

DISSERTATION

AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALISM, SOVEREIGNTY AND
THE “IMMIGRATION PROBLEM”

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ABSTRACT

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Theorizing the relationship between sovereignty and nature has posed challenges to both scholars and activists. Some believe that sovereignty is a problematic institutional constraint that hampers the formulation of holistic solutions to ecological problems, while others contend that the norms, practices and institutions of sovereignty can be stretched in pursuit of ecological and social sustainability. Complicating this picture is the fact that the empirical contours of sovereignty have shifted of late, as the authority and control of the nation-state has been challenged by neoliberal globalization and the transboundary realities of many environmental challenges, creating a crisis of legitimacy that societal actors attempt to ameliorate in various ways.

This dissertation begins from the observation that “nature” – the socially constructed ideal employed to capture the vast multiplicity of the non-human realm – is increasingly central to the process through which individuals, interest groups and social movements attempt to create more democratic, sustainable or ethical political communities and forms of governance. As environmental politics continue to gain traction within mainstream political discourses, environmentalists and non-environmentalists alike are inserting nature into struggles to reconfigure sovereignty toward a particular ecological and/or social ethos. In exploring this interaction, I ask: how do societal groups conceptualize and work to reconfigure the relationship between nature and sovereignty? And what are the social and ecological implications of the normative ideals that they attempt to institutionalize? In order to gain insight into these

questions, I examine contemporary American debates over the environmental impacts of immigration.

Discussions of the so-called "immigration problem" have been contentious for American greens, leading to significant division within environmentalist organizations, and surprising alliances with a variety of other societal interests. The individuals and organizations involved all attempt to challenge the status quo, but deploy vastly different conceptions of nature, political community and governance to do so. Turning to individuals and organizations who have taken public stances within this debate, I employ (1) textual analysis of websites and publications; (2) semi-structured interviews; and (3) content analysis, in considering the various discursive pathways through which environmental restrictionists and their opponents attempt to reconfigure sovereignty. Through this empirical analysis, I make the case that the discursive terrain on which the relationship between nature and sovereignty resides remains poorly understood – to the detriment of efforts to promote socially and ecologically inclusive polities.

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I had always felt that including an acknowledgement section like this in a dissertation was kind of self-aggrandizing (“it’s not like you’ve published a book,” I thought). Then I wrote a dissertation. Suffice to say that after accumulating many, many personal debts throughout the course of this project, I’ve changed my mind. The real question is not whether or not I ought to include an acknowledgements section, but whether or not I can possibly remember everyone who I need to thank.

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Although my research was primarily geared toward understanding environmental restrictionism, I was also fortunate to speak with several individuals who have been actively involved in combating immigration-reduction logics. Cheryl Distaso, of the Fort Collins Community Action Network (formerly the Center for Justice, Peace and Environment), gave me a sense of the history of anti-immigrant movements in Northern Colorado and put me in touch

with several immigrants' rights activists and environmental justice organizations. Rebecca Poswolsky of the Center for New Community (CNC) was nice enough to talk with me on multiple occasions. Rebecca helped me connect with several other activists and organizations, and gave me a sense of the breadth and interconnection of the contemporary American immigration-restrictionist network. No organization has done more to combat environmental restrictionism than the CNC, and their research and publications were invaluable resources. Others I interviewed included: former Sierra Club director Michael Dorsey (who provided excellent insight into Sierra Club debates), Dan Millis (who shared with me the current efforts of the Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign), and immigration attorney Kim Medina (who filled me in on the struggles immigrants face in Northern Colorado). In addition to these individuals who I spoke with directly, my research was greatly assisted by the work of the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Committee on Women, Population and Environment, and the Political Ecology Group. The efforts of these individuals and organizations to advance social and environmental justice are inspirational.

While working on a PhD, it is common to hear horror stories about dissertation committees. I'm happy to say that my experiences with my committee were nothing but positive. Much of the credit for this goes to my advisor, Dimitris Stevis. From first talking over this topic with me, to helping me structure it into a viable project, to ushering me through the editing process, Dimitris has been incredibly kind, patient, and always constructive in his criticism. Dimitris' refusal to accept simplistic explanations and his careful attention to the world in all its complexity is a rare quality, even amongst academics. It's one that I hope to develop through time. Without his efforts to get me to really engage with the empirics of this case, I would not

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AICF: American Immigration Control Foundation

ALT: America's Leadership Team Alliance

AMREN: American Renaissance

A3P: American Third Position

ASUSA: Alliance for a Sustainable USA (formerly Diversity Alliance for a Sustainable USA)

CAPS: Californians for Population Stabilization

CCC: Council of Conservative Citizens

CCN: Carrying Capacity Network

CIS: Center for Immigration Studies

CJPE: Center for Justice, Peace and Environment (has been renamed FCCAN)

CNC: Center for New Community

CWPE: Committee on Women, Population and Environment

EHC: Environmental Health Coalition

FAIR: Federation for American Immigration Reform

FCCAN: Fort Collins Community Action Network (formerly CJPE)

NCIR: Northern Coloradoans for Immigration Reduction

NPG: Negative Population Growth

PEG: Political Ecology Group

PFIR: Progressives for Immigration Reform

SCBC: Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign

SUSPS: Support US Population Stabilization or Sierrans for Population Stabilization

ZPG: Zero Population Growth (renamed Population-Connection)

INTRODUCTION

My favorite café in Fort Collins, *The Bean Cycle*, in many ways fits the mold of a typical coffee-shop in a progressive college town: Fair Trade coffee, a small used bookstore, an in-house journal, and plenty of vegetarian and vegan fare. It's a good place to write a dissertation. I can drink my "Chiapas" blend, listen to mellow acoustic music, and, occasionally, a patron will even strike up a conversation about the Foucault or Marx book on my table. The shop also serves a communal function as a place where social groups – particularly leftists – gather. It plays host to slam poetry, meetings of a local bicycling organization, and dialogues over the transition to a post-oil economy. Like many similar coffee houses, its progressive politics are on display for all to see.

So I wasn't surprised one day to walk in and see an immigrants' rights sticker displayed prominently near the entrance. "*No person is illegal!*" it read. Not five feet from this was another marker of progressivism – a veritable shrine to deep ecological hero Edward Abbey. In addition to this prominent display of Abbey novels and memorabilia, the bookstore's journal had a recent issue dedicated to Abbey, and on their list of fifty "must reads," there are three Abbey novels.

For the average customer there is nothing unusual here; both displays fit the image of progressivism – demonstrating a commitment to social justice on one hand, and environmentalism on the other. For those who know more about Abbey, however, this perceived complementarity is ironically cruel, as this "father of environmentalism" routinely railed against immigrants in statements that ranged from overtly xenophobic to shockingly misanthropic:

...Meanwhile, here at home in the land of endless plenty, we seem still unable to solve our traditional and nagging difficulties. After forty years of the most fantastic economic growth in the history of mankind, the United States remains burdened with mass unemployment, permanent poverty, an overloaded welfare

system, violent crime, clogged courts, jam-packed prisons, commercial ("white-collar") crime, rotting cities and a poisoned environment, eroding farmlands and the disappearing family farm, all of the usual forms of racial, ethnic and sexual conflict (which immigration further intensifies), plus the ongoing destruction of what remains of our forests, fields, mountains, lakes, rivers, and seashores, accompanied by the extermination of whole species of plants and animals. To name but a few of our little nagging difficulties.

This being so, it occurs to some of us that perhaps evercontinuing industrial and population growth is not the true road to human happiness, that simple gross quantitative increase of this kind creates only more pain, dislocation, confusion, and misery. In which case it might be wise for us as American citizens to consider calling a halt to the mass influx of even more millions of hungry, ignorant, unskilled, and culturally-morally-genetically impoverished people. At least until we have brought our own affairs into order. Especially when these uninvited millions bring with them an alien mode of life which - let us be honest about this - is not appealing to the majority of Americans. Why not? Because we prefer democratic government, for one thing; because we still hope for an open, spacious, uncrowded, and beautiful--yes, beautiful!--society, for another. The alternative, in the squalor, cruelty, and corruption of Latin America, is plain for all to see. (1988)

Re-citing the mid-nineteenth century trope of an uncivilized – “culturally-morally-genetically impoverished” – Latino population that threatens “our” way of life, Abbey’s “forests, fields, mountains, lakes, rivers and seashores” are located squarely within the confines of a culturally, racially and geographically bounded society. While many, perhaps most, contemporary environmentalists assert that “Nature knows no bounds” – viewing their political project as eco-systemic, transnational, or even global – Abbey’s counter-argument is clear: the boundaries of the sovereign nation-state ought to be reinforced in order to protect “Wild Nature.”

It would be easy to dismiss such tirades as ancillary to his environmental commitments; unfortunate, but unrelated to the green imaginary that he helped to produce. This is precisely how most environmentalists respond when informed of Abbey’s social politics. *“Yeah, his social statements are problematic, but his contributions to environmentalism are invaluable.”*¹ After

¹ Or they respond: *“He’s an eccentric; impossible to put in a box – this is what makes him worth reading!”* For instance, in response to a critical article against Abbey in *The Nation*, Wendell Berry writes: “[The author] and

all, incredible theoretical and practical contributions have been made by thinkers with troubling political commitments (e.g. Jefferson was a slaveholder, Heidegger and Schmitt were Nazi sympathizers, Foucault expressed admiration for the Iranian revolution, and so on). But, in such instances, one must ask if the theorist's troubling personal politics were in some way related to her or his central theoretical concepts. What if it was Abbey's conception of "Nature"² itself that led him to adopt this exclusionary position?

The "Nature" of Sovereignty

American environmentalists typically proclaim that they are speaking for nature in its sovereign splendor – in other words, detached from any cultural influences. However, Abbey's statements suggest a nature closely connected to a particular ideal of political community (the Anglo-European Nation) itself wedded to a specific institutional form (the autonomous state).³ The possibility thus emerges that Abbey's nature isn't so sovereign after all, but is entangled in a particular conception of American political sovereignty.

What's more, Abbey's nativism is not altogether novel, but represents a recent iteration of a sentiment common amongst the "pioneers" of American environmentalism. The writings of early environmentalists – Muir, Leopold, Whitman, George Perkins Marsh, and Madison Grant (to name but a few) – are showered with evidence of shifting ethnic, racial and class-based

others like him assume that Mr. Abbey is an environmentalist—and hence that they, as other environmentalists, have a right to expect him to perform as their tool. They further assume that if he does not so perform, they have a proprietary right to complain" (Berry 1985; citing Drabelle 1982). My response to such a reaction is that it doesn't matter whether Abbey considered himself an environmentalist or not; his ideas about what nature is and how to protect it have had indelible impacts on the green movement. It is for this reason that it is so important to critically evaluate his "nature."

² I use the scare quotes here to denote my position that "Nature" is discursively mediated (though, as I will argue later, the non-human realm maintains a degree of autonomy from human projects), and the capitalization when speaking of a conception that is said to be completely separate from the "Cultural" realm. From this point on, however, for the sake of readability, I will not continue to use the scare quotes or capitalization unless the specific context necessitates such a treatment.

³ In this respect, his statements on immigration represent an aberration, as Abbey was none too wild about "the state" and frequently sketched a vision that has been referred to as anarchic.

anxieties that interacted with changing ideals of nature, political community and social institutions (Gottlieb 1993, 255; Olsen 1999, 137; Kosek 2006, 146-182). Securing the bounds of the sovereign nation-state was a project taken up alongside that of protecting nature, and new immigrants often clashed with idealized conceptions of what the political community ought to look like and how it ought to be governed. Oftentimes, this culminated in proposals advocating exclusion and/or discrimination against certain populations deemed threats to the expanding nation and its nature (Kosek 2006, Rome 2008).

While today's environmentalism has lost much of this overtly racist, hyper-nationalistic bluster, it retains a close relationship to the social politics of the day. Notably, environmental governance has been irrevocably impacted by the intensification of globalization. Responses to this complex set of phenomena generally hinge on the assumption that the nation-state's sovereignty has eroded or been reconfigured, with far reaching impacts on traditional forms of political community and citizenship. Although there is profound disagreement over how to conceptualize and respond to globalization, commentators of varying stripes have noted a tension between transnational flows (capital, labor, ecosystems, viruses, ideas, communications, etc.) and national blockages (traditional identities, attachments to place, protectionist economic policies, state environmental and social regulations, etc.). The divergent ways that political interests negotiate this tension have major implications on the prospects for social and ecological inclusion today.

For environmentalists, in particular, neoliberalism – the laissez-faire rationale that gained prominence in the 1980s, supporting tax cuts and reduced social spending at the domestic level, while seeking to institutionalize free trade and further propelling globalization at the international level – is widely perceived to have reconfigured the contours of American

sovereignty by privileging an elite cadre representing the interests of transnational capital over the broader public, while simultaneously wreaking havoc on ecological health. Attempts to contest this emergent form of sovereignty – to reconsolidate democracy in the interests of some “public” – have centered upon efforts to articulate a particular relationship between privileged conceptions of nature, political community, and governance. Each of these ideals is deemed in some way capable of blocking those flows considered undesirable and providing entrance to those considered valuable. These contested relations coalesce and clash in debates surrounding the promises and perils of “greening sovereignty” (Conca 1994, Litfin 1998, Paterson 1999, Eckersley 2004, Smith 2009).

Sovereignty: To Green or Not to Green?

Whether or not sovereignty can be made ecologically (and socially) beneficent has been a contentious topic, and positions within the debate vary widely. At one end of the spectrum, myriad commentators – both popular and academic – have enthusiastically advocated for environmental politics out of a belief that nature is an inherently deterritorializing object that, by highlighting humanity’s interconnections, works to break down national boundaries in favor of more holistic forms of governance (Ruggie 1993, Ward 1998). Sovereignty, from such a perspective, is a problematic institutional constraint that hampers global, transnational or ecosystemic solutions to ecological problems. At the other end, however, others – drawing on the aforementioned history of conservative ecologism – have appealed to ecological science, romantic aesthetics, or traditional connections to the land in order to naturalize one population’s place in the political community while excluding others (see Bramwell 1989, Cronon 1996, Kosek 2006). The “sovereign nation-state,” in this account, is a sacred, timeless form whose

insulation from outside forces ensures the protection of nature. Between these extremes lie a multitude of alternative efforts aimed at reconfiguring sovereignty along more ecologically and socially sustainable lines.

While the political terrain has shifted since the time of Abbey, the debate over the environmental impacts of immigration continues to occupy a prominent position on the contemporary American environmentalist agenda. In fact, in the first decade of the 21st century, this debate has received more attention than ever, with numerous individuals and organizations deploying demographic projections and, less frequently, empirical analyses, in asserting that immigration poses a threat to America's ecological health.⁴ The argument has provoked controversy within environmentalist organizations, has attracted the attention of numerous national news outlets, and has grown to include a significant array of non-environmental interests who view the immigration-environment connection as ethically and strategically promising or problematic.

My contention, however, is that commentators on this matter – environmental restrictionists, the media, certain opponents of restrictionism, and several academic analysts – are too quick to proceed through a “problem-solving” perspective;⁵ framing the issue as an empirical

⁴ While restrictionists present various statistics related to projected population growth, little empirical evidence actually links immigration (which they argue has long been at unsustainable levels) with environmental degradation, and those few efforts to do so are methodologically suspect (Population-Environment Balance 1992; Garling 1998; Beck, Kolankiewicz, Camarota 2003). Indeed, in her study for the Commission on Immigration Reform, Ellen Percy Kraly proclaims that “[i]n spite of the knowledge implied in popular accounts, extremely little scientific information has been gathered concerning the environmental effects in US immigration trends and compositions” (1998, 422; see also Kraly 1995, iv). In two multivariate analyses, Jay Squalli finds no evidence linking immigration to environmental degradation in the United States (2009, 2010). Another study that was just published offers further support for this position, concluding that there is no relationship between immigration and seven measures of air pollution (Price and Feldmeyer 2012).

⁵ This distinction between “problem-solving” and “critical” was popularized by international relations scholar Robert Cox (1981). Cox writes that problem-solving theory “takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action” (128). Critical theory, on the other hand, “does not take institutions and social and power relationships for granted but calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of

debate over whether or not immigration causes environmental degradation in the United States. In doing so, however, a particular set of normative assumptions are privileged. Methodologically, for example, restrictionists insist that the health of nature can be measured through national level proxies (e.g. American carbon dioxide emissions). This effectively transforms socially constructed borders into natural facts while *a priori* purging any eco-systemic or transnational measures from discussion. Implicit here is a claim that the “nation-state” is the appropriate lens through which “Nature” can be examined and understood. At deeper, ontological and epistemological levels, the realities that restrictionists purport to be objective, are made intelligible through a particular constellation of vantage points (Malthusianism, romanticism, orthodox geopolitics, social Darwinism, and so on) through which nature becomes irrevocably bound up in particular configurations of the nation-state.

For these reasons, I argue that a “critical” approach to the debate is necessary in order to bring to light the variable assumptions from which restrictionists and their opponents proceed. Interestingly enough, the individuals and groups involved in both advancing and countering this position are in agreement that the status quo is problematic, but they draw upon alternative conceptions of nature, political community and governance in working to reconfigure sovereignty toward vastly divergent ends. Throughout the dissertation, I make the case that environmental restrictionists provide insight into how nature is being woven into exclusionary forms of sovereignty, while opponents highlight potentially inclusive strategies of resistance.

With this in mind, the dissertation is framed around two overarching questions: First, what are the discursive pathways through which efforts to green sovereignty proceed?; Second, can “greening sovereignty” lead to ecologically and socially inclusive politics or do efforts to

changing...It is directed towards an appraisal of the very framework for action that problem-solving theory accepts as its parameters” (129).

work within bounded sovereign polities inevitably reinforce problematic exclusions? The former will provide insight into a complex political terrain that remains poorly understood, to the detriment of strategic efforts to construct forms of socio-ecological governance that are both ecologically and socially sound. The latter attempts to come to terms with one of the central theoretical and practical puzzles of early 21st century politics: the potential malleability of the institution of sovereignty, and its relation to ecological politics.

The Case of “Environmental Restrictionism”

I define “environmental restrictionism” – referred to by others as “anti-immigrant environmentalism” or “immigration-reduction environmentalism” – as the argument that immigration poses a threat to the natural environment of a given, territorially bounded area (in this case, the United States) and, for this reason, ought to be curtailed.⁶ The historical roots of American restrictionism can be traced back to late 18th century anxieties over the potential for “our” vast tracts of land to be populated by foreign races (Kosek 2006), but extant overviews generally trace the beginnings of contemporary environmental restrictionism – where “eco-centric” arguments emphasizing the intrinsic value of nature first appear – to the marriage of Malthusianism and environmentalism that began in the 1940s, plateaued in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and has waxed and waned since (Reimers 1998, Muradian 2006). Although restrictionist arguments vary significantly, the overarching logic is consistent and simple: the “importation” of population growth puts unnecessary stress on eco-systems that are already at or above their carrying capacity; since the overwhelming majority of current population growth

⁶ I have chosen to use the term “environmental restrictionism,” because I believe it to be the most descriptively accurate. “Anti-immigrant environmentalism” is a term strongly contested by many restrictionists who contend that they are not “anti-immigrant,” but simply prefer a more restrictive immigration policy. Immigration-reduction environmentalism implies that all of the individuals and organizations advancing this logic are, in fact, environmentalists. As I detail later, this is not the case.

comes from immigration, it is only through strict restrictions that we can protect “our” land, water, forests and air.

Immigration and the Environmentalist Agenda

The matter initially burst onto the modern environmentalist agenda within the largest environmental organization in the United States, the Sierra Club, when longtime president David Brower persuaded Stanford ecologist Paul Ehrlich to write what would become a seminal work of American environmentalism – *The Population Bomb* (1968). Though Ehrlich did not, at this point, directly address immigration, his dire warnings over population growth spurred the club to establish a Population Committee. Alongside this formal institutional shift, the organization Zero Population Growth (ZPG, today renamed Population-Connection), comprised of many Sierra Club activists, was founded in 1968. In 1972, Negative Population Growth (NPG) emerged out of a perception that ZPG had failed to effectively advance strict immigration restrictions. Attention to the “population problem” had national repercussions as well, as President Nixon’s *Commission on Population Growth and the American Future*, chaired by John D. Rockefeller, concluded with the measured, yet significant, recommendation that “immigration levels not be increased and that immigration policy be reviewed periodically to reflect demographic conditions and considerations” (1969).

Despite considerable concern amongst its membership and frequent statements stressing the need for global and national population stabilization, the Sierra Club itself did not directly address the issue of immigration until 1978, when it urged Congress to examine the impacts of immigration on the environment (Bender 2003, SUSPS 2011). In 1980, club members communicated a similar position to the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Reform,

and in 1989, the Population Committee formally recommended that immigration be limited; stating that “immigration to the U.S. should be no greater than that which will permit achievement of population stabilization in the U.S” (Sierra Club Population Committee 1989).

Yet, since its emergence, the immigration question has been controversial within the US’s largest environmental organization, conjuring up issues of racism and xenophobia that have plagued greens since the days of eugenics. The controversy was so great that, in 1996, the club reversed course and formally adopted a position of neutrality; declaring that “[t]he Sierra Club, its entities, and those speaking in its name will take no position on immigration levels or on policies governing immigration into the United States... The Club remains committed to environmental rights and protections for all within our borders, without discrimination based on immigration status” (Sierra Club 2011).

It appears to be this declaration that truly ignited the opposing camps and brought debates over the environmental impacts of immigration to the attention of national media outlets. Out of this impasse, several internal splinter groups emerged: on one side, Sierrans for US Population Stabilization (SUSPS), which was led by former Colorado Democratic Governor Dick Lamm, former director of the Congressional Black Caucus Frank Morris, professor of Ecology David Pimentel, and activist Alan Kuper; and on the other, Groundswell Sierra, which included thirteen former Sierra Club directors and numerous members worried about the ethical and strategic implications of an anti-immigrant position (Adler 2004; Associated Press 2005; Dorsey 2011, personal interview).

As the issue gained greater attention, a variety of outside social interests leapt into this, at least rhetorically, “environmental” fray. In the restrictionists’ corner was former Sierra Club Population Committee and ZPG chair John Tanton, a controversial figure who began his activist

career a committed environmentalist but has since founded a whole network of organizations whose fundamental goal is restricting immigration (the Federation for American Immigration Reform, Center for Immigration Studies, and the Social Contract Press, among others). Additionally, a variety of nativist and white supremacist organizations, such as the Council of Conservative Citizens and VDARE, that had previously voiced little concern for the environment, began encouraging their members to join the Sierra Club so that they might use it to advance their xenophobic agenda (see, for instance, Walker 2004). The potential for this was so great that the Southern Poverty Law Center warned: “without a doubt, the Sierra Club is the subject of a hostile takeover attempt by forces allied with [John] Tanton and a variety of right-wing extremists” (Potok 2003).

In response, opponents of restrictionism were joined by a variety of environmental justice and immigrants’ rights organizations, including the Committee on Women, Population and Environment, the San Francisco-based Political Ecology Group, the Chicago-based Center for New Community and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Opponents argued that, within these debates, the environment was being appropriated to serve alternative social ends. Their discursive strategy was to challenge the motivations of restrictionists by asserting that they were disingenuously advancing the “greening of hate” (Political Ecology Group 1999).

This shouting match was punctuated by a 1998 national referendum where members voted, by a three (60%) to two (40%) ratio, in favor of keeping in place the club’s policy of neutrality (Salazar and Hewitt 2001, Barringer 2004). The winning position statement – while explicitly one of neutrality – contains a strong, if measured, rebuff to restrictionists insofar as it grounds a commitment to nature within a broader politics of social responsibility that is cognizant of structural inequalities:

The Sierra Club reaffirms its commitment to addressing the root causes of global and United States population problems and offers the following comprehensive approach: The Sierra Club will build upon its effective efforts to champion the right of all families to maternal, infant, and reproductive health care, and the empowerment and equity of women... The Sierra Club will continue to address the root causes of migration by encouraging sustainability, economic security, human rights, viable ecosystems, and environmentally responsible consumption ... The Sierra Club supports the decision of the Board of Directors to take no position on U.S. immigration levels and policies.

Despite this convincing defeat, the restrictionist coalition pressed the issue and it was revisited in both 2003 and 2005, when restrictionists attempted to stack the board of directors with sympathizers (SUSPS 2011). While the efforts did succeed in electing several restrictionist candidates (including Sea Shepherd's founder, reality-TV persona, and ardent restrictionist, "Captain" Paul Watson) to the Board of Directors, the restrictionists have ultimately failed to gain a controlling stake.

In line with the Sierra Club, major environmental organizations in the US – the Audubon Society, Friends of the Earth, the National Wildlife Federation, the National Parks and Conservation Association, the Environmental Defense Fund – remain "neutral" on the issue of immigration (Reimers 1998). Nonetheless, the internal debates have been divisive,⁷ and numerous well-known environmental advocates – including Garrett Hardin, Herman Daly, Paul and Anne Ehrlich, David Brower, Dave Foreman, Gaylord Nelson, George Sessions, William Rees, and Lester Brown – have voiced support for the restrictionist cause.

In addition to these organizations and individuals who are unquestionably environmentalists, there are currently many other groups operating at the national, state and local levels that articulate arguments against immigration on environmental grounds, but that diverge markedly in their politics. National level groups include the Carrying Capacity Network, Negative Population Growth, Population-Environment Balance, Alliance for a Sustainable USA,

⁷ For further analysis of Sierra Club debates, see Bender 2003 and King 2008.

and Progressives for Immigration Reform; State level groups include Colorado Alliance for Immigration Reform, Floridians for a Sustainable Population, Alternatives to Growth Oregon, and several sizable local chapters of environmentalist organizations have voiced such connections, as have local level groups founded with regard to immigration-related issues.⁸

Environmental Restrictionism Today

I first encountered the issue in the context of debates in Northern Colorado. In 2006, a group named Northern Coloradoans for Immigration Reduction (NCIR) sparked controversy when members handed out fliers voicing the environmental argument against immigration at the annual Rocky Mountain Sustainable Living Fair. The group was opposed by environmental and social organizations, including the Fort Collins-based Center for Justice, Peace and Environment (CJPE). Subsequently, NCIR was not invited to the following years fair on the grounds that they “were not acting in a respectful manner” (Park 2007). NCIR and Sierra Club member, Phil Cafaro, a professor of environmental ethics at Colorado State University and current President of Progressives for Immigration Reform, disagreed: “it was a cowardly and mistaken decision,” he argued, “wrong for fundamental reasons...If you’re interested in living sustainably, you have to talk about population just as you talk about consumption” (ibid, quoting Cafaro). This divisive argument has continued on local editorial pages and in public forums.

In June of 2008, I was made aware of a national campaign espousing the same connections, as an umbrella-organization, “America’s Leadership Team for Long-Range Population-Resource Planning,” began placing advertisements in a number of generally

⁸ When I refer to environmental restrictionism or environmental restrictionists throughout this dissertation, I am talking about individuals or groups who have publicly voiced support for reducing immigration on environmental grounds. Thus, despite the variability within a group like the Sierra Club, I do not include the club as a whole in the category of “environmental restrictionism” but I do include individual members who have advanced this logic.

“progressive” national magazines and newspapers. The coalition responsible for the advertising campaign consists of five groups – the Federation for American Immigration Reform, the Social Contract Press, NumbersUSA, Californians for Population Stabilization, and the American Immigration Control Foundation – that demonstrate widely varying levels of environmental concern (see *Appendix A*). For example, the members of Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS) exhibit a significant history of environmental activism and devote considerable attention to environmental concerns, while the American Immigration Control (AIC) Foundation is a hyper-nationalist front that evinces no concern for the environment, and has numerous ties with white supremacist and xenophobic organizations. This diversity is reflected in groups at different levels with vastly varying conceptions of and commitments to both nature and sovereignty.

Whatever their motivations, the contemporary restrictionist movement has enjoyed some influence in bringing the issue onto the national policy agenda: the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 specified that subsequent immigration reports prepared for Congress should provide ‘a description of the impact of immigration on environmental quality and resources’ (Kraly 1995, i), and President Clinton’s Council on Sustainable Development concluded that “reducing immigration levels is a necessary part of population stabilization and the drive toward sustainability” (Population and Consumption Task Force Report, 1996). While the successes and failures of restrictionist policy prescriptions – calling for a complete moratorium on immigration, repealing “birthright citizenship,” increasing securitization and surveillance on the border region, expanding state and local level authority to detain immigrants, enacting mandatory E-Verify employment screening, etc. – are also closely linked with geopolitical and economic realities, several influential policy-makers have articulated environmental restrictionist positions in

congressional hearings⁹ and the environmental restrictionist logic has been influential in debates over anti-immigrant measures at the sub-state level.¹⁰

Today, the so-called “immigration problem” figures prominently in local, state and national level debates both within environmentalist circles and in dialogues between environmentalists and other social interests. A close analysis of these exchanges reveals coalitions of strange bedfellows whose perspectives are founded upon vastly differing ontologies, strategies, and ethics. Though “Nature” retains a prominent position in such arguments, there seems little agreement on what “it” actually is, and how it relates to the foundational theoretical construct of sovereignty.

Theoretical Framework

There are, thus, two questions that must be considered: (1) What is sovereignty?; and (2) How does it relate to both immigrants and nature?

Conceptualizing Sovereignty

In his foundational work on sovereignty, Steven Krasner notes that there exists no consensus over what sovereignty is. Some “take sovereignty as an analytic assumption, others as a description of the practice of actors, and still others as a generative grammar” (1999, 3). Krasner asserts that there are four forms of sovereignty (domestic, international legal, Westphalian, and interdependence) that cut across two dimensions of political life (internal and external). Internally, sovereignty refers to the Weberian maxim that the “nation-state” possesses

⁹ For instance, in introducing a 1994 immigration bill, Harry Reid observed that ‘our resources are being used up, and our environment is being significantly harmed by the rapidly growing population in the United States...fully half of this population growth is a result of immigration’ (Reimers 1998, 62).

¹⁰ For example, Park and Pellow (2011) detail the use of the environmental restrictionist logic in Aspen, Colorado in the late 1990s.

a monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive force over a particular population within a given territory (“domestic sovereignty”); while externally, sovereignty lies in the recognition of the nation-state as the legitimate ruling authority by other nation-states (“international legal sovereignty”), which lends itself to acceptance of the principle of non-interference (“Westphalian sovereignty”). At the interface of these two dimensions is the notion of “interdependence sovereignty,” which provides that the state should be able to regulate the entrance of external flows (ibid).

Thus, the concept of sovereignty is not necessarily a monolithic one – where an entity either “has it” or does not – rather, sovereign power comes in different forms, and can be further unpacked into constituent parts (e.g. authority, control, and legitimacy), which could potentially be dispersed across different actors and scales. However, for Krasner – as well as a coterie of both realists and neoliberal institutionalists – “anarchy,” the absence of any overarching authority in international relations, necessitates that nation-states remain vigilant in reacting to potential threats to their survival. As a consequence, power is conceptualized in terms of material capabilities and militarily dominant nation-states are considered to be the chief actors in international affairs. More so, it is argued that although domestic and interdependence sovereignty may be subject to some contestation, as they always have been, states will strive to retain those external dimensions in the interests of self preservation.

Along these lines, powerful nation-states are not only perceived to act following a timeless logic of self-interest, they are urged to do so. This realist account, as Robert Gilpin observes, has been heavily influenced by conventional readings of Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes, and rests upon the assertion that ethical behavior can be self-defeating if it fails to take into account the actual (i.e. generally unethical) behavior of other actors (1986). Thus, in

sovereignty, realists find a timeless logic of self-preservation that propels the actions of states, causing them to be vigilant in their concern for maximizing relative power (realists) or security (neorealists).

Sovereignty, Nature, and Immigration

What does this mean for immigrants and nature? In such a narrative, the constitutive elements of sovereignty – the self-interested nation-state presiding over its territory and population in an anarchic environment – are already in place as the starting points from which analysis proceeds. Not surprisingly, from Thucydides account of the Melian Dialogues (“the strong do what they will, the weak suffer what they must”) to Hobbes justification of “sovereignty by acquisition,” to Rousseau’s observation that the unity of force found in the “general will” provides protection against outsiders, “the immigrant” (“foreigner,” “stranger,” “alien,” etc.) is a source of anxiety who is not granted the types of ethical considerations given to those within the polis, but is subject to the cold, harsh realities of power politics. Based upon such logics, immigrants have been conventionally portrayed as potential threats to the domestic, interdependence, and Westphalian notions of sovereignty. As Bonnie Honig observes, “in classical political thought, foreignness is generally taken to signify a threat of corruption that must be kept out or contained for the sake of the stability and identity of the regime” (2001, 1-2).

Along somewhat similar lines, nature has historically functioned as the raw material – both theoretically and physically – out of which sovereign civilization is constructed. As Mick Smith asserts:

Nature enters politics and ethics primarily as that over and against which ruling powers define their present political state, as that ‘apolitical realm’ realm over which they first and foremost claim to exercise sovereign power (as exemplified in Locke). The natural world is thereby reduced to both resource and to its

definitional role as a necessary counterpart to human uniqueness, to humanity's own self-decreed, political and ethical, exceptionality from so-called laws of nature. (2008, 9)

For Hobbes, nature is a mechanistic realm in which pieces of “matter in motion” collide like balls on a billiards table. Applied to humans, it is, thus, a state of war where more or less equal bodies are driven into conflict by a scarcity of goods. For Locke, uncultivated nature is simply a wasteland, and those who dwell within are savages (Kuehls 1996). For geopoliticians indebted to Hobbes, nature is both an instrumental resource to enhance state power and a symbol of chaos lurking outside the order of the sovereign, while for liberals¹¹ inspired by Locke, nature is the raw material through which the civilizing mission of economic development proceeds.

If one accepts these conventional readings, the best that can be hoped for – with regard to immigrants or nature – is to adopt a liberal institutionalist perspective where international institutions encourage multi-iterative interactions through which information can be shared, credibility enhanced, and trust gained (Keohane 2002). Through this process, strategic calculations can be refined and self-interest redefined in a way that enhances mutually beneficial gains. Still, nature and immigrants are treated instrumentally, as peripheral entities whose beneficial treatment may occasionally align with the enlightened self-interest of states. Any recognition of intrinsic value or ethical obligation is rejected *a priori*.

An Alternative Account

However, this orthodox account of sovereignty has been increasingly called into question in terms of both its descriptive accuracy and conceptual acumen. Radikha Mongia, for instance, observes:

¹¹ Throughout the dissertation, when I use the term liberal – without quotation marks – I am referring to the classical political economic doctrine associated with Locke, Smith, Kant, etc. To differentiate this from the Americanized use of the term, I place “liberal” in quotation marks when I am referring to the contemporary American left.

Sovereignty is a term that, in our times, lives in numerous domains: these range from poststructuralist and postcolonial critiques of the sovereign subject to Foucault's call to "cut off the head of the king" and reject models of power premised on sovereign authority; from Carl Schmitt's characterization of sovereignty as he who decides on the state of exception to Achille Mbembe's understanding of sovereignty (following Foucault and Giorgio Agamben) as the right to decide who might live and who must die; from Thomas Hansen and Finn Stepputat's suggestion that sovereignty, ultimately, is the "capacity for visiting violence on human bodies" to its colloquial and political usages designating freedom, autonomy, and self-determination. (2007, 394)

Post-structuralists (or "critical constructivists"), in particular, have assailed the ahistorical, structurally-deterministic account that realists and liberal institutionalists alike have provided. In other words, rather than positing any overarching force (i.e international anarchy) and timeless set of actors (i.e. nation-states) as determining political outcomes, such an approach seeks to confront the various *epistemes* or *discourses* through which concepts such as sovereignty, the state, the nation, self-interest, and security, emerge as determinant, supposedly natural, institutions or logics at particular political conjunctures. Dominant forms of sovereignty, in this sense, are the products of contingent discursive struggles. The apparent stability and timelessness of the concept is more a consequence of orthodox political thought than it is a descriptor of empirical reality (Walker 1992, Weber 1995).¹² This is not to suggest that sovereignty is purely ideational. Rather, material manifestations of sovereign power are the effects of struggles to project authority and control over particular spaces by weaving certain knowledges, norms, and representative practices into the ontological foundations of institutions possessing the capacity to visit coercive force upon bodies.¹³

¹² As Weber writes: "[S]overeignty marks not the location of the foundational entity of international relations theory but a site of political struggle. This struggle is the struggle to fix the meaning of sovereignty in such a way as to constitute a particular state [and, I would add, nation]...with particular boundaries, competencies and legitimacies available to it. This is not a one-time occurrence which fixes the meaning of sovereignty and statehood for all time in all places; rather, this struggle is repeated in various forms at numerous spatial and temporal locales" (1995, 3).

¹³ For example, in the early 20th century US, social Darwinism – a popular form of "scientific" knowledge – asserted that genetically inferior races posed a threat to the "founding stock" that had forged a sovereign American nation-state. The social Darwinian discourse began to impact US laws as proponents effectively pushed forward the

Discourses informing dominant practices of sovereignty have been historically dependent on a series of dichotomies – self/other, domestic/foreign, inside/outside, modern/traditional, civilized/barbaric – that are fraught with racial, gendered and class-based undertones (Walker 1992, Shapiro 1997, 1999, 2004). These reifications of “identity” versus “difference” are particularly problematic in a rapidly globalizing world where one both impacts and is impacted by “the Other” to a far greater extent than in previous periods. Thus, transnational connections (through flows of capital, immigration, non-human lives, ideas, communications, etc.) are everywhere evident, but dominant discourses frequently shape perceptions of certain flows as fundamentally threatening. Within realist international relations scholarship, in particular, encounters with migrants are managed through a logic of difference, as evidenced by recent works of Samuel Huntington (2004) and Robert Kaplan (1994, 2001) where the Other is invading “our” borders, taking “our” jobs, competing for “our” resources, and threatening “our” culture.

There is, thus, a long-standing and highly entrenched relationship between sovereignty and exclusion. But is this relationship one of necessity or contingency? The post-structural emphasis on the discursive construction of the institution would suggest the former, but amongst adherents to this approach, there remains significant debate on the matter.

Biopolitics and Bare Life

Much of the contestation in the sovereignty debate stems from the influence of two post-structural theorists – Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben – and their respective efforts to unpack the relationship between politics, power and life itself. Power, in such an account, is not

narrative that national sovereignty was threatened by racial impurity; the very *raison d’être* of “America” (as both nation and state) was said to be endangered by this racialized immigration crisis. The institutionalization of this discourse is reflected in the Immigration Act of 1924, enforced by the sovereign nation-state.

possessed by an entity (like the state) and used only to coerce and repress, but flows throughout social life and is intimately involved in the production of subjectivity, or, as Foucault put it, the “governing of mentalities” (1978). Central to this approach is the concept of biopolitics, which asserts that whereas earlier forms of sovereign power were content to merely “take life or let live,” today’s predominant mode of power is defined by an attempt to intervene at the level of the population in pursuit of a whole host of political ends; it seeks to “make live or let die” (1990 [1978]). Theorists emphasizing biopolitics, thus, evaluate the ways in which various populations emerge as targets of governmental rationalities that attempt to mold, distribute and regularize forces of biological life (population movements, literacy rates, fertility rates, levels of production, modes of consumption, etc.) in line with certain political ends. In opposition to, though frequently operating in tandem with, the spectacular, violent manifestations of sovereign power, biopolitics set into motion relations of power that subtly function through the deployment of scientific, “objective” knowledge (demography, political economy, biology, etc.) (1978, 142-3).¹⁴ It is here, according to Foucault, where the major political struggles of our time – “the ‘right’ to life, to one’s body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs,” and so on – will play out (ibid, 145).

And although Foucault’s micro-political approach has been incredibly influential, Giorgio Agamben has recently argued that Foucault’s conception of biopolitics fails to capture the actual enigma of contemporary power. Whereas Foucault argues that the biological becomes a target of state power in the 19th century, Agamben contends that “the production of the

¹⁴ Foucault writes: “For the first time in history ... biological existence was reflected in political existence; the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time, amid the randomness of death and its fatality; part of it passed into knowledge’s field of control and power’s sphere of intervention. Power would no longer be dealing simply with legal subjects over whom the ultimate dominion was death, but with living beings, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself; it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave power its access even to the body” (1978, 143).

biopolitical body is the originary activity of sovereign power” (1995, 5). Returning to Greek philosophy, Agamben observes that there existed a dichotomy between *zoē* – the mere biological state of living – and *bios* – life in the public sphere or “politically qualified life.” However, through an historical analysis that examines the complexities of ancient and classical political practice, Agamben demonstrates that this distinction did not always hold. The paradigm of sovereignty is founded upon a paradox wherein the sovereign, in declaring a “state of exception” (or “state of emergency”), asserts itself by suspending the very juridical order that grants it legitimacy, leaving those accused of threatening the sovereign (and thereby necessitating the state of exception) in unstable territory where the dichotomy between *zoē* and *bios* is no longer tenable.

Key to unpacking this paradox is the obscure Roman figure of *homo sacer* (“sacred man”), a category that the sovereign bestowed upon an individual who, by virtue of an egregious offense (e.g. “the cancellation of borders”), was able to be killed by anyone with impunity, but was deemed unfit for the sacrificial rites that linked the sovereign to “the sacred” (Agamben 1998, 85). Through the rare and exceptional declaration of *homo sacer*, the individual was included in the juridical order solely through his or her exclusion; his or her biological life (*zoē*) was abandoned to perpetual administration at the whim of the sovereign, without the parallel juridical protections granted to politically qualified life (*bios*) (ibid, 27-8). *Homo sacer* provides the model for what Agamben terms “bare life.”

Agamben observes that, historically, the potential for the abandonment of an individual or a broader population to bare life is particularly acute during periods of emergency rule. In these states of exception, the normal juridical order is suspended for the ostensible purposes of saving that juridical order. American national crises provide numerous examples of this

tendency: Lincoln's suspensions of *habeas corpus* during the Civil War; Roosevelt's internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II; and George W. Bush's support for (and Obama's continued reliance on) the Patriot Act, indefinite detention and extraordinary rendition during the current War on Terror (Agamben 2005, 20-22). Foundational examples of bare life include the prisoner of a concentration camp, the detainee at Guantanamo, and the immigrant awaiting "expedited removal" in contemporary American detention facilities.

With this in mind, Agamben asserts that, contrary to Foucault's specification, the novelty of modern politics is not the inclusion of *zoē* in the polis, rather:

The decisive fact is that, together with the process by which the exception everywhere becomes the rule, the realm of bare life – which is originally situated at the margins of the political order, gradually begins to coincide with the political realm, and exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, *bios* and *zoē*, enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction. (Agamben 1998, 9)

Agamben's argument is that in a period where the exception has effectively become the rule (e.g. a War on Terror that knows no temporal or spatial boundaries), the line between democracy and totalitarianism is fast becoming indistinguishable as power invests the most intimate minutia of life (e.g. phone taps, monitoring of purchases and library books, restrictions on free movement, etc.) in the very name of saving democracy, without providing recourse to the sorts of political protections that have historically characterized democracy. The *potential* exists, he argues, for us all to be declared bare life.

And yet, we are clearly not all being reduced to bare life. The actualization of this process takes place – has always taken place – within the confines of discourses that are shot through with national, racial, gendered, class-based and sexual conventions that lend themselves to the differential governance of various populations (Pratt 2005, Ong 2006).¹⁵ As a consequence, even

¹⁵ For example, Geraldine Pratt remarks that "women's formal equality within the public sphere has been entirely dependent upon their subordination within the home...Both the production of the home as a gendered private space,

as “neoliberal globalization” reconfigures the bounds of sovereignty and citizenship, it does so in ways that privilege some while marginalizing others. For example, political geographer Matthew Sparke observes that, with regard to migration, the “so-called Smart Border programs exemplify how a business class civil citizenship has been extended across transnational space at the very same time as economic liberalization and national securitization have curtailed citizenship for others” (2006, 151). Certain lives are deemed valuable – they fit within a dominant national imaginary or contribute to a national economic project – while others are easy to abandon or exclude. Anthropologist Aihwa Ong has commented on the seemingly paradoxical situation this creates, where states often grant transnational elites more rights than many of their own citizens (particularly marginalized groups) in an effort to attract skilled labor that fits some national development strategy (2006).

Environmentalism, Sovereignty and Bare Life

How do these debates over sovereignty and biopolitics relate to environmentalism? Mainstream environmentalism is wedded to a discursive ideal of a “capital-N-Nature” – that is, a sovereign Nature that speaks without cultural or political mediation – *in crisis*. In Agamben’s terms, discourses of environmentalism commonly intersect with narratives of exception, where ecological emergencies (e.g. resource scarcity, global warming, and population “explosions”) are said to necessitate extreme and immediate measures. Indeed, throughout the dissertation, I will detail how a shared assumption marking all environmental restrictionist narratives is the notion of “crisis,” though they disagree on the “nature” of that crisis. Restrictionists (like many mainstream American greens) contend that the time for debate is over; in order to save nature,

and women’s especial difficulty in maintaining the boundary between private and public are key resources for the legal abandonment of women” (2005, 1056). Pratt, thus, asserts that the dichotomy between bare life and politically qualified life has historically been a gendered one.

“we” must act now. Nature, in this sense, cannot wait any longer for the emotional opinions, the incrementalism and the politicization that characterizes democratic decision-making.

On one hand, the increasingly tendency of environmentalists to rely upon such a narrative is (in part) what has propelled concerns over global warming, the end of oil, and population “explosions” onto mainstream dialogues of economics, security, and development. But on the other, this is (in part) what makes environmental politics appealing to alternative (non-environmental) social interests, and what renders environmentalism culpable in the exclusionary implications of the ever-looming state of exception. If, as I will argue, nature is imbued with social conventions – entwined in ideals of “Nation,” “Race,” “Culture” and the various other trappings of sovereignty – then marginalized populations are likely to be adversely impacted, even reduced to bare life, if these states of exception are actualized.

As nature is valued and deployed in ways that have vastly differing social and environmental consequences – many of which are antithetical to democratic politics and social inclusion – a number of questions ought to be considered: How is nature enmeshed in this process of constructing a “state of exception?;” What is the discursive terrain through which “bare life” emerges?; Might certain discourses of environmentalism militate against a declaration of exception? Must we abandon sovereignty altogether to do so, or can we even truly rid ourselves of an institution that has become woven into so many apparently separate discursive forms?

Chapter Overview

I have argued that, in conventional accounts, both immigrants and nature are the Others of sovereignty *par excellence*; they are, respectively, the outside threat or raw material through which the nation-state consolidates itself. Thus, a case focused on the intersection of nature and

immigration might help us to think about the limits of inclusion within the parameters of the norms, institutions and practices that comprise sovereignty. A brief introduction to environmental restrictionism and its opponents suggests that that both sides seek to reconfigure the bounds of sovereignty, but there is incredible variability both within each coalition and between the two sides. Debates over how to conceptualize nature, what the political community ought to look like, what scale governance should occur at, what the social purpose of that governance should be, and how to relate these contested ideals to one another, result in efforts to reconfigure sovereignty toward vastly different ends. In order to unpack these relations, my analysis will proceed as follows:

Part One consists of the theoretical framework from which the empirical analysis will proceed. In *Chapter One*, I review the ways in which practitioners and theorists of environmental politics have conceptualized the relationship between sovereignty and nature. I observe that environmentalists tend to either support “greening sovereignty” or to reject such a project out of hand. To illustrate this dichotomous logic, I turn to two competing exemplars: Robyn Eckersley’s *The Green State* (2004) and Mick Smith’s *Against Ecological Sovereignty* (2011). I use this dialogue as an entrance point to consider the promises and perils of both projects, and I advance an alternative that proceeds through a less generalizable, but perhaps more strategic, mode of analysis aiming to consider the contingent conjunctions through which particular articulations of eco-sovereignty acquire their inclusive or exclusive *ethos* (Connolly 2004).

In *Chapter Two*, I further develop the mode of analysis introduced in the previous chapter, making the case that although particular relationships between nature, political community, and governance are often implicit in the works of both scholars and practitioners, the precise articulations of these ideals are rarely reflected upon. I then review the ways in which

these constitutive components are both conceptualized and related to one another in extant literature. After examining various conceptions of nature, political community, and governance, I outline six prominent articulations of “green sovereignty” that I group into three categories: *dominant* (green neoliberalism, orthodox geopolitics), *subordinate* (eco-cosmopolitanism, eco-nativism) and *emergent* (eco-communitarianism, radical political ecologism).

In *Chapter Three*, I observe that in order to combat exclusionary iterations of green sovereignty that I outlined in Chapter Two, progressively-minded environmentalists cannot allow their opponents to set the terms of the debate. While a typical dissertation on environmental restrictionism, for instance, might ask, “What is the impact of immigrants on the environment of the United States?”, such a mode of questioning takes for granted socially constructed boundaries (e.g. the US-Mexico border), institutions (e.g. “the nation-state”), and ideals (e.g. nature as “Wilderness,” or Hobbesian or Darwinian) that the restrictionist argument depends upon. I proceed to defend the use of a qualitative methodology, and describe both the theoretical considerations underlying discourse analysis, and the modes of operationalization through which the empirical examination will proceed.

