“I’M NOT A GIRLY-GIRL”: PERFORMANCES OF FEMININITY IN CAMPUS OUTDOOR RECREATION STAFF

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"What are you doing?" I looked up from where my razor was poised over my shin, making eye contact with my male coleader. "Nothing," I quickly replied as I put the razor down. Hot shame at being caught dry shaving my legs in a tent washed over me. It was day three of a week-long whitewater canoe trip I was leading with two male coworkers. Our group was made up of eleven incoming freshmen at the College of William and Mary. I had been able to secretly shave each morning as I took my getting ready shift while camp was broken down, but now I was caught. "Hey, come here! See what Anne's doing!" Great. Now it was going to be shared amongst the staff. I was teased for the rest of the trip by both my co-leaders and participants.

As a woman in the outdoors, I feel constantly torn between societal expectations in the front country and the pressure to be outdoorsy enough in the back country. I was shaving my legs because it had been drilled into my mind since I was a child that it was disgusting and dirty for women to have hair on their bodies. I was certain that if I didn't shave, I would face criticism and demeaning comments. Shaving, however, was too girly, too prissy to be a part of the outdoors. I was to be *magically hairless* – the perfect outdoorswoman who was simultaneously independent and rugged, but not *too* rugged…-or that wasn't cute. When I was caught shaving and mercilessly teased about it, a message was sent not only to me but to every single woman participant on that trip about what was acceptable and what was not in that space. It wasn't about packing too heavy or taking up too much time. It was about not being outdoors in the "right" way, and specifically, about how to perform gender in the outdoors.

Long after the trip was over, that experience and the countless others like it echoed in the back of my mind. I constantly questioned if I was doing my gender in the outdoors the "right way" as a woman, but even when I wasn't actively participating in outdoor pursuits these questions haunted me:

> *If I wore a dress to my job in a restaurant, did that negate my tomboy-ness? Was I allowed to paint my nails and still be considered a climber? After all, what's the point of a manicure on the wall? Did I need to wear quick dry pants all the time? If I wear earrings, will I be seen as too girly? Will they listen to me? What if I run into one of my co-leaders between classes and I'm wearing makeup? What if they see me out on a date dressed up? Am I still allowed to drink wine or is it all beer for me now? What if I like showering and staying relatively clean when I go camping? But what if I smell bad?*

These thoughts and more dictated how I navigated my own performance of femininity for over a decade, constantly feeling the need to prove myself worthy of this field as a woman even when I wasn't actively participating in outdoor pursuits. I had been made to believe that my femininity was a burden to be eschewed, to ensure that I was "not like other girls" but was a true tomboy, worthy of working in the outdoor field.

Performing Gender "Correctly"

Because of experiences such as this mine, femininity in the outdoors and the gendered expectations of men versus women has long been the subject of research. From the earliest experiences of adolescent girls that shape their relationship with and perception of the outdoors (Culp, 1998; Gray, 2016; Whittington, 2006) to the experiences had and messaging received by adult women in the outdoors (Ceurvorst et al., 2018; Frauman & Washam, 2013; Glotfelty, 1996;

Humberstone, 2000; Knapp, 1985; Newbery, 2004; Stuart, 2022; Warren & Loeffler, 2006), and how those experiences then influence women outdoor leaders and their careership (Allen-Craig et al., 2020; Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Delay & Dyment, 2003; Gray et al., 2020; Rogers & Rose, 2019; Wittmer, 2001), there have been an abundance of studies exploring how girls and women experience and perceive their role in the outdoors. Gender role congruity theory (Wittmer, 2001) highlights how those who perform within their specific gender roles are regarded more highly than those who seek to break those barriers. While sex is biological, gender is socially and culturally constructed and is deeply entwined with our personal expression of identity and personality development (Bell, 1997; Humberstone, 2000). Gender is often defined in the terms of "masculinity" or "femininity", and we are judged based on how well we perform within those categories (Humberstone, 2000). Judith Butler's theory of performativity goes so far as to say that the social construction of gender is created by the very process of performing gender (Newbury, 2004). According to Whittington (2006) "femininity refers to the characteristics that are associated with being female" (p. 206), so, conversely, masculinity can be understood as the characteristics associated with being male. Characteristics that are generally assigned as masculine include competitiveness, logical thinking, achieving, risk taking, leading, aggressive, assertive, active, ambitious, task oriented, decisive, independent, taking initiative, dominating, and controlled (Knapp, 1993). Characteristics generally assigned as feminine include caring, dependent or interdependent, nurturing, passive, cooperating, empathetic, yielding, gentle, emotional, self-sacrificing, intuitive, and giving (Knapp, 1993). Female identifying persons (hereafter referred to as "women") often perform their femininity by taking on more caring roles, deferring to men, and putting themselves in positions to give of themselves (Humberstone, 2000). Male identifying persons (hereafter referred to as "men"), on the other

hand, often perform their masculinity by taking on positions of leadership, assuming risks, and engaging in competitive pursuits. Those who do not perform within those roles are harshly judged, seen as incorrect, or face negative social, emotional, or physical consequences. Frequently, the differences in masculinity and femininity and accurately performing gender are held in much higher regard and focus than any similarities the two may share (Humberstone, 2000). Too often, men and women are depicted as monoliths, completely homogeneously, which is not congruent with the complexity of human nature (Newbery, 2004). While many believe that the issues of sexism, especially in outdoor spaces that value diversity and inclusion, are resolved, it is very apparent that they are not (Gray, 2016).

Gender Performance in the Outdoors

The pressure to perform gender "correctly" is especially pervasive in spheres of active pursuits, such as sports or the outdoors (Allen-Craig, 2020; Delay & Dyment, 2003; Gray et al., 2020; Humberstone, 2000; Krane et al., 2004; Rogers & Rose, 2019; Stuart, 2022; Warren & Loeffler, 2006). Many women in these fields feel as though they must live between two cultures. Society encourages and celebrates traditional performances of femininity, while the field of sports and outdoor or adventure pursuits uphold the traditionally masculine (Krane, 2004). Specifically, within the experiential education field, women must navigate constantly conflicting messages about how to perform their femininity or keep it under wraps to be seen as legitimate. Women must continuously mediate conflicting definitions of what it means to participate in the outdoors, particularly if they are pursuing positions of leadership (Warren & Loeffler, 2006). From a young age, we are often taught that being "sporty" or "outdoorsy" is in direct conflict with femininity and what it means to be a "real" woman (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Culp, 1998; Krane, 2004). While that perception has started to shift in recent

years, hegemonic masculinity is still prevalent in most outdoor spaces. Young girls and grown women alike who are participants and leaders in the outdoor and experiential education field have often eschewed traditional femininity, stating that they aren't "conventionally girly" or "girly-girls," preferring to instead define themselves as "tomboys" or "outdoorsy girls." They frequently distance themselves from things like dressing up in traditionally feminine clothing, wearing makeup, or concerning themselves with painting their nails (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Culp, 1998). As they continue to pursue the outdoor industry, these ideas are reinforced both implicitly and explicitly, and women are forced to navigate the pressure to remain feminine and fill feminine roles in outdoor settings while living with the reality that masculine traits and behaviors are much more highly regarded in the outdoor and experiential education field (Gray, 2016; Warren & Loeffler, 2006). Many women resign themselves to maintaining traditionally feminine behaviors because of the lower social risk associated with performing their gender in alignment with societal ideals of femininity (Warren & Loeffler, 2006). Other women choose to align themselves with more traditionally masculine traits and disposition, making the decision to wholly cast-off femininity to fit into a male-dominated environment (Allin & Humberstone, 2006).

There is No Winning: Contradictory Feedback

These feelings of internal conflict are reinforced through contradictory feedback given when women act as leaders on outdoor programs. Participant and supervisor feedback when women perform with traditionally feminine traits is often negative and harsh (Gray, 2016). On the other hand, when women perform more masculine roles, they receive even harsher feedback, and oftentimes they are still receiving incredibly gendered feedback about being "nurturing" or "caring" even when they purposely did not display those traits (Rogers & Rose, 2019). Women

are constantly receiving feedback that they are both too feminine and too masculine to perform in the outdoors (Gray et al., 2020; Newbery, 2004). For example, a participant in a study by Newbery (2004) recalls

> *"It really came home to me how much I had felt oppressed how much it feels like to be respected here…you have to be hard, strong, masculine and a woman but that any of the feminine traits…softness, flowing, colours…reveals a weakness perhaps. Like we are all trying so hard to prove we can do it and be feminine and being women, we are proving we can be a 'guy'"* (p. 44)

Until now, the majority of studies focused on women in the outdoors emphasize barriers to entry and sexism and misogyny faced once in the outdoors and the behaviors that both women and men display in response to this (e.g. comments on technical skill level, judgement of appearance, questioning of judgement and ability, etc.). Additionally, most research is based around women while they are in the outdoors rather than digging into what external or internal factors may be present in day-to-day life. Furthermore, while there have been many studies about women working in outdoor recreation programs, very little research is centered specifically around campus outdoor recreation programming at the collegiate level. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how women professionals in campus outdoor recreation programs perform their femininities at work.

Importance of Campus Outdoor Recreation

College is one of the most transformative times for many young people, where they begin to develop their personal identity, explore different intellectual and career paths, and solidify their belief and value systems (Blimling, 2010). During this period of their lives, college students

experience a rapid period of growth and development both socially and intellectually, with students embracing this as a time to find themselves and determine what their future personal and career paths will look like (Blimling, 2010). This is a uniquely formative time in the lives of many, and the experiences that they have during college are ones that they will carry with them throughout their lives. Campus recreation programs have been shown to be foils for growth and development among both participants and student staff, helping them build meaningful relationships, develop communication skills, and acquire transferable skills (Felty & Liu, 2024).

Campus outdoor recreation programs in particular have been proven to have long-term benefits for students who participate in them, including 1) positive impacts on participant health and wellness outcomes; 2) development of participants' prosocial connection and interpersonal skills; 3) increasing support for colleges' and universities' environmental goals by increasing participant engagement with and care for the natural world; 4) improvement of students' academic performance; 5) providing leadership opportunities that help with job acquisition post-graduation; and 6) aiding in the development of transferrable and marketable skills such as team work, problem solving, and self-efficacy (Andre et al., 2017; Boettcher & Gansemer-Topf, 2015). Campus outdoor recreation programs are equally beneficial to both men and women participants with women rating all benefits to participation higher than the ratings of male participants, however, women participants also rated constraints to participation more highly than male participants, most significantly concerns about being fit enough, confidence in the outdoors, and fear of injury. For many students, participation in campus outdoor recreation programs is their first interaction with outdoor recreation as a field, and the experiences that they have during these programs can shape how they navigate the outdoor space going forward (Ceurvorst et al., 2018).

Campus outdoor recreation programs have also been heavily studied as leadership development tools for student staff (Boettcher & Gansemer-Topf, 2015; Sandberg et al., 2017; Toperzer et al., 2011). These studies have demonstrated that working in a campus outdoor recreation program as a student staff member provides a wide range of benefits and development opportunities to both male and female employees, however, in one of the few available studies comparing the experiences of male versus female outdoor program staff, Frauman and Washam (2013) found that program staff were significantly more comfortable filling traditional gendered roles when leading outdoor programs even amongst graduate and professional level staff members. Male staff members reported significantly higher confidence levels in eleven out of nineteen possible technical or "hard" skills while female staff reported higher confidence in 38 of 62 skills with the majority of those being interpersonal or "soft" skills. The study also examined the attitudes of program staff towards each other and both female and male staff reported a lack of confidence in other female leaders, notably that they were not assertive or confident enough as leaders. (Frauman & Washam, 2013). One survey respondent event recalled a male supervisor advising a female student staff member to "be more of a bitch" to gain the respect and attention of the group (Frauman & Washam, 2013, p. 122). This study did not, however, include any space for any of the program staff to share why they felt comfortable filling some roles over others. In a study of women outdoor leaders in higher education, all the women who were part of the study explored their own experiences as students and staff of campus outdoor recreation programs. All of these women noted that as participants, they looked to female leaders for cues on how to behave in the outdoors and as staff members sought mentorship from more seasoned female leaders. These women also all shared stories of gendered experiences while in the field, particularly around how male leaders often doubted their abilities, relegated them to gendered

roles, and taught them more about how not to be a leader than how to lead (Rogers, 2018). While these stories highlight gendered experiences in one college outdoor recreation program, this research is still extremely limited. These narratives are powerful and important; however, they do not touch at all on the subject of femininity and how women's views of themselves and choice in how to present themselves at work may be impacted by their gendered experiences in this space. Furthermore, none of the cited studies root themselves in traditional presentations and performances of femininity, through actions, behaviors, and appearance, and how women in these spaces choose to resist or reinforce those presentations through their individual performance of femininity. Additionally, there is very little focus specifically on the experiences of women student staff and how they navigate this male dominated space.

Given the gap in literature and the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of women's experiences in the outdoors on their performance of femininity in the campus outdoor recreation workplace, the purpose of this study was to utilize collective memory work to examine how women student professionals in campus recreation programs perform their femininities at work. I addressed these ideas by asking the following questions:

1. How do women working in campus outdoor recreation programs perform their femininities at work?
2. How do performances of femininity in campus outdoor recreation affirm or contest hegemonic femininity?

In the next chapter, I outline the literature surrounding women in the outdoors, including exploring feminist performance theory, gendered experiences in the outdoors for all participants, the impacts of women outdoor leaders, and explore gaps in the literature.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the rise of the feminist movement, there has been increasing focus on women in the outdoors, particularly on the barriers that they face to entry and feelings of misogyny and sexism once they are initiated to the space (Glotfelty, 1996). The present literature that is centered around women in the outdoors has done a significant amount of work digging into the social and societal reasons that women are not entering the outdoors and the challenges they face once they get there. Society has long told women either subtly or overtly that their place is indoors or in more traditionally feminine settings away from the danger and adventure of the wilderness (Allen-Craig, 2020; Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Bell, 1997; Gray, 2016; Humberstone, 2000; Knapp, 1985; McNeil et al., 2012; Warren & Loeffler, 2006; Wittmer, 2001). Women in outdoor leadership roles face even larger barriers and pushback from their male counterparts, participants, and supervisors (Allen-Craig, 2020; Delay & Dyment, 2003; Gray et al., 2020; Newbery, 2004). Much of this research is focused on women in outdoor spaces with the goal of empowerment and resistance (Meyer & Borrie, 2013). Concurrently, but almost entirely separately, there has been abundant research into campus outdoor recreation programs ranging from benefits for students, student staff, and administrators to causes for turnover rates to leadership development and beyond (Andre et al., 2017; Bell, 2022; Bower, 2004; Christie, 2018; Deringer, 2012; Hall & Jostad, 2020; Sandberg et al., 2017; Waller et al., 2015; Yerkes, 1984). These studies highlight many of the factors that influence the culture surrounding campus outdoor recreation, and some even focus on gender disparities for both participants and staff. What is missing, though, is an intersection of these studies – a critical examination of gendered experiences surrounding expression of femininity in the campus outdoor recreation sphere and

their impact on women student professionals in the campus recreation industry, particularly their feelings towards their own feminine physical expression and presentation.

