily to systematic oppression that heightens inequalities in outdoor recreation.

On a hiking trip in the mountains together, my mom and I came to the realization that we have most likely endured a set of parallel experiences, separated by time, that have continually reinforced our feelings of exclusion towards outdoor recreation. In our discussions on this trip, it was abundantly clear, that her previous engagements relating to outdoor recreation have made her detached from feeling a sense of belongingness in the environment. She recounted how she was purposely left out of outdoor recreation opportunities because she was a woman. Her father

would leave for fishing trips with her brothers without question as she was left to take care of other family obligations with her mother. In many of these moments of reflection, it feels as though an authoritative force incessantly attempts to limit our engagement in coming back to nature – both physically and psychologically. Inadvertently, my parents upheld these same gendered ideals of outdoor recreation throughout my upbringing. While I fixate upon the few memories of my experiences in the outdoors when I was younger, I am embarrassed to admit that my relationship to our 1990s television set was more profound. Unpacking these types of lived experiences can provide essential knowledge about why outdoor recreation opportunities remain inaccessible to certain individuals. In turn, this could provide valuable insight towards one's progression in recreation activities.

During these recollections, I am often overcome with feelings associated with powerlessness, where I remain in a defenseless and isolated state. How do we change the toxic conditioning within lived experiences that stems from the patriarchal roots of outdoor recreation? In attempting to answer this question, my axiological positioning stemmed from a desire to value and engage with women's voices to enable new conversations about the exclusionary nature of outdoor recreation experiences. This study is important for allocating a space for the expression of, and reflection upon, these sentiments that are often dismissed. For this reason, this research adopted an interpretivist paradigm. No longer am I able to support inquiry that is founded on a universal truth seeking. My axiological position is founded on the explicit recognition that outdoor recreation experiences are not excluded from the systems of oppression that perpetuate an unjust world for women through discrimination, negative gender stereotypes, and norms.

Research Approach

Qualitative research is compelling in its ability to investigate "multiple voices in multiple social contexts with the possibility of creating social change" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p.54). This study was conducted through an interpretivist paradigm as it centers individual experiences. An interpretive paradigm recognizes the complexities that are embedded in the social world (Markula & Silk, 2011). The aim of this research paradigm is to "understand the participants' subjective experiences and through these experiences, interpret the participants' meanings" (p.34). Thus, the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this research assume that there is no universal truth (relativism) and that individuals construct their own understanding of reality (subjectivism; Markula & Silk, 2011). Therefore, it is an ideal paradigm for the purpose of this research: to explore women's developmental process in outdoor recreation activities.

This research utilizes interpretivist description as it allows for freedom in adding an "explanatory flavor" while posing "complex experiential questions" (Thorne et al., 2004, p.2). The field of outdoor recreation could be seen as a multi-disciplinary, as it bridges both the social and natural sciences in providing people with experiences in nature. To constitute as an applied discipline, this research supports greater diversity within the perspectives of outdoor recreationists. This study could provide insight on ways to encourage and apply EDI+ practices seeking to support women throughout the field of outdoor recreation. The interpretivist description is not "satisfied with 'pure' description, but rather, seeks to discover associations, relationships, and patterns within the phenomenon that has been described" (Thorne, 2016, p.56).

The interpretivist description fits nicely with thematic analysis "for the purpose of capturing themes and patterns within subjective perceptions and generating an interpretive description" sufficient in exploring the complexities of the human experience in the natural

world (Thorne et al., 2004, p.3). There is an explicit recognition that the research results will enter "back into the context of the practice field, with all of its inherent social, political, and ideological complexities" (Thorne, 2016, p.57). As such, this research emphasizes the importance of acknowledging systems of oppression that exist within the formation of outdoor recreation experiences.

The interpretivist description fits nicely with thematic analysis as it is used "for the purpose of capturing themes and patterns within subjective perceptions and generating an interpretive description" sufficient in exploring the complexities of the human experience in the natural world (Thorne et al., 2004, p.3). Thematic analysis is widely applied in qualitative research and is described by Braun and Clarke (2006) as "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within data" (p.79). This methodological choice stemmed from the approach's flexible nature, which allowed for a more "nuanced, complex, [and] interpretative analysis" while I examined the relationships between multiple frameworks embedded in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2016, p.191). This research engages with the process of *reflexive thematic analysis* (TA) and utilizes a latent approach in coding to explore meaning-making through the women of the study's experiences. The latent approach of TA allows for the exploration of the "underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations" (p.84) that go beyond surface level examinations to understand lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analytic approach was better suited to the "journeying" of the research process, which in dedicating time for reflection and recognizes the evolution of research (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p.592). To honor this process, I documented my own experiences and feelings as a researcher as I navigated through the stages of TA. This follows interpretivist description as it "explicitly

acknowledges that [my] interpretive brain has been in action throughout the [research] process" (Thorne, 2016, p.215).

Ethical Considerations

In my ethical positioning, I sought to incorporate a reflexive stance by incorporating a humanistic approach to the interviews. As a researcher, I centered my own moral compass around the ethic of caring, as described by Collins (2002), and embedded in a Black feminist epistemology. In this perspective, the ethic of caring posits "that personal expressiveness, emotions, and empathy are central to the knowledge validation process." (Collins, 2002, p.263). As such, in the construction of knowledge that I developed throughout the project, I valued and respected the information shared by participants, and sought to earn their trust. In this qualitative work, there was the potential for "ethically important moments" to arise while conducting research involving humans (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p.262). These moments could have created unforeseen long-term lasting consequences (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004), and it was important to note, that participants were "not being used as mere means or tools by the researchers" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p.271).

The personal nature of this research required careful examination and reflection of my own moral set of guiding principles to ensure that "participants are treated with dignity and respect" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p.12). With respect to procedural ethics, this research was conducted at the University of Alberta, and received ethics approval (protocol number Pro00115763; see Appendix A) from the Research Ethics Board 1 (REB1; University of Alberta, 2021). The completion of the application followed the *Checklists for Submission of Ethics Applications to REB1/REB2*, provided by the University of Alberta (2018). Funding for this

project was provided by various sources, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The phases of this research were carefully designed in consultation with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (2022)*. However, solely abiding by these guidelines did not guarantee an ethical research process.

To sustain ethical integrity throughout this project, I integrated practices that adhered to the five principles of maintaining respect for human dignity: respect for dignity, free and informed consent, vulnerable persons, privacy and confidentiality, and justice and inclusiveness (CIHR, NSERC, & SSHRC, 2022; Markula & Silk, 2011). In this case, *respect for dignity* focused on upholding participant autonomy. In following *free and informed consent*, voluntary consent was obtained prior to commencing the short questionnaire and at the start of each interview session. Completion of the questionnaire was dependant on the agreement of the consent form found at the start of the survey (Appendix B). An information and consent form was shared with participants in advance of the focus group and individual interviews (Appendix C & D). The beginning of each session was reserved for the delivery of project information and to review the consent form, allowing space for participants to ask questions, and to obtain oral consent. No *vulnerable persons* were recruited for the study. Although the decision to exclude vulnerable persons limited my ability to examine elements related to justice and inclusiveness, I felt that my inexperience in conducting social research did not prepare me to adequately support and minimize the potential for harm for vulnerable persons. The *privacy and confidentiality* of participants was maintained by assigning individuals a pseudonym and omitting identifying information during the transcription phase of the study. Because I could not maintain anonymity between participants in the focus group interviews, I explained the importance of preserving confidentiality among members to participants. To center *justice and inclusiveness,* individuals

were informed about the potential benefits and harms from participating. Other practices informed by these guiding rules can be found in the information letter and consent forms provided to participants (Appendices B, C, & D).

Participants and Recruitment

Six participants were recruited through various organizations and community groups that facilitate and encourage women-only experiences in Alberta-based outdoor recreation. I approached 11 groups through Facebook and Instagram in March of 2022. The administrators of these social media groups, representing knowledge holders, were first invited to participate. The organizations were direct messaged when the contact information of these admins was not publicly available. Afterwards, a general message (Appendix E) including a link to the project website (Appendix F) was posted to the closed groups main pages. Anyone interacting with these posts (i.e., commenting or liking) was sent a direct invitation to participate. I had pre-existing relationships with two members recruited for the study and employed snowball sampling to connect with other potential contacts. In utilizing these various strategies, a total of 47 individuals were sent a direct message inviting them to participate. Limited interest, coupled with the privacy settings of many members on these platforms, reduced my ability to communicate with individuals directly. Of the 47 people I contacted, 12 individuals expressed interest in the study and provided additional contact information.

I used a criterion-based sampling approach to recruit participants (Markula & Silk, 2011). Participants met the following conditions to be considered for the study, they: were over the age of 18 at the time of recruitment; identified that they have felt constrained in their ability to progress in outdoor recreation opportunities; and participated in their respected group by actively

engaging on the social media page or previously attended women-only events. Although the participants implicitly identified as women through their involvement in women-only outdoor recreation groups, they were required to self-identify as a woman through a short questionnaire. Initially, participants were required to attend an event with their respected group within the last year. However, in-person events were severely limited during the 2020-2021 year and many participants were only able to be involved with women-only groups through an online presence.

A short questionnaire (Appendix B) was administered to participants to gain insights about their outdoor recreation interests and to obtain socio-demographic information. Most of the women were 25-34 (n=5); one woman identified between the ages of 45-54. Individuals self-identified as White (n=5) and Latin American (n=1). Five participants currently reside in Alberta; one person did not disclose their current residence. In terms of education, all participants had either completed high school (n=3) or university/college (n=3). Individual's household income ranged from $49,999 or less (n=1), $50,000-$99,000 (n=2), $100,000-$149,000 (n=1), $150,000 (n=2).

Data Generation

The qualitative nature of this research generated data through two focus groups and three follow-up individual interviews followed a semi-structured format. The choice to engage participants through interviews followed the rationale provided by Smith and Sparkes (2016) that "interviewing is an occasion for conversation" (p.107). These authors recount that these opportunities for conversation provide materials that "captures shared cultural understandings and enactments of the social world, not pristine private experiences, or inner cognitive meaning systems. Talk therefore needs to be treating as socially created, and experience and meaning as

inherently shaped by our sociocultural landscape" (p.108). Thus, these interviews were regarded as a privileging method to examine the attitudes, values, and beliefs that are created, transformed, and verified through personal experience.

The interviews followed a semi-structure format, and used open-ended questions. The open-ended nature of the interviews allowed a freedom for participant expression without being "constrained by categories of classifications imposed by the interviewer" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p.46). An interview guide was developed and informed by the research literature and the work of Magnusson & Marecek (2015), *Designing the Interview Guide*. The guide was approved by the research supervisorial committee (see Appendix G). A pilot and pretest of the interview guide were piloted by conducting "two sets of trial interviews" to allow for the critical feedback phase from participants (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p.57). These initial interview sessions allowed the opportunity for me to gain practical experience in interviewing related to research. After each pilot interview was conducted, the interview guide was refined to provide a better structure to the focus group sessions. The guide broadly addressed outdoor recreation experiences and addressed relevant aspects of the guiding theory, most notably recreation specialization, initiating a deductive-inductive approach to this research.

Theory asserted a peripheral guise in the data generation phase of the research and became a background instrument in the data collection phase to avoid a situation where the "researchers […] have to force fit a theoretical formulation to their data" (Sandelowski, 1993, p.216). Accordingly, the interviews sessions in this research addressed the following questions:

1. How well does recreation specialization explain women's outdoor recreation engagement?

2. What constraints affect women's progression within recreation specialization?

3.   How do women understand the role(s) of gender in outdoor recreation experiences?

The data-analysis phase departed from the deductive approach and adopted induction to support an organic process of uncovering meaning within the participants experiences (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The research goal of exploring and understanding women's lived experiences in outdoor recreation is responsible for shifting the nature of theory.

Focus Groups

Each focus group engaged three participants. Two focus groups captured the perspectives and experiences of six participants. Each focus group session took place via Zoom based on the preferences of participants and due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each session was scheduled weeks in advance to maximize the potential availability of participants. The focus group sessions lasted between 110-120 minutes and were conducted in March and April of 2022. Only three of 12 potential participants attended the initial focus group session. Participants cited scheduling conflicts, Zoom-use challenges, and forgetfulness as the primary reasons they were unable to attend the session. As a result, the research study warranted a second focus group. The focus groups followed the interview guide protocol. Audio and visual recordings of the interviews were collected with the participants consent and later transcribed using Otter.ai transcription software.

Individual Interviews

Three participants were invited to a follow-up in-depth individual interview. Participants selected explicitly described a desire to specialize within an outdoor recreation activity. Semi-structured interviews ran from 40-70 minutes in May and June of 2022. The individual interviews took place over Zoom. Each interview had a personalized guide tailored to each

participant based on previous responses in the focus group. As such, individuals were encouraged to engage in the meaning-making process involved in their sharing of experiences. Each participant consented to the audio and visual recording of their interviews. The video recordings were transcribed using Otter.ai transcription software.

Employing Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The transcripts were analyzed using the data analysis software NVivo. Reflexive thematic analysis, developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), was utilized in the advanced stages of this research project. Braun et al. (2016) suggests that thematic analysis TA "can provide analyses of people's experiences in relation to an issue, or the factors and processes that underlie and influence particular phenomena" (p.193). In this case, the reframing of this point within the context of the study examined constraints that women experience in outdoor recreation within the framework of recreation specialization. Thus, this process utilized a more latent and inductive approach to coding. The study followed the six-phase model of this specific TA approach, outlined by Braun et al. (2016). In addition, the 15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis served as a guide in each stage of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.96).

Stage 1: The Familiarization Phase

The familiarization phase served as a guide in "critically engaging with the data" (p.196). This first stage of the work consisted of a preliminary review of the transcripts to note initial thoughts and findings surrounding each participant's experiences in outdoor recreation. At this point, engagements in reflexivity and an explicit acknowledgement of my role in shaping the data was essential in advancing to further stages of the analysis. The familiarization stage occurred at two points in the data analysis phase. I watched each focus group and individual

interview recording in full without taking notes to revisit the content and information expressed during the interviews. Afterwards, I took personal notes on each transcript by hand and then transferred these comments to the digital transcription files.