Part Two develops this theoretical lens through an empirical analysis of the environmental restrictionist case. *Chapter Four* provides a genealogy of the relationship between nature and nativism. The chapter anticipates three conceptions of nature that are frequently deployed in contemporary debates – Malthusian, romantic and Darwinian – and explores how these ways of knowing nature have historically figured into American nativist efforts to reconfigure sovereignty.

Chapter Five commences the analysis of contemporary restrictionism with the introduction of two groups: Social Nativists and Ecological Nativists. I observe that while Social

Nativists are grappling with the role that nature might play in white nationalist ideologies, the logic of Eco-Nativism is grounded in neo-Malthusian and Darwinian traditions wherein a mechanistic conception of nature is intricately woven into a celebration of Anglo-European Culture. I conclude by arguing that it is unlikely that either of these logics could work to broaden the support for environmental restrictionism, though they may deepen anti-immigrant sentiment within the far Right.

Chapter Six introduces a restrictionist grouping that is typically, and problematically, ignored by opponents: Eco-Communitarians. I argue that Eco-Communitarianism is the logic being articulated in restrictionist material geared toward public consumption. It provides a forceful critique of neoliberalism, is explicitly multicultural in its discussion of nationhood, and makes repeated reference to an “environmentalism of place.” It is this logic that is most likely to persuade social leftists and mainstream environmentalists, and it is here where opponents ought to aim their critiques.

Chapter Seven reviews responses to restrictionism, identifying two discourses – eco-cosmopolitanism and radical political ecology – that are employed by critics. After offering a sympathetic critique of the eco-cosmopolitan discourse, I outline the contours of the radical political ecological variant and I engage with the Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign and the Center for New Community in exploring how this latter articulation of eco-sovereignty might militate against declaration of an environmental state of exception in which already marginalized social and ecological populations are reduced to bare life.

Chapter Eight builds off of the radical political ecological discourse in tracing the contours of what I term an “environmentalism of movement,” founded upon engagement with the figure of “the migrant.” After considering how “the migrant” functions as a source of

resistance in the writings of Roberto Bolaño and Salman Rushdie and the theories of Agamben and Hardt & Negri, I draw on environmental political theory and political geography in asserting that the socio-natural perspective of “the migrant” could work to construct an environmentalism that is better able to resist the incursions of environmental restrictionism, better equipped to identify the structural sources of environmental and social degradation, more ethical in its inclusion of human and non-human others, and more effective in its alliance-building.

Looking Forward

To conclude, it is worth noting that despite the anxiety that characterizes conventional accounts of immigrants within political theory, Honig observes that “in the classic texts of Western political culture...the curious figure of the foreign-founder recurs with some frequency: established regimes, peoples, or towns that fall prey to corruption are restored or refounded (not corrupted or transcended) by the agency of a foreigner or stranger” (2001, 3). The discussion of justice in Plato’s republic, for instance, takes place in the house of a foreign merchant, while Rousseau speaks of the historical importance of foreign lawgivers (ibid, 3-4).

Might a movement that has been denounced of late for its apolitical conception of nature, excessive moralism, practices of social exclusion, and overall strategic inefficacy (see, for instance, Nordhaus and Shellenberger 2007, Chaloupka 2008) be rejuvenated by its own foreign-founder of sorts? What would an environmentalism that provides space for the unique insights of immigrants look like? As I have alluded to, theorists as diverse as Arendt, Connolly, Honig, Agamben, Bolaño, Rushdie and Hardt & Negri suggest that it is necessary to dwell on border figures – “the foreigner,” “the refugee,” “the migrant” – in order to gain insight into the oscillations, contradictions, and encounters that comprise theories and practices of sovereignty.

Through this dissertation, I want to also suggest that it is necessary to dwell on “the migrant” in order to glimpse an alternative account of environmental ethics and strategies. The migrant, thus, provides the figure who might offer a path to resistance; a way forward to a more inclusive *and effective* environmental politics.

The environmentalism of movement that I have in mind would not imply a nature that evades sovereignty; that is, in some idealistic sense, purely deterritorialized. And it also wouldn't imply using the migrant instrumentally as a sort of “noble savage” who is somehow “closer to nature.” What it would imply is a rhizomatic approach to both sovereignty and nature, founded upon a lens that – like today's dominant iterations of sovereignty – meanders through diverse *topological* terrains rather than remaining fixed on a particular *topographic* landscape.¹⁶ The hope in developing such an alternative would be to convince those well-intentioned environmentalists, currently so captivated by the nature put forth by Abbey and his ilk, not to insulate their nationalized landscapes through the exclusion of the already marginalized. So that nature doesn't emerge as another wedge issue dividing leftists on immigration *or environmental protection*. And so that I don't have to look at shrines to xenophobes in my favorite coffee shop.

¹⁶ I draw on Agamben in making this distinction between topology and topography. As I understand it, the state of exception – though which sovereignty and biopolitics come into contact – is unlocalizable in the sense that its potentiality is universal (and this universal potentiality has material impacts). At the same time, however, the state of exception materializes in contingent ways that impact specific populations within particular, localized spaces. In contrast with topographic imaginaries, premised upon static ideals of territory, governance and belonging, topology refers to a more complex set of social relations through which the “zones of indistinction” linking inside and outside, universal and particular, the law and the norm, the rule and the exception, democracy and totalitarianism, the citizen and the migrant, etc. can be theorized. I attempt to flesh this out in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER ONE SOVEREIGNTY AND NATURE

A Tale of Two Narratives

Jacques Rancière's *Short Voyages to the Land of the People* (2003) recounts the story of the poet William Wordsworth and his first voyage to revolutionary-era France. Wordsworth arrives in France a young romantic, enthralled by the beauty of Nature, and spends his early time abroad wandering through the countryside and writing poems describing the other-worldly majesty of the flowers, fields, and streams that he comes across. Yet as his voyage continues, his poems take on a strikingly different tone – one where these depictions of nature became irrevocably entwined in the political landscape of the period. Rancière describes a particular moment where Wordsworth discovers “in the midst of the greenery of meadows, near a joyous brook, a wrecked and roofless convent, victim of revolutionary passion” (2003, 14). When Wordsworth first encountered the French *paysage*, “nature alone was...sovereign in his heart” (ibid, 10), but from the sight of this image on, his perception of the non-human realm would be irrevocably bound up in France's early struggles for nationhood and popular sovereignty. In other words, Wordsworth's spectatorial vantage point enabled an experience where Nature was transformed from a *pure, universal, and separate* space, into an *interconnected, particular, and cultured* space whose bounds seeped into the project of democratic nation-building. With this, “[t]he July sunshine dappling the tree leaves becomes, for the English poet on a walking tour of the continent, the new light of revolutionary France wedded to festive nature” (ibid, 1).

Fast-forward to June of 2008, when advertisements from a coalition calling itself “*America's Leadership Team for Long-Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning*” began surfacing in numerous, predominantly “liberal,” news sources, proclaiming that

immigration poses the greatest threat to the United States' natural environment today. One such ad appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Nation*, and *Mother Jones*:

As America's population races from the current 300 million to a projected 400 million in the next 30 years, progressive thinkers are confronted with a debate among themselves – and others – as to our nation's capacity to absorb domestic population growth and growth due almost entirely to immigration. What price will we pay in terms of the environment? What will be the impact on resources from water to energy? What additional challenges will be created by this growth? What is our responsibility to future generations?

Framed against a backdrop of an apparently pristine landscape, the ad – titled “Population, Immigration and the Foreseeable Limits of America's Capacity: A Conundrum of Epic Proportions for the Progressive Thinker” – portrays a man standing in front of two paths: one presumably leads to a sustainable future, while the other to certain ecological destruction.¹⁷

Throughout other coalitional publications that comprise this ad blitz – six pieces appearing in fifteen news sources (the *American Prospect*, the *Atlantic*, *Forbes*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Harpers*, *the Hill*, the *LA Times*, *Mother Jones*, *The Nation*, *Nature*, *Newsweek*, the *New Republic*, the *NY Times*, *Roll Call*, and the *Washington Post*) – a similar narrative has emerged: United States' citizens have taken significant steps toward the adoption of a progressive environmental culture (having fewer children, recycling, and developing renewable energy sources), however, “we” continue to import population growth. This offsets “our” (allegedly) diminishing consumptive habits and puts serious stress on ecosystems that are already at or above their carrying capacities. In the various advertisements, this overarching neo-Malthusian logic is then interspersed with discursive forays into “post-materialist” values, place-based identities, romantic aesthetics, geopolitics, and cultural consumptive patterns.

¹⁷ The ad can be publicly access through the Californians for Population Stabilization website: http://www.capsweb.org/content_elements/recent_advertising/conundrum_roll_call.pdf (April 12, 2012)

The coalition has proceeded by strategically directing its arguments at “liberal” environmentalist audiences, while, at the same time, recognizing that its position is controversial in such circles, and attempting to anticipate unease with its exclusionary policy prescriptions:

... We want it all. We want a clean environment, adequate natural resources, good housing, plenty of food, first rate healthcare, and so on. We also feel the need to welcome the world to our front door, or, in many cases, our back door. But America is rapidly approaching the point of no return. Either we opt for preserving the quality of life that has attracted so many millions in the past by limiting some in the future. Or we continue to accept millions, knowing that our children and grandchildren will continue to pay a huge price. Nobody wants to close the doors. Nobody wants to totally abandon our heritage of immigration and the rich tapestry it has woven. But with more sensible numbers we could actually restore it. More and more progressive thinkers are saying it’s time to connect the dots ...

While this addendum speaks to “progressive” concerns over natural resources, inter-generational justice, and even multiculturalism, the ease with which the non-human realm is rhetorically transformed into a national possession is telling; the preservation of our shared national heritage is explicitly linked with the fate of our environment. A commentator in a popular restrictionist journal frames the issue in even starker terms: “Mexico is sweeping its people and problems into the United States...[i]f we don’t solve these problems ourselves, then Mother Nature will solve them for us” (Duncan 2007).

Though the coalition is more strategic in its presentation, the narrative that emerges is quite similar: the visual appeal to the “road less traveled” works to conjure up emotions of radical independence and populism (ideals that lay at the heart of both American and environmentalist identities), while the text serves to fill the two distinct paths with metaphoric and symbolic meanings. One road – polluted and crowded with, presumably Mexican, immigrants – leads from “our back door” to certain ecological destruction. The other – pristine and inhabited by a treasured line of “Americans” (past, present and future) – proceeds along a

sacred path to the preservation of “our” wilderness, natural resources, and, by extension, “rich” multicultural heritage. Ecological health, in other words, functions as the foundation upon which this national imaginary is sustained; the fate of nature is the fate of the nation.

From Spaces of Flows to Spaces of Exception

The juxtaposition of the aforementioned cases is instructive as it illuminates certain discursive commonalities across vastly different contexts. While the historical conjunctures, images, and intended provocations of Wordsworth and “America’s Leadership Team” diverge markedly, both situations are founded upon perceptions of “crisis” or “emergency” that point toward the construction of chains of equivalence between nature, community, and governance in ways that reconfigure sovereignty. In the former, Nature is spectacularized amidst the potential rupture that gives rise to the popular sovereignty of the newly emerging Nation-state. In the latter, Nature is a precarious equilibrium – both “scientifically” and metaphorically – that is purportedly threatened by transnational flows which necessitate the reconsolidation of the “traditional” Nation-state. One narrative enables a voyager to perceive the shifting paths through which Nature’s colors accentuate the celebration of democratic rule. Another disables voyage in the name of a Nature tightly bound to territory, culture, place, and the purportedly timeless exigencies of sovereignty.

The examples suggest that the interrelation between nature and sovereignty – often seen as paradoxical in a period where the environment is widely assumed to be a global, transnational or cosmopolitan concern¹⁸ – is in many respects a perennial one. Although environmental theorists and activists have begun attending to the shifting relations between the non-human

¹⁸ For example, Robyn Eckersley remarks that “[i]t is now a trite observation that ecological problems respect neither the territorial borders of sovereign states nor the boundaries of particular nations or peoples” (2004, 4).

realm and sovereignty (Conca 1994, Kuehls 1996, Litfin 1998, Eckersley 2004), two questions remain under-explored: First, how do scholars and environmentalists currently understand the relationship between sovereignty and Nature?; Second, if these extant theorizations are deficient, how might this relationship be re-conceptualized in order to better navigate the tension between the empirical and a normative endpoint that is both ecologically and socially just?

It has been observed that contemporary green attitudes toward the “sovereign nation-state” are always cautious, often ambivalent, and, sometimes, contradictory (Conca 1994, Deudney 1998, Eckersley 2004). I contend that this conceptual haziness is indicative of the complexities – perhaps inconsistencies – that characterize relations between the normative visions, ontological commitments, and practical politics of popular environmental imaginaries. While it has become common-place to disavow sovereignty in the name of a liberating, post-sovereign future (Paterson 2006, 70), few accounts go so far as to trace the contours of how this might occur and what role any sort of sovereign authority would play in this process.

Amongst critical commentators who do take a definitive position, a split has emerged. On one side are those who argue that (re)embedding sovereignty within a “green state” will produce an authoritative and legitimate “gatekeeper” whose steering capacity can forge a critical ecological democracy (Eckersley 2004, 2006, 2007a, Barry and Eckersley 2005, Hunold and Dryzek 2005, and Meadowcroft 2005). On the other are those who view any instantiation of sovereignty as an exclusionary, depoliticizing death knell for the emancipatory potential of environmental thought (Gould 2006, Smith 2008, 2009, 2011).

In this chapter, I review extant literature on the relationship between sovereignty and nature, considering conceptual debates through the lens of two prominent exemplars: Robyn

Eckersley's *The Green State* (2004) and Mick Smith's *Against Ecological Sovereignty* (2011).¹⁹ I contend that these examples are reflective of broader scholarly tendencies to either embrace the greening of sovereignty as a potentially emancipatory political project or to reject the institution of sovereignty out of hand by appealing to the supposedly deterritorializing "sovereignty of nature."²⁰ I observe that an overarching commonality on both sides of the debate is the failure to consider how the contingent articulations between the constitutive elements of green sovereignty – namely political community, governance and nature – serve to reshape what William Connolly has termed the "ethos of sovereignty" (2004). That is, a particular constellation of communal imaginaries, juridical forms, and constructions of Nature, changes how "the eco-sovereign" values, distributes, and ultimately governs human and non-human Others. Analytic focus on the ethos of sovereignty shifts attention to the micropolitical dimension through which norms, knowledges and identities link up with the constitutive elements of green or eco-sovereignty, coalescing into particular engagements with alterity that variably enable distinctions between "politically qualified life" and "bare life."

Constituting Eco-Sovereignty

As political theorist Ronnie Lipschutz has observed, historically, "[t]he assumed 'sovereignty of nature' [has been] used to naturalize certain propositions about the 'nature of sovereignty'" (1998, 113):

¹⁹ It should be noted that Smith's book length argument came out just as I was finishing the dissertation. While I cite the book at several points, the page numbers referenced here are mainly from two articles that comprise two chapters in the book. The book deepened his argument, but did not change the thrust of it.

²⁰ Thus, my intent in this chapter is not to provide a holistic review of the literature on sovereignty and nature, but rather to examine the ways that two prominent scholarly works: (1) conceptualize nature, political community and governance, (2) relate these constructions to the concept of green sovereignty, and (3) evaluate its inclusive or exclusive potential. Specifically, this chapter does not cover approaches to sovereignty and nature influenced by historical sociology and post-colonial theory. I attempt to ameliorate this deficiency by weaving insights from these bodies of thought into my discussions of the "radical political ecology" approach in Chapter 2 and Chapter 7.

On one hand, nature – the material world – imposes constraints on human activities and, in a sense, limits what can be freely and autonomously done. On the other hand, Nature – the reified construction that seeks to account for power and hierarchy – is invoked in order to naturalize the control, autonomy, and authority exercised by some human beings. (ibid, 112)

Constructions of the nation have figured prominently in these naturalizing moves (Kuehls 1996; Lipschutz 1998; Braun 2000, 2002; McCarthy and Hague 2004; Kosek 2006; Stetson and Lindner 2009), but, as the aforementioned two narratives demonstrate, the ways in which nature and political community are conceptualized and related to one another vary widely. The malleability of nature is reflected in its various signifying roles: a source of sacred awe, a symbol of chaos, a metaphor for fragility, an object of science, and so on. Nature is romanticized and aestheticized or villainized and deemed threatening; it is rationalized and instrumentalized or sacralized and worshiped; it is an enclosed space of equilibrium or a wild space of untamed and overlapping flows; it is raced, classed, gendered and sexualized.²¹

Similarly, the nation is forged through the construction of a common language, history, heroes, symbols, landscapes, and threats (Shapiro 1999, 2004; Bell 2001; Anderson 2006). Forms of nationalism vary widely both in terms of their internal composition and external disposition; they can be nativist, civic republican, radically democratic, or subaltern. These diverse iterations of nationalism also intersect with alternative modes of communal identity constructed around indigenous cultures, cosmopolitan mindsets, sub-national arrangements, and attachment to particular places.

²¹ Nature is often *raced* through linking a specific population (for instance, indigenous groups) with “nature” and another (generally white, Europeans) with “culture” or civilization (Braun 2002; Moore, Kosek, Pandian 2003; Kosek 2006); it is *classed* by transforming wilderness into a space of leisure or recreation over one of labor (see Williams 2005); it is gendered in constant appeals to a Mother Nature (who is variously nurturing, vindictive, irrational, etc.) who can be tamed or controlled by a masculinized scientific regime (see, for example, Sandilands 1999); and it is often sexualized (“barren wasteland,” “fertile wilderness,” “impenetrable forest”) and linked with these racial, gendered or class-based anxieties (McClintock 1995, Braun 2002).

There is significant fluctuation in the ways that forms of governance are attached to the political community of choice. Privileged institutional forms – including the state, the local government, a form of “global governance,” a transnational regional arrangement, etc. – are contested both conceptually and in terms of their desired social and ecological roles. While the “nation-state” remains the dominant articulatory form, cosmopolitan ideals of community are often wedded to the institutionalization of a particular architecture of global governance (Held 1995), social ecological ideals of nature are joined with small-scale, local forms of participatory democracy and communal identity (Bookchin 1980), and so on.

Historically, the articulations²² linking nature, political community and governance together have played shifting political roles; at times working to advance overtly exclusionary projects – e.g. the “blood and soil” naturalism of ultra-right wing ecology (see Biehl 1994, Olsen 1999); the anxieties over coming “resource wars” instigated by threatening Others painted with symbols of nature’s anarchy (Kaplan 1994) – and at others working alongside forceful calls to democratize nature – e.g. the call to reclaim public control over nature in Guthrie’s “This Land is your Land” (Eckersley 2007); and appeals by developing states, indigenous and otherwise marginalized populations to re-assert authority over natural resources in the name of a subaltern Nation.

And yet, the line between articulations that are progressive and those that are exclusionary is often muddled. For instance, although one might be tempted to equate Wordsworth’s “revolutionary Nature” with an inclusive, leftist orientation, one would do well to

²² Stuart Hall explains the concept of “articulation” as follows: ‘a connection or link which is not necessarily given in all cases, as a law or a fact of life, but which requires particular conditions of existence to appear at all, which has to be positively sustained by specific processes...It is also important that an articulation between different practices does not mean that they become identical or that the one is dissolved into the other. Each retains its distinct determinations and conditions of existence. However, once an articulation is made, the two practices can function together, not as an ‘immediate entity’...but as ‘distinctions within a unity’ (1985, 133-4; as cited by Nelson 1999, 3).

remember that it had its exclusions as well: attachments to regional and local identities were deemed “backwards” and, at times, subversive, as the jagged coast of Bretagne, the grapes of Aquitaine, and the *terroir* of Bourgogne became putatively “French” symbols working alongside calls for linguistic uniformity, centralized education, and a Gaullic national identity (see Bell 2001). Along the same lines, the popular equation of Guthrie’s “public Nature” with American national parks and other state-owned lands effaces the violence through which Native American and Hispano populaces were excluded from this supposedly communal domain (Kosek 2006). Finally, appeals to subaltern nationalism are often deployed to serve the interests of corporate and state elites who veil their profit-driven resource extraction under the auspices of resistance against green imperialism.

Contested Eco-Sovereignties

On one hand, Wordsworth’s articulation harkens back to a time when nationalized natures and naturalized Nation-states retained innocuous spaces in the drive to popular sovereignty. It is in the poetic meditations of the young voyager where those who seek to infuse the contemporary remnants of sovereignty with ecological and social inclusivity find hope. America’s Leadership Team, on the other hand, conjures up ecological exclusions: manifest destiny, eugenics, eco-authoritarianism, green imperialism, and so on. In short, it highlights all the traces of nationalism, racism, and ethnocentrism that have historically inhabited efforts to speak for Nature in its sovereign splendor; specters that environmentalists have long attempted to distance themselves from. It is in such territorializations where those who have abandoned sovereignty find their vindication.

Difficulties reconciling the non-human realm with traditional notions of sovereignty are evident in early environmentalist and scholarly approaches to the matter. While international

relations debates were centered upon reified conceptions of the self-interested, sovereign “nation-state” operating in an anarchic sphere that privileged power-politics and relegated environmental concerns to irrevocable fringe-status, environmentalist debates merely restated the self-evident disconnect between natural flows and socially constructed boundaries (Eckersley 2004, 4). The shared assumption marking these divergent narratives is that nature is, for the nation-state, an intrinsically instrumental resource linked to the inviolable strictures of territorial sovereignty and, therefore, inevitably at odds with ecologically responsible governance.

Discussions of green sovereignty within recent debates over globalization and neoliberalism have moved away from such generalizations and toward contextually grounded accounts that consider the relational, constructed, and contingent nature of the concept (Conca 1994, Kuehls 1996, Litfin 1998). Such analyses suggest that, contrary to popular generalizations, state sovereignty over nature is not simply being eroded, but is growing more complex as it is layered in local, transnational and global governance arrangements. This recognition has led researchers to assert that explorations of sovereignty should be detached from “the state” for both empirical and conceptual reasons (Litfin 1998, 9).

Empirically, territoriality has been *unbundled* (Ruggie 1993) and space *reconfigured* (Litfin 1998, 1) as authority, control and legitimacy have been dispersed across scales, and recast within diverse assemblages of governmental units, non-governmental organizations, transnational corporations, and international institutions. Conceptually, these empirical shifts have provoked suggestion that, under a period of neoliberal hegemony, sovereign power has been partially decentered from the state and reconsolidated within an ecologically and socially destructive “Empire” (Hardt and Negri 2000) that necessitates a counter-hegemonic environmentalist response (Chaloupka 2003, Dalby 2004). And while many have expressed hope

that the transboundary realities of Nature would work in the service of inclusionary, cosmopolitan projects (Ruggie 1993, Ward 1998), reactions to neoliberalism are also harnessing ecological discourses where Nature is irrevocably bound up in exclusionary social politics that differentially value various populations in efforts to reinforce some vision of a “naturally” sovereign “nation-state” (Braun 2000, 2002, Kosek 2006).

In this sense, debates over eco-sovereignty are marked, on one hand, by the perceived need to control the de-territorializing forces of neoliberalism, and, on the other, by the specters of exclusion that haunt territorialized environmental politics. Thus, although the relationship between sovereignty, nation, and state, has, in certain respects loosened, green sovereignty re-emerges in environmental debates as a site of contestation within competing projects that seek to project and legitimize authority over some segment of space in the service of molding institutions and subjects better equipped to speak for both Nature and Society.²³

The Pros and Cons of Eco-Sovereignty

Eckersley’s *The Green State* (2004, see also 2006, 2007a, 2007b) and Smith’s *Against Ecological Sovereignty* (2011, see also 2008, 2009) are, in my opinion, the most sophisticated articulations of the opposing positions that divide critical perspectives on sovereignty, nature, nation and state. For Eckersley, repositioning sovereignty within a “green state” poses the most promising attempt to confront an ecologically destructive neoliberalism that privileges corporate and elite interests over the public writ large. For Smith, the institution of sovereignty – whatever

²³ I am, thus, advocating a move away from theorizing sovereignty as necessarily connected with the state, and toward a theorization that looks to “assemblages” forged through contingent practices of territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The particular form that a sovereign assemblage will take – its scale, scope, intensity, ethos, the actors it involves, etc. – is an empirical question. And while I emphasize the importance of discursive struggles in the production of these variable configurations of sovereignty, it should be noted that the authority and privilege of certain actors remains historically conditioned by the colonial experience (as well as histories of racial, class and gendered oppression), and continues to depend on the marginalization and violent management of other human and non-human lives (Mongia 2007).

the articulation of its various elements – is itself structured around a capacity to exist over and above these constitutive contingencies through declaration of a “state of exception” (Agamben 1998, 2003). This depoliticizing power renders any environmental gains under a green “nation-state” subject to arbitrary decisions that re-instantiate orthodox treatments of nature as a “standing reserve” put to use in the service of geopolitics and neoliberal political economics (Smith 2008, 3-5; 2009, 108).

Green States and Inclusive Sovereigns

Eckersley begins by recognizing that, historically, the sovereign, liberal democratic nation-state has not exactly been a force for environmental progress (2004, 4-5). However, giving up on the state is, for Eckersley, both practically and theoretically deficient. Realistically, the state isn’t going anywhere despite challenges from the increasing power of transnational corporations, international financial institutions, and non-state actors (ibid, 5). Instead, such shifts have engendered a crisis of legitimacy that necessitates the reconsolidation of democratic power within an entity strong enough to project its regulatory and punitive authority vis-à-vis private interests in the name of the Nation:

The state is enlisted because it is the social institution with the greatest capacity to discipline investors, producers, and consumers....[It] has the capacity to redistribute resources and otherwise influence life opportunities to ensure that the move toward a more sustainable society is not a socially regressive one. (2004, 12)

A reliance on the coercive capacity of the state is not simply an instrumental necessity, but an ethical one; it is *legitimate* because it acquires power from democratic procedures agreed upon by “the people” and institutionalized in law. Thus, at a theoretical level, “the state” is not a timeless, autonomous form, but is intimately bound up in discursive struggles emanating from

the realm of “society” (ibid, 34-5, 62-4). Reconfiguring the socially constructed contours of public responsibility and obligation allows the state’s regulatory and steering mechanisms to work towards alternative political projects, pushed forward by an amended *demos*.

In order to guide the trajectory of such shifts toward an inclusive sovereignty, Eckersley proposes a political community founded upon a blend of communitarian concerns with cultural solidarity and cosmopolitan emphasis on transnational affect. Her “transnational state” would gain legitimacy through its organization around principles of “cosmopolitan nationalism” that strategically reorient the insular ethos of traditional nationalism outwards to extend to non-humans, non-members, and future generations (2004, chapter 7, 2007a, 677). In this sense, “the people would remain sovereign, but would be a more variable and fluid community made up of nations and all those who happen to belong, or are likely to belong, to the relevant community at risk” (2004, 197).

Eckersley attempts to institutionalize this inclusive ethos through a mutually reinforcing interaction between formal green constitutions and deliberative green public spheres. The former would solidify certain social and ecological norms in law (e.g. the precautionary principle, rights to environmental information, public participation, access to justice) (2004, 193), while the latter would guarantee that a fluctuating array of actors could voice their social and ecological realities in debates having direct implications on their lives.

Green Biopolitics and Ecological Exceptions

Smith, however, is insistent that Eckersley has overestimated the malleability of sovereignty (2009, 113). In contrast, Smith draws on Italian theorist Giorgio Agamben in asserting that contemporary life is increasingly characterized by an ever-present “state of

exception,” where the “nation-state” responds to some “crisis” or “emergency” by suspending the normal political order in the name of saving that very order. In an issue area punctured by calls of crisis that are widely purported to warrant extraordinary and indefinite measures (e.g. climate change, resource shortages, population “explosions”), there is a real danger that by couching hopes for ecological emancipation within a sovereign order, any potentially radical ecological dialogue will be suspended under the auspices of the immediate action that a Nature-in-crisis necessitates. While most greens have moved away from prior flirtations with eco-authoritarianism, the ability of “the sovereign” to declare a state of exception increases the likelihood that technocratic, top-down, militaristic “solutions” will be the norm (ibid, 110).

Smith contends that under the order of the eco-sovereign, both Nature and Society will be reduced to *bare life*; deemed no longer deserving of democratic rights and protections, but still subject to the coercive force of (eco)authoritarian projects (2009, 112-114). The overarching point is that “[w]hile we can recognize historically different discourses surrounding and informing the normal practices of state sovereignty ... its ordering principle is precisely not one that is protean....In the last instance sovereign power is wielded by a ‘body’ which ‘decides on the exception’” (2009, 113).

This “body” is the “nation-state,” and “the decision” is – given the track record of the nation-state – likely to invoke ecological emergency as a cover over motives that are definitely anthropocentric (ibid, 112). In this sense, calls to green sovereignty, no matter how well intentioned, are likely to end in exceptional decisions that eschew radical ecological solutions in defense of the stability wrought by a capital-friendly logic of ecological modernization (ibid). Indeed, “the possibility of this ultimately arbitrary decisionistic assumption of absolute territorial power underlies all claims to state sovereignty, no matter what kind of political constitutions

such states espouse” (2009, 106). For Smith, the state remains concerned with geopolitical and political economic expediencies, and any political or ethical contingencies that threaten such projects collapse under the weight of a supposedly “ecological” emergency (2009, 112).

The ultimate conclusion is that such projects only enable the “nation-state” to appropriate Nature to retool its sovereign power; Nature remains a rhetorical veil over traditional state interests. As such, the only way out is through the de-territorializing impulses of radical ecology:

... [R]adical ecology tries to save politics and ethics (and not only the natural world), to recognize their ‘relative autonomy’ and their vital importance in constituting a good life for human communities within, and not constitutionally positioned as a sovereign power above, a ‘more than human’ world. (2008, 9)

It is through an ethico-political commitment to nature that the geopolitical and capitalist instrumentalities that breed “bare life” give way to the freedom of a life unmarked by sovereign power: “[t]o save the whales is to free them from all claims of human sovereignty, to release them into the flows of evolutionary time, of natural history” (ibid, 3).

The Ethos of Green “Statecraft from Below”

The two aforementioned approaches are directly conflicting; Eckersley’s immanent critique urges us to consider the potentially progressive lines of flight that might be latent in current institutional forms, while Smith’s response calls attention to the underlying biopolitical structure of sovereignty that is said to negate any potentially radical shifts in environmental governance. The latter contention suggests that while Eckersley’s normative vision highlights the formal institutional shifts whereby multiple voices could speak for Nature, her approach leaves under-theorized the interstices in which environmental politics, subtle biopolitical practices, and the, often violent, spectacles of sovereign power meet.

In particular, “progressive” environmental projects routinely rely on managing the life

forces of various populations. Concerns over population reduction, for instance, seek to channel fertility rates, distribute movement, and control the productive and consumptive capacities of select populations in efforts to construct a particular type of environmental society. Such projects are often bound up in exclusionary politics of race, class and gender, and in periods of “crisis” are likely to be imposed from on high rather than subject to democratic debate. The shift that Eckersley envisions, geared to Habermasian ideals of public deliberation, would permit a broader scope of inclusion, but would not necessarily challenge the discursive pathways through which exclusion advances. The emphasis on consensus, beholden to a pluralistic notion of free and rational deliberation, overlooks the very forms of knowledge/power through which terms of dominant discourses are naturalized – to the detriment of marginalized populations whose formal inclusion in a dialogic process is not, therefore, likely to produce an equitable role in decision-making.

Specifically, with Eckersley’s insistence on the necessity of national solidarity as a precondition for ecological democracy (2007a, 685), there is a real risk that Nature may be woven into insidious schemes to reconsolidate imagined communities through the exclusion of Others. Historically, certain constitutive elements of Nature have materialized within narratives of exception: discourses of Linnaean classification, romantic Wilderness, and neo-Malthusian demographics have all served to cleanse the landscape of indigenous and/or marginalized inhabitants in the name of strengthening the nation against some biopolitical threat (Braun 2000, 2002, Tsing 2005, Kosek 2006). These “natural” concepts, which have worked to efface the violence through which hegemonic national forms have proceeded, are more likely to re-emerge today under a subtle commitment to “progressive” environmental politics, rather than an overt commitment to nationalism.

And while Eckersley might overlook the way that nature is bound up in these micropolitical struggles, Smith's account "cuts the head off the king"²⁴ only to fashion his ghost into a biopolitical God whose exceptional decisions are a *fait accompli*. Both the declaration of the state of exception and the trajectory through which it emerges appear inevitable.

Smith's universalizing conclusion stems from the fact that he does not unpack the contingent conjunctures that suture "the nation" to "the state" at a particular point in time, and leaves him open to the same critique that Connolly levels against Agamben:

He does not ask whether disturbing developments in the logic of sovereignty are bound not merely to a conjunction between biopolitics and sovereignty, *but to a conjunction between them and renewed attempts to consolidate the spirituality of the nation during a time when it is even more difficult to do so*. If and as the reactive drive to restore the fictive unity of the nation is relaxed, it becomes more possible to negotiate a generous ethos of pluralism that copes in more inclusive ways with the nexus between biology, politics, and sovereignty... The shape of the ethos infusing the practice of sovereignty is therefore critical, and not a mere conjugation of sovereignty and biopolitics. (2004, 29, his italics)

The relationship that Connolly references between sovereignty, nationhood and spirituality is worth reflecting on. Agnew observes that "the term sovereignty emerged out of a western religious context in which sovereignty was first vested in the roman polis and then the Roman Emperor and later in a monotheistic God represented by the Pope and the Church" (2009, vii). As sovereignty became *de jure* secularized – first, at an external level as the Treaty of Westphalia institutionalized respect for religious autonomy between nation-states, and second, at an internal level as the authority of the church was challenged by both epistemological shifts (reliance on

²⁴ I am referring to Foucault's famous observation that "what we need is a political philosophy that isn't erected around the problem of sovereignty, nor therefore around the problems of law and prohibition. We need to cut off the king's head: in political theory that has still to be done" (1980, 121). Smith ostensibly turns to biopolitics in order to provide insight into the micropolitical practices through which populations are abandoned to bare life, and yet his final depiction of sovereignty looks strangely like that of realist international relations theorists. The sovereign nation-state operates according to a logic of its own, insulated from all social forces except those reinforcing anarchy and self-interest.

scientific practices rather than texts filtered through ecclesiastic authorities) and democratic principles (reliance on popular sovereignty instead of the divine declarations of monarchs) – sovereignty remained *de facto* dependent upon emergent visions of the sacred. Two prominent secular manifestations of the sacred have been found in nationalism (epitomized by god-like depictions of “Founding Fathers” and the veneration of national anthems and flags) and nature (epitomized by Romantic depictions of Wilderness as “sublime”).²⁵

Connolly’s emphasis on *the ethos of sovereignty* is significant, because it suggests that sovereignty – particularly in governmental arrangements that are influenced, to some degree, by the people – is, far from being reducible to a single logic, subject to contingent struggles between shifting ideals of the sacred that emanate throughout society. While those holding the formal levers of power might “declare” a state of exception when these sacred ideals are perceived as threatened, they are reliant on the presence of pre-existing discourses (especially spiritual notions of nationhood) that will legitimate their actions and allow them to retain the degree of popularity necessary to prolong or extend their authority. In this light, Connolly notes that “within the idea of the exception ‘decided’ by sovereignty, an oscillation flows between a juridically established authority that authoritatively decides the exception and social powers that assert themselves irresistibly in and around the decision” (2004, 30).²⁶

As Eckersley astutely recognizes, a particular conception of nationality legitimates certain forms of state activity: its use of internal and external coercion, intervention into the

²⁵ Though I would argue that these historically dominant manifestations are presently challenged by the supposed sacrality of “the free-market.” In the American context this manifests itself in libertarian nationalism; proclamations of freedom, the founding fathers and the “American Way” discursively connected to Austrian and Chicago school visions of market rationality that are gradually extending from the economic realm to vectors of social life that had traditionally been governed by non-economic rationales.

²⁶ Expanding upon this, he observes: “In democratic constitutionalism, sovereignty circulates uncertainly between the multitude, the traditions it embodies, constitutionally sanctioned authorities and, where operative, the written constitution that the authorities interpret. The relative weight of each element can be specified more closely, although never completely, according to need and context” (ibid, 31).

economy domestically and internationally, policing of the border, and regulation of nature. Accompanying these actions, I would add – and dependent upon the particular nation-state configurations being advanced – are myriad forms of discipline (environmental and social pedagogy, representations of Others in popular culture, modes of identity privileged within state institutions, etc.) and their biopolitical counterparts (hedged within demography, census categories, measures of political economic strength, fertility, environmental health, etc.).

On one hand, for example, nativists advance configurations of sovereignty that construct “the nation” as a natural entity that links up smoothly with racialized projects where “the state” only attains legitimacy insofar as it weeds out internal “sources of pollution” (i.e. non-white populations). On the other, social justice advocates push for cosmopolitan or subaltern modes of identity that tweak hegemonic national forms in more inclusive directions, while attempting to enlarge the elements of the state that might provide social safety nets, environmental and workplace regulations, and redistributive policies of taxation. This latter ethos contests the discursive pathways through which a “state of exception” might be declared, and the ways that this declaration would impact already marginalized populations – human and nonhuman.

The logics pushing forth these sovereign projects do not emerge within an autonomous site irrevocably wedded to predetermined interests, but through forms of “statecraft from below” (Doty 2001, 2007) that struggle amongst themselves for institutionalization in diverse macro-political realms. For instance, Roxanne Doty argues in her analysis of American vigilante justice groups that “the decision that ushers in both the enemy and ‘we’, ‘the people,’ ‘the nation,’ ‘the society,’ is in fact a plurality of decisions made from diverse locales” (2007, 130). Smith harkens back to an image of a singular ‘sovereign body’ – the “nation state” – declaring a state of exception, when such a declaration emerges from a multiplicity of enunciative sites dispersed

throughout society. Put differently, both the declaration of a state of exception and the reduction of specific populations to bare life are dependent upon contingent struggles to forge articulations between nature, political community and governance.

In contrast to such an account, Smith makes a judgment contingent upon the supposedly timeless exigencies of the sovereign nation-state, and offers radical ecology as an emancipatory way out (ibid, 113). As a consequence, his conclusion – that eco-sovereignty will reduce both Humanity and Nature to bare life (ibid, 114) – might benefit from the insight of feminist and postcolonial theorists, that the construction of bare life is a relational process dependent upon contingent modes of Othering that intersect with constructions of race, gender, class, nationality and nature (Pratt 2005, Ong 2006). The potential for the reduction of humanity writ large to “bare life” might exist, but this process will be actualized through contingent articulations of sovereignty that are shot through which relational judgments – privileging some populations and marginalizing others.

Rather than opposing a universalizing logic of sovereignty that meshes smoothly with Lockean conceptions of Nature as wasteland, to an equally universalizing radical ecological sphere that links up perfectly with a non-state “outside” (2009, 113), it makes more sense to consider how various non-human lives and conceptions of Nature are bounded within complex, cross-cutting, and often contradictory social registers. Smith reminds us of the exclusionary potentialities that lurk beneath the surface of green sovereignty, but in order to grasp the topological contours through which these exclusions are actualized, it is necessary to explore the messy, fleeting interactions between nature, political community, and governance – and to ask: through what contingent articulations does the exception emerge?

Conclusion

In concluding his discussion of the English romantic, Rancière notes that, over time, the fragile bond that linked Wordsworth's youthful hopes of French nation-building to his poetic depictions of Nature faded. Democracy was replaced by a "reign of terror," traditionalism gained strength and he gradually morphed from a young revolutionary to an old conservative. Ironically, Wordsworth's *The Borderers* – a relatively early work that he revised near the end of his life – was a tragic morality tale which "shows us that crime is virtually present from the moment the self-evidence of nature is split in the couple of ends and means" (Rancière 2003, 19). The commonality linking Eckersley to Smith is that, at some level, they would agree; speaking for Nature ought not be an "instrumental" endeavor (and will not be, given the proper macro-political arrangement). For Smith, the novelty of radical ecology is to decenter anthropocentric claims to sovereignty in order to allow "sovereign natures" to speak for themselves – thereby providing a direct pathway to a deterritorialized, emancipatory politics.²⁷ For Eckersley, the novelty of the "green state" is that institutional shifts (the scientific identification and inclusion of "communities at risk") enable "us" to glimpse a more complete, intersubjective account of nature – whereby "we" can feel comfortable saying that "we have attained a degree of objective knowledge about the world" (2004, 123).

Against Smith and those who reject working "within sovereignty" altogether, the example of Wordsworth might demonstrate that fixed utopian dreams have a tendency to turn into nightmares if their macro-political endpoints aren't adequately unhinged from their

²⁷ In fairness, Smith does, at numerous points, assert the need to reject these simplistic assertions of Nature's sovereignty (see, for instance, 2008, 13), although he maintains that a particular iteration of radical eco-politics evades sovereign power. Whereas Agamben (2005) attempts to escape the logic of sovereignty through metaphysics (the search for "a word that does not bind, that neither commands nor prohibits anything, but says only itself"), Smith reverts to naturalism. In his book, the alternative that he privileges is an "anarcho-primitivism," articulated around a call to "wildness," that "is a life affirming negativity with no use that resists totalizing attempts to impose authority and order on life itself" (2011, 95). Thus, my contention is that, despite assurances to the contrary, Smith does, in fact, revert to a "sovereign nature" after all.

biopolitical foundations. Against Eckersley and those who insist on the necessity of a green state, the example of “America’s Leadership Team” is a cautionary tale that biopolitical norms that are commonsensical within environmentalist imaginaries can easily be translated into violent exclusions during periods of “crisis.”

In reiterating his emphasis on the ethos of sovereignty, Connolly remarks that:

The new world assemblage, just because it is flexible and complex in its architecture, is not amenable to replacement...[b]ut for the same reason it may be susceptible to significant stretching and reshaping by a variety of movements situated at multiple sites. (ibid, 38)

It is, after all, unlikely that the nation-state will be replaced anytime soon, and unclear if such a development would even be socially or ecologically beneficial. But, contrary to traditional narratives of sovereignty, much of contemporary politics does not presently occur in this nation-state-space (Kuehls 1996, Shaw 2004). While no doubt an over-simplification, it seems more heuristically accurate to say, with Hardt & Negri, that elements of sovereign power (authority, control and legitimacy) are dispersed throughout a destructive Empire, that is challenged by a potentially emancipatory Multitude, and set against the backdrop of a whole host of actors, governmental arrangements, and logics whose normative roles remain unclear.²⁸

In calling attention to the dispersed nature of sovereign power without, at the same time, reifying deterritorialization, the emphasis on the ethos of sovereignty leads one to seek out forms of resistance that, while potentially less sweeping than the macro-political shifts called for by either Eckersley or Smith, provide insight into a multiplicity of sites through which the exclusionary, destructive or otherwise problematic manifestations of sovereign power might be challenged or reinforced. Both Eckersley and Smith continue to theorize sovereignty as a molar

²⁸ In critiquing Hardt & Negri, Matthew Sparke has argued that the universalizing vision of deterritorialized forces of domination (Empire) and resistance (Multitude) glosses over the myriad localized and nationalized forms of reterritorialization that propel forms of both domination and resistance (2005).

form – one that can either be embraced and adjusted, or that must be rejected altogether. An analytic that instead examines the ways in which forms of green “statecraft from below” work to reshape the “ethos of sovereignty” is perhaps less ambitious, but more strategically insightful.

CHAPTER TWO NATURE, POLITICAL COMMUNITY AND GOVERNANCE

Though, within environmental dialogues, the question of sovereignty is often framed around the dichotomy of “greening the state” or “giving up on the state,” there are a variety of ways that greens, and those deploying green logics, articulate the relations between nature, political community and governance that do not necessarily fit squarely on either side of this binary. Take, for example, the popular slogan, “think globally, act locally.” Synonymous with urban gardens, farmers markets and support for community-owned businesses, this common refrain tells little about how a small-scale communal imaginary will interact with divergent forms of political community (e.g. hegemonic nationalism, subaltern nationalisms, cosmopolitan ideals), or how it will be layered in forms of governance (e.g. the state, international institutions, transnational alliances between non-governmental actors). Does “think globally, act locally” reflect an eco-anarchist ethos that is skeptical of broader forms of state governance? Or is it one component of a social-democratic vision? Does it represent a radically democratic impulse wedded to transnational forms of community and the hopes of global governance? Or does it serve to greenwash neoliberalism, as transnational elites appropriate the concept in line with their own socio-ecological realities: “surfing in Maui and thinking about the next business deal in Manilla...or contributing to the local PBS television station to pay its share of producing a documentary in London about saving elephants in Africa” (Luke 1997, 180).²⁹

This example is reflective of broader ambiguities within environmental politics. The relationships between popular discourses and practices of environmentalism, the status quo, and

²⁹ Or is it, in even more insidious iterations, deployed to legitimize “life boat ethics,” furthering national policies for population reduction, while excluding migrants and decreasing humanitarian aid? (see my Chapter 6 discussion of Garrett Hardin and the resonance of his “think globally, act locally” amongst contemporary environmental restrictionists).

the desired normative endpoints of greens are often unclear and always contested – even with regard to an apparently commonsensical, non-controversial slogan. Adding another layer of complexity to this picture is the tendency, in recent years, for environmentalists and non-environmentalists alike to strategically deploy nature within traditionally anthropocentric discourses of security, development, labor, and migration. Indeed, the prominence of nature in mainstream political discussions has much to do with its position in dialogues over environmental security, sustainable development, “green jobs” and environmental refugees. While these socio-ecological ideals are contested, each discourse revolves around attempts to reconfigure the ethos of sovereignty by inserting nature into an issue-area that has historically been dominated by questions concerning the composition of political community and/or the scale and social purpose of governance.

In the previous chapter, I argued in favor of an analytic approach that focuses on the forms of statecraft from below through which the *ethos of sovereignty* is reconfigured. I further made the case that exploring the ethos of sovereignty necessitates a movement away from conceptualizing sovereignty in molar terms – as a fixed set of ideas, institutions and practices that operate according to a static logic – and toward a more dispersed analysis that examines the contingent interactions between the constituent parts of particular iterations of sovereignty. Although the ethos of sovereignty at a particular conjuncture is comprised of numerous distinct, yet interrelated, parts – authority, control, legitimacy, autonomy, territory, population, formal constitutions, cultural traditions, and so on (Litfin 1998, 5) – I have chosen to focus on unpacking the overarching ideals of (1) nature, (2) political community and (3) governance, which I contend are central to understanding the variability in green efforts to reconfigure sovereignty. It is through exploring these three constitutive elements that it is possible to gain

insight into how particular organizations, individuals, theorists and logics attempt to piece together all of those intricate parts that make sovereignty what it is at a particular time and place.

This chapter is divided into two parts. First, I explore the foundations of green sovereignty by examining the various ways that nature, political community and governance are respectively conceptualized. Second, I outline how these diverse conceptions are articulated in relation to one another in efforts to advance particular configurations of eco-sovereignty. Specifically, I review six articulations of nature, political community and governance that I group into three categories: *dominant* (green neoliberalism, orthodox geopolitics), *subordinate* (eco-cosmopolitanism, eco-nativism) and *emergent* (eco-communitarianism, radical political ecology). In positivist terms, this chapter constructs a **classificatory typology** that will later be utilized as a lens to critically examine the assumptions of restrictionists and their opponents (Bennett and Elman 2007, 181). Unlike a positivist approach, however, my goal is not to formulate a universalizing narrative of nature, political community and governance, but to highlight a multiplicity of paths through which these contested ideals are woven together. The analyses that follow in *Part II* of the dissertation will make use of the analytic developed in this chapter, and, by offering a more precise, empirical account of the ways that insights from these received modes of knowledge are adopted and deployed in practice, will deepen understandings of the processes through which this discursive interaction plays out. The analysis may also uncover alternative ideal types that the extant literature has not yet focused on.

Foundations of Green Sovereignty

While there do exist several analyses aiming to provide a normative framework of how the relationship between nature, political community and governance might be reconfigured

(examples include Kymlicka 1996, Eckersley 2004), there are few attempts to provide a systematic overview of the divergent pathways that this reconfiguration might take (one exception is Barcena et. al. 1997). There are, it should be noted, numerous efforts to unpack two pillars of this tripartite articulation; reviewing the relationship between particular iterations of nationalism and nature (Olsen 1999, Hamilton 2002, Hannigan 2011), for instance, or making the case for a renewed emphasis on the relationship between a specific form of governance (like the democratic state) and protection of the non-human realm (Eckersley 2004, Meadowcroft 2005). In most of these cases, however, the third constitutive element tends to be under-explored. For example, works that wed a deep ecological conception of nature to a preference for bioregional governance are typically vague as to how we will move from the status quo to such an institutional arrangement, who will be included within the bioregional community, and what the ethos of engagement will be between the bioregion and other communities.³⁰

In order to better understand the vast array of ways in which these constitutive elements are variously conceptualized and related to one another, I begin by unpacking nature, political community and governance separately, and detailing the varied conceptualizations of each. I then proceed to examine how their interconnections are theorized.

Nature

“Nature” is a powerful signifier that is employed to represent the vast multiplicity of the nonhuman realm. With this in mind, Raymond Williams famously remarked that nature is

³⁰ Some theorists employ bioregions in making the argument that, insofar as they evade extant territorial boundaries, the spatial contours of bioregions can serve to contest dominant forms of political community and governance, and forge more inclusive, transnational communities (see, for example, Salazar and Hewitt 2001, 302-3). Others, however – like deep ecologist George Sessions, a member of Californians for Population Stabilization – argue that bioregions are currently overpopulated to such an extent that extant political units, though perhaps not ecologically-ideal in scale or composition, must reduce populations by whatever means they have at their disposal (including the exclusion of migrant populations through the coercive force of the state).