I will begin this literature review with an overview of feminist performance theory, placing the study within this theoretical framework. Next, I will take a deeper dive into the experiences of women in the outdoors, focusing on gendered experiences that have influenced their perception and expression of femininity. From there, I will take some time to delve into campus recreation – what it is, its benefits, and current research. Finally, I will explore what studies have currently been conducted on the intersection of the two, what that research has found, and what is missing.

Feminist Performance Theory

While often spoken of as parallel things, sex and gender are not inherently linked to one another (Butler, 1988; Goffman, 1976; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Sex refers to our anatomy, hormones, and physicality upon birth and is intrinsically linked to our physical bodies (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Gender is a much more fluid concept, and how we discuss gender, including what gender means and how we determine it as individuals and as a society, has evolved over time. Goffman (1976) first proposed the "sex category" as a link between sex and gender. He argues that, at birth, we are assigned a sex based on an agreed upon biological criteria and then, based on that sex determination, placed into a sex category. Sex category is automatically assigned based on sex, and each sex category has an inherent set of traits, behaviors, and values that are assigned to it. He posits that gender is then a conscious or subconscious act of conducting oneself in a way that fits into the normative ideals of activities, attitudes, and behaviors that are appropriate for the given sex category – man or woman (1976). This theory is

referred to as dramaturgy, a nod to the fact that members of society are just performers, putting on acts to perform or behave in normative, expected ways (Goffman, 1976).

Even before Goffman made his claims, Simone de Beauvoir argues in *The Second Sex* that gender is not a natural fact of the body, but rather a historical and cultural situation and context (1991). She argues that, while you may be born female, you are not born a woman. You are molded into and become a woman through societal and cultural expectations placed upon those assigned female at birth (Beauvoir, 1991). These ideas are so engrained in our society and culture, however, that sex and gender are perceived as inextricably linked to one another (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Even the most fundamental roles in our society, such as being a mother, are arguably not inherently linked to sex but instead created by societal expectations of females to be caretakers (Butler, 1988; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

The theory of performativity states that gender is not inherent but is instead constructed through performances that fit specific expectations placed upon men and women. Furthermore, gender is purely performative, meaning that gender is only real as it is being performed and there are no inherent masculine and feminine qualities (Butler, 1988; West & Zimmerman, 1987). The continuous performance of gender by individuals is what perpetuates the existence of gender (Butler, 1988). Thus, gender is "an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" over time (Butler, 1988, p. 519). The goal of this performance is survival (Butler, 1988; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Those who perform their gender correctly are rewarded with acceptance into society, while those who shirk their gender roles are ostracized or worse (Butler, 1988). These gender roles are not just performed by individuals, but also further reinforced by looking for and policing that same correct performance in others (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Performing

gender correctly is a "performative accomplishment" (p. 520) in society, and not performing that gender is seen as taboo (Butler, 1988).

The exploration of gender and gender performance is rooted in critical feminist theory. Feminist theory aims to take individual experiences and apply them to society on the whole, clarifying personal situations and experiences by situating them within a broader context (Butler, 1988). Performative gender theory argues that individual actions and performances in and of themselves create the concept of gender and thus define what is masculine and what is feminine (Butler, 1988; West & Zimmerman, 1987). The creation of gender in society casts not only behaviors and physical presentations, but also particular interests and active pursuits as inherently masculine or feminine in nature (West & Zimmerman, 1987). How then are women who work in the outdoors expected to perform and behave when they are being held hostage by societal ideas of femininity while existing in a traditionally masculine environment?

Socialization & Traditional Ideas of Femininity

Gender is socially constructed, and thus, masculinity and femininity are also driven by our societal discourse and culture. Women in the U.S. are constantly being given cues by Western society about what it means to be feminine and to perform femininity "correctly." Many studies have explored the messaging and societal cues given to young girls and women in this context (e.g. Glotfelty, 1996). Often these ideas are contradictory, especially when outdoor and adventure culture are added to the equation. Starting from a young age, girls are given completely different messaging from boys about what they are capable of with boys being encouraged to explore nature and the environment around them while girls are kept apart from risk (Delay & Dyment, 2003). Growing up, young women are taught that athleticism and the outdoors are in direct contrast to femininity (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010). One adolescent female

participant interviewed in a study by Culp (1998) when speaking about opportunities that young women were given to participate in outdoor activities stated that her brother always got to go camping because her father assumed "girls like staying home and primping their hair" (p. 370). An adult woman who has been working in the outdoor industry for over twenty years stated in an interview with Allin & Humberstone (2006) that she was always called a "tomboy" growing up because of her love for being outdoors. Words such as "tomboy" and "girly girl" are pervasive throughout discussions with both adolescent girls and adult women about participating in the outdoors and their comfort level with such things. Many of them group themselves as participatory (the tomboys) or not at all interested (the girly girls), with very few individuals defining themselves using both masculine and feminine traits (Allin & Humberstone, 2006). In interviews with collegiate athletes, many of them spoke about being "sporty" and "outdoorsy" in direct opposition to "girly" things with examples given like dressing up and painting their nails (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010). Through these interviews, it's glaringly apparent that the idea of the outdoors and sport being only for men is engrained very early on, and that those who choose to participate must do so in an acceptably feminine way or risk derision from peers.

These ideas continue into adulthood, with many women perceiving the "outdoors as a contradictory space of freedom and struggle for women" (Newbery, 2004, p.34). Outside of outdoor spaces, women face constant pressure to perform their femininity both in behavior and appearance. Once they are in the outdoors, they are told to leave that outward femininity behind because it is seen as weak, but when they appear and perform in masculine ways, they face derision from participants, colleagues, and supervisors (Gray et al., 2020). As participants, many women have expressed discomfort participating in outdoor activities in mixed-gender groups because of men performing traditional masculinity in a way that is harmful to women's feeling of

acceptance and place in the outdoors as well as the lack of comfort at expressing their apprehension and challenges with men present, preventing the creation of a sense of community amongst the group. They have also expressed feeling judged for not maintaining appearances (not shaving legs, greasy hair, etc.) and being perceived as not being able to contribute physically to the group (Newbery, 2004; Welsh et al., 2020). Women in mixed gender groups have expressed that they find themselves automatically deferring to the men of the group when it comes to things like portaging canoes or lifting heavy packs without even trying first themselves (Welsh et al., 2020). Women participating in mixed gender outdoor experiences also often chosen to perform traditionally feminine roles to avoid navigating social stigmas (Warren & Loeffler, 2016).

Beyond societal messaging, women are often influenced by those within the outdoor culture to perform their femininity in certain ways or embrace masculinity. Glotfelty (1996) critically examined messaging in women's backpacking guides from the rise of the feminist movement. In contrast to the men's and unisex guides, women's guides took on a much different tone, trying to encourage women to go into the outdoors while warning them of the potential dangers. Across different guides, and even sometimes within the same guide, there was blatantly contradictory information about how much traditional femininity they should retain in the outdoors. In the same guide, they praise throwing off the confines of the home and family and breaking free from the shackles of traditional femininity while also giving tips on how many different cute ways you can use a bandana or how to distract from the unsightly hiking boots you must wear (Glotfelty, 1996). In a much more recent study by McNeil et al. (2012), researchers critically examined advertisements in outdoor magazines through a lens of gender socialization. Only 46% of all advertisements depicted women at all, and, of those, very few actually depicted

women actively engaging in outdoor recreation. Most ads that depicted women were for vacation locations or clothing, not technical gear or adventure pursuits. When they were participating, it was in "clean" ways such as hiking and camping while smiling or appearing pleasant. This contrasts with ads depicting men dirty and rugged, scaling mountains alone or conquering whitewater. Additionally, most of the women depicted pursuing high-adrenaline or technical outdoor pursuits were professional athletes who were named and a backstory given. This sends the message to women that these women who participate in outdoor adventure are special, have unique characteristics that other women do not, and are not to be considered a normal or achievable woman (McNeil et al., 2012). While these guides and advertisements are not overtly telling women that they are not made to exist in the outdoors, there is subtle messaging about the "right" way to do it. This feeling of not belonging in the outdoors is only exacerbated as women who do follow adventurous pursuits are constantly compared to men engaging in the same activities.

Women vs Men: The Creation and Upholding of a Binary Power Structure

"The ideologies of femininity…thus 'work' by making the values incorporated into the ideas about what constitutes a 'real' woman, which are different from and inferior to those that constitute a 'real' man, appear natural and rational" (Humberstone, 2000, p. 25). During the instances when women do enter the outdoors, they are seen as the "other" and "lesser" rather than the standard and are constantly rated against and compared to men (Allen-Craig et al., 2020; Glotfelty, 1996). Even when the messaging is positive, such as telling girls or women that they can do anything that their male counterparts can do, they are being compared directly to masculine figures in the same situation (Allen-Craig et al., 2020). This leads yet again to the internalization of the outdoors as a masculine space that women must perform appropriately to fit

into as well as a consistent "othering" of the opposite gender, placing men and women, and therefore masculinity and femininity, constantly at odds. When women achieve to the same standard as men, they are held in much lower regard, whereas men may receive heaps of praise for that same accomplishment (Gray, 2016). To even begin to be judged as equals, women must consistently out-perform men in technical skills as well as in interpersonal skills (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Wright & Gray, 2013). If women perform traditionally masculine behaviors, they are judged harshly, however, when men take on traditionally feminine leadership styles and behaviors, they are praised (Rogers & Ross, 2019). This policing of behavior does not include derisive comments about outward appearances of femininity, such as wearing colors perceived as feminine, painting nails, or donning makeup, or the contemptuous comments about not outwardly performing femininity such as not shaving legs or wearing baggier clothing (Gray et al., 2020). When placed in leadership positions, women often encounter dismissiveness from male participants, particularly when leading with a male co-leader (Allen-Craig et al., 2020; Gray et al., 2020; Newbery, 2004). This is particularly prominent when women perform their femininity through appearance (Gray et al., 2020). Women are regularly passed over for leadership positions in experiential and outdoor education when in competition with a man, even if he is decisively less qualified (Allen-Craig et al., 2020). All of this combined reinforces the idea that women are not as impressive because of their inherent femininity.

Performance of Femininity in the Outdoors

Many young girls and women are hesitant to even refer to themselves as "outdoorsy" because it is so often painted in stark contrast to the ideal performance of femininity that society has constructed (Culp, 1998). While in the outdoors, women are expected to perform their femininity appropriately while not acting too femininely. There is a stereotype of women in the

outdoors as a “masculinized superwoman” who can and must outperform the men, making the outdoors appear as though it is not the place for your everyday woman, and absolutely not the place for female leadership (Delay & Dyment, 2003). Throughout all of these studies, there are two key ways identified that women perform their femininity in the outdoors: through behavior and through appearance.

Behavior

Women in the outdoors consistently receive the messaging that certain outdoor activities, particularly those seen as more technically or physically challenging, are not for them, and if they do participate, they must behave “correctly” while participating (Warren & Loeffler, 2006; Delay & Dyment, 2003). Especially when it comes to leadership in the outdoors, a traditional leadership style that connects more with traditionally male gender socialization wherein one person holds the primary power while others fall in line is more highly regarded than a more cooperative or empathetic leadership style that aligns more closely with feminine gender socialization (Delay & Dyment, 2003; Jordan, 1992). While many outdoor programs promote cooperation and teamwork, the focus is almost always on the participants gaining these skills. There is always at least one leader who is calling the ultimate shots. When a man and woman are leading a group together, no matter who the primary, more skilled, or more knowledgeable leader is, participants more often than not defer to the male leader as the ultimate authority. This holds true even when the male leader actively takes a step back and the female leader is very obviously the one in charge (Rogers & Rose, 2019). Furthermore, when working in pairs or teams, both male and female outdoor leaders expressed a lower level of confidence in female co-leaders even if they rated their own skills highly (Frauman & Washam, 2013).

Delay & Dyment's (2003) work focuses on how to make wilderness leadership more gender-inclusive, highlighting nine pieces of a toolkit to make leadership in the outdoors more equitable. Of their nine suggestions, five of them pertain to the behavior of men and women and its perception by participants and other leaders. Many of the concepts either focus on more androgyny in leadership with both men and women breaking out of socially constructed gender roles or embracing more traditionally feminine behaviors such as empathy and listening. (Delay & Dyment, 2003). Even in more progressive literature, women and men are regarded as homogenous monoliths rather than embracing the nuance of each individual. Additionally, all of these suggestions pertain solely to work in the outdoors and what can be done during programming, which is arguably a smaller portion of women in experiential education leadership roles' lives than the day-to-day interactions that reinforce these behaviors.

Women having to make the choice between traditionally feminine and traditionally masculine behaviors doesn't just apply to leadership positions. Many studies have explored the role of a mixed gender versus an all-female group on groups of people participating in an outdoor activity such as a group hike or paddle. Rogers & Rose (2019) found that in mixed gender groups, women either try to overcompensate in technical skills and take on a more masculine leadership and communication style or they'll step firmly into their socialized roles – setting up camp, cooking dinner, etc. Women who do try to take on more technical roles or try to learn new skills are often faced with derision from male instructors or counterparts (Little, 2002).

Women's behavior both as leaders and individuals is constantly being policed either as too feminine or not feminine enough. Through feedback from peers and participants, or even external policing that may have done its work long before women even considered the outdoors, women are monitoring and adjusting their behavior in the outdoors to fit what is expected of

them (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Jordan, 1992; Little, 2002; Rogers & Rose, 2014; Wittmer, 2001). These gender dynamics and resulting behaviors are some of the most widely studied phenomena in the outdoor and adventure education arena with the studies listed and many more exploring behavioral outcomes of societal pressures on female outdoor professionals. Far fewer studies explore the topic of appearance and feminine presentation of female experiential education professionals both in the outdoors and in their day to day lives.