Within this phase, I often doubted my ability to highlight critically important moments within transcripts. I spent time repeatedly listening to the participants' experiences while transcribing the work to compensate for my lack of experience in qualitative research. To ensure that critically important moments were captured, a second researcher (Dr. Howard Harshaw) annotated each interview transcript; we then we collaborated to discuss each interview session at length. These sessions represented moments of reflection regarding particularly interesting and potentially significant points observed in the data. Several potential codes were developed during this process and were later modified during Phase 2. For instance, some participants highlighted the role of mentorship in facilitating outdoor recreation experiences for others, warranting further investigation.

Stage 2: Generating Initial Codes

During the first round of coding, I felt that I had little strategy in the initial conception of codes. This round was brief and served to better familiarize myself with the coding process using NVivo. I was unsure how organize data in a systematic way (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017), and spent a lot of time revising and recoding segments of this research. I attended a webinar by Robertson and Casey (2021): *Thematic Analysis Using NVivo*, that provided guidance about the use of the software and general coding strategies, which I returned to when I was uncertain about my code generation. Progressing through the coding phase felt like an insurmountable task, and required the most from my slow processing power. One of the main reasons for this uncertainty stemmed from the requirement of coding to be "unstructured and organic, with the potential for

codes to evolve to capture the researcher's deepening understanding of the data subjective process" (p.3). In seeking guidance from Maguire and Delahunt (2017), and DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2010), this process became less daunting through time with trial and error. DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2010) state, the development of codes stem from "three major areas including theory (theory-driven), data (data-driven), and research goals (structural)." p.141. Within reflective TA, codes represent "entities that capture (at least) one observation, display (usually just) one facet." (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p.340). With this information, the coding was informed by recreation specialization, constraints theory, gender studies, and other relevant leisure literature.

The exploratory nature of this work allowed the coding process to reflect thoughts and meanings existing outside of recreation specialization, constraints theory, and gender studies. As a result, the research utilizes both semantic and latent coding, where meaning is derived through an explicit and implicit approach, respectively. I employed line-by-line open coding (*see* examples in Appendices H) due to the positioning of this work on the deductive-inductive spectrum, as advised by Maguire and Delahunt (2017). Initially, I used broad categories that were too vague to sufficiently organize my codes. I felt like I was trying to discern the individual notes of a violin while listening to an entire orchestra. While I could identify who the violinist was, it was impossible to isolate their sound; this initial coding attempt felt like a disservice to my participants and eradicated any uniqueness embedded in their stories. Due to the challenges I encountered to reflect the experiences of my participants in my initial coding, I re-visited the transcripts and coded to a greater level of specificity. This more accurately reflected my research objectives, and I was able to enter Stage 3 and develop my list of potential themes.

Stage 3: Theme Generation

My early attempts to engage with theme generation focused on design thinking. During this process, the sentiments shared by Braun and Clarke (2002, p.1) that the "diversity within the method of TA is typically poorly understood and rarely acknowledged" resonated with me and my experiences with theme development. I frequently struggled to understand the position of my research on the deductive-inductive spectrum. My background in natural science, which typically adheres to positivist and post-positivist paradigms, often created a sense of unease in the creation of meaning-making: I caught myself starting to veer into design choices that were incompatible with the paradigm identified for this study. This is evidenced in the initial conception of my themes, where I assessed two different ways in approaching this Stage.

The first way that I approached this theme generation was heavily focused on a deductive analysis, where the themes are developed in direct response to the research questions. As a result, the themes can be synonymous to topic summaries in where they respond to the research objectives but is counter to the interpretive nature of reflexive TA (Sage, 2022). The second approach focused on a more organic development of themes that derived meaning from the participant experiences. This approach is more aligned with the conceptualization derived from Braun, Clarke, and Hayfield (2019) in where "a theme could have multiple facets, like the planets, but these would all come back to a central point, idea or understanding" (p.438). As Braun and Clarke (2021) describe, the six phases may not carry a rigid structure, allowing them to "blend together" (p.331). This was felt while I brainstormed a living list of potential themes during stage 2, blurring into stage 3, and is captured below (Table 1).

Table 1. List of potential themes identified in Stage 2 of the coding process.

Battling/overcoming self-doubt
Validating one's belongingness
Competitive edge
Escaping reality
Community culture
The goldilocks' option
Power imbalances
Prepping for the future
Solidarity sister
Repercussions of fear mongering
Outsider influences
Simulating multiple realities
The continual need to be hyperaware
Pivotal points in progression
Curving one's inferiority complex
Anticipated costs
Difficult Journey of the introspection
Profiteering
Seeking security
Early onset of the gender binary
Reinforcing positive spaces
Emphasis on introspection
Unwelcoming spaces
Continual or maximized effort
Memorable self-taught moments
Emotional labour
Rebuilding one's confidence
Emotionally charged moments
Bridging gaps for others

Stage 4: Reviewing Themes

The ambiguous nature of the process of reviewing themes often agitated my fight or flight instinct. Throughout this period, I was often confronted with my own ideals of progression when I examined the theory of outdoor recreation specialization. If the blinking vertical bar stayed in place for too long on the document, it represented a lack of progress. As a slow writer, I reflected on my own realistic nature of creation, and found that sitting in a room with other academics heightened my sense of urgency in seeking progress. When the world was awake, I felt most susceptible to worrying thoughts during the day and found it difficult to write anything with substance. So, I found solace when the sunlight fled the sky, and the world felt slow through its darkened lens. During these times, five themes were solidified and adapted from the potential themes identified in Table 1, which will be discussed in greater detail below and are as follows: (a) searching for journey (b) pivotal moments in one's journey, (c) deterring and defeating spaces (d) internal influences, and (e) community crafting (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of themes.

Searching for Journey
- The Prioritization of Outdoor Recreation Within Lifestyle
- Forming One's Sense of Belongingness in the Outdoors

Pivotal Points in Progression

Deterring & Defeating Spaces

Internalized Influences

Community Crafting
- Visibility and Representation
- Instilling Confidence and Overcoming Doubt
- Bridging Gaps for Others

I describe and *Stage 5* and *Stage 6* of reflexive thematic analysis (theme definition) in the next chapter.

Striving for Quality Research

To establish quality in the research process, I — like many, questioned the effectiveness of using terms like validity and reliability within qualitative research (Noble & Smith, 2015; Sandelowski, 1993). I followed the direction of Trochim (2024), who cites the work of Guba and Lincoln (1994), and explains alternative qualitative criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The interpretive paradigm is incompatible with validity "methods that offer objective or precise information" (Sandelowski, 1993, p.26). Following this point, achieving reliability based on quantitative definitions is counter to the research protocols of this study. For instance, if I were to replicate each stage of the study using the same semi-structured interview guide with the same criterion placed on participants, my results may be

substantively different. As a consequence, I am not aiming to generalize the results of the study. Rather, this work seeks transferability, where others may feel that the "story of the research overlaps with their own situation" (Tracy, 2010, p.845).

I followed the advice of Tracy (2010) and Noble and Smith (2015) who have encouraged best practices that encourage a trustworthy research process. Particularly, I revisited *Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research* (Tracy, 2010, *see* Table 1) at each stage of the study to reflect on a transparent and honest research process. This was also supported through weekly meetings with Dr. Howard Harshaw to reflect on the methodological choices and findings outlined in the project. At the early stages, I often questioned the importance of my research objectives and critically reflected on my own biases as I developed them. In recognizing the role of my own researcher position and the further need to explore women's experiences in outdoor recreation as identified by the literature review, there is a crucial need to state the significance of the study, per the advice of Tracy (2010). This work is significant because it explores the ways women encounter, perceive, and negotiate for constraints within their outdoor recreation specialization journeys. This knowledge can provide critical insight on how to support women within their progression in outdoor recreation through EDI+ centered practices.

In addition to describing the importance of the study phases more broadly, other strategies were utilized to strengthen the quality of this research. Each transcript was compared to their original audio/video recording of the interview to increase the credibility of findings. This allowed me to accurately provide a detailed account of the interview capturing the tacit knowledge often concealed in the explicit recounting of experience in the interview sessions.

A period after the interview session was dedicated to self-reflection. This included a thick description phase for the participant to note any other relevant thoughts, reactions, and concerns

that arose throughout the session by the researcher (Tracy, 2010). This was essential to preserve transparency to think critically around questions in what concerns "the level of participant and immersion, fieldnote practices, and level of detail in transcription" (Tracy, 2010, p.842). Following these strategies resolves some of the criticisms of the use of member-checking that assumes an ethical and rigorous study outlined by Motulsky (2021).

In terms of credibility, I implemented with one of the most universally recognized tools in qualitative research — member-checking (Motulsky, 2021). I engaged in *member reflections*, described by Tracy (2010); this can represent member-checking, but is more suited to an interpretivist paradigm as it does not assume a "single true reality" (p.844) that is often asserted in validating the research by participants. In this way, it presented an opportunity for collaboration with the research participants to reflect on the analysis and findings of the study (Tracy, 2010).

After the interview sessions were transcribed, participants were encouraged to add, modify, or remove any information provided in the interview sessions to support member checking. Three participants responded briefly to the inquiry to revise the transcriptions. In the anonymized focus group transcript, one participant stated that she "liked reading everyone's responses, it's like [a] train of thought journaling". Another commented that she "got a good chuckle out of some of the conversation" and noted some spelling and grammar errors in the transcripts. The last participant simply stated she had "no issue with them at all".

 Participants were further invited to submit feedback about a summary of themes. Three participants responded to this invitation with minimal feedback. The first participant stated that they had no comments but the results "[looked] good". Another participant expressed appreciation for being included in the step but offered no feedback. Instead, she reflected on how

the final three themes of the study felt explicitly connected to a gendered lens. The final participant was seemingly more engaged with the process of member reflections and asked the question: "Was the ability to relate and find common ground with other women (for lack of better phrase) not a reason women felt more engagement in these female community spaces outside?" This question strikes at the heart of member reflections, as it provided an opportunity for reflexive elaboration on the findings of the data analysis. The role of relatability was a meaningful discussion point for the participant. As such, my response asked for their own perspectives on this idea but expanded on the role of relatability within the various themes. Despite the request for further reflection, the participant did not provide additional comments. A final copy of the thesis will be shared to the participants after corrections are made based on the feedback from the examining committee before publication. The other criteria developed by Tracy (2010), including resonance, ethical, and meaningful coherence have already been implicitly discussed in the previous sections of this chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to explore women's developmental process in outdoor recreation through a gendered lens. I simultaneously sought to understand the enduring role of constraints within women's recreation specialization journeys. Over the course of interviews, five themes were identified, which are used to structure this chapter: (a) searching for journey (b) pivotal points in progression (c) occupying deterring and defeating spaces (d) internal influences, and (e) community crafting. The themes represent participants' progression and the enduring role of constraints within their lived experiences in outdoor recreation. Collectively, participants shared experiences in skiing (cross-country, ski touring, downhill), snowboarding, climbing and scrambling, hiking, mountain biking, ATVing, paddle boarding, horseback riding, camping, and angling.

Participants conceptualized their own outdoor recreation journey. The following participant profiles were informed by the women's answers to questions that broadly reflected the three dimensions of recreation specialization: the affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions. These profiles provide insight on their degree of specialization using their own words. For instance, participants were asked questions related to importance of an outdoor recreation activity within their lives and pieced together a dialogue that signaled to the affective dimension. For each participant, I connected participants' stories in the interview that I thought best described their own degree of specialization in outdoor recreation. This information provides insight on the participants progression in outdoor recreation outside and supported the development of themes.

Conceptualizing Recreation Specialization Through Participant Profiles

M's Experiences

M described her engagement in different activities in outdoor recreation as general. She did not exclusively focus on one activity type, and preferred pursuits like camping or hiking, where she could "kind of do [several activities] all at once". She was in a stage of exploration, and would "try everything, but [is] not an expert at anything". Having accumulated five years of experience in various activities, she held a strong attachment to outdoor recreation as it allowed her to connect with her own sense of self: "it is a really important part of my life, because I feel more like myself, when I'm doing […] any sort of outdoor recreation." In terms of progression, she had begun to focus efforts on hiking and backpacking, primarily in alpine environments. She had "hiked a bit over the last two- three years but [had] kept to easy to moderate hikes" due to her lack of technique. She was transitioning from "short hikes" in the city to ones that required "higher elevation and higher difficulty" in the mountains. She described being cautious when approaching more difficult trails and wanted to "be as educated as possible" before attempting something outside of her comfort zone. Factors that have constrained her advancement were often connected to her lack of long-term engagement in mountain-based activities. Prior to attending university, she had few friends and family who were interested in outdoor recreation, which presented as an entry barrier. Outdoor recreation was largely absent from her early development and has had lasting impacts on her capacity to build upon each of the specialization dimensions.

A's Experiences

Outdoor recreation was central to A's life. Her family was instrumental in facilitating early experiences that had given her "the opportunity to meet people and progress to a level where [she felt] comfortable" skiing or snowboarding. In high school, she became more involved in solo activities like hiking. Her evolution had been primarily motivated by her connection to

nature which enhanced her well-being: "I just want to be doing something outside". Her lifestyle has been guided by her interest to specialize in alpine activities, as demonstrated by her decision to move to a mountain environment "unlike […] anywhere else" to provide access to recreation opportunities. She described her current skill-level in snowboarding as: "…probably at the highest level I'll probably ever be. I feel comfortable in a variety of terrain types, and comfortable teaching other people." She went hiking everyday with her dog but participated in more specialized behaviours relating to snowboarding "at least every two weeks." She described being most restricted in the behavioural dimension of specialization, as she was limited in her ability to engage more frequently due to structural constraints like work and school. However, she addressed interpersonal constraints such as encountering negative group interactions in previous recreation experiences.

E's Experiences

Many of E's, "relationships and events revolve around outdoor activity." It was an integral piece of her identity and constituted a "big importance" in her life. She participated in an "endless list" of outdoor recreation activities, having been "involved in hiking and camping, fishing, [and] skiing […] as early as [she] can remember." She engaged in outdoor recreation "three times a week" but did not specify how much time she dedicated towards each activity. E had a large social network related to outdoor recreation that greatly influenced her engagement: "depending on […] what friend group I'm with, it can look different as far as like skill level, length of time we're out, activity that we're doing." For her, the most "important" part of outdoor recreation was the aspect of *fun*, which often provided her with rushes of adrenaline. Though she considers herself to be "all over the place" in her skill levels, she asserted that she was most advanced in backcountry hiking:

I've got all the equipment and can […] guide people on their first trips pretty well.

