

BIRTH CONTROL, BORDERS AND *THE BOMB*: AN INTERSECTIONAL
FEMINIST GENEALOGY OF SIERRA CLUB POPULATION DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

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Population discourse has been woven throughout the Sierra Club rhetoric and evolved into an internal, yet public debate over the Sierra's Club's immigration policy. This debate generated moments that reproduce systems of power as well as spurred anti-immigration environmentalism. This research is an intersectional feminist genealogy of population discourse that reveals how rhetoric and representation get articulated through the Sierra Club. This genealogy is informed through the investigation of public artifacts generated from the Sierra Club. Rigorous content analysis of this discourse brings attention to an ideology that objectifies and seeks to control bodies of color, particularly women. By focusing on fertility and the 'other,' the actual detrimental root causes of ecological degradation goes missing. This thesis is an attempt to provide a moment of resistance in a dominant discourse that maintains and reproduces racism and sexism, as well as other forms of oppression, within United States environmentalism.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
BIRTH CONTROL, BORDERS AND THE <i>BOMB</i> : AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST GENEALOGY OF SIERRA CLUB POPULATION DISCOURSE	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM AND FOUCAULT.....	5
Foucault	10
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW	199
Intersectional Feminist Critique of Population Discourse in U.S. Environmentalism .	19
United States Environmentalism Climate and the Sierra Club.....	277
The Political Ecology of the Ecological Crisis.....	32
CHAPTER 4: THE BOMB AND THE BATTLE.....	366
SUSPS and Anti-Immigration Environmentalism.....	42
The Battle for the Sierra Club.....	50
The Sierra Club and Global Population Rhetoric	70
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	85
References.....	88

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We can no longer afford merely to treat the symptoms of the cancer of population growth; the cancer itself must be cut out. (Ehlich, 1969: 3)

The women often say the doctors frightened them into surgery [hysterectomies] by saying the uterus was cancerous. But in many cases, the diagnosis was made on the basis of a single ultrasound scan - which, according to independent doctors, cannot justify a decision to operate. (McGivering, 2013)

In 1969 the Sierra Club published Paul Erlich's *The Population Bomb* that reflected a shift in mainstream environmentalism that embraced the ideology that overpopulation is a root cause of ecological degradation. This ideology was translated into a Sierra Club population policy and later linked to shifting positions on immigration policy. These shifts stirred an internal debate that spilled into the public arena.

This battle over the heart of the Sierra Club created clear visible moments in which to examine the significance of population and the environment discourse. The debate has sparked an evolution of discourse that is found in Sierra Club's current global population and environment program, as well as in the work of anti-immigration environmental groups. This thesis highlights a narrative that perpetuates and reproduces systems of power and privilege as they imbed sexism and racism in mainstream environmentalism.

Using the narrative of the Sierra Club is critical in a few ways. First, the Sierra Club is one of the oldest and most influential environmental advocacy organizations in the United States with an arsenal of members and funding to back it up. Therefore, the control of the club and its resources allows for substantial power and influence over mainstream environmentalism. Second, the Sierra Club had a very public debate over immigration that placed this narrative in the fore front of environmentalism. The visibility of the discourse in public space allowed messages on both sides to be internalized and embedded in popular discourse.

In this thesis I present an intersectional feminist genealogy of Sierra Club population discourse. This thesis utilizes an intersectional feminist and Foucauldian theoretical framework. Intersectional feminism applies a lens that exposes a web of interlocking oppressions: sexism, racism and global capitalist patriarchy. Using this lens provides a set of tools that highlight inequity and marginalization within narratives. Foucauldian thought deconstructs the power within knowledge production and state making through understanding of power-knowledge relationships, governmentality, and bio-politics.

Genealogy is a methodology that exposes an evolution of an object or an idea in discourse. Popular discourse such as newspapers and media provide fruitful location for analysis as it is the most widely read and common; becoming entrenched in culture and ideology. Revealing the powerful and intrinsic representations from the Sierra Club population discourse generates an evolving narrative of population rhetoric in mainstream

environmentalism. I utilized LexisNexis Academic search engine to identify mainstream news articles from 1998 to 2006 that reflected on the Sierra Club debate on immigration and population. This period was critical within the debate. I continued to generate data from *Sierra*, a Sierra Club magazine, the Sierra Club website and Support for United States Population Stabilization or formerly known as Sierrans for Population Stabilization (SUSPS) website to develop an entire narrative of population discourse. I then did a content analysis of productive moments within these discourses.

Through the research process a I created a timeline of the genealogy to articulate the story of population within the Sierra Club. This story's beginning in the Sierra Club start with publication of *The Population Bomb* (1969) by Paul Erhlich. This book popularized this ideology of overpopulation as an urgent environmental concern that proliferated throughout mainstream environmentalism. This narrative was embraced by the Sierra Club and as a result generates active policies regarding population and immigration.

Once the Sierra Club claimed neutrality on the topic of immigration in 1996, SUSPS was formed to support what they deemed pro-immigration policy (or anti-immigration) within the Sierra Club. After this failed attempt on policy change, in 2004 the struggle came to a head when SUSPS sponsored individuals to infiltrate the Sierra Club board of directors. SUSPS has become recognized as the initiator of several anti-immigration environmental advocacy groups. After the public debate and Sierra Club

battle over immigration and population, the Sierra Club developed an active global population program with the mantra “birth control not borders.”

Both evolving narratives were seeded within the ideology of population growth as a root cause to ecological degradation. This narrative has been critiqued as overly simplistic to understanding the ecological crisis and provides a distraction to the spectrum of complexities. Providing the rhetorical space for this narrative to grow displaces the blame from the wealthy elite consumption demands and global neo-liberal economics to global poor populations, particularly women of color. By blaming global women of color and their fertility allow for a climate in which domination and control of their bodies becomes justifiable and implemented. Using the language of environmentalism allows for guise to the inherently sexist and racist nature of not only global population control but border control as well. These messages then get embodied advocacy for policy and state making that has contributed to violence the “other;” particularly women of color. This thesis seeks to identify expose this narrative fruiting within the Sierra Club population discourse.

CHAPTER 2: INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM AND FOUCAULT

Epistemology, the framework of knowledge, is understood as the way of knowing that directly informs the methodology and methods of one's research. I embrace an intersectional feminist epistemology in my life and in my research. Intersectional feminism provides a multifaceted lens or framework that argues that the systems that work to oppress, like race, class, and gender, work together and cannot be divided. My approach is to the evolution of Sierra Club population discourse. This approach begins with the perspectives of the marginalized groups, like women of color. This work begins with the oppressors' representations or the stories told about the oppressed via the language of ecology. This research attempts an approach that can make visible the missed perspectives and dialogues privileged eyes have not recognized while holding accountable the white capitalist positions that propagate lies about the border and marginalized peoples.

I embrace this framework not only because I am a women, but because the systemic powers that keep people subordinate are complex and without a multifaceted engagement the significant dynamics can and do get missed. Inadvertently, the most well intentioned research can work to reinforce the oppressive dominant paradigm missing perspectives that have been made invisible. I choose intersectional feminism as a framework as it highlights these missed perspectives. I argue that it also encompasses the spectrum of feminisms I utilize like ecofeminism and third world feminism. This lens in an attempt to untangle the complex dynamisms of patriarchy, not replicate it within the

research process by shedding light on privileged environmentalism that reinforces patriarchal capitalism that inscribes a single answer. Instead I provide a layered historical analysis of key moments where Sierra Club ecological racist rhetoric should be more visible.

Intersectionality as a concept stems from Kimberle Crenshaw's research on violence against women of color. Crenshaw (1991) provides examples that illustrate situations where feminist priorities marginalized race and where anti-racist work subjugated women; compounding oppression of women of color. Crenshaw outlined how these multiple oppressions were not only exasperated by class but systemically institutionalized. Crenshaw thus produces a framework that may "provide the means for dealing with other marginalizations" (Crenshaw, 1991:1299). Intersectionality thus acknowledges the arena where different identities intersect and how that intersection is politicized as well as marginalized.

Crenshaw's understanding of intersectionality may have not been a new concept. Crenshaw's ability to 'map the margins' produced an ethic for research that is echoed in feminist research literature. *Feminist Approaches to Research as a Process* (2004) arguably takes on an intersectional feminist perspective and is a response to positivist research. Positivism is a methodology that seeks to discover general laws through scientific inquiry and places significance on the scientific method. Positivism is rooted within the scientific method that uses procedures and hypotheses to generate facts or truths. It claims objectivity and has been the key form of western knowledge production.

We can see this apparent positivist stronghold within research regarding Sierra Club with authors like Clarke (2001) and Meyerson (2004) drawing similar narrow conclusions regarding the immigration and population debate within the club. The conclusion based on flawed data, limited objectivity and perspective.

Positivist methodology has been critiqued, yet remains the core foundation in much social scientific research. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, Patricia Leavy, and Michelle L. Yaiser (2004) generate a feminist critique, drawing from Sprague and Zimmerman (1993), against positivism suggesting that it “creates false dichotomies that bias the research process” (11) and generates a limited approach to research that narrows the research into single variables. The false dichotomies are the limited understandings generated within positivism like subject/object, male/female, and superior/inferior that exclude possible variables, perspectives and engagements. This disconnected approach allows for a narrow understanding and engagement with the research intending to be objective but essentially decreases objectivity. Feminist methodology encourages a reflective process that rejects objectivity as it is essentially impossible to detach one’s own experiences and biases from the research process (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004: 4). The feminist alternative is standpoint theory and an intersectional approach that is a more “fluid continuum” than a dichotomous split. (12). The fluidity of feminist research provides and an ethic that seeks multiple standpoints by considering the “intersectionality of race, class and gender in defining a person’s standpoint” (Hesse-Biber et al, 2004: 17). The authors continue to describe this “multidimensional standpoint” (Naples, 1999) epistemology as way for women to generate new knowledge and methods for political

activism by exposing the “matrix of domination” as “interlocking system of oppression” (Collins, 1990: 234).

Multidimensional standpoint provides useful information on how communities are structured politically and how their members promote or inhibit political activism. By understanding these processes, we can uncover the weaknesses of systems of oppression and thereby ‘account for the possibility of resistance- a central goal of feminist praxis’ (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004: 17).

This feminist standpoint theory is a direct reflection of intersectionality and provides feminist research a tool kit that utilizes an array of approaches and methods. These tools work to provide me with the ability to ask the questions that get missed and make visible what is omitted in the discourse as well as what is provided. This key text works as a guidebook to understanding intersectional research, while articulating an action orientated process and demonstrating the crucial need for these intersectional approaches. Within this dynamic understanding of intersectional feminist epistemology I include global ecofeminism as another articulation of resistance and tool for understanding and analyzing population and immigration rhetoric in Sierra Club environmentalism.

Ecofeminism by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies (1993) address the relationship between the domination of women and the environment through resistance work in social and ecological activism. This book engages with the complexities of the environment in

terms of the larger, global, understandings of the socio-political and economic spectrum. Shiva and Mies generate a critique of the trickle down discourse of environmental degradation and the global disjointed resistance movements. They suggest a series of bridging arguments that address the actual root causes founded in what they term the “capitalist patriarchal world system” (2). Their argument articulates that the ecological crisis is a complex crisis and is rooted in the patriarchal, heterosexual, capitalistic paradigm. The text outlines that ecological crises and proposed solutions are placed on the backs of women and/or ‘populations.’ Placing the blame on ‘populations’ allows for control over these ‘populations’ while global capitalism continues to manufacture the deterioration of the environment. This is the justification for violence and domination over ‘others’ for profit. These ecofeminist analyses are critical for this research as they provide an understanding that capitalism creates these discourses as a form for control and profit while environmental organizations borrow the language for power and profits. This analytical understanding shows that discourse is not random but operational and structured forms of control.

Ecofeminism is commonly referenced as being a different argument than intersectional feminism, but I am including global ecofeminist perspectives as intersectional feminism. It entails the intersection of patriarchal dominance and capitalism as subordinating both women and nature and how the two are problematically interchangeable as justifications for dominance. Ariel Salleh (1997) demonstrates this articulation of ecofeminism in, *Ecofeminism as Politics: Nature, Marx, and the Postmodern* by advocating for an ecofeminist political analysis of ecology and history.

This reframing of history calls for making women more visible throughout ecological history. Salleh sifts through the misrepresentation and the discrediting of feminism, articulates the role Marxism, and presents a framework that draws out complexities such as the buttressed relationship of capitalism and patriarchy. Salleh articulates women as the ultimate “proletariat” as women undertake, “65 percent of the world’s work for 5 percent of its pay” (6). This insight is entrenched in Salleh’s ultimate argument; “Ecofeminist political analysis is that the ecological crisis is the inevitable effect of a Eurocentric capitalist patriarchal culture built on the domination of nature and the domination of Woman ‘as nature’” (16). This thesis directly draws upon the themes noted above in order to continue to make visible the ways in which women and in particular non-United States women are described in the language of the Sierra Club.