Appearance

Less commonly studied is women's expression of their femininity through appearance in the outdoors and the reasons behind women's chosen physical expression. One of the key components of traditional femininity is maintaining a physical expression of femininity whether that's keeping nails done, dressing in the latest fashions, wearing makeup, or other traditionally "girly" things. This expression of femininity, however, is perceived negatively in outdoor settings (Gray, 2020; Newbery, 2004). Even other women in the experiential education industry speak negatively about femininity in either overt or hidden ways. For example, Whittington (2006) says that "femininity includes a preoccupation with beauty" (p. 208), which is not an outright condemnation of femininity but can reasonably be perceived as negative and even condescending towards women who focus on their appearance. Another female leader in campus outdoor recreation programs when describing her time working as a park ranger expressed her frustration that a male colleague described her as being too soft and girly because of her painted toenails. Her outrage was not necessarily at being described as soft and girly, but because he didn't question her motivation for painting her toenails, which were black and bruised from marathon running, which, in her mind, was an "acceptable" reason to be painting them (Christie, 2018). A participant in Newbery's (2004) study of hegemonic gender identity in Outward Bound

programs noted “the rules change regarding appearance but are nonetheless rigidly enforced” (p. 44). This holds true for both co-ed and female only outdoors programs (Rogers & Rose, 2019).

Women often choose to tamp down their femininity while in the outdoors or participating in adventurous pursuits because of negative comments and policing from those around them, particularly men. Even female athletes, who face many of the same pressures as women in the outdoors, describe toning down their femininity or regretting presenting in a traditionally feminine way during sporting events because of negative or derogatory comments from others. One female athlete noted that something as simple as wearing a pink jacket drew ire and rude comments from male spectators and coaches (Gray, 2020). Krane (2004) found that, despite potentially negative commentary, female athletes still felt immense societal pressure to present a feminine image while competing.

This phenomenon is paralleled in the outdoor industry through guidebooks that focus on women’s appearance, programs that are specifically designed to break down ideas of femininity, and the culture around needing to be “grungy” to be seen as legitimate in the outdoors (Delay & Dyment, 2003; Glotfelty, 1996; Newbery, 2004; Whittington, 2006). In a critical examination of women’s backpacking guides, Glotfelty (1996) noted that in female-focused books, there were always large sections about how to maintain an attractive physical appearance in the outdoors with tips for how to tie your bandana and the best way to style your clothes to distract from the unsightly hiking boots that you’re unfortunately required to wear. Rarely, though, is the focus of this traditionally feminine appearance centered around the woman herself and her feelings of comfort or confidence. The focus is primarily on impressing those that she may encounter along the way (Glotfelty, 1996).

These guidebooks, however, did little to change the view of femininity's place in the outdoors. Many modern outdoor trips and programs that are facilitated for and by women have a strong overtone of casting off traditional femininity and leaving your girliness at the door. Even trips that promote women's empowerment are quick to quash femininity with one Outward Bound participant stating, "you could never wear makeup…you would have been completely chastised" (Newbery, 2004, p. 44). Feminine appearance is often framed as impractical in the outdoors with little to no nuance about the different ways that femininity can be physically expressed (Delay & Dyment, 2003; Newbery, 2004). On the same trips that Newbery's (2004) participants describe feeling chastised for presenting femininely, they also comment that they often felt shamed as people stared at or even commented on their unshaven legs or unkempt hair. No matter how a woman presents in the outdoors she seems to be doing it incorrectly. This is ingrained at a young age, particularly for girls who participate in outdoor programming designed for and about young women. Many of these programs seek to break down the traditional views of femininity, and many girls leave the experience with different views about beauty and hygiene standards, with some going so far as to saying it improved their body image and relationship with food (Whittington, 2006). While many of these outcomes from female-only programs for young girls are undisputedly positive, few of these programs approach the issue of feminine physical expression with a balanced view. There is little space given to encourage girls and young women to embrace their femininity while also occupying outdoor spaces.

Campus Outdoor Recreation

Many women who work or recreate in the outdoors can trace their interest and passion back to either childhood experiences or trips in early adulthood with programs from early adulthood having been experienced during their time at college or university (Wright & Gray,

2013). College is a time of self-discovery for young adults where both undergraduate and graduate students explore self-definition, freedom, and authenticity (Deringer, 2012). This is often a time when young adults are given their first taste of authentic choice, allowing them to become aware of past systems that shaped who they have been up until this point and creating pathways towards self-discovery (Andre et al., 2017; Deringer, 2012). One of the first and most important choices of young adulthood is whether to attend college, and, if so, which institution of higher education to attend. Studies have shown that campus recreation in general is important to college students, and the availability of campus recreation programs as well as the quality of those programs can greatly influence a prospective student's choice of college or university as well as whether to continue at that institution once enrolled (Andre et al., 2017). Campus outdoor recreation programs can have a significant impact on student wellbeing and provide unique challenges and leadership opportunities that lead to personal growth (Andre et al., 2017; Deringer, 2012; Waller et al., 2015).

While I was unable to find an exact count of how many colleges and universities across the United States offer campus outdoor recreation programs, a census of outdoor orientation programs showed that, as of 2020, 212 colleges and universities offered outdoor orientation programs, which are almost exclusively offered through campus outdoor recreation staff (Bell, 2022). It would stand to reason that there are likely 200+ campus outdoor recreation programs through a larger campus recreation system across the US. For the purpose of this study, I will define campus outdoor recreation as "any outdoor recreation activities sponsored by a college, university, or associated auxiliary unit" (Andre et al., 2017, p. 16). Specifically, I will be focusing on non-academic campus outdoor recreation programming that is facilitated through a

larger campus recreation organization that may include other departments such as intramurals, fitness classes, and aquatics.

Benefits of Campus Recreation Programs

There are significant benefits to students of all gender identities from participating in campus outdoor recreation programs either as student participants or as student staff. It has been shown time and again that spending time recreating in the outdoors provides long term physical and mental health benefits, and campus outdoor recreation programs give students a safe and accessible way to take advantage of those benefits (Andre et al., 2017; Welsh et al., 2020). Incoming student orientation programs, which have been steadily increasing since 2005, are seen by most participants as a transitional experience, preparing students to take their next step and establishing long-term relationships with other students, staff, and often the outdoors in general (Bell, 2022; Deringer, 2012). Campus outdoor recreation programs have been proven to increase self-esteem and mood amongst participants as well as help alleviate the stress of academia (Andre et al., 2017). Additionally, campus outdoor recreation programs facilitate sense of place and social connection amongst participants, reducing levels of social anxiety and increasing group and teamworking abilities (Andre et al., 2017; Deringer, 2012). Challenges have been proven to help shape our vision and definition of who we are as people, and outdoor experiences such as those facilitated through campus outdoor recreation provide participants with those experiences in a setting that is designed for and proven to facilitate growth (Deringer, 2012).

Beyond the benefits to all participants, campus outdoor recreation programs provide a unique opportunity to student staff at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Campus recreation is driven largely by student employees across all departments, making it one of the largest employers of students in college and university settings, and giving students a unique

growth opportunity and taste of what a career in recreation may look like (Toperzer et al., 2011). Campus outdoor recreation programs are focused on developing leadership traits and qualities amongst their student staff, setting them up for long term success in the job market either within our outside of outdoor recreation careers by providing long-term transferable job skills (Andre et al., 2017; Sandberg et al., 2017; Toperzer et al., 2011).

Women in Campus Outdoor Recreation

One of the key demographics who can benefit most from campus outdoor recreation programs is women staff and participants. College-aged women often feel a diminished sense of control and empowerment (Welsh et al., 2020). Outdoor programming has proven to create conditions and contexts that can give women a greater sense of empowerment and agency over their lives, particularly in an all-women setting and with empowered women role-models (Waller et al., 2015; Welsh et al., 2020). Campus outdoor recreation programs have also been proven to be a door to greater experience with outdoor recreation beyond the program attended, with participants often engaging with other aspects of outdoor or approximate outdoor recreation, such as participating in a guided canoe trip then visiting the campus rock wall (Welsh et al., 2020). These experiences can be pivotal in how a woman sees and defines herself as a capable and empowered human being, capable of and driven to eschew societal expectations of her gender performance (Meyer & Borrie, 2013; Welsh et al., 2020). Despite the proven benefits to women from campus outdoor recreation programming, women still face significant challenges when pursuing a career in campus outdoor recreation.

While the number of women studying and working in campus recreation has been increasing steadily since the 1970's, likely due to Title IX, the proportion of men to women in campus recreation leadership positions still skews largely towards men (Waller et al., 2015).

Furthermore, even with more women entering the field, the vast majority of lecturers and program administrators in both academic and non-academic campus outdoor recreation programs are still male (Christie, 2018). In a 2015 study of 357 women administrators working in campus recreation, Waller et al. found that "the two biggest challenges women face in the career advancement were the lack of female role models and lack of mentors" (p. 24). Women who do enter the campus outdoor recreation field face similar challenges to women in the outdoors in general, but the struggle is compounded by the setting of higher education and academia, which presents its own set of challenges to women (Christie, 2018; Wright & Gray, 2013).

Gendered expectations of performance begin for women campus outdoor recreation staff long before they become leaders or administrators in the field. In a 2013 study of university outdoor program staff, women staff expressed a sense of stress surrounding the competitive outdoor culture prevalent in the industry (Frauman & Washam, 2013). Further, even undergraduate staff members who are fairly new to the outdoor recreation career field followed gender lines when rating their comfort and confidence with technical versus interpersonal skills, with men consistently rating their comfort much higher than women for technical skills and vice versa for interpersonal (Frauman & Washam, 2013). Additionally, both men and women expressed a lower level of confidence in a female co-leader, even when women rate confidence in themselves highly, pointing to a biased view towards women's performance and allowing them a lower chance of success (Frauman & Washam, 2013).

The trends that begin as student staff following women professionals throughout their careers, with men regularly questioning the belonging of women in the field and undermining their authority and confidence. One advanced professional in the campus outdoor recreation field recalled attending a conference with a male colleague during which he asked her "Don't you feel

like a fraud? You don't really do this kind of stuff do you?" (Christie, 2018, p. 265). Two other women working in the outdoor learning profession when comparing their experience noted that they "have experienced firsthand the ways that women in outdoor fields face stigmas – that we are necessarily masculine or overly 'butch; - or that we must unflinchingly face any challenge with fearless determination and a cup of 'toughen up'" and that "any failure is taken to indicate that women do not belong in the outdoor learning field" (Wright & Gray, 2013, p. 12).

In addition to external influences causing pressure to perform, women also internalize many gendered societal expectations that make them doubt their own place and performance in the field, which are then reinforced by misogynistic comments from coworkers and participants. For example, many women expressed a view that they may be unable to succeed in campus outdoor recreation leadership positions because of the demand on their time and how that would impact them caring for their families with no mention of their partner's responsibility (Wright & Gray, 2013). These continued experiences that women are having, even in recent years, remind us that we must not only be focusing on the overall number of women in campus outdoor recreation but also to the "complex structural discrimination that devalues women's capital and marginalizes their career progression" (Christie, 2018).

Gaps in the Literature: Stories Still Untold

There has been extensive research around women in the outdoors, the benefits of campus recreation, and careers of women in campus outdoor recreation. All of these are valuable topics, but there is still much to be learned about the phenomenon of women in the campus outdoor recreation field and how these women perform their gender. First, I was only able to find one study that explored the confidence levels of campus outdoor recreation staff across different ages and positions (undergraduate, graduate, and administrative), which did touch on gender as it

related to confidence in skills, which is well explored in the available literature (Frauman & Washam, 2013). Secondly, there is a vast amount of research centered around women's gendered experiences both positive and negative while in outdoor spaces either for programs or personally. Some studies take this information further to explore how these experiences influence whether women choose to continue in the field and how it impacted their career journey. There are few, if any, studies, though, of women's views of their own femininity because of these programs. Most, if not all, discussions of femininity in the current literature center around traditional gender roles and if women are performing them or casting them off in outdoor spaces. There is no discussion about how women in campus outdoor recreation perceive their own femininity and how they either consciously or unconsciously choose to perform it each day. Furthermore, there is a missing element of how gendered experiences while in the outdoors impact how women in the campus outdoor recreation field may or may not alter their presentation of femininity while not in outdoor spaces, such as while they are navigating office time or program planning in this traditionally masculine space. Finally, I was unable to find any literature working exclusively with women student staff in campus outdoor recreation programs. There is significant literature exploring careership in women in campus outdoor recreation, but only once they've reached the administrative level. There is also research into the benefits of working in campus outdoor recreation for student staff and the benefits of campus outdoor recreation in general. There are not, however, any studies focusing on women student staff and how their experiences as early career professionals in campus outdoor recreation impact their own views and performance of their femininity.

It is essential that this demographic not be ignored, as they are the future of the campus outdoor recreation field. There is still a startling lack of women in administrative positions

within campus outdoor recreation, and Waller et al. (2015) has highlighted the importance of women role models and mentorship for women professionals in campus outdoor recreation. More women entering the campus outdoor recreation career field begins with student staff and early career exposure. It has been demonstrated time and again that the outdoors can be a place of growth and freedom for women, but that it also carries with it extreme stigma related to gender performance, and these experiences can shape the way a woman views her place in the outdoors, her capabilities, and her own femininity for years to come, and those experiences may start with student staff.

Therefore, I utilized collective memory work to examine how women student professionals in campus recreation programs performed their femininities at work. I addressed these ideas by asking the following questions:

1. How do women working in campus outdoor recreation programs perform their femininities at work?
2. How do performances of femininity in campus outdoor recreation affirm or contest hegemonic femininity?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

For this study, I utilized collective memory work (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018) to explore women in campus outdoor recreation's performances of femininity in their workplace. Participants were three women who either are currently working as student staff in campus outdoor recreation or have within the past ten years. All participants are currently located in Pennsylvania or Ohio and have worked in campus outdoor recreation programs in these states as well as others outside of this geographic range. All participants were either current graduate students or working professionals, and all had worked in campus outdoor recreation as undergraduates. I as the primary researcher also acted as a participant in this study – submitting a narrative and participating in the focus group – because of my own history as a student staff of a campus outdoor recreation program. Participants became co-researchers throughout the study, first submitting narratives, then gathering in a focus group to analyze the narratives submitted As a collective, we decided how we wanted data to be represented and the final product of our collective narrative was approved by all co-researchers.

Collective Memory Work

The purpose of this study was to examine how women student professionals in campus recreation programs perform their femininities at work. I addressed these ideas by asking the following questions:

1. How do women working in campus outdoor recreation programs perform their femininities at work?

2. How do performances of femininity in campus outdoor recreation affirm or contest hegemonic femininity?

To answer these research questions, this thesis employed collective memory work (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). Developed by Frigga Haug in the 1980's, collective memory work (CMW) is at type of Participatory Action Research "based on an egalitarian approach to inquiry" that "asks co-researchers…to recall, examine, and analyze their own memories" (Johnson et al., 2018, p. 4). CMW operates under the assumption that one cannot separate their experiences from their ideologies and that individuals' experiences can be connected to collective, shared experiences (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). Simply put, the meaning given to our experiences is constructed through the lens of our own and societal ideologies, and, while meanings can be individual, there are often shared meanings amongst similar groups of people who have the same or similar experiences. This is an inherently collaborative methodology, which is appropriate for the subject of this study because of the shared lived experiences of those participating.