[I] feel confident in myself depending on the chosen trail […]. I have been doing

it probably the longest out of most of my activities.

She had been progressively focused on developing her competencies in backcountry ski touring

for the past two seasons. She indicated that she was of intermediate skill at downhill skiing, but

was limited in her knowledge of avalanche conditions and was unfamiliar with the equipment

required for ski touring. She often negotiated ways of addressing a lack of motivation to continue

to specialize in skiing.

G's Experiences

G had "been in the outdoor recreation world as long as [she] can remember." She tried to

support "outdoor activity at least three times a week" but like A, prioritized work and school

responsibilities – although at one point, these obligations overlapped with outdoor recreation

through her work as a biologist. Her recent graduate research included a data collection phase

that required extensive angling excursions. Outside of academia, she spent time in remote areas

of Alberta conducting animal surveys. These experiences contributed to her self-described skill-

level, as she noted:

I think just from the nature of the work that I do […], I feel pretty confident […]

being able to not only bring myself outdoors for hikes, but also take care of others

in the field if they need it. I feel really comfortable with that.

For the past five years, she seemed most interested in advancing her participation in mountain

biking. Although she had expressed doubts about her skill-level, she held a large body of

knowledge surrounding the activity, which was demonstrated through her use of technical

language throughout the interview. In her words, "I still don't think that I'm a professional […]

and I wouldn't teach anybody based on my own skills. I […] just go for it and see what happens."

C's Experiences

C had a strong attraction to nature-based activities and attempted to "build [her] life around" outdoor recreation. Her early development was consumed with outdoor recreation as her "social and family life" centered around activity. She continued to be involved in running, downhill and cross-country skiing, and mountain biking to different degrees as an adult. She focused on specializing more on mountain biking and backcountry skiing depending on the season. At the time of her second interview, she prepared for a women-only mountain biking course to build on her skills for a second season. With respect to her recent progression, she felt

> …considerably more confident this time around just knowing people socially, in the space, but also feeling like […] I have a foundation of skills now. I'm more refining skills and building on them than I was like, learning them for the very first time earlier. Yeah, it's made it a lot more fun.

Though C was actively focused on finding community within outdoor spaces, she often expressed an inability to find suitable partners in mountain biking.

L's Experiences

L identified as an avid recreationist who was "obsessed" with, and highly specialized in, scrambling. For L, scrambling was an "extension of hiking up mountains" where the "risks are a little bit higher depending on the terrain", and the aim is to reach the top of peaks with little equipment. She distinguished it from climbing, as scrambling was something more liberating and was less structured. She preferred scrambling because of its faster pace and because it did not require the same degree of technical rope knowledge or reliance on a partner. When asked about

her skill level, L shared, "I've been suffering, planning trips, doing crazy stuff in all kinds of weather for 30 years. I'd say my skill level and my ability to suffer is pretty high." This suffering alludes to her ability to endure the negative aspects of outdoor recreation more easily than her outdoor recreation partners including harsh weather conditions and mosquitos.

L engages in peak bagging, the goal of which is to track the number of peak summits that they have reached. At the time of the interview, she was close to reaching her 300th peak in the Rockies. L touched on an early desire to engage in outdoor recreation – and that her initial curiosity in scrambling overshadowed any doubt or fear within pursuits. She described outdoor recreation as "something that came into my heart, whether it was nature, whether it was the physical action of having my heart rate up, no one ever stopped me." She considered herself to be advanced in terms of her knowledge and experience in scrambling and had taken on a mentorship role for others as an administrator of an outdoor recreation social media page. Although she recognized that constraints were present in her journey (e.g., like cost or proximity to opportunity), she more easily negotiated for these compared to other participants. In the future, L anticipated aging impacting her approaches in risk-taking and reducing her current skills and abilities:

> I probably won't climb till I'm 68 because I find that I'll probably be harder on my joints, and I don't need arthritis. I'll probably do a lot less elevation, maybe lower my risk as my flexibility and […] my body just kind of gets sore – which it has already been doing because I'm well past my prime now. But I still see myself doing these things – being happy. Hopefully, when I'm retired, I'll be doing them even more.

Although this could change L's degree of specialization in scrambling, it had seemingly little effect on her intent to engage in outdoor recreation.

Searching for Journey

After the participants shared a portrait of themselves as outdoor recreationists, this theme was constructed as it identified two subthemes that are critical in their willingness to specialize in their respective outdoor recreation activity. These results were informed by the ways that participants detailed their own lives, compared their journey to others, and their motivations and anticipated changes to their continued or repeated engagement in an outdoor recreation activity described above. Exploring the participants lived experiences within the outdoor specialization process revealed: the prioritization of outdoor recreation within lifestyle and the formation of one's sense of belongingness in the outdoors.

The Prioritization of Outdoor Recreation Within Lifestyle

All participants expressed desires to maintain or increase their current level of involvement in outdoor recreation when discussing their future engagement. For two participants, A and L, the decision to move closer to opportunities have supported their outdoor recreation journeys. Outdoor recreation was prioritized in A's lifestyle choices as it was a determining factor to "move outside of the city" and "accept a job, where I want to […] start my life after school." L's goal-orientated motivations in scrambling led to "bigger mountains" that were "steeper and longer", which drove her to relocate closer to the Rocky Mountains in Alberta. For others, prioritizing outdoor recreation in their lifestyle was a more difficult decision. C compared her life to:

People who've, perhaps designed their lives in a way that allows them to be outside more

often […] like finding a career, […] or a work schedule, […] or […] location that would

enable it more. […] I've certainly not prioritized those elements to that degree.

Career development was a critical discussion point, and one that influenced participants'

lifestyles in terms of outdoor recreation. For M, "the city is easier to find work […] but if I was

able to, I would prefer to live in Canmore." For L, a career in outdoor recreation would have

interfered with the affective dimension of their specialization in scrambling:

I actually don't want to be outside all the time – in case I don't appreciate it as

much. […] I don't know if I would have the same passion if it was always there.

Instead, she discussed volunteering with outdoor related organizations to "give back" to the

community in some way.

Although C also chose a career path that limited her time outdoors, she was more

conflicted about this decision. For her, the choice of an office-based career led her to question

her identity as an outdoor recreationist. She provided insight to this idea by sharing that she felt

like "I'm not a true adventurer if I don't pursue those things as a full-time career." At one point

in time, C was a part-time ski instructor; she compared herself to others in similar positions who

seemed confident in their identities as outdoor recreationists. She was unlike others "who are just

frothing to be outside or on the trails", which made her doubt her belongingness in a professional

setting of outdoor recreation. C was unable to "envision" herself as an outdoor recreationist in a

professional capacity due to the lack of relatability in this setting. She had few examples of

others who had done this successfully as parents of young children; becoming a mother was one

of her future lifestyle aspirations.

Forming One's Sense of Belongingness in the Outdoors

The focus group sessions engaged participants about their feelings of belongingness in outdoor recreation, which was intrinsically tied to their affective dimension in outdoor recreation. For instance, spending time in nature for L was always pivotal to her identity:

> Never for one minute in my life did I ever feel that I didn't belong outdoors. Whether I was catching a frog as a kid, whether I'm paddling across the lake, whether I'm on the top of the mountain – no one ever said I couldn't. It was something that came into my heart, whether it was nature, whether it was the physical action of having my heart rate up, no one ever stopped me.

Most of the women credited their sense of belonginess to their family as they facilitated early experiences in outdoor recreation. This is clear in E's recollections:

> I've been really fortunate and never felt like I don't belong in the outdoors. […I had a] very privileged upbringing to be able to go outside all the time, and do the activities, be able to afford certain equipment and all of that.

M's experiences are counter to this narrative. Her outdoor recreation journey began after she graduated university, and sometimes her lack of early development made her doubt herself as an outdoor recreationist: "clearly I wasn't made for this or clearly you know, the hobbies I used to have maybe fit better into my lifestyle."

Pivotal Points in the Progression

Participants described the challenges that they encountered in actualizing *progression* in their outdoor recreation journeys, as they conceptualized specialization as the need for continued improvement. These challenges included setting unrealistic expectations of success, anticipating

failure, and allowing comparative measures to frame what specialization was for them. Throughout the coding process, it became evident that participants conceptualized the notion of progression differently. Central to reconceptualizing progression for these women was the need for autonomy, liberation from destructive spaces, and challenge competitiveness in their outdoor recreation achievements.

C recounted that her outdoor recreation journey felt "confusing." In her early development, "all [of her] free time was organized with having to do sports." She described being "enrolled in something at all times" throughout her upbringing and having had little autonomy over her decision to participate. She was often involved in activities that her "parents were more interested in" – like racing events for skiing and running, that made her participation feel more like an "expectation" than a choice. This removal of autonomy has had a lasting impact on her recreation engagement. Currently, she describes having either "rejected" certain activities from her youth – such as cross-country ski racing – or having taken "a really long time to return" to similar activities that held a high degree of competition. In contrast, C also recognized importance of early exposure, as she cited it as a reason for her prolonged engagement in downhill skiing. However, she revealed that her skiing motivations depended on the need to "embrace it on [her] own terms" as these previous experiences tainted the activity:

> It's a tough balance, though, because I know that the reasons why I enjoy what I like to do is because I've found my own enjoyment in them, right. Like there's exposure and then there's me discovering it for myself.

Her progression in mountain biking and backcountry skiing was focused on "opportunities to find joy" within this self-actualization instead of engaging in "competitive" and "pressured" environments. She avoided activities that would "restrict" her schedule. This shift in engagement

allowed her to develop a stronger affinity towards her current involvement in activities such as mountain biking and downhill skiing, that seemed related to the affective dimension of specialization.

C was previously involved in several outdoor activities that included a competitive racing component. The competitive nature of these recreation spaces made her feel "pretty miserable" and often created "bad memories." She felt "a lot of pressure" within these environments, which highlights some of the unrealistic aspects of progression:

> It was at one point hard for me to enjoy running recreationally on my own because it would always be about being faster than the last time, which is not sustainable.

In her recent engagements in outdoor recreation, she expressed a continued difficulty in separating from the need to "[seek] perfection" that stemmed from both her childhood and her personality: "I think sometimes I want to be really good at something in order to enjoy it. And so that's, that can be limiting". An important point in her progression was the realization that she has largely "unlearn[ed]" those behaviours took value away from her recreation experiences:

> I've succeeded in kind of letting myself go away from those feelings of pressure that I'm just putting on myself to just be able to enjoy it. I'd like to do that with other things too and not feel like in order to ski or mountain bike or something, like I have to be really good at it.

Her engagement in many of her activities from her youth, like running and skiing necessitated a reconceptualization of the notion of progression – one distinct from a constant need for growth that was associated with in her early experiences. Many other participants discussed progression in similar terms of competition. A, E, and G each touched on how their motivations for

participating in outdoor recreation centered on self-enjoyment, which necessitated a detachment from the competitive nature that is often associated with outdoor recreation pursuits.

Participants explicitly recognized the role that gender played within their outdoor recreation development. L believed that the activity type influenced the extent that women would encounter constraints in outdoor recreation,

> I just think the sports I do are far less male dominated, but I'm wondering if you're looking at let's say, female hunters and that type of outdoors woman because there must be a tremendous number of barriers for them compared to what I do.

This sentiment was shared during a focus group, and other participants provided their own perspectives about this idea. G attributed gender-based constraints to the "macho mindsets in Alberta" that she had encountered and seen in broader gender stereotypes that challenged her existence and motivations within outdoor spaces. The macho mindsets idea was prominent throughout G's life where she heard "different variations of men are better at sports than women" that were not attributable to one specific experience. The attitudes and behaviours that question women's existence in male-dominated spaces is further explored in the following theme.

For G and A, gender-based constraints remained relatively constant across a broad spectrum of activities, regardless of their type (e.g., motorized versus non-motorized, consumptive versus non-consumption, trail-based versus feature-based). Although G recognized that individuals' motivations for participation may vary depending on the activity, she argued that her experiences with others had been influenced by the traditional ideologies embedded in outdoor recreation that focused on the exploitation of natural resources.

G shared a moment from a mountain biking trip near Abraham Lake to illustrate this perspective. Her group came across a steam bank, which she was unwilling to cross as it was identified as an ecologically sensitive area. She shared her concerns with the group, but they were quickly dismissed by excuses that normalized this exploitation because "everyone else does it". She described being labelled as an "emotional female" and that her knowledge of environmental impacts was dismissed when she did not want to participate in a similar way.

Similarly, A accepted that her engagement in outdoor recreation was fundamentally different from others due to her gender, and that her motivations were often incompatible with male-dominated spaces. These motivations focused on the formation of outdoor recreation experiences that centered on nature connectedness. E also positioned gender more explicitly within her experiences with hiking and downhill skiing: "being a woman influences my decision[s] a lot when it comes to what activities I'll be doing with who." Reflections like this reveal how gender is a central force that affect belongingness in outdoor recreation spaces; this will be explored in greater detail below.

Occupying Deterring and Defeating Spaces

This theme was a result of the intensity and magnitude that participants encountered constraints to a higher degree in male-dominated outdoor recreation spaces. Participants recounted experiences when men downplayed their accomplishments, intensified their feelings of inadequacy, underestimated their abilities, and pushed them to their emotional and physical limits. These experiences in male-dominated spaces had important implications for their current engagement in outdoor recreation, and has resulted in some participants avoiding these spaces

entirely. They described the long-term impacts to their self-esteem that resulted from discouragement and lack of support from male members of these groups.

Participants recounted moments when they had felt unwelcome in outdoor recreation spaces, primarily due to incompatible behaviours and attitudes of the people that they were with. C attributed some of her feelings about risk-tasking approaches as being gender influenced; she would "often trust a risk assessment of women more often than men." She continued,

> I don't want to be in a space where there's hypermasculinity mixed with a dangerous environment. I just don't want to be in that kind of a space where there's just too much going on that I feel like I can kind of predict what a worst-case scenario might look like. And I don't trust those elements mixing very well, especially if I'm the one that needs rescuing or, you know I don't want to depend on that.

L expressed a similar perspective and stated that she felt like women have a "better self-preservation instinct" and that her "risk tolerance is lower" than that of her male-counterparts.