“perhaps the most complex word in the [English] language” (1983, 219). Political geographer David Demeritt notes that, for Williams, there are “three specific but closely intertwined meanings of the word”:

The ontologically essential or necessary quality of something; The inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both...; [and] The external, material world itself (e.g. the natural world). (2001, 29; citing Williams 1983)

These variable understandings and usages of nature make it apparent that the relationship between the “Natural” and “Cultural” (or “Social”) spheres is complex and mutually constitutive (Bennett and Chaloupka 1993, Castree and Braun 2001). However, in both popular and academic dialogues, nature and culture are spoken of and deployed as if they occupied purely autonomous spheres of life (Latour 1993, 2004). The discursive separation of the two concepts is variably *configured and deployed* (or *contested and reconfigured*) for both ontological and strategic reasons.

While there are, in practice, innumerable ways of conceptualizing nature, for heuristic purposes I build on the work of Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997; see also Martinez-Alier 2002) in identifying three ideal-type approaches to conceptualizing the non-human environment that attempt to navigate this Natural/Cultural tension in diverse ways: the (1) deep ecological approach (the “cult of the wilderness”); the (2) political ecological approach (the “environmentalism of the poor”); and the (3) economistic approach (the “the gospel of eco-efficiency”). Within each approach, I lay out the dominant epistemological practices through which nature becomes *intelligible* (Braun 2002), and I consider the socio-political implications of the practices of “purification” (Latour *ibid*) or “filtration” (Sandilands 1999) through which

efforts to speak for nature proceed.³¹

Deep Ecology

The deep ecological conception of nature asserts that society ought to be re-conceptualized as embedded in nature, rather than diametrically opposed and celebrated in opposition to it. Thus, whereas modern thought posits that we leave a “state of nature” and enter the world of culture, deep ecologists draw on Eastern philosophies, romanticism, and – to some extent – ecological science in arguing that “there is no bifurcation in reality between the human and the non-human” (Devall and Sessions 1985, 66; see also Naess 1973, Naess and Rothenberg 1989).

This perspective on nature emanates from a variety of epistemological practices. While clearly beholden to romanticism (Nash 2001 [1967]) and Eastern philosophy (Zimmerman 1994, Fox 1995), commentators have remarked that deep ecological thinkers have an ambivalent relationship to science – at once rejecting the human/nature dichotomy through which much of science proceeds, while simultaneously embracing Malthusian population anxieties, and insights from neo-Darwinian evolutionary science (varieties of ecology and conservation biology, and socio-biology) that support their normative vision of a society governed by principles of nature, ultimately allowing “us” to be “at one with” the nonhuman realm.

Achieving such a future necessitates a combination of macro- and micro-political reforms. As Sessions and Devall observe, “man is a part of nature, his full humanity is realized when he has defined his own particularity in relation to Nature’s totality” (ibid, 169). Along these lines, while a major deep ecological emphasis is on personal experimentation – finding

³¹ It is through this process of filtration that the tangled webs of human/non-human interactions are rendered intelligible in ways that neatly partition them into two distinct spheres of life – the Natural and the Cultural (see Braun 2002).

oneself through experiencing “untrammled Wilderness” – this also points to a broader definition of community in which non-human entities have as much a right to exist as humans (ibid, 191). Naess termed the principle that this political and ethical community would be founded upon, “biospherical egalitarianism” (Hay 2002, 47; citing Naess 1973).

And although deep ecologists highlight the interconnections between humanity and nature, their very descriptions and prescriptions often seem to reify the distinctions between the two, and to privilege wilderness in its stark opposition to humanity. Nature, in these accounts, is sacred; it is the source of political guidance *par excellence*. Indeed, the final page of Devall and Session’s seminal work includes a poem by Gary Snyder where he literally “pledges allegiance” to nature (ibid, 206).³² As Guha and Martinez-Alier observe, the overarching motto of deep ecology is: “No humanity without Nature!” (1997, 2)

Political Ecology

The motto of political ecology, by contrast, might be “No nature without social justice!” (ibid). From this perspective, nature is argued to be embedded in society, rather than the other way around. The goal of such a conception is to break down the binary between nature and culture by looking at the specific ways that different populations – across socially constructed lines of race, class, gender, development – interact with and conceptualize their non-human surroundings. Amidst that broad commonality, however, there are numerous highly diverse approaches to political ecology – ranging from the neo-Marxist analyses of the political economic inequalities that structure access to nature and exposure to environmental harm (Harvey 1996, Smith 2008 [1990]), to post-colonial critiques of ecological imperialism (Guha

³² Thus prefiguring the close relationship between deep ecological natures and nationalism that I reflect on in chapters four through six.

and Martinez-Alier 1997) and counter-theorizations of subaltern environmentalism (Martinez-Alier 1991, Guha 2000), to Foucauldian analyses of the variable eco-governmental practices through which environmental subjects are constructed (Agrawal 2005, Goldman 2005, Li 2007).

Despite this variability there are two overarching concerns that define the political ecological project, as I understand it. First, nature is placed in an historical, political economic perspective. Influenced by Marxist and post-colonial insights, in particular, a political ecological discussion of environmental politics does not accept the conventional, “post-materialist” line of thought – that only at a certain level of development can a concern for Nature emerge – but instead explores the ways in which marginalized peoples encounter Nature and organize to protect it in contexts of exclusionary social hierarchies and little access to formal institutional power (Broad 1994, Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997, Escobar 1999, Martinez-Alier 2002). As Guha and Martinez-Alier assert, “the environmentalisms of the poor...originate in social conflicts over access to and control over natural resources” (1997, xxi).³³

Second, influenced by post-structuralist efforts to call attention not only to differential material realities but to vastly divergent conceptions of nature that come to dominate at a particular time and place, political ecologists work to analyze the discursive processes through which nature intersects with various social projects (Braun 2002, Peluso and Watts 2001, Peet and Watts 2004). In particular, political ecologists are skeptical of accounts of wilderness preservation that so often seem to cleanse the landscape of the indigenous peoples living within these quintessential “Natures.” Political ecologists observe how deep ecologists bemoan the “poaching” and vandalism occurring in the world’s “great” national parks, while glossing over

³³ I use the term “political ecology” loosely, here. Political ecologists, like deep ecologists, come from a variety of academic disciplines (geography, sociology, anthropology, political science, etc.) and non-academic backgrounds, and there are numerous distinctions that could be made among those scholars who I cite in this section (e.g. political geography versus political ecology). That said, each scholar fits in with this broader perspective through the two commonalities that I lay out, and through their opposition to both deep ecological and economic approaches.

the manner in which these areas of “wilderness” were once the home of certain native populations (prior to their forced removal) (Guha 1989, Peluso 1993, Guha 1997; for an example of this tendency, see Devall and Sessions 1985, 30); highlight “the state” and western environmentalists as guardians of nature, while ignoring the manner in which these authoritative figures have frequently appropriated the land, water and forest rights of local or indigenous populaces (Kosek 2006); and praise Hardin and Abbey, in spite of their xenophobic and, at times, misanthropic stances (Hartmann 2004). These examples support the political ecological argument that the foundational deep ecological construct of “wilderness” is made legible through lenses that are tinted with race, nation, class and gender (Braun 2000, Kosek 2006).

In contrast to this wild, pristine nature, political ecologists instead focus on day-to-day encounters with the non-human realm, the historical and structural injustices that impact access to nature, and the consumptive asymmetries that must be taken into account in discussions of obligation for rectifying environmental problems (Robbins 2012). This approach has been influential in the development of both the “first world” environmental justice movement and so-called “third world” environmentalisms (Guha 1989, Bryant and Bailey 1997, Peritore 1999).

Economistic

The economistic perspective relates to a variety of anthropocentric social projects, as well as those of “reformist” environmentalists (e.g. certain large-scale environmental organizations) and fits in line with Guha and Martinez-Alier’s “gospel of eco-efficiency.” For heuristic purposes, I use the term “economistic,” here, to refer to several projects that variably appropriate nature for instrumental reasons, treating “it” as an object – or, as Mick Smith writes, a “standing reserve” (2011) – to be put to use for some anthropocentric end. This category, thus,

encompasses liberal economic approaches where nature is a resource to be put to use by capital, as well as geopolitical approaches where nature is a resource to be put to use by the state (less frequently, it also applies to social nativist approaches, where nature functions as a resource to be put to use by the Anglo-European nation).

In the *liberal economic* variant, nature is argued to be embedded in the economy, and there is significant faith that in the capacity of free-markets to appropriately value nature. Within this conceptual paradigm, nature was historically seen as a mere asocial artifice that needed to be put to use or “civilized;” as Locke observed, “land that is left wholly to nature that hath no improvement of pasturage, tillage, or planting, is called, as indeed it is, waste” (1965, 339).

Today, *neoliberal* approaches argue that Nature ought to be priced through the market, and state environmental regulations are deemed forms of protectionism (or “non-tariff barriers”) (Beckerman and Pasek 2001; Anderson and Leal 2001; World Bank 2003; WTO 2007).

Although contemporary liberal thought has evolved significantly in its valuations of nature, assumptions of nature’s asociality remain prevalent. In this sense, nature must be socialized – e.g. commodified and privatized – in order to be efficiently allocated and protected (see, for instance, Beckerman and Pasek 2001).³⁴

In the *geopolitical* variant, nature has been historically embedded in the logic of *realpolitik*, as territory and natural resources to be employed for furthering state interest through the maximization of power or security (see, for instance, the seminal works of Mackinder, 1887, 1904). The continued vitality of the nation-state is guaranteed by the Hobbesian state of nature

³⁴ It should be noted that there is tremendous variability in liberal approaches to Nature (Meyer 2005). For example, those who have been termed “ecological modernists” (Mol and Spaargaren 2002, Mol 2002) or “liberal environmentalists” (Bernstein 2002) favor significant social and environmental regulations, but continue to argue that “the ongoing, internal dynamics of capitalist modernity can be harnessed to improve environmental quality” (McCarthy 2004: 328; see also Mol and Spaargaren 2000, Buttel 2000, 2001).

that epitomizes international politics, where nationalism is constantly reinforced through the security threats posed by rival states and other actors. Nature enters into this geopolitical calculus insofar as it is a resource of strategic necessity to the state (oil, precious metals, or, in some cases, water), or if resource shortages or natural disasters produce refugees that threaten a state's control over its borders (Kaplan 1994).

Table 2.1: Conceptions of Nature

Conception of Nature	Epistemologies	Nature as:
<i>Deep Ecology</i>	Romanticism	Wilderness
	Eastern Philosophy	Self-experience
	Malthusianism	Scarce/Overpopulated
	Evolutionary Science	Competition/Equilibrium
<i>Political Ecology</i>	Marxism	Maldistributed/Overconsumed
	Post-colonialism	Day-to-day Necessity
	Post-structuralism	Socially constructed
<i>Economistic</i>	Liberal economism	Natural resources Commodity
	Geopoliticism	Natural resources Territory Symbol of anarchy

Political Community

These competing ideals of nature are frequently deployed to justify idealized visions of political community. By political community, I mean the locus of social or cultural life with which one most closely identifies politically; in short, it is the ideal *polis* in which political deliberation and communal decision-making ought to occur. While the dominant form of political community is the territorial “Nation,” others are founded upon particular cultural groupings (e.g indigenous nations), attachments to bioregions, local communities, or global forms of solidarity. Political community provides a feeling of “we”-ness that links people

together.

While there is significant argument over whether or not political communities must be particularistic (Eckersley 2008), extant arrangements celebrate communities of vastly different scopes. By scope, here, I refer to the breadth of political community in terms of the *cultural* (how is a specific “in-group” defined and differentiated from others?), *spatial* (is membership fixed to a delimited territory?) and *temporal* (is the focus on the present, historical relations, or future generations?) breadth in which membership and political protections extend. Political community is closely linked with governance (e.g. the nation-state), and, in certain cases, nature (e.g. arguments for political membership to extent to non-humans or arguments that “the nation” retains a natural connection to a particular territorial landscape). My discussion here focuses on the cultural dimension, as the spatial and temporal dimensions are dependent on ideals of governance and nature that are articulated alongside the cultural “in-group” (as such, they will be discussed in the final section of the chapter). There are four ideal type approaches to political community – individualism, nationalism, communitarianism, and cosmopolitanism – each of which contain several sub-groupings.

Individualism

The individualist approach rejects the obligations and constraints that come with political community in favor of emphasis on personal autonomy and freedom (conceptualized in “negative” terms).³⁵ Variably influenced by libertarianism and anarchism, individualists contend that the social institutions – in both their formal/legal and informal/normative forms – that spring from political community are frequently discriminatory toward individuals who think and

³⁵ The distinction between positive and negative freedom was popularized by Berlin (1958). “Negative” freedom refers to the protection or expansion of a “private” sphere free from state interference.

act differently, are stifling to creativity and/or entrepreneurship, and, overall, are unnecessarily coercive.³⁶

In its *libertarian* variants, the individualist ethos is founded on specific readings of classical liberal theorists (like Locke, Kant, Madison, etc.) radicalized by more recent engagements their Austrian (Hayek 1944, Mises 1949) and Chicago school (Friedman 1962) interlocutors, as well as the popularity of Ayn Rand's philosophy. In this formulation, radical individualism is closely entwined with support for laissez-faire capitalism, and the minimalist state that exists derives its legitimacy from the protection of property (Hayek *ibid*, Rothbard 1973).

To the contrary, in its *anarchist* variants, radical individualism is said to necessitate the destruction of private property, which merely legitimates the gross inequalities that uphold the political and moral order (Goldman 1969 [1917], 52-4).³⁷ Influenced by Proudhon, Kropotkin, Godwin and Goldman, as well as more recent thinkers like social ecologist, Murray Bookchin, anarchist philosophy – despite its enormous variability – holds that capital, the state, and religion subordinate individuals to some entrenched social logic that impedes the development of human consciousness. While the prescriptions of anarchists vary, they are united by an overarching ideal:

The dissolution of authority and government, the decentralization of responsibility, the replacement of states and similar monolithic organizations by a federalism which will allow sovereignty to return to the intimate primal units of society – this is what in their various ways the anarchists have all desired.
(Woodcock 1962, 28)

³⁶ Again, in constructing this ideal-type I am simplifying two incredibly complex bodies of thought. As I allude to below, anarchism, in particular, is highly variable and often eschews simplistic forms of individualism in favor of a more complex social ontology.

³⁷ Emma Goldman expresses the anarchist viewpoint on private property as follows: “‘Property is robbery,’ said the great French Anarchist Proudhon. Yes, but without risk and danger to the robber. Monopolizing the accumulated efforts of man, property has robbed him of his birthright and turned him loose a pauper and outcast” (*ibid*, 53-4).

This emphasis on a return to society's "primordial units" suggests that while libertarians proclaim that society "does not exist," anarchists offer a more complex reading of the relationship between the individual and society. For example, in a discussion of Murray Bookchin's eco-anarchism, Janet Biehl writes that:

In contrast to many anarchists of an individualist bent, Bookchin is no enemy of institutions as such. Freedom that is conceived entirely in personal terms, that has no institutional embodiment ... languishes as a narcissistic indulgence. A society that sustains both individual and social freedom, must be undergirded by institutions that are themselves liberatory (1998, viii).

Bookchin's "libertarian municipalism" is an attempt to sketch the contours of a small-scale political arrangement that achieves individual and social freedom by wedding principles of direct democracy to those of ecology.

Despite these ontological differences, what brings libertarianism and anarchism together under the banner of radical individualism is a distrust of the political communities that legitimate centralized power (namely, that of the state), and the capacity such powers come to possess to use coercion to achieve political ends.

Nationalism

Nationalism, discussed in Chapter One, refers to an "imagined political community" (Anderson 2006 [1983], 6) that deems "the nation" the proper locus of communal attachment. "It is imagined," according to Benedict Anderson, "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, but in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (ibid). There are three subtypes of nationalism.

First, *nativism* is a conservative ideology that conceptualizes the nation as a timeless social and political unit that provides the basis for democratic governance and social cohesion.

Nationality is constructed as the foundation of one's identity, which is defined – along racial, ethnic and gendered lines – in opposition to those groups that are viewed as threatening the biological or cultural coherence of this closed political unit (Shapiro 1999, Balibar 2005).

Nativism, according to John Higham, manifests itself as “an intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign (i.e. un-American) connections” (1983, 4).

Second, *liberal nationalism* accentuates the importance of a diverse, multi-cultural populace, but asserts that there must remain certain common threads that tie such a populace together in solidarity (Tamir 1993, Mason 1999). Liberal nationalism eschews the explicit ideals of ethnic nationalism that influence nativist projects, in favor of a civic nationalism – a sense of civic duty; knowledge of political institutions, national histories and traditions; and commitment to democratic practice, individual liberty and human rights – that unites the political community (Habermas 1996, 1998; Markell 2000; Pickus 2005).³⁸ While more welcoming of cultural difference than ethnic nationalists, liberal nationalists argue that newcomers, in entering into the social contract, are obliged to assimilate to this overarching set of political norms.

Finally, *subaltern nationalism* refers to a communal grouping of populations that have been historically marginalized within a political community, and generally continue to suffer structural injustices. Oftentimes, these subaltern nations – Native Americans, the Québécois, Basques, and other indigenous populations – were the Others in opposition to which the supposedly “civilized” projects of European and American nation-building were constructed (see Tully 1995, Bruyneel 2007, Shaw 2008). In this sense, subaltern nations seek to reconfigure

³⁸ Habermas goes so far as to argue for a rejection of nationalism, emphasizing in its place a “constitutional patriotism.” I, however, do not accept this distinction between patriotism and nationalism. In my opinion, what Habermas is proposing is simply a softer, friendlier, more nuanced nationalism, so I continue to place him in the liberal nationalist category (despite facets of his philosophy that might be considered to favor a “thin cosmopolitanism”).

sovereignty so that their cultural grouping obtains some measure of autonomy, recognition and/or representation.

Communitarianism:

This third approach to political community – the aptly named communitarianism – often overlaps with forms of nationalism, but is defined first and foremost by its emphasis on an Aristotelian ontology whereby the community exists prior to the individual (MacIntyre 1984a). Certain conceptions of nationality might embody communitarian principles, but dominant forms of nationalism today are grounded squarely in the liberal ideal of the autonomous individual. Additionally, communitarianism varies across scale; adopted, at times, by individuals identifying with localities, bioregions, and transnational ethnic or social groupings. Emphasizing a form of community governed by cultural self-determination, the communitarian conception of freedom is one in which the autonomy of a self-defined collective takes precedence over the atomistic, self-interested individual of classical liberalism (Walzer 1983, 1990).

There are both *liberal* and *conservative* variants of communitarianism. The latter is characterized by a strong attachment to “traditional” cultural ideals, as well as an insular particularism that exhibits little concern for alternative political communities and is much more likely to converge with nativism and other conservative social forms (MacIntyre 1984b). The former is influenced by civic republican ideals that place some “public good” above individual desires and interests (Mouffe 1992, 71). Along these lines, liberal communitarians are more likely to emphasize a form of “iconoclastic patriotism” in which dissent is not only tolerated but prized (Eckersley 2008), and to seek to cultivate a generous ethos of engagement with immigrants, indigenous populations and other states (Kymlicka 2006).

Liberal communitarians may also welcome liberal cosmopolitan institutions, like the EU, insofar as they help to diffuse ideals of liberal nationhood to nation-states that had formerly been governed by illiberal institutions, norms and practices (Kymlicka 2006, 134-5). Even amongst liberal communitarian internationalists, however, there is a general consensus that efforts in the international sphere alone cannot provide for the cultural solidarity and autonomy necessary for a flourishing democracy (Eckersley 2005).

While it initially appears slight, the difference between liberal communitarianism and liberal nationalism is twofold. First, liberal communitarians argue that liberal nationalism is insufficient in promoting the solidarity necessary for a democratic political community to function effectively. Robyn Eckersley, for instance, is critical of Habermas' constitutional patriotism; arguing that it "provides a very weak functional equivalent to belonging and attachment to the nation, precisely because it requires no pre-existing social bonds or the development of any particular national identity – merely a commitment to democracy as a procedure, and to human rights" (2008, 189). Second, whereas liberal nationalists are committed to the adjudication of ontological and epistemological differences through democratic processes and constitutions founded upon protection of universal rights, liberal communitarians contend that the intersubjective truths that come to guide a political community are constructed according to cultural traditions. The liberal nationalist is, for this reason, far more likely to reject the absolute notion of sovereign non-interference when individual human rights are threatened,³⁹ whereas the liberal communitarian insists that the principle of sovereignty should safeguard cultural autonomy (except, perhaps, in the most egregious of humanitarian violations).

³⁹ Liberal nationalists, at times, go so far as to welcome a "thin" conception of cosmopolitan citizenship; recognizing some universal moral obligation but subordinating it to the more pressing obligations to those within one's political community. For a discussion of "thick" versus "thin" cosmopolitanism, see Linklater (1998, 204-6).

Cosmopolitanism:

In contrast with communitarians, cosmopolitans assert that ethical obligations do not stop at socially constructed borders, but extend to all of humanity (Pogge 1992). *Liberal cosmopolitans* note that, particularly in a period in which the actions of a person in one locale may have impacts that carry far into space and time, universal principles of individual freedom necessitate a global ethic. The notion of “affectedness” is crucial here; those who are impacted by a particular institution or policy should have a voice in debating the merits of this institution or policy (Dower 1989, Held 1995, Linklater 1998). Such is not the case in the bounded, national communities in which “democratic” deliberation typically occurs. Influenced by Kantian ideals of perpetual peace, cosmopolitans view Westphalian sovereignty as an institutional and normative constraint that must be amended or overcome in advancing a global humanitarian ethic. The institutional arrangement that will replace sovereignty is unclear; to some the nation-state, if it shifts to a more universal ethic, can figure into this governance (Dower 1989, 21), while others call for a global confederation governed by abstract, universal principles and democratic procedures that cut across scales according to affect (Archibugi and Held 1995, Held 1995).

Radical cosmopolitanism moves beyond “the individual” of liberal cosmopolitanism in order to underscore broader historical injustices and social and political structures of domination. The abstract universals of liberal cosmopolitanism are, therefore, eschewed by radical cosmopolitan approaches in favor of empirical considerations that attempt to identify the structural origins of the inequalities and injustices plaguing the globe. Following Marx, radical cosmopolitans seek to formulate an alternative to the purportedly anemic conception of politics advanced by liberals. At a domestic level, where liberals see an autonomous individual

possessing formal juridical equality, radicals see a being stripped of his or her social essence through waged labor, and treated inequitably under the laws and structures of a state beholden to moneyed interests. At an international level, radical cosmopolitans argue that contemporary structures of sovereignty may no longer be territorially bound, but they remain vastly asymmetric in terms of the distribution of power and resources. As a consequence, obligation for rectifying these inequalities should not be viewed as uniformly distributed; certain institutions and actors have a far greater responsibility for ameliorating the injustices that they have perpetuated and/or benefited from (Young 2005).

Frequently the radical cosmopolitan approach, indebted to the economic analyses of critical political economy, intersects with *critical cosmopolitanism*, indebted to the cultural analyses of post-structural and post-colonial theory. The overriding concern of critical cosmopolitanism is to create space for difference within the abstract universal ethics of liberal cosmopolitan visions. For example, recognizing that cosmopolitan projects (e.g. Christianity and the European Enlightenment) were historically “global designs” that served universalizing visions of colonization and imperialism, Walter D. Mignolo advances a cosmopolitanism constructed from the perspective of coloniality (2000, 721-2; see also Appiah 2006). Founded upon “border thinking” (as opposed to global designs) and “diversality” (as opposed to universality), this form of critical cosmopolitanism emerges “from the perspective of those local histories that had to deal all along with global designs” (ibid, 744). In such a formulation, cosmopolitanism is less about efforts to replace the national community with some international society, as it is about constructing an ethos geared to bringing about:

[t]he internal transformation of social and cultural phenomena through self-problematization and pluralization. It is in the interplay of self, other and world that cosmopolitan processes come into play. (Delanty 2006)

Table 2.2: Conceptions of Political Community

Political Community	Variants	Ontology
<i>Individualism</i>	Libertarian	Rejection of society
	Anarchic	Society without government
<i>Nationalism</i>	Nativist	Anglo-European Culture
	Liberal	Civic practices and commitments
	Subaltern	Marginalized Cultural Traditions
<i>Communitarianism</i>	Liberal	Civic Republicanism
	Conservative	Cultural Traditions
<i>Cosmopolitanism</i>	Liberal	Individual human rights
	Radical	Alliance against oppression
	Critical	Difference within universality

Governance

For scholars and practitioners, these idealized political communities are argued to necessitate a variety of modes of governance. “Governance” here refers to the institutional form that authority, control and legitimacy ought to rest within according to the political community of choice.⁴⁰ The issue of governance has been a particularly contentious one within environmentalism, and greens are often quite vague in articulating precisely which institution will function as a social steering mechanism, a punitive force, or a privileged deliberative body in attaining environmental progress – insisting instead on the necessity of some ill-defined multi-scalar interaction or ambiguous “glocalism.” Nonetheless, within the statements and practices of environmentalists and their commentators, ideals of political community are nested within architectures of governance that typically privilege a particular *scale* (or articulate a specific

⁴⁰ I, thus, employ the term here in a traditional, rather than Foucauldian, sense. Later, as I explore the interaction between various ideals of nature, political community and governance, I return to a Foucauldian focus in exploring the micropolitical practices that are bound up in these efforts to reconfigure macropolitical institutional forms.

relation between scales) and put forward a vision of a specific *social and ecological purpose* that ought to guide that governance.

By “scale,” I mean the spatial expanse of an environmental or social problem or solution, and the corresponding level(s) at which it should be addressed (according to some actor). While scale is generally seen to revolve around a simple functional assessment aimed at finding the right match between the spatial reach of an object or issue and the proper level (local, state, regional, national, international, global etc.) at which it should be governed, numerous theorists have remarked that scale-making is a highly politicized practice involving “the temporary fixing of the territorial scope of particular modalities of power” (Newstead, Reid and Spark 2000; cited by McCarthy 2005). The identification of a privileged scale and/or the articulation between the scales is crucial to crafting any sort of narrative that deals with the difficult ethical questions stemming from various transnational flows and blockages. There are four scalar forms that environmentalists emphasize – the local, the ecosystem, the state and the global – but the social and/or ecological purpose that scholars and practitioners argue ought to drive practices of governance can vary within a particular scale.

Local

Local forms of governance are variably emphasized by (eco)anarchists, libertarians, participatory democrats, and bioregionalists (and, in practice, local-level alliances are often comprised of strange bedfellows containing members driven by each of these ideals). Within each of these approaches, the local scale is argued to be the location where individual autonomy and freedom can be most effectively cultivated, because institutional power is kept so close to “the people.” In addition to those actors who are ontologically wedded to the local scale, a

variety of other social actors engage strategically with “the local” in attempting to advance their political ends. Local forms of governance contain a particularly special place in green political imaginaries; as Gregory Albo writes: “If there is one element in...diverse ecological thought that emerges foremost, it is the primacy of localism as the central strategic focus” (Albo 2007, 4).

Local governance involves a variety of actors that cut across the “public” and “private” spheres. Prominent examples include: the adoption of “Climate-Wise” by city governments; social movement actors engaged in the “Do-it-Yourself” (DIY) and “Transition Town” movements; NGOs and individual entrepreneurs becoming involved in farmers markets and urban gardens; the devolution of authority away from governmental entities and toward forms of community-based natural resource management; and so on. On the left, localism is often argued to represent a scale that is more democratic than statist forms of governance, and on the right, localism is at times viewed as a preferable alternative to “command and control” governance. For others, particularly social leftists, “thinking and acting locally [is seen] as perpetuating inter-place competition for jobs and investment – and therefore undermining worker solidarity across space” (Castree et. al. 2004, 158).

There are, in fact, varieties of localism whose social and ecological purposes differ dramatically. Localism can be wedded to political community in ways that are environmentally and socially destructive (e.g. local labor unions supportive of offering municipal tax incentives to big business because it will lure jobs from other localities unwilling to do so) and/or exclusionary (e.g. local elites claiming to speak or act on behalf of the entire local community); to those that are open to engagement with other locales (e.g. local NGOs that seek to forge alliances with indigenous communities), and attempt to broaden the participatory scope of their local-coalition (e.g. local union activists allying with local environmentalists and immigrants’

rights advocates to fight for stronger worker health and safety standards). With this in mind, Coe and Ward emphasize the need for critical political economic analyses that view local struggles not as “bounded locations, but...part of relational networks and flows” (Castree et. al. 2004, 180). The take home is that the articulation binding local struggles to alternative scales of governance and diverse modes of community must be carefully considered, as “one person’s progressive localism might be another person’s regressive localism” (ibid, 181).

Ecosystem

Moving beyond local bounds, the ecosystemic approach is based on the scientific delineation of ecosystemic boundaries, which are frequently couched within a regionalist form of governance (instances of this regionalism are both subnational and transnational). For certain proponents, the term “bioregionalism” is used to refer to such an arrangement. A “bioregion,” in this case, refers to “any part of the earth’s surface whose rough boundaries are determined by natural characteristics rather than human dictates, distinguishable from other areas by particular attributes of flora, fauna, water, climate, soils and landforms, and by the human settlements and cultures those attributes have given rise to” (Sale 2000 [1991], 55).

While more sophisticated iterations of bioregionalism (reviewed below in my discussion of eco-communitarianism), move beyond this functionalist definition, scalar bioregionalists contend that within the boundaries of the ecosystem, institutions of governance should work to protect ecological and social independence, autonomy and participation. While this approach is typically enmeshed in a deep ecological conception of nature, some political ecologists have also noted the intersection between bioregions and particular (usually marginalized) cultural systems.

Proposals for ecosystemic forms of governance, however, are not as simple as following

the “facts” of ecology. There remain difficult questions over who should be included within a political community structured around a specific ecosystem, what social purpose should guide ecosystemic governance, and how “we” ought to move from the status quo to this normative end. For this reason, those privileging the spatial contours of eco-systems frequently turn, out of strategic or ethical necessity, to discourses of regionalism (Sale 2000), nationalism (Abbey 1988) and/or cosmopolitanism (Ward 1998).

State

Statists argue that most environmental and social gains have been made at this level of governance. Moreover, in a period of “neoliberal globalization,” many view “the state” (however they variably conceptualize it) as the one entity currently capable of providing a check against the power of transnational corporations, international financial institutions, and the forces of neoliberal globalization.

Aside from this general consensus, forms of statism vary widely in terms of their ideals of governance and conceptions of political community. For instance, *conservative statist*s view the state as the mechanism through which the passions of the people can be filtered, and national traditions, religious morals and social hierarchies can be safeguarded. *Social democratic statist*s, on the other hand, view the state as a steering mechanism through which national projects can be molded, and the will of the people expressed. Overlapping with social democratic concerns but eschewing the pro-growth biases of Keynesian economics, *eco-statist*s consider the extent to which the traditionally anthropocentric state can be remolded into a “green state” (Eckersley 2004) or a “steady state” (Daly 1974), and debate the concomitant environmental and social implications of this “greening of sovereignty” (Litfin 1998). At times, social democratic and eco-

statists are *strategic statist*s, who view the state as a regulatory arena that provides a stepping stone to architectures of governance that are more environmentally sound – in most cases, forms of international or global governance (Eckersley 2004). The state, in this sense, is not an ideal site of environmental or social governance, but is simply “what is” (and, therefore, what must be dealt with).

While conservative statist

s are typically staunch nationalists, there is significant variability amongst social democratic and eco-statists, who may also be internationalists (e.g. liberal institutionalists who would like to see an international society but do not believe it is possible in any strong form as a consequence of international anarchy), or cosmopolitans. For example, many eco-statists seek to detach the “state” from the “nation,” insisting that “a nationally oriented eco-state seems almost a contradiction in terms” (Meadowcroft 2005, 12). Others, like Eckersley, argue that until cosmopolitan ideals become more adequately institutionalized, the sense of solidarity necessary for a flourishing political community will be lacking. With this in mind, she advocates a “transnational green state” that works to join a sense of national belongingness with cosmopolitan ideals of affectedness (2004, 176).

Global

Globalist

s argue that institutional forms predicated on territorial borders (e.g. the state) are incapable of constructing viable solutions to the myriad contemporary problems that are fundamentally de-territorialized. Given this functional mismatch, issue-areas including ecology, migration, finance, human rights, and trade are variably argued to demand some global form of governance. While there are few remaining (eco)authoritarians favoring a one-world government (Ophuls 1974), many globalists hope to see strong international institutions or some sort of

global confederal arrangement (Archibugi and Held 1995, Held 1995). Still others are transnationalists who favor multiscale governance that includes the current nation-state, but will none the less move “us” toward stronger architectures of global governance.

Like the other scalar forms, the social and ecological purposes that drive globalist projects vary widely, ranging from neoliberals and their sympathizers who welcome the “flattening of the world,” (Friedman 2006; see also Ohmae 1999), all the way to alter-globalists who are opponents of neoliberalism but believe that within globalization are deterritorializing “lines of flight” that provide pathways toward more just and inclusive futures (Appadurai 1996, Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004).

Table 2.3: Conceptions of Governance

Scale	Social/Ecological Purpose
<i>Local</i>	Anarchist
	Libertarian
	Participatory Democratic
<i>Ecosystem</i>	Bioregionalist
	Nationalist
	Cosmopolitan
<i>State</i>	Conservative
	Social Democratic
	Ecological
<i>Global</i>	Neoliberal
	Alter-Globalist

Articulations of Green Sovereignty

The potential combinations of Nature, political community, and governance are too vast to fully do justice to in a dissertation chapter. However, the following are the most common arrangements that seem to arise – implicitly or explicitly – in extant theory and practice. I group these articulations into three categories: 1) *Dominant*, which are institutionalized in powerful social forms; 2) *Subordinate*, which have gained significant discursive inertia, particularly within social movement organizations, but have not yet become institutionalized in formal venues; and 3) *Emergent*, which are discursive pathways that have been articulated by several individuals or groups, but have not yet fully punctured social movements discourses, or have only recently begun to do so.

Dominant

Green Neoliberalism

Also referred to as “hegemonic globalism” (Barcena et al 1997, 310-12), green neoliberalism is an economistic conception of Nature wedded to the global scale represented by a radical individualist conception of community. The launching off point for green neoliberalism lies in the liberal economistic approach to nature; nature is a resource that, to be efficiently allocated, must be placed within capitalistic relations. The governance of nature, in other words, ought to hinge upon its exchange value on the global market (in a manner that is not subject to the interference of sovereign states).

For proponents, green neoliberalism represents an attempt to integrate practices of sustainable development into a logic of capitalism (Beckerman and Pasek 2001, Anderson and Leal 2001, World Bank 2003, WTO 2007). Using successful cases of corporate social

responsibility or private environmental stewardship, green neoliberals contend that private entities will respond to changing consumptive practices in re-regulating their own behaviors without the heavy hand of “command-and-control” regulation (Economist 2008). For opponents, however, green neoliberalism represents the mere greenwashing of a profoundly anthropocentric project; within the triple-bottom line of sustainable development, “the economic” always takes precedence. The global nature of the market allows corporations to venue shop, resulting in a race to the bottom, at the same time as international institutions push forward privatization and deregulation as the formula for development.

The literature critical of neoliberalism is voluminous, with scholars and practitioners detailing: how neoliberal trade regimes have curtailed the power of states to put in place environmental regulations (McCarthy 2004, Eckersley 2004); how the conditionalities employed by international financial institutions have advanced the privatization of natural resources (Goldman 2006); how the same IFI’s, in coordination with powerful transnational corporations, have pushed forward the commodification of indigenous knowledges (Tsing 2005) and genetic materials (McAfee 2003); and how neoliberal national development strategies have decimated the natural and cultural resources of indigenous and marginalized populations (Sawyer 2004, Goldman 2006).

Despite the overarching contours that structure the theoretical project of green neoliberalism, actually existing green neoliberalism intersects with nature, political community and governance in contingent manners (McCarthy and Prudham 2004, Castree 2008). In critiquing the tendency of some political geographers to discuss green neoliberalism in universalizing terms, Bakker notes:

Collectively, geographers are thus unable to account for variegation; specifically, they are unable to generate convincing explanations of the neoliberalization of nature as a historically and geographically differentiated, yet global (or at least translocal) phenomenon. This is troubling, because there is tremendous variation in the articulation of neoliberalism with different types of socio-natures. (2010, 721)

For example, while green neoliberals may well possess a liberal economic conception of nature, deep ecological ideals of pristine wilderness are often deployed to advance eco-tourism in the so-called “developing world.” Along the same lines, Matthew Sparke details how Cascadia was first articulated as a transnational ecological system by bioregionalists, and yet this eco-centric ideal is now being woven into the publicity strategies of business and regional alliances aiming to profit off of the region’s reputation as an ecological gem (2005, chapter two).

And while green neoliberalism eschews political community in theory, in practice it frequently deploys ideals of community as a tool to further profits (e.g. tourist ads in “exotic” locales that appeal to the “authentic” experience consumers might have vacationing amidst an indigenous culture), and produces new forms of community through its deterritorializing impulses (at one extreme, amongst transnational business elites weaving their ways through urban centers, and, at the other, amongst transnational migrants often living in the very same urban centers).

Finally, with regard to governance, while free-market globalism is dominant, green neoliberals – specifically, transnational corporations – also pursue more contingent strategies: taking advantage of opportunity costs and first-mover advantages (e.g. Dupont chemicals supporting the Montreal Protocol after it had developed an alternative to CFCs) (Dimitrov 2003, 130); supporting forms of re-regulation that promote subsidies, at the same time as they work to weaken environmental oversight and defund environmental agencies; and lobbying against binding international institutions while touting their efforts in corporate social responsibility.

Green Geopolitics

While green neoliberalism has a tendency to eschew territorialized sovereignty, the greening of orthodox geopolitics works to secure the sovereign nation-state through ecological advances. Viewed from one side, green geopolitics represents a strategic attempt by environmentalists to elevate issues of global warming, the end of oil and resource scarcity onto the mainstream security agenda. From another, it is the appropriation of Nature by mainstream security theorists who seek a more socially acceptable means to legitimate their conventional concern for the territory and resources of the nation-state. Within this framework, the continued vitality of the nation-state is guaranteed by the Hobbesian state of nature that epitomizes international politics, where nationalism is constantly reinforced through the security threats posed by rival states and other actors. Non-human entities enter into this geopolitical calculus insofar as they are a resource of strategic necessity to the state (oil, precious metals, or, in some cases, water), or if resource shortages or natural disasters produce refugees that threaten a state's control over its borders.

Nature, however, also plays a more symbolic role here – as a symbol of disorder – that works to construct the “developing world,” “3rd world,” or “Global South” as an *uncivilized* threat to its developed counterparts. For instance, the failed states of Africa are alleged to be the result of corrupt, non-Western models of development, which are argued to be causally linked with “famines, deforestation, soil erosion, flooding and the explosive rise of epidemics” (Fernandes 2004, 202). Jorge Fernandes contends that, through these geopolitical formulations, the inhabitants of these states are “reprimitivized” through discursive placement in a Hobbesian state of nature that threatens to seep into the West (ibid; Dalby 2002). The often blatant racism of nativist approaches is, in this fashion, displaced into a discourse of development, accompanied

by Malthusian specters of “hordes” and “waves” of refugees crashing through “our” civilizational gates.

In geopolitical formulations of “environmental security,” the maintenance of sovereignty is contingent upon the continued maximization of power or security vis-à-vis other states, and the prescription is for states to project power outward – through resource capture, the securitization of borders, and the strategic positioning of military bases (Kaplan 2009) – in order to keep resource shortages and the ever-more frequent incursions of environmental refugees from threatening national security (for a critical analysis, see Dalby 2002). National identity is constituted through the articulation of these “threats” and is intimately involved in the delineation of state interest; as Huntington observes: “national interests derive from national identity...[w]e have to know who we are before we can know what our interests are” (Huntington 2004, 10). Proponents of green geopolitics include academics (see Kaplan 1994, Barnett 2006, Kaplan 2009), influential journalists (see Friedman 2008) and policy-makers (like former CIA director James Woolsey).

Subordinate

Eco-Cosmopolitan

Adopting a distinctly ecological perspective, eco-cosmopolitans – also referred to as “globalist ecologists” (Barcena et. al. 1997) and “terracosmopolitans” (Deudney 1998) – contend that there is a fundamental disconnect between the boundaries of the “nation-state” and the boundaries of ecological systems or “bioregions” (Pogge 1992, 63; Litfin 1998; Ward 1998). The institution of sovereignty, wedded to the exclusionary ethos of nationalism and the pro-growth ethos of the state, is viewed as inherently ecologically destructive. The alternative is a planetary

community of eco-stewards, constructed around the inclusionary impulses of ecological interconnectedness, and governed by a global architecture of eco-systemic governance.

For example, Veronica Ward sketches an ecosystem management approach that is concerned with enabling states to move beyond territorial exclusivity in order to listen to ‘the facts of ecology.’ These facts, she contends, emerge in the field of conservation biology that accents ‘ecology over economics’ and ‘integrates scientific knowledge of ecological relationships and values framework within a complex sociopolitical and values framework toward the general goal of protecting native ecosystem integrity over the long term’ (1998, 87; citing Grumbine 1994). Who and what will be prioritized when this sociopolitical framework clashes with ecosystemic integrity remains unclear. For many eco-cosmopolitans, it seems as if the ecological sciences are inherently progressive: “The widespread goal of governments to assure the greatest economic returns for themselves and/or their citizens in the name of continued survival and ‘growth’ is an objective that does not even appear among conservation biologists’ management goals” (Ward 1998, 101). If “we” merely transferred authority to this epistemic community, “our” ecological problems would disappear.

In response to the transnational character of “nature,” the development of sustainable lifestyles is argued to necessitate different configurations of political space than the sovereign “nation-state,” including: open-access spaces, non-exclusive forms of territoriality, and limited territorial sovereignty (Ruggie 1993; Johnston 1981, 22; Ward 1998, 89). The overall thrust of eco-cosmopolitanism is, therefore, that global ecology has the “potential to comprise a new and very different social episteme – a new set of spatial, metaphysical and doctrinal constructs through which the visualization of collective existence on the planet is shaped” (Ruggie 1993, 173). And while certain eco-cosmopolitan visions descend into a top-down, technocratic form of

governance, others seek a more confederal arrangement that adjudicates complex socio-natures through radically democratic means.

The danger is that, in the former variants, “global” scales and communities are uncritically valorized; with global cosmopolitanism seen as inherently emancipatory. And yet, as critical cosmopolitans point out, global cosmopolitan visions have historically been anything but. In this vein, Daniel Deudney recognizes the need for a more nuanced relationship between ecology, political community and governance (see also Heise 2008):

it is obvious that such a conception of the basis of political association must move beyond the pure particularity of the Westphalian state and nation. But it is also necessary to steer clear of the universal, homogenous, and unmediated conceptions of cosmopolitan political association. (1998, 303)

Instead, Deudney calls for a form of sovereignty that moves away from Westphalian sovereignty but also eschews cosmopolitanism, embracing instead “terrapolitan” principles, organized around “the earth (*terra*) and its requirements” (ibid). The institutional architecture that would support the terrapolitan sovereignty is a federal arrangement constructed around ideals of the “global village” and “planetary patriotism” that fuse the concerns for place that characterize localist and bioregionalist theories, with the interconnection of ecosystems. Providing this novel arrangement with the emotional resonance that previous forms of nationalism captured is a “Gaian Earth religion,” which would both emphasize the sacredness of Earth’s human and non-human beings and provide impetus for saving Earth in the name of a “transgenerational public.” This public would be considered in democratic deliberations guided by both “ecological understandings of place and human links to place” (ibid, 315).

Like the cosmopolitan approach more generally, there is significant variability within the eco-cosmopolitan approach to governance. However, the overarching contention undergirding all variants of eco-cosmopolitanism is that nature – conceived as species, ecosystems and

wildernesses – is, at some level, an intrinsically global concern, and paying attention to the global scope of nature provides a pathway to more just forms of governance: “The first thing that almost all environmentalists would insist on is that we adopt a global perspective in facing the problems involve... Where the lines of cause and effect run across nation-states, so do the lines of moral responsibility” (Dower 1989, 20).⁴¹

Eco-Nativist

Also referred to as “right wing ecology,” eco-nativism is, in many respects, the inverse of eco-cosmopolitanism; combining deep ecological and geopolitical conceptions of nature with a nativist approach to political community that stresses the connections between “blood and soil” (Biehl 1994, Olsen 1999). In his analysis of right-wing ecology in Germany, Jonathan Olsen observes three ways that hyper-nationalist (e.g. nativist) movements draw on discourses of ecology: *naturalism* (membership is the product of a division of the human race, rather than of a social contract); *organicism* (the nation is conceptualized as self-enclosed and living – individuals play “roles” but are ontologically antecedent to the collective); and a *discourse of renewal* (any problem is a symptom of national decline) (1999, 25-6). Within contemporary right wing ecology, he adds, the “science of ecology is used to demonstrate the purported naturalness of the ethnic and cultural community, and thus, in turn, the nation” (ibid).

These articulations between nature and nationalism produce a frequent appeal to “the state” to shore up purity in the face of a culture or populace that is rapidly being polluted by external flows. As I further detail in Chapter Five, eco-nativists employ deep ecological conceptions of a national wilderness imperiled by population growth. In addition to wreaking

⁴¹ As with nationalist ecological discourses, the idea of “limits” remains prominent here, but issues of historical asymmetries in consumption are more likely to be taken into account: “And if the poor man’s over-use of his land – just to survive – is excusable, our demand for more and more is not” (Dower ibid, 15).

havoc on romantic ideals, population growth is argued to produce intercultural conflict for control over scarce quantities of natural resources. In this sense, neo-Malthusian anxieties are filtered through a social Darwinian imaginary by extending ecological notions of inter-group competition to social phenomena. Flows of migrants are threatening to overshoot “our” “cultural carrying capacity” and violent conflict will inevitably result. With this in mind, the legitimacy of the state is directly related to its ability and willingness to maintain a homogenous, internal “culture.” Further shoring up this narrative is the deployment of geopolitical imagery where those “outside” the cultural boundaries of the nation are marked with symbols of nature’s anarchy; “waves” of migrants crash through the border, and “our life boat” simply cannot handle any more (Hardin 1974).

And although this eco-nativist articulation is frequently criticized for merely appropriating nature to advance what are in reality anthropocentric ends of nativism, numerous theorists (Olsen 1999, Bhatia 2004, Hannigan 2011) have remarked that this is often not the case: “many followers of this political movement are sincerely committed to an ideological vision that emphasizes ‘a defense of small-scale communities against a homogenizing one-world culture and, above all, the protection of the local environment against the forces of global capitalism’” (Hannigan 2011, 319; citing Olsen 1995, 4). In recent years, the eco-nativist discourse has been employed by social movement actors in the United States (Carrying Capacity Network) and Australia (Sustainable Population Australia), and has been advanced by individuals, organizations and/or political parties in parts of the world, including Germany (Christian Social Union, Christian Democratic Union), France (les Verts, le Front Nationale), Switzerland (Social Democrats), Belgium (Vlams Blok), the Netherlands (Center Democrats), Italy (Northern League), and Russia (Rasputin) (Olsen 1999, 135-140).

Emergent

Eco-Communitarianism

Moving away from the insular, overtly racialized nationalism of eco-nativists, eco-communitarians contend that, because ecological values and conceptions of “nature” are culturally-mediated, there is a necessity to protect the autonomy of ecologically-oriented communities. As Kymlicka observes, “when green theorists talk about the ‘individual in community’ they usually have in mind some form of subnational, geographically defined community...[t]his may be an existing territorial subunit...or a new, environmentally defined, unit” (1996, 40-41). For example, while certain *bioregionalists* (discussed in the previous section) focus solely on the scientific identification of ecological scale, it is more common to link bioregions with small-scale communities defined by the intersection between cultural traditions and common interactions with the natural realm. Berg and Dasmann, for example, write that:

The final boundaries of a bioregion are best described by the people who have lived within it, through human recognition of the realities of living-in-place. All life on the planet is interconnected in a few obvious ways, and in many more that remain barely explored. But there is a distinct resonance among living things and the factors which influence them that occurs specifically within each separate place on the planet (1977, 399; as quoted by Aberley 1999, his italics).

However, the dominant form of eco-communitarianism today is not bioregionalism, but an eco-communitarian nationalism. In theory, *eco-communitarian nationalists* may be sympathetic to communitarian bioregionalism, eco-cosmopolitanism or other idealized visions of governance, but, in practice, eco-communitarian nationalists contend that the “state” – however non-ideal it may be – is simply the institutional form that is best equipped to promote ecological progress by virtue of its capacity to mediate between local communal connections to “place” and global flows and institutions (Eckersley 2004, Cafaro 2010). While forms of nationalism advanced by eco-communitarians vary (Barcena et al 1997, 309; Curtin 1999; Eckersley 2008),

the rhetoric of contemporary American eco-communitarians is firmly wedded to the liberal communitarianism outlined earlier in the chapter (see Cafaro 2010).

