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White environmental subjectivity and the politics of belonging

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ABSTRACT

In a society dominated by a colorblind approach to racial difference, racial categories are often viewed as unchanging and constructed in a time past. This article examines the making of racial categories and subjectivities in everyday perceptions and portrayals of place and belonging related to environmentalism. It examines the ways in which middle-class white people, who engage regularly with Latino immigrants, simultaneously construct the racial category of 'white' and affirm their own belonging in Boulder, Colorado through an exclusionary discourse of environmentalism. In Boulder, immigrants and non-immigrant Latinos are often portrayed as unaware of environmentalism, not interested in environmentalism, and/or too busy or poor to participate in environmentalism. In interviews, white residents of the city reproduce discourses of privilege and exclusion through environmental discourses and reinforce their own white environmental subjectivity as the norm. The insider/outsider division established through environmental discourse in Boulder is a specific example of how exclusion is enforced through the racialization of 'natural' spaces and environmental activities and how environmentalism itself is an important articulation of difference.

Subjectivité environnementale et politiques d'appartenance

RÉSUMÉ

Dans une société dominée par une approche d'insensibilité à la couleur quant à la différence raciale, les catégories raciales sont souvent perçues comme inchangées et construites à une époque passée. Cet article examine l'élaboration de catégories raciales et de subjectivités à travers des perceptions quotidiennes et des portraits de lieu et d'appartenance en rapport avec l'environnementalisme. Il examine les manières dont les personnes blanches de classe moyenne, qui ont contact régulièrement avec des immigrants latinos, construisent simultanément la catégorie raciale de « blanc » et affirment leur propre appartenance à Boulder dans le Colorado à travers un discours d'environnementalisme d'exclusion. A Boulder, les immigrants et les non immigrants latinos sont souvent dépeints comme ignorants de l'environnementalisme, sans intérêt pour l'environnementalisme et / ou trop occupés ou trop pauvres pour participer à l'environnementalisme. Dans des interviews, les résidents blancs de la ville reproduisent les discours de privilège et

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d'exclusion à travers des discours environnementaux et confirmer leur propre subjectivité environnementale blanche comme norme. La division entre venu de l'intérieur et venu de l'extérieur établie à travers le discours environnemental à Boulder est un exemple précis de la manière dont l'exclusion est appliquée à travers la racialisation d'espaces « naturels » et d'activités environnementales et de la manière dont l'environnementalisme même est une articulation importante de la différence.

Subjetividad ambiental blanca y la política de pertenencia

RESUMEN

En una sociedad dominada por un enfoque sin prejuicios hacia la diferencia racial, las categorías raciales son a menudo vistas como inmutables y construidas en un tiempo pasado. Este artículo examina la formulación de categorías raciales y subjetividades en las percepciones cotidianas y las representaciones de lugar y pertenencia relacionadas con el ambientalismo. Examina las formas en que los blancos de clase media, que se involucran regularmente con inmigrantes latinos, construyen simultáneamente la categoría racial "blanca" y afirman su propia pertenencia en Boulder, Colorado, a través de un discurso excluyente de ambientalismo. En Boulder, los inmigrantes y no inmigrantes latinos a menudo son retratados como personas no conscientes del ambientalismo, no interesados en el ambientalismo, y/o demasiado ocupados o pobres para participar en el ambientalismo. En las entrevistas, los residentes blancos de la ciudad reproducen discursos de privilegio y exclusión a través de discursos ambientales y refuerzan su propia subjetividad ambiental blanca como norma. La división interna/externa establecida a través del discurso ambiental en Boulder es un ejemplo específico de cómo se impone la exclusión a través de la racialización de espacios "naturales" y actividades ambientales y cómo el ambientalismo en sí mismo es una importante articulación de la diferencia.

Introduction

The racial agenda of conservative and right-leaning politics in the United States has received much attention, from examination of the racially charged criticisms of President Barack Obama to historical and political economic accounts of the Southern Strategy in the past half-century (Edge, 2010; Inwood, 2015). Similarly, colorblindness as a racial ideology has been demonstrated to be a denial of racism rather than a utopian, post-race reality. The role of the politically liberal white person who expresses a desire for racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion in perpetuating racial exclusions in the United States is less explored. Yet, liberal white people who say they oppose racism can reinforce racism through discussions of 'difference.' I examine how liberal middle-class and wealthy white people, who interact with Latino immigrants, simultaneously construct the racial category of 'white' and affirm their own belonging in Boulder, Colorado through an exclusionary discourse of environmentalism.

Boulder sits beneath the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Looking west over the city of nearly 100,000 residents, red cliffs rise a thousand feet from the valley, forming a backdrop to the city. Since the 1950s, city residents and government have worked to protect this

mountain backdrop from sprawl. This work culminated in the preservation of over 45,000 acres of open space around the city. In 1967 Boulder was the first city in the country to pass a tax via referendum to provide funds to acquire and maintain open space.

Consequently, over the past 50 years, establishment and protection of open space has become the norm in the city. The city has developed a reputation for being 'environmental' in its city government decisions, industry, and consumer habits – in short, its way of life. At the same time, the racial demographic history of the city is one of whiteness; 88 percent of its population identifies as non-Hispanic white (U.S. Census, 2010).

When asking why Boulder is so 'environmental,' one must also ask why it is so 'white,' not only by the numbers, but also in practice. I demonstrate below that the practices that comprise Boulder's 'environmental' reputation are intricately connected with a hegemonic wealthy, liberal, consumerist whiteness that also characterizes the city. Drawing on interview data, I explore how white residents discursively position immigrants and non-immigrant Latinos in the city as 'other,' particularly through portrayals of their environmental practices. This 'othering' is one way the specific form of white environmental subjectivity is performed in Boulder. I analyze 'white environmental subjectivity' as the ongoing discursive formation of a 'white' racial self in part through environmental discourses. I argue that racial and environmental discourses are mutually constituted in the formation of white environmental subjectivity. While not all environmental discourses delineate a racial 'other,' and not all immigrants or Latinos are positioned as 'other' through environmental discourses, my analysis shows how difference can be articulated through environmentalism. Moreover, the difference articulated through environmentalism can be intricately connected with racial identifications.

I demonstrate how environmentalism shapes portrayals of insiders and outsiders in Boulder. Racial readings of an insider/outsider binary can take many forms, including white suburb/ethnic urban core, that operate in popular white mainstream discourse beyond a specific location such as Boulder.¹ The insider/outsider binary can also be shaped around environmental norms, for example, hiker/non-hiker or vegetarian/omnivore. I focus on the racial distinctions constructed through environmental categories such as health, physical activity, and environmental ethics. These more specific binaries, such as physically active/inactive and responsible/irresponsible consumer, can often be ignored or dismissed as insignificant cultural facts. Yet, subjects are formed and dynamics of belonging are mapped onto bodies and landscapes through these binaries and cultural distinctions.

To the extent that environmentalism continues to move into mainstream culture in the United States, it is necessary to examine how environmental discourses can produce difference. Boulder is famous for its politically liberal stance on environment, as well as on racial and gender equality. Thus, it provides an ideal location to examine the ways 'difference,' 'race,' and 'environmentalism' intersect in a place where the norm is opposition to racism. Attention to this intersection can inform the analysis of the changing role of 'environmentalism' in the United States. The case also sheds light on national dynamics of belonging shaped by the perceptions of who can and who cannot align themselves with the ethics and practices of 'environmentalism.'