In a similar vein, C felt like she was "not going to be listened to" when she did not "agree with a decision" made within male-dominated spaces. A felt like her autonomy had been ignored in similar situations when others pressured her to act in a certain way: "maybe I just don't want to do it, you know", which was counter to the males' instruction 'no, just do it'." G expressed frustration about the behaviour in male-dominated groups that stemmed from a "just do it" attitude that she had repeatedly witnessed. G found that her encounters with this type of group mentality were "stressful" and had caused her to specifically seek out women-only groups. A has accepted this interpersonal constraint and posited that she would often engage in outdoor recreation activities on her own when it is in her best interest. For A, "it's easier, and then you don't run into someone not wanting to go that way or go there – do that. Because you're the one

sort of making decisions." L was the only participant who acknowledged the beneficial nature of male-dominated spaces and took advantage of male tendencies to engage in higher risk behaviours and activities.

The need to "prove" oneself and exceed the "expectations" of others was a common thread woven between the past outdoor recreation experiences of the women in the study. Many participants discussed the relationship between intra- and inter- personal constraints stemming from the attitudes and behaviours that they encountered in these spaces. C described how male-dominated spaces make her feel "a lot more self-conscious about [her] own skills and abilities and feeling welcome in the space." She was "less at ease" and "intimidated" when participating in activities with men outside of her close family and friend group; as a consequence, she tends to avoid those uncomfortable situations entirely.

Similarly, A and G recounted the repeated "questioning" of their knowledge about outdoor recreation. They discussed the persistent need to justify their attitudes and behaviours that were not compatible with the other members of the group. A attributed this to differing mindsets and values that surround outdoor recreation, where individuals "don't necessarily [participate] for the same reasons". However, G expressed frustration about some of her angling experiences, and positioned the attitudes that she encountered as being within an explicitly gendered context:

A lot of men will approach you more often and be like, "are you sure you know what you're doing? I don't think you know what you're doing" and […] "are you sure you know the regulations for this lake?" And I'm like, "yes, I know the regulations."

This questioning of ability and knowledge was not restricted to her outdoor recreation engagements, and were present in her career as a field biologist. In her words, "I find myself

always having to work twice as hard just to prove that I know what to do." E added that for women, "there's a lot of preconceptions about physical ability." C captured the intrapersonal acceptance that occurred simultaneously while existing in these spaces, "just having to, again, prove yourself or, like justify your presence in the space that you feel – like that's so tiring to have to do that."

Participants touched on the destructive nature of competition that is often presented in male-dominated outdoor recreation spaces, which often downplays the accomplishments of participants. This "interpersonal competition" has had lasting impacts on participants, and necessitated new ways of engagement. L captured the attitudes that downplayed achievement within male-dominated spaces when proving themselves well:

> I don't like […] when they steal something from you and make it not legitimate. When you know, "Hey, I have just led […] this ice climb. And I don't care if you guys can lead one twice as hard, but this is awesome for me". And they just say, "Oh my god, you did that so slow, or you, you use too many screws." And you're like, "so what?"

Several other participants described how these attitudes manifested into internal narratives that instilled doubt in their abilities and impacted their self-esteem. The following theme, internal influences describes some of the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints that accompany the participants' desire to progress in outdoor recreation through time.

Internalized Influences

The theme is "internalized influences" outlines several structural and interpersonal factors were identified throughout the interviews that were primary limitations to the women's engagement. These constraints and the participants' storytelling reflected how societal norms

and expectations, personal relationships, and mainstreamed representation in the outdoors are all internalized and could express as self-doubt. This theme touches on the direct constraints discussed by the women that are often captured within constraints literature that were prominent during the interviews, and their role in shaping outdoor recreation through a gendered lens.

M captured many of the thoughts and feelings that were discussed by participants when she reflected on experiencing time limitations: "my real life is taking over the adventure I want to live." Time was a central structural limitation discussed by participants. Scheduling conflicts due to work or school obligations often affected the ability of participants to plan and engage in outdoor recreation activities. For instance, A's career influenced her ability to dedicate time to volunteer with outdoor recreation groups. Although most of the participants encountered time as constraint, it had little impact on their affective connection to the outdoor recreation activities they pursued as it related to identity. M explicitly recounted that "[Outdoor recreation] is very important [to me] but due to the limitations, it doesn't take up as much time as I'd like [but] it's a very big part of my identity." Her career restricted her ability to engage in more frequently in nature-based activities, but she wanted to integrate "nature therapy, and counseling practice" despite having been uncertain in how to approach this in reality.

Lifestyle obligations and at-home responsibilities restricted outdoor recreation opportunities for participants. Many of these commitments disproportionately affected participants because of their gender. L's relationship required her to make "sacrifices […] just for the sake of the relationship" when she would rather have prioritized scrambling adventures. She noted that she has "to give up every second weekend and do what [her] boyfriend wants." She stated that she felt like it was "sexist" that the importance of reaching her goals were often

minimized by her partner. Contrarily, she stated how he often expected her to help him succeed in achieving these goals but that this expectation was one-sided.

Similarly, C described the need for trade-offs between outdoor recreation and her close relationships. She often struggled to accept feeling "guilty" when she has prioritized outdoor recreation over spending time with her friends and family in the city.

Although none of the participants had children at the time of the interview, perceptions surrounding motherhood were discussed in depth. A was often considered the "caregiver" in her relationship and was primarily responsible for their animals despite having an equal partnership. She assumed that this division of labour would transfer to her future outdoor lifestyle and the experience of parenthood more generally. This was consistent with L's experiences; L perceived that motherhood could change one's frequency of participation in outdoor recreation activities, and would often halt a women's progression entirely in the long-term. L noted that in her personal experiences, men engaged in outdoor recreation more often as parents compared to women due to the unequal division of labour in their parental roles. She even questioned how one of her male outdoor recreation partners was "not divorced yet", and that she had "to learn [his] trick where [she] can go out whenever [she] want[s]."

Participants describe the "expensive" and "costly" nature of outdoor recreation that stem from direct costs tied to an activity, such as obtaining the necessary gear, or other required expenditures such as lift tickets. C expressed how financial limitations are one of the few constraints that she "consistently" encountered for skiing. L positioned this constraint within a gendered context, explaining that women have less access to the monetary resources required for outdoor recreation activities:

The reality is that just generally women [are] making less money. […] I feel women do face more barriers in getting equipment and getting vehicles and just doing some of these more expensive things [that is required for outdoor recreation activities].

Financial limitations have restricted the development of participants' skills and knowledge that make up the cognitive dimension of recreation specialization. G described that it was "very difficult to find affordable entry to learning how to [… start cross country skiing]." A added that these associated costs were "always something [she's] had to be conscious of in terms of improving technical skills" and that she had been primarily "self-taught" in the knowledge and skills related to the alpine recreation she enjoys. Some of the participants negotiated these high costs by utilizing free resources, such as seeking advice from social media groups or attending online webinars. M was more willing to accept these high costs than the other participants when they applied to women-only spaces because they fostered a "positive learning environment."

For some participants like L, it took "years to accumulate" the necessary gear. G perceived having experienced more difficultly in acquiring gear than her male counterparts:

For some reason, I feel like guys always have the gear. As a woman, I don't know how I'd be able to accumulate [it], and maybe it's passed down from father to son.

L had utilized past relationships to negotiate the economic impacts stemming from outdoor recreation participation. She noted, "I've taken advantage of [boyfriends] having gear, and them being experts in something, and I've taken that opportunity to learn everything I can from them." A has similarly negotiated these types of expenses as her male partners tend to have "all the stuff" and acknowledges that she "can learn a lot from them" without spending money.

Many of the structural constraints identified above interact and formed additional constraints, such as the access to opportunities. M's specialization in hiking was limited by her

proximity to her mountains. As she became more experienced, mountain-based hiking required additional mental and physical requirements, and were the only pursuits that had a "real" impact on her degree of specialization. G added to this thought from her own experiences of trying to go on mountain biking adventures:

"Even though I love going into the mountains and participating in [alpine] sports, there's a lot of barriers to actually getting there and […] to enjoy your experience in an affordable way."

Many participants touched on the difficulties of finding and maintaining partnerships or relationships with groups that would strengthen their outdoor recreation community. C discussed how it felt like "an uphill battle convincing people to join" her on hiking pursuits. A perceived that women-only spaces were sometimes absent or difficult to join, and shared: "I can't be the only one who wants to do this kind of thing with other girls". Although there were plans early in her journey to meet with others from women-only Facebook groups, in M's experience "a lot of people can't follow through or cancellations happen". To negotiate these structural (i.e., absence of women spaces) and interpersonal constraints (i.e., cancellations or lack of partners) for other women, A assisted in a women-only group outdoor recreation collective where she facilitated this process by making the "connections for people."

Although C participated in women-only mountain biking workshops, she described the difficulty in maintaining a sense of community outside of these group activities. She felt as though:

I have to take advantage of a mountain trip through this organization because I'll never be able to organize it myself. I can't envision doing a future trip with ladies because I don't know any […] other than in this group.

M has often substituted her activity of choice based on the availability of partners. L was seemingly the only participant who did not experience this constraint in her scrambling activities. Through time, she had built up a valuable scrambling "team", and highlighted one of her meaningful partnerships with a female friend that was founded on the fact that they "really trusted each other and understood how each other worked."

Another prominent constraint identified in this research was that being a woman was recognized as an important factor in experiencing fear in the outdoors for the participants. G was more fearful of mountain biking trails in urban areas compared to rural settings due to the possibility of encountering threatening people: "if I'm in the bush, I'm a little less worried – I'm more likely to run into a moose than a human." L understood fear as a known reality, and detailed an experience of her friends that were once followed on a trail by a man that "just came out of the woods." She stated that she had encountered similar situations but did not let it affect her future engagement. While she accepted this constraint through her outdoor recreation journey, she recognized that fear was influential in women's experiences in outdoor recreation.

Interpersonal factors heavily influenced feelings of fear in outdoor recreation pursuits among participants. L expressed discontent for how her male relationships would caution her engagement in outdoor recreation: "They worry about me more than I actually worry about it. […] I know what can go wrong." Previously, she had often purposely hidden details in her outdoor recreation plans to family and friends to avoid these conversations. She talked about the double standard for women to be questioned in engaging in high-risk outdoor recreation and added:

>Yes, I'm a woman but does that make me stupid? Does that make me unaware? Does that make me incapable? […] It can be a barrier if your partner doesn't accept that you're independent and strong.

For M, feelings of fear and worry had greater implications on her feeling supported as an outdoor recreationist. She described her family as:

>… supportive, but I think that the fact that I am female, gives them a little bit of apprehension to not support me fully because they're afraid that something will happen.

These attitudes heightened her perceptions of fear as an outdoor recreationist. In M's words: "it makes me think I shouldn't go on long trips or solo trips very often. Because it's always that possibility of something that could happen." M cited that a central constraint in her ability to specialize was that she was "afraid of doing [hiking trips] alone", especially if the trails were rated more "difficult".

Community Crafting

A driving force in the motivations behind participants' outdoor recreation journeys was the role of community in constraint negotiation. M identified some of the central threads of community crafting that are captured in women-only spaces. Women-only spaces provided her "encouragement to try new things, encouragement to learn, encouragement from others to join them". C recounted the "specific experience" of comradery that had only occurred in her women-only outdoor recreation spaces. She reflected on her past mountain-biking group outings when describing how the women promoted a "dance party type" environment and were consistently "excited and cheering you on." Often, in women-only spaces, the "decisions are made more as a group" which enabled a collaborative experience for C. Women-only spaces provided an opportunity for participants to engage in community crafting by promoting a

belongingness in the outdoors through visibility and representation, facilitating feelings of

confidence and overcoming doubt, and bridging the gap for others.

Visibility and Representation

All the participants perceived an increase in the visibility and representation of women in

outdoor recreation activities compared to recollections from their youth. E described how

women's representation in outdoor recreation has become more relatable compared to these

representations from her youth due, to the diverse portrayals of women in outdoor recreation

media. She noted how social media has created spaces to share more relatable images of women

in outdoor recreation activities and spaces. Participants, like L, attributed the increase in

visibility and representation to digital spaces. This was a consistent perspective among

participants; for example, G shared how "there are so many more women that are exposed,

sponsored, [and] present on social media." In many cases, the increase in relatable images made

it easier to feel like outdoor recreation was accessible to women: "there's so many weird little

thoughts that go in your brain that tell you, 'you can't do something'." She related an experience

when she viewed pictures from another woman's solo backpacking trip, and recounted how "as

soon as you see someone else doing it, 'you're like oh, [it] unlock[s] that [motivation that] I can

do it now'."

In this way, the increased visibility of women in outdoor recreation spaces evolved to

depict more realistic images of womanhood engaged in outdoor recreation activities, according

to the women in the study. In terms of visible representation, A addressed the pervasive thoughts

that can accompany a certain way of viewing woman: "I felt this pressure that girls are not

supposed to be muscular" until she had seen other woman with "giant arms [who were] super

strong and successful." Until that point, her body was "not what [it's] supposed to look like"

compared to woman depicted in outdoor media. G described how, in her experience, "there's been a switch [of] perception of like, oh, the very thin is the best. Now, I want to be strong to be able to have my body do all these cool things."

Instilling Confidence and Overcoming Doubt

The increased visibility of women through online women-only groups had an impact on C's entry into backcountry skiing. Although she was waitlisted on a women-only group, and unable to "ever join them" in person, the images she saw from a women-only backcountry ski group gave her the confidence to try the activity. C's intention to join her mountain biking group was for "the main purpose of finding like-minded women, who were interested, and at the same level as me in mountain biking, so we could kind of learn together." E agreed with the impact of experiences like this, and added: "Just knowing that there's a common, shared perspective of being a woman is very relatable. I find that makes learning and growing together much easier, and more welcoming." A discussed how "it's easier to connect with women sometimes because you share a lot of similar experiences. […] Women-only groups sort of eliminates this competitive environment that sometimes exists [otherwise]." These excerpts shed light on the positive environments that women-only spaces can provide that heightened participants' feelings of confidence in the outdoor recreation activities that they pursued.