Within such a framework, “nature” is often deployed in defense of cultural diversity. Life “thrives on diversity” in both the human and nonhuman realms, but is threatened by an erosion of sovereignty that is contributing to a growing cultural homogeneity in line with the interests of transnational capital. With regard to environmental politics, this had led to the inability of diverse communities to govern nature as they see fit, resulting in the privatization and commodification of nature, and a failure to protect non-human lives for future generations. Thus, sovereignty must be reconfigured to provide for authority and control over eco-cultural values.

Radical Political Ecologism

In contrast with eco-communitarian efforts to reconfigure the sovereignty of the nation-state along more ecologically-sustainable lines, radical political ecologists search for more inclusive and equitable forms of governance and community that take into account the multiplicity of ways that various populations encounter and are positioned in relation to non-human and social flows.

To begin, radical political ecologists assert that formal juridical sovereignty has never resulted in real control, authority, or autonomy for most states. To the contrary, powerful states, international institutions, and elite actors have selectively wielded their power in order to capture certain flows (of capital, labor, nature, etc.) while excluding or displacing others (see Conca 1994; Miller 1995; Patterson 1997; Guha and Martinez-Alier 1998; Kutting 2001). From this perspective, the authority and control that a particular state possesses arises out of the interplay of historical and structural forces; notably the period in which the state received its formal

independence, and its corresponding location within the world political economic system (see, for instance, Conca 1994; Paterson 1999; Miller 1998; Stevis and Bruyninckx 2006). In addition to the asymmetric nature of state sovereignty, there exist global architectures of authority, control and legitimacy that do not mesh with the spatial boundaries of territorial states, but are more closely related to international institutions, global production chains, cultural patterns of migration, and so on.

Natural flows are, thus, impacted by the internal social relations of the state(s) within which they reside, the transnational relations between social actors working within and across state boundaries, and the external relations between the state(s) and other actors. In terms of relations between states, some states are rule-makers and others are rule-takers, and sovereignty emerges – not through the negotiations of two relatively equitable parties – but out of political processes occurring within a broader social field in which states of unequal power negotiate both amongst themselves and with interests of capital (Mol and Buttel 2002, Stevis and Bruyninckx 2006). As a consequence, wealthy states – increasingly operating according to the dictates of transnational corporations – have historically been able to set the terms of international environmental agreements (Miller 1995, Kutting 2001), appropriate the biological knowledge of their lesser developed counterparts (Miller 1995, Guha and Martinez-Alier 1998; Escobar 2006), and export the pollution arising from the production processes of goods that they consume (Rothman 1998; Gray and Mosely 2005). This asymmetric political economic terrain suggests the need for asymmetric responsibilities and obligations when it comes to ameliorating social and environmental harms.

Given these empirical realities, radical political ecologists recognize the need for a universal ethical vision that takes into account the intricate interconnections between

differentially positioned human and non-human lives, but – at the same time – are also skeptical of overly-generalizing cosmopolitan accounts that too often gloss over these profound differences. For this reason, radical political ecologists (indebted to the critical cosmopolitan approach reviewed earlier) emphasize the need for alternative political communities – e.g. subaltern eco-nationalisms (Kamieniecki and Granzeier 1998) – that can be contingently articulated alongside critical and radical (eco)cosmopolitan struggles.

The emphasis here is on providing an opportunity for those who have been excluded from contributing to the nature’s present in dominant articulations of sovereignty, to voice their socio-natural realities, and to construct a movement that is founded on building opposition to the macro and micropolitical structures that are identified as impediments to sustaining or improving these socio-natural realities. For this reason, the scale and social and ecological purpose of governance will vary according to ontologies, ethics and strategies that flow from these subaltern socio-natures.

Table 2.4: Articulations of Green Sovereignty

Discourse	Nature	Political Community	Governance
<i>Dominant</i>			
Green Neoliberalism	Economistic (liberal)	Individualist (libertarian)	Globalist
Green Geopolitics	Economistic (state)	Nationalist (variable)	Statist
<i>Subordinate</i>			
Eco-Nativism	Deep Ecological	Nationalist (nativist)	Statist
Eco-Cosmopolitanism	Deep Ecological/Political Ecological	Cosmopolitan (variable)	Variable
<i>Emergent</i>			
Eco-Communitarianism	Deep Ecological/Political Ecological	Communitarian (liberal nation)	Statist
Radical Political Ecologism	Political Ecological	Cosmopolitan (critical)	Variable

Conclusion

The discursive terrain linking nature to political community and governance in attempts to reconfigure sovereignty along more ecologically and socially sustainable lines is, in short, complex. The overview provided in this chapter makes it clear that environmentalists are currently struggling to conceptualize the empirical connections between these social and ecological ideals, and to construct a normative vision that is both socially and ecologically just and potentially attainable. But how are these discourses employed in actual environmentalist debates? What actors deploy these various discourses? What end(s) are they aiming to achieve in deploying them? And how might one best go about tracing the interaction between these different discursive ideal-types? In the following chapter, I assert that in order to answer these questions it is necessary to utilize a methodology that is founded upon discourse analysis.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The ideal relationship between nature, political community and governance is clearly contested. And yet, whatever the normative endpoint desired, struggles to rework sovereignty are necessarily central to all environmentalist projects that seek to move away from an ecologically and socially deleterious status quo. In this sense, eco-sovereignty – and the conceptual baggage that accompanies it (authority, legitimacy, control, population, territory, and so on) – emerges through the interventions of individuals and groups who seek to change the ecological and social impacts of what they perceive to be problematic institutionalized constructions of nature, political community, and/or governance. While I have examined several normative ideal-types that have been articulated by environmentalists, the actual strategies that various interests employ, and the social implications of these strategies, remain to be analyzed.

The remainder of the dissertation is centered on an exploration of two questions – one empirical and one normative – through the lens of environmental restrictionism: first, through what discursive pathways do nature, political community (typically, but not exclusively, “the nation”) and governance (typically, but not exclusively, “the state”) intersect in efforts to reconfigure sovereignty?; and, second, what are the likely social and environmental impacts of the resulting configurations? The first question is designed to provide insight into how these aforementioned social constructions emerge as seemingly autonomous objects that interact in the construction of a configuration of sovereignty being deployed to advance a particular political project. The second question allows for reflection on the ethical implications of each variant, and its accompanying ethos.

Debate amongst American environmentalists over the so-called “immigration problem” provides an ideal lens for exploring these issues, as the individuals and groups involved all work to reconfigure the contours of American sovereignty, but do so through vastly different articulatory combinations of Nature, political community and governance. There is, thus, an ongoing struggle over the ethos of eco-sovereignty, with both social and ecological considerations hanging in the balance.

Research Design

The research design for the proposed project is intended to enable empirical examination of the “environmental restrictionists” and their critics in a systematic, methodologically rigorous manner. I proceed through qualitative analysis, as what I seek to understand is not the simple “empirical” relationship between immigration and environmental degradation, but the ways in which socially constructed institutions (e.g. “the nation,” “the state,” “the border,” etc.) influence how environmentalists (and non-environmentalists deploying nature) conceptualize the non-human realm, and the ways in which particular constructions of nature influence how environmentalists (and non-environmentalists) conceptualize foundational social institutions. As many have observed, qualitative approaches are particularly adept at providing the “thick description” necessary to grasp the multiple perspectives through which individuals and groups construct their social realities (Geertz 1973, Weiss 1994).

These multiple perspectives are best unpacked through an approach indebted to post-structural theory, with its emphasis on the problematization of structures, institutions, and identities that are typically treated as ontological givens. For instance, while positivist analyses begin with the “nation-state” or “nature” as the foundations upon which to build generalizable

theory, a post-structural approach seeks to parse out the process through which such institutions are hedged within systems of meaning, repeated, re-iterated, re-styled, and woven into identities in a way that serves to naturalize a specific reading of reality.

With that in mind, this project employs an anti-essentialist ontology and perspectival epistemology; asserting that one's reading of empirical reality is mediated by *discourse*: the "ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (Hajer 1995, 44). In this sense, discourse studies seek to empirically analyze the practices of representation through which various objects (e.g. "the immigrant," "the environment," "America") are invested with meaning (Milliken 2001). Central to discourse analysis is a concern with the ways in which a particular "regime of truth" or "mode of representation" makes it possible for certain individuals or groups to speak as authoritative agents on a particular issue, while relegating others to mere objects to be spoken of or for. The overarching objectives are: to decipher how various "narratives" (Hajer 2006) or "frames" (Benford and Snow 2000) are constructed; to analyze how these divergent constructions variably impact our perceptions of reality (and, in turn, serve to reconstruct that reality); to consider the modes of inclusion and exclusion present in each; and to trace how the narratives intersect and clash.

Operationalizing Discourse Analysis

While discourse analysis is typically marked by an ambivalence with regard to any sort of formal methodology, there is no reason that a post-positivist approach must eschew carefully structured empirical analysis (Milliken 2001, 136-7). In attempting to carry out the theoretical

objectives, I employ a mode of discourse analysis referred to as “thematic analysis,” that cuts across the diverse methodologies and data sources that I rely on.

Thematic analysis focuses on the text itself; identifying “a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organizes possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis 1998, vii). Analysis of groups or individuals taking stances on the “immigration problem” will provide divergent narratives from which a list of key themes can be generated, and a typology developed. Thematic analysis works to provide a holistic picture of a particular discourse. As I focus on the interaction between three constituent parts of eco-sovereignty – nature, political community, and governance – I use thematic analysis to aid in the categorization and understanding of restrictionists and their opponents. Based upon extant literature detailed in Chapter Two, I have employed thematic analysis to develop preliminary ideal-types with regard to conceptions of nature, political community, and governance. These exploratory forms aided in devising questions that produce data relevant to the research questions, in making sense of that data, and, ultimately, in producing more refined ideal-types that help in understanding the perspectives of both restrictionists and their opponents.

Methods and Data

In order to make sure that these findings do not suffer from selection bias and capture the breadth and depth of the discourses employed by environmental restrictionists and their opponents, it is necessary to examine data gathered through a variety of methodological approaches. My examination of restrictionist discourses will combine **semi-structured interviews, document analysis, visual analysis, and content analysis**. I, thus, employ a strategy

of “triangulation,” where multiple forms of data collection function as a “check” on the findings (Berg 2007, 5-8). Examining the case through a variety of analytical lenses will allow me to consider whether or not the data is consistent and will increase the validity of my eventual conclusions.

I proceeded with data collection and analysis as follows:

First, I began by identifying the nine most prominent groups and approximately fifty individuals (*Appendix A*) who have publicly articulated environmental restrictionist positions, as well as the seven most prominent groups (*Appendix B*) who have forcefully critiqued restrictionism. Through contact information obtained from the groups, I sent a brief email (*Appendix C*) to key individuals explaining my request and summarizing my project. If the subjects agreed to be interviewed, I then emailed or delivered in person a detailed cover letter in line with Institutional Review Board requirements.

While in-person interviews were done where possible, for the purposes of time, money, and interviewee convenience, the interviews were carried out through whatever medium was necessary (in-person, phone, or email). I utilized **semi-structured interview** questions designed to produce the data appropriate to my research questions without artificially constraining the scope of the interviewees’ responses, thus providing the flexibility for unforeseen themes to arise (Berg 2007, 93). In several cases, these initial contacts generated additional subjects through a “snowballing” technique (see *Appendix F*). As my dissertation is primarily geared toward understanding environmental restrictionism, I feel justified in interviewing more restrictionists (8) than critics (5).

Second, I utilized document and visual analysis in exploring various representations of nature, political community and governance. I am chiefly concerned with understanding the

ways in which linkages between a certain representation of nature (as Malthusian, Darwinian, Romantic, etc.) and a particular population (i.e. “Mexicans,” “Spanish speakers,” “globalists,” etc.) figure into attempts to further a normative vision of political community. **Document analysis** enables me to look for these connections in restrictionist websites, publications, and media appearances.

Third, **visual analysis** is concerned with similar questions, but seeks to understand the ways in which images function to structure a visual imaginary through which the “viewer” makes sense of space and time (Mirzoeff 1998). It is curious that although numerous theorists have recognized the importance of images in environmental politics – e.g. the first pictures of the earth from space (Jasanoff 1998) – analysis has focused on the *detritorializing* impacts of such images while paying relatively little attention to their potentially *territorializing* role (exceptions include Braun 2002, Kosek 2006). However, images play a central role in constructing the environmental restrictionist narrative, particularly in their recent strategic advertising campaign (the “America’s Leadership Team” Coalition, discussed in Chapter One). I analyzed several photos involved in this campaign in an attempt to understand how the depictions of nature work to structure a visual field.

Finally, I supplemented these primary methods with **content analysis**; examining restrictionist websites, publications, and interviews in an attempt to quantify the number of times that environmental themes arise relative to other themes (security, economic, cultural, etc.). Content analysis serves as an additional check on the findings generated through qualitative, discursive methods. These findings, as well as a description of the coding scheme employed, are detailed in *Appendices D and E*.

Methods and Theory

The dissertation proceeds by exploring the variable and shifting iterations of attempts to “green sovereignty” through an in-depth case study of American environmentalist debates over the so-called “immigration problem.” By employing a post-structural form of discourse analysis, guided by a thematic mode of operationalization that will be applied to a range of data sources, I flesh out several ideal-types approaches to eco-sovereignty, that build off of those outlined in Chapter Two.

While the project is, in a sense, empirically-driven, the idea is not to advance any sort of “realist” epistemology. My analysis of debates surrounding restrictionism does not emerge from an Archimedean point, but from a perspective fraught with positionality and ideology. Although the methodological procedures employed will help to minimize bias, I do not claim that my reconstruction of ideal type approaches to nature, political community and governance are definitively “True.”

More so, while I have adopted a relatively orthodox approach to discourse analysis, I also recognize that there are several reasons why post-structuralists have eschewed any sort of methodological formalism. First, in such analyses, “language” (or “the text”) is often parceled off from politics, as if it alone provides a clear window into the intentions of actors who then voluntaristically piece together social realities. Struggles for meaning, however, do not occur in a social vacuum, but in a context that is shot through with history and power structures that, while discursively mediated, asymmetrically position some as purveyors of truth, reason and justice. By focusing on the historical context of these struggles, as well as the interaction between these systems of meaning and social and political institutions, I hope to avoid the pitfall of pluralism that too often characterizes discourse analysis.

Second, there is a danger that a reliance on ideal-types will lead to oversimplification, cordoning off structures of meaning in a way that plays down interconnection and minimizes complexity. While this is a legitimate concern, the ideal-types that I develop provide a more holistic overview of the discursive field than extant examinations, and, as a consequence, provide an alternative – significantly more complex – set of prescriptions with regard to sovereignty and nature. Additionally, as this dissertation is concerned, in part, with formulating an inclusionary, progressive response to environmental restrictionism, recognition of an infinitely complex reality must at some point yield to acceptance of incomplete understanding in the face of necessary strategic political choices. In this sense, the ideal-types that I develop will serve as a helpful launching off point in combating restrictionists by rendering their discursive constructions and strategic interactions transparent.

In essence, this project can be characterized as a post-structural approach to mid-level theory; I seek to draw out the connections between a variety of, often sweeping, normative positions that environmentalists, and those deploying environmental logics, have in regard to the relationship between nature and sovereignty, and the contingencies and interactions that are revealed by this concrete instance in which “the ecological” and “the social” are so clearly bound together. The goal is not to produce any sort of universalizing conclusions about environmentalist approaches to sovereignty and political community, but to provide detailed insight into contemporary American debates over environmentalism, sovereignty, nature and inclusion, and to outline an approach that allows for critical theoretical sophistication informed by the complexities of contested and changing empirical realities.

CHAPTER FOUR WE (GREENS) HAVE ALWAYS BEEN NATIVISTS

“Even though nature has been a central site of a particularly potent and exclusionary idea of US nationalism...the connections between nature and nation and the historical and contemporary material effects of these exclusionary couplings continue to go largely unexplored.”

- Jake Kosek, *Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico*⁴²

Nature and Nativism: A Genealogy

In a 1751 essay⁴³ that would influence English political economist Thomas

Malthus,⁴⁴ Ben Franklin wrote the following:

[T]he Number of purely white People in the World is proportionately very small. All *Africa* is black or tawny. *Asia* chiefly tawny. *America* (exclusive of the new Comers) wholly so. And in *Europe*, the *Spaniards*, *Italians*, *French*, *Russians* and *Swedes*, are generally of what we call a swarthy Complexion; as are the *Germans* also, and *Saxons* only excepted, who with the *English*, make the principal Body of White People on the face of the Earth. I could wish their Numbers were increased. And while we are, as I may call it, *Scouring* our Planet, by clearing *America* of Woods, and so making this Side of our Globe reflect a brighter Light to the Eyes of Inhabitants in *Mars* or *Venus*, why should we in the Sight of Superior Beings, darken its People? Why increase the Sons of *Africa*, by *Planting* them in *America*, where we have so fair an Opportunity, by excluding all Blacks and Tawneys, of increasing the lovely White and Red? But perhaps I am partial to the Complexion of my Country, for such Kind of Partiality is natural to Mankind.

Employing the familiar trope of “mankind” taming a dark and dangerous wilderness, the metaphor of light functions to draw a parallel between the civilization of nature (through the use of Labour) and the civilization of the Nation – both of which are rhetorically transformed into white spaces. Franklin, thus, links an attempt to secure a racialized nation, with his discontent over the impacts of a growing population. While, at this time, this may well have been a “progressive” argument against the importation of slaves, “Civilized” whites have the agency –

⁴² 2006, 226-7

⁴³ *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind and the Peopling of Countries*

⁴⁴ Malthus approvingly cites Franklin in his second *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1803).

they can “Plant” Africans here – and “non-white” migrants are passive threats to the nation, its nature, and culture. In Franklin’s vision, American popular sovereignty could only be secured through a concomitant process of whitening. What’s more, preference for a racialized nation was deemed “natural.”

While the immediate origins of the contemporary American environmental restrictionist movement, as discussed in the introduction, lie in the neo-Malthusian positions of Garrett Hardin and Paul Ehrlich, the inter-connections between nature and immigration date back to these much earlier anxieties over the possibility that “our” vast tracts of vacant land would be populated by “foreign” races.⁴⁵ Indeed, despite the popular tendency to treat commitments to “Nature” as inherently “progressive,” the historical intersections between nativism and nature are intense, and the contemporary remnants of these intersections are readily apparent. To play on Latour’s famous phrase, we (greens) have always been nativists. This chapter is an attempt to provide a genealogy of this relation between nature and nativism.⁴⁶

The purpose of this genealogy, it should be noted, is not to give a holistic account of the ways in which nature has intersected with exclusionary social projects (an effort that far exceeds the scope of this project), but: to (1) demonstrate how “Nature” is filtered through a variety of epistemological frames that emanate, respectively, from the natural sciences, political economy, social movements, and orthodox international relations; and, by doing so, to (2) provide background on several claims to “knowing Nature” (specifically Malthusian, romantic, and Darwinian) that are explicitly deployed in contemporary restrictionist projects. Each of these

⁴⁵ Immigration historian Aristide Zolberg observes that “immigration and naturalization... were regarded by both British imperial authorities and the American leaders as key processes that shaped basic features of the colonies existence: the size of their population, its composition, and the rules for membership in the body politic” (2006, 2). The racialized nationalism expressed by Franklin was central to these concerns over “naturalization.”

⁴⁶ I follow Higham in defining nativism as “an intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign (i.e. un-American) connections” (1983, 4).

conceptual frames links up with iterations of political community and governance in attempts to reconfigure sovereignty toward an ethos that, in the environmental restrictionist case, is explicitly nativist.

“Objectively” Natural Nations

Accompanying and reinforcing late-18th century efforts to construct racialized nations, was a burgeoning scientific discourse that was rendering a “universal” nature intelligible to European and American populations, often through knowledge accumulated within colonial spaces. Environmental historian Richard Grove (1995) observes that the privileging of “the scientist” or “the botanist” within environmental discourses provided an “objective” mechanism through which colonial social hierarchies could be filtered. For instance, one common form of knowledge deterministically linked particular climates with the cultures and institutional forms of the populations living in those climates (ibid, 154).⁴⁷ A tropical climate was purported to produce a lethargic, irrational people; an arctic climate, a cold, terse people, and so on.⁴⁸ As Grove reports, scholars of the Scottish Enlightenment, like Lord Kames in his *Sketches of the History of Man*, relied heavily on early scientific accounts of colonial environs, such as the Cook Expeditions:

The balmy climate praised by the explorers, he thought, hindered rather than stimulated the progress of man. ‘Need we any other excuse’, Kames asked, ‘for their inferiority of understanding compared with the inhabitants of other climates, where the mind, as well as the body, is constantly at work procuring necessaries?’

⁴⁷ It should be noted that, in certain cases, this brought about a reflexive thinking, where colonial voyagers came to perceive of the deleterious impacts Europeans cultures were having on “primitive” plants, animals and cultures (See Grove 1995, 154).

⁴⁸ Buffon writes: ‘Everything... goes to prove that the human type is not composed of species with essential differences between them, but that, on the contrary, there was originally only one species of man, which having multiplied and spread out over the whole surface of the earth, underwent different changes by the influence of climate, by the difference of nourishment, by the manner of living, by epidemic diseases...’ (as quoted by Grove 1995, 163). Buffon’s concept of “degeneration” argued that problematic developments in cultures and species could be traced back largely to climatic influences (ibid).

(ibid, 316; citing Kames 1774, I, 106)

Closely related articulations between nature, nation and race appear in the work of Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, who supposed his system of biological classification to have been rendered intelligible to “the botanist” alone by (a Christian) God himself. He viewed Nature as a self-standing system detached from all social processes “with each nation containing all the natural products necessary for a complete and complex economy” (Koerner 1999, 7). In order to accumulate knowledge of “exotic” plants and people, Linnaeus – like many botanists and naturalists of the time – was sent voyaging, in this case into Lapland, a frontier region inhabited by the Sami, that “contained 40 percent of the country’s landmass – and 0.2 percent of its people” (ibid, 61).

The Sami or “Lapps,” to Linnaeus, represented a savage people who were, nonetheless, models of health and medicine whose cultural habits could be appropriated and presented to Swedish and European audiences as a foil against the moral and scientific dangers of European civilization. The Sami were depicted as Edenic creatures “living in natural innocence...[who] proved that man could live in harmony with nature” (ibid, 75). However, Lapland, once flush with furred-animals, was being ecologically decimated by hunting, and had been politically dominated by Swedish homesteaders for some time; two phenomena stemming from colonial encounters that Linnaeus’ portrayal of the “happy Lapp” erased.⁴⁹ Linnaeus never spoke of the extent to which these native people had been driven from their lands, forced to labor, and subject to diseases against which they had little immunity.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ According to Koerner, there were two kinds of homesteaders: “Finnish slash and burn corn-growers and Swedish cattle-farmers and hay-harvesters. The Lapland Settlement Act, in force between 1673 and 1873, granted colonists crown land leases, shooting and fishing privileges, and freedom from extraordinary taxes” (ibid, 61)

⁵⁰ Koerner observes: “The Linnaean fiction of the ‘happy Lapp’ is an especially strained variant of primitivism, for in the eighteenth century, the Sami were a thoroughly colonized people. They suffered from smallpox, measles, and alcoholism; as nomads crossing state borders, they labored under double and triple taxation; they were conscripted

Despite such blind-spots, his socio-natural frame was incredibly influential; propelled by a conception of Nature in which European scientists occupied privileged positions – at once part of nature, but also the anointed few who had been made capable of fully grasping this natural order. It was, therefore, no contradiction for Linnaeus to apply his system of categorization to human “races” as well; putting forth a six-tiered racial hierarchy comprised of “Wild, American, European, Asian, African and Monstrous” (Wohlforth 2010, 25; Koerner 1999, 57).⁵¹ As privileged interlocutors between God and Nature, the 18th century European botanists were shaping a new *global* regime of environmental science that typically worked to advance European imperialism by providing further legitimation for the management of natural resources and, by virtue of natural racial hierarchies, colonial institutions (Grove 1995, 166).

Anthropologist Anna Tsing explains how this Nature was deployed in pursuit of colonial projects:

European botanists wrote of the plants but not the people... Their texts emptied the landscapes they studied of human inhabitants, making them appropriate for European settlement and conquest. (2005, 94)

In short, these empty spaces were virtual invitations for “civilization.” In important respects, environmental science paved the way for European sovereignty to expand across colonized spaces.

Returning to the American context, Thomas Jefferson was a devoted follower of Linnaeus⁵² and one sees traces of a racialized naturalism in his *Notes on Virginia*, the “ostensible motive of which is to record and promulgate a certain organized body of knowledge respecting

into Lapland’s mines; they were driven from their hunting grounds, fishing creeks, and grazing lands; and the Lutheran churches burdened them with tithes, catechism exams, and compulsory church attendance” (1999, 74).

⁵¹ The Sami were placed in the “monstrous” category “as supposed dwarfs, alongside mythic Patagonian giants” (Koerner 1999, 57).

⁵² “Having built his natural history and much of his anthropology and ethics on Linnaeus’ *Systema Naturae*, he commonly expressed unstinting admiration for the Swedish naturalist” (Boorstin 1993, 138).

the flora, fauna, geography, and human and social institutions of Virginia” (Looby 1987). While Jefferson seemed to recognize that certain inalienable rights applied to all races, he argued that the racial superiority of whites was a natural constant (Boorstin 1993),⁵³ and worried that immigration would disturb the natural order of the burgeoning nation.⁵⁴ Virginian social hierarchies, for Jefferson, were as natural as the rivers and hills that he gazed upon from Monticello.

The Political Economy of Bourgeois Nationalism

While colonized natures were being emptied by natural science, colonizing nations were being discursively filled as political economists and statesmen grappled for the first time with the phenomenon of over-population. Although the concept of “a population” is today so routinely invoked as to appear natural, it did not appear in overtly political dialogues until the eighteenth century, where attempts were made to mold the life forces of “society” toward specific ends through tacks that included both the erasure and proliferation of various populations (Foucault 1978, 25). Perhaps the most renowned example of discursively joining the “emptying” of nature with the concomitant “filling” of the nation, rests with Malthus, whose 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population* remains a major, if contested, influence on mainstream environmental

⁵³ “The first difference [between whites and blacks] which strikes us is that of color. . . . The difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us. And is this difference of no importance?... though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and of red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind. It is not against experience to suppose, that different species of the same genus, or varieties of the same species, may possess different qualifications” (Jefferson 1999 [1787], 239).

⁵⁴ Christopher Looby reflects on Jefferson’s social taxonomy: “The only kind of society that had a chance to forestall the process of corruption was one that was conflict free: a homogeneous, egalitarian, agricultural republic. ‘It is for the happiness of those united in society to harmonize as much as possible in matters which they must of necessity transact together. Civil government being the sole object of forming societies, its administration must be conducted by common consent’ (Notes 84). It was therefore crucial that the American population not be ‘a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass,’ as it might very well become if emigrants, who ‘will bring with them the principles of governments they leave,’ were allowed to ‘warp and bias its direction’ (Notes 85)” (1987, 264-5, citing Jefferson 1787).

thought.

According to Malthus:

Throughout the animal and vegetable kingdoms, Nature has scattered the seeds of life abroad with the most profuse and liberal hand; but has been comparatively sparing in the room and the nourishment necessary to rear them. The germs of existence contained in this earth, if they could freely develop themselves, would fill millions of worlds in the course of a few thousand years. Necessity, that imperious, all-pervading law of nature, restrains them within the prescribed bounds. The race of plants and the race of animals shrink under this great restrictive law; and many cannot by any efforts of reason escape from it. (Malthus 1826, 2)

His principal argument is that population multiplies exponentially in a manner that constantly outstrips food production; an unchanging relationship that he viewed as part and parcel of God's sacred, natural order. Environmental historian, Donald Worster, summarizes Malthus' articulation of these relations as follows: "the Creator made the human capacity for propagation 'a power of superior order' to the capacity of the soil to produce food. This discrepancy must lead to an unending cycle: expansion, then the misery of competition, and finally a forced retrenchment" (1977, 150). Nature, for Malthus, was a violent order driven by the constantly unsettled relation between scarcity and population.

However, while Malthus is commonly supposed an early environmental visionary, his project was more concerned with advancing a particular vision of capitalism than it was conserving natural resources:

Among his principal aims was to explain the nature and origins of poverty in a way which not only would suggest that there was no viable alternative to capitalist economy, but which would also contribute to the evolution of that economy in the form of certain policy prescriptions... which he justified in terms of his "law" of population.⁵⁵ (Ross 1998, 1)

⁵⁵ Ross explains that in turn of the century England, "there was mounting pressure by employers for the creation of a cheap labour market, which required a working population which was not too costly to maintain and neither immoderate nor too modest in its reproductive habits" (ibid, 5). For this reason, Malthus opposed birth control; deeming it unnatural.

Far from being a moral imperative to overcome, Eric Ross explains that Malthus viewed scarcity and the accompanying specter of poverty as a necessary means to induce humans to work. He further argued that “the poor” simply lacked this middle class ethic, which, in part, drove his opposition to the Poor Laws and public health projects (ibid, 12). Thus, poverty played a crucial social role in Malthus’ logic, and efforts to minimize this naturally occurring state were bound to backfire:

Suppose by a subscription of the rich, the eighteenpence or two shillings which men now earn were made up to five shillings, it might be imagined that they would then be able to live comfortably, and have a piece of meat everyday for their dinner. But this would be a very false conclusion. The transfer of three additional shillings a day to each laborer would not increase the quantity of meat in the country. There is not at present enough for all to have a moderate share. What would then be the consequence? The competition among the buyers in the market of meat would rapidly raise the price from eightpence or ninepence to two or three shillings in the pound, and the commodity would not be divided among many more than it is at present. (1826, 294)

The problem, in short, is not distribution, it is scarcity. And scarcity is an occurrence held constant by Nature “herself.” Whereas the burgeoning political ideals of democracy and the emergence of socialist thought both threatened private property, Malthus’ Nature, which tilted against taxation and legitimated inequality, served to further entrench this laissez-faire governmental arrangement.

Overall, Malthus’s project was directly related to an attempt to deny popular sovereignty while simultaneously reinforcing the economic liberalism that expansionist colonial nations depended upon at home and abroad; it was a recodification of conservative anxieties over democracy in the language of political economy. Malthus’ law of nature legitimated colonial-era projects, as the poverty of colonized “nations,” such as Ireland and India, could be attributed to their “excessive population” rather than inequitable distribution of resources institutionalized through coercive force and accompanying trading regimes (ibid, 31-2; Pearce 2010, 58). Though

Malthus employed population dynamics in the post-colonial US as a universal model for the inevitability of exponential growth (1826, 53-6), the full impact of Malthusianism on American popular discourses did not come until much later – after it had been filtered through the prisms of romanticism and Darwinism.

The Natural/National as Sacred

By the mid-nineteenth century, the violent struggles of a Malthusian nature were being challenged by the popularity of the Romantic movement, which turned to nature as a source of passionate inspiration that provided insight in to the proper arrangement of civil society.

Whereas, for Malthus, God had made natural resources inherently scarce, amongst romantics – including Rousseau, Wordsworth, Emerson and Thoreau – nature was abundant, intrinsically valuable and marked by traces of the divine. Moreover, experiencing the wonders of nature was deemed a vital national imperative (Nash 1970, 727-8; Cronon 1996). As Cronon notes:

God was on the mountaintop, in the chasm, in the waterfall, in the thunder-cloud, in the rainbow, in the sunset. One has only to think of the sites that Americans chose for their first national parks – Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Rainier, Zion – to realize that virtually all of them fit one or more of these categories. (Cronon 1996, 11)

Similar sentiments were echoed in the writings of Rousseau, Emerson and Thoreau,⁵⁶ and in many respects served to form the environmental imaginaries that John Muir,⁵⁷ George Perkins Marsh,⁵⁸ and Aldo Leopold⁵⁹ would bring to their writing and activism. The sacred emerged in

⁵⁶ ‘Give me the ocean, the desert, the wilderness!...When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable and...the most dismal swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place, a sanctum sanctorum. There is the strength, the marrow, of Nature. The wildwood covers the virgin mould, and the same soil is good for men and trees...In such soil [civilization] arose and out of such wilderness comes the reformer eating locusts and wild honey’ (Thoreau 1994, 26-8; as quoted by Kosek 2006, 159; citing Oelschlaeger 1991, 165).

⁵⁷ Similarly, Muir famously compared those wanting to dam Hetch Hetchy Valley to “temple destroyers.” ‘Instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains,’ he wrote, [they] ‘lift them to the Almighty Dollar.’ (see Tsing 2005, 97; citing Muir 1912, 261-2).).

⁵⁸ Kosek writes: “In a frightening foreshadowing of Turner, Marsh believed that the American government was the product of this mixing of a potent strain of Germanic-Anglo tradition with the wilds of America. In 1868 he wrote:

these landscapes of self-discovery; the experience of god and self converged in the Wilderness – and produced a better *national* citizen.

However, the national nature of romanticism was founded upon an ontological exclusion that lay in a sharp binary between “civilization” and “savagery.” The roots of this relationality can be traced to Rousseau's “noble savage” – modeled, at points, on the American Indian – who remained in an ahistorical state of nature, absent the self-interested artifice of civilization, but also without its capacity for advancement. As a consequence, both in theory and practice, discourses of romanticism were dependent upon some primitive Other in opposition to which the development of civil society was framed. As “savage” populations encountered “civilization” they met great wrath; their voice was silenced in the apparently radical democratic bearings of a “general will” – erased from the “national public” of which Rousseau spoke.

In late 19th-century United States, for example, the movement to protect romantic wilderness became inextricably linked with racialized efforts to secure sovereignty in the West. Specifically, concern with preserving the whiteness of the nation is evident in writings related to the settling of the “frontier” in the face of “foreign” threats, and concomitant attempts to preserve wilderness amidst this disappearing ideal (Cronon 1996; Kosek 2006). Most prominent was the

‘The Goths are the noblest branch of the Caucasian race. We are their children. It was the spirit of the Goth that guided the May Flower across the trackless ocean; the blood of the Goth that flowed at Bunker Hill.’ For Marsh, nature – both human and environmental – was something that could be controlled and that needed protection and proper management. It followed, then, that a love of liberty and effective governance were exclusive attributes of the Germanic people” (Kosek *ibid*, 159; citing Marsh 1843).

⁵⁹ Leopold, for instance, framed his project to protect “wilderness” in explicitly nationalist terms. Experiencing wilderness, he asserted: “reminds us of our distinctive national origin and evolution, that is, it stimulates awareness of history. Such awareness is ‘nationalism’ in its best sense. For example: a boy scout has tanned a coonskin cap, and goes Daniel Booneing in the willow thicket below the tracks, he is reenacting American history. He is, to that extent, culturally prepared to face the dark and bloody realities of the present” (Leopold 1970 [1949], 211; as quoted by Kosek 2006, 162).

work of Frederick Jackson Turner, whose “Frontier Thesis” insisted that American political life developed in direct relation to the colonization of the West:

American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnishes the forces dominating American character...[T]he frontier is the out wedge of the wave – the meeting point between savagery and civilization. (Turner 1996 [1893])

Like Rousseau, Turner emphasized the positive in the primitive; the frontiersman “leaving civilization” became a model of national self-renewal:

As Turner described the process, easterners and European immigrants, in moving to the wild unsettled lands of the frontier, shed the trappings of civilization, rediscovered their primitive racial energies, reinvented direct democratic institutions, and thereby reinfused themselves with a vigor, an independence, and a creativity that were the source of American democracy and national character. (Cronon 1996, 13)

Also similar to Rousseau, the nation-building project that Turner spoke of was a project intended for Anglo-European populations only. Turner’s primary assertion is that, by the 1890’s, the Frontier was being settled – the Western wilderness was “filling up” – and “with its going has closed the first period of American history” (Turner 1996 [1893]). As historians have pointed out, however, the “frontier” was never truly empty; wilderness was, in fact, occupied by Native American, and, later, Hispano populaces (Cronon 1996, Kosek 2006). Nonetheless, nostalgia for this paradise lost echoed loudly in the struggles over wilderness being waged by the so-called “fathers” of American environmentalism. Speaking of Sierra Club founder John Muir, for instance, Kosek observes that his public writings on the untouched Nature of “Yosemite temples” are contradicted by journal entries that reveal a more complex socio-ecological reality: “He saw both sheep and men as out of place in the mountains and placed them all – sheep,

Hispanos, ‘Chinamen,’ and Indians – in opposition to the purity and grandeur of ‘Nature’ ” (Kosek 2006, 155-6; citing Spence 1999).

The irony of all this is that the “pristine” locales Muir praised often necessitated the forced removal of Native American and Hispano peoples (Kosek *ibid*, 156; Spence 1999, 55-70). Muir was well aware of this and applauded the Army’s presence in Yosemite, particularly in so far as it kept out “Hispanos and Native American grazers” (*ibid*; Jacoby 2001).⁶⁰ In this context, the romantic ideal of experiencing “empty wilderness” in order to cultivate national subjectivity formed a vital cog in a racialized “frontier mentality” that legitimated the de facto erasure of claims to nature made by Hispanos and Native Americans (Cronon 1996, Spence 1999, Kosek 2006).

Overall, Cronon has argued that romantic wilderness functions as a discursive hinge that relates “the sublime” to “the frontier” in American environmental imaginaries – a phenomenon shot through with racial, colonial and gendered baggage. The sublime and the frontier:

[C]onverged to remake wilderness in their own image, freighting it with moral values and cultural symbols that it carries to this day. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the modern environmental movement is itself a grandchild of romanticism and post-frontier ideology, which is why it is no accident that so much environmentalist discourse takes its bearings from the wilderness these intellectual movements helped create. (1996, 10)

It is, further, no accident that an American environmental movement dependent on romantic ideals of Nature remains so closely entwined in particular conceptions of American sovereignty.

The “Evolution” of American Environmentalism

Natural scientists writing in the mid-to-late 19th century grappled with Malthusianism and Romanticism as competing prisms through which to view nature. Worster describes how this

⁶⁰ Jacoby writes that Muir “rejoiced at seeing Yellowstone ‘efficiently managed by small troops of United States cavalry’” (2001, 99; citing Muir 1901, 40).

tension manifested itself in the young Charles Darwin, who initially struggled with a disconnect between the romantic nature that had previously captivated him, and the often cold, violent confrontations that he witnessed in his travels on the *H.M.S. Beagle* (Worster 1977, Chapter 6).⁶¹ Malthus, in this case, provided an explanatory logic that helped Darwin come to terms with this chasm:

I happened to read for amusement Malthus on Population and, being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on from long-continued observation of the habits of animals and plants, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of new species. (Darwin 2005 [1876], 45; cited by Worster *ibid*, 149)

Worster goes so far as to argue that “Darwin’s reading of Malthus can make good claim to being the single most important event in the history of Anglo-American ecological thought” (*ibid*).

While Darwin moved away from Malthus’s Christian worldview, seeking explanation instead in scientific observation, he gained from him the idea that nature was a site of scarcity and, potentially violence. Outcomes in nature were determined by a struggle for survival, where only the strong prevailed (i.e. “survival of the fittest”), and biological changes occurred to enable organisms to better survive amidst such conditions (i.e. natural selection).

Though Darwin’s natural scientific contributions are too numerous to mention, these basic principles were soon drawn into social debates where his scientific conclusions were used to justify class-based and racial inequality. “Social Darwinism” technically refers to the application of evolutionary insights to provide explanation for human difference, but it has typically been deployed in efforts to legitimate all types of social inequality as based in some natural order or evolutionary strategy (e.g. survival of the fittest). “Eugenicism,” a term coined

⁶¹ In particular, Darwin observed a South American continent in both social and ecological disarray; an “all out war of extermination” in Argentina, and the impacts of European plant and animal imports on the Argentine ecosystem (*ibid*, 122-3).

by Darwin's cousin Francis Galton, is a particularly extreme form of social Darwinism popularized in the late 19th and early 20th century, which attempted to justify racial domination, sterilization, and even extermination, on the basis of evolutionary science.⁶²

Interestingly enough, proponents of eugenics were not generally conservatives, but were often staunch leftists, opposed to traditionalism and militarism, and aligned with ecological science and the "progressive" political ideology. Indeed, eugenicism occupied a prominent place in Teddy Roosevelt's progressive program. Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" speech, written by Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the Forest Service, articulated the interconnections between nature, race and nationalism in stark terms:

of all the questions which can come before this nation, of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us, and training them into a better race to inhabit the land and pass it on (1910, 22; cited by Wohlforth 2010, 28).

Pinchot, along with a prestigious group of scientists and social activists, also submitted a three volume National Conservation Commission report to Roosevelt, entitled *National Vitality, Its Wastes and Conservation*:

The problem of the conservation of our natural resources is therefore not a series of independent problems, but a coherent, all-embracing whole...If our nation cares to make any provision for its grandchildren and its grandchildren's grandchildren, this provision must include conservation in all its branches – but above all, the conservation of the racial stock itself. (Fischer 1909, 126; quoted by Wohlforth 2010, 24-5)

The report included a chapter entitled, "Conservation through Heredity" that detailed and voiced support for the "science of eugenics." According to journalist, Charles Wohlforth, "Roosevelt transmitted the report to Congress with the statement that it was 'one of the most fundamentally

⁶² Galton coined the term in his 1883 work, *Inheritance of Human Faculties*. Ross writes that Galton "conceived it as the means by which the physical and moral attributes of a population might be improved by selective breeding which favoured the increased genetic representation of those who were considered to possess more of what he variously called 'natural ability' and 'civic worth'" (1998,60).

important documents ever laid before the American people' ” (2010, 24-5).⁶³

Pinchot was far from the only environmentally-active proponent of eugenicism in the US.⁶⁴ The nation's earliest conservation organization, the Boone and Crockett Club (1887), included eugenicist Henry Fairfield Osborn and Roosevelt himself. Political geographer Gray Brechin observes that “[m]embers of the Club became key players in the American Museum of Natural History, New York Zoological Park (Bronx Zoo) and San Francisco's Save-the-Redwoods League,⁶⁵ as well as eugenics and immigration restriction movements” (1996, 233). In her analysis of the relationship between eugenics and early conservation efforts in California, Historian Alexandra Minna Stern writes that “eugenic guidelines of selective breeding and species endangerment were central to” the Sierra Club, Sempervirens Club, and Save-the-Redwoods League (2005, 119-120).

One of the co-founders of the Save-the-Redwoods League, Madison Grant – a prominent conservationist who also founded the New York Zoological Park – wrote *The Passing of the Great Race*, where he cautioned that white Americans “lack the instinct of self-preservation in a racial sense...[and argued that] Unless such an instinct develops their race will perish, as do all organisms which disregard this primary law of nature” (1921, 90).⁶⁶ In his seminal work on

⁶³ Wohlforth observes that Pinchot did change his tune in later years: “[b]y the 1930's [he] had become a champion of the poor and an admirer of indigenous cultures, and he spoke out early against German anti-semitism” (ibid, 26).

⁶⁴ Though eugenicism and nativism have close historical linkages, they are not one and the same. Many eugenicists of this period were nativists (though this nativism was racialized, as some welcomed European immigration), but not all nativists were eugenicists (many were traditional conservatives whose nativism sprang from readings of religious texts or popular cultural ideas). Still, eugenicism provided nativists scientific backing and, as this analysis shows, the two were closely entwined in this period.

⁶⁵ Stern writes that “[f]or Grant and other conservationists, the redwood – its stateliness, grandeur, and perseverance – represented the ‘great race.’ Like Anglo-Saxon America, which was being engulfed by hordes of defectives and mongrels and menaced by the excessive breeding of undesirables, the redwood was imperiled by ‘race suicide’ from rampant logging, urban encroachment, and human ignorance” (2005, 124).

⁶⁶ In addition to Grant, other early environmentalists who combined their ecological concerns with the science of eugenics included Charles Goethe (a member of the Sierra Club and Audubon Society who formed the California Nature Study League and was deemed “honorary chief Naturalist” by the National Park Service) and David Starr Jordan (a charter member of the Sierra Club, who also belonged to the Sempervirens and the Save the Redwoods clubs) (see Stern ibid, 128-149).

American nativism, John Higham calls Grant “intellectually the most important nativist in recent American history” (1983, 155). Buoyed by the eugenic logic, Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and other national leaders bemoaned increasing numbers of eastern-European and Jewish immigrants, and vocally urged Americans of western- and northern-European ancestry to reproduce for the good of the nation (Kosek 2006, 151; Wohlforth 2010, 25). Concerns over the fertility rates of immigrants were further buttressed by romantic fears that immigrants were unable to appreciate wilderness, as well as a bourgeois revulsion against the *closeness* to nature exhibited by Italian and Irish immigrants (Rome 2008).⁶⁷

Demographically, this period was one of great flux. Historian Adam Rome observes that from “1880 until 1924, when immigration was restricted, almost 25 million people came to the United States from other nations...[t]he largest share came from southern, central, and eastern Europe—regions that had provided few immigrants before” (2008, 433). In response to this increase, natural scientific concerns over the changing composition of the Nation were institutionalized in a variety of non-governmental organizations (the American Eugenic Society, The Galton Society, the American Breeders Society, the Race Betterment Foundation), and governmental sub-units (in particular, the US Department of Agriculture and Forest Service). They were also visible in public spaces (like World’s Fairs, “Fitter Family” contests at county fairs, and across university campuses in departments of anthropology, biology, zoology, and demography), and were enshrined in a variety of laws across more than a dozen states: forcing sterilization (on the mentally ill, epileptics, those with disabilities, criminals or, in some cases, simply poor); outlawing inter-racial marriage, and “forbidding marriage of eugenically unfit men and women” (Wohlforth *ibid*, 25).

⁶⁷ Particularly controversial were the hunting habits of Italian as well as Eastern-European immigrants (known collectively as “slavs”) who still hunted for food. They were termed “pothunters” and deemed threats to bird and animal populations (see Rome 2008).

This popularity of this “scientific” form of discrimination echoed in the halls of Congress during immigration debates. Harry Laughlin, president of the Eugenics Record Office was made the “expert eugenics agent” of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, while Representative Albert Johnson, a close confidant of Grant, deployed eugenic arguments in advocating for the inclusion of racial quotas in the immigration overhaul that he sponsored (Higham 1983, 313-4; Reimers 1998, 21). Kosek adds that “the prominent eugenicist and avid naturalist Charles Davenport was recruited to lobby Congress on immigration issues...Davenport was extremely successful in persuading Congress, the surgeon general, and other officers within the U.S. Public Health Service and the Department of Education to align with the eugenics movement” (ibid, 153-4; see also Lombardo 2002). Ultimately, this thinking is even reflected in Calvin Coolidge’s signing statement accompanying the Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act):

There are racial considerations too grave to be brushed aside for sentimental reasons...The Nordics propagate themselves successfully. With other races, the outcome shows deterioration...Quality of mind and body suggests that observance of ethnic law is as great a necessity to a nation as immigration law.⁶⁸
(quoted by Reimers ibid, 22)

Though this law strictly curtailed immigration from southern and eastern Europe, the ethnic quota system that it put into place – despite the best efforts of Laughlin and his fellow eugenicists – did not apply to countries in the Western hemisphere (Stern 2005, 69-70). Yet, the eugenic logic institutionalized in the law and embedded in popular imaginaries had impacts that would be felt along US/Mexico border (which up to this point had been relatively loosely regulated). Stern writes that, in the 1920s, constructions of Mexican migrants as carriers of

⁶⁸ It is no exaggeration to say that the Johnson-Reed Act is an example of eugenics institutionalized. The act created an ethnic quota system stipulating that the annual number of immigrants who could enter the US from a particular country, could be no more than 2% of that nationality’s 1890 population in the US. Hing observes that the “law struck most deeply at Jews, Italians, Slavs, and Greeks, who had immigrated in great numbers after 1890” (1999, 4).

disease – which had resulted in a “quarantine” in border towns⁶⁹ – came to intersect with eugenic concerns over their supposedly inferior racial biology: “reflecting the conflation of germs and genes, the image and description of Mexicans as filthy, lousy carriers that had been spawned by the border quarantine merged with eugenic arguments about the bad hereditary ‘stock’ of immigrants” (2005, 68). And while the quarantine was originally put in place to combat a specific public health crisis, Stern suggests that the popular resonance of the eugenics logic enabled this exceptional measure to become the norm. The quarantine lasted until World War II, and had impacts that reverberated far and wide:

The border quarantine helped to solidify the boundary line that had previously been much more nebulous and, in doing so, helped to racialized Mexicans as outsiders and demarcate Mexico as a distinct geographical entity despite topographic and climatic similarity. It not only intensified racial tensions in the borderlands, it also catalyzed anti-Mexican sentiment on a national level and fueled nativist efforts to ban all immigration from the Southern Hemisphere. (Stern 2005, 67)

Of particular importance is the 1921 establishment of a Mounted Quarantine Guard, which came about out of the recognition that many migrants were seeking to avoid the intrusive quarantines by entering into the US at other points along the border.⁷⁰ After the Border Patrol was created as part of the Immigration Act of 1924 – a compromise between eugenicists and nativists who wanted strict restrictions on Mexican migration (on the grounds of its impact on public health and national “stock”) and Southwestern agricultural interests who wanted unfettered access to labor – the relatively limited powers of the Mounted Quarantine Guard were transferred to a Border Patrol emboldened by its authority to “arrest, without warrant, any ‘alien’

⁶⁹ The quarantine – which Stern implies resulted from racialized anxieties far more than from the real threat of typhus or smallpox – was a process where migrants were stripped naked, checked for lice and typhus, showered in a mixture of soap, kerosene and water, vaccinated for small-pox and given a general medical examination. Additionally, their clothes were “disinfected” and returned wrinkled or ruined (2005, 62-3).