First I review literatures related to the process of racialization, whiteness, political ecology, and geographies of belonging. The main part of the article, in which interview data is presented and analyzed, is divided into four sub-sections. The first sub-section describes interviewees' descriptions of Boulder as an 'environmental' place. In the second and third

sub-sections, I analyze interviewees' portrayal that immigrants and non-immigrant Latinos in Boulder do not participate in quintessential environmental activities. I demonstrate that this portrayal performatively reaffirms white subjectivity through discursive exclusion of the city's immigrant and non-immigrant Latino population. Next, I argue that white interviewees' disbelief that any immigrants and Latinos participate in environmental activities draws on assumptions of proper environmental behavior contingent on class status. I also explore the ambivalent role of whiteness in the construction of 'self' and 'other.' I conclude by arguing that environmentalism provides a relatively unified articulation of difference, partly through reliance on racial thinking.

Research was conducted in 2010 and 2011 and consists primarily of 19 semi-structured interviews with white (self-identified) volunteers who taught English to adult immigrants living in Boulder. Volunteers helped improve immigrants' language skills and facilitated their integration in the larger community. Interviewees were asked how they identified in terms of race or ethnicity. The majority said 'white' or 'Caucasian,' and a few added phrases like 'WASP,' 'Gringo-Caucasian-white Eastern European, Jewish even a little bit,' and 'white American.' These answers illustrate the way interviewees both adopt 'white' as their identity and simultaneously tailor or resist the racial category. This variation in adoption of the identity 'white' illustrates that though 'white' is often understood as a stable identity, it is consistently produced, inhabited, and remade through everyday discourse.

Interview topics focused on perceptions of Boulder and on interactions with volunteers' immigrant students. The research focused on white racism to better understand how well-meaning white liberals propagate exclusion and racism in Boulder even as they want to eliminate it. Interviewees' articulations of difference, otherness, and belonging are significant because of their desire to incorporate immigrants into Boulder. Despite their desire to help immigrants integrate into the community, the interviewees often pointed out how different the immigrants were from their own perception of what is typical in Boulder. When conducting qualitative research, as in this study, the goal is not to select a research population representative of a larger population, but instead to select a population that is most capable of addressing the central question of the research. In this case, white volunteers teaching English to immigrants were best positioned to answer the question 'how is difference articulated in relation to environmental practices and norms in Boulder, Colorado?'

References throughout the article to 'volunteers' refer to white volunteer English teachers. References to 'students' indicate immigrant students learning English in Boulder, most of whom in this research emigrated from Latin America and spoke Spanish as their primary language. Interviewees' references to 'immigrants' usually refers to immigrants from Latin America but sometimes also from other locations in the Global South. I use the word 'Latinos' to refer to a broad category of people including those who immigrated to the United States from Latin America and people who have Latin American heritage but are not immigrants. Further, Latino is not a racial identity but rather an ethnic or cultural identity. However, in this research, interviewees' portrayals of Latinos and immigrants serve to reinforce racial assumptions and characterizations. Thus, in discussing portrayals of Latinos, I refer to the representations as racial or racial-ethnic (see Almaguer (2012) for analysis of the ways Latinos are racialized in United States contexts). This article does not analyze Latinos' environmental practices in depth.² The purpose of this article is to explore the portrayals of immigrants and Latinos by interviewees who work with them to understand better how racism and racial logics operate through environmental discourses and racial subject formation.

Geographic theorization of racialization and belonging

Racialization and racial thinking are pervasive in the United States (Omi & Winant, 1994), and racism is often identified in the reductive nature of racial thinking, typified by stereotypes (Hall, 1997). However, Stoler (2000) argues that racial thinking is not a straightforward application of stereotypes. Racism is powerful because it is malleable; it changes over time and with context. How does it persist across time and context? Racial thinking thrives under conditions in which visible, physical traits are perceived to connect to moral, character-based traits (Stoler, 2000, p. 372). The specific relationship between the physical and moral characteristics changes with time and place, but the quest to connect the two is the hallmark of racial thinking. Further, the ambiguity of the relationship between the physical and moral traits is the condition for the proliferation and possibility of racial thinking (Stoler, 2000, p. 372). The ambiguity of the relationship allows racism to be malleable, to change more easily with time and context.

Stoler looks for examples of racial thinking in unexpected places. She says, 'In turning to inconsistencies and disparities in debates that ostensibly were not about race at all, we may better capture the specific ways in which that mobility [of racism] was realized and the consequences of it' (2000, p. 385). Analyzing environmentalism as an arena of racial thinking opens the door to better understanding how racism plays a part in and becomes integral to a discourse seen as unrelated to race. Whiteness, in particular, must be examined in the context of environmentalism.

Whiteness scholars point out that although whiteness is not often seen as a racial identity, it is (Bonnett, 1997; Gilmore, 2002; Kobayashi & Peake, 2000). Because I examine the socio-spatial processes of racialization in everyday life, I use 'racialized' to refer to all people who are subject to racializing discourses, including white people, who are continually (though not always consistently) racialized as 'white.' I focus on Boulder as a space of white privilege, 'a less conscious but hegemonic form of racism' (Pulido, 2000, p. 12), where racial privilege is enacted through norms of environmentalism.

The potency and grave effects of white racism in United States history and continuing to today suggest that whiteness is unchanging, a monolith at the root of racism. However, scholars of whiteness have demonstrated how whiteness, as an identity, is contingent and changes over time (Bonnett, 1997). Further, Wendy Shaw rejects the concept of whiteness as an 'ethnicity'; instead, it is a process of unification that privileges some and marginalizes others (Shaw, 2007, p. 13). Thus, whiteness is a strategy of empowerment used by groups of people (Shaw, 2007, p. 13). This theorization of whiteness as a process and a strategy underlines its fluid nature, showing it to be a 'fickle entity with a capacity to expand and contract its membership, as required' (Shaw, 2007, p. 4). Whiteness, then, is always in a state of becoming, an 'ongoing and unfinished history' (Ahmed, 2007, p. 150).

This article investigates how what people refer to as 'white,' both as a personal identity and a characterization of a place, comes to be. It traces how 'white' as an identity is talked about in everyday life, that is, how people reiterate and reconstruct the meaning of 'white' racial identity. This analysis shows how race is articulated in conjunction with other forms of identity and ways of life, specifically environmentalism. It also highlights how the boundaries of whiteness can merge with the boundaries of environmentalism.

The racialization of space is an ongoing process, through which racial meanings are necessarily produced in place, and in turn produce places (Anderson, 1988; Delaney, 2002; Dwyer

& Jones, 2000; Gilmore, 2002; Kobayashi, 2003; Kobayashi & Peake, 2000; Pulido, 2000; Smith, 1989). Racialization is the ongoing construction of race and formation of racial subjects in which 'somatic characteristics... have been made to go beyond themselves to designate the socially inscribed value and the attributes of racialized bodies' (Kobayashi, 2003, p. 549). Audrey Kobayashi insists that geographers need to rethink and destabilize the normative categories of race and space to better understand their relationship to each other (Kobayashi, 2003, p. 549, 553). The study of racism must recognize, then, 'not only historical forms of racism, which are self-evident to many contemporary observers, but also the subtle and often unobserved... discursive forms that continue to script the process of racialization today through socially taken-for-granted means' (Kobayashi, 2003, p. 550). Conceptualizations of space, such as open space versus urban space and ideas of what is and is not 'environmental,' are discursive forms that must be examined in the study of racism. Both actual material spaces and the social constructions of those spaces (the imagined spaces) shape social norms and expectations.

To study racial logics that are often unnoticed or taken for granted, the analytical tools of discourse and performativity are helpful. The concept of discourse as speech and actions that assign meanings and give order to those meanings provides a means to analyze the everyday process of racialization. In their articulation, discourses position people in relation to the established beliefs about the world around them, including its material and social organization (Hall, 1996, 1997).