Foucault

It is it easy to characterize a discipline like the history of ideas: it is an uncertain object, with badly drawn frontiers, methods borrowed from here and there, and an approach lacking in rigor and stability. And it seems to possess two roles. On one hand, it recounts the by-ways and margins of history. Not the history of the sciences, but that of imperfect, ill based knowledge, which could never in the whole of its long persistent life attain the form of scientificity (the history of alchemy rather than chemistry, of animal spirits of phrenology rather than physiology, the history of atomistic themes rather than physics). The history of those shady

philosophies the haunt literature, art, the sciences, law, ethics, and even man's daily life; the history of those age-old themes that are never crystallized in a rigorous and individual system, but which have formed the spontaneous philosophy of those who did not philosophize. The history not of literature but of that tangential rumor that every day, transient writing that never acquires the status of an oeuvre, or it is immediately lost: the analysis of sub-literatures, almanacs, reviews and newspapers, temporary successes, anonymous authors. Thus defined-but one can see at how difficult it is to fix precise limits for it-the history of ideas is concerned with all that insidious thought, the whole interplay of representations that flow anonymously between men; in the interstices of the great discursive monuments, it reveals the crumbling soil on which they are based. It is the discipline of fluctuating languages, of shapeless works, of unrelated themes. The analysis of opinions rather than knowledge, of errors rather than of the truth, of types of mentality rather than of forms of thought (Foucault 1972; 136-137).

Michel Foucault presents an understanding from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969/1972) that is pivotal to the justification of this research. Foucault locates the discourse that seems most critical for analysis; the daily, the routine, the margins. The argument is that it is this discourse, "of sub-literatures, almanacs, reviews and newspapers, temporary successes, anonymous authors," that defines how a society

functions, and how meaning is established in hegemonic culture. This definitive quote introduces Foucault as part of the theoretical framework and methodology of this research, by providing fundamental reasoning and justification for the research of discourse as well as generating paramount ideas that inform and understand my research.

Foucault draws from historical documents to explore how ideas change over time. Discourse is the vehicle that drives all power, knowledge, and understanding. Foucault explores how discourse, “does not merely act on individuals but also produces its subjects, through a combination of external subjection and internal subjectification, shaping desires,” (Fairhead and Leach, 2003: 14) providing a weight, power, and purpose to investigating the representations of discourse. By engaging key writings from Foucault, as well as texts within Foucauldian thought, we can develop the foundation for understanding genealogy as methodology and attempting to uncover the power roles within discourse in this case study of the descriptions of the Sierra Club. Foucault’s critiques generated methods such as genealogy and stressed the dynamics of power-knowledge understandings as well as introduced governmentality, biopolitics and inspired the evolution of eco-governmentality.

Genealogy, the process exemplified in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* was introduced to Foucault in Friedrich Nietzsche’s *The Genealogy of Morals*. Foucault outlines this literature’s influence on his ideology on genealogy in his essay, *Nietzsche Genealogy, History*. “Genealogy is gray meticulous and patiently documentary,” is how Foucault begins the essay and describes the characteristics of a genealogy (Foucault, 1971: 76). A genealogy must “record the singularity of events

outsides of any monotonous finality,” as well discover these events in uncommon places or places that tend to be perceived without a history, like in sexuality or love. Also, when reviewing instances in histories one cannot only reveal how they have changed but also how they were perceived in time and space. This is done (generally) through documentary analysis – drawing out how the subject was understood at a particular time in history. Lastly, a genealogy must examine within the history of the created object, as well as discover when and where it becomes missing or glorified when it was absent from history (Foucault, 1971: 76).

In conducting genealogies Foucault illuminates modernity through examining the articulations/representations of the past. Rudi Visker’s (1995) *Michel Foucault: Genealogy as Critique* examines this idea by reviewing the writings of Foucault as well as Foucault’s use of quotation marks in all his texts. Aside from analytical discussion of quotation marks Visker states the functionality of a genealogy well: “Rather than writing a history of the past in terms of the present, the ‘history of the present,’ with which Foucault is already engaged in...illuminates the present from the past by freeing the chronologies and historical sequences” (12). Visker describes that understanding the present from the past means not participating in a linear analysis, as it was the traditional linear analyses that developed the current organizations of power. These linear analyses would be the scientific school of positivism that reduced understanding to problematic dualisms, like the subject/object; one always being dominate over the other. A linear historical analysis may lead to narrow generalizations and risks missed opportunities to amplify certain narratives. For example, a linear historical analysis of Sierra Club rhetoric

would be too vast to actually engage with specific stories and the power of their messages. A targeted feminist reading provides opportunity to highlight key moments that get passed over, like assumed overpopulation narratives. Visker thus engages with philosophy and rhetoric to further gain meaning from Foucault's writings. Visker thus concludes that a genealogy is not just a tool for critique but also a medium for illustrating the parallel between power and knowledge because by uncovering the history and evolution of an idea one can make visible the influence of named idea.

Power-Knowledge is a key ideology developed by Foucault, that establishes that power and knowledge, have different meanings and association, and are inherently interrelated. Power is established and gained through knowledge. *Between Genealogy and Epistemology: Psychology, Politics, and Knowledge in the Thought of Michel Foucault* by Todd May (1993) examines the progression of thought while illuminating Foucault's impact on epistemology. May examines how Foucault presents power as neither exploitation nor possession of those who exploit but rather as a phenomenon that has been progressively established over hundreds of years with different types of knowledge generated from technology, industrialism, and capitalism. "Knowledge and power can be heterogeneous and yet mutually reinforcing, with knowledge producing the effects of power and power producing the effects of knowledge" (51). May thus reflects genealogy as structured uncovering and fluid understanding of the history of ideas that highlights Foucault's strategic utilization of power-knowledge. A fluid understanding of history is rejection of linear analysis that shows how this "power-knowledge" relationship becomes constructed

Genealogy thus becomes a prominent tool to uncover the history of discourses as to establish where their power dynamics are established. In K. Sivaramakrishnan's (2003) *Scientific Forestry and Genealogies of Development in Bengal*, the significance of genealogies is described. Sivaramakrishnan describes a genealogy as a "historical ontology with particular reference to power" (253). Sivaramakrishnan (2003) also illustrates genealogy as a "critical thrust" that uncovers power strategies, comparing a historical moment between another historical moment as well as providing an accessible definition of discourse as a "complex of ideas and social practices" (254). The success of his article in uncovering the discourses of forestry and state building are within the significance of the genealogical approach. In the conclusion, Sivaramakrishnan (2003) explains:

Historicizing such discourse is a basic task that has to be undertaken before studying its effects. One benefit of such an approach is that by tracking development historically, one can appreciate the complex origins of what came to be...I have further suggested that identifying the locus of production of any particular variant of a discourse should be integral to any such historical inquiry (274-275).

This passage articulates a meticulous use of a genealogy and provides a comprehensive guideline for my research of Sierra Club population rhetoric.

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (1995/1977) Foucault examines the history and the rise of the modern prison system. This text espouses the

nuances of the evolution and implementation of the prison system. It reflects on the assumption that prisons in France were established on a moral foundation to move away from public torture. Foucault's thorough critical examination illustrates more than just a review of history, but a chance to see how an idea about something like punishment changes over time, revealing a process through which power and knowledge are normalized. The chapter on panopticism demonstrates the processes of normalizing power through surveillance. An example of this power can be seen in the idea that though there might be a camera watching prisoners, the fact that there is a camera causes the prisoners to behave as if guards are watching. The camera is just a symbol of the surveillance; the power is in the prisoners' perceptions of being watched by the camera. The power is from the idea that they are being watched, established through the knowledge of what a camera does; this idea of being surveilled creates a system of self-surveillance. This notion of self-surveillance is the first inclination towards Foucault's governmentality.

Governmentality is a rationalization for the institution of government through reason by making visible the self as a willing subject of government. Foucault presents governmentality as "art of government", that government is more than state making but rather a purposeful strategy to making ideal government subjects or citizens. Governmentality is the normalization process of government through discourse into the body. Foucault deems this internalization and rationalization of government and control onto populations as biopolitics. Biopolitics and governmentality demonstrate an understanding of the exercise of government externalized into practice and state making

and internalized into self-surveillance and behavior control (Foucault, 1997/ 1978-9, 73-76). *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements* is an anthology of essays edited by Michael Watts and Richard Peet that reflect on Foucauldian influence. Peet and Watts outline governmentality as Foucault's "conduct of conduct" (Peet & Watts, 2004: 27). This means that the conduct of governments is created and calculated to secure the role of the government through multiple people, agencies, and authorities. The government has techniques to maintain power such as its use of discourse, knowledge production, legitimizing authoritative roles, and producing self-surveillance.

Timothy Luke (1999) explores this as a form of governmentality and biopolitics with the dynamics of the environment by generating bio political-governmentality or eco-governmentality. Eco-governmentality or "environmentality" is the eco-discipline within the body (health, fitness) and within government (population control, sustainable development) (Luke, 1999). The connection is that the body internalizes this governmentality and then externalizes in behaviors and actions. The person internalizes ecological messages presented down from government entities that maintain systems of power with a façade of sustainability and survival (Luke, 1999: 134). Luke illustrates this idea within the Clinton/Gore administration that pushed a "green" agenda to generate environmental populations that would be accepting of global "sustainable" development projects and green capitalism (135). The message is to establish a controlled population with a particular ecological discourse that maintains/creates government control as well as creates an ecological self-discipline. For example, having the consumer purchase eco-friendly goods and services that alleviates privileged guilt from consumer driven

environmental degradation while promoting an environmental ethic that would support exported environmental “solutions.”

These authors that utilize and interpret Foucauldian and intersectional feminism thought provide a level of confidence and understanding of the ideological tools that will help in the dissection of Sierra Club population discourse. Engaging with Foucauldian concepts such as power-knowledge, governmentality and biopolitics provides a path to articulate how power and control are manifested in everyday discourse and normalized in a society. By utilizing Foucauldian/ intersectional feminist thought and genealogy as a methodology this research seeks to understand the role of Sierra Club population discourse and its evolution and influence in United States environmentalism and how the representations of this environmentalism has normalized racism and sexism.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Employing a theoretical framework of Foucauldian thought and global intersectional feminism provides a lens that will challenge and guide this research including navigating the literature that will inform my understandings. This literature includes a review of texts that contribute to the overall understanding of the subject of this thesis. This provides an opportunity to review academics that have researched and studied the Sierra Club including a range of texts regarding the ecological crisis, and the climate of mainstream environmentalism. To incorporate these authors and texts allows me to acknowledge the significant work and thought that paved the way to understanding my research regarding the Sierra Club population discourse. The nature of this approach allows me to include a range of ideas that informed this process starting with an intersectional feminist critique of population discourse within United States environmentalism, followed by a review of United States environmentalism and lastly a critical engagement with the ecological crisis.

Intersectional Feminist Critique of Population Discourse in U.S. Environmentalism

Betsy Hartman, feminist pioneer, deconstructs population and scarcity rhetoric by laying out the racist and sexist implications that emphasizes reducing populations to address ecological problems. Hartmann, an influential feminist thinker, tackled the task of understanding the ever growing popular Malthusian rhetoric or Neo-Malthusianism:

“the belief that rapid population growth is a major cause of poverty, environmental degradation, and political instability” (Hartmann, 1999: 3). Hartmann argues that this discourse, infested in environmental discourse, ignores the complexities of these global problems, places the problems and solutions on women of color, aligns itself with neoliberalism, and diminishes human rights.

The generalizing of population causing scarcity as a problem has been widely commented upon in the literature. Hartmann anchors this “alarmist message” from Thomas Malthus, a British economist of the early 1800’s (Hartmann, 1995; 13). Malthus’s main argument was population growth was exponential (1,2,4,8,16) and that food production was an arithmetic progression (1,2,3,4,5), suggesting that population growth was too rapid for food production to keep up, thus would lead to catastrophic events and mass deaths. This “Malthusianism” led to the spread of eugenics and has been articulated a number of times as a crucial repeated discourse about environmentalism. Garret Hardin’s environmental “tragedy” states that because there are so many people on the planet, more people are overusing common-pool resources leading to the world’s most detrimental problems. Hardin’s piece gets used and translated to becoming an anthem for population control. This alarmist message manifests into mass sterilization, neo-colonialism, and racist sexist elitist global policy.

Hartmann finds this ideology fundamentally flawed. First, food production has exceeded what Malthus could have ever predicted and second, population growth is slowing and is projected to stabilize at 9 billion people. Today there is enough food produced to provide everyone in the world with at least 2,720 kilocalories (kcal) per

person per day (Hartmann, 1995). This means the problem is not with scarcity or limited carry capacity but about distribution, organization of food systems, power and control and because of neoliberal economic policies. Neo-liberalism is an economic system based on global free trade, privatization of resources, and encouraging industrial development. This has placed pressure on the global south to compete in an unfair market. This cycle causes farmers and leaders of farming nations to take out loans to expand production just to compete or alter their crops to cash crops, leaving no land or agriculture for sustenance. This becomes a dependency trap (Perfecto et al., 2010) where poor peoples are forced to be dependent on an economic system that proliferated the ecological crisis. After World War II the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development or the World Bank was established. This was complimented with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF and World Bank produced structural adjustment plans (SAPs) to stimulate Third World economies, by offering bailout loans and restrictions for turning farmland into cash crops for export. With these loans came forced deflation and foreign investors; investors that encouraged massive resource depletion and promoted consumption under the guise of trickle-down economics. This was to promote cheap labor and cheap resources for corporations and capitalist development. This process was later dubbed neo-liberal economics and dubbed a debt trap (Perfecto et al., 2010: 86-89). The debt cycle or dependency trap discussed can be seen in many examples over and over. *Life and Debt* (Black, 2001), a documentary, depicts this cycle generated from neo-liberal economics in Jamaica. We see how Jamaica received loans from the IMF. It placed Jamaica on the world market and could not compete with subsidized farmers (U.S.)

which led them into debt. Farmers went out of business and sweatshops were introduced. Labor became cheap and the country became all export while they were forced to live on imported goods. It forces the impoverished countries to stay indebted to IMF and the World Bank.