⁷⁰ Mounted Quarantine Guards were charged with vaccinating migrants they found or bringing migrants who appeared sick in to quarantine plants (Stern *ibid*, 71).

suspected of entering the country illegally or violating federal law” (ibid, 74). While a detailed engagement with the history, logics and practices of the Border Patrol is outside the scope of my analysis, Stern contends that “from multiple angles, the border patrol can be understood as a facet of a larger eugenic movement rooted in anxieties about biological purity and attendant to contracting and shifting categories of race” (ibid, 81).

Over the next several decades, the increased securitization of the border region can be, in part, attributed to the continued popularity of eugenics. However, the logic of eugenics was also being contested by migrant populations and their allies (whose resistance is a testament to historical and cultural interconnection in the Southwest), US agribusiness (whose desires for cheap labor were institutionalized in the Bracero program), and a burgeoning social movement which sought to extend formal liberal equality to racial minorities. This shifting political terrain is reflected in post-World War II immigration policy, where reforms ended racist national origin quotas (that had primarily impacted southern and eastern European immigrants), but also institutionalized, for the first time, numerical restrictions in the Western hemisphere. As Mae Ngai argues:

The liberals formulated a policy of formal equality that put all countries on the same footing and favored no national group over another...But arguably that policy was substantively unequal, because it failed to consider differences in size and needs among countries or the particular historical relations between some countries and the United States. (2004, 245)

In order to justify these numerical restrictions, the racial anxieties that eugenics helped to bolster were recast by opponents of immigration in the terms of Cold War geopolitics.

Malthusianism played a central role in these efforts, functioning as an epistemological bridge through which the “teaming” populations “out there” could be connected to the ideological threats of communism. The backdrop of geopolitical struggle enabled the world to be partitioned

along both territorial (inside versus outside) and ideological (capitalist friends versus communist enemies) lines. With regard to immigration, the discursive construction of migrants as potentially impure ideologically served to reinvigorate a racialized nationalism in which “Mexicans” – citizens and immigrants alike – were marked as foreign threats without any overt reference to race or eugenics. In reflecting on the Hart-Cellar Act (the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965), Ngai finds that while previous legislative proposals:

had exempted Western immigration from numerical quotas ... a group of moderates in Congress intervened in the final moments of negotiation over the legislation in 1965 ... [and] held repeal of the national origins quotas hostage to Western Hemisphere quotas, citing ‘fairness’ and ‘*worldwide population explosion*’.⁷¹ (ibid, 257; my italics)

The Realignment of Nature and Nativism

This shift in immigration policy reflects a broader move away from eugenicism and toward a new Malthusianism. Wohlforth asserts that “World War II’s horrors saved our country from going farther down the eugenic path” (2010, 26). Ross amends this observation, arguing that the war did not put an end to eugenics, but forced such concerns to be packaged in more subtle, nuanced ways: “As eugenic concerns were muted in the shadow of the Third Reich, environmental catastrophism became the principle vehicle for Malthusian fears” (1998, 73). The influence of eugenics, in fact, extends well beyond this restrictionist era to debates over the environmental impacts of population that would, to use Paul Ehrlich’s phrase, “explode,” in the 1960’s. On one hand, eugenics put in place the institutional structures through which Darwinian

⁷¹ The law put into place a 20,000 per-country quota in the Western Hemisphere. Ngai notes that, by contrast, in the early 1960’s “annual ‘legal’ Mexican migration comprised some 200,000 braceros and 35,000 regular admissions for permanent residency. The fact that “illegal” immigration increased dramatically after Hart-Cellar should surprise no one.

and Malthusian logics would be advanced,⁷² and the eugenics-inspired Immigration Act of 1924 solidified numerical restriction as the norm in immigration policy (Ngai 2004, 227-8). On the other, collective memory of the atrocities of eugenicism, coupled with growing movements for liberal equality, guaranteed that Malthusian disdain for the masses, romantic constructions of primitivism, and overt social Darwinism would have to be expressed in terms that were less explicitly classist, racist and nativist.

This specific conjuncture spawned the emergence of a powerful logic emphasizing the impacts of population growth on “nature” itself. Ross contends that this shift was inaugurated by the publication of Henry Fairfield Osborn Jr.’s *Our Plundered Planet* (1948) (1998, 73). Interestingly, Osborn’s family had established the American Museum of Natural History, home of the Galton Society and sponsor of the Second International Congress of Eugenics. His father, the aforementioned Henry Fairfield Osborn, had published the influential eugenics tract, *The Origin and Evolution of Life*, and was a delegate to the Second International Congress of Eugenics. And his cousin, Frederick Osborn, was secretary of the American Eugenics Society and one of the founders of the racist *Pioneer Fund* (ibid, 89). However, Osborn Jr. gravitated away from this overt eugenicism and toward neo-Malthusian population critiques that warned of the ecological consequences of overpopulation.

Osborn’s own work was a major influence on Paul Ehrlich, who cites it approvingly in his seminal piece, *The Population Bomb* (1968). Interestingly, “Paul Ehrlich’s concern about population received a brief acknowledgement in 1969 when President Richard Nixon established the *Commission on Population Growth and the American Future*, chaired by John D. Rockefeller

⁷² The support for eugenics coming from the Rockefeller Foundation, in particular, spawned the Population Council and Population Reference Bureau, and funded a variety of academic programs in public health (Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Michigan), demography (Princeton’s Office of Population Research), biology and genetics (Stanford, Cal-Tech).

[III]” (Reimers *ibid*, 45). The Commission concluded with the recommendation that “immigration levels not be increased and that immigration policy be reviewed periodically to reflect demographic conditions and considerations” (1972). This statement continues to be cited by contemporary environmental restrictionists.

Conclusion

The diverse conceptions of nature that I have outlined were made legible through prisms founded upon natural scientific (Linnaean and Darwinian), political economic (Malthusian), and popular (Romantic) knowledges. In the mid-twentieth century, growing recognition of nature’s intrinsic value thrust matters of environmental degradation onto political agendas; opening the discursive terrain linking nature, political community and governance to new epistemological practices, but remaining in important respects wedded to the historical articulations that I have outlined. While I have focused on the linkages between nature and nativism here, it goes without saying that many conceptions of nature – including Malthusian, romantic, and Darwinian – have been deployed for quite beneficent, even inclusionary purposes. But there are plenty of scholars and practitioners singing the praises of these benign articulations. The more insidious iterations, on the other hand, can be witnessed in the contemporary intersection of environmental restrictionism and nativism.

CHAPTER FIVE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTRICTIONISM AND NATIVISM

“Never, since the Greeks’ earliest discussions on the excellence of public life, have people spoken about politics without speaking of nature; or rather, never has anyone appealed to nature except to teach a political lesson.”

- Bruno Latour, *The Politics of Nature*⁷³

Peter O’Neill drew a deep breath, flustered by the question that had been posed to him. It was Wednesday, April 29th, 2009 and the Fort Collins, Colorado resident had just finished a presentation in front of a crowd of roughly 100 at a town hall panel entitled “*Immigration and Sustainability: How Many People Can the United States Absorb?*”⁷⁴ The panel, part of a local celebration of immigration and its rich contribution to the community, came about after conveners had been pressured by O’Neill’s organization – Northern Coloradoans for Immigration Reduction – to include several panels critical of immigration. In the question and answer segment following O’Neill’s presentation, a woman – a Latina with a marked accent – rose and pointed out what seemed to be a contradiction in his logic: “First, you say that the race of immigrants is not the problem, it’s impacts stemming from the number of immigrants,” she observed, “but then, you express fear over the loss of an anglo-european majority.”⁷⁵

Despite the audible groans of the three middle-aged Caucasian males seated behind me, the audience member was onto something. Throughout his presentation, O’Neill had explicitly disavowed racism, instead emphasizing demographic projections that were purported to result in ecological and social disaster. “It’s not immigrants that are the problem, it’s the number of immigrants,” he repeatedly stated. But late in his presentation he stopped and, with an air of profundity, made the following remark: “by 2050, Anglo-European cultures will no longer be in

⁷³2004, 28

⁷⁴ Personal attendance; 4/29/09.

⁷⁵ According to my field notes, I was not able to capture the audience member’s statement in its entirety, so I am paraphrasing here. O’Neill’s statements, however, are direct quotations.

the majority...and you can only imagine what will happen then."

What *will* happen then? To O'Neill, the answer is clear and there lies no contradiction in his seemingly disparate statements. He responded angrily to the audience member's observation: "I'm talking about *culture, not race*." He then proceeded to describe the ways in which the "Latin culture" was democratically deficient; how it was "immature," lacked a respect for basic rights, and showed little regard for nature. The discursive narrative he was attempting to weave was one that constructed a population of social and ecological *savages*; a teeming, brown horde of chaos whose movement had to be forcefully arrested, whose fertility had to be managed, whose life needed to be made transparent. All for the good of America.

While extreme, O'Neill's logic is not unique. Indeed, it closely mirrors that expressed by greens like Abbey and Hardin, prominent geo-politicians like Samuel Huntington and Robert Kaplan, quasi-popular writers like Jean Raspail and Peter Brimelow, and a variety of environmental and non-environmental organizations who echo the sentiment that American sovereignty must be secured from the potential flood of Third World invaders who currently lie in wait at the borders. In a seminal contemporary nativist work, *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster*, Peter Brimelow expresses surprise as he relays the following anecdote:

I have found myself discussing my *National Review* cover story with a group of environmentalists...who voted for Patrick J. Buchanan in the 1992 presidential primaries because of their fear that immigration-driven population growth is ecologically insupportable. Probably both Buchanan and the professional environmentalist lobby in Washington would be equally astounded by news of this emerging electoral bloc. (1996, 19-20)

How is it that this apparently paradoxical alliance emerges? How do nativists weave nature into their calls for a "state of exception" (or, as Pat Buchanan puts it, "*State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*")? More precisely, how do nativists go about

constructing the relationship between nature, political community and governance in their attempts to reconfigure sovereignty along exclusionary lines? A provocative, somewhat splintered, picture emerges from the environmental restrictionist movement.

Unraveling the current environmental restrictionist alliance, specifically the most recent campaign by *America's Leadership Team*, is a complex task. To begin, it includes an openly nativist organization, the American Immigration Control Foundation, that one would not expect in any environmentalist coalition; they pay virtually no attention and dedicate little time or space to environmental affairs. Additionally, far-right groups like the Council of Conservative Citizens and VDARE occasionally invoke environmentalist rhetoric, but only as part of their broader projects of securing the Anglo-European civilization against incursion by non-western forces. The Carrying Capacity Network, by virtue of its name and certain of its members, appears to be an environmentalist organization, but its substantive concerns are far closer to those expressed by nativists than mainstream environmentalists. By contrast, the Social Contract Press, NumbersUSA, and the Federation for American Immigration Reform all devote the majority of their attention to non-environmental issues (economy, security, culture), but do voice substantive concerns for environmental degradation. Finally, Californians for Population Stabilization pays considerable attention to environmental issues, but at times – particularly in interviews, on message boards, and in documents not intended for widespread public consumption – lapses into nativist narratives.

The institutional terrain upon which nature and nativism are linked is, in short, heterogeneous. For heuristic purposes, however, these variable positions can be thought of as falling into two broad discourses: (1) *social nativism* and (2) *ecological nativism*. While traditional, social nativism has received much attention elsewhere (Perea 1997, Ferber 2004), I

feel it is important to highlight the influence of social nativist groupings in the environmental restrictionist movement for both political and methodological reasons. In terms of the former, nativist groups are strategically latching onto nature in their attempts to both broaden their support by appealing to moderate or leftist organizations, and enhance the anti-immigrant sentiment of their existing base by highlighting the traditionally conservative appeal of conservationism. In terms of the latter, an exploration of nativism provides the comparative context necessary to demonstrate areas of convergence and divergence between this and the other discursive groupings. In particular, I argue that despite crucial areas of distinction, other groupings of restrictionists continue to rely on deeply embedded nativist tropes of race and difference that are legitimated by specific deployments of nature.

New Potions in Old Bottles: Social Nativism and Nature

“We believe that the natural environment and resources of a nation are among its most precious, valuable, and irreplaceable treasures. We believe in the protection of the environment from reckless greed as well as from irresponsible government. We support the protection of truly endangered species of wildlife and areas of natural beauty.”

The above statement sounds commonplace for an environmental organization. If one were to guess who made it, a representative from the Sierra Club or the Natural Resources Defense Council might come to mind. Or perhaps even a Democratic Party candidate reciting a line from the party’s platform. In fact, the declaration is part of the mission statement of the Council of Conservative Citizens, a white-supremacist organization that, in the same document, also insists that the United States is a “part of the European Civilization and the European People and...the American people and government should remain European in their composition and character” (Francis 2005).

Along the same lines, in 2006, in Fort Collins, Colorado, the annual “Rocky Mountain Sustainable Living Fair” was the site of controversy when the group *Northern Coloradoans for Immigration Reduction* set up a booth and began distributing fliers detailing the environmental argument for reducing immigration. Among those present was Perry Lorenz, a prominent member of the Council of Conservative Citizens who had recently caused a stir in his unsuccessful run at school board when he praised *The Bell Curve* and suggested that intelligence might be biologically rooted in race. Lorenz, who describes his move to Colorado from California as an effort to “get back to the United States,” was also part of a seven-person contingent that infiltrated a state-level roundtable on urban sprawl in order to stress the linkages between this form of environmental degradation and immigration (Williamson 2001).

Brimelow notes, in his introduction to *Alien Nation*, that his analysis of immigration has opened his mind to environmentalism, which he had previously thought of as “just another excuse for government regulation” (ibid, 21). Similarly, dialogues over environmentalism on nativist websites have led to impassioned exchanges and even a sort-of reflexive thinking on the far-right. For example, a recent article at VDARE.com, a white nationalist webzine named after Virginia Dare (allegedly the first European child born in the new world), suggested that conservation was a traditional value of the Right, and, more importantly, one that could serve to “shore up the demographic base of the Republican Party without alienating minorities” (Sailer 2001). A respondent to the article made the following argument, drawing a distinction between “environmentalism” and “conservationism”:

I believe the Right is quite correct in distancing itself from so-called ‘environmentalism.’ After all, as they say in Europe, ‘the green tree has red roots.’ The roots of the environmentalist and conservationist movements are indeed radically different. The former is unquestionably statist, anti-sovereignty, egalitarian, interventionist, irrational. The latter is its approximate antithesis...I believe this is perfectly consistent with paleoconservatism (and certainly

Jeffersonian agrarianism) which is simply the desire to preserve our heritage and our property... Speaking for myself, an Eagle Scout who loves the pinnacles of civilization and the most remote wilderness alike, I find environmentalism repulsive and conservation a necessity. (Dunaway 2001)

This statement is, in many ways, reflective of nativist attempts to draw nature into efforts to reconfigure sovereignty toward exclusionary ends: an ambivalent, loosely defined “Nature” is being woven into a militarized, nostalgia-laden iteration of sovereignty – one with an idealized vision of a racially and cultural homogeneous “nation,” linked to a “state” that is conceptualized in libertarian terms as *the foremost threat to liberty* (while the “wilderness” the state protects is paradoxically ensconced in the national imaginary). The remainder of this section will unpack the ways that nature, nation and state are related to broader efforts to reconsolidate this particular vision of the “sovereign nation-state,” and how “immigrants” function as the threats against which the traditional nativist self is secured.

The National Crisis

The nativist group most active in advancing environmental restrictionist arguments – as part of the America’s Leadership Team alliance – is the American Immigration Control Foundation. The AIC Foundation was founded in 1983 by John Vinson, a regular contributor to the Council of Conservative Citizens’ *Citizen’s Informer* Newsletter. The Southern Poverty Law Center notes that Vinson “often speaks at CCC meetings, and is a founding member of the white supremacist League of the South” (SPLC 2001). Vinson argued, in a 1998 article, entitled, *Europhobia: The Racism of Anti-racists*, that ‘multiculturalism which subordinates successful Euro-American culture to dysfunctional Third World cultures, keeps gaining ground against surprisingly weak opposition...[w]hite Americans...passively accept government-sponsored anti-white discrimination – even that which benefits recently-arrived immigrants’ (Muradian

2006, 209).

The AIC Foundation website is dedicated primarily to selling books, booklets and pamphlets that put the looming national crisis front and center. Titles include Brimelow's *Alien Nation; Immigration out of Control; The Coming Anarchy; Will America Drown?: Immigration and the Third World Population Explosion; Erasing America: The Politics of the Borderless Nation*; and so on. Interestingly, however, out of the twenty-five publications summarized on the site, there is not one single mention of nature or the environment (content analysis, 12/4/2011).

Nonetheless, a closer analysis of the books and pamphlets being pushed by the organization (as well as the like-minded CCC, VDare and American Renaissance), reveals that "nature" is a frequently employed discursive tool in advancing nativist logics. In fact, nature is used, in a way that is consistent with much of traditional conservative thought, as a *source of order* that works to grant nativist tropes of difference epistemological legitimacy: (a) a sacred marker of God's Truth, (b) a scientific Truth rooted in Darwin, and/or (c) a political Truth in line with the minimalist state prescribed by Locke or the "Founding Fathers." Finally, woven throughout each of these epistemological strategies, one sees nature being deployed symbolically as (d) a metaphor of chaos carefully linked with non-European Others against which this crisis of western civilization is framed. The sole thread uniting these diverse practices is an instrumental attempt to reconfigure sovereignty so that the *sacred white nation* can be secured.

The Christian Nation

The CCC's mission statement begins with a forceful assertion – the group's "first principle" – that America is a "Christian Country," which is carefully linked with its "second principle," that the United States is a "European country" (Francis 2005). Throughout nativist

dialogues, Christianity is rhetorically wedded to “traditional” values and social hierarchies, including legality, order, and the cultivation of ostensibly decent personal traits (honesty, virtue, and respect for life, liberty and property). In contrast to the “naturally Christian” United States, a variety of other religions are differentially marked as self-interested and/or savage.

Following the white supremacist tradition, Judaism is targeted particularly harshly, with “Jews” constructed as a “hostile elite” concerned primarily with furthering the interests of their ethnic group over the broader national public (MacDonald 2011). These interests, unlike those of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, are argued to be advanced through conspiratorial networks of prominent political figures, corporate CEOs, and media outlets (ibid, CCC 2011). There remains significant debate within white nativist organizations over whether or not “the Jews” are “white,” with the *Occidental Observer* recently reporting on a Ford Foundation grant to the American Jewish Committee, by stating: “Just in case there remained any doubt, non-White groups are leading the charge on legalizing the illegals and raising even further the numbers of legal immigrants” (MacDonald 2010). Interestingly, however, such a position is now debatable within white nationalist organizations. In a recent article in the *American Renaissance*, noted white supremacist Jared Taylor responded to intra-organizational debates on the issue:

Readers have always included both Jews and people who believe Jews play no useful role in a movement that promotes white interests. It has been my intent to emphasize questions crucial to our interests and on which we agree. To put it more accurately, AR has taken an implicit position on Jews by publishing Jewish authors and inviting Jewish speakers to AR conferences. It should be clear to anyone that Jews have, from the outset, been welcome and equal participants in our efforts.... Some people in the AR community believe Jewish influence was decisive in destroying the traditional American consensus on race. Others disagree. Gentile whites—without help from anyone else—have repeatedly shown themselves capable of egalitarian excess. The French Revolution, the Clapham abolitionists, John Brown and his backers, the miscegenist enthusiasms of the Grimke sisters and other radical integrationists are all products of purely gentile delusion. (Taylor 2006)

The fundamental concern is strengthening a white nation, and some contemporary nativists are beginning to include Jewish-Americans in this category, particularly as allies in the fights against immigration of groups who are deemed even further from anglo-european normative ideals.

By contrast, there is little debate over the “savagery” of Islam. In its May 2011 issue, the *American Renaissance* approvingly quoted a presentation given by Dutch nativist Geert Wilders: “The presence of Muslims in Canada threatens the country’s freedoms and democracy, and only if immigration from Islamic countries is suspended can the cultural deterioration of the country be stopped” (American Renaissance 2011). Immigration from Islamic countries, it is argued, imperils those “natural” Christian values that already face an uphill battle in a liberal multicultural society:

Far be it from us to tell Arabs or Persians or Pakistanis how to live or what to believe. Conservative Islam holds much promise for men whose lives and cultures have been blighted by Western vulgarity. Many earnest people seek in Islam a refuge from license and materialism. However, as Europeans are discovering and as we eventually will, Islam is hungry for converts and power. Even worse, in the United States it is poised to join forces with an unstable and violent racial minority. Islam can bring us only trouble. We have every right and every reason to insist that Muslims stay in their own countries. (Boggs 1993)

This seminal nativist essay begins by linking national sovereignty with cultural relativism (“far be it from us” to tell others what to believe) – a connection that is intensified by the universal dominance of “modern” liberal Western ideals that, the author suggests, are incompatible with “traditional” values. However, similar to nativist portrayals of Jews, “Islam” as a whole is asserted to be a power-hungry cult whose practitioners are seeking to advancing their “in-group” interests by allying with racial minorities against the traditional, white, Christian majority.

Cementing this narrative, nativists meticulously document instances of violent crimes, acts of terrorism (perceived or real) and supposed attempts to impose Sharia law by “Muslims.”⁷⁶

⁷⁶ See, for instance, Brenda Walker’s site, “Immigration’s Human Cost”: <http://www.immigrationshumancost.org/>

Recent headlines on the CCC website include the following: “AWOL Muslim private planned to murder his fellow soldiers,” “Three black Muslim leaders convicted of racially motivated triple murder,” “Black Panthers announce Egyptian style ‘showdown’,” and so on. In each piece, Muslims are constructed as violent, irrational, and anti-democratic. Of particular relevance, the relationship between Islam and African-Americanism is continually reiterated; the “enemy” is not only external, but lives among us. “Islam,” American Renaissance contributor William Boggs observes, “lies at the dangerous intersection between race and immigration” (ibid).

Although the views of nativist organizations are typically cloaked in praise of masculinity (see Ferber 1998), gender is also deployed in the nativist defense of western nationalism and the liberal democratic values that are said to accompany it. After being expelled from the Sierra Club for publicly making numerous racially-offensive statements,⁷⁷ VDare contributor Brenda Walker makes the case against immigration on the grounds that it imports “groups for whom the social norms include slavery, female genital mutilation, forcibly arranged marriages and other horrors.” She continues:

The false ideology of multiculturalism with its accusation of racism against anyone who will not submit has intimidated Americans into believing it is desirable to welcome millions of immigrants from cultures which consider women inferior...the absurd preference for third world cultures in our immigration policy amounts to importing sexism. (Walker 2005)

Through this strategy, whole cultures of migrants are constructed as misogynistic threats to the universal western values of equality and freedom. The take home, in no-uncertain terms, is that non-white migrants – particularly non-Christians – are savages, and the further importation of Islamists threatens to corrode the already weakened linkages between Christianity and the white

⁷⁷ Walker reports: “My letter from the Sierra Club opened with the accusatory, ‘It is reported that your public statements, your website, your postings to VDARE.com, and your reactions to the immigration debate in the Sierra Club are replete with examples of ethnically and racially derogatory language. We do not welcome members in the Club who engage in this behavior’.” Walker’s reaction - an attempt to “rebut” these accusations - continues to provide ample support for them (2004).

nation.

Not surprisingly, the nativist brand of Christianity is forcefully challenged by many in the Christian community. In response to those Christian churches who seek to humanize immigrants – opposing immigration restrictions and welcoming new parishioners regardless of national status – social nativists appeal to the Bible itself:

Some in the religious and liberal community believe that borders should be opened entirely from a humanitarian point of view... Clerics who believe they are doing good deeds by encouraging illegal immigration are practicing a funny kind of morality which is more Marx than scripture. Jesus said to ‘Render unto Caesar, that which is Caesar’s’ which certainly means to obey civil law. (Walker 2007)

The sovereignty of the United States, in this logic, is contingent on respect for legality – divine law naturalizes juridical institutions. It is, at least in this case, not universal norms or moral guidelines that are sanctioned by God, but a message to follow the letter of the law in the particular political space that one currently occupies. Thus, it is not “discrimination” to keep out lawbreakers.

Moreover, nativists insist that discrimination is not morally problematic; racial and national preferences are *natural* according to close biblical readings:

The Bible supports racial preservation and even separation. The Bible teaches that mankind is composed not of an amorphous mass of individuals but of nations. It also teaches that the basis of all genuine nations is a common ethnic stock, which is more important even than a common language, culture, political allegiance, or locale. The Bible praises homogeneity as a blessing, and posits it as the basis of love, friendship, social peace, and national harmony. The Bible also sanctions love of nation and fatherland, a virtue antagonistic to indiscriminate and large-scale immigration. (Trask 2001)

It is argued, however, that mainstream Christianity has forgotten this divinely sanctioned state as it has become polluted with liberal, multicultural ideals: “Like the seeds that fell on stony ground which had no depth of earth, cosmic Christianity was scorched and withered away because it had no roots... Christianity’s roots are in humanity, in the blood. Sever those roots and Christianity

becomes liberalism” (Citizens Informer 2010). The White Christian nation is a timeless, absolute Truth set in stone by “law of nature and nature’s god,” and this relationship between the natural religious order and the sacred white nation must be reawakened.

The Natural Scientific Nation

The notion that the White Christian nation is rooted in “nature’s God” is paradoxically buttressed by a stronger and more frequently cited commitment to social Darwinism. Indeed, while appeals to Christianity are scattered throughout nativist proclamations, they are dwarfed in both quantity and emphasis by “scientific” support for racism and ethnocentrism. For example, Steve Sailer, a frequent contributor to VDARE and founder of the “Human Biodiversity Institute” articulates a theory of “ethnic nepotism” which he contends “explains the tendency of humans to favor members of their own racial group by postulating that all animals evolve toward being more altruistic toward kin in order to propagate more copies of their common genes” (2004).⁷⁸

The concept of ethnic nepotism, Sailer argues, is derived from evolutionary biologist William Hamilton’s notions of “kin selection” and “inclusive fitness,”⁷⁹ and introduced by Pierre van den Berge, a sociologist and anthropologist who is purported to have found support for the concept in his experiences with ethnic conflict in the Belgian-controlled Congo and Nazi-occupied Belgium. Ethnic nepotism is based on the “gene-centric” socio-biological notion that

⁷⁸ Sailer writes: “The Ethnic Phenomenon is the book Karl Marx should have written. Rather than focusing on the relatively minor phenomenon of class, he should have explored the global importance of kinship.”

⁷⁹ According to Eberhard (1975), kin selection “explains how aid that is self-sacrificing (in terms of classical individual fitness)...can evolve if sufficiently beneficial to relatives.” Similarly, inclusive fitness is a concept that rationalizes kin selection by taking “into account the individual's total lifetime effect on the gene pool of the succeeding generation(s), both through the production of the individual's own offspring and through effects on the reproduction of other individuals.” Ethnic nepotism stretches these concepts; moving away from familial relations to suggest that altruistic behavior towards one’s own race makes evolutionary sense if it furthers the vitality of that race.

genes can provide evolutionary explanations for human behavior; in this case, we all have an innate tendency to act with a preference toward those with similar genes.

Sailer argues that the ideas of socio- and evolutionary-biologists, like E.O. Wilson and Richard Dawkins, logically lead to the conclusion that preferences for “our own” races and nationalities are natural and even beneficial – “ethnocentrism, clannishness, xenophobia, nationalism and racism are the almost inevitable flip sides of ethnic nepotism” – but the liberal culture of political correctness creates an epistemic closure where scientists are unable or unwilling to voice such ideas.⁸⁰ This claim of political correctness trumping biological Truth is constantly reiterated throughout nativist writings. For example, Kevin MacDonald, an evolutionary psychologist at Cal-State Long Beach and ardent white nationalist, links these supposed socio-biological Truths to the study of psychology: “All peoples,” he writes, “have ethnic interests and all peoples have a legitimate right to assert their interests, to construct societies that reflect their culture, and to define the borders of their kinship group” (*Occidental Observer* 2010). MacDonald employs this linkage in attempts to explore the “self-interested,” “in group” behavior of “Jews,” and other ethnic minorities, and he uses his social Darwinian explanations to justify his anti-immigrant conclusions:

[G]iven that some ethnic groups, especially ones with high levels of ethnocentrism and mobilization, will undoubtedly continue to function as groups far into the foreseeable future, unilateral renunciation of ethnic loyalties by other groups means only their surrender and defeat and disappearance—the Darwinian dead end of extinction...The future, then, like the past, will inevitably be a Darwinian competition. And ethnicity will play a crucial role. (MacDonald 2004)

In short, Darwin remains central to white nationalism. In celebration of the 150th anniversary of

⁸⁰ Dawkins reply is astute: “The National Front was saying something like this, ‘kin selection provides the basis for favoring your own race as distinct from other races, as a kind of generalization of favoring your own close family as opposed to other individuals.’ Kin selection doesn’t do that! Kin selection favors nepotism toward your own immediate close family. It does not favor a generalization of nepotism towards millions of other people who happen to be the same color as you. Even if it did, I would oppose any suggestion from any group such as the National Front, that whatever occurs in natural selection is therefore morally good and desirable” (Miele 1995).

On the Origin of Species, Cornelius Troost, a former UCLA professor of science education, reflected on (what he alleges to be) the distorted contemporary legacy of evolution:

The truth about Darwin is being submerged in the multicultural phantasmagoria enveloping our culture... The mass movement to ‘equalize’ society quite simply lacks a scientific basis and, in fact, is built upon a premise denied by Darwin. Races not only exist, but they are different in very deep ways that may well descend to the moral foundation of humankind.⁸¹ (2009)

Sacred Nation/Broken State

This social Darwinian framework is conjoined with an overriding, if somewhat inconsistent, libertarian conception of the state. The nativist argument is that if what are typically viewed as social categories (i.e. race and nation) are, in fact, naturally given, and preferential treatment of one’s own “in-group” is a normatively beneficial evolutionary strategy, then we do not need any state intervention to alleviate social injustices. There is no reason for social programs to control for poverty, to correct historical forms of discrimination, to provide safety nets for the marginalized, if these social inequalities – racial, class-based, and gendered – are natural. In an essay entitled, “Why Biology is the Friend of Liberty – And the Enemy of ‘Totalitarian Creep’” – Robert Weissberg, an emeritus professor of political science at the University of Illinois-Urbana, contends that “treating race related biological differences as readily amenable to state intercession virtually guarantees expanding oppressive (if well-intentioned) state power” (2011).

Nativists reconcile such disregard for “the government” with their constant proclamations of national pride through reanimating a sharp distinction between “the state” and “the nation.” A seminal article on VDARE is ominously titled “When the state is the enemy of the nation”

⁸¹ In illustrating the intersection between nativism and mainstream conservatism, the author approvingly cites John McGinnis’ article, “The Origin of Conservatism” (1997), from *National Review*, as a “powerful argument for Darwinian biology as a foundation for conservatism.”

(Francis 2004). The article is written in response to a recent op-ed in *Le Figaro* by Jean Raspail, the French author whose novel, *The Camp of the Saints*, depicts a poor, brown, savage tidal wave sweeping through France and decimating civilization. Raspail's editorial, entitled "*La patrie trahie par la république*" ("The fatherland betrayed by the republic") chronicles the ways in which France's "political class... helped destroy the nation by doing nothing to resist the anti-white, anti-Christian invasion" (Francis 2004). The author of the response, Sam Francis, forcefully argues that, not only is such a conjuncture possible in the United States, it is already occurring and it may be too late to stop it. The nation is in peril:

Like the real France, the real America is also a 'country of common blood' (Jefferson used that very phrase in the original Declaration...). In fact, every real nation is a country of a common blood. The only nations that claim to be defined by creeds are – come to think of it – totalitarian states... When the common blood dries up and the civilization founded on it withers, all that's left is the state – the government. (ibid)

The state, nativists argue, is not fulfilling its role to the nation. But what is the proper role of the state? On this, nativists are conflicted. On one hand, nativists frequently express their anger over "greed," the growing power of transnational corporations, elite-rule, and NAFTA (see, for instance, CCC 2010a). On the other hand, however – often in the next breath – they ridicule state intervention and express deep fears over "cultural Marxism" (Sunic 2010). Overall, the argument – though convoluted at best – is marked by an insistence that "the state" (i.e. government) has been captured by liberal multiculturalist, globalist, cultural Marxists.

Sovereignty, Nature and Biopolitics

The national crisis spawned by the liberal, multi-culturalist state is frequently linked with the deterioration of American sovereignty. And the greatest threat to national sovereignty, nativists make clear, comes from the continued immigration of non-white populations. "National

sovereignty is weakened by open border and lax law enforcement,” states Brenda Walker, “the continuing extreme level of immigration, both legal and illegal, will change this country far more than anything else in the coming decades unless it is brought under control soon... And once America has been dismantled from a unitary nation into a grouping of ethnic enclaves, it will be broken forever” (Walker 2007). A recent letter to the editor in the *Citizens Informer* framed the crisis in even starker terms:

The time has come to division the country into a series of ethno-states. Very few people are comfortable with multiculturalism. Only progressive Whites perceive some kind of sick advantage in it. Mexicans believe in diversity so much they are ethnically cleansing Los Angeles of its former black neighborhoods. Eventually, they will cleanse the entire Southwestern part of the country, maybe more. Muslims are even less tolerant. The reason for the fall of the world’s greatest civilizations is multiculturalism and miscegenation. This will surely be our fate as well unless we act to prevent it. (Alexander 2011)

In order to secure sovereignty – to revitalize the white nation – nativists employ visceral language to construct the “foreign” threat in terms that will provoke disgust and, ultimately, dehumanization. Central to this narrative is the use of nature as a metaphor for chaos that is carefully layered with racialized imagery. Raspail’s *Camp of the Saints*, for example, is replete with images of “flooding,” of “waves,” of masses “drowning” in chaos and filth:

Then, after a while, there were too many poor. Altogether too many. Folk you didn’t even know. Not even from here. Spreading through cities, and houses and homes. Worming their way by the thousands, in thousands of foolproof ways. Through the slits in your mailboxes, begging for help, with their frightful pictures bursting from envelopes day after day, claiming their due in the name of some organization or other. Slithering in... Whole countries full, bristling with poignant appeals, please that seemed more like threats, and not begging now for linen but for checks to their account... Soon you saw them on television, hordes of them, churning up, dying by the thousands, and nameless butchery became a feature, a continuous show... The poor had overrun the earth...(1975, 15)

The prows of ninety-nine ships plunged headlong onto the beaches and between the rocks, as the monster child, waking from his cataleptic sleep, let out a triumphant cry. Throughout the whole day that followed, and part of the night, nothing stirred on board those ships. Nothing, that is, but the forest of black,

waving, snakelike arms, upraised by the thousands; the corpses thrown into the sea and washed in by the waves”.... (ibid, 192)

What struck the Western observers the most – those few who would speak to historians later – was clearly the smell. They all described it in much the same terms: ‘it stunk to high heaven...It bowled you over, wouldn’t let you breath...’ As the decks sprang to life with their myriad bodies – men, women, children, steeping in dung and debris since Calcutta – as the hatchways puked out into the sunlight the sweating, starving mass...At the same time, a strong, hot wind had gusted up from the south, the kind that always heralds a storm, and it smelled as if some vile, rotting monster, jaws agape, were blowing its lungs out in huge fetid blasts...” (ibid, 259).

The “waves crash” into the motherland and the “wind blows” the vile horde along; natural flows metaphorically accompanying an outside threat that is more animal than human. Throughout the novel, in a manner reflective of broader nativist efforts, immigrants, backed by their non-white domestic supporters and well-intentioned multiculturalists, are variously portrayed as maggots, vermin, rapists and blood-thirsty butchers. Readers are invited to become warriors fighting to save a white nation, which embodies all that is sacred, in peril.

Despite this symbolic use of nature, there is real debate within nativist dialogues over whether or not the far Right should care about the natural environment. Typically, when social nativists express concern over the non-human realm, it is only out of an instrumental effort to advance unambiguously xenophobic, racist ends that portrays non-whites as savage. A recent CCC article typifies this approach:

An animal preserve in Zimbabwe set up by white charities was destroyed by Zimbabweans who slaughtered over a thousand rare animals...All of Sub-Saharan Africa’s animal preserves were originally established by white governments and charities. These preserves are financially supported by white charities from the west, but are constantly attacked by Africans...Efforts to preserve wildlife around the world are led and financed by whites. Not that white people are ever given any credit for it. (CCC 2010b)

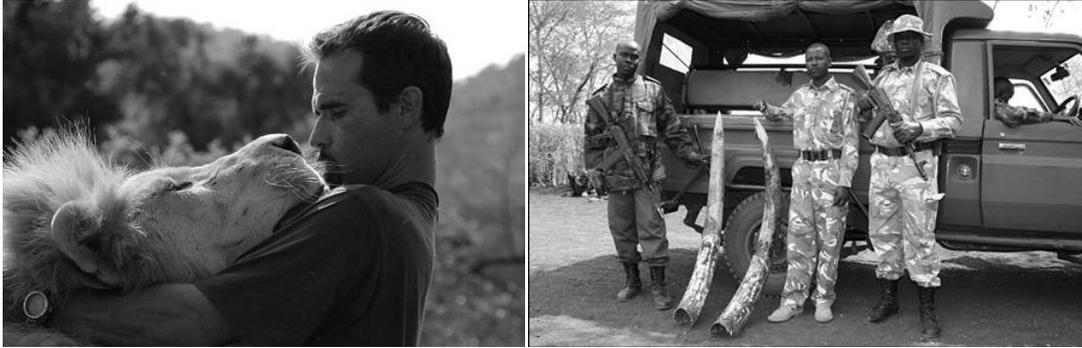


Figure 5.1: Nature and Nativism in the CCC

The juxtaposition between civilization and savagery in these pictures would be laughable, were it not taken so seriously by those deploying it.

Along similar lines, the website, “*Majority Rights*” recently initiated a dialogue amongst its followers on the relationship between American white nationalism and the environment.

While there was significant disagreement, the responses were telling (2008):

Basically environmentalism can only mean one thing, to stop all 3rd world births and immigration....A genuine environmentalist would have zero policy differences with a racist, both true believers should be trying to stop immigration and lower birth rates in the worst polluted areas of earth, ie the places with the highest people to carrying capacity ration, ie poorest, ie worst maintained.

Kind of ironic that White people are the biggest promoters of preserving everything except White people and their environment...Whites will gather, raise money and move in political activist mode to preserve the natural habitat of the Red Crested-Web Footed Lake Loon, yet raise not an eyebrow as Jolly Old England mutates into Eurabia.

Native Born White Americans need to increase their fertility even if it means more sprawl and paving over state and national parks...or [the]expulsion of a majority of post 1965 non-whites. This really is the only choice.

The consensus is a form of neo-Malthusianism with a twist. It isn't population growth or fertility *writ large* that is the problem, it is the population growth caused by immigrants and the fertility of non-white populations. In fact, reminiscent of the eugenics era, the white population, according to many nativists, needs to be augmented. “Our” national emergency requires

intervention at the level of the population – differentially managing fertility, arresting movement, and imbuing “blood relations” with the appropriate cultural norms needed to restore the natural order. If “the state” is to work in service of the nation, it needs to recognize this biopolitical necessity and take appropriate action.

In sum, social nativists depend upon a variety of epistemological strategies that deploy “nature” as a marker of order; however, they are quite ambivalent in their dealings with nature as an intrinsically valuable entity. There is no logical reason that social nativists cannot be greens, but given today’s American political terrain – where environmentalism is perceived to be so intimately bound up in liberal, Democratic politics – a substantive shift amongst white nationalists in the near future toward environmentalism is not terribly likely, and their muted attempts to instrumentally appropriate nature are so clearly bound up in their racist nationalism, that they are not likely to influence many environmentalists (or even, for that matter, moderates who do not consider themselves greens, but care about clean water or air). To appeal to such groups, traditional nativists are being forced to turn to other discourses, and to alliances with groups who aren’t so obviously nativist. Hence the AIC Foundation’s involvement in “America’s Leadership Team.”

Old Potions in New Bottles: Ecological Nativism

The United States has been fully settled, and more than full, for at least a century. We have nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by allowing the old boat to be swamped. How many of us, truthfully, would prefer to be submerged in the Caribbean-Latin version of civilization? Harsh words: but somebody has to say them. We cannot play ‘let’s pretend’ much longer, not in the present world.

I have seen the enemy. I know what is coming. Add 200 million people, and we will be Bangladesh: illiterate, ignorant, especially if you add rituals... cockfighting, female genital mutilation, dog fighting... It gets really nasty when incompatible cultures are brought up in a First World environment.

The above statements, with their references to a sweeping, uncivilized Third World “enemy,” sound eerily similar to those of traditional, social nativists. If one heard them out of context, it would be a safe assumption to link them to the American Immigration Control Foundation or Council of Conservative Citizens. However, in both cases the author quickly conjoins these ethnocentric anxieties to tales of imminent ecological devastation. The first statement, written by Edward Abbey (whose “green” motivations are unimpeachable within contemporary environmentalist imaginaries) is prefaced on the assumption that restricting immigration will prevent “the ongoing destruction of what remains of our forests, fields, mountains, lakes, rivers and seashores” (1988, 42-3). The second, written by Frosty Wooldridge, a lesser-known but equally eccentric activist, is linked to a more explicitly neo-Malthusian logic:

The US population projections show an added 100 million by 2035 – a scant 24 years from now. We’re already 12 million into that since 2008’s 300 million to hit 312 million as of 2010. Every environmental expert states scientifically that continued human growth cannot continue ... Human overpopulation creates every environmental and quality of life degradation in the USA and around the world. We face water shortages, energy shortages and resource shortages. We’re pushing our civilization over a demographic and environmental cliff. And short sighted people continue supporting population growth. It will lead to our collapse or degraded human life in America. We must change course toward a stable population in the USA.⁸²

As several opponents of restrictionism have recognized, it would be a mistake to depict the environmental restrictionist movement as purely Nativist (Bhatia 2004, Muradian 2006, King 2007, 2008). Indeed, certain restrictionists have long histories of environmental activism and appear to be genuine in their concern for nature (Reimers 1998). The grouping that I term “eco-nativists” are difficult to make sense of as they express viewpoints that overlap in important ways with the anxieties of traditional nativists, yet also devote significant attention to environmental concerns, and come from backgrounds of environmental activism.

⁸² See Kohoutek 2004.

Case-in-point is John Tanton. An ophthalmologist from northern Michigan, Tanton first emerged as a player in national environmental causes in the 1960s, but had already been concerned with over-population for some time:

As early as the '50s, he avidly read reports from the Population Reference Bureau, and by the time Ehrlich's book was published, he and Mary Lou had already started work on the first Northern Michigan chapter of Planned Parenthood. 'I believed in the multiplication tables,' says Tanton. 'Since I was a physician and could do something about birth control, it struck me that this was where I could make my contribution to the conservation movement.' (Hayes 2006; see also Rowe 2002, 22)

After becoming active in local and state level environmental organizations in the late '50s – founding the local chapter of the Audubon Society, heading up organizing in Northern Michigan for the Sierra Club and League of Conservation Voters, working in support of a variety of state-level land conservation measures – Tanton chaired the Sierra Club's National Population Committee from 1971-74, and founded and served on the board of Zero Population Growth from 1973-78 (including a stretch as President from '75-77).

Soon, however, his activism veered into more explicitly social territory. In 1979, Tanton formed the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) in order to aggressively push for the immigration-restrictions that he had been unable to convince the Sierra Club and ZPG to advocate. Over the next decade he would found the Center for Immigration Studies, NumbersUSA, U.S. Inc., the Immigration Reform Law Institute and Journal, The Social Contract, US English, and ProEnglish, as well as provide funding to numerous other restrictionists organizations (including the American Immigration Control Foundation and Californians for Population Stabilization) (Reimers 1998, Southern Poverty Law Center 2002). In doing so, he began to cultivate connections with traditional nativists: holding a series of WITAN (named after Witenagemot, which means "wise council" in Old English) seminars

attended by a broad swath of nativists (including Jared Taylor of the white supremacist *American Renaissance*) and environmental restrictionists alike; publishing Raspail's *The Camp of the Saints* through his Social Contract Press;⁸³ and co-authoring *The Immigration Invasion* with Wayne Lutton, the white nationalist editor of the Social Contract Press.

Judging by numerous statements in the '80's and '90's, Tanton's opinions evolved along with these alliances. For example, in one of a series of 1986 memos that were leaked to the mainstream press in 1988,⁸⁴ Tanton provided his colleagues a list of queries that were to be discussed at the WITAN seminars, including the following:

Will Latin American migrants bring with them the tradition of the mordida (bribe), the lack of involvement in public affairs, etc.? What in fact are the characteristics of Latin American culture, versus that of the United States?

As Whites see their power and control over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night? Or will there be an explosion? Why don't non-Hispanic Whites have a group identity, as do Blacks, Jews, Hispanics?

Moreover, reactions to the release of these controversial remarks do not appear to have provoked a shift in his expressions of nativism. In a 1993 letter to ecologist Garrett Hardin, Tanton wrote: "I've come to the point of view that for European-American society and culture to persist requires a European-American majority, and a clear one at that" (SPLC 2008). Similarly, in a 1996 letter to Roy Beck of NumbersUSA, Tanton voiced his concerns that current immigrants may prove inassimilable: "I have no doubt that individual minority persons can assimilate to the culture necessary to run an advanced society but if through mass migration, the culture of the homeland is transplanted from Latin America to California, then my guess is we

⁸³ In doing so, he effectively popularized the book within the US.

⁸⁴ Volumes of Tanton's writings are archived the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan. However, some of the more controversial subject matter – including the WITAN memos – is closed to access until April 2035.

will see the same degree of success with governmental and social institutions that we have seen in Latin America" (ibid).

These apparently incongruous positions render Tanton somewhat of an enigma, with observers left struggling to reconcile his commitment to both nature and nativism. A recent *Washington Post* article begins:

Let's just get this out of the way. John Tanton, mastermind of the modern-day movement to curb immigration, is a tree hugger. Literally. He has a favorite pair of ash trees "this big around," he says, spreading his arms wide. He likes to visit them every so often in the forest just north of here, to see how they're doing. (Huslin 2006)

Similarly, journalist Chris Hayes, writing for *In These Times*, registers his surprise at Tanton's personal politics:

Given that the movement he helped create now finds its base among conservative Republicans, you might expect John Tanton to be an unapologetic reactionary. You'd be wrong. He's a self-described progressive, ex-Sierra Club member, Planned Parenthood supporter and harsh critic of neoclassical economists. So I wanted to know: How did a whip-smart, mild-mannered farm boy committed to conserving the natural world end up seeding and nurturing a movement that now dispatches gun-toting vigilantes to patrol the border? (2006)

The sentiment being communicated here is that these two logics – environmentalism and nativism – are at odds. My analysis, however, finds that they are tied together through a neo-Malthusian narrative of natural crisis that is meticulously woven into a variety of hyper-nationalistic tropes. In this sense, Tanton is not simply a former environmentalist-gone-bad; he is, rather, an environmentalist wedded to a specific construction of nature that is itself embedded in exclusionary notions of political community and governance.

The Natural/National Population Crisis

Appeals to ecological nativism commence by emphasizing the importance of national wilderness as a part of "our" national heritage, an observation closely followed by a bevy of

demographic projections that demonstrate how this ideal is threatened by over-crowding. Edward Abbey, for instance, famously remarked that the “open, spacious, uncrowded, and beautiful” society that “we” prefer was being threatened by the “mass influx” of “squalor, cruelty, and corruption of Latin America” (1988). Similarly, a prominent contemporary restrictionist, Frosty Wooldridge, mentioned earlier in the chapter, was recently featured on the documentary series *Tomorrow’s America* as an “environmental activist” seeking to raise attention to the looming national population crisis: “Overpopulation,” he proclaimed, “will become the single greatest issue in 21st century America and we must stabilize population in order to solve it” (*Tomorrows America* Discussion Series 2010). This is a message he reiterates in his weekly editorials to local and national media outlets, in his books (titled *America on the Brink* and *Immigration’s Unarmed Invasion*), and in the presentation that he delivers around Colorado, “The Coming Population Crisis in America.”

In a personal interview, Wooldridge demonstrated passion for the topic of overpopulation and recited statistics at an impressive clip:

Each time you add one new person, that’s 19.4 acres of ecological footprint...we’re adding 100 million more by 2035...the average American has a ten to thirty times greater ecological impact than people in the Third World...by 2030 the Chinese will be putting 16,000 new cars on the highway every week...the Chinese use 98 million barrels of oil per day...India will be 1.6 billion within forty years...China will be 1.5 billion by 2050...