Understanding racial discourse as performative also offers insight into how racial meanings are perpetuated and naturalized in everyday life. Judith Butler's theorization of gender performativity focuses on the way that discourse produces the subject that it names (e.g. 'girl') through reiterated acts (Butler, 1993). Through the repeated statements and enactments of what a subject is (and what it ought to be, i.e. the norm) the subject 'acquires a naturalized effect' (Mirón & Inda, 2000). The naturalization seems to ground race in history, suggesting it is an essential, unchangeable difference (Mirón & Inda, 2000, p. 99). In this way race seems to be a natural reality even though it is a social construction.

Viewing the concepts of racialization and performativity as spatial enables the examination not only of *forms* of social difference, but also of the *formation* of difference through everyday discursive practice related to nature and environmentalism. Environmental practices performed in a space are indicative of a place-based norm; the spatial nature of the act (e.g. 'walking' in the city versus 'hiking' in open space) is integral to the act itself. Mary Thomas furthers Butler's claim that 'context matters to the performative process' to demonstrate that this 'context' is 'a central component of the processes of identity practice and... an integral, spatial component of identity and difference' (Thomas, 2005, p. 1234). Racial difference is produced and policed performatively not only through social practice but also through spatial practice. Race is made to look real through concretizing it in place (Pred, 2000).

Power operates not only through the construction of racial subjectivities, but also through environmental subjectivities. As Juanita Sundberg argues, 'we must take environmental formations seriously as sites wherein hierarchical discourses about social subjects are delineated and fixed' (Sundberg, 2008, p. 579). Political ecology holds that power is central to the management of resources and construction of nature. Jake Kosek (2006) has demonstrated the need for political ecologists to position a cultural politics of difference at the analytical core of political ecology. Along with Kosek, Bruce Braun (2002) and Andrew Baldwin (2009) attend to the histories of the construction of whiteness, including ways that nature and white

identity are co-constructed (see also Finney, 2014; Moore, Pandian, & Kosek, 2003). In addition, feminist political ecology recognizes the construction of gender and other subjectivities as overlapping with one another and imbricated with natural resource management and conceptualizations of nature (Elmhirst, 2011; Mollett & Faria, 2013; Nightingale, 2011; Sundberg, 2004, 2008).

In the exploration of interview data, below, this article furthers these lines of inquiry within political ecology about the construction of nature as power-laden by examining the performative construction of racial and environmental subjectivities through everyday articulations of difference. I examine not only the way nature 'is infused with forms of social difference' (Kosek, 2006, p. 22), but also the way the formation of nature and the processes of social differentiation themselves are performative and interlinked.

To analyze the power dynamics that are part of environmentalism in the United States, one must acknowledge the ways in which environmentalism is racialized. Roberts and Chitewere (2011) examine the ways different racial minority populations use national parks, focusing on reported experiences of racism and other forms of exclusion. Likewise, Jason Byrne reports Latino park users encountering obstacles to wildland park use in southern California due to 'racial and nativist barriers' (Byrne, 2012, p. 601). He analyzes park use through a lens of cultural politics, finding that a white ideal often shapes park design and use, which in turn shapes perception of the park by non-white users, including Latinos (Byrne, 2012, p. 606).

Similar to Byrne's cultural politics analysis, Carolyn Finney explores the imbrication of race, culture, and environmentalism in her study of African American experiences in the 'great outdoors' (Finney, 2014). She shows the complexity and variation of 'the African American experience' and how that experience must accommodate hegemonic white ideas about the environment, but is not limited to hegemonic norms or even resistance to those norms. She demonstrates that

representation and racialization sustain the way many Americans think about the natural environment... [and] both processes have the power to determine who participates in environment-related activities and who does not; what voices are heard in environmental debates and what voices are not. (Finney, 2014, p. 68; see also Jones, 1998)

Through a cultural politics lens, these studies examine the relationship between racial minority experiences with environmental recreation and the mainstream environmental movement.

Mainstream environmentalism has been an exclusionary white and middle- or upper-class social institution from its beginning, prioritizing preservation of nature and wilderness (Cronon, 1996; Di Chiro, 1996; Finney, 2014; Kosek, 2006). When the environmental justice organization the Southwest Organizing Project wrote a letter to the ten most prominent environmental organizations in the United States in 1990, activist Pat Bryant criticized the movement's 'deep-seated cultural beliefs' grounded in whiteness, Eurocentrism, and an exclusionary focus on wilderness (DeLuca & Demo, 2001, p. 541). Sarah Jaquette Ray argues that environmentalism uses white privilege to hide its exclusions; paradoxically, environmentalism 'espouses social and ecological harmony, yet it reinforces many social hierarchies' such as race, class, and gender (Ray, 2013, p. 17). Dorceta Taylor suggests that it is not that people of color do not have environmental ethics or engage in environmental actions, but these ethics and actions often lie outside the mainstream white environmental norms (Taylor, 1997; see also Finney, 2014). Certain fundamental social-environmental values linked to

purity, ability, responsibility, and productivity remain central to the modern environmental movement and continue to produce 'ecological others' (Kosek, 2006; Ray, 2013). As some mainstream environmental organizations slowly shift their focus beyond wilderness, commonsense understandings of environment and environmentalism among the American public have not necessarily followed. A traditional focus on wilderness as well as on key environmental practices defines Boulder as an 'environmental' place, as I will demonstrate below.

Definitions of place establish the bounds of belonging. Characterizations of a place are normative because they suggest how it should be (Häkli & Paasi, 2003) and who belongs there. Anderson (1988) shows how a place can become associated with a certain racial-ethnic or cultural group in her history of the making of Chinatown in Vancouver, British Columbia. Through both social norms and exclusionary housing laws, Chinatown was developed as the area of Vancouver – the place – where 'Chinese people' belonged. Similarly, Daniel Trudeau defines a territorialized 'politics of belonging' as 'the discourses and practices that establish and maintain discursive and material boundaries that correspond to the imagined geographies of a polity and to the spaces that normatively embody the polity' (Trudeau, 2006, p. 422). Trudeau examines how a Minnesota town's white residents emphasize the 'rurality' of the town's landscape to argue that the local immigrant population does not belong. Through this analysis he looks into the everyday discourses and processes that draw boundaries around places and people, establishing categories of belonging.

As Trudeau shows, characterizations of a place can be understood as a geographic imaginary of the place, both locally and within a global context. Stuart Hall articulates the self/other relationship at the center of the geographic imaginary as the discursive separation between 'the West' and 'the Rest,' a 'crude and simplistic distinction' that reinforces an 'over-simplified conception of "difference"' (Hall, 1996, p. 189). Political ecologists have also pointed out the problematic ways the First World/Third World binary influences the field itself by potentially shaping the questions researchers ask according to where the research site is within the binary (McCarthy, 2005; Wainwright, 2005). As Joel Wainwright points out, 'hegemony is doubly geographical: hegemony is constituted on the basis of spatial relations, and such relations become hegemonic as geographies are naturalized and sedimented as common sense through political and cultural practices' (Wainwright, 2005, p. 1037). Regions are not ontological facts, yet they are often socially constructed and understood as such. Consequently, the developing/developed world, 'the West'/'the Rest,' First World/Third World, and Global North/Global South distinctions shape many Americans' geographic imaginaries. The binaries employ the commonsense division that, as Hall points out, constructs and performs an over-simplified understanding of difference (see also Braun, 2002). Similar imaginaries characterize localities, such as Boulder, as well.

Immigrants don't hike and other exclusionary myths: the making of white environmental subjectivity

Characterization of Boulder as green

Descriptions of Boulder as a 'green' or environmentally progressive city performatively reinforce a norm that those who live there subscribe to environmental values and participate in environmental activities, and position those who do not as outsiders. Boulder's history of

environmental planning and open space preservation anchors the environmental lifestyles of many Boulder residents interviewed. Here, I summarize characterizations of Boulder offered in interviews and draw on media sources to demonstrate the characterization of Boulder as 'green.' I asked interviewees whether they see Boulder as a city concerned with environmentalism and what aspects of Boulder are environmental. All responded that Boulder is very environmental and expanded on how. I examine activities as disparate as recycling and hiking together as an 'environmental way of life' because interviewees said these behaviors make Boulder a distinctively environmentally minded place. The examination of a broader, place-based definition of environmentalism highlights the specific ways that environmental discourses intersect with other social identifications, including racial-ethnic identity and class.