There have been several iterations of the implementation of CMW since its initial inception, but all share many of the same elements. Participants are asked to submit a narrative to the primary researcher using a focus of study as the jumping off point for the written narrative. Narratives are generally one to two typewritten pages in length and may be submitted anonymously or with identifying information (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). Narratives are gathered and distributed to other focus group participants by the primary researcher. Sometimes, not all narratives are utilized in the final focus group due to time constraints, but all are distributed to study participants. (Haug, 1999). All participants who submitted a narrative then gather in a focus group to participate in group analysis of the narratives, which may be shared

anonymously or with identities revealed depending on the focus question of the study and the choice of the participant co-researchers (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). The focus group analysis itself is the generation of data, and contextualization and analysis of the data generated during the focus group may be undertaken by either the primary researcher alone or together with members of the focus group dependent upon time constraints and interest in participation in that aspect of contextualization and analysis by members of the group.(Johnson et al., 2018).

Throughout the narrative writing, focus group, and analysis process, participants act as co-researchers, working in tandem with the primary researcher to generate, analyze, and communicate the data. Participant co-researchers are essential to the process of creating authentic and meaningful data, as it is their stories that are being shared and situated within a broader social and cultural context (Butler, 1988; Johonson et al., 2018)

Why Collective Memory Work?

Collective memory work has been used extensively to examine and draw meaning from the experiences of women (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). Collective memory work is also inherently reflexive and recursive (Johnson et al., 2018). For these reasons, this method was determined to be the most appropriate for this study.

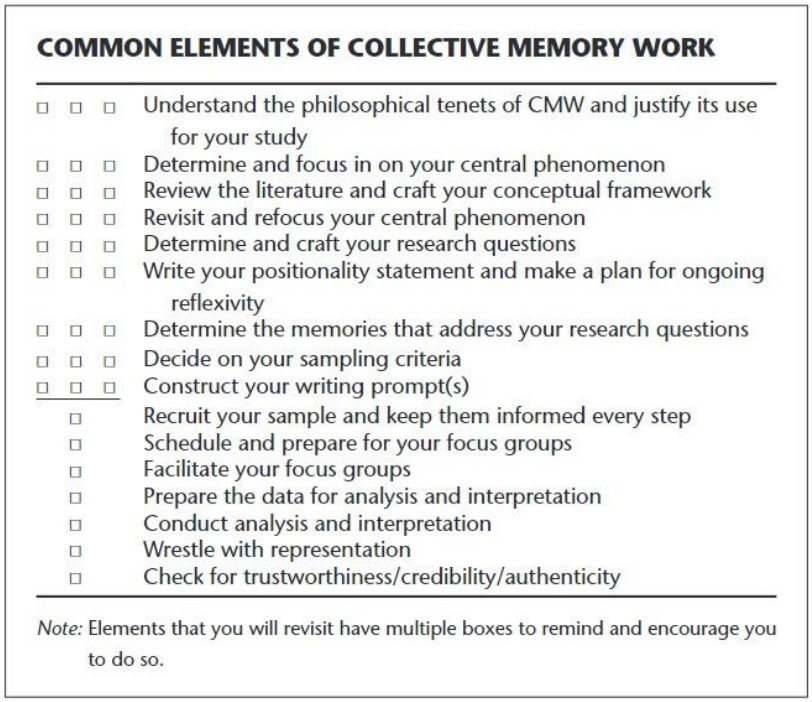
Collective memory work has been used across disciplines, primarily in Australia and New Zealand, but in recent years has been utilized to examine women's leisure experiences (Johnson et al., 2018). Small (1999), McCormack (1998), and, most recently, Allen-Craig et al. (2020) have explored women's leisure and travel experiences, both in the outdoors and in other leisure spaces, using different applications of CMW. Most prevalent to this proposed study, Allen-Craig et al. (2020) specifically examined gendered experiences in the outdoors of both

women and men participants. During this study, a team of Australian researchers engaged 32 outdoor leadership professionals across three workshops delivered at outdoor conferences during 2018. The purpose of these workshops was to create a "safe and brave space" (p. 123) for people who may not have explored or shared the effects of gender on their outdoor journey (Allen-Craig et-al, 2020). The success of these studies suggests the appropriateness of this method for exploring the experiences of women in the campus outdoor recreation field at all stages of their careers.

Collective memory work is also appropriate because of its recursiveness and reflexivity. Throughout the process the primary researcher must return to their philosophical tenets, central phenomenon, and research questions several times to ensure alignment and appropriateness (Johnson et al., 2018). CMW also requires a plan for ongoing reflexivity of the researcher, all of which happens before participants are even recruited (Johnson et al., 2018). This is particularly appropriate for this study because of my deep connection to the subject matter. I want to clarify that reflexivity does not mean objectivity. My experiences, narrative, and perspective as the researcher are valuable, however, reflexivity ensures that I am not applying my own viewpoint to that of my participants and prevents imparting my own bias on the stories and perspectives of others. In Figure 1 below, the process proposed by Johnson et al. (2018) highlights the inherent reflexivity and recursiveness of the CMW process, which is the iteration of CMW that I based my method on.

Figure 1

Common Elements of Collective Memory Work (Johnson et al., 2018, p. 130)



COMMON ELEMENTS OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY WORK

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Understand the philosophical tenets of CMW and justify its use for your study
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Determine and focus in on your central phenomenon
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Review the literature and craft your conceptual framework
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Revisit and refocus your central phenomenon
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Determine and craft your research questions
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Write your positionality statement and make a plan for ongoing reflexivity
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Determine the memories that address your research questions
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Decide on your sampling criteria
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Construct your writing prompt(s)
- ☐ Recruit your sample and keep them informed every step
- ☐ Schedule and prepare for your focus groups
- ☐ Facilitate your focus groups
- ☐ Prepare the data for analysis and interpretation
- ☐ Conduct analysis and interpretation
- ☐ Wrestle with representation
- ☐ Check for trustworthiness/credibility/authenticity

Note: Elements that you will revisit have multiple boxes to remind and encourage you to do so.

Finally, collective memory work does the work of shifting the traditional distribution of power between the researcher and the participants (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). Collective memory work makes participants co-researchers who work to analyze their own and others' experiences (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). This redistributes power between the primary researcher and the participants, creating a more equal and equitable process. This leads to a collaborative space where more authentic narratives can be shared, and analysis can go deeper. This is particularly important again because of my connection to the subject matter of the proposed thesis. The participants in this study and I were on this journey together, creating an authentically collaborative space for analysis and discussion.

Methods

For this study, I utilized Johnson et al.'s (2018) common elements of collective memory work.

Participant Recruitment & Selection[1]

Participants were recruited for this study via email. To begin, I compiled a list of all colleges and universities that had campus outdoor recreation programs in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware whose administrators had contact information publicly available. Utilizing a specific geographic region allowed deeper connections to be formed through the recruitment and focus group process. The hope was to create avenues for connection outside of the group that opened the door for in-person relationships to be curated and a supportive network to take shape within this community. Once the list of potential contacts was compiled, an email was sent explaining the study, who I was hoping to recruit, and the proposed timeline and time commitment with my contact information and a request to share this information with their current and former graduate and undergraduate student staff. Participants were selected based on interest and ability to participate within the given timeline.

Participants for this study were selected using several criteria. First, due to focused geographic recruitment, participants were all currently located or had worked in campus outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania or Ohio and had expressed interest in participating in the study within the required timeline. Second, all participants were student employees of a campus outdoor recreation program or had been student campus outdoor recreation employees within the last ten

[1] Due to the impacts of Hurricane Helene during the study design process, IRB submission and participant recruitment were delayed, resulting in a smaller than initially intended group of participants.

years. Participants were a mix of current and former undergraduate and graduate student staff. Finally, all participants identify as women currently and did so while working in the campus outdoor recreation field.

This participant recruitment led to a focus group of three women, including the primary researcher, who had worked across five different universities at different experience levels outlined below.

Participant #1: 4 years as undergraduate student trip leader and trip administrator at one university

Participant #2: 4 years as undergraduate student trip leader at one university; 1.5 years as graduate assistant at second university

Participant #3: undergraduate involvement in outdoor club; 2 years as graduate assistant for outdoor recreation program at second university;1 year as administrative staff at third university

Due to concerns about retribution or retaliation from current or former supervisors, study participants requested to remain anonymous. It is important to note that all participants in the study are white women with undisclosed socioeconomic backgrounds.

Written Narratives

For this study, each participant submitted a written narrative to be analyzed by the focus group based on the following prompt:

"Submit a narrative that captures your experience as a woman working in campus outdoor recreation. Narratives should be one-to-two page, 1.5 space, and typewritten

detailing how you perform your femininity as a woman in campus outdoor recreation. Narratives may be from any aspect of your position with campus outdoor recreation (leading programs, office or administrative work, etc.) and may highlight individual experiences or a general overview. Please be as detailed as possible (sharing appearances, clothing, gestures, expressions, feelings, smells, taste, actions, etc.) in your narrative without censoring your thoughts or language."

This prompt follows many of Frigga Haug's (1999) original rules for written narratives as a part of collective memory work, including being as detailed as possible even if details may be interpreted by the participant as trivial, not analyzing or interpreting the event or series of events included in the narrative, and within one typewritten page front and back. Participants were given the prompt once they had agreed to participate in the study and filled out the consent form. Written narratives were distributed to all members of the focus group prior to the agreed upon meeting date and time.

Focus Group

Focus groups are an essential element of collective memory work that allow authentic participant interaction and a participant-led discussion of the topic at hand (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018; Marshall et al., 2022). During the focus group, the participant co-researchers and I met virtually for 2.5 hours, working together to analyze narratives and generate data, which created a truly participatory method – an essential element of collective memory work (Johnson et al., 2018). Prior to the focus group, the written narratives were distributed to co-researchers to allow them the opportunity to contribute their own questions to the discussion. As the primary researcher, I prepared the following guiding questions to help lead the discussion:

What performances of femininity do we see in this individual's photograph and narrative collection? What is not present here? How do these performances make you feel as an audience? What messages are being sent by this performance to us as an audience? What are the shared performances of femininity across our narratives/photos? What is different or unique? Are there any experiences we've had that weren't represented in the photos or narratives?

We began our focus group by analyzing each individual narrative. To help co-researchers feel comfortable with the process, we began with my own narrative. During the focus group, the primary researcher bears the responsibility of creating a safe and open space for all participants to be able to openly and authentically analyze the narratives. Beginning with my own narrative opened the door for vulnerability, set the stage and tone for the rest of the focus group, and created a sense of reciprocal trust between the focus group members. I was not only asking them to analyze their experiences but being fully open to analysis of my own. For each individual narrative, we worked our way through the above discussion questions while adding our own questions and clarifications. This process of clarifying personal, individual situations and experiences by situating them into a broader cultural and social context is essential to feminist theory (Butler, 1988). This process also ensures women that they are not the only ones having these experiences, creating a sense of community and providing validation.

Once all narratives were individually addressed, participant co-researchers analyzed the collective group of narratives, exploring similarities and differences, experiences that may not have been touched upon, and connections between the narratives and the participant co-researchers' experiences overall.

Data Analysis and Representation

One of the most powerful elements of Collective Memory Work is the construction of meaning by participant co-researchers (Haug, 1999). This process goes hand-in-hand with gender performativity theory in which gender is constructed through the act of performing your gender "correctly" (Butler, 1988, West & Zimmerman, 1987). This collective process allows participant co-researchers to reclaim the narrative and construct the meaning that is most authentic and impactful to them and their individual and shared experiences. Data is inherently generated through the narratives themselves as well as the process of analyzing the narratives by the collective, but the primary researcher must also contextualize that analysis with the data that is generated by the narratives (Johnson et al., 2018). During the focus group, participant co-researchers worked together to identify powerful themes within the individual narratives as well as threads of connection and continuity between the narratives. Participant co-researchers also took time to discuss how the results of this study and the narrative analysis will be communicated to a wider audience. The goal of this study is to put the power into the hands of the participant co-researchers to tell their own stories and share the experiences that influenced and shaped them.

One striking theme that cut across all narratives was fear of the pushback and retribution from men in the industry be they supervisors, colleagues, or participants. It became shockingly apparent throughout the focus group that even those who purport to be feminists or champions of women's equality in this space can react poorly to being challenged by women in the field, and every single participant in the focus group has experienced the sting of retaliation and its impacts on their career from speaking up and speaking out as women in this industry. Because of these experiences, the co-researchers requested to remain anonymous throughout this process. Inspired

by Rogers & Rose (2019), we decided that the best way to share our authentic narratives while protecting anonymity is through a combined narrative that weaves together our collective story. This combined narrative was constructed by the primary researcher and inspired by experiences discussed in both the written narratives and the focus group. While the exact order of events and specifics of each experience highlighted in the combined narrative may have been altered to preserve anonymity, each of these encounters and occurrences are rooted in the lived experience of the co-researchers. As the primary researcher, I did not fictionalize any key parts of the collective narrative. The spirit of all conversations, some direct quotes, and the experiences themselves are pulled directly from the narratives and focus group. Most importantly, the feelings associated with being a woman working in campus outdoor recreation are fully preserved in the collective narrative. Because of my unique role as both a participant and primary researcher, I was able to give authentic voice and feeling to this collective narrative with a firsthand understanding of the conversations, actions, and interactions detailed in the collective narrative. This collective narrative was shared with the participant co-researchers for final approval prior to submission.

Manuscript Thesis Option

Per the Western Carolina University Experiential and Outdoor Education Handbook, I have chosen to complete the manuscript thesis format option. This option requires Chapters One, Two, and Three plus a full-length journal manuscript formatted to the requirements of a specific journal. The following chapter contains my complete manuscript, which I have chosen to submit to the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning. This journal requires authors to submit a manuscript of no more than 9,000 words and written in APA-7 format.