Contextualizing Wooldridge’s numerical barrage, however, is a constant citation of a chaotic “Third World” that is argued to provide a mirror into “our” futures. Wooldridge, who says he has been involved in environmental issues since attending the first Earth Day celebration, recounted to me that it wasn’t until visiting China and Bangladesh that he became truly aware of the connections between population growth, immigration and environmental degradation: “It wasn’t till ‘84 when I walked on the wall of China...China is wall to wall people...India is wall to

wall...Bangladesh has 157 million in a landmass the size of Colorado” (ibid, 2011). In describing his encounters in the “Third World,” Wooldridge makes it clear that “we” are not immune from the chaos wrought by the cultural practice of overpopulation:

I have seen the enemy [and] I know what is coming...Add 200 million people, and we will be Bangladesh: illiterate, ignorant, especially if you add rituals... cockfighting, female genital mutilation, dog fighting...It gets really nasty when incompatible cultures are brought up in a First World environment. (Kohoutek 2004, quoting Wooldridge)

And while relying upon passionate appeals to secure romantic wilderness from the fate of the anarchy lurking outside “our” bounds, the eco-nativist discourse concurrently employs the rationalism of neo-Malthusian demographic projections in order to embed these emotional concerns within a more “objective” register. While Malthusian population anxieties have been a source of contention within traditional, social nativist organizations, for eco-nativists, population is, in many respects, the end all be all of natural and national health. Though the arguments vary in form, the substance is always the same:

If the nation’s drinking water is endangered by contaminated water with 275 million Americans, what will it be like with 400 million? If our national parks are loved to death with 275 million Americans, what will it be like with many more clamoring for admission? If 40% of Americans are breathing air unfit for human consumption with 275 million Americans, what will it be like with a 50% population increase in 50 years? (Rowe 2002, 60)

This is a significant shift from social nativism because the particular framings of nature that eco-nativists rely upon enable anxieties over population to be expressed in ways that more directly mesh with the political anxieties of environmentalists. Nonetheless, the state of exception that they urge Americans to recognize has significant overlap with traditional nativist logics, and intense racial and gendered implications for certain immigrant and non-immigrant populations. In particular, the eco-nativist logic emerges through varied epistemological practices that combine romanticism, demography, fertility rates, sociobiology, and orthodox international

relations in their constructions of nature, political community and governance.

The Demographic Steady State

To begin, whatever the genuine feelings and political commitments of some eco-nativists, the discourse moves away from overt nativism through an emphasis on the sheer number of immigrants, an explicit disavowal of racism, and an appeal to environmentalists to take these “facts” seriously:

Identifying causality is not assigning moral ‘blame.’ However, political pressure groups have sought to intimidate those correctly linking environmental degradation, population growth, and immigration by hurling such spiteful epithets as ‘racists’ or ‘nativists’....Demography drives human destiny. David Brower knows this, our politicians discount it.⁸⁵ (Burke 2000)

The solution to this politically correct impasse, then, lies in a “demographic steady state” where “replacement rates” are realized; “Native” Americans have achieved this rate, but growth from immigration has upset the potential equilibrium (FAIR 2008). Particularly troubling in this regard are the fertility rates of “foreign” women:

The foreign-born account for a much larger share of U.S. births than their share of the population. Native-born Americans average roughly 13 births per thousand people; immigrants average roughly 28 births per thousand. As a result, the foreign born have a disproportionate share of the births in the U.S. According to the Census Bureau, in 2000, births to foreign-born mothers accounted for 17 percent of the births in the United States.” (FAIR 2008)

These high fertility rates are attributed to a number of factors, including American aid and immigration policies. Virginia Abernethy – a self-described “ethnic separatist” and Vanderbilt professor emeritus who formerly edited the journal *Population and Environment*, currently sits on the Carrying Capacity Network board of directors, and recently joined the board of white nationalist organization, American Third Position (A3P) – further develops a neo-

⁸⁵ This article shows how strange the environmental restrictionist appeal can be: it appeared on the popular leftist site “Common Dreams” but Burke has written for VDARE (see Brimelow 2000).

Malthusian approach to fertility in developing the “fertility opportunity hypothesis” (in a 2006 issue of *Ecological Economics* dedicated to the environmental debates over immigration). Her contention is that as perceptions of economic opportunity increase, people have more children; when economic opportunity collapses, people have fewer children. The lesson she aims to drive home is that immigration, foreign aid and other “redistributive” policies worsen the demographic crisis in developing states. Instead, “letting the population bear the weight of a contracting economy, so that they perceive that opportunity has diminished, is the path to rapid fertility decline and eventual population stabilization” (2006, 229). In other words, inequality is *natural and necessary*. In response to the claim that such a policy would be unethical, she offers a vision of progress: “[t]he present may be painful but the future is not hopeless because prosperity can build from a platform of demographic stability.”

However, the “empirical” observations that eco-nativists offer with regard to population growth are enabled by an underlying methodological nationalism. In their measures of both demographic growth and fertility rates, the national categories (citizen and non-citizen) and spatial borders that the census depends upon are treated as timeless givens, and ecological degradation is measured only through the units of analysis (national, state, county, city) provided by American bureaucracies. Such studies, thus, “presuppose...that the nation-state is the natural and necessary form of society in modernity, and that the nation-state becomes the organizing principles around which the whole project of modernity coheres” (Chernilo 2006). Any alternative categories and forms of measure (e.g. global or ecosystemic evaluations) are *a priori* cleansed from the slate and debate instead revolves around this “empirical” set of subjects, spaces and institutions.

Moreover, such supposedly objective concerns often seep into racial anxieties over the growing numbers of brown bodies. Vocal restrictionist John Tanton, for instance, once mused: “can *homo contraceptivus* compete with *homo progenitiva* if borders aren't controlled?” (Tanton 1986, SPLC 2002a),⁸⁶ while a recent contributor to *The Social Contract* put it more bluntly: “The U.S. is the only industrial country with a growing population. And 80 percent of the growth is due to immigration and the rest to the babies of immigrants ... their weapon is their babies” (Duncan 2007). Paralleling nativist paranoia over the coming “*reconquista*,” eco-nativists foment cultural essentializations in which the very presence of immigrant families is seen as evidence of a conspiratorial form of statecraft from below (see, for instance, Horowitz 2005).⁸⁷

In a personal interview, Marilyn Chandler DeYoung, current Chair of the Board of Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS) and a former Nixon-appointed to the Rockefeller Commission, echoed these sentiments in linking the allegedly rising birth rates of Muslim populations with post-9/11 national security concerns:

The Muslims are another group you have to face, because they're trying to control the world by having lots of children. Their women are uneducated and at complete control of the man...we've lost ground with Arab countries in the 40 years we've been working on this...I had an interview with Mubarak when he was secretary of home, health and welfare, and he was advocating population stabilization.⁸⁸

This securitization of fertility, family practices, and child-birth, while not without historical precedent, is a strategy that has captivated eco-nativists for some time. Chandler DeYoung recounted to me how one of their top priorities is to challenge the 14th amendment's birthright

⁸⁶ He is riffing here, on a speech by Charles Galton Darwin, Darwin's Grandson, that is cited in Hardin's “Tragedy of the Commons.” Charles Galton Darwin wrote an influential eugenics tract, *The Next Million Years*, in 195

⁸⁷ As Tanton put it, ‘[p]erhaps this is the first instance in which those with their pants up are going to get caught by those with their pants down’ (Tanton 1986, as quoted by SPLC 2002a).

⁸⁸ Personal Interview, 5/23/11. I'm currently trying to figure out if Mubarak ever even held this position. US Rep. Louie Gohmert was recently skewered by John Stewart for articulating a similar position on a live TV interview. As Stewart sarcastically noted, ‘even Lou Dobbs thinks this viewpoint is extreme.’ <http://www.politicususa.com/en/jon-stewart-anchor-babies>

citizenship clause – or, at least, conventional interpretations of *jus soli*. “Right now,” she explained, “we’re working on the birthright visa or ‘Birthright tourism’... Many of them are called ‘anchor babies.’”

The “anchor baby” terminology was introduced in the late 1980’s, but has in recent years gone mainstream. According to FAIR:

An anchor baby is defined as an offspring of an illegal immigrant or other non-citizen, who under current legal interpretation becomes a United States citizen at birth. These children may instantly qualify for welfare and other state and local benefit programs. Additionally with the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, the child may sponsor other family members for entry into the United States when he or she reaches the age of twenty-one... The sheer numbers are staggering. In Stockton, California (2003), 70 percent of the 2,300 babies, born in San Joaquin General Hospital’s maternity ward were anchor babies.

The term, thus, emerged from the observation that children of immigrants root the family into the country. While single male immigrants frequently work abroad for some time before returning home, it is argued that those with families stay here. More importantly, as Lutton explains, “[t]he citizen-children are automatically entitled to all of the benefits available to Americans, and, upon reaching the age of 21 years, can legally sponsor their parents and siblings for citizenship ... making it possible for an entire family to gain entry into the United States and its social welfare programs” (1996). Frequently, the urgency of the anchor baby crisis is underscored in more essentialized terms: “did the fourteenth amendment actually establish or even intend to establish that the baby of a Mexican national who swam across the river to get to US soil immediately become entitled to every benefit available to children of citizens?” (Hull 2008).

Continued practices of *jus soli*, it is asserted, are threats to the rule of law on which sovereignty and *cultural continuity* depend: “Granting birthright citizenship to the children of illegal aliens whose first act in coming to the U.S. is to break our laws, cheapens the meaning of our Constitution and denigrates the principle of the rule of law upon which our country was

founded” (Elbel 2007). Or, as Wooldridge succinctly puts it: “We absolutely demand that there are no more allowances for anchor babies...we don’t need a bunch of anchor babies.” “Name one single advantage,” he continued – reciting a line that he had also used during our interview – “of adding 200 million people to America...can anybody come up with one? Well I can tell ya, China and India haven’t figured that out either” (Wooldridge 2006).

Overall, while neo-malthusianism is by no means *a priori* nativist, the constant citation of a “savage” developing world, the methodological nationalism and the essentialization of latina reproductive practices, render this particular manifestation nativist despite its ostensibly ecological focus. This discursive strategy – wedding passionate appeals to save romantic wilderness to the apparently “scientific” rigor of Malthusian-inspired projections – nonetheless plays a crucial ontological role: in a language laden with racial imagery and cultural essentializations, immigrant populations – particularly latina/o families, mothers and children – are constructed as ecologically savage (in contrast to the ecological saviors invited to join in advancing the eco-nativist logic).

Sociologist Leo Chavez views the anchor baby fixation as part and parcel of, what he terms, the “latina reproductive threat” narrative:

Even with birthright citizenship, the children of Latinas, particularly undocumented Latinas, are cast as illegitimate members of society, as mere anchor babies, whose very existence and purpose in life are reduced to the biopolitics of immigration. According to this view, theirs is a crass attempt to play the system so that they can acquire citizenship for their scheming and conniving parents, themselves illegitimate and undeserving members of our society ... Denying birthright citizenship to those who would undoubtedly continue to live amongst us would cast them as the most liminal and miserable subjects in the nation” (2008, 90).

The effects of this discourse, Jessica Leann Urban adds, are not confined to immigrants, but render “women’s bodies (especially women of color...) a key battleground in defense of a ‘civilized’ American nation” (Urban 2007). All the more troubling, the “anchor baby” anxieties

have not only been appropriated by traditional nativists (as one might expect), they have spread to reputable public discourses and congressional debates.

Cultural Carrying Capacity and Socio-biological Realism

The nature conceptualized by eco-nativists also plays a role in alliance-building. Eco-nativists frequently employ ecological concepts, such as carrying capacity, to legitimize their essentialized notions of the “Third World” or “Latin” culture, while simultaneously working to expand the restrictionist coalition beyond the far-right. For example, Garrett Hardin is well known by environmentalists and international relations scholars for his 1968 essay, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” which is influential for its depiction of a collective action problem, and Hardin’s concomitant assertion that self-interested actors have no rational incentive to conserve resources in the absence of private property or a strong coercive state. Nonetheless, the overarching normative concern of this essay – excessive “breeding” – is often overlooked:

In a welfare state, how shall we deal with the family, the religion, the race, or the class (or indeed any distinguishable and cohesive group) that adopts over breeding as a policy to secure its own aggrandizement? To couple the concept of freedom to breed with the belief that everyone born has an equal right to the commons is to lock the world into a tragic course of action.

There is, thus, a cultural component to Hardin’s tragedy. The problem, as he saw it, was not merely that self-interested individuals are bound to breed, it was that certain religions, races and classes are particularly egregious transgressors of this necessary social norm. Moreover, it was, according to Hardin, the absolute wrong religions, races and classes who were over-breeding. In fact, Hardin was an adamant eugenicist – a former director of the American Eugenics Society who accepted a \$29,000 grant from the racist Pioneer Fund (Miller 1994/5, 60) and viewed infanticide as an “effective population control” (Spencer 1992, Beirich 2007).

The relationship between Hardin’s neo-Malthusianism and his eugenicism can be more

closely connected by looking to his 1986 speech entitled “Cultural Carrying Capacity.” Hardin begins by decrying “human exceptionalism;” the promethean idea that humans are not bound by the laws of nature because of our ability to create technology. Instead, he asserts, “the kinship of man and the animals (meaning "other animals") remains a fruitful working hypothesis for biologists...[t]his hypothesis is recommended to scholars of all persuasions as a sovereign remedy against deceptions engendered by exemptionist thinking.” Following this line of thought, Hardin notes that all species, humans included, have a carrying capacity. However, he contends that the ethology of humanity has revealed certain differences, and this concept must thereby be amended to add a social dimension:

For non-human animals it seems reasonable to measure carrying capacity in terms of resources available for survival. In evaluating the human situation, however, we are not satisfied with so simple a metric. We hold that "Man does not live by bread alone." We go beyond the spiritual meaning of the Biblical quotation in distinguishing between mere existence and the good life. This distinction, like so many population-related ideas, was well understood by Malthus, who held that the density of population should be such that people could enjoy meat and a glass of wine with their dinners. Implicitly, Malthus's concept of carrying capacity included cultural factors....The good life, then, must include a reasonable (though undefined) amount of luxury food (fresh vegetables, quality meats, delicious drinks), clothing beyond that needed for mere conservation of body heat, comfortable housing, adequate transportation, space heating and cooling, electronic entertainment, vacations, etc.

From this almost Aristotelian logic, Hardin derives a simple scientific conclusion: to lead the “good life” – however defined – humans need a minimal amount of energy with which to produce materials. The fewer people in the world, the more energy each can possess, and vice versa. Complicating this scenario, Hardin asserts, is the fact that humans do not – *will not and cannot* – live as “One World”:

Is it wise to hope and plan for One World, a world without borders? Or must our plans assume the continuation of subdivisions something like the nations we now know? This is perhaps the most fundamental political question of our time. The insights of biology are needed to solve it.

Dreams of world government or “spaceship earth,” he insists, suffer from the debilitating effects of collective action problems that he demonstrated in “The Tragedy of the Commons.” Self-interested competition for scarce-resources, in Hardin’s Darwinian frame, is a natural constant: “[i]f discrete entities (nations, for example) are in reality competing for scarce resources, those entities that follow Marx’s ideal [from each according to his ability...] will be at a competitive disadvantage competing with more self-seeking entities.” Thus, Hardin’s socio-biological logic arrives at the same point as realist international relations theorists; his is a world driven by Darwin rather than Hobbes or Thucydides, but his political imaginary is founded upon the same principles: anarchy, scarcity, self-interest, and competition.

This begs the question, how should a world of nation-states deal with the problem of population? In responding, Hardin reverts to the timeless scientific trope of objectivity – the Archimedean point; in this case, the “man from Mars”:

The man from Mars makes a tour of the earth and notes the widely varying standards of living and the widely varying densities of population. He also notes that resources vary widely in their distribution. Having evolved by natural selection on Mars -- is there any other way to evolve? -- our martian (like earthlings) has strong territorial feelings.... The per capita consumption of energy in Bangladesh is one thirty-eighth as great as the world average. Spokesmen for the country complain about this low energy income. (The material quality of life, however measured, seems correspondingly low.) How should others react to this discrepancy?...

The standard earthly response is to say, ‘Bangladesh suffers from shortages.’ Thus do earthlings demonstrate their fellow-feeling for the Bangladeshi, even though this may be the only way they do so. But what would the man from Mars say? Being under no felt necessity to demonstrate fellow-feeling, he might well respond thus: ‘Shortage, you say? Shortage of resources? If parochial resources are being fully used, how can there be a shortage? Parochial demand should match parochial supply. Why not say there is a longage in demand? Though it may not be possible to increase supply, it is always possible to decrease demand. You do this either by reducing people’s expectations, or by reducing the number of people who have expectations -- which can always be done by reducing the birth rate. (There is no necessity to increase the death rate.)’...

Continuing, the man from Mars says: ‘If each Bangladeshi enjoys only one thirty-eighth as much energy as the average earthling, maybe there are 38 times too many people living in Bangladesh? Should we not speak of a ‘longage’ of people, rather than a shortage of resources? In principle, a longage is always soluble; a shortage may not be.’ (1986)

The take home here, as Hardin would later write, is that “there is no global population problem...there are 180 national problems” (1989). What’s more, the solution to these problems does not lie in charity or aid – in providing more resources or even redistributing existing resources (a principle that, he suggests, flies in the face of natural selection) – rather, it lies in population reduction. There must exist a match between a nation’s resources and population; “[t]he only legitimate demand that nations can make on one another is this: ‘Don’t try to solve your population problem by exporting your excess people to us’” (1989).

Based upon this logic, it is no surprise that Hardin was an early proponent of environmental restrictionism, or that his concepts continue to animate eco-nativist discussions. Hardin’s notion of carrying capacity is deployed most prominently by the appropriately named Carrying Capacity Network, who display the definition on their webpage: “the number of individuals who can be supported in a given area within natural resource limits and without degrading the *natural, social, cultural and economic environment* for present and future generations” (Carrying Capacity Network 2010, my italics). Working from this definition, the apparent incommensurability of commitments to both Nativism and Nature is resolved through the construction of a grand “problem” that is argued to be responsible for environmental and societal declines alike: a sweeping pro-growth ethos that fails to entertain the possibility of cultural, political economic, and environmental “limits to growth.” With this, natural and national health are synthesized and rendered intelligible through a single concept.

Citations of cultural carrying capacity abound in eco-nativist works, often in ways that stray dramatically from the scientific jargon of Hardin. For instance, despite including “resource conservation” as one of its five missions, the Carrying Capacity Network dedicates the vast majority of its space to detailing instances of *cultural* pollution:

Practices which impair or destroy fundamental cultural values impair the sustainability of a nation -- as the eminent Garrett Hardin asserted in his classic 1986 essay 'Cultural Carrying Capacity' -- just as overuse of not-easily replaceable resources is a transgression of long-term ecological carrying capacity... Among cultural values essential to the sustainability of the United States are, for example, Freedom of Speech, Rule of Law, and Respect for a shared Heritage and English Language --all basic to social cohesion, national unity and national preservation...

...Increasingly in the second half of the twentieth century, however, the social movement known as Cultural Marxism began to transform the USA itself. Cultural Marxism's advocacy of Politically Correct speech rather than Free Speech, and multiculturalism/multilingualism rather than National Unity under one shared Culture and Language are, arguably, threats to the USA itself. (July 2010)

In 2010, the CCN devoted three “Action Alerts” to the threat of Cultural Marxism. The alerts express nostalgia for the homogeneity of a 1950’s America,⁸⁹ and assert that traditional values have been destroyed by the rise to hegemony of Frankfurt School and Trotskyite ideologies (February, July 2010). In particular, the alerts contend, this emergent ideology is fundamentally antithetical to the equality of European-American populations:

The Marxist social revolutionaries in modern America who strive to promote the disintegration of the white male power structure not only know all of this, but write about it and put it into practice as part of their grand scheme... In the name of combating Fascism and Nazism in America, this body of destructive criticism was employed by the Marxist social revolutionaries to bring about the disintegration of the prevailing American system of beliefs, attitudes and values. (ibid)

⁸⁹ “Sometime during the last half-century,” William Lind writes, “someone stole our culture. Just 50 years ago, in the 1950’s, America was a great place. It was safe. It was decent. Children got good educations in the public schools. Even blue-collar fathers brought home middle-class incomes, so moms could stay home with the kids. Television shows reflected sound, traditional values.” The rest of his essay details how “it” was stolen by the cultural ideals fostered by the Frankfurt School.

Despite voicing positions that verge perilously close to traditional nativism, the CCN is considered a respected voice in the restrictionist movement, thanks largely to the fact that prominent ecological economists Herman Daly, Robert Costanza and William Rees sit on its Board of Advisors.⁹⁰

Think Globally, Act Locally (Exclude Nationally)

Eco-nativism, thus, relies on two parallel discursive tacks. On one hand, “nature” is constructed through a neo-Malthusian lens that only comes into focus through social-scientific methodological practices emphasizing “hyper-fertile Latinas,” combined with a conception of romantic wilderness made intelligible through its opposition to “Third World cultures.” On the other, “the nation” emerges through the deployment of natural scientific ideals; Darwinian (socio)biology serves to naturalize the self-interested nation-state, while cultural carrying capacity fixes the ethnic contours of that nation-state once and for all. The cultural resonance of this narrative is further enhanced by the deployment of popular environmental terminology.

In a recent public presentation, Stuart Hurlbert, of Californians for Population Stabilization, leaned heavily on Hardin.⁹¹ Hurlbert’s introductory slide depicted a crowded Tokyo Water Park and asked: “should you feel guilty about Tokyo Swimming Pools?” Hurlbert commences his response by linking this aquatic event with growing water shortages on the Salton Sea, the Colorado River, and the Columbia River, and by rhetorically placing these looming ecological catastrophes alongside a whole host of graphs and statistics depicting

⁹⁰ When I interviewed Rees (10/11/2011), he explained to me that he was unaware of the connections between the CCN (specifically Virginia Abernethy) and white supremacy. He said that he has had no contact with them and he repudiated support for any racist project. As of April 2012, however, his name remains on the CCN website. One wonders if Daly and Costanza are aware of the CCN’s agenda, or if they were themselves duped by the organization’s environmentalist-sounding name.

⁹¹ Hurlbert’s powerpoint presentation can be publicly accessed at:
http://www.capsweb.org/content.php?id=56&menu_id=7&menu_item_id=60

escalating population growth. After framing the problem in this manner, he employs a quotation by Rene Dubos, advisor to the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment: “ecological consciousness should begin at home.” Or, as it’s more often put, “think globally, act locally.”

While such phraseology is common amongst environmentalists, Hurlbert weds this green ideal to a territorially-bound national community by turning to Hardin’s insistence that “[w]e will make no progress with population problems, which are a root cause of both hunger and poverty, until we deglobalize them” (1989). Hurlbert then details, what he terms, “the globalist cop-out,” epitomized by the notion that rather than restricting immigration, the United States ought to continue to allow sizable flows of migrants to enter, while working to ameliorate “the social, political and economic problems in the rest of the world that cause so many to attempt to come here.” In forcefully rejecting this point, Hurlbert’s harkens back to the Tokyo swimming pool, and again asks: do we have any ethical responsibility to help those unfortunate souls outside?

His response – a resounding “No” – is nothing more than a re-hashing of Hardin’s “lifeboat ethics.” Hardin begins his 1974 essay by laying out the following scenario:

Metaphorically, each rich nation amounts to a lifeboat full of comparatively rich people. The poor of the world are in other, much more crowded, lifeboats. Continuously, so to speak, the poor fall out of their lifeboats and swim for a while in the water outside, hoping to be admitted to a rich lifeboat, or in some other way to benefit from the "goodies" on board. What should the passengers on a rich lifeboat do? This is the central problem of "the ethics of a lifeboat."

The metaphor is a simple one: there is only so much room on “our” lifeboat and in order to sustain any quality of life “we” simply cannot allow any of those swimming in the waters alongside us onboard. For those who deem such a response unethical, Hardin’s reply is as cold as it is concise:

Get out and yield your place to others.... The needy person to whom a guilt-addict yields his place will not himself feel guilty about his sudden good luck. (If he did he would not climb aboard.) The net result of conscience-stricken people

relinquishing their unjustly held positions is the elimination of their kind of conscience from the lifeboat. The lifeboat, as it were, purifies itself of guilt. (1974, my italics)

Moreover, Hardin insists that foreign states have the responsibility to deal with their own population problems; it is a *sovereign responsibility*:

All population controls must be applied locally; local governments are the agents best prepared to choose local means. Means must fit local traditions. For one nation to attempt to impose its ethical principles on another is to *violate national sovereignty* and endanger international peace. (1989, my italics)

Through this logic, the problem of immigration is transformed into a crisis of sovereignty. The population catastrophes on the horizon necessitate “mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon” (1989). The (anglo-european) nation provides the mutual agreement, and “the state,” if it is to be legitimate, must deploy its coercive capacity to enforce this agreement. With this, it becomes clear why followers of Hardin link up with followers of Pat Buchanan, Peter Brimelow and Samuel Huntington. There is little paradox here at all; their logics converge in spite of their divergent frames of nature. What these Darwinian, Hobbesian and conservative discourses have in common is the over-riding faith that Social and Natural order and equilibrium are to be found in the nation-state. And in the evolution of the nation-state, excluding immigrants is natural.

As such, the eco-nativist line of thought, in its extreme forms, blurs almost seamlessly into traditional, social nativism.

Are the United States and its citizens threatened by the Cultural Marxists push for Politically Correct speech, multiculturalism, multilingualism, mass immigration, unequal rights for certain categories of citizens, ‘Globalism’ (as opposed to Internationalism), destruction of ‘Sovereign Nations’ (an ‘obsolete concept’ a recent European Union document claimed), and the displacement of the Founding Stock and Religion of Western Nations? (Carrying Capacity Network, February 2010)

The typical iteration of eco-nativism, however, is closer to Hurlbert’s presentation; white nationalism is not explicitly embraced, but the Darwinian logic, coupled with the employment of

popular environmental metaphors, works to locate the cause of immigration squarely within “irresponsible nations,” while simultaneously distancing Americans from any ethical obligation to social Others. Immigrants do not warrant ethical treatment; rather, the self-interested logics and laws of the sovereign nation-state are ethical.

Sovereignty, Nature and Biopolitics

Hurlbert concludes his presentation with a literal scripting of lifeboat ethics. He flips to a slide displaying an image from the film, *The Perfect Storm*, with a small boat – which he has titled U.S.A. – crashing against a massive tidal wave. In a graphic above the boat, he has placed a large list of organizations who are ostensibly contributing to the wave (Democratic Party, Republican Party, Obama, McCain, Sierra Club, Mexican Government, ACLU, etc.) and in a graphic below, a much smaller list of organizations who are attempting to save the boat (CAPS, NumbersUSA, FAIR, CCN, NPG, etc.).

Throughout eco-Nativism, one finds (1) an abiding sentiment that to defend against the ecological savages, “we” need ecological saviors, and (2) a hardly concealed anger that no one seems to be listening to these saviors. In our conversation, Wooldridge repeatedly bemoaned the fact that he and his colleagues weren’t taken more seriously, and left me with some cautionary advice:

What I’m talking about is not politically correct, but the fact is this is what’s coming... You’re gonna find that everybody wants to avoid and evade this issue. It’s the last taboo in 21st century America.

The notion that those who disagree are irrational, or hyper-emotional, or too concerned with political correctness is found throughout eco-nativist dialogues. The political battles that they have lost are not evidence of contested truths or failing strategies, but proof that they – and the

Anglo-European ideals that they represent – are victims of epistemic closure. After observing Tanton’s efforts to tap into this politics of resentment, however, Christopher Hayes suggests that there is hypocrisy at play. His argument is worth quoting at length:

Though he plays the victim, Tanton wants it both ways: harnessing the political power that comes from tapping into nativist grievances and building bridges with outright racists, while at the same time dismissing any of the negative consequences that might come from such partnerships”...Crisscrossing the country, Tanton found little interest in his conservation based arguments for reduced immigration, but kept hearing the same complaint. ‘I tell you what pisses me off,’ Tanton recalls people saying, ‘It’s going into a ballot box and finding a ballot in a language I can’t read.’ So it became clear that the language question had a lot more emotional power than the immigration question ...

...The success of US English taught Tanton a crucial lesson. If the immigration restrictionist movement was to succeed, it would have to be rooted in an emotional appeal to those who felt that their country, their language, their identity was under assault. ‘Feelings,’ Tanton says in a tone reminiscent of Spock sharing some hard-won insight on human behavior, ‘trump facts.’ (2006)

The irony is, thus, that eco-nativists criticize their opponents for relying on “feelings” rather than “facts,” at the same time as they continue to stir the hyper-emotional pots of race, culture, and nationalism – at times indirectly through their application of ostensibly ecological ideals. The neo-Malthusian emergency of which they speak is at once natural and national, and both social and ecological concepts are deployed to support the case that “we” are imperiled by the movement, fertility, and cultural practices of migrant bodies. The tie that binds the nation’s nature to the natural nation is so thick that one can’t possibly untangle it.

The articulation between nation and nature that I have outlined is *sacred* in the eco-nativist imaginary, and population is the prism through which the sacred becomes intelligible. The Truth is found – can only be found – through the lens provided by a Nature that is constructed by romantic, neo-Malthusian, and Darwinian epistemological practices. Despite their

continued popular resonance, these conceptions of “nature” occupy three crucial dimensions of the eco-nativist discourse:

First, *ontologically*, the national environmental subject is constructed by juxtaposing the romantic ideal of “national wilderness” to a chaotic “developing world” whose cultures supposedly militate against the preservation of such national treasures. At the same time, Malthusian concerns over demographics proceed through methodological nationalisms beholden to cultural essentializations that construct latina/o families, mothers and children as ecologically uncivilized. Constant references to these symbols of savagery provide the Other in opposition to which the eco-nativist self is secured.

Second, *strategically*, the employment of sociobiology (e.g. cultural carrying capacity) enables nature to function as a nodal point, linking together ecologically-minded thinkers with traditional, social nativists through the privilege afforded to “the nation,” order, self-interest and anarchy. While enabling alliances with social nativists, this nature continues to work as a progressive signifier that allows the discourse of eco-nativism to disassociate itself from nativist groupings in the public psyche.

Third, *ethically*, the use of popular environmental terminology masks the deployment of social Darwinian ideals (life boat ethics) that legitimize the distancing of the national environmental subject from any ethical obligation to immigrant populations.

“Back in ’84 when I got to China,” Wooldridge tells me, “I literally pledged my life...just like Susan B. Anthony or Martin Luther King who I marched with in ’63 as a kid.” Hurlbert thinks the same; his presentation repeatedly expresses outrage against those greens who refuse to “speak truth to power.” Through his Perfect Storm image, the message is clear: only a small number of people have the Truth that will save the boat and those on it. The patriotic

imagery employed by Wooldridge and his colleagues is no accident; from their neo-Malthusian vantage-point, they are the defenders of American sovereignty.

Conclusion

Nature plays a central role in the logics of both social and ecological nativism. In the former, nature functions as: a source of order – referring to both God and Darwin’s “laws” of racial difference; a Lockean political ideal that delegitimizes state action to ameliorate these “natural” racial inequalities; and a symbol of anarchy that is attached to those populations located outside of the racialized national norm. At the same time, there is debate amongst social nativists over whether or not protecting the national non-human realm ought to be a commitment of the far right. In the latter, as I have just discussed, nature functions as a marker of alterity, a nodal point, and a privileged ethical foundation that links together the protection of a culturally-homogenous nation with that of a specific ideal of nature. Eco-nativists have played a crucial role in anti-immigrant alliance-building, fostering relationships amongst conservationists, green followers of Darwin and Malthus, and the American Far-Right.

The differences between the two nativist logics, though at times slight, are important. The traditional, social nativist constructs “the immigrant” as part of a “wave” or “horde” that lacks specificity. As such, it induces a generalizable image of chaos, violence and impurity – one working at a visceral level – that invites the viewer to relate that image to the omnipresent “threats” surrounding them in their day-to-day lives – the new neighbor with an accent, the guy on the street in baggy jeans, the rapper on TV, the brown-skinned janitorial worker, etc. – and it implores them to think, “these fears are *natural*.”

The political contribution of eco-nativism is to give an additional, ecological connotation to this horde, which at once introduces a degree of sophistication to the nativist argument, and

also imbues it with an added intensity; the environment isn't the only level on which "they" are savage, it's another level. The eco-nativist viewer is subject to the same tropes, and encouraged to think the same things about the same categories of people, but thinks to his or herself, "you're doing this for *Nature*."

CHAPTER SIX THE CHALLENGE OF ECO-COMMUNITARIANISM

“In what does national integrity consist, what might nationhood and belonging *mean*, what moral and material entitlements might it entail, at a time when global capitalism seems everywhere to be threatening sovereign borders, everywhere to be displacing politics-as-usual?” – Jean and Jean Comaroff⁹²

As Peter O’Neill discussed “culture” at the town-hall panel, Philip Cafaro, seated next to him, must have been uneasy. Cafaro, professor of Environmental Ethics at Colorado State University and President of *Progressives of Immigration Reform*, has dedicated himself to advancing the “liberal”⁹³ argument for immigration-reduction. An ardent environmentalist who identifies as a progressive, the presentation that Cafaro gave eschewed any mention of cultural continuity, instead depicting the precarious state of the Cache la Poudre River, a federally-designated Wild and Scenic River that is threatened by the proposed Glade Reservoir. The reservoir is a response to development plans, supposedly necessitated by expected population growth, that a vocal regional organization, Northern Coloradoans for Immigration Reduction,⁹⁴ argues is driven by immigration. In a blog-post for *NumbersUSA*, Cafaro recounted this scenario:

A lovely river flows through my town: the Cache la Poudre....I’ve helped the local Audubon Society census its bird populations, and wrote a proposal to have the river corridor designated a state important bird area. I’ve pointed out kingfishers, osprey and foxes to my sons on our river walks. And when I asked my wife ... to marry me, the “natural” choice was along the banks of the Poudre ... I love the Cache. And I hate plans to siphon off its last unallocated “flows” and pump them into a new storage reservoir. (2010a)

His narrative, thus, commences by aesthetically linking this “lovely” river to a local communal imaginary: Fort Collins is defined by the Cache la Poudre, and through the use of personal history, Cafaro suggests that his identity is irrevocably bound up in both. However, his

⁹²2001, 236-7

⁹³ Where I place “liberal” in quotation marks, I am referencing the contemporary American political context, and not the classical political economic ideology.

⁹⁴ While it is unclear if NCIR remains active today, Cafaro was, at the time, a prominent member.

“nature” – both the nonhuman nature that he “loves” and the human identity that he has internalized – is threatened by the crisis of population growth:

Of course the reservoir’s proponents also get to have their say, and the water district has hired a fetching young woman to tell their side of the story. She begins a fancy power point presentation. And here they are, two slides into the proceedings . . . The population projections! Again, looking thirty to fifty years out from the present. Again: low, medium, and high growth projections. And again, it is obvious: we’re going to have more people here. They will need water. Etc. The whole rest of the presentation flows from that one slide. And with that one slide on their side, the presentation will be very tough to argue away. . . . If our population wasn’t growing, no one would be proposing this reservoir. (ibid)

In a personal interview, Cafaro echoed these sentiments in reflecting on his role working to “Save the Poudre” from damming:

Over the course of twenty five years, again and again, I’ve seen that population projections make a big difference in justifying bad projects. . . . We’re trying to make a case for not building this dam, but it’s hard when more and more people are moving here. . . . You take away that population growth, you take away the whole fight about the dam. (2011)

Environmental degradation, these examples imply, does not occur without population increases.

With this, stabilizing population becomes the penultimate environmental goal – taking priority over diminished consumption, industrial regulations, water laws, or national trade policy. It is the only way to save the local places that “we” care about. And out of this local necessity emerges a national policy prescription:

I’m no longer willing to keep my mouth shut about population growth, just because most population growth in the U.S. is now caused by immigration and the topic makes a lot of people uncomfortable. Hell, discussing immigration makes me uncomfortable! I would much rather avoid the topic, particularly among my fellow progressives. More than once, I’ve been called a nativist, a xenophobe, a racist—not because of anything objectionable I’ve said about any racial or ethnic group, but simply for saying that we should reduce immigration. Who needs it? The answer, I think, is that nature needs it. Nature needs fewer people—globally, but also right here, in the United States. . . . America’s rivers, forests and grasslands; the birds and mammals and other species with whom we grudgingly share the landscape; desperately need fewer Americans, not more. (2010a)

In opposition to the eco-nativist discourse, Cafaro makes a point of emphasizing that immigration is not his target, a growth-first logic is. Immigrants, he asserts, just so happen to be contributing to the destruction of Nature – not because of any “cultural” deficiency, but because of their sheer numbers – and, in order to protect “our” communities (local and national), someone has to speak for all of the “rivers, forests, grasslands, birds and mammals” who cannot speak for themselves.

The narrative that Cafaro weaves is reflective of a broader discursive grouping that I refer to as “eco-communitarianism,” an emergent variant of environmental restrictionism that differs in obvious respects from that of nativist iterations: employing a language of liberal multiculturalism, criticizing the neoliberal fetishization of growth, urging America to exercise leadership as a strong global environmental steward, and advancing a politics of “place.” While elements of eco-nativism – neo-Malthusianism population anxieties and Romantic ideals of national wilderness – remain prominent in this discourse, these forms of knowing nature are carefully enmeshed in a communitarian ideal, rather than a hyper-nationalist one.

Eco-Communitarianism in Context

Eco-communitarianism plays ontological, epistemological and strategic roles within the restrictionist alliance. On one hand, this is the lens that many Sierra Club restrictionists, in addition to organizations like Alliance for a Sustainable USA, Californians for Population Stabilization, NumbersUSA and Cafaro’s own Progressives for Immigration Reform, employ to understand the relationship between immigration and environmental degradation (see *Appendix A*). In this sense, examination of the eco-communitarian discourse gives us insight into the ontologies and epistemologies through which environmental restrictionism advances among

mainstream environmentalists and organizations that position themselves on the left of the American political spectrum. But, on the other, eco-communitarianism is also the logic being advanced by a number of organizations that I highlighted in the previous chapter – FAIR, the AIC Foundation, The Social Contract, Carrying Capacity Network, and the Center for Immigration Studies – in their materials *geared toward public consumption*. In fact, eco-communitarianism is the chosen discourse of the “America’s Leadership Team” alliance. This suggests that eco-communitarianism plays a strategic role in the efforts of nativists to expand their anti-immigrant coalition into the ranks of contemporary “progressivism” (see *Appendix D*).

To understand the potential resonance of eco-communitarianism, one has to understand the broader discursive terrain on which contemporary American debates over immigration and environmental degradation reside. Twenty years ago, Etienne Balibar (1991) argued that political efforts imbued with naturalized, biological claims of racial superiority were increasingly being recoded into a cultural discourse of hyper-nationalism. Balibar made the case that, operating amidst the specters of Nazism, Jim Crow and colonialism, the discursive transition from overt racism to these slightly more nuanced visions of nationalism rested upon the naturalization of the latter as socially acceptable in reference to the former: “the core of the meaning contrasts a ‘normal’ ideology and politics (nationalism) with an ‘excessive’ ideology and behavior (racism)” (1991, 46). And though these ideologies are popularly imagined as separate from one another, Balibar recognized that the “nature” deployed in biological racism never really went away in hyper-nationalist projects; rather, the “natural” and “cultural” were being woven together in ways that were nevertheless presented as definitively “cultural.” Indeed, though he did not employ the terminology, Balibar was cognizant of early iterations of eco-nativism:

In classical Social Darwinism, we thus have the paradoxical figure of an evolution which has to extract humanity...from animality, but to do so by the means which

characterized animality (the ‘survival of the fittest’) or, in other words, by an ‘animal’ competition between the different degrees of humanity... In differentialist culturalism, one might think this theme was totally absent. I believe it does exist, however, in an oblique form: in the frequent coupling of the discourse on cultural difference with that on ecology (as if the isolation of cultures were the precondition for the preservation of the ‘natural milieu’ of the human race), and, especially, in the thoroughgoing metaphorization of cultural categories in terms of individuality, selection, reproduction and interbreeding. (ibid, 57)

Since Balibar’s writing, these nativist and eco-nativist projects have become solidified on the far-right, but their expansion into moderate and leftist circles has been largely blocked by the institutionalization of principles of liberal equality – the mainstreaming of liberal multiculturalism, continued attempts to understand the contemporary implications of historical traditions of racism and colonialism, and renewed attention to structural asymmetries of power provoked by the intensification of neoliberal globalization. In this context, I contend that Balibar’s analysis of the role of race in hyper-nationalism has become commonsensical amongst “progressives” (as evidenced by the forceful critiques of eco-nativist racism that I will detail in Chapter 7). As environmentalism is hedged firmly on the left of American political imaginaries (Dunlap et al 2001, Bryner 2008, Anderson 2011),⁹⁵ a “cultural” politics of social justice has seeped into the ideals of many mainstream environmentalists. This is reflected in the institutionalization of environmental justice within major environmental organizations (Bernstein 2006), as well as much-publicized recent alliances between environmental and social activists (Steele 2008, Jakopovich 2009, Blue-Green Alliance 2012).

At the same time, however, these cultural politics intersect with a “natural” register where the epistemological practices outlined in the previous chapters – Malthusianism, romanticism,

⁹⁵This certainly was not always the case – environmentalism was once a bipartisan issue among both political elites and the broader American public. This began to change as the Reagan administration worked to extend the “culture war” into environmentalism, and it has only worsened in recent years as global warming has been successfully transformed into a matter of identity politics on the Right. Today, as Anderson observes, “members of environmental groups belong almost exclusively (and increasingly) to the traditional constituency of the Democrats, not the Republicans” (2011, 551).

and Darwinism – retain prominent positions. Thus, contemporary American environmentalism is characterized by a dichotomous ontology through which apparently contradictory political ideals are filtered: on one side, a Cultural register where liberal equality is prized (and ideals of social justice are increasingly relevant); on the other, a Natural register where conservative ontological ideals remain institutionalized. As forms of environmental politics come to occupy increasingly prominent positions on political agendas – intersecting with “anthropocentric” issues of security, development, labor and migration – nature is re-emerging as a privileged signifier that a variety of political interests seek to contest and deploy, and this ontological disconnect renders American environmentalism a pivotal site of discursive struggle.

While I do not dispute the authenticity of the commitments to nature held by the individuals and organizations discussed in this chapter, I contend that the eco-communitarians have forged a discourse that is readily appropriable by exclusionary interests who seek to creatively manipulate the aforementioned disjuncture between the generally “liberal” politics of the environmentalist movement, and the often conservative ontologies through which greens continue to view nature. In this sense, eco-communitarianism is one such project that seeks to speak to both the Natural and Cultural personas of the ontologically ambivalent environmentalist.

The discourse plays a strategic role in enabling nativists and eco-nativists to respond to the critiques of “racism” and “xenophobia” that their cultural essentializations are increasingly met by (at least outside of the far-right). For example, after a recent *NY Times* article recounted some of the xenophobic statements and racist allies of John Tanton, he was removed from the FAIR board of directors and the organization attempted to publicly distance itself (DeParle

2011).⁹⁶ In a strange twist of fate, as the network that he helped to create has successfully moved into more “mainstream” circles, Tanton’s eco-nativism has grown too controversial for several restrictionist organizations who prefer to position themselves as moderate (FAIR), nonpartisan (CIS) or “liberal” (CAPS). In select venues, employing carefully calibrated tones, discourses of restrictionism are moving left, and eco-communitarianism appears to be central in these efforts.

In a sense, eco-communitarianism represents a “best case scenario” – it is environmental restrictionist logic at its most logical and persuasive. There is not a crisis of national homogeneity threatened by cultural impurity, but one of “natural places” threatened by a hegemonic neoliberal ideology. The eco-communitarian aim is to reconfigure sovereignty through the construction of a progressive environmental citizenry, in which non-humans species and future generations are included in a multicultural, social-democratic nation-state. Nowhere in this narrative are *immigrants* deemed “savage.” Rather, *immigration* provokes opposition in relation to its alleged complicity with a neoliberal political economic agenda.

My argument, however, is that eco-communitarians advance an ethical imaginary that is incapable of recognizing the complex structures through which environmental and social injustices are institutionalized, and therefore is unable to provide a satisfactory adjudication of ethical obligation. While the extreme political economic impacts of neoliberalism are accepted, a normative ideal of ethical obligation contingent on membership within a sovereign political culture serves to displace blame for environmental (and social) degradation away from the very sovereign structures that produce harm and toward migrant populations. As a consequence, the progressive *rhetoric* of eco-communitarianism is not matched in *practice* by the extremism of their policy prescriptions. I conclude that, whether driven by ontological or strategic

⁹⁶Tanton was removed from the Board of Directors immediately after the article appeared – purportedly for health reasons – but three months he later re-emerged as a member of the Board of Advisors (Piggott 2011).

commitments, eco-communitarianism continues to rely on black-boxed notions of “national cultures” and state-centric logics of morality that resonate strongly with contemporary nativists. For this reason, the discourse should be forcefully rejected by environmentalists concerned with social justice.

The Crisis of Neoliberal Globalization

In the June 16, 2008 issue of *The Nation*, America’s Leadership Team placed a full page ad depicting a bulldozer plowing through a pristine forest. Linking the destruction of nature with a pro-growth ethos, the headline proclaimed the machine “One of America’s Best Selling Vehicles”:

Bulldozer sales in America have been booming. Road builders need them to level rolling hills into concrete interchanges and bypasses. Developers need them to turn farmland into housing developments and shopping malls. You can find big earthmoving equipment throughout America, turning our most picturesque land into suburban sprawl, while adding to some of the worst traffic problems in the world. Yet the bulldozers keep on coming, ripping up some of the most beautiful farms and forests in the world and turning them into concrete and asphalt suburbs. But with U.S. census projections indicating our population will explode from 300 million today to 400 million in thirty years and 600 million before 2100, bulldozer sales should keep on booming. Unless we take action today. The Pew Hispanic Research Center projects 82% of the country’s massive population increase, between 2005 and 2050, will result from immigration. And with every new U.S. resident, whether from births or immigration, comes further degradation of America’s natural treasures.⁹⁷

In a move reflective of broader eco-communitarian tactics, the imperiled state of “our” national wilderness is here attributed to the priority placed on economic development; an unfortunate trend that is argued to proceed in direct relation to population growth. More population, it is argued, inevitably breeds more environmentally destructive economic growth.

As this ad indicates, the central pillar of eco-communitarianism remains a familiar neo-

⁹⁷ The ad can be publicly accessed through the Californians for Population Stabilization website: http://www.capsweb.org/content_elements/recent_advertising/bulldozer_print_2008.pdf (April 12, 2012)

Malthusian logic, but this emergent discourse – unlike the libertarianism of nativism or the ambivalent political economic perspective of eco-nativism – couches the crisis of population growth in a forceful critique of neoliberal economic policies. In his 2001 Congressional testimony, Bill Elder, of *Sierrans for Population Stabilization*, echoed this sentiment: “Of course, some economic interests with a short-term outlook welcome population growth...

[e]nvironmentalists do not, because we understand its true environmental quality-of-life and economic costs.”

This sharp distinction between “the economic” and “the environmental” animates a zero-sum logic that is a hall-mark of eco-communitarianism. In a personal interview, William Ryerson, former President of *Progressives for Immigration Reform* and current President of the *Population Media Center*, spoke at length about the ways in which supporters of the *Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes* lobby for immigration on the grounds that the influx of cheap labor will drive economic growth (10/17/2011). Marilyn Chandler DeYoung, Chair of CAPS, concurred in remarking to me that the “business community is very reluctant to give up the cheap labor that they’ve had access to for so long” (personal interview, 5/23/2011).

However, self-interested attempts to attract flows of labor from “outside” only tell part of the story. William Rees, co-founder of the “ecological footprint” and Fellow at the *Post-Carbon Institute* puts forth a broader critique of liberal capitalism. Rees observes that “money enables people in rich countries to appropriate the carrying capacity of people in poor countries” (personal interview, 10/11/2011). Trade driven by liberal economic models, according to Rees, has created a condition in which rich countries have accumulated ecological footprints that vastly exceed their biophysical capacities:

Large populations are supported by trade and dumping waste into the global commons, moving people around doesn’t solve this. In a marketplace, wealthy

countries are still able to purchase biocapacity...Money enables people in rich countries to appropriate the carrying capacity of people in poor countries. People become incapable of providing enough of their own landscape to support themselves. (ibid; see also 2006, 222)

Herman Daly, the founder of “steady state economics,” extends these concerns over free-market trading practices to a whole-scale critique of “globalization”:

Globalization refers to the global economic integration of many formerly national economies into one global economy, mainly by free trade and free capital mobility, but also by somewhat easier or uncontrolled migration. It is the effective erasure of national boundaries for economic purposes. (2006, 187)

Contrasting the boundless telos of globalization – which he defines in solely economic terms – to the state-centric ideal of “internationalization,” Daly concludes that the emergence of a global economy has wreaked havoc on the national community:

[I]n the United States we have seen the abrogation of a basic social agreement between labor and capital over how to divide up the value that they jointly add to raw materials (as well as the value of the raw materials themselves, i.e. nature’s often-unaccounted value-added). That agreement has been reached nationally, not internationally, much less globally...That agreement on which national community and industrial peace depend, is being repudiated in the interests of global integration. That is a very poor trade, even if you call it ‘free trade’ (2006, 188).