In line with mainstream environmentalism's emphasis on wilderness and pristine nature, interviewees portrayed Boulder as a location of environmental beauty and health, contributing to Boulder's characterization as 'environmental.' They appreciated the natural beauty of the mountain landscape that forms a backdrop to the city's west, which is protected from urban development by city zoning and land conservation policies. Interviewees cited recreation on open space and trails as one of the most important environmental activities that Boulder residents engage in. The hiking trails and scenic beauty are central identifiers of Boulder's environmental lifestyle, and Boulder residents have consistently supported acquisition and management of open space around the city through referendum votes (e.g. on whether to issue municipal bonds to purchase open space). Interviewees portrayed Boulder as a place where people live healthy lifestyles and have a high quality of life because of environmental values and activities. Here the binaries of pure nature/polluted city and healthy/unhealthy align to reinforce the geographic imaginary of Boulder as a pure environment that fosters health. Boulder's healthy character and residents' care for the environment set it apart from other cities in interviewees' views. They believe this healthful environment encourages a balanced lifestyle and the value of making time for outdoor recreation.

A policy-oriented view of environmentalism was also prominent among interviewees. Recycling efforts, transportation, and energy policies set Boulder apart from other cities and position it as a leader in the country in environmental policy-making. Interviewees mentioned the city's curbside recycling and compost collection program most frequently when asked what makes Boulder a city concerned with environmentalism. In addition, alternative transportation options were seen as an important facet of Boulder's environmentalism. Many residents interviewed mentioned Boulder's bus system and bicycle trails as central components of Boulder's green lifestyle, along with people's willingness to walk, bike, or take the bus to get around town. Like alternative transportation options that reduce the amount of driving in Boulder, interviewees pointed to energy policies that set Boulder apart as a city that values energy efficiency and reduction of its carbon emissions, including home energy audits and incentives for installation of solar panels.

To someone who lives in Boulder, these observations of the city's environmental characteristics are likely common sense. Media coverage corroborates this view; Boulder is praised as an early adaptor for single-stream recycling (Snider, 2010), in 2012 The Atlantic Cities organization ranked Boulder number three in its assessment of 'America's Healthiest Metros' (Boulder Daily Camera, 2012), in 2010 Match.com named Boulder the city with the 'fittest singles' in the country (Boulder Daily Camera, 2010), the 2013 book *The State of Slim* by

directors of the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center lauded Boulder as the place with the healthiest lifestyle (Heckel, 2013), and Boulder youth have been written up in the local paper for their activism in opposing climate change (Moutinho, 2011) and implementing a ban on plastic bags at grocery stores in the city (Kuta, 2011). The normative view of Boulder is that it is a city that prioritizes the environment in its policies and planning, and it is filled with people who hike, recycle, exercise, and vote for progressive environmental policies.

This normative view establishes a distinct, territorialized politics of belonging (Trudeau, 2006) through the imagined geography of Boulder as 'green.' All of these commonsense green characteristics of the city are perceived to foster a healthy, high quality life that makes people who live in Boulder 'the happiest residents of any city in the United States' (Boulder Daily Camera, 2011, p. B1). This self-congratulatory appellation naturalizes the idea that Boulder's environmental lifestyle is good for everyone and elides its exclusionary dynamics. As I will argue in the following section, although interviewees' definition of environmentalism is one that expands beyond wilderness protection, it still functions as exclusionary through the descriptions of immigrants' and Latinos' lack of involvement in 'environmental' practices and ethics.

Turning from Boulder's characterization as 'green,' how did Boulder become so 'white'? There are several competing narratives among Boulder residents and in local media. Most emphasize the open space preservation and limits on urban growth described by interviewees, above, as determinants of rising property values. Most also ignore any active dynamics of social exclusion in Boulder's past or present.

In the most prevalent narrative about how Boulder became so 'white,' the preservation of open space and limits on physical city growth raised the property values in Boulder. This narrative employs the direct logic of supply and demand: with demand assumed to rise steadily and a limit on urban growth, supply of housing does not meet growing demand, available housing is more expensive, and the city becomes a more exclusive place to live. There is a lot of truth to this narrative, as Boulder lacks the sprawling suburbs and suburban shopping centers of nearby small cities, and any person who has lived in the city for even a few years is familiar with the rising cost of housing. However, the assumption that connects the limit on growth to whiteness is tenuous. In this narrative, it follows from the rise in property values that there are not many people of color in Boulder because it is an expensive place to live; it is white because it is wealthy. This logic assumes that only white people are wealthy and that people of color are poor, too poor to live in Boulder.

An added layer to the narrative of how Boulder became both white and environmental expands on the role of open space and environmental preservation. Many residents and city documents alike gesture simply to the landscape – the city's mountain backdrop – as the reason it is an expensive place to live. The landscape is perceived as the rationale for preservation of open space and limits on urban growth. The beauty of the landscape is seen to justify, without question, the preservation of open space and limits on growth in Boulder; the city is wealthy because it is beautiful. In this narrative, it follows that the beauty of the landscape determines and justifies city conservation and growth policy, and the people who support such a policy fit in with its timeless natural landscape.³ These narratives draw on economic logics and simplified racial assumptions. They work as a self-fulfilling prophecy and justify the normative environmental culture as well as the hegemonic nature of the wealthy white population of the city.

However, a small number of others support a narrative that traces the roots of the city's whiteness to its early history. Boulder was exclusionary in employment opportunities for African American residents in its early days (Delgado & Stefancic, 1999), and it had an active chapter of the Ku Klux Klan during that organization's resurgence in the 1920s (Goldberg, 1981). Furthermore, a key part of the official history of Boulder's open space is Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.'s visit in 1910, in which he is said to have recommended implementing urban planning to build parks and preserve the beautiful landscape. Olmsted's report also recommends not attracting industry to the city, especially industries that might bring 'noise, dirt, disorder, or annoyance' (Olmsted Jr., 1967, p. 6). In this view, Boulder has been exclusionary based on race and class for nearly a century. Following this narrative, the environmental veneer of whiteness layered onto the city in the past half-century is a discourse that serves to justify belonging of white environmental subjects. As such, environmentalism acts ideologically to hide the city's social history of exclusion (Hickcox, 2007). With this view, the simple economic narrative is complicated by an analysis based in political economy and cultural politics, in which race and environment together hold a shifting but central presence.

Hikers who don't count

In this section I examine interviewees' assumptions that Latinos do not participate in environmental activities. Several white volunteer English teachers interviewed said immigrants and Latinos do not hike or participate in outdoor recreation the way 'typical' white Boulder residents do. They did not attribute the cause of the small number of immigrants or Latinos they saw on trails and in open space to the small population of racial or ethnic minorities in the city.⁴ Instead, they saw Latinos who hike in Boulder as exceptions to the rule that only whites participate in this quintessential Boulder activity. Volunteer teachers described their students' and other immigrants' outdoor activity as either nonexistent or motivated by cultural values other than environmental ethics.

The assumption that only white people practice environmentalism is drawn in part from early twentieth-century environmentalism's white racist history and its persistent exclusionary culture, as described above. The ongoing process of 'othering' immigrants, particularly from Latin America, in Boulder is visible in their discursive exclusion from environmentalism. As the material exclusion of Latinos from environmental activities in Boulder is not as totalizing as it is portrayed (some Latinos in Boulder do hike, recycle, and participate in Boulder's environmental lifestyle), the major effect of this performative practice is the reaffirmation of white racial subjectivity.