As described this cycle causes poverty and hunger and keeps ‘developing’ countries from sufficiency. Yet “by stressing the negative role of population growth, both target poor women’s fertility as a fundamental root of environmental evil. And both divert attention from the real forces destroying the environment” (Hartmann 2004). Hartmann argues that causes to poverty and hunger are neo-liberal economics not population growth; by focusing on population growth the real causes do not get addressed and the proposed solutions are placed upon women of color. The overemphasis on population growth leads to efforts to curb population. Hartmann argues that these efforts to reduce population tend to be in the global south or ‘developing’ nations; locations where women of color and the environment are often exploited. By correlating population growth with the environmentally degraded areas provides bogus justifications for bodily violence to women of color. Hartman draws on the intersection that women tend to be the main farmers and utilizers of the land, while the men in families have to migrate for work because of the continued indebtedness of rural communities kept in a cycle of poverty (1995, 1999). Instead the only gender recognition is of women’s fertility; not their key roles in the family economy, on the farm, ecological restoration, and in community organizing and social movements (1999). This invisibility allows for continued male hegemony, exploitation of women and problematic global economics.

This focus on women's fertility is a point Hartmann makes that needs to be expanded on. It is more specifically women of the global south or "third world" women. Placing family planning efforts on these women's bodies is directly linking the idea of whose population needs to be controlled. Hartmann compares the difference between family planning services and health services. Family planning is often implemented without other health service infrastructure and focuses on birth control rather than long term maternity care (1999). Hartmann's critique is that women of color are only seen as fertile threats and are dehumanized, objectified and the focus of global policy for "environmental security." These bodies, as well as the South, become synonymous with environmental problems. Family planning becomes the priority for countries and monies go toward fertility reduction instead of building infrastructure like hospitals, sanitation, education and economic independence.

Hartmann's analysis and response of population and scarcity as tool for reinforcing power, privilege and oppression is an intersectional feminist critique and was the pathway to understanding to the development of ecofeminism. Hartmann is an author and an editor to *Making Threats: Biofears and Environmental Anxieties*, an anthology of essays that dissect the role of fear culture in maintaining the dominant oppressive ideologies. Larry Lohmann (2005) generates one such essay on the fear of scarcity through two interpretations of Malthusianism; the dark overtly racist Malthusianism and the economically logical Malthusianism. Lohmann's argument suggests that the two need each other, that the 'us' and 'them' model structurally reinforces the political economy model and vice versa:

The economic model contained in the story needs Us-and-Them fear narratives and metaphors to get itself out of conceptual trouble and to distract and rally the troops in times of cultural confrontation, social upheaval or theoretical uncertainty...the US-and-Them narratives also need Malthusian mathematics: to displace and elevate themselves into ritual and tragedy and perpetuate and reconstitute themselves as civil common sense (84).

Lohmann continues to equate how the ‘us’ and ‘them’ fear narratives perpetuated by Malthusianism, get translated into anti-immigration rhetoric and how the fear of the “other” morphs into different bodies when politically needed in manifesting fear narratives. Hartmann produces several works on what she argues is a “greening of hate” (2004, 2010) or using environmental justification for racism or blaming the poor for environmental degradation. Hartmann provides two examples. First, advocating anti-immigration policies under the guise that immigration causes overpopulation and thus sprawl, consumption, and other degradations: The second that global peasants are destroying pristine land:

The overconsumption of the rich and corporate plundering of the planet’s resources were let off the hook as poor women’s fertility became synonymous with the felling of forests, polluting of rivers and desertification of farmland. In many ways, this focus on population control threw the American environmental movement off track. By shifting the

blame elsewhere, to the proverbial dark-skinned Other, it prevented many Americans from taking a deeper look at their own role, and the role of the U.S. government and corporations, in causing environmental degradation at home and abroad. It distorted family planning policy as the provision of birth control became a coercive tool in the war on population growth, rather than a means to improve women's health and choices. It alienated people of color and immigrants from the environmental movement and left the door wide open to the greening of hate (Hartmann, 2010).

The anti-immigration environmentalism that has been deemed the greening of hate by Hartman has become utilized by other authors as well. Jessica Urban's (2008) *Nation, Immigration, and Environmental Security*, navigates through the greening of hate by investigating the discourse of environmental security. Urban's thesis that "mainstream environmental security discourse in the United States scapegoats immigration-especially female immigrants of color and immigration across the United States-Mexico border- for the ills besetting the United States,"(4) is paramount to understanding my research. Urban's investigation draws to a critique of the Sierra Club's discourse on population and immigration that fuelled an internal divide within the club as part of her research on environmental security discourse. Urban's ideas echo the ideology and approach to research that I also embrace. Urban suggests two particular outcomes: forced sterilization and militarized borders. These outcomes stem from the umbrella of Malthusianism, which parallels the two sides of the Sierra club debate. These two sides become forced

sterilization generated from a population control campaigns and militarized border from anti-immigration campaigns. In some ways, this project is a moment of accountability for seemingly innocent Sierra Club commentary on the bodies divided by the border.

An intersectional feminist critique of environmentalism is fundamentally structured around the challenging of Malthusianism, the critical engagement with the exploitation of people justified by their assumed resource uses. Noël Sturgeon's (2009) relevant text *Environmentalism in Popular Culture: Gender, Race, Sexuality and the Politics of Nature* explore the naturalization processes of U.S. popular culture's domination and the implications of this negative naturalization. Sturgeon's thesis is that the "deployment of certain [U.S.] narratives about nature" are used to "uphold troubling ideas about U.S. power, heterosexist and sexist concepts of family and sexuality, and racist ideas about indigenous and Global South peoples" (7). Sturgeon understands naturalization as a tool of power is explored through the critique of dualisms that reinforce the process. These dualisms or dichotomies would be us/them, male/female, legal/illegal, North/South, superior/inferior, savior/victim, human/nature etc. By focusing on superficial dualisms the discourse obscures the complexities within and around these dualisms; having only two choices fails to understand the spectrum of complexities, constructions and possibilities. These dualisms become naturalized and embedded in the environment as they are replicated by prominent speakers and writers. Pointing out the problematic ideology behind binary dualisms allows for a dynamic analysis and understanding.

Sturgeon discusses this naturalization regarding frontiers, reproduction and

globalization. The overarching theme is that the process of modernity is naturalized and situated within dominant U.S. popular culture and these communications pervade environmentalism. This dominance is disseminated through narratives and tropes and the heart of this understanding is of the human-nature split and “women as Mother Nature; nature as purity; nature as wild, dark, raced; heterosexuality as natural; and indigenous people as closer to nature” (15). This intersectional analysis challenges the naturalizing process as to understand how environmentalism cannot reproduce the power structure to create the intertwined ecological and social crises; as you can attempt to solve one problem without the other.

United States Environmentalism Climate and the Sierra Club

Given the theoretical work from intersectional perspectives, I’ll argue that it is important to examine how environmental groups describe their work. In the United States the ecological movements are generally fractured and disjointed while being rhetorically demonized. There is an array of environmental discourses in the United States but ecological modernization or green capitalism coupled with racist population rhetoric has been a part of these messages. Several thoughtful scholars have pointed out the problems with environmental organizations that do not address or focus on the root causes. Environmental studies are rich with intellectuals who note the compromises, racism and sexism that emerge as part of the so-called ecological movement.

Doug Bevington’s (2009) assessment of the mainstream environmental movement in his book, *The Rebirth of Environmentalism*, is a response to, “The Death of

Environmentalism,” an essay by Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus. Bevington begins his analysis of the environmental movement by defining the problematic insider-outsider dichotomy. Insider strategy is an organizational strategy that focuses on working inside the system. To clarify, this strategy focuses on political lobbying, professionalization of staff, and negotiates compromises within the environmental movement to move its goals forward (Bevington, 2009: 9). This insider strategy is embraced by national environmental organizations like the Sierra Club. The outsider strategy is positioned outside this system and reflects grassroots strategies like civil disobedience, protesting, and face-face advocacy. I may disagree with Bevington’s assessment as it failed to show the actual spectrum of U.S. environmentalism, like environmental justice movements (Meyer, 2005), but was able to generate a general understanding of the Sierra Club and the strategies they use.

A grasp of the structure and strategy of the Sierra Club is essential when investigating a basic understanding of U.S. Environmentalism. Also critical to understanding the ecological movement is to examine the unique role of funding and foundations. The Sierra Club is like many organizations that receives funding from larger foundations and provides funding for smaller organizations. *Foundations for Social Change; Critical Perspectives on Philanthropy and Popular Movements* (2005) articulates this role of foundation funding for advocacy groups. One essential problem is foundations fund groups that articulate goals of the funders. In “Up against Conservative Public Policy: Alternatives to Mainstream Philanthropy,” Robert O. Brothwell (2005), is responding to the conservative stronghold over policy making and the political landscape.

This stronghold gets translated into the funding world as progressive groups tend to get denied funding or received the least amount of money. Also this foundation funding cycle pitches philanthropy groups against one another by generating a competitive demand for funding. “Foundations and the Environmental Movement: Priorities, Strategies, and Impact,” by Robert J. Brulle and J. Craig Jenkins (2005) engage with an overview of environmental discourse and the funding they receive. The author’s main points are that social change organizations or “radical” groups receive little funding from foundations. Yet, the big question revealed is where the majority of funding goes. This money goes to conservation, preservation and moderate environmental groups and discourses, like the Sierra Club (Even though the Sierra Club has its own foundation). The reason that funding goes to moderate discourse groups is because foundations can still appear to be addressing the environmental problems without actually enacting change or going against their own financial interests: “By funding movement organizations with particular discourses, foundations in effect promote particular ideologies” (Brulle and Jenkins, 2005: 154). The authors of this anthology also examine the struggles of the environmental justice movement, philanthropic marginalization, problematic discourses, systemic racism and sexism, and the further fracturing of the environmental movement by generating competition between groups. We see their critiques validated with, the proliferation of anti-immigration environmental groups, the co-optation of environmental justice groups and funding as the driving force for policy decisions within movements. The one unifying assumption not addressed is population rhetoric as environmental discourse, an assumption so entrenched with environmentalism it almost becomes

invisible.

These themes are addressed with Mark Dowie (1996) in, “Environmental Justice.” This key text highlights the struggle and successes with the environmental justice movement. Environmental justice is the movement that takes environmentalism and brings it to marginalized groups that are negatively affected by environmental hazards. Dowie argues the health of the people needs to be a priority as an environmental concern because it is the pollution of water, soil, and air that is killing people as well as the planet. Dowie also argues that these environmental hazards are disproportionately affecting people of color. Dowie correlates this environmentalism racism with issues of immigration and population control visible within the Sierra Club literature. Dowie highlights the racist nature of immigration within environmental discourse referring to swarm and flood metaphors as well as the racist visible affiliations within the club and its members (159-165). This includes funding from the Weeden foundation and the Pioneer Fund, member alliances with the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and Zero Population Group (162). These groups and organizations advocate and fund population control and anti-immigration programs. Dowie (1996) provides a significant voice for environmental justice movement while highlighting the “legacy of racism,” established with the history of population control rhetoric (161).

The role funding in advocacy groups often acts as an indicator of the agendas and priorities of the funders. *Foundations for Social Change* ultimately was arguing for a cohesive left movement by highlighting injustices the funding process but *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*, a similar anthology written by INCITE! Women of Color

against Violence (2007), has a similar yet more urgent message. This book addresses the detrimental role funding has played for social movements with a more intersectional feminist approach. The INCITE! Women of Color against Violence, critique stems from the recognition that foundations have funded the population control movement and foundations seek to “save” women of color. According to Andrea Smith (2007), foundations take advantage of historical inequities to harm women of color in the United States and elsewhere. The introductory chapter, by Smith, lays out the funding patterns of large foundations as manufacturing the population control movement, especially the Pew Foundation, which donated 13 million in the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development: population control was their top priority (13).

This book also introduced the concept of the Non-Profit Industrial complex (NPIC). The NPIC is system of relationships between the state, the owning class, and political entities that reinforce each other to maintain control through surveillance and public ideology. There are non-profits that work as a tax shelter for corporations, which mean corporations can filter significant amounts of money into foundations and non-profits and not have to pay taxes on that money. Then corporations get a say in how this money is spent and used. Smith lists some other components in which capitalist white hetero-sexist interests are prioritized within nonprofits:

Monitor and control social justice movements, divert public monies into private hands, manage and control dissent in order to make the world safe for capitalism, redirect activist energies into career-based models of organizing instead of mass-based organizing capable of actually

transforming society, allow corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through philanthropic work, and to encourage social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them(3).

The book makes the connections between funding and oppression while articulating the role of capitalism via a description of the non-profit industrial complex.

The Political Ecology of the Ecological Crisis

The ecological crisis is an umbrella understanding for the current destruction of the planet. This typically includes climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation and deforestation. However, the root causes for this crisis is human made and intrinsically linked to capitalism and neoliberal economics. This global spread of capitalism and environmental degradation has displaced people from their land, generated mass starvation, spread global poverty, and structurally supported racism and sexism. As these crises are braided together, it is necessary to include them under the term “ecological crisis.” The following engagement with literature will facilitate a discussion on the Sierra Club’s rhetoric and representation of environmentalism and specifically the role of population rhetoric in the subordination of women of color. Providing a discussion of the ecological crisis and capitalism places the weight back on the side of the root causes

anchoring our discussion of population in the structural harms of inequality rather than simplistically blaming women in developing nations for overpopulation.