M described how female-dominated spaces provided a unique "type of community that want[ed] to build people up", which enabled her to feel more confident in the outdoors. At the time of the interview, she had signed up for a guided backpacking trip that she found online through her women-only spaces. As it was her first backpacking trip, she was clear about the importance of the trip being women-only, and related that she felt more comfortable about the

trip based on the environment that the guides cultivated through initial communication efforts that seemed "very understanding and very welcoming" towards the individual group members.

Bridging the Gaps for Others

Throughout the interviews, participants described how women-only spaces encouraged mentorship opportunities. M discussed the role of mentorship in noting that participants of women-only groups "want to share any experience to help you get out, especially if you don't feel comfortable with the outdoors". This encouragement led M to want to develop her skills and abilities in women-only spaces. In developing her social world, C described her motivation to invite other women to join was "almost selfishly – I'm looking to encourage other women to just join me."

In many cases, women-only spaces had been discussed as groups that encourage mentorship opportunities in an organic manner. L described situations where she "offers" knowledge to woman she had met "who have a similar interest […] and a similar passion." Her confidence as an outdoor recreationist was notable throughout the interview, and is particularly important as she described her role in leading others on outdoor pursuits:

> I feel that I can impart more of the other experience, like whether it's the technique, whether it's the mindset. I'm bringing something to the table, like, if someone wants to break trail for me, because they're fitter and faster, fine, I can bring something else to the table.

In L's words, "it's just the way I talk about things and the passion I have" that has brought other woman to ask if they could join her on pursuits. Similarly, A talked about the role of informal mentorship in outdoor recreation spaces. She shared her willingness to transfer her skills and knowledge to others that "can't afford or can't access lessons."

For C, family togetherness was a primary motivation for her participation in running, downhill and cross-country skiing, and mountain biking. When discussing her intent to grow her family, she stated that "it's important to me that my future kids are able to find the same joy." In anticipation of this lifestyle change, she turned to online groups that provided her with community support for mothers in outdoor recreation. In this way, she could more easily anticipate future constraints relating in learning from the experiences of other mothers.

Many of the participants recounted how they were able to remain authentic in their identity in women-only spaces. E was able to express herself more openly in women-only spaces and was to be more "vulnerable" with women when she shared her affection towards the beauty in natural settings. A felt it to be "easier to share ideas between each other, and [has been] more comfortable speaking up" in women-only spaces. She was "more eager to listen" to feedback in these groups when she wanted to improve her skills and technique as it was more constructive than with her male counterparts. She contrasted this feedback to her previous experiences developing skills in that male-dominated spaces were more "demeaning" and critical, which would often make her "shut down" and be less engaged in the group.

Summary of Themes

Collectively, the reflexive thematic analysis process explored the experiences of women in outdoor recreation participation in Alberta. Theme 1 centered on how the women conceptualized their own degree of specialization as outdoor recreationists. Theme 2 identified pivotal points in their outdoor recreation journeys that changed the way the women of the study progressed in their specialization trajectory. Theme 3 recounted the negative experiences within male-dominated spaces, and the implications to the women's participation. Theme 4 touched on

the various constraints that were most prominent for the participants separate from male-dominated spaces. Theme 5 highlighted the crucial role of women-only spaces in creating a sense of community for the women of the study. The results shed light on the pivotal role of gender within the formation of specialization journeys, which are visible in the five central themes.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

Women continue to encounter constraints within their engagements in outdoor recreation activities, despite the importance of these activity within their lives and the strategies that they have employed to address these constraints. My conversations with the women that participated in this research have reinforced existing evidence that women's participation in outdoor recreation activities are disproportionately impacted by intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints compared to men (e.g., Ghimire et al., 2014). The spectrum of constraints described within the participants' lived experiences in outdoor recreation activities have had important repercussions on the degree of specialization they are able to achieve.

Findings from my research contribute to a deeper appreciation and characterization of women's recreation specialization journeys. Common approaches to measure the three dimensions of recreation specialization have neglected the roles of gender in the differentiation of recreationists' goals, preferences, and behaviors. The reflections and descriptions provided by the participants of this research are critical for understanding how women perceive, experience, and negotiate constraints to their outdoor recreation experiences and aspirations. The insights gained through this research about the processes that contribute to, or impede, the various dimensions of specialization provide valuable knowledge for developing outdoor recreation opportunities that support women's engagement.

Our conversations about outdoor recreation participation revealed that the role of community, particularly the nurturing of group members – community crafting – was a crucial element of the specialization process. Community crafting entails the collective attitudes and behaviours in a group who share common experiences that enhance feelings of connectedness.

This process has a deliberate intention to support and empower its' members, thereby facilitating the recreation specialization process for women. Although Bryan's (1977) initial framing of recreation specialization described "a continuum of behavior from the general to the particular, reflected by equipment and skills used in the sport and activity setting preferences" (p. 175), it did not recognize or address the influence, and necessity, of social support and influence – community – in achieving higher degrees of mastery and engagement in outdoor recreation activities. Taken together, these findings provide insight to the observed gender gap in achieving higher stages of specialization (e.g., Randler, 2021).

Recreation Specialization as a Developmental Process

Although these results are largely consistent with the outdoor recreation, leisure, and gender studies literatures, they do highlight the differences in how women conceptualize their own developmental process compared to typical approaches for operationalizing the specialization framework. My approach was novel because it differed from traditional methods to measure and characterize individuals' degree of specialization in the context of leisure constraints; I have found comparatively few recreation specialization studies that have engaged in qualitative methods. Participants in this study were able to describe their outdoor recreation journeys in an activity in terms of the affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions of the specialization framework (Scott & Shafer, 2001). Interview responses were pieced together to represent participants' degrees of specialization. In this way, participants can be positioned on a continuous spectrum, from low to high degrees of specialization.

My findings align with scholarship that recognizes recreation specialization as a developmental process (e.g., Scott & Shafer, 2001). An important finding of my work is that the

idea of progression along a specialization continuum can deter participation in outdoor recreation activities if it is defined by the need for continued improvement, and can be an unrealistic metric of success or achievement. When continued improvement became unattainable for C, it had a lasting impact on her willingness to engage in outdoor recreation activities. She expressed how the "competitive" context that was necessary for her to achieve greater performance in outdoor recreation (i.e., the behavioural and cognitive dimensions) took away her "enjoyment" (i.e, the affective dimension of specialization). Ultimately, this dissonance impeded her specialization trajectory in the long-term, and resulted in her rejection of some outdoor recreation activities entirely. These experiences contribute to our understanding of the dynamic processes of progression, and *how* mastery in an activity becomes an undesirable trajectory for many outdoor recreationists (Scott & Shafer, 2001).

Another consideration for this work was that some of the interview sessions did not focus on one particular activity. Recreation specialization research tends to concentrate on one activity (i.e., birdwatching; e.g., Randler, 2021) or subset of activity (i.e., deer or elk hunting; e.g., Needham & Vaske, 2013) to narrow the focus of investigation. At times, it was difficult to discern participants' degree of specialization within a single outdoor recreation activity. This raises questions about the role of progression, as a singular or multiple trajectory concept. Kuentzel (2001) highlights this perspective and argues that the notion of *progress* could be seen as a multiple trajectory concept that includes "[generating] participation trajectories and expanding leisure opportunities" (p. 354). Thus, one may favour a new specialization trajectory by rejecting an existing continuum, which would still be considered a part of their *progress*. This could be reflected in C's experience as an outdoor recreationist. C was involved in a variety of activities that were primarily focused on competition, such as skiing and running. Through time,

she became resentful of the pressure of these competitive environments, and chose to abandon some of these activities entirely. These experiences necessitated a change in her motivations for outdoor recreation experiences to focus on self-actualization, which led her to specialize in mountain biking and backcountry skiing. It begs the question: what point in her journey marks the starting point of her progression? Answering this question requires an exploration of the factors that were most influential in impeding on her specialization trajectory.

Although recreation specialization was a focus of this research, my conversations with participants included discussions of other outdoor recreation concepts. Activity substitutability was implicitly described by M when she explored the constraints that limited her access to alpine-based opportunities. She was willing to substitute an activity when she was unable to negotiate the constraints related to her alpine hiking activities, including time availability, financial resources, and lack of partners. As her motivations often centered on spending time in nature, she could achieve her desired goals through other means, including paddling or biking. Although the observations that I made in this study are insufficient to provide a more detailed expansion of the role of progression and substitutability within the specialization framework, scholars have documented a higher degree of willingness for casual recreationists to substitute their activity compared to advanced recreationists (Needham & Vaske, 2013).

Although participants often recounted their motivations for engagement in depth, this was not a primary objective of the study. Participants highlighted many motivations, including: learning, nature connectedness, achievement, well-being, social, autonomy, investment, risk, favourable conditions, and nostalgia. Participants' motivations are consistent with the motivational domains that are outlined in the work of Manning (2011; *see* Table 7-6, p. 179). Some participants implicitly described entering a "flow state" when engaging in outdoor

recreation. The nature of flow was originally conceptualized by Csikszentmihalyi (1988) as an optimal experience that occurs when a person is wholesomely engaged in an activity. It, "denotes the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 136). Flow is a state in which an individual becomes immersed in an activity so intensely that it can result in a loss of self-consciousness within an environment (Wu et al., 2013). This concept has been linked to recreation specialization, as one study of online game users found that specialized players were more likely to experience a sense of flow in their gaming sessions compared to casual players (Wu et al., 2013).

It should be noted that a standard definition of outdoor recreation was not provided to the participants during the data generation phase. Often, participants interchangeably applied the term "sport" and "outdoor recreation" when recounting their experiences. L distinguished the two by explaining how outdoor recreation opportunities need to explicitly engage with the natural setting. However, no comparison was made between categories of sport, such as team-based (i.e., soccer) or individual-based (i.e., competitive climbing) activities. The broad use of the term "sport" by the participants did not distinguish between the extent to which sports occur in natural settings (i.e., soccer is played on maintained or artificial turf compared to outdoor climbing that can occur in a variety of outdoor terrains). Although it was not a central finding from the research, the interchangeable use of sport with outdoor recreation raises questions about how the term "sport" could be applied within the concept of mastery in outdoor recreation skills.

Unpacking the Various Dimensions of Specialization

Each of the participants indicated that outdoor recreation was of central importance to their lives, regardless of their self-described behaviours and cognitive development. This is

consistent with the work of Lee et al. (2015), who found that women placed a greater importance on the affective dimension of outdoor recreation "as a form of personal enrichment, enjoyment, [and] satisfaction" compared to male participants (Lee et al., 2015, p.60).

A significant finding of this research was how participants each described the importance of the activity in their lives in terms of their identity as an outdoor recreationist. One theoretical contribution of this research is the emergent relationship of identity to specialization, and whether identity (as an outdoor recreation activity participant) could exist independently outside of the three recreation specialization dimensions (Jun et al., 2015). Most participants described having a strong sense of belongingness to outdoor recreation through their direct connections to natural settings or to the activities. However, participants felt detached to specific outdoor recreation settings like male-dominated spaces that fostered incompatible attitudes and behaviours.

The behavioural dimension of recreation specialization within the women's outdoor recreation experiences was assessed through their level of involvement in an activity. Each participant described their style and frequency of engagement in a particular activity. In our discussions, each participant identified a desire to prioritize outdoor recreation more heavily within their lifestyles. Despite this intention, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints all influenced participants' capacities to engage more deeply with preferred outdoor recreation activities in their lives. The roles that leisure constraints can play are explored in more detail below; however, leisure constraints seemingly had the greatest influence on the behavioural dimension of specialization. Structural constraints, including time and financial limitations, directly impacted the frequency of participation for each woman in the study. Most

participants experienced constraints to their engagement in outdoor recreation activities to higher degrees in their early stages of their development due to challenges like lack of equipment.

Participants discussed their skill levels in ways that were often comparative in nature. A unique finding of this work was how participants provided rationales for their skill and knowledge development by describing their ability to lead, mentor, and educate others in a particular outdoor recreation activity. The women of the study compared their activity competency levels to previous versions of themselves, which reflects their progression in their specialization journey. They also compared themselves to other outdoor recreationists that they had previously interacted with, elite athletes, or other professionals. Through these comparisons, they identified themselves as beginner, intermediate, or advanced with respect to their skill and knowledge development related to their preferred outdoor recreation activity. Interestingly, L captured her competency by stating: "I'm well past my prime now", which raises questions surrounding the *whose* or *what* standards that are used to assess her abilities. This could provide for a new area of inquiry within the recreation specialization framework, as scholars have found that women tend to underestimate their intelligence (Reilly et al., 2022).

Perceptions of Gender to Outdoor Recreation Participation

The roles that gender plays in outdoor recreation participation are well-documented in literature and are consistent with the findings of this study (e.g., Humberstone, 2000; Rizzolo et al., 2023, Warren, 2015). Participants explicitly recognized the influence of gender on their participation in outdoor recreation activities. A significant finding of the research was *how* participants perceived constraints to higher degrees in male-dominated spaces. Many of the participants attributed gender to the mismatch between motivations for participation in outdoor

spaces. The women described how their specialization journeys needed to differ from the "traditional" outdoor recreation activity engagements of those in male-dominated spaces that often-encouraged natural resource exploitation, competition, and higher-risk behaviours. This is congruent with the findings of Lee et al. (2015), who found gender differences within the styles of engagement between men and women in birdwatching. Their results showed how women tended to be more emotionally attached to birdwatching then men, and placed less emphasis on the behavioural and cognitive related factors, including gear possession and recording their birds on lists. Lee et al. (2015) assert, despite these differences, women were as committed to their birdwatching as men were.

The collective experiences shared by the participants to "prove" themselves among men is consistent with other investigations that have examined women's experiences in male-dominated spaces. Evans et al. (2020a) describe how women's "incompetence was automatically assumed by men" (p.14), and that to be equal and accepted by them they needed to push their physical selves in a way that could cause harm. Often participants in my study were unable to negotiate interpersonal constraints like this within these group settings, and instead sought out women-only spaces. L, who despite being able to better negotiate these constraints than the other women in this study, described how her accomplishments were downplayed by the comparative and competitive nature that exists in these male-dominated groups. This aligns with the work of Little (2002), who explains that it is often difficult for women to cope with the reinforced stereotypical attitudes that are persistent in male-dominated outdoor recreation activities. Literature has documented that men are more committed to outdoor recreation activities through the behavioural and cognitive settings compared to women (e.g., Moore et al., 2008). Scholars have suggested that these differences stem from socialization pressures that can exclude and

discourage women from participating more seriously in their activities as competitive arenas are seen as "highly masculine endeavours" (Moore et al., 2008, p.97).