Negotiating Exceptions to Neoliberalism

While Daly’s conception of globalization is one-dimensional,⁹⁸ his diagnosis of the contemporary political economic condition is more sophisticated, and alludes to the concept of “embedded liberalism” that has been developed by political scientist John Ruggie. Ruggie asserts that in the 1930’s through ’70’s, capital and labor reached a compromise of sorts, where “all sectors of society agreed to open markets...but also to contain and share the social adjustment costs that open markets inevitably produce” (2003, 93-4). Drawing on the work of Karl Polanyi

⁹⁸As Gill observes, “globalisation, as a process, is not amenable to reductionist forms of explanation, because it is multifaceted and multidimensional and involves ideas, images, symbols, music, fashions, and a variety of tastes and representations of identity and community” (1995, 405; see also Scholte 2000).

(1957, 2001 [1944]),⁹⁹ embedded liberalism refers to the idea that the gross inequalities and crises produced by the dominant *economic* system – liberal capitalism – can be, in part, warded off by embedding this system within specific *social* institutions.¹⁰⁰ Polanyi asserts that capitalism in its laissez-faire variants has a tendency to become disembedded from social norms, mutating into a logic of its own that extends an ethos of economic competition into all dimensions of social life (becoming the tail that wags the dog). Embedded liberalism, however, provided the American working class with social safety nets, healthcare, and pensions that insulated the lower and middle-classes from the ruptures that accompany liberal free-market systems (Polanyi 1957a; Ruggie 1982, 2003).¹⁰¹ In the United States, this took the form of the managerial liberalism of Keynes (institutionalized initially as the New Deal and continuing through the Great Society).

Starting in the late 1970's and early '80's, however, the compromise began to crumble. Ruggie observes that through the emergence of a neoliberal international regime – global production chains accompanied by domestic decisions of powerful states and reinforced by World Bank, IMF, and GATT (later WTO) mandates which forced the hands of less powerful states – the “compromise of embedded liberalism,” through which “nation-states” had retained

⁹⁹ Specifically, this account draws on Polanyi's seminal work, *The Great Transformation*, as well as his article, “The Economy as Instituted Process.”

¹⁰⁰ More specifically, Polanyi shows how previous economic forms were embedded in social relations of *reciprocity* or *redistribution*. As Ruggie notes, Polanyi demonstrated that “under neither tribal, nor feudal, nor mercantile conditions was there... a separate economic system in society.” Polanyi's contention is that capitalism tends to create an economic system driven by a logic that morphs into other sectors of social life; nature is transformed into land, life into labor, and exchange into money. While analytically and methodologically distinct, Foucault's examination of “neoliberal governmentality” comes to a similar conclusion in asserting that “neoliberalism” should be renamed “sociological liberalism”:

“Government must not form a counterpoint or a screen... between society and economic processes. It has to intervene on society as such, in its fabric and depth. Basically, it has to intervene on society so that competitive mechanisms can play a regulatory role at every moment and every point in society and by intervening in this way its objective will become possible, that is to say, a general regulation of society by the market” (2008, 145).

¹⁰¹ Ruggie takes care to point out that much of the “developing world” has long been ravaged by the crises of an asymmetrically deployed free-market. Access to embedded liberalism depended on one's position within the global political economy (2003, 94).

social legitimacy, was replaced by the dominance of the neoliberal rationale to which Daly refers.¹⁰²

And although neoliberalism is frequently portrayed in exclusively macro-political terms, as the dramatic scaling back of state intervention in the economic and social realms – i.e. “the state’s” withdrawal from the “private” sphere – Foucault has argued that it is, in fact, a new political rationality that necessitates the active cultivation of specific forms of subjectivity. As Ong remarks, “[n]eoliberalism is merely the most recent development of... techniques that govern human life, that is, a governmentality that relies on market knowledge and calculations for a politics of subjection and subject-making that continually places in question the political existence of modern human beings” (Ong 2006, 13). In this sense, neoliberalism is a technique of “governing through freedom,” that aims to construct entrepreneurial, consumptive, efficient subjects who, by internalizing market-knowledge, choose to exercise their freedom through economic rationales (e.g. “consumer sovereignty”) (Rose 1996). As neoliberal subjectivity becomes ever more prevalent, a neoliberal rationality is seeping into areas of life that had long been governed by non-economic logics (e.g. health-care, education, the management of state agencies, etc.), while it is simultaneously cast by proponents as founded in the “autonomous,” “expert-driven,” “objective” realm of economics. Neoliberalism, thus, functions as a subtle mode of depoliticization that “hides its ideological scaffolding in the dictates of economic efficiency and capital growth, in the fetishism of the free-market, in the exigencies of science and technology” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 242).

However, a neoliberal rationale is also used as justification for the relations of violence –

¹⁰²This replacement is dominant, but has not been hegemonic. Neoliberalisation is actively contested (oftentimes successfully), and has not been uniformly institutionalized. In the US, for example, one sees selective agricultural subsidies, continued evidence of the welfare state, and local and subnational governments proceeding through alternative political economic logics (see McCarthy and Prudham 2004).

the abandonment of certain populations to “bare life”¹⁰³ – that Agamben theorizes. For example, Ong recounts how, amidst the exceptional conditions of globalization, Southeast Asian states have reconfigured citizenship so that “highly-skilled” non-citizens obtain more political protections than many citizens, who increasingly toil in special administrative zones (absent environmental and social regulations, and subject to strict policing) disproportionately inhabited by women, racial minorities and “low-skilled” immigrants (ibid). In the American context, Henri Giroux details how neoliberalism has intersected with Republican “culture wars” in the discursive positioning of racial minorities and poor populations as lazy, lawless, disorderly “threats” to a society purportedly imperiled by the governmental inefficiencies that their care necessitates (Giroux 2006). In reflecting on the militarization of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Giroux concludes:

[N]eoliberalism, privatization, and militarism have become the dominant biopolitics of the mid-twentieth-century social state...the coupling of a market fundamentalism and contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of capital accumulation, violence, and disposability...has produced a new and dangerous version of biopolitics. (2006, 181)

Both theorists, thus, assert that the institutionalization of neoliberalism has been accompanied by the seemingly paradoxical expansion of coercive force aimed at sectors of the populace who defy or resist attempts to be molded into neoliberal subjects. Moreover, these examples make clear that these violent incursions are driven by the intersections between rationalities and practices of sovereignty, biopolitics and neoliberalism; various populations are valued differently in relation to a logic of neoliberalism and the strategic efforts of states, capital, and social actors (frequently driven by or at the mercy of these logics) to position themselves within flows set into motion by shifts within the global political economy. Immigrants occupy a

¹⁰³ Explored in the Introduction and Chapter One, “bare life” refers to populations whose very biological lives are forcefully managed, at the same time as they have been stripped of their political qualifications.

particularly precarious position within these struggles.

Ong recognizes, however, that while “neoliberalism as exception” is a powerful force, there are also ways in which states and societal actors carve out “exceptions to neoliberalism” by excluding “populations and places from neoliberal calculations and choices” (2006, 4). Efforts to construct exceptions to neoliberalism take widely divergent forms: ranging from providing social safety nets to denying particular populations the benefits accumulated through their participation in neoliberal regimes.¹⁰⁴ These projects also vary in terms of the political community they aim to invent, and the scale and social purpose of governance they seek to achieve. For example, while Ruggie attempts to theorize the emergence of a global public domain that might embed neoliberal reason within a supra-national form of governance, Daly is involved in an effort to negotiate an exception to neoliberalism by returning to an ideal of government by nation-states. Complicating this, Daly is not seeking to construct a Keynesian welfare state, but a “steady state” (albeit with socially-democratic tendencies) that institutionalizes strict limits to growth – economic, environmental and cultural – at the national scale (Daly 1974).¹⁰⁵ While most eco-communitarians do not frame their project in the technical, political economic terms of Daly, the entire discourse of eco-communitarianism is organized around an opposition to “free-markets,” “neoliberalism,” “development” or the “growth paradigm,” and a parallel sense that the “nation-state” has lost control amidst these powerful political economic forces. In this sense, eco-communitarianism represents an attempt to negotiate an exception to neoliberal globalization

¹⁰⁴According to Ong: “In Russia...subsidized housing and social rights are preserved even when neoliberal techniques are introduced in urban budgetary practices. At the same time, in Southeast Asia, exceptions to neoliberalism exclude migrant workers from the living standards created by market-driven policies” (2006, 4). The same phenomenon is occurring in the US, as the free-market ethos of NAFTA produces more migrants while hyper-nationalist sentiment has resulted in policies that have made both the act of migrating, and the ability of migrants to live securely once they arrive, far more precarious (I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Seven).

¹⁰⁵ Daly is one of many theorists to note that Keynesian, social welfare states are not necessarily environmentally-benign. Indeed, the Keynesian state, founded upon heavy industry and the continued stimulation of consumer demand, has been quite destructive ecologically (see also Eckersley 2004).

premised upon the destructive ecological implications that this phenomenon has wrought.

Returning to the America's Leadership Team advertisement, the bulldozer, it seems, has no driver – the visual does not portray the human actor responsible for the desecration of wilderness. However, the text, through a nuanced path that discursively articulates a connection between a neoliberal model of growth and the inability of the nation-state to protect its nature, (dis)places the destruction indirectly onto immigrant populations.¹⁰⁶ The ad suggests that “we” face a crisis of (eco)sovereignty. The forces of globalization, propelled by ideals of neoliberalism – themselves pushed forward by certain rationales institutionalized within powerful states and interests – have created a conjuncture where nation-states can no longer control the population dynamics that drive environmental degradation and social deterioration. In the remainder of this chapter, I detail how immigration is discursively linked with the economic interests of the actors driving neoliberalism, and constructed in opposition to the “environmentally responsible” communities, citizens and institutions that eco-communitarians seek to construct. My contention is that eco-communitarians seek to negotiate this exception to neoliberalism through a declaration of an *ecological state of exception* that is argued to necessitate the suspension of the “normal” social concerns that typify contemporary leftist political discourse.

¹⁰⁶This is significant. On one hand, a portrayal of “the immigrant” – in order to effectively mark any human figure as an immigrant – would have to be racialized in order to be made intelligible to popular imaginaries. Such a racialized depiction, however, would be forcefully critiqued by the leftist audience that eco-communitarians seek to target. Instead, they indicate the destructive force textually; in this medium, one can make the race of the perpetrator clear without even gesturing toward it. The popular perception of immigration in the United States is already punctured by a racialized discourse. The term “illegal immigrant,” in particular, immediately conjures up an image of “a Mexican” for many Americans (Chavez 2008).

Toward a Green State

This opposition to neoliberalism is itself not unique, as the dominance of neoliberalism is contested by many on both the left and right.¹⁰⁷ For opponents on both sides of the political spectrum, the question that emerges is: how do “we” articulate “our” systems of governance and political communities in such a way as to allow beneficial flows passage inside these boundaries, while blocking flows that hamper “our” ability to organize social life toward the end(s) that “we” deem acceptable? For contemporary American progressives, in particular, an additional question necessitates consideration: How do we do so, without harming those populations that are already marginalized? What is novel about eco-communitarianism is the carefully crafted answer that is provided to this latter question, and the ways in which nature is folded into the response.

The eco-communitarian logic begins by constructing a sharp distinction between “immigrants as humans” and “immigration as policy.” Distancing himself from a nativist logic, Daly, also a board member of *Carrying Capacity Network*, remarks “[I]t is a terrible thing to be ‘anti-immigrant’... Immigration, however, is a policy, not a person, and one can be... ‘pro-immigration limits’ without in the least being anti-immigrant” (2006, 189). In the same vein, the mission statement of the Center for Immigration Studies proclaims that the organization is “animated by a “low-immigration, pro-immigrant” vision of an America that admits fewer immigrants but affords a warmer welcome for those who are admitted” (2011). Similarly, in an article entitled “‘No’ to Immigrant Bashing,” Roy Beck of *NumbersUSA* observes:

The task before the nation in setting a fair level of immigration is not about race or some vision of a homogeneous white America; it is about protecting and enhancing the United States’ unique experiment in democracy for all Americans,

¹⁰⁷On the right, in particular, “an impassioned rhetoric of autochthony, to which alienness is the negative counterpoint, has edged aside other images of belonging at the end of the twentieth century... a fetishizing of origins seems to be growing up the world over in opposition to the liberal credo of *laissez-faire*” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 236).

including recent immigrants, regardless of their particular ethnicity. (1996)

Eco-communitarians insist, however, that in order to provide for continuation of this multicultural “experiment in democracy,” ecological limits must be respected. In articulating these limits, although eco-communitarians continue to advance forceful neo-Malthusian critiques, their population anxieties are increasingly wedded to a national cultural consumptive imaginary. For example, a widely cited *Carrying Capacity Network* study suggests that immigrant levels of consumption rise dramatically in coming to the United States:

We need to recognize the simple fact that the last thing this world needs is more Americans. The world just cannot afford what Americans do to the earth, air, and water. And it does not matter whether these Americans are Americans by birth or by border crossing. It does not matter what color their skin is. It does not matter what language they speak or which god they worship. What matters is that they will live like Americans. (Dinalt 1997)

That the CCN study was methodologically dubious,¹⁰⁸ did not stop other restrictionists from citing it as empirical fact. In a recent article in *Environmental Ethics*, Cafaro and Staples, echo the same logic in juxtaposing average American ecological footprints with averages from the US’s top ten immigration source countries: “On average, immigrating from nine of these ten countries greatly increases an individual’s ecological footprint – and the ecological footprints of his or her descendants – by 100 percent to 1,000 percent or more” (2009, 26). In other words, Americans – writ large – are consumers, and more Americans means more consumption. This sentiment both distances itself from the un-reflexive nationalism of nativist groupings, and taps into the collective consciousness of environmentalists through an appeal to transform America into a responsible *global* environmental steward by limiting “our” consumptive practices.

¹⁰⁸Dinalt simply compares the per capita consumption patterns of different countries with the United States, and concludes that in moving to the United States, immigrants will adopt “our” consumptive patterns. For example, he asserts that the average American’s energy consumption is 508% that of the average Mexican’s, and then concludes that in moving to the US, this immigrant increases his consumption by 508%. This obviously fails to take into account asymmetries in consumption, assumes a static level of consumption in developing states, and presupposes that immigrants will assimilate to this “American” cultural pattern. No empirical evidence is offered for any of these.

In fact, concerns over increased consumption are frequently linked with America's "global obligation" to ameliorate the crisis of global warming. In the most polished restrictionist analysis to date, Kolankiewicz and Camarota (2008) begin with these per capita national consumptive statistics, but attempt to control for vast asymmetries in consumption by including per capita income as a variable.¹⁰⁹ The authors use this simple univariate comparison to come to the conclusion that while "CO₂ emissions of the average immigrant...in the United States are 18% less than those of the average native-born American...immigrants in the United States produce an estimated four times more CO₂...as they would have in their countries of origin" (2008, 1). Based upon this, they conclude that immigration to the United States further contributes to global warming.

Although this method is no doubt an improvement over the CCN study, it fails to unpack the myriad intervening variables that impact CO₂ emissions,¹¹⁰ and assumes a static level of consumption in developing states. While growth in consumption is an ethical imperative for many in the developing world, the study depicts continued poverty for would-be-immigrant populations as the de facto "solution" to the crisis of global warming. Despite these shortcomings, Camarota, of the Center of Immigration Studies, recently cited his aforementioned findings in a prepared statement to the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on

¹⁰⁹To provide an idea of the logic being advanced, the authors begin with the assertion that per capita CO₂ emissions in Mexico is 3.75 metric tons, while, in the US, it is 20.14 metric tons. While the average income in the US is roughly \$35,000, the average Mexican immigrant earns a little under \$19,000 in coming to the US (about 53% of the national average). Kolankiewicz and Camarota, therefore, multiply the average American's CO₂ emission (20.14) by 53% and conclude that the average immigrant will produce 10.71 metric tons of CO₂ in coming to the US, as opposed to 3.75 in Mexico (ibid 2008, 5).

¹¹⁰Methodologically, while equating income with CO₂ emissions makes intuitive sense, there are a whole host of intervening variables at play. In the most holistic analysis to date, Jay Squalli examines the relationship between immigration and environmental degradation at both county and state levels. Through a multivariate analysis focused on CO₂, PM₁₀, SO₂ and NO₂, he finds "no evidence of the association between these aspects of population composition and levels of the four considered pollutants" (2009, 259). He further concludes: "there is no evidence supporting the contention that immigrants adopt the consumption patterns of their American-born counterparts" (2010, 1170).

Immigration and Claims, asserting:

immigration has the effect of transferring population from the less-polluting parts of the world to the more-polluting parts of the world...[t]hus even if the highest priority is placed on reducing the emission of greenhouse gases worldwide, immigration is still counterproductive. (2001, 32)

Furthering this line of thought, a recent CAPS television ad portrayed an actor reciting the conclusions as if they were commonsensical observations:

Concerned about America's carbon footprint? Then you should be concerned about immigration. Sound crazy? Immigrants produce four times more carbon emissions in the US than in their home countries. (2008)

Yet another CAPS piece appeared in *Roll Call* under the headline: "Mass Immigration and Global Warming: Gives the Term Melting Pot a Whole New Meaning." The text continues:

America leads the world in many different categories and capacities. Unfortunately, when it comes to global warming, we're leading the world in the wrong direction. The US generates more greenhouse gas emissions and pollution than any country. The root cause? Out of control immigration growth fueled by mass immigration...It's time to lead the world on the right direction in global warming. The first step is setting the right example by rolling back mass immigration to sensible levels that will allow America to begin healing its environment here at home. Then we can truly begin to lead the world in global warming.

The advertisement makes an overt appeal to the "external" dimension of sovereignty by asserting that the continued presence of America as a global leader is contingent upon actions "at home" from which our legitimacy as an international leader is derived. Put differently, non-human flows, like CO₂, that originate in the US, have global environmental implications. To decrease these destructive *non-human flows*, "we" need to block the incursion of "foreign" *human flows* in order to secure the approval of an international community that functions through a morality of state-centricity. Of course, the political economic flows – the movement of capital, global production chains, and a dominant neoliberal ideology – that drive this movement of bodies, enable these shifts in consumption, and complicate this state-centric morality, are never

mentioned in these studies, advertisements and testimonies.

Nonetheless, these “facts” of consumption are continually cited by environmental restrictionists and, amongst the network of restrictionist organizations, are transformed into veritable truisms. In this respect, they are premised upon a subtle form of methodological nationalism that plays a “citational” role in the more theoretical manner that Judith Butler conceptualizes the term (2006 [1990]; see also Gregson and Rose 2000).¹¹¹ Eco-communitarians “perform” the boundaries of the “green nation-state” by naturalizing territorial borders through the routinized citation of subject-positions premised on dichotomies between “citizen” and “immigrant,” “inside” and “outside,” “domestic” and “foreign.” This logic insists that when one steps across a line, one's consumptive practices immediately begin to adhere to the linear patterns of an Other national culture. With this, “the immigrant” becomes a stable identity in environmental discussions; national membership is *the* referent in relation to which a subject's environmental beneficence or negligence can be gleaned.

And while sustainability is conventionally measured in accordance with a “triple-bottom line” – across environmental, social and economic dimensions – the narrative of ecological crisis that accompanies these statistics allow the environmental component to take precedence. However, the nature-in-crisis articulated by eco-communitarians is shot-through with the trappings of the nation-state. Indeed, if income alone is the driver of CO2 emissions, then one wonders why immigration would even be brought into the mix? Why not attempt to stop economic growth or upward mobility instead? Immigration is emphasized because the other

¹¹¹Gregson and Rose explain that, for Butler, “the ‘doing’ of discourse cites already established formations of knowledge and it is this citation which produces social subjects” (2000, 436). Through words, gestures, and acts, subjects reinforce and/or resist these formations of knowledge. It should be noted, that there always exists “slippage,” as the heterogeneity of immigrant populations, and the strategies of anti-restrictionist forces, demonstrate the contingency of the signifier “immigrant,” and complicate the ontological foundation that the distinction between “citizen” and “non-citizen” rests upon.

solutions are not politically-viable as a consequence of the undesirable social impacts that would accompany them. There are, thus, normative choices embedded in the eco-communitarian analysis; it is not an effort to simply “speak for nature.” Put differently, the eco-communitarian “nature” is rendered intelligible through foundational ontological assumptions about the management of space and subjectivity. Specifically, the logic takes advantage of a national imaginary in which “the immigrant” enjoys increasingly little ethical standing. Eco-communitarians employ the same methodological nationalism of eco-nativists, but couch their “objective” claims within an internationalist discourse where global environmental stewardship is dependent upon shifts in essentialized national cultural consumptive patterns.

Natural Places and Ethical Obligations

This acknowledgement of the global scope of environmental problems begs the question: if nature is a global concern, why focus on national solutions? In anticipating this critique, eco-communitarians make it clear that a call for global responsibility is not a call for “globalism.” For example, in reinforcing his distinction between “internationalization” and “globalization,” Herman Daly asserts that globalization threatens not just the authority of the state, but the social purpose on which a sense of national community depends. This is so, according to eco-communitarians, because of the complicity between global arrangements and the interests of capital. Specifically, eco-communitarians, as I have noted, stress that lax immigration policies are in the interests of transnational elites; lobbied for by neo-classical economists, multinational corporations, and neoliberal interest groups, because they produce a flexible, mobile labor force with no sense of “*place*.”

The echoes of romantic linkages between national culture and wilderness are readily apparent here. “Place,” in the eco-communitarian narrative, represents “a deep attachment to

specific geographies fashioned by repeated interactions that provide both the context and content for the construction of personal and cultural identity” (Chapman 2006, 216). While national communities, according to Chapman, are founded upon close interactions with sacred places, globalization destroys these attachments in order to project onto the Earth a capital-friendly landscape of “space,” a “mere spatial extension that lacks the capacity to uniquely influence what it contains” (ibid, 215-16). Following this line of thought, Cafaro links protection of “place” – specifically, the *natural place* – with patriotism, or love of “the fatherland” (2010b, 192-3):

Environmental activists typically work to protect the places they know and love, whether it is open-space threatened by sprawl, or a downtown threatened by a new Super Wal-mart... They do all this not to make a buck, but because they care about where they live and other special places they have gotten to know, and because they want to preserve them for their children and grandchildren. (ibid, 192)

Objectively, one place is not more important than the other. But for me, I care about particular places. They’re the places I know. They are the places that I can engage to protect within the political framework... For me, I’m a patriot, I think. I care about my country. I care about the country that my children are going to live in most likely, and my grandchildren. More than I care about other places. And I think that’s a very powerful motivator for people. It’s been a powerful motivator in protecting national parks... I think it’s good for people to really care more about the places they live in. (personal interview, 2/8/11)

Place, thus, functions as a national environmental and social necessity that is being undone by the deterritorializing impulses of neoliberalism.

Through this narrative, neoliberal hegemony is linked with a “global space,” in opposition to progressive environmentalism, which is the product of a “national place.” By opening up “the nation-state” to a variety of economic flows, neoliberalism is argued to diminish the capacity of “the state” to deal with social and environmental problems that “the Nation” deems legitimate sources of concern; a phenomenon only amplified by heightened immigration.

For instance, Cafaro wonders how citizens could be convinced to make environmental sacrifices if national projects to, say, decrease carbon dioxide output, were countered by population growth from immigration:

If we want to convince our more skeptical fellow-citizens to follow our lead and consume less, we need to get population growth under control... [Saying] ‘you need to consume less, make these efforts and sacrifices, so that our country can accommodate tens of millions more Mexicans, tens of millions more Chinese. . . and all their descendants’... Even a reasonable and conscientious citizen might well ask why he or she should bother.

Bill Elder reiterated this position in his Congressional testimony:

As environmentalists, we think people are entitled to cleaner air (water that we can swim and fish in, etc.), not just the same quality we have now. We also think that many Americans will make sacrifices to accomplish such goals. But we do not think Americans will respond to the call to conserve – only to see the fruits of their sacrifice eaten up by government sponsored population growth. (U.S. Congress 2001, 39)

In order for “the state” to attain the political capital necessary to provide a range of environmental protections for its citizens, citizens must be prepared to practice and demand sacrifice. And these sacrifices are contingent upon the ability and willingness of “the state” to assert control over its territorial boundaries in order to stem population growth. In short, environmental sacrifice necessitates correspondence to the historical ideal of a nation-state that possesses an absolute ability to regulate the entrance of external flows (what Krasner has termed, “interdependence sovereignty”).

The appeal being made to political community here is not one of blatant hyper-nationalism, but a communitarian concern for self-determination wedded to the purported exigencies of a global environmental crisis (a crisis that already faces an uphill battle in a period of neoliberal hegemony). Undergirding the narrative is a sharp division between “the economic” – associated with instrumental reasoning, narrow self-interest, private benefit, and the global

scale – and “the environmental” – associated with intrinsic value, broad conceptions of interest, public benefit, and the national scale. Chapman, for instance, boils down the complex political terrain on which debates over immigration and environmental degradation play out, into two groupings: “One group accepts the current neo-liberal paradigm supporting globalization, the other rejects it” (2006, 215). The logical conclusion is that “we” have a moral obligation to “our” nature and “our” future that trumps any responsibility to a populace that enjoys political rights elsewhere. As Cafaro and Staples argue: “[w]ith open borders, the interests of nonhuman nature would be sacrificed completely to the interests of people... The *economic interests* of would-be immigrants would trump the very existence of many nonhuman organisms, endangered species, and wild places in the United States” (2009, 19 my italics).

This discursive move brings up a tension in the eco-communitarian logic. On one hand, it is recognized that, within the extant political economic system, “our” quality of life is sustained through “ecological debt.” The consumptive practices that the economy *and environment* of the United States depends upon are contingent upon the importation of goods from outside – and the environmental degradation created through the resource extraction used to produce and ship these goods. Rees, for example, refers to developed nations’ unfair use of the world’s natural capital as “appropriated carrying capacity” (personal interview, 10/11/2011). On the other, however, this *transnational* debt doesn’t translate into a transnational ethic. While recognizing the spatial reach and force of neoliberal globalization, eco-communitarians adjudicate ethical obligation through a normative ideal contingent upon the nation-state as the dominant (and legitimate) actor in political affairs. Chapman, for example, cites the seminal communitarian, Michael Walzer, in asserting that “sovereign nations have no legal mandate nor moral obligation to accept immigrants; indeed, nations have the legal right and in many cases the moral mandate

to control membership” (2006, 215; see also Daly 2006, 189).¹¹² Thus, while eco-communitarians recognize the devastating impacts that neoliberal globalization has wrought on nature and society – and the ways in which certain actors have been asymmetrically positioned to benefit from this order – they move from a (transnational) narrative of political economic linkages to a (state-centric) one of self-responsibility when debating issues of ethical obligation to immigrants:

It seems wrong to suggest that these achievements,¹¹³ which may provide meaning, secure justice, and contribute substantially to people’s quality of life, must be compromised because people in other countries are having too many children, or have failed to create decent societies themselves... Would be immigrants need to take up responsibilities for self-government which they and their leaders have neglected in their own countries. (Cafaro and Staples, 2009 20)

Oftentimes, this narrative of self-responsibility is coupled with the assertion that “we” face an ecological crisis so grave that it trumps the social ethics that would ideally be recognized in times of ecological normalcy. For example, while expressing sympathy for the myriad social and ethical dilemmas involved in immigration debates, Ehrlich and Ehrlich conclude that significant restrictions are essential for the transformations necessary to ward off ecological apocalypse:

To the degree that migration as a ‘safety valve’ keeps poor nations from squarely facing their own demographic problems while swelling the numbers of higher-income consumers, migration will have a negative influence on the chances of reaching global sustainability. (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 2004, 108)

Working within this communitarian framework, Chapman considers the right to a healthy national environment a “subsistence right;” in other words, a “right that is the condition for the

¹¹² Iris Marion Young critiques the communitarian logic as follows: “[c]ritics of the position that limits the scope of obligations of justice to members of a common political order are right to argue that it is arbitrary to consider nation-state membership as a source of obligations of justice. Political communities have evolved in contingent and arbitrary ways that are more connected to power than to moral right. People often stand in dense relationships with others prior to, apart from, or outside political communities” (2006, 104-5).

¹¹³ Cafaro is speaking here of domestic environmental laws and regulations, as well as shifts in consumption.

possibility of itself and other rights” (2006, 215). His contention is that national ecological destruction, caused by neoliberal globalization and the forces propelling it (immigrants included), is a crisis of such epic proportions that it trumps social concerns, and permitting entrance to immigrants would only precipitate the ecological crisis that awaits. Public pronouncements of eco-communitarians evince the intensity with which a declaration of ecological exception undergirds the narrative: Lester Brown’s “Plan B” series is subtitled “*Mobilizing to Save Civilization*”; Ehrlich recently publicly estimated that ‘there is only a 10% chance of avoiding a collapse of global civilization’ (Jowit 2011); and America’s Leadership Team concluded a 2009 ad:

If we can all agree on an immigration plan that is fair and workable, we can avoid the projected growth of another 100 million people in just 30 years. If we don’t, the demand for fresh, clean water will continue unabated. Until the tap runs dry.

The entire advertising campaign is geared to convincing American progressives and environmentalists of the need to take a temporary “time out” on immigration; to suspend their “normal” social concerns as a consequence of the crisis facing nature. Negotiating an exception to neoliberalism is, thus, premised upon the declaration of an ecological exception.

Sovereignty, Nature and Biopolitics

In order to reconfigure (eco)sovereignty amidst an ecological crisis created by neoliberal globalization, an ethical concern for “the immigrant” is displaced through a communitarian vision of an ecologically-flourishing nation-state where obligation to humans and non-humans alike is a function of inclusion within a bounded territorial and cultural community. In contrast with nativists, the “enemy” tying this communal narrative together is not immigrants or any foreign entity, but those amorphous forces of neoliberalism whose incessant flows debilitate the

types of ecological sacrifices that could be fashioned by a sovereign ecological state. In an attempt to secure these bounds, the national place of environmentalists is juxtaposed against a homogenous space of difference – the global space – in which transnational capitalists, immigrants, and cosmopolitan idealists all reside. In other words, immigrants are not the problem, global neoliberalism is; the reduction of immigrants to “bare life” emerges indirectly through a form of guilt-by-association.

It should be noted that the rhetoric of eco-communitarianism – steeped in a liberal language of equality – aims to eschew statements that could be viewed as derogatory, or dehumanizing, or as in any way constructing immigrants as “bare life.” At points, sympathy is expressed over the myriad plights faced by immigrants (though this does not match the sympathy extended toward non-humans), racism is rejected (though reduced to a purely interpersonal construct), and the political economic linkages driving immigration are duly noted (though greater emphasis is placed on internal problems in “sending” countries). Eco-communitarians generally detest NAFTA, want the US to give more humanitarian aid, and accept the necessity of action at the global scale.¹¹⁴ In fact, many eco-communitarians are radicals who would welcome the overhaul of the liberal political economic system. For example, when I asked Phil Cafaro about what ought to be done to achieve ecological sustainability, he predictably discussed a national population policy, but then laid out several additional steps:

Within the current system, I'd like to see us put a price on carbon...[and] I'd like to see us effectively reduce the impact of corporations on our political process. I think that would do more than anything else in helping to protect the environment...And then, if you really want to get utopian/optimistic about it, it's hard for me to imagine us creating sustainable societies in the context of the endless growth economy. So I'd like us start figuring out what a very different sort of economy would look like. (Personal Interview, 2/8/2011)

¹¹⁴ William Ryerson, for example, is President of the Population Media Center. Among other strategies, the PMC focuses on voluntary family planning for women in the developing world.

However, the perceived impossibility of changing the institutions and structures driving neoliberal globalization creates a selective utopianism where immigration restriction is somehow seen as the “low-hanging fruit” in efforts to ameliorate environmental degradation.

In attempting to legitimize this position as “progressive,” eco-communitarians claim that they are merely seeking to institutionalize the conclusions of two Clinton-era commissions: The US Commission on Immigration Reform (Jordan Commission) and the Council on Sustainable Development (Beck 2009, 16).¹¹⁵ But eco-communitarian prescriptions go far beyond the relatively ambiguous findings of these exploratory bodies. In fact, despite their seemingly benign rhetoric, eco-communitarians have embraced draconian policies: forcefully rejecting the Dream Act (Brown 2011), supporting Arizona’s SB 1070 (Durant 2010), seeking to repeal the 14th Amendment’s birthright citizenship clause, and calling for a temporary moratorium on immigration (ostensibly until the ecological crisis abates) before going back to “normal” levels of around 200,000 per year (America’s Leadership Team 2009). Not only are immigrants incapable of speaking or acting on behalf of Nature here, they are stripped of any potential for becoming national subjects, while their day-to-day lives are simultaneously exposed to the ever-present possibility of coercive force.

In sum, there exists a disjuncture between the carefully sculpted, progressive rhetoric of eco-communitarianism and prescriptions that are unquestionably illiberal. I do not mean to imply here that the “liberal” rhetoric is somehow disingenuous; to the contrary, I do not doubt that the humanitarian concerns expressed by the Ehrlichs, Rees, Ryerson, Cafaro and other eco-

¹¹⁵Although I would contest the idea that these Clinton-era panels are “progressive,” both commissions did conclude that reducing immigration was necessary to achieve ecological sustainability. However, neither called for the concrete proposals that contemporary eco-communitarians support. Moreover, in a study undertaken as part of the US Commission on Immigration Reform, Ellen Percy Kraly noted that significant data limitations exist, and asserted that despite a great deal of “popular commentary” on the matter, “[t]he direct or causal effects of U.S. immigration on the environment have not been established...through scientific study” (1995, i). Given Squalli’s (2010, 2011) more recent findings, it is clear that this remains true today.

communitarians are sincere. But such concerns are always trumped by the perceived necessity of saving a Nature that only becomes intelligible through contingent articulations that subtly nationalize it: neo-Malthusian population anxieties are wedded to a national cultural consumptive imaginary; romantic ideals of American “natural places” are opposed to the “global spaces” of neoliberalism; and ethics constructed around “sovereign cultures” elevate a commitment to the nation’s nature above any obligation to social Others. The result is a tripartite logic: (1) the diagnosis of an ecological exception created by neoliberal globalization; (2) the conclusion that ecological sustainability, which outweighs all social goals, can only be pursued within the nation-state; and (3) the evangelism with which these Truths are advanced.

As such, despite the liberal communitarian rhetoric, I have yet to find a single example of a liberal communitarian prescription driven by an ethos that recognizes “the immigrant” as a political subject worthy of ethical obligation: that echoes more socially-attuned deep ecological thinkers in arguing for a gradual and humane decrease in population;¹¹⁶ that recognizes the value of compromise in attempting to balance the exigencies of protecting nature with the exigencies of correcting for egregious social injustices; that does anything but reduce the lives of immigrants to mere “consuming units” (King 2007, 320); or that focuses on the structural causes of immigration, and proposes concrete solutions that would ameliorate these “push factors.” Instead, what I have found is a prescriptive politics organized around the dictates of national ecological emergency; one that attempts to reconfigure sovereignty in order to insulate America’s natural places from the ruptures of globalization, and asserts that this is ethical because it will help to protect non-humans and ameliorate America’s ecological debt. Of course, those populations whose lives have already been deleteriously impacted by that debt are left to fend for

¹¹⁶ Reflecting on the Deep Ecology Platform (DEP), Michael Zimmerman contends that “done humanely, as deep ecologists insist, reducing population to a desirable level...might take up to one thousand years” (1994, 26).

themselves under the state-centric norms of communitarianism.

The Biopolitics of a Post-racist Racism

Interestingly, despite passionate appeals for saving natural places, and an explicitly-stated *normative* preference for a communitarian vision of sovereignty, the eco-communitarian discourse frequently falls back into a logic of hyper-objectivity when faced with environmentalists who oppose immigration-reduction. Anyone who disagrees is accused of not looking at the facts, but instead “playing the race card” (Beck 2009) or succumbing to “political correctness” (Beck and Kolankiewicz 2000), or being influenced by their “bleeding heart” rather than reason.¹¹⁷ The idea is the emotional resonance of the immigration debate is so intense that these dissenters are unwilling to speak the Truth and/or unable to even grasp reality.

However, the sheer passion of these eco-communitarian reactions betrays the evangelism that underlays their position. Eco-communitarians cannot even fathom that one could come to an alternative conclusion; they are unable to accept the legitimacy of opposing truths.¹¹⁸ Their political terrain is divided between Friend (guardians of wilderness, like-minded environmental scientists, protectors of American cultural autonomy) and Enemy (globalists, neoliberals, immigrants), and there is no room for nuance. There is one path to saving “our” sacred natural places, and eco-communitarians are the ones who know the way (it is no surprise that Brown seeks to instruct us how to “Save Civilization,” or that the title of the Ehrlichs’ *One with Ninevah* comes from a fabled biblical city that was done in by environmental collapse). When anyone dares to accuse eco-communitarians of racism, the reaction is even stronger; the accusers are

¹¹⁷ The working title of Cafaro’s book-in-progress is: “Bleeding Hearts and Empty Promises: A Liberal Rethinks American Immigration.” http://www.applythebrakes.com/leader_detail.asp?id=16

¹¹⁸ As I detail in Chapters 7 and 8, there are many alternative ways of approaching immigration and environmental policies.

“blinded about population concerns by [their] emotions...rather than from any interest or knowledge about the environment” (Pasternak 2011), or are engaging “in ad hominem and McCarthyesque attacks of the worst kind” (DeYoung 2011).¹¹⁹ As Roy Beck puts it, “[t]he environmental argument against high immigration is so upsetting and challenging to many liberal Americans that they resort to fabricating a myth that those perpetrating the environmental argument are really just racists hiding behind arguments that are acceptable to mainstream Americans” (2009).

However, there are good reasons to consider both the racialized impacts of restrictionist prescriptions, and the ways in which racist logics have broadened the appeal of the current environmental restrictionist coalition. Specifically, eco-communitarians demonstrate a profound capacity to look past the racial implications of the policies they support, like SB1070, and a blatant willingness to ignore the racist and xenophobic positions of their strange bedfellows in order to forge strategic alliances (case in point is the inclusion of the AIC Foundation in America’s Leadership Team).¹²⁰ As Salazar and Hewitt note:

¹¹⁹ This coming from the same person who told me in an interview that “Muslims are trying to take over the world by having more babies” (personal interview, 5/23/2011).

¹²⁰ For example, the 2011 documentary, “GrowthBusters” – a look at the linkages between economic growth and population growth – has attracted a great deal of positive press amongst environmentalists. Interestingly enough, the nativist website VDare also liked the film (Collins 2011). While there is nothing eco-communitarians can do to stop nativists from promoting their material, they could do much more to demonstrate an awareness of the historical intersections between population control, race, gender and nativism. Instead, they explicitly promote a language of color-blindness that doesn’t do justice to the way in which population control plays out, even today. For example, Dave Gardner, the creator of the Growthbusters, recently responded to a reader of his blog who commented on these historical linkages. Gardner insisted that,

“while it is good to know about this history, I don’t feel a strong need to bring it up. Frankly, those trying to stifle the conversation bring it up more than enough. That was past and while it is good to be on guard, that history says nothing about current efforts and motives. Nothing” (2011).

And while the film itself does not deal with immigration, a quick review of the website found links to restrictionist organizations, like FAIR. The legal arm of FAIR, it should be noted, is headed up by Kris Kobach, who was the main author of the Alabama and Arizona laws. In yet another example of this, Progressives for Immigration Reform links to the Carrying Capacity Network on its recommended “Resources” page. CCN, as I detailed in the last chapter, is directed by self-described ethnic separatist, Virginia Abernethy. The dark side of population control is readily apparent even on the websites of groups who are so quick to deny it exists.

As much as environmentalists take pains to separate immigrants from immigration, the experience of Latino's in the U.S./Mexico border region suggests that enforcement officials often fail to distinguish between (brown) skin color and (illegal) immigration status. Environmentalists rhetorical distinction does not comfort those who suffer from the border patrol's corporeal conflation. (2001, 302)

As the power to detain is extended to a variety of local and state-level actors, the impacts on non-white citizens become more severe. Under the eco-communitarian ethos of sovereignty, racist and nativist policies are explicitly denounced, but their state-centric morality, coupled with a narrative of ecological exception, results in policy prescriptions and coalition-building steeped in biopolitical valuations that *attempt to* reduce immigrant (and, increasingly, Latino citizen) populations to bare life.

Conclusion

Comaroff and Comaroff observe that “imagining the nation rarely presumes a deep horizontal fraternity anymore...[w]hile most human beings still live as citizens *in* nation-states, they tend only to be conditionally, partially, and situationally citizens *of* nation-states” (2001, 240). In such a conjuncture, the cultural essentializations that nativists and eco-nativists rely upon will not find resonance amongst the “liberals” that American restrictionists need to expand and further legitimize their movement. In attempting to appeal to “progressive” interests, eco-communitarians articulate an opposition to neoliberalism, appeal to a multicultural (as well as intergenerational and interspecies) nation, emphasize the need for global environmental stewardship, extend their over-riding focus on population to consumption, and express concern for the romantic “natural places” that can only be saved through particularistic attachments wedded to ideals of nationhood. All of this is couched within a broader condition of ecological crisis.

Despite this apparently progressive discursive shift, my critique of eco-communitarianism has proceeded at two levels. First, eco-communitarians fail to consider the broader political terrain on which their argument is lodged. For eco-communitarians, this appeal to a communitarian nationalism is, in part, strategic. For instance, Cafaro has argued in favor of linking environmentalism with patriotism: “Environmentalists, who generally skew left politically, might have been able to block some of these assaults on nature, if we could have found common cause with conservatives for whom patriotism themes resonate” (Cafaro 2010, 195). But at what cost? As political theorist Robyn Eckersley writes in her own discussion of eco-communitarianism, whether or not environmentalists should situate their projects in narratives of nationalism or patriotism depends on careful consideration of the discursive, institutional and historical context. She contends that: “In the absence of an engaged citizenry and a robust public sphere, facilitated and informed by a diverse, independent and critical media, environmentalists may be better advised to challenge and subvert, rather than merely extend, the language of patriotism by calling on us all to become planetary patriots and global ecological citizens” (2008). In the US – a national context that not only lacks a critical media, but also has a long history of exclusion based on race and culture – hyper-nationalists can too easily appropriate this patriotic language to serve purposes that are both racist and nativist.

As greens have become aware that nativists are doing just that, environmentalist organizations (including those comprised of individuals sympathetic to population concerns, but also concerned with social justice), have become divided.¹²¹ For this same reason, the environmental restrictionist position also disables one of the most potentially impactful avenues for environmental progress – further alliance-building between traditional environmentalists and other social groupings on the left (labor, civil rights, and social justice organizations) who have

¹²¹ The splintering of the Sierra Club into opposing factions amidst these debates is a perfect example.

been historically under-mobilized on environmental issues.

And yet, one could argue that these strategic considerations alone do not make the eco-communitarians “wrong.” My more foundational critique, at the ontological level, is that the extant structure of sovereignty that eco-communitarians recognize in their diagnosis of the crisis of neoliberal globalization, does not mesh with the structure of sovereignty that they revert to in their adjudication of ethical obligation. It should be noted that nature is definitively not “sovereign” in the eco-communitarian logic; as Cafaro, Chapman, Daly and Rees make clear, it is enmeshed in a liberal communitarian imaginary. Eco-communitarians recognize that the proper relationship between immigration, environmental degradation and sovereignty, cannot be “solved” by a simple empirical analysis. Rather, this matter necessitates difficult normative choices over what populations – human and non-human – ought to be included in the political community, what the social purpose of the political community ought to be, and what “our” obligation is to those lives outside. However, anytime their position is opposed – oftentimes, for the ontological reasons that I have just alluded to – eco-communitarians double-down on a sovereign “Nature,” where numbers are all that matter, and biophysical analysis of the non-human realm can arrive at the Truth of how we ought to deal with environmental degradation, without mediation from “Culture.”

The result is an environmental imaginary that is unethical, strategically ineffective, and logically inconsistent. In the last analysis, the inconsistencies of this approach – the shift between the conceptualization of structures of sovereignty and that of ethical obligation, as well as the instrumentality with which Nature is drawn in to support the biopolitical dictates of immigration reduction – suggest that the eco-communitarian opposition to immigration has less to do with immigrants themselves (and their impacts on the environment), than it does with the impacts of

neoliberal globalization on an ideal of Nature that is irrevocably bound up in an antiquated conception of an autonomous national culture.

CHAPTER SEVEN RESPONDING TO RESTRICTIONISM

The Crisis of Exclusion

Environmental restrictionism has met skepticism from those who have found racial, gendered, class-based, and neocolonial undertones in the logics being advanced (Reimers 1998; Lindsley 2001a, 2001b; Salazar and Hewitt 2001; Hartmann 2004; Bhatia 2004; Rutherford 2005, Muradian 2006, Urban 2007; King 2007, 2008; Levison et. al. 2010; Pearce 2010; Park and Pellow 2011). Academic and activist critics alike – the latter including the Center for New Community, Southern Poverty Law Center, Committee on Women Population and Environment, Political Ecology Group, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and America’s Voice, among others – have asserted that the territorialized Nature advanced by restrictionists is inadequate in considering the difficult ethical questions stemming from historical injustices and spatial interconnections.

Empirically, determining the environmental impact of migration is complex, and the “objective” conclusions drawn by restrictionists are strongly contested (Kraly 1995, 1998; Squalli 2009, 2010). Ethically, the recognition of asymmetric power relations in a period of intense cross-border flows turns questions of responsibility and obligation for rectifying both environmental and social problems into incredibly delicate matters (Salazar and Hewitt 2001, Urban 2008). For example, in locating a global ethical obligation with the “United States” writ large, eco-communitarians displace any social obligation to non-members while reshaping the contours of “nation-state” in an “ecological” direction. However, membership within the “nation-state,” as Iris Marion Young has argued, may not be the appropriate locus of ethical responsibility in a period where sovereign authority, control and legitimacy intermingle amongst

a variety of actors across a spectrum of scales:

critics of the position that limits the scope of obligations of justice to members of a common political order are right to argue that it is arbitrary to consider nation-state membership as a source of obligations of justice. Political communities have evolved in contingent and arbitrary ways that are more connected to power than to moral right. People often stand in dense relationships with others prior to, apart from, or outside political communities. (2006, 104-5)

The voluminous research on the social and environmental impacts of NAFTA provides a useful illustration here. NAFTA produced what Matthew Sparke terms a “transnational state effect” – reregulating through “the commodity by commodity, service by service, exception by exception recodification of tariff designations, along with their detailed timetables for implementation... accompanied by a whole range of new investment rules and...the recodification of intellectual property rights too” (2005, 145-147). Though this form of managed trade necessitates the active role of the state (in customs, oversight of economic transactions, and so on), the ability of the US, Mexico and Canada to implement environmental and social regulations was significantly curtailed by the new transnational administrative regime (ibid; see also McCarthy 2004).¹²²

At the same time as this transnationalization was occurring, however, hyper-nationalist responses were being deployed to delegitimize the aforementioned shifts in authority by articulating a state of exception in which the growing “flood of immigrants” was argued to threaten the sovereignty of the American nation-state. This resulted in several federal laws that,

¹²²Specifically, Chapter 11 of NAFTA institutionalized a logic of “regulatory takings” whereby states and localities were potentially subject to legal action for any policy that might impact the property value or expected return on investment of corporations (McCarthy 2004). In other words, NAFTA “involved giving corporations the quasi-constitutional right to sue national and local governments if such governments ever sought to re-nationalise or otherwise provide as public services privatized utility, healthcare or welfare services” (Sparke 2006, 158). Sparke concludes that this serves as a form of “new constitutionalism” (Gill 1995) that locks in neoliberal reforms by institutionalizing them in venues (e.g. the IMF, WTO, national banks, binational trade agreements) that operate at a distance from democratic rule.

in piecemeal fashion, began to militarize the border (Andreas 1998-99).¹²³ The militarization intensified after 9/11, and has been accompanied in recent years by a marked decentralization of immigration policy toward sub-state and local entities (Coleman 2007) that recently culminated in draconian anti-immigrant laws in Arizona, Alabama, and South Carolina. On a parallel but separate track, federal officials – constrained by the fiscal burdens of neoliberalism coupled with the realities of a militarized border – have turned to the private sector to manage the increased load of immigration detainees (Shapiro 2011), further complicating issues of transparency and accountability in an era when “expedited removal”¹²⁴ and “extraordinary rendition” are increasingly the norm in immigration policy (Sparke 2006).

Thus, in the case of NAFTA, sovereignty is migrating away from the state and toward transnational institutions (in broad terms of both authority and control of environmental and social affairs), at the same time as, in the closely related case of immigration policy (which has been driven in no small part by hyper-nationalist responses to NAFTA), sovereignty is becoming decentralized within the state – its coercive force extended to spatial areas far removed from the literal border, and enacted on a day-to-day basis by private actors driven by profit-motives. The response of many national level policy-makers (on both the left and right) to this seemingly paradoxical conjuncture has been to further militarize the border; a spectacular but largely ineffective demonstration of power designed to recapture legitimacy amongst those frustrated by

¹²³While I cannot do justice here to the history of the militarization of the border, it proceeded through both regulatory and legislative shifts (that both reinforced and responded to the micropolitical pressures of hypernationalism). Both have historical precursors (see Dunn 1996), but the former escalated in the early to mid-1990s with “Operation Gatekeeper,” “Operation Hold the Line,” and “Operation Safeguard.” The proximate origin of the latter was the 1996 IRIIRA – which doubled the size of the Border Patrol, and funded the construction of initial stretches of border fencing. The militarization has been furthered by the Patriot Act, the Enhanced Border Security Act, and the Real ID Act (for more detailed analyses, see Andreas 1996, 1998-99; Massey et. al. 2003; Coleman 2005, 2007).