To grapple with the complexity of the ecological crisis I have engaged with political ecology literature. Political ecology is a multi-scalar approach to research that seeks to understand a chain of explanation and levels of causality by simultaneously engaging cultural ecology and political economy, thus reflecting on political, social, economic and ecological intersections. This approach, I argue, is a direct reflection of third world and ecofeminisms by incorporating such an intersectional approach with eye on justice. This literature also generates a language that dissects the intersections within the ecological movement that was necessary for my research process.. Robert P. Neumann's *Making Political Ecology* (2005) articulates a comprehensive view of political ecology. Neumann outlines the field from its theoretical background and as well as depicts political ecology as a reactionary field of study. The text addresses how the dominant thought was situated within romanticized ideologies of pristine nature and within the problematic human-nature dichotomy as well as illustrates the highly complex, multi-layered analyses that would be necessary to understand the ecological crisis. The introduction to *Global Political Ecology* by Richard Peet, Paul Robbins, and Michael Watt (2011) dissects the role of capitalism and the neo-liberal agenda as the overarching problematic hegemony that contributes to environmental degradation, social inequality, poverty, starvation, classism, racisms, sexism, and thus violence. This ideology maintains a top-down model of power, control, wealth and knowledge and spreads through discourses that help to maintain its power like overpopulation rhetoric. This

brand of environmental advocacy emphasizes a sense of urgency and that we “must change our whole way of life” (Peet et al, 2011:41). This sense of urgency is used in the case of anti-immigrant rhetoric from the Sierra Club to make racism and sexism less visible in mainstream environmentalism while simplistic overpopulation rhetoric becomes highlighted. As capitalism is the engine that runs the United States it is vital to draw the discussion to capitalism and its relationship to rhetoric and the roles it plays in fueling the ecological crisis.

John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark, and Richard York’s *The Ecological Rift: Capitalism’s War on the Planet* (2010) generates a complex text that situates the ecological crisis within the juggernaut of capitalism. The authors lay out their argument; that there is not a significant critique of capitalism within environmentalism. Several other authors like Klein (2011) Ross (2011) provide similar arguments drawing out the absence of capitalism in mainstream environmentalism groups like The Sierra Club. Foster et al. are grounded in Marxist thought and lay out the nine planetary boundaries or the limits or thresholds that once passed could devastate life on earth including climate change, ocean acidification, and ozone depletion (Foster et al, 2010: 14). The authors suggest that you cannot understand the ecological crisis without critiques of the social sciences, history, capitalism and market based solutions. Ross (2011) draws on these parallels in his investigation of sustainability; arguing that actual sustainability has to be multi-faceted understandings of the political, ecological, economic and the social forces that push people to work against the environment. They all provide understandings of an ecological crisis that is not only driven by capitalist growth, but it is supported through

intellectual work – words and ideas presented by environmentalists within the capitalist system.

These perspectives are all attempts and tools that provide a critical examination at problematic nature of overpopulation rhetoric. This discourse is problematic as it is inherently racist and sexist as well as generates dualisms that constitute the fabric of the racist discourse. The literature provides this research with the understanding that overpopulation is not the root cause of environmental degradation but the larger global economic system is. However, by blaming the global poor allows for perpetual control of the people and the resources. The literature demonstrates how the United States ecology activists have not only adopted this paradigm, but has been actively funding this ideology. This paradigm continues to influence not only global policy on the environment and population but gets externalized in places like the United States-Mexico Border. The Sierra Club is so entrenched in this paradigm and contentious ecological debate that it has internalized the struggle. This struggle has provided moments in which the visible discourse can be analyzed. This visibility becomes ideal in attempting to understand the evolution of overpopulation rhetoric.

CHAPTER 4: THE BOMB AND THE BATTLE

The streets seemed to be alive with people. People eating, people washing, people sleeping. People visiting, arguing, and screaming. People thrusting their hands through the taxi window, begging. People defecating and urinating. People clinging to buses. People herding animals. People, people, people people. As we moved through the mob, hand horn squawking, the dust, noise, heat and cooking fires gave scene to hellish aspect. Would we ever get to our hotel room? All three of us were, frankly, frightened. It seemed anything could happen- but, of course, nothing did. Old India hands will laugh at our reaction (Ehrlich, 1969: 3).

Thousands of Indian women are having their wombs removed in operations that campaigners say are unnecessary...When other local women crowded round, I asked how many of them had undergone hysterectomies. More than half raised their hands at once. Village leaders said about 90% of the village women have had the operation, including many in their 20s and 30s (McGivering, 2013).

The Sierra Club has been and continues to be the leading mainstream voice of United States environmentalism. Their rhetoric and representation have significant implications for the ecological movement. In 1892 the organization's environmentalism was based on ideas of conservation and preservation of America's supposed pristine wilderness. Their explanations of the problems with environmentalism were communicated to lead the reader logically to a corresponding series of political actions to

‘save the environment.’ This human/nature dichotomy emerged from the notion that humans had to protect nature from humans and that human population was a root cause of environmental degradation.

In 1969 the Sierra Club published Paul R. Ehrlich’s *The Population Bomb*, a book considered to have embedded the population rhetoric into mainstream environmentalism. *The Population Bomb* developed an argument that environmental degradation was a direct result from population growth and that “hundreds of millions” of people were going to die of hunger if the world didn’t arrest population growth (3). During this time the Sierra Club adopted a policy on addressing population: To control human population growth and impact; to limit human population numbers and habitat needs within Earth’s carrying capacity (Sierra Club, Bylaws and Goals, n.d 1). As an established norm generated from Sierra Club text, population rhetoric has been embraced by a number of branches of mainstream environmentalism.

Population rhetoric argues that the planet has finite resources and the more people inhabiting the planet the faster the resources are consumed. Population rhetoric thus most often suggests population control as the means to prevent oncoming ecological disaster driven by over consumption of resources. This particular framing translates into multiple discourses with particularly objectifying metaphors, causes and solutions. Initially, this rhetoric was generated from Malthusian ideology. Malthusianism is an understanding that as the world population increases, a catastrophic event will inevitably happen, as we will have passed the planet’s carrying capacity or ability to sustain life on this planet. These ideas led to often blaming the world’s poor for environmental

degradation based on high fertility rates. This often led to population control initiatives and domination of the global poor and women, as reflected in the BBC news quote at the beginning of this chapter illustrating a current hysterectomy scam in India. This control was justified through ‘us’ and ‘them’ rhetoric or ‘Otherizing’; this control was not only population control but control over nature and resources. One good example of the modern surge of Malthusianism can be seen in Ehrlich’s *The Population Bomb*, a manifestation of this ideology. Because the book was so popular, it is a good location to help locate the ideology that is the root of population rhetoric in mainstream environmentalism.

Hartmann (1995), Mies and Shiva (1993) generate similar arguments against this overpopulation rhetoric by critiquing its assumptions. The argument that high fertility rates are appropriate responses to colonialism; having more children was necessary for security and survival in poor populations that is kept in poverty by the dominant powers that is. These feminist responses articulate that consumption drives resource use not just birthrates. It is these competing ideas that are brought out in the Sierra Club public debate

Forty years after *The Population Bomb* was published came *The Population Bomb Revisited* (2009). *The Population Bomb Revisited* (2009) goes back to address what they felt were the flaws: their predictions were off and people incorrectly interpreted the book wrong. “Perhaps the biggest barrier to acceptance of the central arguments of “The Bomb” was—and still is—an unwillingness of the vast majority of people to do simple math and take seriously the problems of exponential growth”(Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 2009: 64). Yet, their revisit fails to effectively address the root causes of environmental

degradation by reaffirming that population growth is the ecological crisis but with more fear, nationalism interjections and ‘expert’ confirmations. Framing population as the main cause for environmental degradation displaces the responsibility of consumption and capitalism: This framing shifts the blame onto the global poor and women. The following quotes from the revisit depict their sentiments and reveal a narrative that reaffirms the problematic rhetoric established from the first *The Population Bomb*

First, *The Population Bomb Revisited* is a prime example of the fear-inducing arguments that are the hallmark of overpopulation rhetoric. The author’s couple this with the assumption that *The Population Bomb* was too optimistic and produces a context in which over population is something to not only be feared but this fear should be more urgent. This is confirmed when their only solutions are population control or death.

Perhaps the most serious flaw in *The Bomb* was that it was much too optimistic about the future (66).

The essential point made about population growth is as valid today as it was in 1968: “Basically, there are only two kinds of solutions to the population problem. One is a ‘birthrate solution,’ in which we find ways to lower the birthrate. The other is a ‘death rate solution,’ in which ways to raise the death rate – war, famine, pestilence –find us P. 34(68).

By enhancing the sense of urgency and the fear producing of population, the Ehrlich’s insulate their work from criticism by using the credibility of scientists to suggest that their arguments have been checked by experts. The result is to embrace an

ideology they helped to not only create and spread but that they are proud of. Their critical avoidance of structural adjustments, consumer culture, industrial militarism, global multi-national corporate control, and capitalism, compounds problems this narrative creates.

One of our personal strategies has always been to have our work reviewed carefully by other scientists, and *The Population Bomb* was no exception.

It was vetted by a series of scientists, including some who became top leaders in the scientific enterprise (69).

The Bomb did exactly what we had hoped – alerted people to the importance of environmental issues and brought human numbers into the debate on the human future. It was thus a successful tract, and we're proud of it (69).

Looking at the storytelling in the revised edition, we can see that both the publisher and the authors are more than satisfied with the entrenched anti-population narrative they helped to propagate. This narrative not only is fundamental in Sierra Club rhetoric, but has been proliferated throughout environmental discourse because of the influence of the Sierra Club. The story told by these authors has echoed throughout mainstream environmentalism and has gained influence and acceptance through the brand of the Sierra Club. The agenda of population is evident throughout their global population program, *Sierra* magazine articles and a slew of activist material provided through the Sierra Club website.

The Sierra Club did not always maintain a neutral stance. The club adopted an immigration policy in 1978 which was to include immigration in the discussions of population and by 1989 adopted a stance that “immigration into the U.S. should be no greater than that which will permit achievement of population stabilization in the U.S.” (SUSPS, n.d). The Sierra Club made a conscious effort to only make connections of immigration with population growth; essentially stating on record plausible deniability of racial motivations. By 1996 the Sierra Club adopted a neutral stance on immigration. The decision to adopt a neutral stance was the result of an internal debate within the club that was played out within the mainstream media.

The fixation with overpopulation discourse did not disappear, but evolved into two competing stances – both adopting some part of the Ehrlich’s argument. Some in the Sierra Club maintained that immigration was a symptom of larger global population concerns and proponents for an anti-immigration stance aligned themselves with more explicit racist arguments. During this debate, the population branch explicitly tried to avoid the perception of racism. The Sierrans’ for United States Population Stabilization (SUSPS) or now called Support United States Population Stabilization (SUSPS), argued that wanting to return the club to its earlier stance on immigration was not racist, but purely based on environmental concerns. The more holistic branch of The Sierra Club focused on women’s empowerment, global family planning, sex education and the role of consumption as part of their global population policy. The SUSPS tried multiple attempts to change policy through ballot initiatives, election cycles and public awareness as well as membership recruitment. The rhetoric and representation of both sides of the debate

generated fascinating visible public arguments which I'll focus on within the battle of the heart of the Sierra Club.

SUSPS and Anti-Immigration Environmentalism

We advocate a return to traditional (1970-1996) Sierra Club population policy which included both birth rates and immigration levels as needed to achieve U.S. population stabilization as quickly as possible. A comprehensive Sierra Club population policy is absolutely necessary and must acknowledge the true impact of increasing U.S. population on our environment, our quality of life, and depletion of the planet's resources (SUSPS, n.d).

A Mexican teenager killed when the U.S. Border Patrol opened fire on a group of rock throwers in Mexico last year was shot at least seven times from behind, an autopsy by Mexican authorities showed (Gaynor, 2013).

In this section, I'll outline the linkages between SUSPS and the population bomb arguments that evolved into current anti-immigration environmentalism. By accessing SUSPS website and researching their representations within the public sphere I will suggest that their narratives enforce systems of power, privilege and oppression as well provided the rhetorical tools for the current manifestations of anti-immigration groups.

Support U.S. Population Stabilization (SUSPS) or formerly known as Sierrans

for U.S. Population Stabilization is a group birthed from the debate over immigration policy within the Sierra Club. This organization sought to include an anti-immigration policy or more specifically to return to a past immigration policy. The group sought to address the 'inadequate' Sierra Club U.S. population policy by advocating a zero population growth policy. This means that births equal deaths and immigration is equal to emigration.

SUSPS organized in 1996 after the Sierra Club passed a neutral stance on immigration. Since then the group has organized to be the voice of anti-immigration within the U.S. environmental movement and organizing members have gone on to establish the Apply the Brakes (ATB) network of anti-immigration environmentalists. The SUSPS website provides pages of information of their principles, their reasoning, rationalities, graphs, charts, definitions, and history of the Sierra Club and SUSPS, but does not provide any current manifestations or member information on the site. Bill Elder has been publicly cited as 'chairman' and then 'spokesman' and other leaders implied were Brenda Walker and Fred Elbel with several other environmentalists tied to the organization (Levison et al, 2010: 2). SUSPS in 1998 tried to pass a ballot within the Sierra Club to return the organization to its prior immigration stance and failed. In the 2002 and 2003 Sierra Club elections three SUSPS candidates were elected to the board of directors (Ben Zuckerman, Paul Watson, and Doug LaFollette). In 2004, SUSPS tried to get three more members elected as to take over majority vote to pass their immigration policy; their efforts failed.