Interviewees are sometimes so sure that immigrants and people of color do not hike in Boulder that when they see them on open space trails, they somehow do *not* see them or do not count their actions as worthy of note. Margaret,⁵ a white woman in her fifties, volunteers for the city Open Space and Mountain Parks department and spends a lot of time in many open space areas around Boulder. She distinguished the people of color and foreigners she saw on the open space as non-residents, people who are 'not from Boulder.' I asked her whether she noticed that there are very many people of color out on the trails. She responded quickly:

M: No!

A: Hiking or anywhere?

M: Well, again, people from *Japan* and, you know, tourists.

A: Tourists.

M: [...] Um, sometimes I see Mid- students from the Middle East, maybe. Or, I'm *assuming* that's who they are. But *no* not that- [*Pause*] But you know, I know my student from Nepal, [her family] went on a camping trip somewhere this summer, I think. I'm pretty sure she was telling me about that. But I don't see them in the- I haven't seen large groups of people from different cultures just out cruising the trails with their dogs or running, you know, running the trails or mountain biking.⁶

This back-and-forth that Margaret offered between 'I don't see them' and 'I see tourists from Japan' or 'sometimes I see Middle Eastern students' demonstrates an exceptionalism that performatively reinforces white identity as the norm in Boulder. Margaret expresses exceptionalism in her contradictions about whether she does or does not see people of color or 'people from different cultures' on trails in Boulder. She says there are none, except these, and also those. According to Margaret, those racial-ethnic minorities who do participate in outdoor recreation are either tourists, and literally not from Boulder, or still exceptional because there are so few of them or because seeing them is so unexpected.

This exceptionalism performatively enacts the generalization of a 'typical' Boulder resident as a middle-class or wealthy white person who frequently uses open space. Margaret's commentary reinforces the idea that white Boulder residents are the ones who use open space trails to run or hike, or sometimes with a dog or on a bicycle. After Margaret talked about whom she does or does not see on trails, I summarized:

A: So it's mostly tourists from almost anywhere or just sort of-

M: Good old-

A: possibly wealthy white Boulder residents.

M: Yeah! *Boulder* residents. I don't really know if they're all wealthy. I see [University of Colorado] students up there a lot, but again most of them are white.

Margaret reinforces a totalizing statement that most people who use the Boulder trails are white. They are 'good old' white Boulder residents. She disputed my tentative assertion that they might be wealthy but left unquestioned my statement that they are white. She even emphasized 'Boulder' after I said white, placing emphasis on 'regular' Boulder residents as white, but not necessarily wealthy. In this case, the cultural practice of hiking, which is associated with white bodies, naturalizes white racial identity in the city's open space (Moore et al., 2003).

White interviewees' racial and environmental narratives sometimes conflated individual immigrant students with all immigrants, and immigrants with all Latinos or even with all people of color. Margaret's racialized observations are tangled with statements about foreigners, immigrants, people from different cultures, foreign students, and tourists. She used the categories rather interchangeably, but they are not the same, and important ambiguities arise in their modular, interchangeable use. This slippage allows a stereotype to form based on experiences with specific immigrants who do not hike because they come from somewhere it is uncommon to hike. That observation is expanded as a stereotyped cultural trait of not hiking supposedly held by all Latinos and people of color. It is exactly this slippage between person, place, region, culture, and activity that fuels stereotypes about immigrants and about people of color, more broadly, that hold up even when one does see immigrants

or people of color hiking. When Margaret saw university students, she observed that ‘most of them are white,’ but would she recognize a white student from Europe as a foreigner or immigrant? Would she see one of Boulder’s many white Swedish residents as out-of-place on a trail? Probably not, as they are people who fall into sites of racial-national ambiguity; they pass as ‘typical’ Boulder residents but are immigrants. Overlooking the ambiguous populations because they appear white enables the exceptionalization of people of color and particularly Latinos seen on trails. It hides the complex politics of belonging embedded in racial-ethnic identities and environmental practices.

One important distinction in Boulder that defines who participates in Boulder’s environmental lifestyle and who does not is the distinction between physically active residents of Boulder and people who are not active. This active/not active binary also attaches to fitness, health, and ability to define and reinforce white environmental subjectivity in Boulder. The binary divides the urban population into one group of people, who are fit, healthy, strong, and able, and who experience the richness of life through outdoor activity, and a second group of people who are out of shape, unhealthy, weak, incapable, and who miss out on the richness of life offered in outdoor activity. This norm is prevalent in Boulder, where it shapes dynamics of belonging, but it is also visible in the national discourse through themes of obesity, diet, physical activity, and prevalence of illness such as diabetes.

The norm of outdoor activity and fitness is articulated in multiple cultural venues in Boulder, including the local newspaper, which consistently refers to Boulder as one of the ‘fittest’ cities in America where it ‘seems like everyone is an expert’ at sports such as cycling (Heckel, 2011, p. B3). The city has been home to many professional cyclists, runners, and other professional athletes in recent decades, and the norm of fitness is commonly discussed. One young white Boulder resident remarked that though she is very confident in many aspects of her life, in Boulder she feels self-conscious when cycling (at which she is experienced). Conversely, an older white male self-professed to be overweight and out of shape ‘in order to keep the Boulder average on par with the rest of the country.’

Populations perceived to be out of shape sometimes attract negative attention. In Boulder, Latinos receive this notice, though many Latinos do exercise and there are white residents who are not as fit as the supposed norm. The active/not active divide is visible in a newspaper article about ‘un-Boulder things to do in Boulder County’:

If you are sick of riding your cruiser bike to the farmer’s market to buy fruit... Take a taxi or drive a motor vehicle to Casa Alvarez [...] for a banana chimichanga: a banana wrapped in a tortilla, fried and served with ice cream and dulce de leche (\$5.99). Request fried ice cream. (Heckel, 2012, p. M14)

Here, eating a dessert at a Mexican restaurant, presented in contrast to and as less healthy than eating fruit, is highlighted as a particularly ‘un-Boulder’ activity that Boulder residents can try out. The article is addressed to a Boulder caricature: triathletes who do yoga and trail-runs and are fueled by ‘kale chips and enhanced water’ (Heckel, 2012, p. M14). It is written ‘in honor of the cowboys, the hunters, the Republicans, the donut- and bacon-lovers, the handful not training for the Boston Marathon’ whose lives people who normally stick to the ‘Boulder way’ can sample for entertainment (Heckel, 2012, p. M14).

The article demonstrates complicated dynamics of race and belonging, indicative of the complex matrix of belonging in the city. First, the otherness of Latinos (as people who might eat Mexican food each day) is implicit and operates through discourses of health and food. Whether the chocolate nemesis dessert at the famed Kitchen restaurant is more healthy

than a banana chimichanga is debatable, yet consuming the latter is featured as a particularly 'un-Boulder' activity and consuming the former would be a 'very Boulder' activity.

Second, the otherness of cowboys, hunters, and Republicans – categories often perceived as racially white – is explicit in relation to the Boulder norm. If whiteness is a process and a strategy for unification of privilege (Shaw, 2007), why is this particular form of whiteness positioned as outside of the white Boulder norm? Hartigan Jr. (2005) shows how important designating 'others' *within* the white race, who are inferior to the white 'self', is in the construction of whiteness. In Hartigan's analysis of the racial discourse of the 1910s, class is the dividing line: poor whites were portrayed as an inferior, 'threatening source of pollution confronting the white race' (Hartigan, 2005, p. 91). The discourse emphasized policing the self, lest one fall into moral decay, and was fueled by examples of moral decay among poor whites. The distinction solidified white racial thinking, of 'thinking in terms of the race' (Hartigan, 2005, p. 93). Further, class relations became viewed in racial terms (Hartigan, 2005).