CHAPTER FOUR: MANUSCRIPT

"I'm not a girly-girl": Performances of femininity in campus outdoor recreation staff

Submitted for consideration in *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Leadership*

“I’m not a girly-girl”: Performances of femininity in campus outdoor recreation staff

Women’s gendered experiences in the outdoors have long been the subject of research, and studies have shown that campus outdoor recreation is often the first touch many young people have with the outdoors. Furthermore, working as a student staff in campus outdoor recreation programs has proven long-term benefits for both undergraduate and graduate students. There are, however, very few studies at the intersection of gendered experiences women have as student staff in campus outdoor recreation. Through collective memory work this study explores the gendered experiences of women student staff in campus outdoor recreation programs and how those experiences impact their own performances of femininity. Results showed a shifting trend in how women student staff responded to comments on their appearance, throwing off criticism in favor of self-assuredness. Comments and corrections about not performing femininity “correctly” in the outdoors, however, are still pervasive from participants, coworkers, and supervisors.

Keywords: campus recreation; outdoor; women; femininity

"What are you doing?" I looked up from where my razor was poised over my shin, making eye contact with my male coleader. "Nothing," I quickly replied as I put the razor down. Hot shame at being caught dry shaving my legs in a tent washed over me. It was day three of a week-long whitewater canoe trip I was leading with two male coworkers. Our group was made up of eleven incoming freshmen and three undergraduate student trip leaders. I had been able to secretly shave each morning as I took my getting ready shift while camp was broken down, but now I was caught. "Hey, come here! See what Anne's doing!" Great. Now it was going to be shared amongst the staff. I was teased for the rest of the trip by both my co-leaders and participants.

As a woman in the outdoors, I (Anne) feel constantly torn between societal expectations in the front country and the pressure to be outdoorsy enough in the back country. I was shaving my legs because it had been drilled into my mind since I was a child that it was disgusting and dirty for women to have hair on their bodies. I was certain that if I didn't shave, I would face criticism and demeaning comments. Shaving, however, was too girly, too prissy to be a part of the outdoors. I was to be *magically hairless* – the perfect outdoorswoman who was simultaneously independent and rugged, but not *too* rugged…-or that wasn't cute. When I was caught shaving and mercilessly teased about it, a message was sent not only to me but to every single woman participant on that trip about what was acceptable and what was not in that space. It wasn't about packing too heavy or taking up too much time. It was about not being outdoors in the "right" way, and specifically, about how to perform gender in the outdoors.

Gender Performance in the Outdoors

Because of experiences such as mine, women in the outdoors have long been the subject of research. There have been an abundance of studies exploring how girls and women experience and perceive their roles in the outdoors, from the earliest experiences of adolescent girls that

shape their relationship with and perception of the outdoors (Culp, 1998; Gray, 2016; Whittington, 2006) to the experiences had and messaging received by adult women in the outdoors (Ceurvorst et al., 2018; Frauman & Washam, 2013; Humberstone, 2000; Newbery, 2004; Warren & Loeffler, 2006), and how those experiences then influence women outdoor leaders and their careership (e.g. Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Delay & Dyment, 2003; Gray et al., 2020; Rogers & Rose, 2019; Wittmer, 2001).

Gender role congruity theory (Wittmer, 2001) highlights how those who perform within their specific gender roles are regarded more highly than those who seek to break those barriers. While sex is biological, gender is socially and culturally constructed and is deeply entwined with our personal expression of identity and personality development (Bell, 1997; Humberstone, 2000). Although much exists outside of the binary, gender and gender roles are often defined in the binary terms of "masculinity" or "femininity" and we are judged based on how well we perform within those categories (Humberstone, 2000). Judith Butler's theory of performativity goes so far as to say that the social construction of gender is created by the very process of performing gender (Newbury, 2004). Characteristics that are generally assigned as masculine include competitiveness, logical thinking, achieving, risk taking, leading, aggressive, assertive, active, ambitious, task oriented, decisive, independent, taking initiative, dominating, and controlled (Knapp, 1993). Characteristics generally assigned as feminine include caring, dependent or interdependent, nurturing, passive, cooperating, empathetic, yielding, gentle, emotional, self-sacrificing, intuitive, and giving (Knapp, 1993). Female identifying persons (hereafter referred to as "women") often perform their femininity by taking on more caring roles, deferring to men, and putting themselves in positions to give of themselves (Humberstone, 2000). Male identifying persons (hereafter referred to as "men"), on the other hand, often

perform their masculinity by taking on positions of leadership, assuming risks, and engaging in competitive pursuits. Those who do not perform within those roles (i.e. women performing in predominantly masculine ways or men performing in predominantly feminine ways) are harshly judged, seen as incorrect, or face negative social, emotional, or physical consequences.

This pressure to perform gender "correctly" is especially pervasive in spheres of active pursuits, such as sports or the outdoors (Delay & Dyment, 2003; Gray et al., 2020; Humberstone, 2000; Rogers & Rose, 2019; Warren & Loeffler, 2006). From a young age, we are often taught that being "sporty" or "outdoorsy" is in direct conflict with femininity and what it means to be a "real" woman (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Azzarito & Katzew, 2010; Culp, 1998). While that perception has started to shift in recent years, hegemonic masculinity is still prevalent in many, if not most, outdoor spaces. These feelings of internal conflict are reinforced through contradictory feedback given when women act as leaders on outdoor programs. Participant and supervisor feedback when women perform in traditionally feminine ways is often negative or harsh (Gray, 2016). On the other hand, when women perform more masculine roles, they receive even harsher feedback, and oftentimes they are still receiving incredibly gendered feedback about being "nurturing" or "caring" even when they purposely did not display those traits (Rogers & Rose, 2019). Women are constantly receiving feedback that they are both too feminine and too masculine to perform in the outdoors (Gray et al., 2020; Newbery, 2004).

Campus Outdoor Recreation

College is a uniquely formative time in the lives of many students – a time of transformation where young people begin to develop personal identity, explore intellectual and career paths, and solidify their belief and value systems (Blimling, 2010). For many students, participation in campus outdoor recreation programs while in college is their first interaction

with outdoor recreation as a field, and the experiences that they have during these programs can shape how they navigate the outdoor space going forward (Ceurvorst et al., 2018). There have been a wealth of studies examining the short and long-term benefits to students both as participants and staff, including helping them build meaningful relationships, develop communication skills, and acquire transferable skills (Felty & Liu, 2024). Furthermore, working as a student campus outdoor recreation staff member has been a proven foil for leadership development that extends beyond the outdoor industry (Boettcher & Gansemer-Topf, 2015; Sandberg et al., 2017; Toperzer et al., 2011).

The benefits of working for campus outdoor recreation have been thoroughly explored, however, there has been very little examination of women's experiences and performances of femininity in the outdoors in this space. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to utilize collective memory work to examine how women student professionals in campus recreation programs perform their femininities at work. I asked the following questions:

1. How do women working in campus outdoor recreation programs perform their femininities at work?

2. How do performances of femininity in campus outdoor recreation affirm or contest hegemonic femininity?

Literature Review

Gender Performance & Socialization

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 273). This quote is central to the concept of gender performance theory which arose as part of critical feminist theory in the 1980's led by Judith Butler. Butler's (1988) theory of performativity states that

gender is not inherent but is instead constructed through performances that fit specific expectations placed upon men and women. Furthermore, gender is purely performative, meaning that gender is only real as it is being performed and there are no inherent masculine and feminine qualities (Butler, 1988; West & Zimmerman, 1987). The continuous performance of gender by individuals is what perpetuates the existence of gender (Butler, 1988). The goal of this performance is survival (Butler, 1988; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Those who perform their gender correctly are rewarded with acceptance into society, while those who shirk their gender roles are ostracized or worse (Butler, 1988). These gender roles are not just performed by individuals, but also further reinforced by looking for and policing that same correct performance in others (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

From a young age, girls are given completely different messaging from boys about what they are capable of with boys being encouraged to explore nature and the environment around them while girls are kept away from "risk" (Delay & Dyment, 2003). Growing up, young women are taught that athleticism and the outdoors are in direct contrast to femininity (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010). Words such as "tomboy" and "girly girl" are pervasive throughout discussions with both adolescent girls and adult women about participating in the outdoors and their comfort level with such things. These messages and ideas continue into adulthood, with many women professionals still using these words to describe themselves and their journeys in the outdoors.

These ideas are not only reinforced by the words and actions of friends, family, and colleagues but through direct marketing and messaging from outdoor guides and ads. Glotfelty (1996) critically examined messaging in women's backpacking guides from the rise of the feminist movement. There was blatantly contradictory information about how much traditional femininity they should retain in the outdoors, simultaneously celebrating throwing off the

confines of the home and family and breaking free from the shackles of traditional femininity while also giving tips on how many different cute ways women backpackers could use a bandana or how to distract from the unsightly hiking boots women must wear (Glotfelty, 1996). In a much more recent study by McNeil et al. (2012), researchers critically examined advertisements in outdoor magazines through a lens of gender socialization. Only 46% of all advertisements depicted women at all, and, of those, most ads that depicted women were for vacation locations or clothing, not technical gear or adventure pursuits. When they were participating, it was in "clean" ways such as hiking and camping while smiling or appearing pleasant (McNeil et al., 2012). While these guides and advertisements are not overtly telling women that they are not made to exist in the outdoors, there is subtle messaging about the "right" way to do it. This feeling of not belonging in the outdoors is only exacerbated as women who do follow adventurous pursuits are constantly compared to men engaging in the same activities.

Femininity in the Outdoors

Many young girls and women are hesitant to even refer to themselves as "outdoorsy" because it is so often painted in stark contrast to the ideal performance of femininity that society has constructed (Culp, 1998). While in the outdoors, women are expected to perform their femininity appropriately while not acting too femininely. There is a stereotype of women in the outdoors as a "masculinized superwoman" who can and must outperform the men, making the outdoors appear as though it is not the place for your everyday woman, and absolutely not the place for female leadership (Delay & Dyment, 2003). Throughout all of these studies, there are two key ways identified that women perform their femininity in the outdoors: through behavior and through appearance.

Behavior

Women's behavior in the outdoors is constantly being policed either as too feminine or not feminine enough, especially those who are placed in leadership positions. Women in the outdoors receive the messaging that certain outdoor activities, particularly those seen as more technically or physically challenging, are not for them, and if they do participate, they must behave "correctly" while participating (Warren & Loeffler, 2006; Delay & Dyment, 2003). Especially when it comes to leadership in the outdoors, a traditional leadership style that connects more with traditionally male gender socialization wherein one person holds the primary power while others fall in line is more highly regarded than a more cooperative or empathetic leadership style that aligns more closely with feminine gender socialization (Delay & Dyment, 2003; Jordan, 1992). When a man and woman are leading a group together, no matter who the primary, more skilled, or more knowledgeable leader is, participants more often than not defer to the male leader as the ultimate authority. This holds true even when the male leader actively takes a step back and the female leader is very obviously the one in charge (Rogers & Rose, 2019). Furthermore, when working in pairs or teams, both male and female outdoor leaders expressed a lower level of confidence in female co-leaders even if they rated their own skills highly (Frauman & Washam, 2013).

Appearance

Women's performances of femininity through appearance are also at the core of the literature surrounding women in the outdoors. One of the key components of traditional, hegemonic femininity is maintaining a physical expression of femininity whether that's keeping nails done, dressing in the latest fashions, wearing makeup, or other traditionally "girly" things. This expression of femininity, however, is perceived negatively in outdoor settings (Gray, 2020;

Newbery, 2004). Even other women in the experiential education industry speak negatively about femininity in either overt or hidden ways. For example, Whittington (2006) says that "femininity includes a preoccupation with beauty" (p. 208), which is not an outright condemnation of femininity but can reasonably be perceived as negative and even condescending towards women who focus on their appearance. Another woman leader in campus outdoor recreation programs when describing her time working as a park ranger expressed her frustration that a male colleague described her as being too soft and girly because of her painted toenails. Her outrage was not necessarily at being described as soft and girly, but because he didn't question her motivation for painting her toenails, which were black and bruised from marathon running, which, in her mind, was an "acceptable" reason to be painting them (Christie, 2018). While in the outdoors "the rules change regarding appearance but are nonetheless rigidly enforced" (Newbery, 2004, p. 44).

Campus Outdoor Recreation

Many women who work or recreate in the outdoors can trace their interest and passion back to either childhood experiences or trips in early adulthood with programs from early adulthood having been experienced during their time at college or university (Wright & Gray, 2013). College is a time of self-discovery for young adults where both undergraduate and graduate students explore self-definition, freedom, and authenticity (Deringer, 2012). One of the first and most important choices of young adulthood is whether to attend college, and, if so, which institution of higher education to attend. Studies have shown that campus recreation in general is important to college students, and the availability of campus recreation programs as well as the quality of those programs can greatly influence a prospective student's choice of college or university as well as whether to continue at that institution once enrolled (Andre et al.,

2017). Campus outdoor recreation programs can have a significant impact on student wellbeing and provide unique challenges and leadership opportunities that lead to personal growth (Andre et al., 2017; Deringer, 2012; Waller et al., 2015).

While an exact program count is unavailable, a census of outdoor orientation programs showed that, as of 2020, 212 colleges and universities offered outdoor orientation programs, which are almost exclusively offered through campus outdoor recreation staff (Bell, 2022). It would stand to reason that there are likely 200+ campus outdoor recreation programs through a larger campus recreation system across the US. For the purpose of this study, I will define campus outdoor recreation as "any outdoor recreation activities sponsored by a college, university, or associated auxiliary unit" (Andre et al., 2017, p. 16). Specifically, I will be focusing on non-academic campus outdoor recreation programming that is facilitated through a larger campus recreation organization that may include other departments such as intramurals, fitness classes, and aquatics.

The benefits of participating in campus outdoor recreation programs both as a participant and as student staff have been widely explored. Campus recreation is driven largely by student employees across all departments, making it one of the largest employers of students in college and university settings, and giving students a unique growth opportunity and taste of what a career in recreation may look like (Toperzer et al., 2011). Campus outdoor recreation programs are focused on developing leadership traits and qualities amongst their student staff, setting them up for long term success in the job market either within our outside of outdoor recreation careers by providing long-term transferable job skills (Andre et al., 2017; Sandberg et al., 2017; Toperzer et al., 2011).

One of the key demographics who can benefit most from campus outdoor recreation programs is women staff and participants. College-aged women often feel a diminished sense of control and empowerment (Welsh et al., 2020). Outdoor programming has the potential to create conditions and contexts that can give women a greater sense of empowerment and agency over their lives, particularly in an all-women setting and with empowered women role-models (Waller et al., 2015; Welsh et al., 2020). Campus outdoor recreation programs have also been proven to be a door to greater experience with outdoor recreation beyond the program attended, with participants often engaging with other aspects of outdoor or approximate outdoor recreation, such as participating in a guided canoe trip then visiting the campus rock wall (Welsh et al., 2020). These experiences can be pivotal in how a woman sees and defines herself as a capable and empowered human being, capable of and driven to eschew societal expectations of her gender performance (Meyer & Borrie, 2013; Welsh et al., 2020).