In 2005 SUSPS tried again to get elected officials on the Sierra Club board and

failed again. This backlash led to Bill Elders shifting focus to organizing an “Environmental Leader Forum,” that tends to be recognized as an earlier name for Apply the Brakes (Levison et al., 2010: 3). Elder received grants from the Weeden foundation, whose funding is for addressing the “adverse impact of growing populations and overuse of natural resources,” and has also donated to the Sierra Club as well (Levison et al., 2010: 3). This evolved web of environmentalists, tied to SUSPS, ATB, Sierra Club and FAIR (Federation for American Immigration Reform), are all supported by the Weeden Foundation and have “greened” the anti-immigration narratives.

The Weeden Foundation has funded this movement with the help of John Tanton. The Weeden foundation was founded in 1963 by Frank Weeden, “to address the adverse impact of growing human populations and overuse of natural resources on the biological fabric of the planet” (Weeden Foundation, 2013). Don Weeden, the Executive Director is also a leader at ATB, and is on the board of NumbersUSA and the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) (Levison et al, 2010: 3). Alan Weeden, father the Don Weeden, is on the Weeden Foundation’s Board of Directors (as well is a director Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), cofounder of the Coalition for a Secure Driver’s License, Emeritus Director of the Conservation International, and on the advisory council of American Bird Conservancy and was on the Sierra Club’s Board of Trustees as well as served on the club’s nation Population committee. John Tanton was also a part of this committee in the early 1970’s and played a role in funding extensive anti-immigrant groups as well as created groups like NumbersUSA, founded FAIR and was editor for The Social Contract (Levison et al, 2010: 2). Tanton was president of the

Zero Population growth and self-proclaims to be “founder of the modern immigration network” (John Tanton, n.d: 1). Together, the Weeden Foundation and John Tanton paid for much of the rebirth of the anti-immigration environmental network with its history rooted within the Sierra Club.

This highly involved network of anti-immigration environmentalists have taken and conserved the overpopulation narrative and established a seemingly credible yet privileged, and racist environmental rhetoric that has influence and power. This network includes Apply the Brakes (ATB), Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS), Social Contract Press, Defend Colorado Now, NumbersUSA, Worldwatch Institute, Progressives for Immigration Reform, VDARE and Population Institute to list a few. These organizations have overlapping members, funders, and contributors that have either been affiliated with Sierra Club or SUSPS (Levison, 2010; Barker, 2010). The Center for New Community has provided an extensive report, mapping the interconnected relationships with The Sierra Club, SUSPS, and the Weeden foundation in *Apply the Brakes: Anti-Immigrant Co-Optation of the Environmental Movement*. This report makes visible the evolution of this new ‘movement,’ and the role of funding in generating powerful rhetoric.

The SUSPS website develops a narrative that assumes population growth is an environmental problem and in the United States that ‘problem’ is exasperated by immigration and the higher fertility rates of women from Mexico (SUSPS, n.d). They argue ‘not racist’ because they are concerned with the carrying capacity of the U.S. and argue that higher U.S. population translates into higher consumption; that immigrants

will adopt U.S. consuming habits and further destroy natural resources. SUSPS ‘proves’ their point by bombarding the reader with graphs, charts and numbers that are founded on problematic ideology, projections. They omit any conversations regarding socio-political and neo-liberal economic influences. This narrowly focused effort happens to be effective in naturalizing migrating populations as the problem as well as establishes an urgent message to address this ‘problem’ locally.

This oppressive narrative is the high attention to fertility and the fear of fertility established by SUSPS.

Fertility, or births per woman, contributes to our population growth and must be addressed in order to achieve population stabilization. Each year there are approximately 4 million births in the U.S. and 2.4 million deaths. The growth due to natural increase (total births minus deaths) is therefore 1.6 million per year. Yet according to the Census Bureau’s decennial census, U.S. population is growing by approximately 3.3 million per year. U.S. fertility is dramatically higher than almost all other developed countries... In less developed countries, fertility is the predominant factor driving population growth. For example, the fertility of Mexico is 2.84 and the U.N. Population Division projects Mexico’s population to grow from its current 100 million to 140 million within the next 50 years, a 40% increase(SUSPS, n.d).

SUSPS is making the connection that the United State fertility is high and

fertility is why there is population growth. United States population growth is predominately immigration and Mexico's fertility is high, which means Mexican women's fertility in the United States is the problem. This is confirmed by SUSPS representative and Sierra Club board member Ben Zuckerman, "Birth rates can be reduced significantly only after immigration rates come down dramatically. Immigrants have much higher fertility than established Americans, except established Mexican-Americans who also have high fertility. A plurality of immigrants are Mexicans" (Zuckerman, 1999: 6). Fertility is only a concern for Mexican women, specifically.

SUSPS also naturalizes their message by drawing on American ideology of democracy and nationalism. First, SUSPS frames their argument that is the boundaries of the United States that need to be discussed as the United States is the leading consumers. This argument becomes the scapegoat when trying to articulate its non-racist in between discussions of fertility. Second, 'U.S' visually responds to the word 'us' as well as directly generates oppressive dualisms; us/them, local/global, superior/inferior. Their narrative repeatedly uses this language to naturalize and embed their passive racist/sexist/elitist message. Racism and sexism are visible through the notions that SUSPS is working to limit Mexican population into the U.S and that Mexican women have higher fertility rates than U.S. women, as well as situating the context of the problem on the women of color bodies (SUSPS, n.d). Their narrative is elitist because of the us/them narrative that shifts responsibility for ecological harm from domestic consumption of resources to immigrant pillaging of the local environment. This allows 'us' horrifying consumption patterns, health services, and environmental ideals and not

‘them.’

SUSPS employs an argument that their efforts failed because of the flawed and corrupt democratic process within the Sierra Club. Their justification is that the club allowed money to skew their judgment about immigration and that the club reducing anti-immigration rhetoric to racist ideology unjustly caused their efforts to fail; that other members of The Sierra Club corrupted the democratic process. SUSPS also attaches their efforts with nationalism: ‘U.S.’ population stabilization, ‘U.S’ birth rates and/ or ‘U.S’ environmental concerns, and that to address the ecological problem globally ignores problems at ‘home.’ SUSPS generates discourse reaffirming this local commitment: “Therefore we must address overpopulation in our own country.” Alluding to Garret Hardin, “The moral is surely obvious: Never globalize a problem if it can possibly be solved locally. It may be chic but it is not wise to tack the adjective global onto the names of problems that are merely widespread” and continues with, “populations, like potholes, are produced locally and, unlike atmospheric pollution, remain local” (SUSPS, n.d). In particular this rhetorical move suggests that critics of SUSP are missing the political reality. It is a defensive justification.

By blurring the lines of undocumented and legal immigrants, SUSPS makes their argument that ‘it’s not about race’: “1.5 million legal immigrants and illegal immigrants,” “total foreign-born population,” are examples of the repetitive language used throughout the entirety of SUSPS website (SUSPS, n.d). Legal immigrants are allowed one of ‘U.S.’ and by lumping legal and undocumented together SUSPS is establishing their sameness as the ‘other.’ Identifying undocumented individuals as ‘illegal’ is not only objectifying

but completely dehumanizing. For SUSPS to utilize this language is and interchanging the “illegal” and “legal” terms means the commonality is about their race and not the legal status.

Lastly, SUSPS generates not only fear of fertility but fear of the ‘other.’ “Today’s current world population harbors millions – if not billions – of people who are eager to enter the U.S. This degree of immigration would devastate our remaining open spaces and ecosystems and place an unacceptable burden on our infrastructure” (SUSPS n.d). They are making assumptions that a majority of the world want to come to the United States and that the consequences of migration would be environmental destruction – particularly open space. This narrow vision assumes that immigration is a desire and not the only viable option for people in economic, social, ecological depression caused by larger global injustices. This ‘eager’ billion will then ‘devastate’ ‘our’ spaces. This statement once again justifies the use of the ‘other’ as not only a problem but a possible infestation, on United States soil. The fear generation allows for the people to internalize immigration as negative and something to fear. This fear allows for not only oppressive state-making through policy and politics but contributes and further justifies bodily impacts and violence against people and women of color, locally and globally. The Sierra Club may claim neutrality on the subject of immigration but still reproduces the over-population rhetoric founded on anti-immigration environmentalism.

The Battle for the Sierra Club

The battle for the Sierra Club played out publicly in newsletters, on TV shows, and in the mainstream popular press. In 1998 and 2004 this battle had key visible moments of discourse that illustrated the evolution of the overpopulation narrative that suffuses the Sierra Club and U.S. environmentalism. By analyzing these productive moments I attempt to make visible the intertwined oppressions of racism and sexism that are made invisible through environmental concerns. By trying to unravel these dimensions, we can articulate new advocacy language while holding accountable those who perpetuate a narrative that not only fails to address the ecological crisis but leads to embodiment and execution of violence towards people, especially women of color. A visible site of this internalized and externalized violence can be seen at the United States and Mexico border. First, *The Population Bomb* (1969) popularized the overpopulation myth within United States environmentalism by making an environmental ideology accessible within a global capitalist patriarchy. This text generated from The Sierra Club became a staple throughout mainstream environmental advocacy groups and became an ideological justification for population and immigration policies within the club, evident as the Sierra Club not only published but suggested the Ehrlich's to write *The Population Bomb* (Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 2009: 63). This dominant thread was challenged in 1996 when the Sierra Club took a neutral stance on immigration and shifted focus to global

population control causing a very visible and public battle for the club to support anti-immigration as well as global population control.

I seek to review representations of the Sierra Club and interpret their significance in relation to the role they play in maintaining larger systemic inequity, particularly for women of color and oppressed people. The first key moment began 1996 the Sierra Club accepted an official neutral stance on immigration, to the dismay of many members who felt the way to curb U.S. population growth was to take an active anti-immigration stance. This internal divide was brought to head in 1998 when an “Alternative A” was placed on the Sierra Club ballot which stated:

Shall the Sierra Club reverse its 1996 decision to “take no position on immigration levels or on policies governing immigration into the United States,” and adopt a comprehensive population policy for the United States that continues to advocate an end to U.S. population growth at the earliest possible time through reduction in natural increase (births minus deaths), but now also through reduction in net immigration (immigration minus emigration) (SUSPS, n.d).

This proposition spurred the internal debate into the public and split the club. The proposition lost but it made visible a discourse about population which exposed some key ideas about racism and sexism. The following is a look at some of the most amplified voices in the discussion.

William Buchanan, legislative director of American Council for Immigration

Reform, commented in *The Washington Times* regarding the 1998 debate on adopting an immigration policy:

As final evidence of their intellectual bankruptcy, some opponents of Alternative A trot out the tired charge of racism. Yes, the Ku Klux Klan and David Duke want immigration cut back. But so do millions of decent Americans who are worried about jobs, schools, taxes, urban sprawl, crime, community life and the environment –concerns the Sierra Club leadership might like to consider on their own merits (Buchanan, 1998).

This comment suggests that being anti-immigration may be embraced by racists but also by “decent Americans.” There are couple messages here. First, it is essentially denying that “decent Americans” can be racist. It provides cover for those people who want to blame immigrants for these problems. I think the author is actually making a key observation that racism is more subversive than the obvious KKK; that because Americans are worried about immigration they adopt the fear of the ‘other’, the immigrant, or in this case absorbing the argument that immigrants are the cause of environmental degradation.

Secondly, Buchanan equates the worries with immigration to the worries about “jobs, schools, taxes, urban sprawl, crime, community life and the environment.” Thus the message here is that immigration/immigrants/the “other” becomes the problem; the job takers, the causes of crowded schools, overdevelopment, the criminal, the brown person on the block must be an immigrant. The assumption also points to an assumed

race of American citizens, which is white in this vision. Community life begins to mean a white, safe neighborhood and the pollution becomes the intrusion of non-white communities. This essential moment in the quote is revealing the powerful and semi-hidden nature of racism in immigration rhetoric.

To represent the other side of the conflict within the Sierra Club one can look at Carl Pope, the Executive Director at the time. In a quote from *The Washington Post* eight days later Pope commented:

Make no mistake: overpopulation is, without question, a fundamental cause of the world's ills. But these are fundamentally global problems; immigration is merely a local symptom (Pope, 1998).

In another Washington Post article Pope uttered the current mantra for addressing this topic, "The common-sense solution to overpopulation is birth control not border patrols." As this position reflects the Sierra club's neutral stance on immigration and makes no hidden attempt to hide its stance on overpopulation. First, by addressing immigration as a symptom to a larger population-driven problem it still is placing immigration in the realm of problematic. Instead of immigration being a response to a complex global political economy it is instead a local symptom to overpopulation. Both positions forward the racist ideology which suggests that North Americans have a responsibility to protect the United States from immigration. Pope seems to be saying that this problem involves population reduction in other, far-away nations, while Buchanan is arguing that the nation needs to protect the border to prevent immigrants

from entering. Both share a vision of the defense of white-identified space and to avoid any discussion of United States consumption.