In the example of Boulder, the cowboys, hunters, and Republicans are not necessarily portrayed as poorer than the normative Boulder resident. The divide is instead drawn along culture and politics, with the dominant culture of Boulder as environmentalist and dominant politics as Democrat (or Green). The strategy of drawing intraracial distinctions using the levers of environmentalism and health unifies the privilege of the white environmental subject in Boulder. The distinction hinges on the concept of bodily purity and fitness as well as on the practice of policing the self to maintain environmentally friendly and personally healthy habits. The white environmental self is not the same as the generalized white self in this place and culture. Certain forms of whiteness mark people as outsiders due to, and reinforcing, the environmentalist/non-environmentalist binary. This form of whiteness has contracted its membership within the place-based rubric of privilege (Shaw, 2007).

Ricky and Becca, a young white married couple who have each volunteered to teach English, also disbelieved that their students hike. They made exceptions of their students' outdoor activities, stating that the students' recreation in parks was not about environment but about family. In my interview with them I asked, 'You guys hike a lot, and bike. Do you think that your students ever got out and hiked or biked?' They both responded emphatically, 'No.' I continued, 'Or do you think that they participated in the environmental lifestyle in other ways?' Ricky repeated, 'No. No. No.' and Becca also said No. I asked if their students recycled, and Becca said, 'No! We went to Eco-cycle [a recycling-based non-profit] for one of our [English class] field trips, and we talked about that, but No.' Becca believed that even after being educated about recycling her students' family would not participate in it. But, Becca noted, 'They definitely did the Saturday or Sunday family gathering and usually in a park, so that was their leisure [activity], but they don't have *time*.' Following up, I asked, 'Your students went to city parks?' Becca replied, 'They usually did that on weekends, family picnics. They talk about going to the parks a lot.' Then Ricky interpreted, 'The family aspect is pretty tight,' and Becca agreed that it's 'the most important.'

Ricky and Becca saw park visits not as an environmental activity but a family one, simultaneously acknowledging this outdoor environmental activity and dismissing it as such. Ricky and Becca exclude the possibility that Becca's students went to the park to enjoy nature or the outdoors. They focused on the students' activity as family leisure time because 'the family aspect is pretty tight' and 'most important.' Such practices of exceptionalism performatively reinforce the idea that Latinos do not participate in Boulder's quintessential environmental activities. Further, if they do participate in some activities, they are not

environmentally motivated and thus do not count as environmental. This exceptionalism is an example of whiteness as a strategy of empowerment and privilege (Shaw, 2007); white people interviewed described an environmental norm, then located non-white immigrants as outside of it, even when they actually participated in environmental activities. This is also an example of Taylor's (1997) observation that people of color's environmental ethics sometimes lie outside of mainstream environmental norms. Rather than alter characterizations of environmental practice to include alternate ethics or practices, Ricky and Becca reinforce existing norms of environmentalism. In the process they fortify their own identification as white, gaining the privileges of white environmental identification in Boulder.

Impossible environmentalists

In this section I argue that descriptions of Latino residents' non-participation in key environmental activities sets them apart as a particular type of city resident who lacks an environmental ethic. Interviewees adamantly stated that their immigrant students did not hike or recycle, two activities central to Boulder's environmental lifestyle. While some of these statements were based on observations and discussions with students, some were based primarily on racial-ethnic, cultural, and class assumptions. These statements about Latinos not hiking, recycling, or participating in other quintessential environmental activities in Boulder performatively separate them from the white volunteer teachers interviewed, who all said they participate in Boulder's environmental lifestyle and said they feel that they fit in. Interviewees distinguished the urban spaces of city parks from open space, a more authentic space of outdoor environmental activity. I show how these distinctions, rather than characterizing activities such as picnicking in parks or walking in the city as environmentalism, bind Latinos to the urban space and exclude them from the geographic imaginary of Boulder's green lifestyle. The presumed cultural and class barriers to Latinos' participation in Boulder's environmentalism performatively reinforce white subjectivity through the exclusionary social construction of open space. The cultural politics that dictate Boulder's imagined geography also reinforce the white environmental norms of the city.

Given the tendency of Boulder residents to take the preservation of the landscape and its apparently correlative wealthy white population for granted, it is necessary to recognize the role of space in the creation of the discourse of Boulder as 'environmental.' The material space of the greenbelt shapes both urban form (the shape of the city) and practice (what people do there). In addition, the social construction of the open space – its imaginative geography – also reinforces the urban form through practice. The construction of the city as a place where white environmental subjects belong cultivates a sense that others, particularly non-white immigrants, do not.

Thus, open space trails are an example of a space that is central in discursively constructing the norms around environmental activity and values in Boulder. A focus on open space in public discourse validates and reinforces the physically active and healthy environmental subject who visits open space to exercise and enjoy the fresh mountain air. Some residents feel a call, an interpellation, from the landscape to go out into open space to exercise and be healthy. The imagined space of the greenbelt is an indispensable part of how Boulder residents construct their own and their city's identity. Actual and imagined visits to material open space construct and justify the processes of belonging and exclusion in the urban landscape.

Interviewees made a significant distinction between activities in the city and the same activities undertaken on open space. They portrayed activities on open space as more environmentally motivated and rarely engaged in by Latinos. People, particularly Latinos, who walk or run in the city were not seen as doing so in accordance with an environmental ethic. The nature in the city is apparently not natural enough, not separate enough, to be valued using an environmental ethic. This ideology reinforces the 'dualistic vision in which the human is entirely outside the natural' (Cronon, 1996, p. 80) because white Boulder residents interviewed define the environment in reference to an ethic based in wilderness. When city residents seek the solace of nature (an ethical valuation), open space (often located outside of the city) provides distance from a modern, urban world. Viewed this way, walking in the city is not an escape from the modern, not far enough away from city life to experience nature's sublime, pure character (Cronon, 1996), and so it does not count as an environmental activity. The sidewalk and trail are not equal, and Latinos are sometimes portrayed as bound to the city and its sidewalks by both culture and geography.

Thus, interviewees expressed another form of exceptionalism in observations that immigrants and people of color use parks and bicycle trails in the city but not open space or trails outside of the city. For example, Hilde, a white woman in her forties, said she sees 'all kinds of people' on the bicycle trails in the neighboring city of Louisville. Betty, a white woman in her sixties, observed that 'you see a lot of Latinos' at Eben G. Fine Park on the weekends, a park close to downtown Boulder, through which Boulder Creek runs. Urban park and recreation spaces are portrayed as accessible physically and culturally for Latinos, but open space, sometimes mere feet away from 'urban' places like Eben G. Fine Park, is understood as a recreational space that Latinos would have to cross over a massive cultural divide to access and enjoy. In this assumption, interviewees fail to recognize both Latinos' visitation of open space and the possibility that Latinos visit urban recreational areas in part to enjoy nature. Even the relatively broad view of environmentalism expressed by interviewees (described in 'Characterization of Boulder as green,' above) fails to include certain urban environmental practices.

Even Latinos who practice some environmental lifestyle characteristics were portrayed by interviewees to lack other key qualities of environmental lifestyles. For example, Heather, a white woman in her twenties, described many similarities between her student Ramiro from Mexico and herself, as well as many differences. They live on a similar income not far from each other, and they both use bicycles for transportation. They share a love of the outdoors and the mountains. After Heather visited Beijing and Shanghai, China, she and Ramiro discussed how polluted those cities are and how polluted Mexico City is as well. They are both glad to live in a city where the air and water are clean. They often have their classes outside, in a downtown park near Boulder Creek. Despite these similarities, Heather was sure that Ramiro did not hike: 'I *know* he doesn't take advantage of open space to the extent that I do. I don't think he's ever hiked up Flagstaff [Mountain], even things that are *really close* to where we live.' She has tried to get him to go hiking or running with her, but they have never gone out to Boulder's open space together.