Connections to Leisure Constraint Theory

My findings are consistent with leisure constraints theory, which suggests women are more likely to experience constraints than men (e.g., Ghimire et al., 2014). The constraints identified by participants of my study were consistent with those that gender studies in outdoor recreation that have examined, including fear, lack of exposure, and gender stereotypes within women's experiences (e.g., Evans et al., 2020a). The women who participated in this study explicitly described structural constraints to their outdoor recreation journeys, including time and financial limitations, and lifestyle and at-home responsibilities, which limited their behavioural and cognitive dimensions of specialization. Many of the women in this study described the societal norms and stereotypes that have heightened the degrees to which they encountered these structural constraints. In one of the focus groups of this research, financial limitations were attributed to the gender pay gap that exists in Canada (e.g., Statistics Canada, 2023). Participants often cited work or school as preventing more opportunities for engagement. The women in the study that were in relationships described an unequal division of labour that restricted their access to leisure time. One participant made comparisons to their male companions in similar situations, who she had perceived to be less constrained by these obligations. Although none of the participants were parents, participants assumed that this division of labour would translate to the experiences of motherhood. These findings are consistent with the work of other scholars who have documented that women tend to have less time for leisure and recreation compared to their male counterparts (e.g., Kamp Dush et al., 2018). Financial limitations and lack of access to

opportunities also influenced participants' learning opportunities and skills development, and ultimately their activity abilities. The participants utilized a host of negotiation strategies to increase their competence in activities including online free resources or taking advantage of their male relationships in outdoor recreation to build off their knowledge.

An important contribution of this research is the refinement of the pivotal role of the social worlds perspective in outdoor recreation, particularly as it relates to women's participation in outdoor recreation activities. Scholars, like Ditton et al. (1992), have explored the social words perspective within the framework of recreation specialization. In this perspective, individuals at beginner stages of an activity may have limited social interactions and support to connect them with others that participate in an activity. As people progress in their specialization journey, they may develop stronger social ties relating to an activity. Participants identified other interpersonal constraints outside of the incompatible attitudes and behaviours that exist in male-dominated spaces. Lack of community was a prominent discussion point among participants, and one that restricted the development of the various dimensions of specialization. For instance, a lack of community made it more difficult for M to develop her skills and knowledge as she depended on others for guidance. In C's experiences, the lack of community often changed her frequency of participation (i.e., behaviour) as she was disinterested in engaging in activities alone. A noted that prior to her engagement in women-only spaces, she had continuously doubted herself and her outdoor recreation abilities.

Often, the women of this study chose their immediate family as outdoor recreation activity partners. This is consistent with the findings of Stokowski (1990) and Stokowski and Lee (1991), who explored the roles of social networks in influencing people's participation in recreation and leisure activities. Stokowski and Lee (1991) found that recreation and leisure

social networks differed for men and women. Women have greater ties to members of their immediate family compared to men, who are more likely to engage in recreation and leisure activities with members of their extended family. They noted that women tend to be limited in their "opportunities for social interaction" within recreation and leisure activities (p.108). At times, the women I engaged noted that although this choice was driven by convenience, it created challenges to create opportunities to engage with others at a similar skill level. For instance, G described that she lacked a "goldilocks' option" that was at a similar place to her in the specialization journey.

This investigation highlights the difficult nature of understanding the processes embedded within the constraint's hierarchy. Often the permeating nature of a constraint within participants' lived experiences was difficult to assign as an intra- or inter- personal constraint. For instance, fear was frequently cited as an impediment to the experiences of the women of the study. This is consistent with gender studies literature that examines the role of fear in outdoor spaces (e.g., Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). However, participants often described how their close family and friends often expressed worry in their engagement in outdoor recreation. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if the source of these constraints is derived from the intrapersonal or interpersonal hierarchy.

Community-Crafting in Women-Only Groups

One of the important and interesting outcomes of this research was the identification of the valuable role that women-only spaces can play in strengthening the abilities of participants to negotiate leisure constraints in their specialization journeys. Women-only spaces were identified

as opportunities to build community in outdoor recreation; these spaces seemed to reinforce the concept of social worlds as described by Bryan (1977):

> A group of fellow [outdoor recreationists][6] holding similar attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies, engaging in similar behavior, and having a sense of group identification. The leisure social world serves as a major reference group for its members (p. 186).

The experiences of the women in my study suggest a need to expand Bryan's (1977) definition of social worlds: women-only spaces seem to have a deliberate focus on supporting and empowering others through their own specialization journeys. This was observed as a primary motivation for the participants' *continued* desire to seek out and engage in women-only spaces. The functioning of these social worlds seems to have a deliberate emphasis on curating opportunities to support each another through their specialization journeys. This explicit and important role of women's social worlds may not have been identifiable without the conscious decision to investigate the role of gender within the outdoor recreation experiences of the women in the study. Although it may seem obvious that a persons' social world may facilitate the ways they are able to negotiate constraints, this research identified the importance of the supportive functions of community, and the crucial roles that community can play in supporting members' aspirations. The concept of community-crafting improves our understanding of the social worlds' perspective in outdoor recreation specialization, and the factors that influence this developmental process.

This research also reinforces a collaborative process that is instilled in women-only spaces. This idea seems to reinforce aspects of feminist outdoor leadership that "include validation of personal experience, democratic or consensus decision-making processes, attention

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[6] Bryan's conceptualization of recreation specialization solely focused on the experiences of men. I altered the language of "sportsmen" and to include gender diverse peoples by changing this term to "outdoor recreationists".

to power dynamics in group processes, shared leadership, collective problem solving and communication, and honouring participant choice" (Warren, 2015, p.362). These spaces allowed participants to gain confidence to participate in outdoor recreation activities and negotiate the constraints that exist in male-dominated spaces. Evans et al. (2020b) highlight the need for group experiences that are founded on welcoming spaces that seek to enhance participants' confidence. Although their work focused on adolescent participants, my study reveals the continued need for spaces that support women's confidence. Scholars have identified the roles of women-only spaces in reducing the constraints to outdoor recreation; Llyod and Little (2005) argue that these spaces are valuable for women to gain a sense of balance in life, to access new opportunities, to feel a sense of belonging, and places to improve self-perception.

The women who participated in this research spoke about a shift in the visibility and representation of women in outdoor recreation, and primarily attributed this shift to social media. Previously, they felt that they had few relatable images of women engaging in outdoor recreation. Examples of social media usage to mobilize diverse representations of outdoor recreationists have been captured by scholars like Stanley (2020). Despite the perceived shift in visibility and representation, research has found that media depictions continue to trend heteronormative narratives in outdoor recreation (e.g., Kling et al., 2020). However, women-only spaces that exist online and in-person could act as spaces that promote more realistic images of outdoor recreationists. In this way, these groups can promote feelings of confidence and negotiate feelings of doubt associated with intra- and interpersonal constraints.

Limitations

The recruitment of participants was an important consideration of this research. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the recruitment and data collection phases occurred exclusively online. This resulted in the exclusion of individuals without an online presence in women-only outdoor recreation groups, or women who face technological-related challenges were unable to be included. Future studies should consider in-person recruitment strategies at various outdoor recreation sites to engage with women with differing experiences in how they perceive, encounter, and negotiate constraints within their specialization journey. A challenging aspect of this study was maintaining prolonged engagement with participants in a virtual setting. Out of the six participants, only three provided feedback about their interview transcripts or about the summary of themes. Providing additional incentives and recognition for participants to provide their time on the project could yield higher engagement. Additionally, recruiting members through organizations such as the *Association of Canadian Mountain Guides*, could provide benefits for sampling individuals with higher levels of specialization.

The exploratory nature of this work revealed a limited understanding of larger trends within women-only outdoor recreation groups. Future research should further investigate the socio-demographic characteristics of the women within these groups. With respect to this research, there was little diversity in the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants: most individuals were aged 25-34 and white; all participants had completed high school. Understanding the diversity of persons within and between women-only groups could be valuable in creating more inclusive outdoor recreation spaces. For instance, Shores et al. (2007) found that constraints in outdoor recreation were more prominent among elderly, female or minority respondents with low socio-economic status.

There exists the potential for women-only groups to align with Moreton-Robinson's (2000) critique of feminism that is often applied to gender studies, which argues that the "universal woman" often depicted in gender studies is focused solely on the "white, middle-class, and heterosexual, whose life is oppressed under patriarchy" (p. 32). Thus, women are positioned through a certain lens, and individuals who do not constitute this damaging narrative are silenced- contributing to a sort of veil of ignorance. Future work needs to center on the collective experiences of women and gender diverse peoples when attributing meaning to outdoor recreation opportunities.

Future Research

Future research should consider intersectional approaches to investigate people's journeys and experiences in outdoor recreation activities. A sole focus on gender may inadvertently conceal the complex processes that contribute to different social realities. As Jones (2020) argues, many challenges associated with the environment transcend gender, and disproportionately affect Black and Indigenous, as well as people of colour. Thus, more critical examinations are warranted for recognizing individuals who do not exist within traditional representations of outdoor recreationists, but who continue to change these dominant narratives.

Leisure and outdoor recreation studies may assign an additive lens to research that investigates the relationships of socio-demographic characteristics to activity participation and engagement and should be interpreted carefully. The additive approach of describing identity characteristics becomes formulaic and assumes that "each discrimination had a single, direct, and independent effect on status" (King, 1988, p.47). As such, this position may obscure the differences embedded in life that are experienced at the *intersections* of age, gender, sexual

orientation, class, race, and ability (Crenshaw, 1989). For instance, King (1988) recounts that black women are subjected to a unique set of oppressive conditions that cannot be adequately understood through the experiences of "that of either black males or white females" (p.45).

Previous literature has employed multiple hierarchical stratification perspectives, which examine the combination of sociodemographic characteristics to understand participation in leisure and recreation (e.g., Lee et al., 2001; Shores et al., 2007). As Lee et al. (2001) assert, the perspective explores how "our everyday life is influenced by multiple social statuses" (p.428). Without the recognition of different lived experiences in relation to socio-demographic characteristics, the development of policies and other relevant actions that seek to address social inequities inadequately conceptualize the discriminations encountered through various systems of oppressions (Crenshaw, 1989). As such, the intersectionality framework has been increasingly recognized and applied in leisure and recreation studies for at least a decade (e.g., Watson & Scraton, 2013).

Due to the scope and resources of my study, executing the theoretical framework of intersectionality, initially outlined by Crenshaw (1989), was unrealistic due to the labour and experience needed to have a just and inclusive process that adequately captures the complexities embedded in lived experience through an intersectional lens. Thus, this research should not be interpreted as being generalizable to every woman. For instance, in investigating the role of motherhood in climbing experiences, Ankers (2023) found that "despite women having greater opportunity and access to participation, the reality is that gendered power dynamics and structural inequalities for mothers continue to constrain and impact negatively on climbing experiences" (p.13).

Recognizing the diverse experiences of women could provide more tailored and practical recreational strategies to increase their engagement. Dorwart et al. (2019) examined the constraints that impede the experiences of African American women participating in outdoor recreation activities. Although the themes identified by Dorwart et al. (2019) touched on topics that were similar to my findings, such as the need for companionship in supporting and encouraging women, these authors also differed, as they identified the need for identity as a central theme because many of their participants did not hold a strong sense of identity tied to outdoor recreation.

It is important to recognize the current efforts within the field of outdoor recreation that seek to dismantle traditional and rigid definitions of outdoorism. *Unlikely Hikers* (n.d.) is an organization that promotes and creates inclusive outdoor spaces for recreationists that identify as "plus-size & fat, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, queer, trans and non-binary, disabled, neurodivergent and beyond." In Alberta, the organization *Colour the Trails* (2024) hosts a variety of outdoor recreation events that prioritize experiences for members of the BiPOC and LGBTQ2SI+ community. Better understanding the influence of these approaches is critical for providing more support and maintenance and growth of these types of organizations, along with additional support for outdoor recreation programming directed at women could increase their potential for long-term repeated engagement.

Conclusion

Findings from this research provide critical insights about the ways that leisure constraints influence recreation specialization progression with respect to women's experiences in outdoor recreation. The results of this work were able to capture the objectives of the study

outlined in Chapter 1. Drawing from lived experiences to explore the recreation specialization

framework enabled a deeper understanding of the individualistic differences in how the women

of the study progress in outdoor recreation activities. Although participants each conceptualized

their own specialization journeys using the various dimensions of the recreation specialization

differently, each of the women placed particular importance on the affective dimension of the

framework. In this way, the women of the study each defined their own outdoor recreation

experiences in ways that reflected the specialization framework. Simultaneously, the study

findings provide new insights about the important role of community to support the progression

of the outdoor recreation journeys of the women who took part in this study.

The socialization process plays a crucial role in women's abilities to progress to higher

degrees of recreation specialization. Although this research highlights a shift in the visibility and

representation of women in the outdoors, women continue to experience a collective *othering* in

male-dominated spaces that necessitates new ways of engagement. Many of the leisure

constraints that were identified in this research center on the gendered nature of women's

engagement in outdoor recreation and were most prominent in affecting the behavioral and

cognitive dimensions of the participants specialization in outdoor recreation.

In order to negotiate these related challenges, the women of the study engaged in

community crafting through women-only spaces. The experiences of women that sought out

women-only spaces reinforces the social worlds perspective, but transcends this perspective

through efforts to explicitly support and empower its' members. This is a central finding of this

research, as it advances our understanding of the role of social worlds supporting women's

specialization journey. In this way, the experiences of women in this study were able to

conceptualize community-crafting, a social worlds perspective that captures the supporting and

empowering role of community in contributing to a person's developmental process in outdoor recreation. In building community spaces and creating better structures to support women's participation in outdoor recreation, individuals may be better equipped to negotiate the leisure constraints that impede their specialization journey.