Secondly, Pope's responses suggest the "common-sense" solution of birth control. This sentiment is saying the problem and the solution is within the capabilities of controlling women's bodies. The problem they established is that overpopulation is a fundamental cause of environmental degradation; too many people equal too much food production and too much consumption. In this equation the production and consumption elements are downplayed as the "too many people" are magnified. This focus takes away from the dominant paradigm which benefits the often first world people speaking and places the problem on the women. Hartmann gives a glimpse of perspective, "with only 5% of the world's population, the U.S. presently consumes 20% of its resources" (Hartmann, 2010). The problem is not too many people; it is consumption rates, overdevelopment and overproduction. When the solution proposed is for birth control it first confirms and emphasizes the problem of overpopulation, while providing the solution is further control over the female body. Furthermore, by implying immigration is still a problem, albeit a resulting outcome of overpopulation somewhere else, and birth control is the solution, Pope is extending the overpopulation narrative.

Byron Slater commented in the March 13, 1998 *The New York Times* "Plan on Immigration Misses Point; Strain on Resources" as a response of the Sierra Club neutral stance. Slater's response denies that racism is not involved with wanting an immigration policy. However his references confirm the entrenched racism within his discourse.

This argument has nothing to do with nativism, racism or any other "ism."

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, we needed low-skill immigrants to fuel the Industrial Revolution. Today, immigrants crowd our schools, hospitals and prisons. We must weigh self-interest in decisions on immigration (Slater, 1998).

First, Slater confirms the exploited relationship immigrants have had in United States history. Second, Slater argues that immigrants now are overwhelming the United States infrastructure, including prisons, placing the ‘immigrant’ as criminal and not worthy of education opportunity or healthcare. These contradictory statements are fundamentally generating the oppressive dualism of “us” and “them” rhetoric and note the blame of criminality, under-education and insanity that immigrants supposedly bring. Urban (2008) argues that this process of creating an “other” is a process as making the immigrant an enemy of the environment and national security; this process justifies the militarization of the border (3).

In an article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 22, 1998 titled “Sierra Club up a tree over immigration; should it urge shutting more people out of the U.S. to save resources, The group is voting on it,” the author, Lelyveld utilizes a highly contentious response from Pat Kittle. Kittle identifies as a strong environmentalist with purely ecological motivations. Kittle places the ‘immigrant’ as fertile gang members who adopt “our” wasteful ways. Then Kittle places more value on a tree than that of a human body.

I try to live lightly on the Earth,” said Pat Kittle after stepping up to a microphone at the meeting. “I have no children. I do that for ecological

reasons. Frankly, I'm tired of walking past immigrants with their Mercedes Benz baseball caps worn backward, their gang mentality, and all the rest of it...."When immigrants come here, their birthrates go up," Kittle continued. "And they adopt our wasteful ways. No doubt about it. I'm trying to save the redwood forest, and when I'm up against the wall, I have to ask: What's the right decision for the redwoods? I ask myself: What would a redwood prefer? (Lelyveld, 1998).

This response reflects the embedded racist, elitist, and sexist messages that grow through anti-immigration messages. This response is placing superiority and elite contexts on Kittle's decision not to have children, unlike the 'immigrant' whose fertility and body become place for debate. Kittle may have a limited understanding of consumption but it seems only problematic when "they" adopt high consumption rates that presumably are a privilege for Americans. Her perspective is inherently privileged. Lohmann (2005) highlights this privileged and racist position, "this argument is advertised as nonracist and is backed by impressive numbers. Yet the conclusion relies on the premise that changing Northern lifestyles is a lower priority" (92). Lastly, the issue of fertility only becomes problematic when "the immigrants" cross the border; making the distress more about American entitlement than fertility.

In *Christian Science Monitor's* April 21, 1998, opinion section B. Meredith Burke wrote a response titled, "Sierra Club Schism: The Limits of Sharing." Burke produces an argument that essentially claims that immigrants will encroach on Americans

mental health and that it is completely reasonable to fear millions of bodies ‘forced’ upon ‘us,’ threatening American life while trying to discredit the Sierra Club decision by calling it ‘political correctness.’

In February, 1996, a Sierra Club board attuned more to political correctness than to physical reality voted to refrain from taking a position on US population and immigration levels and policies...Massive populations frustrate the hopes of the poor, raise the cost of housing, and estrange urban residents from the natural settings eco-psychologists believe essential for nurturing the spirit. Why is it immoral to resist the 21st-century cities of 20 million, 30 million and 40 million that immigration supporters are foisting upon us? (Burke, 1998).

Burke devalues the Sierra Club decision as being politically correct instead of environmentally motivated, thus opening up her opportunity to suggest that strengthening the US-Mexican border is in the best interests of potential immigrants. Her justification for Americans to have more space for their mental health is establishing a narrative that provides a perspective that the ‘other’ cannot have access to American privilege, establishing a green eco-gated community. The second part of the quote shows the opposite side; epidemics of immigrants that are not only going to harm your spirit but contribute to unnecessary sprawl already affecting the hopeful poor. The condescending “natural” of the quote reflects the paternal nature of the current paradigm but is completely objectifying with a pastoralist vision of a migrating herd to “American” land.

Burke makes visible the entrenched racist nature of anti-immigration discourse while putting forth a privileged environmental ethic forward.

Aubrey Arrington commented in the letters Section of *Sierra* magazine's November/ December 1998 issue. Arrington's letter continues to affirm that not only is population a central problem for environmentalists but addressing immigration is a part of the solution.

His [Carl Pope] second sentence suggests we were choosing whether to deal with population growth by "limiting immigration or dealing with its root causes," as if we couldn't possibly do both. The pro- immigration-control policy addressed root causes. It simply included immigration control as one of the solutions (Arrington, 1998).

This letter takes the bodies out of the conversation making immigration an objective 'other' that can be debated without larger implications. By reframing the issue as 'pro-immigration policy' instead of 'anti-immigration' situates the understanding of the issue as a positive, acceptable, appealing form discourse. By choosing the reverse language subversively hides the racist and sexist implications because it allows the rhetoric to appear to be for immigration policy not immigrants. This slight difference in language becomes a tool to put forth the same agenda. This was response to Carl Pope's essay, "Lessons of the Immigration Debate," in the July/August 1998 *Sierra* magazine. The rest of the essay continues to put forth the Sierra Club stance on focusing globally on overpopulation. Arrington provides voice to visible distress of environmentalists that fear

that lack of initiative from the club to address immigration will mean compromising the American soil. This reaffirms the entrenched nature of the anti-immigration discourse within mainstream environmentalism. Carl Pope's response in the same issue as Arrington is as follows:

I did not intend to offend the 40 percent of the Club's voters who supported taking a position on immigration. I wrote the column when it appeared that there would be a great deal of media coverage of the results of the election and that most Club members would learn of the result from the media, which have not always done a very good job of presenting either side. So I felt it was necessary to try to reiterate the Club's majority position. I clearly did so in a way that offended some of the folks who took an active part in the debate, and I'm sorry (Pope, 1998).

Pope's apology makes the anti-immigration stance acceptable rhetoric within the narrative. Pope is saying that 40 percent of the club is not wrong or right but the majority of the club would prefer to not to make the distinction. Pope is providing space for the anti-immigration narrative to have equal authority in the conversation and still is adopting the overpopulation framework; through the inclusion of the menu of options. Pope shows the entwined nature of Sierra Club organizing with anti-immigrant sentiment both locally (enthusiasm for border enforcement) and globally (enthusiasm for population reduction measures). Like, Urban (2008) suggests, "Choosing to remain neutral *is* taking a position (177). By taking a neutral stance the Sierra Club is suggesting there is validation in the

ideology.

After the 1998 “alternative A” was defeated, SUSPS took measure to still influence the Sierra Club by endorsing candidates for the elections for the board of directors. They were successful in adding three candidates in the 2002 and 2003 elections but in 2004 they tried to elect three more to allow them a majority to turn over the neutral stance on immigration. The following are these moments in the public sphere that shape the narrative and reveal the problematic overpopulation rhetoric and its evolution within the Sierra Club.

In the April 4, 2004 Philadelphia Inquirer, Paul Nussbaum, covered this evolving story in, “Immigration splits Sierra Club; some board candidates link population, damage. Others say the issue isn’t a priority.”

‘More people, they say, means the use of more land, energy and other resources, driving out wildlife’ Lamm, who in 1985 wrote *The Immigration Time Bomb*, predicts that current growth patterns could mean a U.S. population of 800 million to 1 billion people by 2100. ‘Do you know what 1 billion people would do to this country? Where would we be alone in the midst of such pressing numbers? How would we get away from the stink and sprawl of civilization?’ he said in an e-mail.

(Nussbaum, 2004)

This quote is making an understanding that immigration specifically is going to not only use more resources and take up more land but generate a stench, an unpleasant

odor, within the borders of the United States. This stink and sprawl is thus correlated with immigration; therefore, Lamm is implying that Mexicans are smelly land degraders. Lamm has generated dividing language by ‘othering’ the Mexican immigrant. Urban (2008) understands ‘othering’ of the immigrant as a process that creates an enemy and outsider. This narrative is fear making and further perpetuates hate language. Lamm does not make the appearance of the border explicit in this quote he is making visible through representation. One side of the border gets presented as mass degradation with an encroaching population of filth and stench while the other side of the border gets presented as land stewards.

This next quote is from Sierra Club board member Ben Zuckerman. It states in *The Globe and Mail* (Canada) January 28, 2004, “Nothing racist about it; Like it or not, over-immigration is destroying our environment,” in other words that there is nothing racist about wanting the Sierra Club to adopt an immigration stance that restricts immigration into the U.S.

As a teenager in the 1950s, I recognized that the high fertility of American women, if continued, would lead to a catastrophic U.S. population explosion. Fast forward a half-century to the present – the U.S. population has doubled to about 300 million and continues to explode with absolutely no end in sight. Another doubling or tripling is projected in the lifetime of people being born today. What has changed is the underlying cause of the rapid population growth – from high fertility to massive immigration... Just this past Sunday, in the usually pro-immigration *Los Angeles Times*,

the lead story in its magazine told it as it really is, as the Sierra Club never tells it: “A human wave is breaking over California. It’s flooding the freeways and schools. It’s bloating the cost of housing. It’s disrupting power and water supplies. Ignoring reality has not worked.”...

The author refers to a recent study from an organization I am involved with, called Californians for Population Stabilization (Zuckerman, 2004).

When Zuckerman states his anti-racist claim in the title he is seeking a supportive audience to insulate the argument of opposing immigration from the criticism of racist motivation legitimate the inherently racist nature of the article. Zuckerman invites the audience to participate in the racist narrative while allowing them to define themselves as not racist.

The second dynamic to racism in the Zuckerman quote is the connection between environmental degradation and brown bodies. Zuckerman is looking at the bodies instead of the actual causes of environmental degradation and making it completely about stopping Mexican bodies and not about stopping actual environmental degradation. It is inherently wrong to assume people in third world locations choose to destroy their land knowing they need the land to live. These aren’t strong logical arguments, but they help to create a distinction between bodies that deserve care and those which should be excluded from society. Lastly, Zuckerman makes his argument about fertility. Initially he feared American fertility before it “exploded” and then redirects this fear to that of immigrant fertility. The “exploding” language is direct reference to *The Population Bomb*.

This quote from Felicity Barringer, in the March 16, 2004 *New York Times* article, “Final Bitter Division For Sierra Club On Immigration,” makes clear the apparent racism tied to anti-immigration within environmentalism:

Brenda Walker, a Sierra Club member, recently urged readers of the anti-immigrant Web site www.vdare.com to join the club and vote for the outside candidates. In a column about Hmong immigrants on that site, she wrote, “So will thousands of drug-addicted polygamists be welcomed into America in another escalation of multiculturalism against American values”(Barringer, 2004)

This is the fruiting of long term embedded discourse. This is the outcome of years of racist environmentalism being absorbed in Brenda Walker’s body being offensively regurgitated. It is not the overt racism that makes this quote pivotal, but rather the visible evolution of the overpopulation narrative and its fundamental links to racism. She overtly generates the us/them dynamic highlighting that there are differences between “us” and “them;” us being the Americans and them being Hmong immigrants. In this case she is drawing conclusions that “them” are going to deteriorate American values and the Americans are not drug addicted polygamists. Walker is also commenting that there was already a wave of multiculturalism that was degrading her ideas of American values. Her positions essentially makes this not about ecological concern, but about the feared “other.”

Robert Cox provides a counter-narrative in the February 10, 2004 Washington

Times letters section, “Spinning at the Sierra Club [cont.]”.

Instead of looking at a global problem from a limited U.S. perspective, the Sierra Club is working to improve the environmental and living conditions for all who inhabit the planet, not just those who live in the United States. We are working to improve access to voluntary family planning both here and abroad because that approach has proved to be an effective solution throughout the world for slowing population growth. Time has proved that increasing education and economic opportunities for women and girls also has a positive effect. We’re committed to promoting these solutions through our population program because they work (Cox, 2004).

By providing the space for a reasonable narrative to combat the anti-immigration narrative, Cox provides political cover for the racist SUSPS rhetoric because it generates the narrative in its entirety. The most hateful virulent racists are provided a space to communicate and further their message. The Sierra Club presents the opportunity for the opposite to thrive; voices like Brenda Walker get heard because of the invitation to imagine these two representations as different and reasonable options within the branded messaging of the Sierra Club.

An editorial from the *Christian Science Monitor* (March 11, 2004), titled, “The Sierra Club and Immigration” suggest: “keeping poorer would-be migrants in their own country,” is a clear and obvious example of exclusionary language that textures the argument that anti-immigration environmentalism is racist in nature. Lamm, Sierra Club

activist explains:

‘develop a sustainable, equitable, environmentally benign nation that could serve as an example of sustainability to the world.’ The US has long restricted immigration for various reasons. Saving the planet by keeping poorer would-be migrants in their own country could be added to the mix. Mr. Lamm’s rationale isn’t “anti-immigrant,” as some claim. Rather, it takes the high road by calling on the nation’s oldest conservation group to persuade the federal government to make the US model in controlling US population growth, and thus helping protect the environment...