The distinction between recreation in open space and outdoor urban recreation, particularly in parks, is a performative expression of environmental values and norms. Open space is an intensively planned and managed social space, much like the city it surrounds, and its designation as a nearby escape to nature from civilization is an arbitrary distinction, at best. At worst, this idea of escape solidifies the norm that there is a correct place to find nature

and a correct way to enjoy it. The trouble with open space, to follow William Cronon's critique of wilderness, is that it sets nature outside the everyday experience of urban life and obscures 'the wilderness in our own backyards, [and]... the nature that is all around us if only we have eyes to see it' (Cronon, 1996, p. 86). In this wilderness view of environmentalism, if nature is accessible in open space, and Latinos cannot access open space because of cultural and class barriers, then they are missing out on a true benefit of living in Boulder, enjoyment of and renewal in nature. This view serves to exclude Latinos from the Boulder norm.

The distinction between recreation in open space and in the city also performatively reinforces white environmental subjectivity through its assumption that Latinos cannot or will not participate in recreation on Boulder's open space. Here, not only whiteness, but also environmentalism is a fluid and fickle category (Shaw, 2007). Interviewees' definitions of environmental practice could expand to include urban outdoor recreation (for the sake of enjoying nature and fresh air, for example), but instead 'environmental' – as a category – contracts to exclude urban practices and those associated with them. This distinction is an example in which environmentalism reinforces social hierarchies (Ray, 2013), including those based on racial-ethnic identity and class. Further, racial-ethnic and class distinctions are constructed through definitions of what is and what is not an environmental practice.

Environmentalism as a luxury: 'it's the least of their concerns'

Another example of environmentalism reinforcing social hierarchies is the assumption that one must be wealthy to participate in environmentalism. Many interviewees expressed the view that environmentalism is a way of life possible only through affluence. Despite the fact that most of the characteristic environmental activities of Boulder described by interviewees, such as hiking, do not require money, many saw low income levels as barriers to participation in Boulder's environmental lifestyle. In this section, I demonstrate how the assumption that immigrants and Latinos do not participate in environmentalism due to class status is performative of environmental subjects and racial subjects. Further, at times the differences articulated through environmentalism are more unified and uncontested than differences articulated through whiteness, even though the two are interdependent in Boulder.

Interviewees assumed that Latinos' perceived distance from a prerequisite income level made it unlikely that they had an environmental ethic or participated in environmental activities. In an interview conducted with him and his wife (both white), retiree Bob summed up what most interviewees expressed. He said, 'I think that the Latinos may be not as aware of environmentalism' as non-Latinos whites are. His wife Eleanor pointed out that class is an important factor in environmental awareness:

To a certain extent I think environmentalism is more the economic situation, more upper-middle-class can be quite environmental, and to the exclusion of social concerns maybe. Thinking of people we've [known], more working-class people are less caught up in environmentalism. [...] I don't think it should be, but I think it's sort of a luxury of the middle-class. [...] I think environmental awareness is spreading much more than it used to be. It started among university educated people [who] had the interest, time, and money to think about such things as open space and be concerned about over-congestion. Putting in the greenbelt [around Boulder] has economic consequences.

Eleanor traces mid-twentieth century environmentalism's roots, particularly in Boulder, to educated people who made enough money to have enough time to be concerned about

losing open space to urban development. Eleanor points out that the environmental decisions such as preservation of open space around Boulder (i.e. the greenbelt) made in Boulder have 'economic consequences,' such as raising the cost of living, that affect working class or poor people. Here, environmental policies are a product of wealthy environmentalists.

Bob agreed with Eleanor but reframed the discussion from environmental awareness to environmental responsibility, particularly focused on climate change. He said, 'I'm thinking about Eco-cycle [doing outreach to Spanish speakers]. I can't think of a lot of difference between whites and Latinos otherwise. Driving and pollution and things like that, we're just as negligent.' Then Bob slyly added a qualifier: 'We aren't. We have a Prius.' Eleanor commented, 'And only one car.'

Bob's joke subtly recognizes and mocks the self-satisfied attitude that often accompanies white environmental subjectivity's construction of the self, who is an environmentalist, and the other, who is not an environmentalist and so does not contribute to solutions to environmental problems like climate change. Bob equalizes the guilt for carbon emissions that exacerbate global climate change, but then half-jokingly excuses himself and Eleanor because they have the money and values to purchase a hybrid car. Eleanor, like many white interviewees, might excuse poor people, and especially Latino immigrants, from environmentalist obligations such as purchasing a hybrid car. But, the issue is still framed in terms of who is willing and able to participate in environmentalism, and that framing includes both class and racial-ethnic assumptions.

Likewise, Beatrice, a white woman in her sixties, highlighted the role of poverty in preventing environmental awareness in her explanation of why and how Latinos do not participate in an environmental lifestyle. She used Leopold's (1966) idea of a land ethic to talk about immigrants' lack of environmental ethics. She made a direct connection between immigrants adopting environmental ethics and integrating into the Boulder community:

One of the real challenges, I think, of helping immigrants integrating into the community (certainly a community like Boulder) is helping them learn the land ethic that Boulder [...] embraces and strives for. Many immigrants come from cultures and countries that do not value land preservation, land protection, and conservation. And many immigrants have many children and are very poor, neither of which much fosters a land ethic. So when I mentioned that they are apart from our land enthusiasm (hiking, biking, birding, studying wild flowers), I think I need to add that they also don't share our sense of conservation – it's the least of their concerns, no doubt.

She included in her explanation the assumption, presented as a fact, that immigrants have many children and are very poor and that these factors do not foster environmental ethics. Like other volunteer teachers interviewed, she implied that a minimum middle-class status is necessary to foster environmental ethics. Beatrice's use of 'our' and 'their' also illuminates her perception of the great difference between immigrants and whites in Boulder in environmental terms, '*they* don't share *our* sense of conservation – it's the least of *their* concerns, no doubt' (emphasis added). Drawing on hackneyed assumptions about immigrants and Latinos, in Beatrice's view, many immigrants are socially positioned as poor, having large families, and concerned with maintaining their basic daily needs, so they do not have time or energy for environmental practices or ethics.

In this model, there is no space for poor Latinos' participation in environmental activities, such as recycling, that are seen by interviewees as central to Boulder's environmental lifestyle and neither expensive nor time consuming. The reasoning behind interviewees' assumptions that Latinos do not hike, recycle, or participate in other key environmental activities in

Boulder draws more on imagined reasons associated with assumptions about class, geography, and culture than any discussion about environmental values or activities with interviewees' students or other Latino city residents. These assumptions point to the fact that interviewees' statements about immigrants' and Latinos' environmental values and behaviors operate as an exclusionary discourse. Environmental discourses are vehicles through which racial logics operate and are propagated. The discourses also support a process of unification of privilege (Shaw, 2007), reinforcing the idea that with wealth comes the option of adhering to an environmental ethic.

Another division within environmentalism through which the insider/outsider binary operates in Boulder is that between the responsible and irresponsible consumer. In this binary, the responsible consumer makes conscientious purchasing choices, particularly with regard to products or services that affect the environment. The environmental goods and services most noted by interviewees are food and transportation. Material culture studies states that objects in our lives do not just serve as a background for or expression of culture; things shape the way we live our lives and shape our culture. In this case, the kind and 'quality' of food consumed, for example, denotes a subject as environmental and healthy or not (as measured against the norms in Boulder).

Conspicuous consumption of environmentally friendly goods and services is one way in which belonging in Boulder is shaped and reinforced. The cultural environmental norm in Boulder is that one's daily life, including how one spends one's money, aligns with values of environmental preservation. This norm shapes a culture of supposedly responsible consumers and a constituent outside of irresponsible consumers. The result of these consumptive norms, combined with above-average wealth in Boulder, is a very active consumer culture, eager for organic local food, organic cotton yoga pants, and stylish bicycles. Yet, the environmentalism of simple living or consuming less is certainly present but much more difficult to find. Environmental consumption plays an important role in the imaginative geography of Boulder.

