

**Hikers That Look Like Me: An Analysis of Mainstream
Environmental Organization's Latinx Youth Engagement**

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Abstract:

I. Introduction

Moving to the Pacific Northwest (PNW) for university, I was excited to make the most of Oregon's nature and outdoor recreation activities. Where the PNW wonders never disappointed, I quickly came to realize that whether it be out on local trails, visiting state parks or forests I rarely came across people who looked like me, a Latina. My personal experience and identity has motivated me to think critically about the ways people are included and not included in the outdoors

establishes something and creates meaning. These efforts thus merit comparative rhetorical analysis.

Only through critically examining the efforts, or lack there of, of these organizations can we figure

areas while also advocating for these spaces to be enjoyable for everyone rather than limited to spaces of exploitative labor.

Though the history of Latinxs in the PNW is inextricably linked to the outdoors, contemporary communication geared toward “outdoor activities,” are notably void of brown people. It is important here to operationalize and acknowledge the importance of naming something as the “outdoors” and/or “nature.” Though broader and more diverse **namings** are needed, for the intent of this research I use mainstream PNW conceptions of the outdoors (think REI; camping, hiking, biking) to analyze how Latinx youth are excluded from and or included in these dominant discourses. Pertinent to understanding this conception of the outdoors is the theory of racialized space. In her book, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors*, Carolyn Finney, articulates the concept of racialized space as it applies to the outdoors writing, “

communication, in creating meaning and conveying purpose shapes discourse, the ways that these organizations convey their mission is important in creating a more inclusive

III. Methods and Sources

Especially pertinent to understanding how this context impacts current rhetorical framings is the way organizations conceptualize and address this need. Guiding this research was a few key questions:

back. I will use an example to try and illustrate what I mean here. Say you sit on the board of directors for a white-led environmental non-profit, your organization realizes, or is informed, that they are not meeting the entire communities needs and or doesn't havSay ydhat

they need to hire people of color and support those already doing the work. White-led environmental organizations need to center environmental justice, thinking about environmentalism and social justice in tandem. They should share and give resources to support organizations of color and build coalitions across non-traditional environmental stakeholders. The dominant discourse needs to shift, all people need to be included in rhetoric, organizations and efforts to make the

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