After all, restricting human use of the environment naturally means influencing the number of humans using it, and especially where they do so (Christian Science Monitor, 2004).

Directly linking this exclusionary language as not “anti-immigrant” is propaganda; it is projecting a representation of anti-immigration that is deceptive. By advocating for poor people to stay in their own country is by definition an “anti-immigrant” stance. The editorial reaffirms Lamm’s position, providing a false credibility to his rationale.

The Guardian’s (London) (January 23, 2004), “Anti migrants plan coup at 100 year old green group: Extreme concern for future of US Sierra Club” by Duncan Campbell illustrates Zuckerman’s opinion clearly; the most critical problem in the U.S. is rapid population growth.

Professor Zuckerman said immigration was only one of many matters that needed to be addressed. “It’s a much bigger problem.” He believed that “rapid population growth is the number one issue for the US, and possibly the world” (Campbell, 2004).

Zuckerman choosing the term ‘rapid population growth’ instead of population growth allows him to suggest an abnormality or something ‘other’ than typical growth; the difference being Zuckerman is more concerned with immigration than population growth or with brown women instead of white women. Also Zuckerman is saying that this growth is more alarming than actual causes of environmental degradation.

Zuckerman, a then Sierra Club board member, illuminates how the visible overpopulation framework has evolved with intensity.

Alan E. Johnsrud, wrote this in the “Letters” section of the September/October 2004 *Sierra* publication:

The May/June issue of *Sierra* contained “The Virus of Hate” (“Ways & Means”), in which Carl Pope said, that racism and intolerance lie beneath the effort to limit immigration and that the Sierra Club should continue its policy of neutrality on immigration. I am one of those who want strict limits on immigration, and I am sure that many are like me in opposing the present high levels of immigration for reasons having nothing to do with ethnic intolerance (Johnsrud, 2004).

Johnsrud, once again revisits that idea that racism and restricting immigration are not related by responding to another Carl Pope essay. This was a similar response as the 1998 Arrington response reviewed previously. The Sierra Club executive director Carl Pope replies with another apology similar to his 1998 apology:

I wrote that only “a few” of the advocates of changing the Club’s immigration stand were guilty of prejudice, but perhaps I didn’t make that point clearly enough. There are a host of perfectly good and unbiased arguments for restricting immigration. Some are environmental; others are not. The fact that there are some prejudiced people with the same positions cannot, and should not, be used to tar those who don’t share those attitudes. I apologize to those who felt that I was suggesting such a connection (Pope, 2004).

This apology moment from Pope expresses the same sentiment as the 1998 apology. It still suggests the acceptance of the anti-immigration perspective and suggests that those who critique the motivations of such anti-immigration advocates are suspect. What we see is that Pope is not moving off the spectrum of the foundational assumptions about population. By giving an apology he is deeming the rhetoric acceptable and assuming that anti-immigration discourse can somehow be disentangled from racism. The apology is evidence of the racism; it is taking same the two same ideas and suggesting they are somehow different when they fundamentally cannot be.

This next quote was provided by Harvey R. Swack in the May/June 2005 *Sierra*

magazine “Letters” section, “On Immigration.” Swack is reflecting the engrained fear and racist narrative by claiming a form of suffocation associated with population growth.

Let’s face it, we need to catch our breath and slow immigration down until we provide adequate housing, water resources, sewage systems, open space, clearer air, and other resources to properly take care of Americans already here. I never have and never will pick out any one group of people to restrict. I believe a sensible solution can be worked out to address the problem. If we don’t, we will never be able to catch up with providing the necessities for all residents to live a healthy and comfortable life in the United States (Swack, 2005).

Swack is still affirming to anti-racist justification but he distinguishes “Americans,” that generated the “us/them” dichotomy. Swack is trying to make his argument seem more reasonable by suggesting that it is only a temporary, yet a necessary measure, until America can ‘catch up’ with the people who are already here. Swack is generating the same prior messages in a more subversive way and tries not to distinguish any ‘one particular group’; the immigration debate is linked with Mexicans in this context and thus makes Swack’s sympathetic message a rhetorical tool to denying racist implications.

Othering happens by repeating words, phrases and using metaphors to depict the immigrant as “the other.” The word immigrant is now associated with a person from Latin America, and incites words such as, “illegal,” or “illegal alien.” These words then

get placed in stories, articles, and speeches that associate social, political, economic and environmental ills with immigration. Veronica Vales, commenter from The Washington Times (2007) and Jerry Seper, from The Washington Times (2007) highlight this narrative:

Among the thousands caught entering the country in the area, more than 10 percent were found to have criminal records... ‘Illegal [aliens] really degrade the environment,’ he [Mr. Chertoff] said. ‘I’ve seen pictures of human waste, garbage, discarded bottles and other human artifacts in pristine areas. And believe me, that is the worst thing you can do to the environment (Vales, 2007).

A popular alien and drug-smuggling corridor in the southeastern part of the state (Seper, 2007).

These quotes provide examples of the role of othering immigrants as problems. The quotes situate immigrants as criminals as well as polluters to the pristine environment while drawing upon the term “illegal alien.” Using the term illegal alien makes the body foreign, other and against the law or state. Creating these racist stereotypes in the rhetoric saturates the body and mind. This saturation justifies not only the continuing of hate speech but also by the acts of violence demonstrated on these bodies. These bodies, immigrant or not, are assumed immigrant by the color of their skin. This artificial justification and embedded racism is produced from top-down communication and is a tool to maintain power to the current white, heterosexual,

capitalist male paradigm. This form of power saturated in the body and reproduces in behaviors and language as Foucault would suggest in his understanding of biopolitics (1997/1978-9).

The battle for the heart of the Sierra Club over immigration policy provided productive moments of visible discourse that illustrated the entrenched population rhetoric threaded throughout the entire spectrum of the debate. These opportunities for analysis were during the 1998 policy initiative to retract a neutral stance on immigration and in 2004 during a key election cycle where the possibility of a majority representation on the Sierra Club board of directors would favor immigration restriction. This evolution of immigration ideology within the Sierra club and thus environmentalism highlights the evolution and subversive nature of racism and sexism. Urban's (2008) analysis of this debate is that a neutral stance still leaves "the door wide open" to construct the people of color, particularly women, as "enemies to environmental security" while reconstructing American values as "white" (184). With this growth of anti-immigration rhetoric came the resurgence within the Sierra Club of global population rhetoric currently visible within the club.

The Sierra Club and Global Population Rhetoric

The Sierra Club has had an active population policy since 1965 that has changed and evolved but has relentlessly maintained an understanding of correlating population growth with the environment. This policy generates a framework for the Sierra Club rhetoric regarding population. This policy provides a representation of the club that

includes their understanding of population as a detrimental root cause of the ecological crisis as well establishes their goals and overall vision. One fruitful place to analyze this arching framework is the Sierra Club endorsement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals or MGDs.

The Sierra Club policy document concludes with its support of the International Conference on Population and Development's (ICPD) approach, a approach that resonates in the Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program (GPEP). This program's strategy is their policy agenda in action, a plan to increase access to family planning and sex education, advocating for women's health care, education, and economic opportunity, educating youth, grassroots organizing, and raising public awareness. Currently, the ICPD approach that GPEP adopted has evolved into, "The Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) (Sierra Club, "MDGs," n.d8) (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (2) Achieve universal primary education, (3) Promote gender equality and empower women, (4) Reduce child mortality, (5) Improve maternal health, (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, (7) Ensure environmental stability and (8) Develop a global partnership for development. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) "represent a global commitment among 189 nations" that the Sierra Club promotes in their program which condenses these eight goals into "advancing reproductive health and sustainable development."

These goals are presenting an agenda that "combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination of women." This is the agenda's main assumption as well as it direct responses to environmental problems from over

population. The Sierra Club introduces this agenda by placing global poverty next to “6.7 billion people,” (Sierra Club, “MDGs”, n.d 8) and correlating population with poverty. This correlation articulates that population is the cause of poverty, when the reality is that poverty is the result of global inequity and complex neoliberal economics as Hartmann (2010) vividly describes; “The overconsumption of the rich and corporate plundering of the planet’s resources were let off the hook as poor women’s fertility became synonymous with the felling of forests, polluting of rivers and desertification of farmland” (Hartmann, 2010). These MDGs “specifically focus on women and children within the world’s most vulnerable populations and include details targets to measure progress.” I include this key statement as it directly states their target: “other” women or women from the global south. There is nothing in the MDGs that is advocating for population control or reproductive healthcare access in the global north.

To further understand the Sierra Club rhetoric we must uncover and analyze the MDGs. Goal one is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and “seeks to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day as well as the proportion of people suffering from hunger.” The MDGs also state:

Today the highest rates of population growth are occurring in the world’s poorest nations, many of which face the challenge of meeting current food needs. The poorest nations are also “predominately agricultural economies and societies.” In fact, “75% of the 1.1 billion people living on less than \$1 a day live in rural areas. Despite producing food staples such as rice, many agricultural communities are trapped in poverty due to several

factors, including harmful trade practices. In the world's poorest countries, imports of agricultural products have exceeded agricultural exports. This trend perpetuates debt and restricts increased access to foreign markets (2).

The MDGs are trying to articulate the complexities of globalization on hunger and poverty but still focus on population growth as the main reason for global poverty and hunger. It creates an understanding that getting rid of populations would get rid of poverty. First, population growth is targeted as a problem on the world's poor and the challenge to meet their food needs. There is enough food in the world today to feed 9 billion people (Hartmann, 1995, Altieri, 2012) but due to large Multinational Corporation's global control on food systems, crops are used for biofuels, animal feed and cash crops, not sustenance for local populations. Corporate control exploits third world populations through, "harmful trade practices" that do not "restrict" access to foreign markets. This global economic system destroys local sufficiency by creating a dependency cycle (Perfecto et al., 2009: 119). By making it about women's fertility and mentioning some other "factors," the Sierra Club side steps the deeply detrimental, and real root causes of the ecological crisis, while still maintaining global patriarchy and control of "other" women. This preoccupation with global poverty and population sidesteps the role of North America and first world influence. This influence is the disproportionate rate of consumption, demand, and influence that North American subjects to the rest of the world.

Goal four “strives to reduce by two-thirds the under-five mortality rate.” This goal also articulates that “despite a decline worldwide in infant and child mortality rates...high child mortality persists throughout Southern Asia and Sub Saharan Africa.” This quote implies understanding of lower mortality rates but confirms that the Global South still needs “help.” The discourse generates an “us” and “them” scenario that confirms a return to the colonial relationship of global western leadership. By having the Global North or the Sierra Club be the saviors of these “other” people, it allows for the superior/inferior dichotomy to persist as well as for the domination and control of the “other.”

Goal five states that they want to improve maternal health by “preventing unplanned pregnancies” The MDGs continue with:

The Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if population and reproductive health trends are not addressed. Increasing access to family planning services is essential to eradicating poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality, combating diseases, environmental sustainability, reducing child mortality and increasing access to education. Greater access to these services can also alleviate pressure on natural resources by slowing population growth. Today, many women and families desire fewer children, but lack of services, information and poverty act as barriers. Gaps in reproductive health “account for almost one-fifth of worldwide burden of illness and death and one third of illness and death among women of reproductive age.” Enabling women to choose the number and timing of their children not only

supports MDG 5, but also helps pave the way towards a more equitable future (4).

This quote confirms that the MDGs primary goal is to address the “problem” of global population growth and not the highly complex and multi-faceted root cause of neoliberal economics. This goal also assumes that natural resources are being used to alleviate pressures of a large population but the natural resources are being used for production of consumer goods. Hartmann (1995) generates a staple argument that a majority of small farmers already practice sustainable agriculture, but their expertise is overlooked for corporate agriculture; small farmers are forced in export that never alleviates debt and leaves not money for food (8). Also this goal suggests that women need maternal healthcare to prevent pregnancies, not for overall health. It focuses on women’s reproduction and not the actual health of the women. This goal draws the attention back to Sub Saharan Africa as a site of interests, as it is these women in particular that need to control their population. This dynamic also contributes to the process of “Othering.” Lastly, the text suggests that if women slow their birth rates they could advance sustainable development. I feel the implication is that with fewer children means more income and energy could go on to sustainable development and more participation on a global level. Sustainable development tends to mean economic development but less pressure on the environment. The technique to articulate that population growth is a strain on the environment, as well as consumption, is the same technique used to promote development; this is counter-productive as more development and reliance on the global market leads to more consumption. This tells me that the

motivation is more about control of the “other” body and less about addressing root causes of environmental degradation.

Goal seven is to ensure environmental sustainability through the “incorporation of sustainable development principles into country policies and increasing the access to drinking water and sanitation services.” The justification for this goal is because the populations most vulnerable to environmental degradation are the “world’s poor.” First, by claiming the most vulnerable population is the global poor is too general of a statement, because some technically ‘poor’ or rural populations, from Global North perspective, might be rich in sustainability through their ecological practices, and knowledge. Second, claiming the modernization or sustainable development will make a community more sustainable is problematic as it is rooted in the philosophy of neoliberal economics. The idea of development in these impoverished communities is that they will develop into the global market system and participate as consumers. Sustainable development has become a phrase to suggest more environmentally friendly development like dams. The problem with both is that it keeps these communities controlled by northern whims of markets and ecology. This places the global problem and solution with the people who contribute the least to the environmental crises.