Environmentalism, as a movement and a political or activist affiliation, is thus seen by interviewees as predicated on the *choice* of joining the movement. The choice is supposedly only available once one achieves a certain income and social status. Hilde highlighted this binary by pointing out the irony in environmentalism being connected simultaneously with both luxury and simplicity. She first asked me whether other volunteer teachers I interviewed said anything about their students recycling. Then she explored the connection between immigrants, necessity, culture, and environmentalism:

Have people even mentioned something about their students doing something like recycling? Is that just a completely foreign concept? Do they recycle? Do they compost? Do they— They probably *do* on some level, they just never *called* it that. I know *my* parents [who immigrated to the United States from Russia] have been recycling forever! As far as reusing grocery sacks, that's part of not *having* anything growing up during the *war*. I mean, they save everything and reuse it and reuse it until it falls apart! [...] So maybe they *have* been doing a lot of environmental things for a long time, it's just never been labeled that. They've been living smarter and wiser than *we* have. [*Laughs.*] And we just figured out a label for it. Or whatever.

Mid-narrative, Hilde reversed the view that environmentalism is a luxury to view environmental practice as something immigrants and poor Latinos participate in out of necessity. She used her English students and her immigrant parents as examples of people who recycle and reuse things because they need to, with the culture of frugality as a motivator. She

pointed to the shortages of goods during World War II and to lack of money to explain why immigrants 'have been doing a lot of environmental things' like using fewer resources, reusing items, and cooking at home from scratch. She said, 'My students have been doing that since they were *tiny*. That's just what you *do*. And that's what *I* did because my parents are who *they* are.' She was struck by the irony of her own statement when she remarked that immigrants have 'been living smarter and wiser than *we* have.' In Hilde's view immigrants live a simpler life out of necessity, and that simplicity is itself often, though accidentally, environmentally progressive behavior.

There is a tension in Hilde's discussion of immigrant students and her own immigrant parents that is instructive for delineating the boundaries of environmentalism. Hilde's initial assumption that immigrants in Boulder do not recycle shows her adherence to the idea that one must be wealthy to participate in environmentalism. She comes to the conclusion that the poor participate in a different kind of environmentalism, which, though she grew up practicing it, she now sees as an immigrant practice. With immigrant parents, she has great sympathy and an understanding of what recent immigrants she teaches are going through. Growing up in the United States, she helped her mother learn English. She even says she too adhered to a lifestyle of not having much. Though she makes a connection between her immigrant parents and students, she positions herself in the category of 'we' and both her immigrant parents and immigrant students in the category of 'they.' Hilde's relative wealth separates her from both her parents and her students. The division between us and them, in this case, hinges on material necessity and is expressed through environmental practices.

In addition to her somewhat messy process of positioning herself on the ethics-based side of environmental practice (rather than the necessity-based side), Hilde has an ambivalent relationship with whiteness. When I asked her at the beginning of the interview how she identifies in terms of race or ethnicity she said:

H: When I *have* to, Caucasian.

A: But you don't really like to.

H: I prefer not to answer those, um, surveys. It's nothing you're doing, it's just a general concept. Maybe if I were a minority group it would not bother me as much, and I'd wanna, stand up and be counted [*laughs*]. I don't know.

She prefers to position herself outside of whiteness, yet she acknowledges her membership in the racial majority. To some extent, this disaffiliation with whiteness is influenced by the specific forms of whiteness she perceives in Boulder. She said that working with immigrants

[has] made me less judgmental of Boulder [*laughs*]. [...] I'm still kinda- I'm surprised at [*pause*] how lily-white it is. When I moved here I was like 'Okay, I wasn't quite ready for that.' And then the *attitudes*, some of the stories that were circulating in the newspaper, maybe the first or second year that we lived here, the racial attacks, on students [...] on the Hill. I was like, 'Are you kidding me? In *Boulder*, free-thinking, liberal Boulder?' I could *not* believe it. And then working in the [immigration] law firms, it was reinforced from another perspective. You know it was pretty pasty-white in the law firms. I just got very judgmental of the overblown sense of entitlement here. I saw a *lot* of money.

Hilde acknowledges Boulder's reputation as 'free-thinking' and 'liberal' and is surprised by several racially motivated incidents near the university in which racial minority students were attacked by whites. In addition to this unexpected racial violence, Hilde also remarks

on the overwhelming sense of whiteness she felt in the city, expressed through attitudes and entitlement among wealthy white residents. Hilde's ambivalence towards whiteness shows how whiteness can unify privilege (Shaw, 2007) but also divide loyalties and inspire disaffiliation, even among 'white' people.

Hilde is quite critical of whiteness, even as she begrudgingly acknowledges it as a racial identification assigned to her. Her discussion of whiteness is full of distrust and condemnation. Yet, her discussion of environmentalism delineates immigrants as 'others' as it affirms an environmental 'self,' for whom environmental practices are common sense. While whiteness and racial privilege are suspect in her discourse, environmentalism and class as markers of difference are not subject to the same scrutiny as race. Thus, they enforce boundaries of difference that overlap with white privilege, even as Hilde critiques and resists that privilege.

Conclusion

I have shown that white interviewees often position immigrants' and Latinos' relationship to environmentalism outside of mainstream or 'typical' environmentalism practiced in Boulder. Immigrants' and Latinos' non-participation in environmentalism is attributed to lack of environmental practice, of wealth, and of environmental ethics. Identification of this environmental non-participation is an articulation of difference assigned to a social group defined by culture and geography, enacted in place. In this articulation of difference, interviewees participate in the ongoing process of racialization, of both themselves and others. I have argued that the racial category that is most unified in this process is the category 'white,' and this whiteness is constructed through a discourse of environmentalism. While 'race' remains a tenuous, hot-button, or off-limits topic in many social spaces dominated by a colorblind mentality, environmentalism carries no such stigma in many places. In the politically liberal city of Boulder, environmentalism is an accepted social norm, an expected way of life enforced through cultural binaries, and it affirms the belonging of the people who are performatively identified as 'white' in Boulder.

Environmentalism provides a relatively unified articulation of difference, partly through reliance on racial thinking. Like with many social discourses, environmentalism has been imbricated with racial meanings. The mobility of racial discourse has allowed it to become integral to some aspects of environmental discourse in some places through articulation of difference. This is not to say that 'white' is a completely unified category. Rather, researchers must attend to the processes through which 'white' becomes more unified, and through which it becomes integrated into other, seemingly unrelated, discourses and identifications, such as environmentalism. The habit of racial thinking – of attaching moral traits to visible, physical traits – persists in its ability to adapt to time and place, and it is most difficult to detect in unexpected times and unexpected places. For this reason, it is necessary to examine the specific, place-based, everyday processes and discourses through which difference and 'race' are constructed and dynamics of belonging confirmed or contested.

Notes

1. I thank an anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to the importance of these sub-binaries.

2. For a local study of Latin American immigrants' attitudes towards environmental issues in Iowa, see Carter, Silva, and Guzmán (2013) and in Los Angeles, see Byrne (2012). For a study of Latinos' environmental discourses see Lynch (1993).
3. For an expanded analysis of the role of landscape in the politics of belonging in Boulder, see Hickcox (2007).
4. The 2010 Census reports Boulder's population as 88% non-Hispanic white and 8.7% Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census, 2010).
5. All names used are pseudonyms.
6. In quotations from interviews, italics indicate a speaker's emphasis, and ellipses in brackets ([...]) indicate that some words have been omitted. Descriptions of speech tone, speed, or pauses are indicated in italics within brackets. Text within brackets that is not italicized is added for clarification.

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