Despite the proven benefits to women from campus outdoor recreation programming, women still face significant challenges when pursuing a career in campus outdoor recreation with significantly fewer women than men holding leadership positions or positions as lecturers or program administrators (Christine, 2018; Waller et al., 2015). In a 2015 study of 357 women administrators working in campus recreation, Waller et al. found that "the two biggest challenges women face in the career advancement were the lack of female role models and lack of mentors" (p. 24). Women who do enter the campus outdoor recreation field face similar challenges to women in the outdoors in general, but the struggle is compounded by the setting of higher education and academia, which presents its own set of challenges to women (Christie, 2018; Wright & Gray, 2013).

Gendered expectations of performance begin for women campus outdoor recreation staff long before they become leaders or administrators in the field. In a 2013 study of university outdoor program staff, women staff expressed a sense of stress surrounding the competitive outdoor culture prevalent in the industry (Frauman & Washam, 2013). Further, even undergraduate staff members who are fairly new to the outdoor recreation career field followed gender lines when rating their comfort and confidence with technical versus interpersonal skills, with men consistently rating their comfort much higher than women for technical skills and vice versa for interpersonal (Frauman & Washam, 2013). Additionally, both men and women expressed a lower level of confidence in a female co-leader, even when women rate confidence in themselves highly, pointing to a biased view towards women's performance and allowing them a lower chance of success (Frauman & Washam, 2013).

The trends that begin as student staff following women professionals throughout their careers, with men regularly questioning the belonging of women in the field and undermining their authority and confidence. One advanced professional in the campus outdoor recreation field recalled attending a conference with a male colleague during which he asked her "Don't you feel like a fraud? You don't really do this kind of stuff do you?" (Christie, 2018, p. 265). Two other women working in the outdoor learning profession when comparing their experience noted that they "have experienced firsthand the ways that women in outdoor fields face stigmas – that we are necessarily masculine or overly 'butch; - or that we must unflinchingly face any challenge with fearless determination and a cup of 'toughen up'" and that "any failure is taken to indicate that women do not belong in the outdoor learning field" (Wright & Gray, 2013, p. 12).

In addition to external influences causing pressure to perform, women also internalize many gendered societal expectations that make them doubt their own place and performance in

the field, which are then reinforced by misogynistic comments from coworkers and participants. For example, many women expressed a view that they may be unable to succeed in campus outdoor recreation leadership positions because of the demand on their time and how that would impact them caring for their families with no mention of their partner's responsibility (Wright & Gray, 2013). These continued experiences that women are having, even in recent years, remind us that we must not only be focusing on the overall number of women in campus outdoor recreation but also to the "complex structural discrimination that devalues women's capital and marginalizes their career progression" (Christie, 2018).

Gaps in the Literature: Stories Still Untold

There has been extensive research around women in the outdoors, the benefits of campus recreation, and careers of women in campus outdoor recreation. All of these are valuable topics, but there is still much to be learned about the phenomenon of women in the campus outdoor recreation field and how these women perform their gender. In my research, I was only able to find a single study that explored gendered experiences among student staff (Frauman & Washam, 2013). There is significant literature exploring careership in women in campus outdoor recreation, but only once they've reached the administrative level. There is also research into the benefits of working in campus outdoor recreation for student staff and the benefits of campus outdoor recreation in general. There are not, however, any studies focusing on women student staff and how their experiences as early career professionals in campus outdoor recreation impact their own views and performance of their femininity.

It is essential that this demographic not be ignored, as they are the future of the campus outdoor recreation field. There is still a startling lack of women in administrative positions within campus outdoor recreation, and Waller et al. (2015) has highlighted the importance of

women role models and mentorship for women professionals in campus outdoor recreation. More women entering the campus outdoor recreation career field begins with student staff and early career exposure. It has been demonstrated time and again that the outdoors can be a place of growth and freedom for women, but that it also carries with it extreme stigma related to gender performance, and these experiences can shape the way a woman views her place in the outdoors, her capabilities, and her own femininity for years to come, and those experiences may start with student staff.

Methodology: Collective Memory Work

I used collective memory work (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018) as methodology in this study. Developed by Frigga Haug in the 1980's, collective memory work (CMW) is at type of Participatory Action Research "based on an egalitarian approach to inquiry" that "asks co-researchers…to recall, examine, and analyze their own memories" (Johnson et al., 2018, p. 4). CMW operates under the assumption that one cannot separate their experiences from their ideologies and that individuals' experiences can be connected to collective, shared experiences (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). Simply put, the meaning given to our experiences is constructed through the lens of our own and societal ideologies, and, while meanings can be individual, there are often shared meanings amongst similar groups of people who have the same or similar experiences.

This is an inherently collaborative methodology, which is appropriate for the subject of this study because of the shared lived experiences of those participating. Collective memory work has three basic elements. First, participants submit written narratives to the primary researcher who then distributes narratives to all participants for review. Second, participants transition to the role of co-researcher as they work together to analyze and draw meaning from

the narratives during a focus group led by the primary researcher. Finally, the primary researcher contextualizes and analyzes the data generated by the focus group (Johnson et al., 2018).

Collective memory work has been used extensively to examine and draw meaning from the experiences of women (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018), including in the outdoor recreation space by researchers such as Small (1999), McCormack (1998), and most recently Allen-Craig et al. (2020). Collective memory work is also inherently reflexive and recursive (Johnson et al., 2018).

Finally, collective memory work does the work of shifting the traditional distribution of power between the researcher and the participants (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). Collective memory work makes participants co-researchers who work to analyze their own and others' experiences (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). This redistributes power between the primary researcher and the participants, creating a more equal and equitable process. This leads to a collaborative space where more authentic narratives can be shared, and analysis can go deeper. This is particularly important again because of my connection to the subject matter of the proposed thesis. Given the propensity for women in college to feel less empowered coupled with the empowering potential of campus outdoor recreation, it was important to choose a methodology that decentered the researcher power and gave more power to participants (Meyer & Borrie, 2013; Welsh et al., 2020). The participants in this study and I will be on this journey together, creating an authentic, equitable, and collaborative space for analysis and discussion. For these reasons, this method was determined to be the most appropriate for this study.

Methods

This study utilized Johnson et al.'s (2018) common elements of collective memory work as a guide to the CMW process. While there have been several iterations of CMW since its inception, all share the same core elements which informed the design of this study. First, all participants submit a narrative based on a provided prompt (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). Second, the narratives are gathered distributed to all participants (Haug, 1999). Next, the primary researcher guides the participants through a focus group where they collectively analyze the narratives. At this stage, the participants transition to co-researchers (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018). The focus group analysis itself is the generation of data and contextualization and analysis of the data generated during the focus group may be undertaken by either the primary researcher alone or together with members of the focus group dependent upon time constraints and interest in participation in that aspect of contextualization and analysis by members of the group (Johnson et al., 2018). Below I outline how each step was implemented in this study.

Participant Recruitment & Selection

Participants were recruited for this study via email. To begin, I compiled a list of all colleges and universities that had campus outdoor recreation programs in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware whose administrators had contact information publicly available. Utilizing a specific geographic region allowed deeper connections to be formed through the recruitment and focus group process. The hope was to create avenues for connection outside of the group that opened the door for in-person relationships to be curated and a supportive network to take shape within this community. Once the list of potential contacts was compiled, an email was sent explaining the study, who I was hoping to recruit, and the proposed timeline and time commitment with my contact information and a request to share this

information with their current and former graduate and undergraduate student staff. Participants were selected based on interest and ability to participate within the given timeline.

Participants for this study were selected using several criteria. First, due to focused geographic recruitment, participants were all currently located or had worked in campus outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania or Ohio and had expressed interest in participating in the study within the required timeline. Second, all participants were student employees of a campus outdoor recreation program or had been student campus outdoor recreation employees within the last ten years. Participants were a mix of current and former undergraduate and graduate student staff. Finally, all participants identify as women currently and did so while working in the campus outdoor recreation field.

This participant recruitment led to a focus group of three women, including the primary researcher, who had worked across five different universities at different experience levels outlined below. It is important to note that all three participants are white women with undisclosed socioeconomic backgrounds.

Participant #1: 4 years as undergraduate student trip leader and trip administrator at one university

Participant #2: 4 years as undergraduate student trip leader at one university; 1.5 years as graduate assistant at second university

Participant #3: undergraduate involvement in outdoor club; 2 years as graduate assistant for outdoor recreation program at second university;1 year as administrative staff at third university

Due to concerns about retribution or retaliation from current or former supervisors, study participants requested to remain anonymous. Throughout this study, participants will not be identified by name or pseudonyms and specific universities will not be mentioned to ensure full anonymity.

Written Narratives

For this study, each participant submitted a written narrative to be analyzed by the focus group based on the following prompt:

> "Submit a narrative that captures your experience as a woman working in campus outdoor recreation. Narratives should be one-to-two page, 1.5 space, and typewritten detailing how you perform your femininity as a woman in campus outdoor recreation. Narratives may be from any aspect of your position with campus outdoor recreation (leading programs, office or administrative work, etc.) and may highlight individual experiences or a general overview. Please be as detailed as possible (sharing appearances, clothing, gestures, expressions, feelings, smells, taste, actions, etc.) in your narrative without censoring your thoughts or language."

This prompt follows many of Frigga Haug's (1999) original rules for written narratives as a part of collective memory work, including being as detailed as possible even if details may be interpreted by the participant as trivial, not analyzing or interpreting the event or series of events included in the narrative, and within one typewritten page front and back. Participants were given the prompt once they had agreed to participate in the study and filled out the consent form. Written narratives were distributed to all members of the focus group prior to the agreed upon meeting date and time.

Focus Group

Focus groups are an essential element of collective memory work that allow authentic participant interaction and a participant-led discussion of the topic at hand (Haug, 1999; Johnson et al., 2018; Marshall et al., 2022). During the focus group, the participant co-researchers and I met virtually for 2.5 hours, working together to analyze narratives and generate data, which created a truly participatory method – an essential element of collective memory work (Johnson et al., 2018). Prior to the focus group, the written narratives were distributed to co-researchers to allow them the opportunity to contribute their own questions to the discussion. As the primary researcher, I prepared the following guiding questions to help lead the discussion:

> *What performances of femininity do we see in this individual's photograph and narrative collection? What is not present here? How do these performances make you feel as an audience? What messages are being sent by this performance to us as an audience? What are the shared performances of femininity across our narratives/photos? What is different or unique? Are there any experiences we've had that weren't represented in the photos or narratives?*

We began our focus group by analyzing each individual narrative. To help co-researchers feel comfortable with the process, we began with my own narrative. During the focus group, the primary researcher bears the responsibility of creating a safe and open space for all participants to be able to openly and authentically analyze the narratives. Beginning with my own narrative opened the door for vulnerability, set the stage and tone for the rest of the focus group, and created a sense of reciprocal trust between the focus group members. I was not only asking them to analyze their experiences but being fully open to analysis of my own. For each individual narrative, we worked our way through the above discussion questions while adding our own

questions and clarifications. This process of clarifying personal, individual situations and experiences by situating them into a broader cultural and social context is essential to feminist theory (Butler, 1988). This process also ensures women that they are not the only ones having these experiences, creating a sense of community and providing validation.

Once all narratives were individually addressed, participant co-researchers analyzed the collective group of narratives, exploring similarities and differences, experiences that may not have been touched upon, and connections between the narratives and the participant co-researchers' experiences overall.

Data Analysis and Representation

One of the most powerful elements of Collective Memory Work is the construction of meaning by participant co-researchers (Haug, 1999). This process aligns with gender performativity theory in which gender is constructed through the act of performing your gender "correctly" (Butler, 1988, West & Zimmerman, 1987). This collective process allows participant co-researchers to reclaim the narrative and construct the meaning that is most authentic and impactful to them and their individual and shared experiences. Data are inherently generated through the narratives themselves as well as the process of analyzing the narratives by the collective, but the primary researcher must also contextualize that analysis with the data that are generated by the narratives (Johnson et al., 2018). During the focus group, participant co-researchers worked together to identify powerful themes within the individual narratives as well as threads of connection and continuity between the narratives. Participant co-researchers also took time to discuss how the results of this study and the narrative analysis will be communicated to a wider audience. The goal of this study was to put the power into the hands of

the participant co-researchers to tell their own stories and share the experiences that influenced and shaped them.

One striking theme that cut across all narratives was fear of the pushback and retribution from men in the industry be they supervisors, colleagues, or participants. It became apparent throughout the focus group that even those who purport to be feminists or champions of women's equality in this space can react poorly to being challenged by women in the field, and every single participant in the focus group has experienced the sting of retaliation and its impacts on their career from speaking up and speaking out as women in this industry. Because of these experiences, the co-researchers requested to remain anonymous throughout this process. Inspired by Rogers & Rose (2019), we decided that the best way to share our authentic narratives while protecting anonymity is through a combined narrative that weaves together our collective story. This combined narrative was constructed by the primary researcher and inspired by experiences discussed in both the written narratives and the focus group. While the exact order of events and specifics of each experience highlighted in the combined narrative may have been altered to preserve anonymity, each of these encounters and occurrences are rooted in the lived experience of the co-researchers. As the primary researcher, I did not fictionalize any key parts of the collective narrative. The spirit of all conversations, some direct quotes, and the experiences themselves are pulled directly from the narratives and focus group. Most importantly, the feelings associated with being a woman working in campus outdoor recreation are fully preserved in the collective narrative. Because of my unique role as both a participant and primary researcher, I was able to give authentic voice and feeling to this collective narrative with a firsthand understanding of the conversations, actions, and interactions detailed in the collective

narrative. This collective narrative was shared with the participant co-researchers prior to submission and begins the results section below.

Results & Discussion

Nora's Story

Nora grew up spending time outdoors fly-fishing with her dad, mountain biking, and spending time down by the river, so when the chance to participate in a freshman preorientation program was presented, she jumped at the opportunity. She spent the week whitewater canoeing, rock climbing, and hiking. That year she applied to work for her school's outdoor program and was ecstatic when she received an email from the program director, Craig, with the subject line "Welcome to the Team!"

"Why do you paint your nails? They're just going to get cracked anyway." Nora looked down at the left hand she had been tapping against the table as she went over the final itinerary for the backpacking trip she was leading with Jackson, a new hire. "I don't know, I like it. It makes me feel good," she replied, brushing the comment off. Jackson rolled his eyes and went back to gathering equipment from the list Nora had written on the whiteboard.