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APPENDIX A

Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RESEARCH ETHICS OFFICE

2-01 North Power Plant (NPP)
11312 - 89 Ave NW
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2N2
Tel: 780.492.0459
www.uab.ca/reo

Notification of Approval

Date:	January 27, 2022
Study ID:	Pro00115763
Principal Investigator:	Janelle Goodine
Study Supervisor:	Howard Harshaw
Study Title:	Encountering gendered experiences in the wild: An investigation of constraints in women's developmental process of outdoor recreation
Approval Expiry Date:	January 26, 2023
Sponsor/Funding Agency:	SSHRC - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council SSHRC

Thank you for submitting the above study to the Research Ethics Board 1. Your application has been reviewed and approved on behalf of the committee.

Approved Documents:

Recruitment Materials
Presentation- Recruitment.pptx
Letter of Initial Contact
Initial Contact- 1
Reminder Email- 1
Consent Forms
Consent Form- Individual Interviews
Consent Form- Focus Groups
Consent Form- Questionnaire
Questionnaires, Cover Letters, Surveys, Tests, Interview Scripts, etc.
Questionnaire-January 12 Version
Questionnaire -Website URL
Guide for semi-structured interviews
Protocol/Research Proposal
Proposal- Goodine

Any proposed changes to the study must be submitted to the REB for approval prior to implementation. A renewal report must be submitted next year prior to the expiry of this approval if your study still requires ethics approval. If you do not renew on or before the renewal expiry date, you will have to re-submit an ethics application.

Approval by the REB does not constitute authorization to initiate the conduct of this research. The Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring required approvals from other involved organizations (e.g., Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health, community organizations, school boards) are obtained, before the research begins.

Sincerely,

Theresa Garvin, Ph.D, MUA, BA
Chair, Research Ethics Board 1

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire with Consent Form

Encountering Gendered Experiences in the Wild:
An investigation of constraints in women's developmental process of outdoor recreation.

Investigator	**Co-investigator**
Dr. Howard Harshaw	Janelle Goodine
Associate Professor	M.Sc. Student
Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation	Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation
University of Alberta	University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB	Edmonton, AB
hdstudy@ualberta.ca	goodine1@ualberta.ca

This study is collecting information to help us understand why and how women participate in outdoor recreation activities.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

STUDY PURPOSE
Understanding and characterizing women's participation in outdoor recreation activities will ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯ ▯▯ ways that women navigate issues that might interfere with their participation in outdoor ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯ ▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯

1. Investigate the concept of recreation specialization in women's outdoor recreation experiences to develop deeper understandings of the processes that evoke individualistic differences in the framework.
2. Explore how a person conceptualizes each of the three specialization dimensions in assessing their role in shaping the user experience. An individual's progression may place particular importance upon certain aspects within each of the dimensions, thus warranting further investigation on an individual level.
3. ▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯ ▯▯▯ ▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯
4. Determine if participants feel that constraints impede their progression in an outdoor ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯ ▯▯ in-depth examination of how individuals encounter, perceive and negotiate these constraints.

▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯
results of this survey will be publicly available on the ▯ ▯ ▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯▯

It is anticipated that the survey results will support strategies and recommendations that address some of the issues that women encounter that constrain the level of outdoor

recreation that they would like to achieve, including approaches for reducing constraints to outdoor recreation participation and for promoting more enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.

Funding for this study was provided by the *Social Science & Humanities Research Council*.

STUDY PROCEDURES
The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. Please take your time as you consider your answers to the questions. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Your responses are saved when you click on the "Next" button on each page. We greatly appreciate your time and effort. **You must be 18 or older to participate.**

RISKS AND BENEFITS
There are no foreseeable risks to you associated with research. You are you unlikely to experience any discomfort as a result of this research. Although participation in this research will not provide direct benefits to you, it is anticipated that the results of this research will help us to understand women's participation in outdoor recreation activities.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Your name and any other identifying information will not be shared in any reports from the completed study. All responses will be identified only by an identification number and kept in a locked filing cabinet and password-protected computer files. The data that is collected in this research project will be kept for future use for understanding women's outdoor recreation participate in in Alberta. Individual responses will not be made available to anyone outside the research team.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any questions about the research, or would like further information, contact Janelle. The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, please contact the Research Ethics Officeby email at reoffice@ualberta.ca. If you wish to opt out of this survey, please contact Janelle.

CONSENT
Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate at any time without penalty. You may skip any question if you do not feel comfortable answering it, though we encourage you to complete all questions if possible. By submitting this survey, you grant your consent to participate in this study. If, for any reason, you wish to withdraw your data (i.e., your answers to the survey questions) from this study, please contact Janelle within two weeks of submitting your questionnaire; your data will be permanently deleted from the study dataset.

<div align="center">

I agree. Begin the Survey.

University of Alberta Ethics Protocol: Pro00115763

Version: January 12, 2022

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Women's Outdoor Recreation Experiences in Alberta

We are interested in learning about your participation in outdoor recreation activities. We ask about your demographic characteristics so that we can engage with a variety of women.

Please click on the Next Button to begin the survey.

Next

Version: November 27, 2021

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Women's Outdoor Recreation Experiences in Alberta

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The following questions ask about your outdoor recreation experiences.

Q1

Have you participated in an event hosted by the organization in the last year?

◯ No   ◯ Yes

Q2

About how often do you engage in the recreation activity?

◯ Multiple times a week
◯ Once a week
◯ Every other week
◯ Once a month
◯ Once a year

Q3

How did you became involved in this outdoor recreation activity.

Q4

What are your motivations for participating in the outdoor recreation activity?

Back   Next

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Women's Outdoor Recreation Experiences in Alberta

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The following questions ask about you. Your answers to these questions will not identify you in any way. Please remember, your answers will be kept confidential.

Q5

Do you identify as a woman?

○ No   ○ Yes

Q6

Do you currently reside in Alberta, Canada?

○ No (If no, please indicate your current location): [_____]   ○ Yes

Q7

Would you be able to attend an in-person session in Edmonton, Alberta? (This will determine if the focus group interview will be conducted remotely.)

○ No   ○ Yes

Q8

What are your ethnic or cultural origins? [Please choose one... ▾]

Q9

Which age category best describes you?

○ 18 - 24   ○ 55 - 64
○ 25 - 34   ○ 65 - 74
○ 35 - 44   ○ 75+
○ 45 - 54

Q10

What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?

○ Some high school   ○ Some university/college   ○ Graduate degree
○ High school   ○ University/college   ○ Other [_____]

Q11

Please check the category that best describes your household income before taxes last year.

○ $49,999 or less   ○ $50,000 - $99,999   ○ $100,000 - $149,999   ○ $150,000 or more   ○ I'd prefer not to say.

[Back]   [Next]

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Women's Outdoor Recreation Experiences in Alberta

0% ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ 100%

Thank you for completing the
Women's Outdoor Recreation Experiences in Alberta survey!

Please click on the Next button to exit the survey. You will be redirected to the *Human Dimensions Research* web site.

Back   Next

Version: November 27, 2021

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Consent Form

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INFORMATION LETTER and CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Encountering gendered experiences in the wild: An investigation of constraints in women's developmental process of outdoor recreation

Research Investigator:
Janelle Goodine
MSc. Candidate
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2R3
goodine1@ualberta.ca
780-318-5793

Supervisor:
Dr. Howard Harshaw
2-130J University Hall
8840 - 114 St NW
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2J9
harshaw@ualberta.ca
780-492-6821

Background
You are invited to participate in this research study about women's outdoor recreation experiences in Alberta because you are above the age of 18 and have participated in an event with the outdoor recreation women's focused organization within the last year. You indicated that you would be interested in participating in an interview with me. The results of the study will be used in support of my thesis with funding from the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council*. Before you make a decision to participate in the interview, one of the researchers will go over this form with you. You are encouraged to ask questions if you feel anything needs to be made clearer. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Purpose
Understanding and characterizing women's participation in outdoor recreation activities will help to identify sources of conflict before they become major issues. We are interested in the ways that women navigate issues that might interfere with their participation in outdoor recreation activities. This research has four objectives:

1. Investigate the concept of recreation specialization in women's outdoor recreation experiences to develop deeper understandings of the processes that evoke individualistic differences in the framework.
2. Explore how women conceptualize their participation in outdoor recreation activities and the experiences that they have. An individual's degree of engagement in an outdoor recreation activity may place particular importance upon certain aspects of their participation.
3. Discuss how women perceive their engagement in outdoor recreation activities: How do women define their own outdoor recreation experience.
4. Determine if women feel that constraints impede their progression in an outdoor recreation activity and at specific points in participation.

Study Procedures

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The focus group will require between 90-180 minutes to complete. The focus group will include a maximum of 10 women and will likely occur remotely. The focus group sessions will provide opportunities for participants to reinstate consent, opt-out of specific questions, and assert that participation is voluntary. Additionally, the contact information of the principal researcher (Janelle Goodine) and supervisor (Dr. Howard Harshaw) will be provided in the event that individuals have follow-up questions relating to the study or would like to opt out of the study. The focus group will be recorded through the relevant video/audio messaging application (Zoom/Google Meet) to increase the validity of findings. In addition, the data analysis phase of the research includes an opportunity for participants to clarify and review the data they provided throughout the interviews. If the researcher needs to verify the findings from the interview, they will contact the participant through email.

Benefits
Participants may or may not experience benefits throughout the research project. Possible benefits could include a better understanding of their own attitudes and behaviors associated with outdoor recreation activities. Additionally, individuals may feel a sense of community in sharing their own lived experiences in outdoor recreation with others during the focus groups. Participants may learn different negotiation strategies in encountering constraints to outdoor recreation opportunities.

The primary benefits of this research may be produced for women involved in outdoor recreation and for the advancement of knowledge. We anticipate that this work will contribute to the existing body of literature addressing inequality in outdoor recreation opportunities. This research could provide benefits for society by informing relevant stakeholders about the ways that women encounter and negotiate for constraints in outdoor recreation.

Although the benefits of this research will be limited, this work could influence future engagement in outdoor recreation for individuals who have felt excluded from participating in these types of activity. It is important to note that this work is exploratory in nature. As such, it is intended to inform individuals of the historical and social influences that affect engagement in outdoor recreation. The risks associated with this program of research are small, but the broader implications for society are important for increasing diversity in the field of outdoor recreation.

Risks
There are no foreseeable physical risks associated with the proposed program of research. Understanding the role of gender in outdoor recreation experiences is a central objective to the study. As such, there is a possibility that participants may have an emotional response to certain questions as the role of gender and constraints present as a potentially sensitive topic. You may experience fatigue through video /audio messaging.

The interviewer will minimize the emotional distress throughout interviews by providing opportunities to opt-out before presenting difficult questions. Additionally, there will be

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established check-in periods throughout the sessions to gauge how the participants are feeling to minimize the potential for distress and fatigue from audio/video messaging sessions. The participant is under no obligation to remain throughout the entirety of the interview sessions. If they wish to withdraw from the study, they should immediately contact the principal investigator (Janelle Goodine) or their supervisor (Dr. Howie Harshaw).

There are associated risks with COVID-19 if the interview is conducted in-person. The research team will adhere to the guidelines, policies, and safety measures set forth by the University of Alberta and the Government of Alberta.

Voluntary Participation
You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any specific questions in the interview sessions even if you are participating in the study. Even if you agree to be in the study, you can change your mind and withdraw at any point in the data collection phase. You will be able to withdraw your data up to 30 days after the focus group has been conducted. At any point after the data collection, you can reach out to the primary investigator (Janelle Goodine) to be removed from the study. Your request to be removed from the study will be honored and all your data will be destroyed.

Confidentiality & Anonymity
The information that you will share will remain strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this research. This research is intended for the purposes to support thesis work, create research articles, and presentations. Under no circumstances will your personal data be included in any subsequent publicly available reports or publications. The data will remain confidential, but the research team involved in this project will have access to the data. The only people who will have access to the research data is the research team. Your answers to open-ended questions may be used verbatim in presentations and publications but neither you (nor your organization) will be identified. Transcripts and other materials relating to the interview sessions will be anonymized and shared with the research team. In order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your email account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the study.

Anonymity cannot be guaranteed in group context, and we will request that participants in the focus group will respect the privacy of others when sharing their own experiences, attitudes, and beliefs surrounding the research questions. While we will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of what is discussed during the focus groups, we cannot guarantee that others from the group will do the same. Participants will be asked to use a nickname or pseudonym during the focus group session. Please respect the confidentiality of others outside of the focus group. Any publications or documents related to data received in the questionnaire will be replace personal

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information with a unique identification number. Interviews will be recorded and will be encrypted and stored on a password protected computer.

Although there are no current plans for future use of the data beyond preparing project report and academic journal articles, there are no plans to destroy the data. If, in the future, there is a desire to use the data in ways that are not directly related to reporting or other communication of results (e.g., linking it to other data sources/databases), an amendment to the Ethical Review Application will be made prior to future use. If participants would like to receive a copy of a report of the research findings, they are able to contact the primary investigator (Janelle Goodine) via email to receive the materials.

Contact Information
- If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact Janelle Goodine or Dr. Howard Harshaw.
- The plan for this study has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. If you have questions about your rights or how research should be conducted, email reoffice@ualberta.ca. This office is independent of the researchers.

Consent Statement
I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent form prior to the interview.

APPENDIX D

Individual Interview Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

INFORMATION LETTER and CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Encountering gendered experiences in the wild: An investigation of constraints in women's developmental process of outdoor recreation

Research Investigator:
Janelle Goodine
MSc. Candidate
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2R3
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780-318-5793

Supervisor:
Dr. Howard Harshaw
2-130J University Hall
8840 - 114 St NW
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2J9
harshaw@ualberta.ca
780-492-6821

Background
You are invited to participate in this research study about women's outdoor recreation experiences in Alberta because you are above the age of 18 and have participated in an event with the outdoor recreation women's focused organization within the last year. You indicated that you would be interested in participating in an interview with me. The results of the study will be used in support of my thesis with funding from the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council*. Before you make a decision to participate in the interview, one of the researchers will go over this form with you. You are encouraged to ask questions if you feel anything needs to be made clearer. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Purpose
Understanding and characterizing women's participation in outdoor recreation activities will help to identify sources of conflict before they become major issues. We are interested in the ways that women navigate issues that might interfere with their participation in outdoor recreation activities. This research has four objectives:

1. Investigate the concept of recreation specialization in women's outdoor recreation experiences to develop deeper understandings of the processes that evoke individualistic differences in the framework.
2. Explore how women conceptualize their participation in outdoor recreation activities and the experiences that they have. An individual's degree of engagement in an outdoor recreation activity may place particular importance upon certain aspects of their participation.
3. Discuss how women perceive their engagement in outdoor recreation activities: How do women define their own outdoor recreation experience.
4. Determine if women feel that constraints impede their progression in an outdoor recreation activity and at specific points in participation.