Lastly, Goal eight, one added after the ICPD, is to “develop a global partnership for development” and states:

Achievement of the MDGs is only possible through a sustained commitment among all nations, whether through increased aid or the reallocation of resources and prioritization of budgets towards

development initiatives. Poor countries must work hard to achieve a more sustainable future, but in accordance with MDG 8, rich countries must match this dedication through debt relief, the elimination of agricultural subsidies, import quotas and other barriers to development, increased access to life-saving drugs, and increased employment opportunities for youth. Only through a dedicated partnership, uniting rich and poor, developed and developing countries, can the global community meet these goals and create a peaceful, more secure world.(6).

This last goal presents a position closest to appropriate and ideal thus far. It demonstrates an evolution of internal critique by articulating the role the rich countries need to play and highlighting some of the detrimental practices that have disabled local self-sufficiency. However, it is very indicative to the overall priority of the Sierra Club's endorsement of the MDGs. This goal is reiterating the development myth: with development comes security and resilience. Development is necessary in roles of infrastructure for culturally appropriate health and social services, clean water and education. However, development has come to mean privatization of resources, top-down state making policies, and development that promotes a neoliberal economic agenda (Luke 1999, Neumann 2005, Peet et al. 2011, Peet and Watts, 2004). Also increasing aid from the rich is increasing attachment that hinders actual sustainability and assumes the developing nations need our aid, and that they are not already more sustainable and resilient. The text confirms this sentiment by claiming rural communities are the "most

susceptible to environmental degradation.” The cause for their move away from sustainable practices is directly caused by the involvement and domination of the Global North and the reasons for environmental degradation are muddled while over population rhetoric is amplified.

Besides the MDGs, this Sierra Club population policy document found on their website, asserts that even with declining birthrates, science, and technology the population growth is still too rapid (Sierra Club, “Population Policy,” n.d.2). To achieve their vision, population stabilization needs to occur. The Sierra Club suggests this can be achieved with two children for an average family and “welcomes non-coercive, culturally sensitive policies that will help lower birth rates, “through the three part program of family planning services, education, and healthcare” (2). The Sierra Club defined the current limitation or “problem” as “the program has not yet been carried out in enough locations, particularly where poverty persists or tradition profoundly affects women’s choices” (2). This “problem” is just an obstacle in the “urgent” matter of population growth, as the document states, “Global Population is already larger than can be sustained over the long term” (2). The global population will stabilize around 9 billion and global food production is currently producing enough to feed 9 billion (Alteri, 2012); the urgent problem is not global population growth but about global systemic inequity. Hartmann (1995) confirms this argument by providing facts of the lack of a food shortage, “the world produces enough grain alone to provide every man, woman and child on earth with 3,000 calories” (5). The Sierra Club population policy document also places the problems and solutions on the backs of third world populations especially women as

Hartmann (1995, 2010) and others argue (Urban, 2008, Lohmann, 2005). The language utilized begins to reflect an internal dialogue that moves away from traditional third world blame-game discourse by making their arguments more sophisticated and subversive.

The population policy concludes by endorsing the MDGs, which can be found within the Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program's (GPEP) activist material. This program also sponsors other activist material as well as publications within the Sierra Club magazine, *Sierra*. The activist material was available publicly through the Sierra Club website and besides the MDGs, there are two downloadable posters and a brochure. The first poster is a picture of planet earth with the words, "What does population have to do with the environment? **Everything.**" (bold in the original) The poster then includes smaller images of traffic, a polar bear surrounded by fire, assumed African women collecting water from a community well, an orangutan, clear cut trees in a body of water, a fish, a little girl(Asian), a tropical flower, a tropical forest, a larger city, and a white women and her son on a yard. Above these images are the words in a smaller font, "children, water, women, deforestation, biodiversity." The second poster is similar, by providing paragraphs describing the perceived connections of population with biodiversity, deforestation, water, gender and children.

These texts are explicit in its message that population is directly connected to the environment; and this connection is detrimental to the planet. These texts are making a simple message that population growth cause's environmental degradation like deforestation, sprawl, and biodiversity loss. However, the text completely ignores the

possibly of other more complicated causes of environmental degradation. By making the problem about women, or specifically women of color, it allows for the dominant paradigm (white heterosexual capitalist male) to presume access and control of these bodies while superficially addressing the ecological crisis. This message then generates further rhetoric and discourse that perpetuates the language of population control on “other” bodies, and makes the language of sexism, racism, and neo-liberal economics less visible. Using images of environmental degradation juxtaposed with women of color places women of color as the source of the problem while simultaneously subjecting them as objects within the wild environment that needs protection.

The Sierra Club activist material located on their website within their Global Population and Environment Program (GPEP) also includes a brochure, a factsheet, and a case statement. The case statement (Sierra Club, “Case Statement,” n.d.6) is a document that outlines their message first by stating the “problem” then describes their “solutions,” that is minimized and repeated in the brochure (Sierra Club, “Brochure,” n.d. 5). This document is a reflection of the policy document and the MDGs. This case document does outline the perceived correlation between population and environmental degradation by answering their own asked question, “how does population affect natural resources?” The statement answers by highlighting the degrading forests, water, and fisheries. The “answer” provided has nothing to do with population. For example, the statement says, “Forests...we have lost 91 million acres.” The loss of forests is more complicated than too many people. They are lost as a result of the dependency trap and consumption demands exasperated by the global elite.

The factsheet (Sierra Club, “Factsheet,” n.d. 4) repeats the case statement but with a more specific look at women and water and is titled, “Breaking the cycle: Women, Water and the Search for Equity.” The text examines how women in third world countries are tied to water through their labor roles of cooking, cleaning, farming, as well as fetching the water. The rest of the factsheet repeats the case statement. Women are disproportionately affected by water politics as the Sierra Club articulates, but the motivation is for population control. This motivation then becomes about their fertility and not really about their empowerment. They utilize the language of empowerment while visually making the connection of women of color as the women that needs empowerment and thus the populations that they need to control their fertility. The assumption is that overpopulation contributes to over consumption and contamination. By articulating third world women as the focus of this program the Sierra Club is positioning women as inferior and as essentially objects that contributes to their disempowerment not their empowerment. I agree with Urban’s (2008) articulation:

The Sierra Club’s overpopulation discourse primarily targets women in the Global South for population stabilization (control) strategies. Similarly, the Sierra Club gives much more attention to the environmental consequences of overpopulation in the Global South for the United States than it does the U.S. consumption patterns, production practices, or militarization on the rest of the world (176).

Urban (2008) argues this is privileging overpopulation discourse as it veils

American ecological destruction and further perpetuates an us/them dualism.

After going through the provided activist material I went through the *Sierra* magazine publication with the focus of population rhetoric. The themes included family planning for women in the third world, addressing the debate of immigration, and sprawl. In “Family Planning, A fine balance; Cultivating smaller families and healthier farms in Ecuador’s highlands,” (2004) by Marilyn Berlin Snell, a picture of ecological devastation and poverty is painted for the reader correlated with their fertility rates. Through the “eroded and scary dirt roads” and “chronic malnutrition” is a story of hope through family planning. In Snell’s (2006) “Flora, Fauna, and Families,” article a similar picture is made in Madagascar but overpopulation is destroying biodiversity by “illegal loggers and the nation’s poor, who cling to survival by slashing and burning the landscape...have already consumed the lion’s share of the countries natural inheritance”(Snell, 2006). Both articles make visible the assumed connection between population and environmental degradation. However, correlation does not mean causation. The articles ignore larger systemic factors of environmental degradation like the consumption of the United States, global multi-national corporations, National and State politics etc. These articles make simplistic connections with overpopulation, draw on emotional language, and articulate what populations the American audience need to fear.

“Fighting Climate Change with Family Planning,” (2012) by Jake Abrahamson brings the overpopulation rhetoric back into the *Sierra* magazine as a forgotten topic, claiming environmentalists have forgotten about overpopulation by fighting the ‘dirty-energy juggernaut.’ Abrahamson offers five ways to stabilize population growth:

Contraceptives, literacy, sex education, gender equality, and dynamic development. I am not against efforts for education, reproductive health and justice, however I will expose when efforts are replicating a narrative that perpetuates problematic understanding about population and women of color. The article created a strong response in the next *Sierra* issue that confirms the quote from the case statement document, “*Sierra* magazine receives more letters about global population than any other issue!” (Sierra Club, “Case Statement”, n.d. 6). These 18 responses provide insights into how this narrative gets translated and internalized. The majority of these responses agreed and congratulated Abrahamson for drawing the connections between climate change and overpopulation. This approval is evidence of the entrenched representation of the overpopulation narrative.

Through the Sierra Club website I found the MDGs, the population policy document, the case statement, the activist material and the *Sierra* publication articles. These artifacts provide a window for understanding the translation of population growth and its relationship to environmentalism. This surge of global awareness is complemented with their “Borderlands” campaign that is advocating against the border wall for ecological purposes (Sierra Club, n.d). This campaign articulates another facet of the debate with immigration policy without being overtly involved. The Sierra Club articulates a campaign to save the wildlife yet ignored the increasing violence and death at borders that reproduces an old narrative of the human/nature dichotomy. This dichotomy keeps human and nature separate and situates humanity as the problem. This is the core value that sits at the base of population discourse in environmentalism. Also

noted is that the Sierra Club relates overpopulation to urban sprawl and has a campaign regarding sprawl. The assumption is that more people equal larger cities and sprawl. This is a very thin line that parallels anti-immigration environmentalists' justification for border control. The Sierra Club also fails to articulate about sprawl that sprouts without population growth. The conversation fails to address growth for the sake of growth.

The Sierra Club maintains entrenched views that population is a root cause of environmental degradation and has developed an active and popular global population policy. This policy reflects an evolution of internal dialogue that has generated both appealing practices and perpetuated old story problematic population rhetoric. This is the same discourse that has fueled the anti-immigration environmentalism groups arguably beginning with SUSPS. These discourses become most visible within the Sierra Club narrative in regards to the debate of immigration within the club.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Guillermo Arévalo Pedroza was shot to death by a U.S Border Patrol agent while having a picnic with wife and two daughters on the south side of the Rio Grande, near Laredo, Texas. The border patrol agent claimed rocks were being thrown at them. 18-year-old Esequiel Hernandez Jr. was shot by a Marine while working for the U.S Border Patrol. Esequiel was tending to his goats near the border in Redford, Texas. The Marine claimed two shots were fired at them. The young Esequiel was facing the opposite direction and bled to death (American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), 2012). These stories, occurring 15 years apart, have become common place in the news as the issue of immigration continues to evolve and escalate in mainstream U.S. discourse. The ACLU, presented a statement, “ on Human Rights Violations on the United States-Mexico Border Submitted to Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Side Event on ‘Human Rights at International Borders’,”(2012) that highlights this increasing violence:

Border security policies and practices that lead to extensive civil and human rights abuses, including the deaths of more than 5,600 unauthorized border crossers. In addition, at least 18 individuals have died since January 2010 as the result of alleged excessive use of force by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials, including six who were under the age of 21 and five who were U.S. citizens (ACLU, 2012).

As this violence increases and becomes entrenched in mainstream discourse so does there rhetorical space for anti-immigration environmentalism. Utilizing excessive force and violence upon the body has become normalized and justified through notions of self-defense from “the other.” In this case, “the other,” is the brown bodies assumed to be an immigrant. The process of naturalizing the violence against “the other” is generated through evolving rhetoric that manufactures fear and dehumanizes immigrants through language. This language can be subversive and persuasive as seen within SUSPS and evolving population rhetoric.

The same process of “us” and “them” is present in global population rhetoric as visible in the Sierra Club’s Global Population and Environment Program (GPEP); defined by a series of activist material and highlighted throughout the *Sierra* publications. The Sierra Club utilized language of empowerment and gender equity, but still replicates that women of color and their fertility is something to be feared. This fear is subversive and embedded in the language and the narrative. This narrative is entrenched in popular discourse, state making, and policy; policy that gets exported to women of color globally.

Foucault calls this governmentality or the embodiment and art of government; the art being the subtle implementations of ideas that reinforce government and power structures. This embodiment is the fruiting of power-knowledge provided through everyday rhetoric. The rhetoric provided here was generated through search of mainstream articles popularizing the debate of immigration policy within the Sierra Club. This debate and narrative may have reflected a passing moment in Sierra Club history but it legitimatizes both stories that equally yet differently, perpetuates the same foundation

narrative. This narrative blames the poor, the women, and those least contributing to environmental degradation as the cause of the global ecological crisis. This crisis stems from globalized capitalism via neo-liberal economics that reinforces systems of power and privilege. It is this root cause that is made invisible through the popular and contentious narrative of population growth.

Exposing this evolving discourse within the Sierra Club provides a moment of resistance. It gives me the opportunity to highlight the detrimental nature of repeated discourse of the myth of overpopulation. It is a chance to push against the popular narratives and possibly provide articulation and language for change. The Sierra Club may have extraordinary programs and may have achieved huge success in their strategies and tactics. The Sierra Club has shown internal struggle, depth and progress and continues to articulate an inclusive mission. This allows me to hope that their internal struggles are still evolving and articulating change for the better. I hope the change can be a call against the grossly disproportionate resources the United States wastes, or the demand placed on the globe because of the United States consumption, or economic systems that perpetuate poverty, or the lack of distribution of wealth and food that keeps hunger alive.

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