"Welcome to the best weekend of your life!" Nora winced as Jackson yelled next to her. "I'm Jackson. I'm your leader, and this is Nora. She also works here at campus rec." Jackson launched into an explanation of the itinerary, gear list, and plan for the day before Nora could introduce herself.

This was Jackson's first backpacking trip, and Nora returned from the program drained from having to go behind Jackson to correct information, lead camp set-up and breakdown, and help him learn how to read the maps correctly. She scheduled a meeting with Craig to discuss her frustrations. "What do you expect Jackson to do when he's asked a question? Not answer? He's just excited." When she replied that he could have directed them towards her instead, Craig responded, "Well that would hurt his credibility, wouldn't it?" After going around in circles, Nora became frustrated and felt hot tears start to roll down her cheeks. In her next performance review, she was noted to be "unprofessional with her emotions" and "not a team player."

This was not an isolated incident.

Despite the challenges of her undergraduate experience, Nora loved campus outdoor recreation. She was hoping for a fresh start at a new university while pursuing her master's in Outdoor Leadership and was excited to be offered a graduate assistantship with the outdoor pursuits program. She was trained by Alex, a GA who was starting his second year. She was a little concerned when he wasn't sure where any of the trip paperwork was. "Gina always handled that for us. I'm sure it's in your desk." While she was excited to lead trips, she regularly found herself performing administrative tasks such as sending emails to staff, coordinating trainings, and scheduling meetings. When she approached Alex for assistance with these administrative tasks, he replied that his plate was way too full to help with those kinds of things. She went to Jim, her supervisor, who asked "What, can you not handle your job? Gina never had a problem."

After Alex graduated, Nora was placed on the hiring committee for a new GA to be her counterpart. They interviewed a woman who was currently attending the business school in the same class as two of the men on the interview panel. Nora was impressed with how well spoken she was and her extensive experience. When the interview was over, Nora said, "Wow! Easy decision, right?" The men laughed and agreed then promptly threw her resume in the trash. Nora was appalled. "Why would you do that?" They argued that because she was in the business school she was just manipulating them and knew what to say. One said, "did you see what she was wearing? There's no way she would be a good fit."

"Are you sure you're not just saying that because she's a woman? Aren't you also in the business school?" The response was immediate offense and aggression.

"I'm just going to bring this up to Jim and see what his thoughts are."

"Good luck," one of them scoffed.

At the next staff meeting when they were making hiring decisions, Nora expressed her concerns to the team about dismissing the candidate. The discussion devolved into another argument.

"I can't believe you would accuse us of this."

"This is really hurtful, Nora. I'm really offended that you would say that."

"You're damaging our friendship and the team by making this a big deal. You know I'm a feminist."

Her supervisor ended the discussion with, "If one woman is going to cause this much trouble, then she's obviously not a good fit for this team."

They hired a man named Hunter, who had worked with Jim for years. Nora was not in his interview.

"What do I want to do next? I love leading outdoor trips. I hate how much emotional energy I spend each day. I feel like I'm a good resource to staff, though, and these programs can be really impactful. Do I want to work for another man in another outdoor program? That's sexist though, right? They're not all difficult to work with. Craig and Jim aren't terrible people – they're still learning. Maybe I shouldn't be so outspoken. Maybe I'll just wait tables for a while or something."

These thoughts race through Nora's head as she sits at her desk scanning the job boards. She's graduating soon and needs to decide where she wants to go from here.

This combined narrative highlights shared experiences of women, but it does not highlight all experiences across all narratives, or all topics and experiences discussed during the focus group. During the focus group, two main categories of gender performance were at the forefront of the conversation – appearance and behavior. This analysis and discussion will contain several elements. First, I'll discuss in depth the performances of both appearance and gender by the co-researchers, reactions to those performances, and the impacts on the co-researchers as well as those around them. These will all be contextualized within greater social theory. I will also discuss what implications the results of this study may have broadly on the field of campus outdoor recreation.

Performing Femininity – Appearance

"Why do you paint your nails? They're just going to get cracked anyway."

"Did you see what she was wearing? There's no way she would be a good fit."

These quotes from Nora's narrative reflects experiences that women working in outdoor recreation spaces have regularly. The appearance and bodies of women have long been under a societal microscope, and that is no different for the campus outdoor recreation space. What has changed over time, however, is representation and the ability to access different representations of bodies in spaces. Goffman posited the "dramaturgical body," which essentially states that "people do not merely 'have' a body – people actively *do* a body" (Waskul & Vannini, 2006, p.6). Therefore, women do not merely exist in our bodies, instead we are making choices whether consciously or subconsciously each day in how we present ourselves to embody what we can only hope is our authentic selves. These presentations are influenced by the reactions, real or imagined, of those with whom we interact.

Outdoor recreation has long been a place of contention for women and their bodies where we are constantly being told how to correctly appear in this space with many traditionally feminine expressions being labeled as "impractical" (Delay & Dyment, 2003). This was no different for the women who participated in this focus group, hereafter referred to as "co-researchers." One co-researcher recalled the process of packing to lead trips while she was an undergraduate student trip leader,

> *"I remember when I was a trip leader I would just like agonize…you know [you're in your] late teens, early 20s like what can I pack that looks outdoorsy enough. Isn't too prissy, isn't too girly, but also doesn't make me look like a boy and how can I balance this looking right. I had a lot of imposter syndrome around my appearance going into these spaces."*

Another stated in her narrative,

> *"When I present more femininely in outdoor spaces, I am often perceived as frail, weak, or incompetent rather than as a confident, capable outdoorswoman. I've faced judgments and questions, such as, 'Why paint your nails before a backpacking trip? They'll just get ruined' or 'Why wear makeup? We're just hiking.'"*

Many social philosophers speak about our perceptions of self and our embodiment of ourselves as responses to imagined perceptions by others, however, as a woman those perceptions often aren't imagined. They instead are stated directly and clearly through derogatory questioning such as those exemplified in the above quote. When women participate in outdoor recreation, these comments are made often under the guise of "helpfulness" and addressing "impracticalities" in our appearance or dress (Delay & Dyment, 2003; Newbery, 2004). The big question, however, is, "Impractical for who?" During the focus group, co-researchers lamented these comments, made most often by men, about the way they are choosing to show up physically in this space when it has no bearing whatsoever on the success of the program. One co-researcher expressed her frustration by stating,

> *"These comments disregard the fact that doing these things makes me feel confident and empowered. My appearance has no bearing on my leadership or decision-making abilities, yet I am still questioned and judged for expressing my femininity. It's frustrating that societal expectations dictate how I should look to be taken seriously in spaces where competence should speak louder than appearance."*

Alongside these frustrations, though, there was a sense of not caring what the opinions of others were when it came to physical appearance and expressions of femininity. While there was

annoyance expressed at those who felt the need to make unwarranted and unwanted comments, co-researchers did not feel the need to change how they performed their femininity through appearance as members of the campus outdoor recreation community because of this feedback. One major shift in recent years that the co-researchers pointed to for their comfort in performing their femininity through appearance is the rise of social media and the representation on social media of hyper-feminine outdoorswomen. One co-researcher stated in the focus group,

> *"I find myself often watching people like 'granola girlies' on social media a lot more just because like I like how they express their femininity. Like there's one woman, her name is Jenny, it's like the Happy Hippie on like TikTok, and I really enjoy watching her content because she wears things like dresses and skirts…while in the outdoors and like she looks so feminine and she wears like bright pink and she talks about how…wearing those clothes makes her feel empowered and makes her feel empowered to be a woman in outdoors. And it's really inspiring to see and it makes me…want to maybe dress even more femininely in those outdoor spaces because like she can look that way and look amazing and look very feminine, but still do all these really, really awesome things like summitting a mountain in like a watermelon dress. Like it's crazy because it's just a dress but for some people…seeing somebody wearing a dress might mean like oh well maybe she can't summit this mountain, but she can."*

Through these social media accounts, this co-researcher received direct messaging that she could perform her femininities through appearance and how she physically showed up in outdoor spaces while still being a capable woman who belongs. This messaging empowers women to shake off negative comments about their physical performances of femininity and make an authentic and free choice in their appearance without guilt or shame.

"The body is wrought of action and interaction in situated social encounters and often by means of institutionalized ritual. In communicative action, the body comes to be" (Waskul & Vannini, 2006, p.7). This embracing of painted nails, makeup, dresses, and other traditionally feminine appearances by current and up-and-coming leaders in the field paints a more inclusive and feminine picture of the future. Across all disciplines, but particularly in those that are male dominated such as campus outdoor recreation, women look to one another for support, guidance, and mentorship. A lack of mentorship among women staff in outdoor recreation has been pointed to as one of the primary reasons the field is still so male dominated (Rogers, 2018; Waller et al., 2015). In a community that so often tells women that they are showing up incorrectly, that they are too feminine, too soft, too much, it is an act of resistance to authentically embody one's own femininity. Authentically and joyfully embracing femininity paves the way for other women to do the same and sends the message to every participant and staff that every body and every appearance is acceptable and can be celebrated in this space.

Performing Femininity – Behavior

In stark contrast to the embracing of traditional femininity through appearance is the feeling of obligation centered around performing traditionally feminine behaviors. Co-researchers discussed performing gendered behaviors at work and how these performances reinforce or contest traditional ideas of femininity, the struggles they experienced navigating this balance, and the responses of those around them to their performances.

Secretary & Administrative Roles

"While she was excited to lead trips, she regularly found herself performing administrative tasks such as sending emails to staff, coordinating trainings, and scheduling meetings."

Nora's experience as the de facto secretary of her campus outdoor recreation program in the combined narrative is one shared by all co-researchers during both undergraduate and graduate student staff experiences. There is a long history of women taking on significantly more unpaid labor than their men colleagues across disciplines, leading to more unpaid and unrecognized labor as a result of inequitable divisions of traditionally feminine tasks (Babcock et al., 2017; Misra et al., 2012; Mitchell & Hesli, 2013). These additional tasks almost always serve to advance the organization or team overall but garner little to no recognition for the woman who was responsible for the task itself. These tasks are almost always service-oriented and include duties such as taking meeting minutes, organizing staff trainings or get-togethers, or volunteering for committees (Babcock et al., 2017; Misra et al., 2012). This is no different in campus outdoor recreation programming. Co-researchers all recalled instances of taking on more than their fair share of administrative tasks to ultimately benefit those around them without any recognition or appreciation for these efforts. This work isn't taken on eagerly or necessarily even willingly, however, with one co-researcher stating in their narrative,

> *"I do this in part because I feel it is expected of me, but also because I have found that the majority of men that I have worked with in outdoor recreation do not schedule or communicate effectively. I generally do not receive any incentive or credit for this extra work."*

This sentiment was echoed during the focus group with another expressing,

> *"Something that I found really, really powerful though was you talking about taking on the role of secretary in your workplace. I think that is something that I definitely myself have experienced because who else is going to do it? And then…you're the one who's blamed if it doesn't happen, and I often struggle with like I want this thing to happen. It's*

not my job to make it happen. But if I don't do it, no one's going to do it. And then we're all going to suffer for it."

The women in the focus group expressed time and again a begrudging acceptance of fulfilling this secretarial or administrative role within their programs. Additionally, the assumption of this role comes with little regard or acknowledgement from others, and sometimes actually results in women putting in a significant amount of work that the men that they work with reap the benefit of by taking credit for someone else's work, such as in this example from the focus group

"*I almost feel like sometimes they do it to co-opt the work that you're doing. For example, I recently was advocating for creating a list of trip competencies and training so that our staff knew what they needed to learn and when they could learn it, which you think an organization would have. And the men that I had that meeting with looked for every excuse not to agree with me like just said they didn't understand me at one point, one very clearly mansplained what I was saying back to me. But made it so that it was his idea, not mine and said that my idea didn't make sense.*

And later, out of that meeting, they basically left and were like, 'Yeah…we don't need this. This is a ridiculous thing. It doesn't make sense for our organization'. And then later, my counterpart actually did make those trip competencies post that meeting, but he got all the credit for it. And I got no credit or recognition for the idea."

Another common experience is men supervisors or coworkers taking advantage of the behind-the-scenes planning work already done such as in this example of another woman in the same organization's experience with a male supervisor,

"He took the lead on the trainings, even if she had designed them and planned them."

Focus group participants noted that when they did receive credit, it was women coming up to them to recognize their work, often women who weren't even in the outdoor recreation department of campus recreation.

> *"I helped to run our pre-orientation program over this past summer, and it was the women [who weren't a part of our campus outdoor rec program] specifically who came to me and said, 'Oh, my God, you're doing incredible amounts of work for this. Look at all of this stuff that you're doing. Look at all this labor you're putting in. Like you're running this program essentially.' And I had never received any kind of praise from that from my supervisor or my male coworker."*

It's no wonder that we as women take on these duties, however. Women are asked significantly more frequently by their supervisors and pressured to volunteer for service-oriented tasks in the workplace (Babcock et al., 2017). Moreover, performing these administrative tasks to a high level was modeled for each one of the co-researchers by women supervisors and mentors. Co-researchers took time to examine the difference between having men and women supervisors in the campus outdoor recreation space, including their leadership style, the administrative success of the program, and the messaging sent to staff. Two had incredibly similar experiences when a male supervisor left, and a woman came in to take his place. Both programs had been what they described as a "walking, talking legal train wreck" and a "massive liability" because of the way the programs had been administered when their male supervisor was in charge. Both described their previous supervisors as having very little care for policies, procedures, and standards.

"We ran wild and there were no policies. We did not submit paperwork for trips so we just kind of went. I have no idea if paperwork ever got done for any of those trips, which is a massive liability."

When that supervisor left and a woman stepped into his place, things changed, but that wasn't always positively regarded by the staff.

"She came in with policies, procedures, regulations, and I loved it. I craved that structure and risk management. The other trip leaders hated it. They railed against her and her totalitarian rule even though every single thing she was doing was in the best interest of our program. I question whether they would have made such a stink if it had been a man in charge doing the same thing. There were discussions about how 'she's just not saying it right' and she needs to be 'gentler'."

Even when women were performing their expected service-oriented work, they still faced significant criticism for the *way* that they performed that work.

Becoming Palatable

"Maybe I shouldn't be so outspoken."

This sentiment that runs through Nora's mind as she debates whether she even wants to continue in outdoor recreation is a repeated intrusive thought that every woman in the focus group has had enter her mind during her time in campus outdoor recreation. One co-researcher stated,

"I feel that I must come across as likable to earn respect from my staff and coworkers to a degree that my male counterparts do not. As a result, I place constant emphasis on

seeming 'nice' and being collaborative. I especially emphasize collaboration in my leadership style to avoid being perceived as overbearing. I often do this even when I may think it may be detrimental."