Study Procedures

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The interviews will require between 90-180 minutes to complete and will occur remotely. The interview will provide opportunities to reinstate consent, opt-out of specific interview questions, and assert that participation is voluntary. Additionally, the contact information of the principal researcher (Janelle Goodine) and supervisor (Dr. Howard Harshaw) will be provided in the event that individuals have follow-up questions relating to the study or would like to opt out of the study. The researcher will have a 30-minute debriefing session after each interview to include any additional notes or findings. Each interview will be recorded through the relevant video/audio messaging application (Zoom/Google Meet) to increase the validity of findings. In addition, the data analysis phase of the research includes opportunities for participants to clarify and review the data they provided throughout the interviews. If researcher need to verify the findings from the interview, they will contact the participant through email.

Benefits
You may or may not experience benefits throughout the research project. Possible benefits could include a better understanding of their own attitudes and behaviors associated with outdoor recreation activities. Participants may learn different negotiation strategies in encountering constraints to outdoor recreation opportunities.

The primary benefits of this research may be produced for women involved in outdoor recreation and for the advancement of knowledge. This work will contribute to the existing body of literature addressing inequality in outdoor recreation opportunities. This research could provide benefits for society by informing relevant stakeholders about the ways that women encounter and negotiate for constraints in outdoor recreation.

Although the benefits of this research will be limited, this work could influence future engagement in outdoor recreation for individuals who have felt excluded from participating in these types of activity. It is important to note that this work is exploratory in nature. As such, it is intended to inform individuals of the historical and social influences that affect engagement in outdoor recreation. The risks associated with this program of research are small, but the broader implications for society are important for increasing diversity in the field of outdoor recreation.

Risks
There are no foreseeable physical risks associated with the proposed program of research. Understanding the role of gender in outdoor recreation experiences is a central objective to the study. As such, there is a possibility that participants may have an emotional response to certain questions as the role of gender and constraints present as a potentially sensitive topic. You may experience fatigue through video/audio messaging.

The interviewer will minimize the emotional distress throughout interviews by providing opportunities to opt-out before presenting difficult questions. Additionally, there will be established check-in periods throughout the sessions to gauge how the participants are feeling to minimize the potential for distress or fatigue from audio/video messaging

sessions. The participant is under no obligation to remain throughout the entirety of the interview sessions. If they wish to withdraw from the study, they should immediately contact the principal investigator (Janelle Goodine) or their supervisor (Dr. Howie Harshaw).

There are associated risks with COVID-19 if the interview is conducted in-person. The research team will adhere to the guidelines, policies, and safety measures set forth by the University of Alberta and the Government of Alberta.

Voluntary Participation
You are under no obligation to participate in this study. The participation is completely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any specific questions in the interview sessions even if you are participating in the study. Even if you agree to be in the study, you can change your mind and withdraw at any point in the data collection phase. You will be able to withdraw your data up to 30 days after the interview has been conducted. At any point after the data collection, you can reach out to the primary investigator (Janelle Goodine) to be removed from the study. Your request to be removed from the study will be honored and all your data will be destroyed.

Confidentiality & Anonymity
The information that you will share will remain strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this research. This research is intended for the purposes to support thesis work, create research articles, presentations, and web posting. Under no circumstances will your personal data be included in any subsequent publicly available reports or publications. The data will remain confidential, but the research team involved in this project will have access to the data. The only people who will have access to the research data is the research team. Your answers to open-ended questions may be used verbatim in presentations and publications but neither you (nor your organization) will be identified. Transcripts and other materials relating to the interview sessions will be anonymized and shared with the research team. In order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your email account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the study.

During interviews, any personal information provided by the participants will be removed in the next stages of the research process. Any publications or documents related to this research will not contain information capable of identifying participants. Participants will be given a unique identification number to conceal their identity. Interviews will be recorded and will be encrypted and stored on a password protected computer. Although there are no current plans for future use of the data beyond preparing project report and academic journal articles, there are no plans to destroy the data. If, in the future, there is a desire to use the data in ways that are not directly related to reporting or other communication of results (e.g., linking it to other data sources/databases), an amendment to the Ethical Review Application will be made prior to future use. If participants would like to receive a copy of a report of the research

findings, they are able to contact the primary investigator (Janelle Goodine) via email to receive the materials.

Contact Information
- If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact Janelle Goodine or Dr. Howard Harshaw.
- The plan for this study has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. If you have questions about your rights or how research should be conducted, email reoffice@ualberta.ca. This office is independent of the researchers.

Consent Statement
I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent form prior to the interview.

APPENDIX E

Example Recruitment Message

Hi *name*, I am messaging you because you are listed as an admin for *organization*
OR
Hi *organization*,

I am a second-year master's student majoring in recreation and leisure studies in the Faculty of KSR at the University of Alberta.

I am seeking participants from women focused outdoor recreation groups in Alberta and am hoping you could help! The goal of my work is to understand the role that gender plays in outdoor recreation participation through the framework of recreation specialization, which helps to explain outdoor recreation engagement. This research consists of a short questionnaire, focus group interview, and individual interview.

Please let me know if you are interested in participating or learning more about myself and my thesis work! You can contact me at goodine1@ualberta.ca or through Facebook.

You can read more about the project here: https://www.hd-research.ca/current-research/gendered-experiences/

APPENDIX F

Research Profile for HD Website

Women's Experiences in Alberta Outdoor Recreation Activities

Encountering gendered experiences in the wild: An investigation of constraints in women's developmental process of outdoor recreation
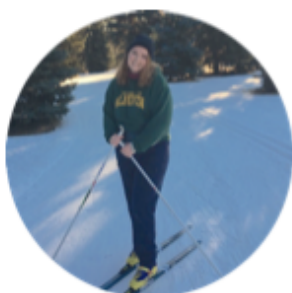
Individuals' developmental processes in outdoor recreation activities provides manybenefits at both individual and societal levels. However, people can be subjected to particular constraints that impede their recreation participation based on certain socio-demographic characteristics. The social construct of gender plays a particularly important role in the formation of outdoor experiences. This research examines gender through the framework of recreation specialization using qualitative methods.

At a societal scale, maintaining and developing these types of direct interactions with the natural world can garner additional support for pro-conservation attitudes and behaviours (Needham & Little, 2013). In Alberta, outdoor recreationists are more likely to support conservation initiatives such as the acquisition of land for non-consumptive reasons than people that don't participate in outdoor recreation activities (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society [CPAWS], 2015). At an individual level, these benefits are most notably observed through improvements to health, well-being, and enhancements in self-development (Eigenschenk et al., 2019). Yet, these benefits are thought to be disproportionately accessible to individuals with certain socio-demographic characteristics (Stanley, 2020).

The goal of my research is to understand the role that gender plays in outdoor recreation participation through the framework of recreation specialization, which helps to explain outdoor recreation engagement. This work is exploratory and is focused on the experiences of women who are members of women's only outdoor recreation groups. Four objectives inform this goal:

1. **Investigate** the concept of recreation specialization in women's outdoor recreation experiences to develop deeper understandings of the processes that evoke individualistic differences in outdoor recreation engagement.
2. **Explore** how women conceptualize their participation in outdoor recreation activities and the experiences that they have. Women's degree of engagement in an outdoor recreation activity may place particular importance upon certain aspects of their participation.
3. **Discuss** how women perceive their engagement in outdoor recreation activities: How do women define their own outdoor recreation experience.
4. **Identify and characterize** the constraints that impede women's participation and progression in an outdoor recreation activity.

Literature Cited

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. (2015). *Albertans' values and attitudes toward recreation and wilderness.* https://aref.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CPAWS-Recreation-and-Wilderness-FINAL-REPORT-2015-003.pdf

Eigenschenk, B., Thomann, A., McClure, M., Davies, L., Gregory, M., Dettweiler, U., & Inglés, E. (2019). Benefits of outdoor sports for society. A systematic literature review and reflections on evidence. *International journal of environmental research and public health, 16*(6), 937. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16060937

Needham, M. D., & Little, M. L. (2013). Voluntary environmental programs at an alpine ski area: Visitor perceptions, attachment, value orientations, and specialization. *Tourism Management, 35,* 70-81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.06.001.

Stanley, P. (2020). Unlikely hikers? Activism, Instagram, and the queer mobilities of fat hikers, women hiking alone, and hikers of colour, *Mobilities, 15*(2), 241-256. DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2019.1696038

APPENDIX G

Interview Guide

Overview of Focus Group Interviews

Background: You are invited to participate in this research study about women's outdoor recreation experiences in Alberta because you are above the age of 18 and have participated in an event with the outdoor recreation women's focused organization within the last year. You recently provided information about yourself in an online questionnaire that you completed. The results of the study will be used in support of my thesis with funding from the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council*.

Objectives
Investigate the concept of recreation specialization in women's outdoor recreation experiences to develop deeper understandings of the processes that evoke individualistic differences in the framework.
Explore how women conceptualize their participation in outdoor recreation activities and the experiences that they have. An individual's degree of engagement in an outdoor recreation activity may place particular importance upon certain aspects of their participation.
Discuss how women perceive their engagement in outdoor recreation activities: How do women define their own outdoor recreation experience.
Determine if women feel that constraints impede their progression in an outdoor recreation activity and at specific points in participation.

Participants: 6-8 individuals from women's only outdoor recreation groups in Alberta

Scope: One online group session that will require 90 to 180 minutes.

What	Description	Duration
PART 1	OVERVIEW	
Introduction and project background	*Objective*: to introduce the facilitators and participants to create an inviting space to encourage discussion *The script* Introduction and background Introduce myself, including outdoor recreation interests, why this research is important to me, and my role as a primary supervisor The research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council *Informed consent and confidentiality* Going over the consent form entirely through screenshare functions of either Zoom/Google Meet *Project background* The overall goal of the research program is this focus group is part of is to understand more about Alberta women's outdoor recreation participation and engagement	15 minutes

Activity #1	Round Table Discussion of Participant Engagement	30 minutes
	Objective: Assess the overall engagement of participants in outdoor recreation How long have each of you been involved in the activity? Follow-up Questions • How did you get into the activity? • How frequently do you participate in the activity? • Do you see yourself continuing in this activity at a similar frequency/involvement? Follow-up Question • What sort of factors would prevent this? • What drew you to this activity? • What are some of your main motivations for participation? Think of the language	
Activity #2	Examining the Affective & Behavioural Dimension of Recreation Specialization	30 minutes
	How central is this activity in your life? Follow-up Questions • Which parts of your recreation experiences with/or in this activity are the most important for you? • Are you happy with the amount of time you current spend participating in the activity? • Where do you see yourself in this activity in the future? • Would this include supporting or encouraging other women? • Why/why not?	
Activity #3	Examining the Cognitive Dimension of Recreation Specialization	30 minutes
	How do you describe your skill level? Follow-up Questions • Do you want to improve your technical skills or learning about this activity? Do you ever attend skill-building courses or gain knowledge in other ways? Follow-up Questions • Is there a particular interest in attending women-focused workshops? • Why/why not?	
Activity #4	BREAK	10 minutes
Activity #5	Constraints	30 minutes
	Do you think being a woman has affected the way that you engage in the activity?	

	- Have you encountered anything that may stop you from participating in the activity? - How did this influence your ability to participate in outdoor recreation? - Are there any benefits from these groups that you feel you cannot obtain from other sources? - Do you feel the need to make sacrifices to participate in outdoor recreation? - Can you think of anything else that limits your engagement? Is your community important for your outdoor recreation? - Have you ever felt like you didn't belong in the outdoors? - If yes- where did this stem from? I.e., partners, social impacts, youth development, etc. - Do you think that your engagement differs based on who you participate with in the activity?	
Activity #6	Look at Potential Negotiation Constraints Participants Encounter	30 minutes
	Objective: Understand the role of groups as a constraint negotiation technique Why did you join a women's only outdoor recreation group? - Have you experienced differing treatment by others due to your gender? - What was this like? - Has this influenced the way you participate in your activity? - Do you have women in your life that inspire you in this activity? Follow-up Questions - Was there a significant event or experience that caused you to seek out these groups? - If no- were there any recurring constraints that limited your participation outside of these groups? - What are these like?	

APPENDIX H

Coding Examples

<u>Line-by-line Coding Examples</u>

Example 1

In reference to the question: Do you ever feel you need to make sacrifices to participate in outdoor recreation in your personal life or from other sources?

"Yeah, I think I can almost copy A's answer because I think that's like, the biggest drawback. It's very hard to find people who have the same schedule as you and who are also skilled as you. If that doesn't line up, you still want to go out with somebody like your friend. So, you kind of have to hold back a little bit. Or in some circumstances, you're working twice as hard to keep up with them. It's really hard to find the perfect Goldilocks option for scheduling and time without having to hold yourself back."

Possible coding: incompatible partner traits, limitations in skill development, constraint acceptance, interpersonal- scheduling conflict, pushing to the limit

---

Example 2

In reference to the question: is there anything else that you can think of that limits your engagement that we haven't talked about?

"Just in a domestic sense, you know, having a dog and feeling like you're the one responsible for a lot of that sort of like caregiving stuff, even just for an animal, and even though it's sort of equally shared. The responsibility falls maybe more on me sometimes because it's like "well you're better at taking care of the thing", you know what I mean? But that's not necessarily true, because anyone can feed and walk and water a dog. But sometimes those things transition to me more, even though it is what I would consider an equal partnership. So, I can imagine that, you know, the kid setting sort of translating."

Possible coding: domestic roles, frustration, societal expectations and norms, parenting, structural- lifestyle and at-home responsibilities

---

Example 3

In reference to the question: Do you ever take skill building courses?

"I've taken my avalanche training course which is required though- well it should be required. But definitely- like I'm signed up to take a biking course this summer actually. So [courses are] something that I seek out and would be interested in. Like M mentioned, price is definitely a factor for me. So other ways that I look to build my skills or outsource is just anything on YouTube or like blogs, I kind of self-research on stuff too."

Possible coding: constraint negotiation, strategies to gain skills, utilizing online resources, cognitive dimension, structural- expensive or limited resources

---