Women face the expectation in our society to behave and communicate in traditionally feminine ways such as being caring, collaborative, passive, gentle, self-sacrificing, yielding, and giving (Knapp, 1993). This is no different in the field of campus outdoor recreation with one co-researcher recalling,

"Perhaps most frustratingly, I feel as though I may never be openly angry even if someone has objectively done something disrespectful to me. Instead, I have had many experiences which have reaffirmed that if I want to address the disrespect of men, I must present myself as being sad and/or hurt."

The women in this focus group discussed shared experiences of learning to present themselves in ways that their male supervisors and colleagues would respond positively to – dampening their emotions, asking nicely or implying that it was their supervisor's idea rather than being assertive, and approaching issues or concerns with "gentle" language. One co-researcher describes her experience below.

"Women, in my experience are expected to present themselves as like very demure and very at worst subservient and maybe like at best collaborative. I know that I feel like I was very aware of how I was presenting myself and was really trying to come across as not overly confident, not all of these things so that people didn't see me as overbearing. And I think I did a good job of that. I feel like I was very kind of eager to please to the people around me."

For these women, it almost felt like speaking another language and teaching others to do the same such as this co-researcher's description of her interactions with supervisors during the focus group:

> *"The number of times I've been in a scenario where I had a male supervisor and I had to learn to speak their language, essentially, where I became this liaison between the other women staff and my supervisor because I knew how to not rile him up or I knew how to say things and make him actually hear the things that I was saying."*

Not performing their femininity in this way led to repercussions and negative feedback from their supervisors like this interaction shared by one co-researcher:

> *"I had a male supervisor who anytime a woman pushed back against him he was like, why are you arguing with me? Why are you so argumentative? Why are you trying to fight with me on this"?*

In the best cases, women who did voice opinions or contest this assumption of traditionally feminine roles were labeled as "aggressive" or "uncooperative" such as in this scenario from one participant's narrative:

> *"I also confidently voice my opinions. Unfortunately, this has led male supervisors to label me as aggressive or abrasive."*

In more extreme scenarios, however, the refusal to adhere to traditional gender roles and instead insist on being free to express opinions in the same way as men in the organization has led to severe consequences that could have long term, lasting impacts on a career in the field of campus outdoor recreation. One co-researcher shared her experience in her current workplace.

> *"As I've started much more vocally like advocating for women, talking about the problems, challenging my boss and the things that he is doing, the things that we as a program are doing, I feel like our relationship has just disintegrated and my place like on the leadership team has disintegrated."*

Another who was placed in a similar situation was taken off programs and out of leadership roles when she expressed similar concerns.

> *"I will voice my opinions if I don't like something that you've done, or it doesn't align with whatever goal we have for the program. And unfortunately, that did lead to like my supervisor not liking me because I constantly challenged the ideas that he had if it didn't align with the goals of the program, and I mentioned it to him. 'Well, doesn't matter. It's my program. Your opinion doesn't matter.' And it kind of got to the point where it felt like he was retaliating to me for being overly confident and voicing my opinions to the point that I was supposed to help with planning [a canoe] trip before I left. [He] just took me out of it, took me out of all the planning meetings without telling me anything about it."*

These experiences are directly in line with Butler's theory of performativity, which states that those who perform their gender correctly are rewarded with acceptance into society, while those who shirk their gender roles are ostracized or worse (Butler, 1988). Performing gender correctly is a "performative accomplishment" (p. 520) in society, and not performing that gender is seen as taboo (Butler, 1988).

But what about the instances of gender being performed correctly and still not being seen as an accomplishment, which is a situation that women often face in the field of outdoor recreation in general and in this instance as a part of campus outdoor recreation. One co-

researcher found herself consistently criticized for performing her femininity through the open expression of emotions detailed below:

> *"I am an openly emotional person, unafraid to express my feelings, including crying when necessary. When overwhelmed—especially while leading trips in unfamiliar circumstances—I may cry as a way to process challenges and move forward. However, many male colleagues and participants have misinterpreted this as weakness or a lack of capability, which couldn't be further from the truth. Crying is simply a coping mechanism I use to navigate difficult situations. Despite this, their discomfort with emotional expression has often led to judgments, with male supervisors noting in evaluations that I "need to be more professional with emotions and facial expressions," further perpetuating the stigma around emotional vulnerability in the workplace."*

Emotional expression is a key part of traditional femininity, so why is it not valued in the campus outdoor recreation field in the same way as being demure, cooperative, and yielding? In this space, do they want us to perform our femininities, or do they want us to be the "masculinized superwoman" that Delay & Dyment (2003) describe in their work? When we receive negative feedback for both, how are we expected to proceed?

Emotional Labor & Caretaking

"This is really hurtful, Nora. I'm really offended that you would say that."

"You're damaging our friendship and the team by making this a big deal. You know I'm a feminist."

In addition to other service-oriented tasks, women are deemed responsible for the emotional well-being of all others on the team, often being given the overarching burden of

emotional labor and caretaking tasks such as mentoring new staff, curating the culture of the workplace, and soothing interpersonal conflicts (Babcock et al., 2017; Misra et al., 2012).

Co-researchers spoke at length about the double-edged sword of mentorship in the campus outdoor recreation setting. Mentorship is an essential element of success for women in campus outdoor recreation, with participants looking to women leaders' cues for performing femininities and women staff seeking out mentorship form more seasoned women leaders in their workplaces (Rogers, 2018). All co-researchers recalled fondly their own mentors in this field and how positively impactful those relationships were and still are, especially when navigating the at times difficult balance of being a woman in the campus outdoor recreation field.

> *"I think it's always like in the same way that female mentorship is powerful…having these spaces to talk about these things openly non-judgmentally and to get validation that you're not alone is always a really powerful experience."*

All co-researchers expressed a genuine joy and desire to further the mentorship that they received and to mentor women in this field, however, mentorship can be a hefty emotional lift, especially when the number of women in leadership positions in campus outdoor recreation is still significantly lower than the number of men (Christie, 2018; Waller et al., 2015). One co-researcher recalled the strain that mentorship added to her schedule:

> *"And I'm spending hours and hours with women every single week mentoring them, having these conversations with them, all of that. And I am a part-time graduate assistant."*

Not only does mentorship require time, but it also requires emotional energy and the ability to hold space (Cairo, 2021) for those you're mentoring, and it's often assumed that women will take on that role for other women.

> *"And again, it's just that like assumed role, of course you're mentoring all these women staff that you have, because who else is going to do it? At that point like feeling this obligation to take people under your wings. I took a lot of emotional burden as well as taking a lot of time outside of my regular duties, which my male director never did, our male coordinators never did."*

Co-researchers noted that when men colleagues did perform these duties, they felt compelled to positively recognize the work that they did even when women never receive that same recognition.

> *"And the ironic thing is anytime one of my male coworkers does anything of these things, I have to like throw them the biggest celebration of like, 'Oh my God, you took my advice to talk about women versus men's sleeping bags this week. Thank you so much. That was so inclusive of you', but nobody's doing that for the women who are regularly putting in all that work."*

In these instances, women are still taking on the emotional burden of validation and recognition for men doing one small part of the responsibility that they are just assumed to shoulder each day in advancing gender equity and inclusion in the workspace.

When women do not perform these duties correctly or at all, they face significant backlash. Co-researchers explored times when men supervisors or colleagues had put the burden on their shoulders to fix an emotional wrong or perceived slight.

> *"I recently kind of like had a conversation with him a couple of months ago after I really kind of called him out on something negative that was happening that he was doing, and he ended up having a conversation with me about how he was really hurt that I didn't respect him or care about him, which, I don't know if he meant it to be manipulative, but it felt a little bit like that."*

Not only are women expected to perform their femininity in a way molded to please others, but they are expected to "fix" it when they do it incorrectly, leading to self-policing of the tone used. This perpetuates this cycle of women consistently taking on massive emotional burdens at work, unrecognized and unappreciated.

What's Next?

Reading through the narratives and the transcript of our focus group, something jumped out at me and made my question my own perspective. Why is everything about men? Why, when we are tasked with writing about our own experiences and expressions of femininity in these spaces, do we so readily jump to our negative experiences with men coworkers, supervisors, and participants? We all recognized in the focus group that we've had positive experiences with other women in campus outdoor recreation, but that's always secondary to highlighting the policing of our bodies, our voices, and our actions by men. Even in preparing to share the combined narrative with my graduate school cohort I was worried about upsetting the men in the room despite the fact that I knew that every single woman in that writing circle would identify strongly with the experiences of Nora. Why are men at the center of our feminist narrative?

Simply put: Men have power.

While this is a study for and about women, there are power imbalances in place in our society on the whole as well as within campus outdoor recreation spaces. “Men have to drive the change” became almost a mantra during our focus group. It is expected for women to care and fight for the advancement and equity of women in these spaces, to create an environment for fellow women to thrive, but it is the men who have the power to make change.

While all the experiences discussed above may not be universal to every woman student staff in campus outdoor recreation, I would assert that most current or former women student staff will resonate with at least one of the encounters or feelings described above. It is heartening that women student staff are embracing performances of femininity through appearance and hitting back at those who feel that it’s appropriate to comment on their bodies. What is disheartening, however, is that the earliest cited source in this study is Knapp’s 1985 study about escaping the gender trap, yet we are still having these conversations and women are still having these experiences forty years later.

So, what’s next? While there needs to be an overall shift in the campus outdoor recreation culture, that can start in small ways. From the experiences of the co-researchers, there seem to be two very practical and implementable changes – training and thought process.

Practical Application - Training

Campus outdoor recreation professionals are inundated with new trainings and training strategies regularly, and particularly those around interpersonal skills can come across as disingenuous or just trying to check a box. Furthermore, holding a specific training on making campus outdoor recreation a more inclusive and welcoming space for women and femininity may only serve to further other and alienate women who want to join the field. A more realistic

approach that would make fundamental, institutional change is to bake inclusive language and attitudes into the already scheduled trainings for campus outdoor recreation staff. One potential implementation tool when leading annual trainings to run trips or programs is to be mindful of language and attitudes used. For example, try not to refer to them as "hard" and "soft" skills but rather "interpersonal" and "technical" or other more neutral language. This removes gendered implications. Further, ensure that both women and men members of the team are being given equal time and attention for both aspects of training with no shame for needing assistance with either. Additionally, the focus during trainings is most often primarily on the technical side of things. Giving equal weight to interpersonal and social skills such as dealing with homesickness, anxiety, or just creating those positive social bonds and connections sends the message that these are equally important parts of trip leading that every staff member should value.

Even before trainings begin, leaders in campus outdoor recreation should be reviewing and assessing curriculum and communications through a critical lens. Are these trainings focusing more heavily on one type of skill over another? Does the language included in the preparatory and training materials other any of the staff or participants? Are packing lists, pre-trip emails, and equipment inclusive of everyone?

Practical Application – Thought Process

In the same vein as critically examining your training, one major step that everyone – student staff and administrative staff – can take is shifting their own thought processes and taking a moment to introspect when providing critique and praise or when feeling annoyed or frustrated with peers, staff, and supervisors. It's important to ask ourselves why we're having the thoughts and feelings that we are. I would guess that more often than not, these are our genuine, unbiased feelings. However, there is always a chance that critiques, annoyance, and even praise can come

from a gendered place that is perpetuating the male-dominated narrative of outdoor spaces. There is no one but ourselves who can make that determination or make that change in thought patterns. A personal example of my own internalized misogyny in the outdoors field is how judgmental I was for a very long time of what other women would choose to bring on multi-day trips. I would think to myself how impractical it was to bring a small bottle of nail polish, a brush, or a razor with them, and during bag checks would ridicule them to my fellow campus outdoor recreation staff. Even further, I would judge what other women would wear, especially if it was too "cute" or "girly." These feelings, however, were deeply rooted in the story that I had been told and that I perpetuated about who belongs in the outdoors and the "right" way to do it. Even as I felt shame, anger, and embarrassment around my own struggles with how to present myself, I made other women feel that exact same way.

It's not just about appearance, though. We must also look at our feelings towards people's actions and words through that same critical lens. Another personal example of mine is that I strongly judged any woman who was "too nice" on trips. I thought it must be fake no matter how genuine they seemed. This is another way that we put down other women and make femininity unacceptable in outdoor spaces. So, the next time you feel frustrated, angry, or ready to critique, first ask yourself why. The same goes for praising individuals. How and why are you doing it? Is it about them epitomizing hegemonic masculinity and the "right" way to be outdoors, or is it coming from a true place of admiration that won't make others feel left out?

Rewriting Nora's Story

Sharing these stories is powerful. The voices of women are necessary to the advancement of this field, and we should continue to resist in our own performances of femininity and model that resistance for the next generation of leaders in this field. But we must also keep pushing,

keep questioning, and keep studying. What if we could re-write Nora's narrative in a world where embracing her femininity was just a part of being in campus outdoor recreation? By embracing some of the practical changes listed, maybe we can paint a more inclusive, positive future for Nora and all women.

Nora grew up spending time outdoors fly-fishing with her dad, mountain biking, and spending time down by the river, so when the chance to participate in a freshman preorientation program was presented, she jumped at the opportunity. She spent the week whitewater canoeing, rock climbing, and hiking. That year she applied to work for her school's outdoor program and was ecstatic when she received an email from the program director, Craig, with the subject line "Welcome to the Team!"

"That's cool that your nails match your backpack. Maybe I'll do that next time." Nora looked down at the left hand she had been tapping against the table as she and Jackson, a new hire leading his first trip with her, went over the final itinerary for the backpacking trip "Thanks! It's my favorite color, and I like how it makes me feel."

"Welcome to the best weekend of your life! I'm Jackson, I'll be one of your guides, and this is Nora. We'll be working together this week to give you all an awesome experience!" Nora winced as Jackson bellowed next to her. "Jackson," Nora whispered, "could you not blow out my eardrums?" "Oh, sorry! I'll take a step away next time." They spent the next ten minutes going over the trip itinerary together with the nervous group of students in front of them.

Nora returned from the trip drained. It had rained the entire time, and a raccoon had broken into their campsite and eaten all of their s'more supplies. Luckily it wasn't a bear. She scheduled a meeting with Craig to debrief and get participant feedback. At the end of the meeting Craig stopped Nora on her way out. "Thank you for showing Jackson the ropes for this trip! I know it didn't go perfectly, but I appreciate you taking the time to train him. If you're thinking of continuing in campus rec you should come by and talk to me about a Graduate Assistantship for next year."

Nora returned to her dorm energized, excited at this first step towards a new future.

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