¹²⁴In order to understand the true cruelty of this logic, one must view it in a relational perspective; expedited removal for marginalized populations was being enacted at the same time as *expedited crossing* was being granted for business elites (Sparke 2006, 173).

the national government's perceived inability or unwillingness to control the flows of people entering and exiting, without grappling at all with the structural factors that produce immigration in the first place (Brown 2010).

Given this complex political terrain, critics of environmental restrictionism argue that adjudicating questions of responsibility and obligation by turning to black-boxed "nation-states" or "national cultures" elides the profound asymmetries of power produced by the aforementioned structures. The case being made is that because environmental restrictionists have not identified the sovereign assemblages producing either immigration or environmental degradation, they cannot possibly formulate an adequate or ethical alternative. Despite this shared critique, there are two distinct discourses driving opposition to restrictionism: (1) *eco-cosmopolitanism* and (2) *radical political ecologism*. I have found that certain organizations and individuals use one or the other exclusively, but it is more common for opponents of restrictionism to employ the rhetoric of eco-cosmopolitanism at the same time as their practices gesture toward more complex, radical political ecological futures.

The Boundless Nature of Eco-Cosmopolitanism

The eco-cosmopolitan critique proceeds along three lines: (1) challenging the restrictionist emphasis on the national scale over the transnational or global; (2) critiquing the focus on population and highlighting the environmental impacts of consumptive asymmetries; and (3) detailing the social goals that motivate certain restrictionists to appropriate the language of Nature so that they may provide a veil over alternative, anthropocentric social projects.

The Global versus the National

For opponents, both the ideal form of governance and mode of political community that is best suited to protect Nature, bear little relation to our current socio-political units. As Salazar and Hewitt note, “a bicyclist pedaling through the Sonoran Desert (covering parts of California, Arizona, Sonora, and Baja California) would have difficulty making ecological or cultural sense of the U.S./Mexico border” (2001, 303). In other words, nature does not respect the inviolability of sovereign borders. Echoing this logic, eco-cosmopolitans assert that a real concern for nature exists in opposition to structures of sovereignty, and highlight forms of governance and political communities that eschew territorialization. For example, in response to restrictionist sentiment in Northern Colorado, Lisa Olivas, a spokesperson for the Fort Collins-based Center for Justice, Peace and the Environment argues that “when you look at population control, you have to look at it in a global sense...if you just say ‘immigration,’ that doesn’t help...they’re still on the planet” (Park 2007). Similarly, a recent Southern Poverty Law Center report emphasized that “most conservationists have come to believe that many of the world's most intractable environmental problems, including global warming, can only be solved by dealing with them on a worldwide, not a nation-by-nation, basis.” (Potok 2010). These statements both echo the Sierra Club’s official position statement:

The environmental and social impacts of population growth extend beyond national borders, affecting everyone that shares the earth's natural resources. Population growth increases the demand on natural resources, and impacts the entire global environment. (2008)

The logic being advanced here is that there is a functional mismatch between a territorially-bound nation state and the global scope of environmental degradation. This observation is typically coupled with an emphasis on the spatial reach of contemporary political economic structures. As the Political Ecology Group observes:

Downsizing, de-industrialization, and the shifting of production overseas by transnational corporations are consequences of the new global economy, where corporations have more freedom than ever to move capital and resources to places with cheaper labor and regulatory costs. At the same time, people are criminalized for moving to find work in areas where natural and economic resources are flowing. Today's economic, social and environmental woes are only made worse as opportunistic politicians attack immigrants, workers and the environment. (PEG 2006)

Consumption versus Population

This emphasis on political economic structures segues into the second line of defense against the restrictionist logic: an emphasis on the role that consumption plays in comparison with population in producing environmental harms. Regardless of the scale at which one chooses to deal with environmental degradation, the focus on population itself is a source of debate. Opponents critique the neo-Malthusian bearings of restrictionists and assert that a more holistic analysis of environmental degradation would place greater emphasis on consumption, thus shifting the burden for ecological restoration from the poor to the wealthy. For instance, the Political Ecology Group observes that “the impact of an immigrant family living in a one-bedroom apartment and taking mass transit pales in comparison to that of a wealthy family living in a single-family home with a swimming pool and two cars (1999, xxiii). Similarly, the Southern Poverty Law Center cites a 2005 study concluding that ‘if everyone in California went to work the way recently arrived immigrants did – by carpooling or using public transportation – that would reduce the number of cars on the road by nearly half’ (Scherr 2008, quoting Hayes-Bautista). Frank Sharry, of the Immigrants’ Rights group *America’s Voice*, sums up these sentiments neatly in a recent segment on National Public Radio: “I don’t think Americans think that immigrants are the cause of McMansions and SUVs and big oil companies who are ravaging the environment” (Ludden 2008). The underlying sentiment being expressed here is that the

“nature” of restrictionists is a bourgeois one. As immigration lawyer Kim Baker Medina put it:

One of the reasons [many immigrants] are coming here is because they can no longer grow in their countries...there’s no clean water. How do we tell these people, ‘don’t come here because you’ll spoil our bike paths?’ (personal interview, 1/7/12).

By paying excessive attention to population, restrictionists define the scope of the problem in ways that artificially inflate the environmental impacts of immigrants, with the blame falling particularly on female immigrants and immigrant families (e.g. the restrictionist move toward ridiculing “anchor babies”). As I detailed in Chapter 5, restrictionists place incredible emphasis on women’s fertility; an integral part of demography, they seek to quantify its rates in order to enable comparisons across populations and projections for the future. Whether done out of genuine environmental concerns or anxieties related to a declining Anglo-European majority, critics point out that this practice ignores the gendered nature of transnational neoliberal structures (Urban 2008). Female workers – many of whom were attracted to manufacturing zones, like the maquiladoras, by free-trade agreements, national development plans and the prospects of increased autonomy from traditional “domestic” roles – have been subject to low wages and harsh working conditions in a political climate of flexible labor where environmental and social standards may well mean the flight of capital to other locales (Pearson 1998).

Authenticity versus Appropriation

Operating alongside and reinforcing the classed and gendered nature of restrictionism is, according to critics, an intense racism that resides just beneath its surface. To underscore the centrality of exclusionary intentions to restrictionist politics, opponents highlight the connections between vocal restrictionist proponents and groups and individuals who have explicitly articulated racist ideologies that express anxiety over increased racial and ethnic diversity. For

example, John Tanton – the former Sierra Club Population Committee president and so-called “father” of the contemporary American anti-immigrant movement (discussed in-depth in Chapter Six) – is an especially controversial figure who has been accused by multiple organization of maintaining ties with noted hate groups (Southern Poverty Law Center 2002, Bhatia 2004, Muradian 2006). Numerous restrictionists have also received funding from eugenics advocates, such as the Pioneer Fund, and several – notably Virginia Abernethy, Wayne Lutton, Kevin Macdonald and John Vinson – have been associated with the white supremacist Council of Conservative Citizens and its *Occidental Quarterly* publication (Bhatia 2004, 211; Muradian 2006, 210).

The primary strategy of several opponents of restrictionism has been to vocally publicize these relationships in order to demonstrate that even those restrictionists who are well-respected in the broader environmental movement – eco-communitarians like the Ehrlichs, Lester Brown, William Ryerson, and so on – have no qualms about allying with blatant racists and xenophobes. For example, both the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Center for New Community have devoted considerable attention to outlining the “John Tanton Network” – a web of interconnection between the various institutions that Tanton created and has been involved with, and the organizations and individuals that currently publicly articulate an opposition to immigration on environmental grounds (see SPLC 2002b, Center for New Community 2009).

Opponents offer this social network mapping as proof that environmental restrictionists are not authentic eco-centrists, but are “nativists in three-piece suits who are smart enough to figure out how to present a face that looks like they’re progressive-minded” (Ludden 2008, quoting Frank Sharry). Restrictionists are said to represent an emerging trend whereby conservatives appropriate Nature in their attempts to refashion sovereignty along hyper-

nationalist, blatantly racist lines (Ward 2009, Potok 2010, Ross 2010). At their most nuanced, such appraisals characterize restrictionists in two categories: nativists and neo-Malthusians (Muradian 2006, 208-210; Bhatia 2004, 225). Whatever their differences, both logics are argued to err in failing to recognize that environmentalism is a global struggle that demands cosmopolitan modes of thinking (Potok 2010, 5). Restrictionists are alleged to be engaging in the “greenwashing of nativism” (Ross 2010); they are not real environmentalists, but “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (Beirich 2010).

Contesting Eco-Cosmopolitan Orthodoxy

Responses have by and large rejected eco-sovereignty as an exclusionary project that instrumentally uses a narrative of natural crisis in order to advance anthropocentric social ends. As an alternative, they have gestured toward the emancipatory, deterritorializing, and mutually constitutive spheres of radical ecology and social justice. Though the counter-narratives to restrictionism vary, the relationship between political community, governance and Nature is consistently argued to be straight-forward: “immigrants live closer to Nature;” or “Nature thrives on diversity;” or “Nature heeds no borders.”¹²⁵ The sovereignty of Nature, in other words, provides lessons that social life can be modeled on; the call of the Wild and the chants of social justice converge into a monotone.

While I sympathize with such responses, I believe that they could be strategically improved in three respects. First, an unintended consequence of the equation of a “real”

¹²⁵The idea that immigrants are “closer to nature” is expressed by an activist depicted in the CNC’s recent film: *The Green War on Immigrants* (2010). The notion that nature “thrives on diversity” was advanced by a well-intentioned audience member at a panel I was recently a part of (Center for Justice, Peace, and the Environment, 10/12/ 2009). The sentiment that nature “heeds no borders” can be found in Potok 2010.

commitment to nature with deterritorialized emancipation, is that the eco-communitarian narrative, which has the most potential to influence leftists, has been widely neglected (the relative nuances of eco-communitarianism do not need to be identified and grappled with if all restrictionists are racist, xenophobes who are merely appropriating nature). This is worrisome because the eco-communitarian logic taps into certain ontological foundations of mainstream American environmentalism – a rhetorical commitment to a multicultural nation, concern with consumption, attachment to place, emphasis on global stewardship and intergenerational justice, critique of neoliberalism, etc. – and, thus, needs to be forcefully addressed (an occurrence that is unlikely given the current strategic trajectory of critical responses). In certain *logical* respects, the eco-communitarian defense of nationalism is similar to Eckersley's. The solidarity inscribed within the nation provides a sense of public concern without which asking for environmental sacrifices would be impossible.

With this in mind, I contend that the primary eco-cosmopolitan strategy of social network mapping is a necessary dimension for building opposition, but not a sufficient one. In order to be effective, opponents need to grapple with the ways in which eco-centrism intersects with social exclusion. I simply cannot find any evidence that people like Paul Ehrlich or Willam Rees or Phil Cafaro do not care about nature; rather, it appears more likely that they care so much about a particular conception of "Nature" that they view efforts to protect it as ethical regardless of the implications on those existing outside the traditional political qualifications of the nation-state. Caught up in a twentieth century struggle against nativists and eco-nativists, I fear that the discourse of eco-cosmopolitanism misses the strategic leap taken by their opponents and leaves critics of restrictionism beholden to a strategy that is fundamentally reactive and unable to adequately contest restrictionism's twenty-first century iterations.

Second, the global cosmopolitan alternative being advanced is excessively universalizing. There is nothing inherently emancipatory about either global forms of governance or cosmopolitan ideals of political community. Indeed, the very photos of earth that many environmental and social advocates point to as gesturing toward some “planetary patriotism,” invoke a gaze that, according to some critics, is a mere continuation of an imperial tradition in which “Europe and North America have used rational and geometric projects that have allowed them to dominate the world and pass them off as neutral and unmarked” (Jazeel 2011, 81-2). It is, in other words, a view from a single (Eurocentric) perspective. Cosmopolitan visions (including specific iterations of Christianity, the European Enlightenment, and more recently, the neoliberal market) are haunted by specters of colonialism and imperialism, and are frequently deployed in the pursuit of ends tinged with nationalism (Mignolo 2000). In the case of global environmentalism, practitioners motivated by a desire to save a “universal” Nature (frequently a Malthusian, romantic or Darwinian nature) beyond national bounds have paid frustratingly little attention to the historical struggles and social contexts of the populations impacted by their (often well-intentioned) interventions in Latin America, Southeast Asia and Africa (Peluso 1993, Tsing 2004). In fairness, opponents of restrictionism at times recognize this. As Betsy Hartmann writes:

From colonial times onwards, wildlife conservation efforts have often involved the violent exclusion of local people from their land by game rangers drawn from the ranks of the police, military and prison guards. To legitimize this exclusion, government officials, conservation agencies and aid donors have frequently invoked narratives of expanding human populations destroying pristine landscapes, obscuring the role of resource extraction by state and corporate interests. (2004, 2)

Despite this recognition, I believe that opponents of restrictionism frequently turn to a rhetoric of eco-cosmopolitanism because of its intuitive pull and strategic leverage; the knowledge that non-human flows do not stop at political boundaries and the hope that images of

nature as global might forge more inclusive and ethical political communities. However, political projects founded upon the promise of eco-cosmopolitanism are ethically risky and strategically anemic. They by and large fail to effectively articulate how their cosmopolitanism will differ from past, exclusionary forms and they gesture toward a universal global condition rather than constructing strategies built on careful attention to contingent political conjunctures.

Third, the eco-cosmopolitan inability to move beyond an essentialist account of nature impacts their theorization of “the migrant” as a potential source of resistance. Although eco-cosmopolitans work to deterritorialize environmental thought – detaching issues of consumption and carrying capacity from the nationalistic foundations of restrictionism – they continue to search for a “standpoint linked to finding a space beyond the social” (Sandilands 1999, 69). The narrative is forged with an eye towards securing immigrants’ rights by showing “them” to be an ecologically conscious populace; immigrants, in other words, are closer to the *real* nature than most middle-class, white environmentalists. Yet, the figure of “the immigrant” as model eco-citizen is only sustainable so long as this populace adheres to the consumptive practices of the lower socio-economic echelon. This construction of “the immigrant” as an ecological steward who consumes less is an ahistorical artifice that does not stand up to the dynamism and difference inherent in actual immigrant populations. While it may work to momentarily disrupt certain restrictionist positions, it fails to politicize generalizable – often stereotypical – conceptions of “the immigrant.” More so, by maintaining a narrow focus on consumption – a private practice – the narrative does nothing to challenge dominant conventions whereby immigrant populations remain situated at the margins of public life. Though “the private” is politicized in order to reveal the variability of different populations’ environmental impacts, the violent exclusion of immigrants from the visible stage of public life remains intact. How can

immigrants participate as “environmentalists” in the same way as citizens can, if any appearance in the public sphere is contingent upon the construction of the immigrant as a noble savage functioning outside of the potentially deleterious impulses of modern civilization?

In light of this, I would argue that eco-cosmopolitanism remains beholden to dichotomous constructions of Nature and Culture as autonomous spheres of life. This is problematic because the eco-communitarian discourse has been strategically sculpted based upon this binary; appealing simultaneously to conceptions of nature (attachment to place, romantic wilderness, cultural consumptive patterns) and ideals of culture (nationhood, steady-states and social democracy) that resonate with mainstream environmentalists. Thus, eco-cosmopolitanism unwittingly reinforces the very divide that restrictionism is dependent upon. As former Sierra Club director Michael Dorsey explained, “most environmentalists have no coherent theoretical foundation to which they can articulate their politics, and this is why they are so easily hoodwinked and led astray” (personal interview, 10/5/2011). In order to combat eco-communitarianism, opponents of restrictionism need a discourse that more effectively links a socially-inclusive politics to theoretical ideals that break down the sharp Nature/Culture dichotomy.

The Promise of Radical Political Ecology

While the overarching narrative of opponents of restrictionism frequently lapses into eco-cosmopolitanism, the grounded actions of environmental justice and immigrants’ rights groups gesture toward alternative modes of resistance that are incredibly innovative. Indeed, even a cursory look at alliances between immigrants and environmental justice organizations reveals the emergence of environmental publics that are constructed with regard to the unique dictates of

localized manifestations of authority, control, and legitimacy. Salazar and Hewitt, for instance, observe that “in the rural counties of southwest Oregon, immigrant forest floor workers have organized to improve their working conditions and protect forest resources” (2001, 305). In the San Diego-Tijuana region, the Environmental Health Coalition has a longstanding Border Environmental Justice Campaign through which environmental justice advocates and workers in the border zone combat the social and environmental consequences of NAFTA (EHC 2012). And here in Fort Collins, the Center for Justice, Peace and Environment (recently renamed the Fort Collins Community Action Network) provides a venue to unite otherwise independent local organizations – including the Fort Collins Sustainability Group, the immigrant-support group *Fuerza Latina*, and the Open Communities Collective – to fight for the protection of marginalized human and non-humans populations.

While many of these actors would provide insight into the contours of radical political ecology, I now turn to two organizations – The Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign and the Center for New Community – whose work is particularly relevant in linking together social justice and environmental protection in ways that might effectively counter eco-communitarianism, highlight new socio-natural potentialities, and build alliances between traditional environmentalists and actors concerned with social justice.

Resisting the Exception: The Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign

In exploring the website of the Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign (SCBC), I was immediately drawn to a page titled, “Faces of the Borderlands.” This section details how a variety of actors – American environmentalists, social justice advocates, migrants, Mexican farmers, Mexican-American citizens, rivers, animals, plant species and so on – have been

impacted by the construction of the US-Mexico border wall. Overall, the stories seem geared to revealing the sheer cruelty that results from coupling a militarized border with the popular reduction of immigrant and non-human populations to “lives not worth grieving” (Butler 2004):

Dan Millis, born and raised in Arizona, has a daily connection to some of the cruelest realities of our border policy. While hiking along a canyon just north of the Arizona/Mexico border with a group of volunteers, Dan stumbled across the corpse of a girl. At only 14, the Salvadoran girl Joseline was the youngest of the 183 recovered bodies along the Arizona border in 2008. (SCBC, 2012a)

Only weeks later, Millis, who today works for both the Sierra Club and No More Deaths (a humanitarian organization that attempts to prevent migrant deaths in the border region) was out distributing water jugs and picking up trash in the same area (in the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge near the border) when he was “stopped by federal authorities and issued a citation” (ibid):

The ticket was written for ‘littering’ despite the boxes full of trash that he and a group of No More Deaths Volunteers had been cleaning up from the area. Dan refused to pay the ticket, and was later convicted in federal court.¹²⁶

The harassment of humanitarian and environmental volunteers, the SCBC suggests, is reflective of the extent to which national security has been redefined in the post-9/11 era in a manner that effectively overrides any alternative legal and normative rationales. To illustrate this tendency, the campaign details the myriad environmental and social travesties stemming from the border wall and the concomitant suspension of the normal ethical-juridical order: the closing of bi-national Friendship Park where families split by the border would meet on weekends; the Department of Homeland Security’s seizure of ancestral land from an Apache nurse whose family settled in Southern Texas over 200 years ago; the inability of mountain lions, mule deer, and a variety of other species to follow seasonal migration patterns; and the destruction of prized riparian areas (ibid).

¹²⁶ The conviction was later overturned by the 9th circuit Court of Appeals (Pope 2010).

Of specific concern is the fact that section 102 of the 2005 Real ID Act grants the Department of Homeland Security a waiver to the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and 33 other federal laws (SCBC 2012b).¹²⁷ Thus, both the construction of the wall and the thousands of miles of border patrol roads (as well as towers and lights) built along these areas are not governed by the environmental or social regulations¹²⁸ present in areas of the country removed from the physical border.

In addition to creating profound insecurity for migrants,¹²⁹ the wall cuts through ecologically sensitive areas. In 2009, the Borderlands campaign produced the film, “Wild versus Wall,” which describes instances of ecological devastation stemming from 650 miles of wall along the southern border:

The international border crosses some of the most biologically rich lands in the world ... Some of the plant and wildlife species that call the borderlands home can be found nowhere else on Earth. And many of the migrating species of North America cross this line at some point in their lives ... But these vital wild places have been under assault by a border policy that can operate above the law, building walls along the border at any cost (SCBC 2009).

Of note, border wall construction has impacted: the Tijuana estuary which “serves as a filtration system for the Tijuana river valley and provides a rare patch of coastal habitat”; the migration of jaguar in and out of the “sky island” region; and the numerous protected spaces surrounding the Rio Grande (SCBC 2009). Existing environmental laws, which recognize the necessity of these protected areas, have been undone by Real ID; “cast aside by costly, ineffective, environmentally destructive and inhumane attempts to ‘secure the border’” (SCBC 2009).

In this sense, the Secretary of Homeland Security – a political appointee – effectively has

¹²⁷ For a full list see: www.sierraclub.org/borderlands/realID.aspx

¹²⁸ The law also grants a waiver to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

¹²⁹ The wall has pushed migrants away from heavily traveled, more urbanized, safer routes and into more dangerous, remote areas.

the capacity to declare a state of exception. “Wild versus Wall” explains that the first three times the exception was invoked was to allow for the construction of walls in 1) the San Diego Estuary, 2) the habitat of the endangered Sonoran prong-horn, and 3) the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Areas. The fourth instance, however, was a much more sweeping declaration:

On April 1st 2008, the use of the waiver provided a green light for 500 miles of infrastructure projects in all four border states. This waiver swept aside more than 30 important laws created to protect clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat, important historical sites and specific wilderness areas. (SCBC 2009)

In the daily enforcement of these exceptional rules, the border patrol and other federal authorities are – by performing tasks like the citation of Millis for “littering” – reinforcing a configuration of sovereignty in which the dictates of (hyper)national security surpass the importance of saving the lives of marginalized human and non-human populations.

The result, as Millis explained to me, is a humanitarian and ecological crisis: “the scale of the tragedy of border death boggles the mind” (personal interview, 1/12/11). And yet, out of this tragedy has emerged significant resistance. For instance, in response to the closing of Friendship Park, “local and state public officials, local community members and organizations now work for the restoration of this historical meeting place” (SCBC 2012a). The Borderlands Campaign itself is a result of grass-roots activism; it was “really spearheaded by volunteers...folks who saw the environmental impacts of a militarized border” (Millis personal interview, 1/12/11). When asked if the campaign’s opposition to this area of US immigration policy came into tension with the Sierra Club’s broader policy of neutrality on immigration, Millis downplayed the distinction. He explained that while the club refrains from taking positions on specific provisions of immigration legislation (e.g. the number of visas a particular country should receive), “we do have a stance on migration – we want to see the root causes addressed....we specifically focus on women’s health and education for children and we also oppose NAFTA and other globalized free trade” (ibid).

Overall, the Borderlands Campaign resists the reduction of both “nature” and “the migrant” to bare life in the border region through a tripartite strategy. First, it has attempted to work through formal democratic institutions by joining a legal suit seeking to challenge the constitutionality of the Real ID Act. In addition to the reinstatement of federal and state laws in the region, the Borderlands campaign seeks to make sure that “land managers, border communities and tribal nations have a say in border policy” (SCBC 2009). The inclusion of these voices would democratize the discursive terrain through which “nature” and “the migrant” become intelligible within the normative-juridical framework that produces the border as a space of exception, opening it to new epistemological practices and ontological foundations.

Second, the campaign seeks to enact change within the Sierra Club through outreach to local branches (as well as interested non-Sierra Club entities). One overarching goal is to make rank-and-file Sierra Club members aware of the destruction in the border region by viewing the “Wild versus Walls” film and discussing the broader political economic and institutional processes surrounding immigration and environmental degradation. Though debates over immigration continue to be contentious within the club, Millis suggests that the SCBC may be part of a broader institutional shift: “the way we look at it, [immigration] is something that we’ve struggled with and something that we’ve come out on the right side” (personal interview, 1/12/11). The outreach seeks to ensure that this continues to be the case.

Third, the campaign engages in alliance-building with both environmental sustainability and social justice organizations; participating, for instance, in the “Coalition to Bring Down the Walls” with the Defenders of Wildlife and *Derechos Humanos*. Such progressive alliances are necessary if environmentalists hope to confront the powerful institutional sedimentation of militarization and neoliberalism.

The Migrant as Socio-Ecological Activist: The Center for New Community

Whereas the Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign primarily takes aim at governmental policies impacting social and ecological health in the border region, the Chicago-based Center for New Community targets the broader environmental restrictionist logic directly. The CNC has launched the most in-depth critique and analysis of the environmental restrictionist movement to-date through its campaign on “Race, Migration and the Environment” and its *Imagine2050* blog. And while similarly critiquing restrictionists for their “appropriation of Nature,” the Nature being articulated by the CNC is itself bound up in an effort to reconfigure American sovereignty through contingent articulations between political community, governance and nature.

The foundation of *Imagine2050* is a reflexive examination of the future of American political community. Notably, the organization does not disavow nationalism but strategically aims to reshape it:

By the year 2050, one out of five Americans will be foreign born. Latino and Asian communities will increase significantly. There will be no clear racial or ethnic majority. We will become a nation of minorities. Today’s perceptions of foreignness will challenge how Americans identify themselves over the coming decades. In light of these challenges, *Imagine 2050* believes igniting candid conversations around race, immigration, and environment will become increasingly necessary to American democracy. (2012)

The collective idea of “America” is not rejected, but is retooled by a critical ethos that seeks to nurture respect for difference. Yet, this is not the only communal imaginary being conjured; subaltern, local, transnational, and cosmopolitan forms of identity are also embraced at particular moments to strategically push and pull the contours of nationhood away from the hyper-nationalist terrain on which it is so often lodged. For example, a search of the “*Imagine2050*” blog highlights a variety of communal forms being advanced, including: national and transnational alliances of youths concerned with environmental justice (Pskowski 2011),

coalitions between first nations, racial minorities and migrants (Cooper 2010), and various instances of local community activism (Garvey 2010, Poswolsky 2011).

Similarly, for the CNC and its allies, “the state” is not rejected but is targeted so that it might work with a renewed sense of legitimacy. The CNC is acutely aware of the transnational political economic linkages that drive immigration (see, for instance, Turk 2009),¹³⁰ however, the organization both moves beyond analysis of relations of production to call attention to the racialized foundations of this sovereign assemblage,¹³¹ and pursues strategies that are not founded upon a “grand refusal” but seek to work with and against existing structures of authority. Thus, the CNC is unwilling to give up on governmental arenas hedged within territorially-bound states. In those venues that provide strategic leverage, the organization pushes federal and sub-state governments to regulate and redistribute to construct a more transparent and participatory democracy. Blog entries by Carlos Rich highlight the need for living wages, health and safety standards, and environmental regulations to protect immigrant workers in meat-packing plants (2011a, 2011b, 2011c). Similarly, the organization urges the federal government to provide protections to undocumented youth through passing the Dream Act (see, for instance, Lal 2009).

“The state,” however, is not a sacred site but a strategic one, and where appealing to this juridical form risk reinforcing an exclusionary ethos (particularly with regard to policy-areas dominated by discourses of militarism or neoliberalism), critique replaces engagement and alternative arrangements of governance are advanced. For example, because a national-level

¹³⁰ In an entry titled, “Migrant Workers: the Last, Best Hope for the Labor Movement,” Turck writes: “During the Great Depression, farmers decimated by the Dust Bowl were trucked to factories for the same purpose. What is different, and perhaps more dangerous for Human and Worker’s Rights is the global scale of the issue. Corporations span the planet, or move from country to country, cheaper labor pool to even cheaper labor pool to reap profits that ultimately succeed only in eroding and degrading Human Rights and peace.”

<http://imagine2050.newcomm.org/2009/02/15/migrant-workers-the-last-best-hope-for-labor-movement/>

¹³¹ “The major systems of this country need an earnest, thorough, examination, and restructure. This action, however, must begin with the corporate, state and economic acknowledgement of, and ultimate dismantling of, the historical foundation of structural racism that permeates the country” (Williams 2010).

repeal of NAFTA seems unlikely in the short term, the CNC promotes on-the-ground alliances between migrant communities and social and environmental justice organizations that work to combat the deleterious impacts of NAFTA's social and environmental reregulation.

Rather than emphasizing a single scale of governance (global) or political community (cosmopolitan), the CNC has constructed a political project founded upon strategic mobility. Migrants are placed at the center of any conception of political community and, through a politics of “fluidarity,”¹³² “the migrant” is articulated alongside alternative modes of communal identity (e.g. First Nations and racial minorities) that are all woven into an emergent ideal of what it means to be “American.” In conjunction with this alter-nationalism, “the state” is viewed as a site of democratic contestation; the norms that its institutions depend upon can be discursively challenged from below, while certain of its macro-political (in this case, legislative and bureaucratic) forms can be targeted (e.g. the Department of Labor, OSHA, and democratic-leaning state legislatures). Engagements “within” the state are supplemented by a variety of actions “outside”; including a “Biking Beyond Bigotry” tour, a newsletter that satirizes restrictionist claims, and the organization of protests against entities funding restrictionist organizations.

Through this strategy, an alternative “nature” emerges; one that is carefully coded across these variable social registers to protect and enhance the lives of marginalized populations – human and non-human – by way of localized interventions that seek to detach nature from its exclusionary social bases and reattach it to forms of community and governance that might work toward an inclusive ethos of eco-sovereignty. In a report entitled, “Race, Migration and the

¹³² Anthropologist Diane Nelson develops this concept – as I understand it – to refer to a contingent political articulation through which differentially positioned subjects momentarily unite without recourse to a “universal” or “revolutionary” subject-position. Fluidarity riffs on the notion of “solidarity,” but eschews its “reliance on solid, unchanging identifications, and its often unconscious hierarchizing (Nelson 1999, 41-2; see also Driscoll 1998).

Environment,” the CNC opens by stating “[i]n order to tackle the serious crises at hand, environmental movements need to reject the historically dangerous understanding that nature is something separate from society, and examine the ways they are interconnected” (McMahon and Sanes 2011). The report proceeds by examining how migrant populations encounter the non-human realm, and argues that the American environmental movement would benefit from the inclusion of these unique socio-natural perspectives.

Overall, a commitment to Nature is entwined in a commitment to this inclusionary, outward-oriented ethos of eco-sovereignty. The radically democratic impetus of such a strategy works to de-center claims of legitimacy away from traditional state authorities and hyper-nationalist sympathizers who might work to invoke an exception, while rechanneling the discursive pathways through which commitments to nature might be complicit in reducing marginalized populations to “bare life.”

Conclusion

Like restrictionism itself, there is significant variability amongst opponents of restrictionism. The challenge for opponents is to move beyond narratives that equate restrictionism with exclusionary Nativism, and “real” commitments to Nature with inclusion and social justice. A more promising approach is to explore how conceptions of Nature link with exclusionary iterations of sovereignty, and show how alternative practices might challenge these forms. Such a move could destabilize previous positions of certainty, but the strategic rewards are infinitely grander: promoting a reflexive environmentalism that opens the door to new green alliances by elevating the problem of “nature’s intelligibility” (Braun 2002) to a place of central concern in dialogues over greening sovereignty. The examples of the Sierra Club Borderlands

Campaign and the Century for New Community demonstrate how an environmentalism founded upon the perspectives of “the migrant” and “the border” is able to 1) more effectively refute the environmental restrictionist logic, 2) provide a more strategic and ethical alternative, and 3) form alliances that could work to move toward such an alternative in practice. In the following chapter, I build on these radical political ecological approaches in outlining the contours of what I term an “environmentalism of movement.”

CHAPTER EIGHT TOWARD AN ENVIRONMENTALISM OF MOVEMENT

The Nature of Borders

A large section in Roberto Bolaño's last novel, *2666*, focuses on the violence against women in the post-NAFTA *maquiladora* region along the US/Mexican border. Entitled, "The Part about the Crimes," the section follows a series of characters, many of whom are police officers, in their efforts to track down the perpetrator(s) in the fictional city of Santa Teresa (a thinly-veiled Ciudad Juárez). After discovering another body of a young female factory worker, one of the characters thinks to himself:

The border between Sonora and Arizona is a chain of haunted or enchanted islands. The cities and towns are boats. The desert is an endless sea. This is a good place for fish, especially deep-sea fish, not men. (2008, 559)

That "the cities and towns are boats" seems to imply that they are simply nodes in a highly interconnected transportation network whose chief purpose is to facilitate the production and movement of goods *and people* – some "legal," some "illegal" – back and forth between the countries. After all, in the years since the passage of NAFTA, trade amongst the three North American countries has tripled from \$297 billion to \$930 billion (USTR 2008), and Mexican exports to the US have risen dramatically – which has not necessarily translated into job growth or wage increases for Mexican workers (Hing 2010, 12). In agricultural sectors, the situation is particularly dire. As journalist David Bacon reports:

According to Alejandro Ramírez, general director of the Confederation of Mexican Pork Producers, Mexico imported 30,000 tons of pork in 1995, the year NAFTA took effect. By 2010 pork imports, almost all from the U.S., had grown over 25 times, to 811,000 tons. As a result, pork prices received by Mexican producers dropped 56%... 'We lost 4000 pig farms,' Alejandro Ramírez estimates. 'On Mexican farms, each 100 animals produce 5 jobs, so we lost 20,000 farm jobs directly from imports. Counting the 5 indirect jobs dependent on each direct job,

we lost over 120,000 jobs in total. This produces migration to the U.S. or to Mexican cities – a big problem for our country.’ (Bacon 2012)

At the same time, for most people – particularly “low-skilled” Mexican workers – cross border movement has grown both more difficult and dangerous (Sparke 2006). From 1998-2009 over 4,300 migrants died trying to cross the border (Anderson 2010) – a testament to how the securitization of the border has complicated traversing the “endless sea” of which Bolaño speaks. Making matters worse, a successful crossing, now more than ever, far from guarantees a peaceful existence on the other side: American deportations doubled, from roughly 200,000/year to nearly 400,000/year, between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2011). If only people were fish, they could flow as simply – as freely – as capital and a select assortment of goods and services do.

And yet, metaphors notwithstanding, the border region is not a good place for fish either. Photographer Brian Frank recently released a series called “Downstream, Death of the Colorado” detailing the river’s demise. The caption of one powerful image reads: “[An] eleven year old Cucapa Indian fisherman...retrieves an empty net from the receding waters that were once abundant with fish in his village’s traditional fishing grounds” (Frank 2011). Capital and labor aren’t the only flows that have been impacted by forms of authority and control that seem to have been imposed from on high rather than subject to inclusive, democratic deliberation. A sovereign assemblage cobbled together through the Colorado River Compact, NAFTA’s trade and environmental stipulations, IMF and World Bank conditionalities, a weak and frequently corrupt Mexican state, a whole host of American laws, and the knowledges, norms and discourses that bolster each of these macropolitical projects, has indelibly impacted non-human flows, resulting in a lack of decent water, privatization of land, and an overall inability for locals to profit off of agricultural products that they traditionally produced (Hing 2010). For inhabitants, this has

meant job loss leading to urbanization, the concentration of land ownership, and, in this case, access to a mere trickle of water that is salty and barren.

The border region and its various inhabitants seem a long way from Fort Collins, Colorado (a post-colonial place-name that itself suggests a history of encounter and militarized dispossession) where the town hall panel (discussed last chapter) detailing the environmental case against immigration emphasized the precarious state of the treasured Cache la Poudre River (personal attendance, April 2009). Interestingly, the source of the Colorado River is at La Poudre Pass, which spans the Continental Divide and separates the Colorado from La Poudre Pass Creek – a two mile stream that flows into the (Cache la) Poudre River. An early trans-basin diversion, the Grand Ditch, carries water from the headwaters of the Colorado to those of the Poudre. It was constructed in 1890, as dreams of Manifest Destiny were being realized, in order to feed the needs of a growing Anglo population in Fort Collins and the neighboring Eastern plains. Estimates suggest that the ditch intercepts around 40% of the run-off of the upper Colorado (Waterman 2010). It was built by Chinese, Swedish and Mexican migrant laborers (ibid).

Sovereignty, Nature and Immigration

This brief illustration suggests an intricate structure of flows (water, migrants, capital) and blockages (borders, dams, connection to “place”) that asymmetrically link together the socio-natural realities of Mexican inhabitants and American environmentalists. In short, it alludes to structures of authority, control and legitimacy that do not mesh with the spatial or temporal parameters of dominant scholarly and environmentalist narratives. Throughout the dissertation, I have suggested that the divisiveness of debates over the environmental impacts of immigration reveals an American environmental movement struggling to come to terms with complexities that dominant articulations of “Nature,” political community, and governance are

unable to adequately represent. They illustrate a disconnect between the models of sovereign power that inform practical ecological action, and the actually existing structures of rule that any effective and ethical environmental and social resistance must engage.

I have, thus far, demonstrated that environmental restrictionists, though a heterogeneous coalition, attempt to infuse sovereignty with an ethos that *naturalizes* the “nation-state” and, through reliance on a variety of distinct discursive formations, works to legitimate the exclusion of immigrants. I have also argued that opponents of restrictionism tend to appeal to an eco-cosmopolitan ethos that deploys nature as an inherently deterritorializing force existing in contrast to the bounded political communities and forms of governance that constitute traditional ideals and practices of sovereignty. Despite the rhetorical popularity of this boundless nature, I found that the grounded activities of two organizations – the Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign and the Center for New Community – gesture toward a radical political ecological discourse that more effectively subverts the relationship between nature and sovereignty that the restrictionist argument depends upon.

Building off of insights from the radical political ecological approach, this chapter is my attempt at developing a theoretical alternative that provides insight into how environmentalists might better understand and respond to the complexities of contemporary forms of sovereign power – and their relationships to nature – through a different lens than extant scholarship on this topic has employed (Litfin 1998, Eckersley 2004, Smith 2011). In order to adjudicate disputes over sovereignty, numerous social theorists have turned to “the migrant” as a figure that, by virtue of its unique status on the margins of political life, provides insight into the norms, institutions, and encounters that comprise theories and practices of sovereignty. In this chapter, I consider what engagement with “the migrant” might offer to environmental politics.

I explore this potentiality in three parts. First, I review the centrality of “the migrant” in the writings of Roberto Bolaño and Salman Rushdie and the theories of Agamben and Hardt & Negri. Second, I stage a conversation between these social analysts and one of the environmental organizations examined in the previous chapter – the Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign – for whom “the migrant” functions as a focal point in efforts to protect nature. Finally, I conclude by relating the insights produced through this conversation to recent work in environmental political theory and political geography, and outlining the contours of what I term an “environmentalism of movement.”

Social Theory and “the Migrant”

As I detailed in the introductory chapter, both immigrants and “Nature” are conventionally reduced to bare life. They are granted no political agency within dominant discourses of sovereignty, yet their very biological lives are subject to governance at intimate levels. Many Mexican immigrants, for instance, see their economic productivity harnessed, fertility managed, and movement channeled (not to mention surveilled and securitized), while the non-human flows on which their livelihoods depend are simultaneously depleted, commoditized, and re-routed in accordance with the ends necessitated by a diversity of political logics (e.g. the War on Terror, neoliberalism, bureaucratic rationalities, etc.).

Both “the immigrant” and “Nature,” thus, serve as liminal figures within discourses attempting to reconfigure sovereignty through the construction of environmentally and socially sound institutions and citizens – provoking consideration of limits to political qualification, limits to national inclusion, and limits to ethical obligation. What insights might a critical engagement with the figure of “the migrant” – and the unique relations between “the migrant” and various non-human lives – offer to American environmentalists? What kinds of politics

might it enable? To answer into these questions, I begin by taking a step back from environmental politics and considering three diverse social registers – the cultural, the state-centric and the political economic – within which contemporary theorists turn to “the migrant” in order to challenge the paradoxes, exclusions and violences present in received accounts of sovereignty.

Cultures of Resistance: The Aesthetics of Migration

In Bolaño’s novel, borders – and those who inhabit, transverse and transgress them – play a central, if sometimes ambivalent, role. Throughout much of *2666*, it seems as though Bolaño makes a concerted effort to render borders meaningless, their juridical and symbolic materiality utterly consumed by eruptions of violence that pay little heed to territory or nationality. A section of the novel follows a young German, Hans Reiter, who finds himself fighting for the Nazi’s in World War II. Trapped for the winter in a tiny Ukrainian village, the only thing keeping Reiter alive is the solace he takes in reading personal journals that he found rummaging through an abandoned cottage. The journals are the life’s musings of young Ukrainian writer and Marxist activist, Boris Ansky, who Reiter has nightmares he may have killed (2008, 737).

Ansky’s journals were so transformative, Bolaño implies, that Reiter decides to become a writer himself, taking his *nom-de-plume* from Italian artist, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, whose paintings Ansky had turned to for strength in moments of hardship (“I think about Giusseppe Archimboldo and the sadness and tedium vanish as if on a spring morning, by a swamp, morning’s imperceptible advance clearing away the mists that rise from the shores”) (ibid, 729). Ansky’s writings awaken Reiter to a deterritorialized perspective that gives rise to new realizations and encounters. At one point, wandering through a post-apocalyptic war zone where

borders seem meaningless, Reiter (the reluctant migrant) meets a group of Romanian troops who, driven crazy by hunger, had just crucified their own general (ibid, 745-7). At another, Reiter himself kills a Nazi official – a fellow inmate in an American camp for German POWs – who was involved in the administration of concentration camps (an act of atonement for the disappearance and likely death of Ansky). After the war is over, rejecting nationalism but haunted by his culpability in its darkest manifestations, Archimboldi sets out to enact change through the aesthetics of fiction.

And while Bolaño's project is decidedly post-nationalist, he recognizes the very real weight of nationalism's biopolitical engravings. In yet another section of *2666*, an African-American journalist named Oscar Fate, in Santa Teresa to report on a boxing match, responds to a question from a cashier by explaining that he did not understand because he is American. Later, his answer provokes an existential crisis:

As he waited by the highway for three trucks to go by on their way home from Santa Teresa to Arizona, he remembered what he'd said to the cashier. I'm American. Why didn't I say I was African-American? Because I'm in a foreign country? But can I really consider myself to be in a foreign country when I could go walking back to my own country right now if I wanted, and it wouldn't even take very long? Does this mean that in some places I'm African American and in other places, by logical extension, I'm nobody? (ibid, 283)

Within this intrapersonal struggle, the border is revealed to be a site where the hyphen binding “nation” to “state,” and the rationale wedding both to “territory” is almost nonsensical. National identity, from the perspective of the border, is unable to adequately represent an individual (particularly a member of an historically marginalized population), and yet individuals can never fully evade this construct (and, in this case, its racialized baggage) – so much so that Fate, the temporary migrant, is left wondering whether he even exists without this seemingly arbitrary signifier attached to his identity.

In this regard, Bolaño is similar to Salman Rushdie; politics don't also occur at the border, in certain respects politics only occur at the border. In his 2002 lectures, *Step Across This Line*, Rushdie makes it clear that at the border, liberalism's most prized ideals – freedom, democracy and civilization – are put to the test:

At the frontier our liberty is stripped away – we hope temporarily – and we enter the universe of control. Even the freest of free societies are unfree at the edge; where things and people go out and other people and things come in; where only the rights things and people must go in and out. Here, at the edge, we submit to scrutiny, to inspection, to judgment. These people, guarding these lines, must tell us who we are. We must be passive, docile. To be otherwise is to be suspect, and at the frontier to come under suspicion is the worst of all possible crimes. (2002, 79)

To appear unsuspecting, Rushdie explains – to gain entrance into the realm of freedom – one must be transparent, in possession of an identity that clearly reveals one as a “normal” subject.

Further expanding on the implications of viewing the border as a political site, Rushdie contemplates the meaning of a photograph taken by Sebastião Salgado. The photo:

shows the wall between the United States and Mexico snaking over the crests of hills, running away into the distance, as far as the eye can see, part Great Wall of China, part gulag. There is a kind of brutal beauty here, the beauty of starkness. At intervals along the wall there are watchtowers, and these so-called sky-towers are manned by armed men. In the photograph we can see the tiny, silhouetted figure of a running man, an illegal immigrant, being chased by other men in cars. The strange thing about the picture is that although the running man is clearly on the American side, he is running towards the wall, not away from it. He has been spotted, and is more afraid of the men bearing down on him in cars than of the impoverished life he thought he had left behind. He's trying to get back, to unmake his bid for freedom. (ibid, 80)

Here, Rushdie deploys the border as a perspective from which to transgress the boundary between “civilized” and “barbaric” – a boundary that continues to animate American immigration debates.

He is arguing that in this test-case for freedom, democracy and civilization, “we” who pride “ourselves” on adherence to these ideals, are losing:

So freedom is now to be defended against those too poor to deserve its benefits by the edifices and procedures of totalitarianism. What kind of freedom is it, then, that

we enjoy in the countries of the West—these exclusive, increasingly well-guarded enclaves of ours? (ibid)

Indeed, he goes so far as to suggest that “we” – Americans, in particular – are becoming the barbarians “whose coming [we] so feared” (ibid, 83).

Whereas many – nation-states and individuals alike – aim to protect freedom by walling themselves in, Rushdie finds freedom in the creative collisions between cultures, and eschews any purely territorial community for ones founded upon the deterritorializing, potentially transgressive, impulses of music and literature. Through his discussion, it becomes clear that far from being reducible to a merely topographic, physical boundary (e.g. a wall running between the US and Mexico), borders come in many forms: moral, linguistic, conceptual, etc. Migrants are not the “archetypal figure[s] of our age” (ibid, 81) simply because of their experiences crossing a literal, geopolitical line, but because of the modes of creativity that stem from the cultural encounters they enable:

The migrant, severed from his roots, often transplanted into a new language, always obliged to learn the ways of a new community, is forced to face the great questions of change and adaptation. (ibid, 82)

For Rushdie, “we” are, by nature, border crossers. And yet “we” have made crossing these borders so dangerous.

It is worth noting that Rushdie has been criticized for this universalizing language (reminiscent in many ways of Rousseau). However, in parts of the lecture, he makes it clear that he is aware of the vast asymmetries that structure how “we” variably encounter, are trapped within, and move across borders; in this sense, the we’s that he invokes are more invitations than predetermined forms, and his appeals to human nature are shot through with contingency and difference. Rushdie invokes the migrant – the border crosser par excellence – in attempting to remind the reader of this too often concealed nature, and in inviting him or her to carefully

consider what borders are constitutive of his or her existence, how the cultural register (literature, music, etc.) feeds into these practices of bordering, and what role transgressions – strategic steps across specific lines – might play in bringing about more just and inclusive futures.

States of Exception and Bare Life: Agamben's Refugee

It is only in a land where the spaces of states will have been perforated and topologically deformed, and the citizen will have learned to acknowledge the refugee that he himself is, that man's political survival today is imaginable (Agamben 1995, 119)

It is not only in fiction, where the profoundly political import of borders and migrants are explored. In his analysis of how biopolitics and sovereignty intersect under conditions of a state of exception, Agamben draws on the figure of “the refugee” as both the embodiment of bare life and the potential source of resistance against it. His discussion builds off the work of Hannah Arendt, herself a German-Jewish refugee, who famously examined the inability of liberal democratic nation-states to stop the Holocaust and protect refugees in her seminal works, *We Refugees* (1943) and *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1958 [1951]). Refugees, for Arendt, provided a mirror into “our” collective futures. The apparent omnipresence of “the refugee” at particular moments of crisis represented the failure of liberal democracy to withstand the incursion of totalitarian ideologies:

The Rights of Man, after all, had been defined as ‘inalienable’ because they were supposed to be independent of all governments; but it turned out that the moment human beings lacked their own government and had to fall back upon their minimum rights, no authority was left to protect them and no institution was willing to guarantee them.¹³³ (1958, 291-2)

In reflecting on the prescience of Arendt’s work, Agamben directly relates his discussion

¹³³ Agamben quotes a similar passage: ‘The concept of the Rights of Man...based on the supposed existence of a human being as such, collapsed in ruins as soon as those who professed it found themselves for the first time before men who had truly lost every other specific quality and connection except for the mere fact of being humans’ (Agamben 1995, 116).

of “the refugee” to that of “the immigrant,” asserting that the distinction between the two is one of degree rather than kind.

What the industrialized states are faced with today is a *permanently resident mass of noncitizens*, who neither can be nor want to be naturalized or repatriated. Often these noncitizens have a nationality of origin, but inasmuch as they prefer not to make use of their state's protection they are, like refugees, ‘stateless *de facto*.’ (1995, 117)

The reaction to the recent increase in migration – a reaction that Rushdie observes and that Arendt noted was also present when nation-states were faced with refugees during WWI and WWII – has been an upsurge in hyper-nationalism and a forceful rejection of migrant or refugee rights, illustrating a tension between the purportedly universal suppositions of liberalism and the particularism manifested most clearly in the linkage between nativity and nationalism:

That bare life (the human creature) which in the *ancient regime* belonged to God, and in the classical world was clearly distinct (as *zoē*) from political life (*bios*), now takes center stage in the state's concerns and becomes, so to speak, its terrestrial foundation. Nation-state means a state that makes nativity or birth (that is, of the bare human life) the foundation of its own sovereignty. (1995, 116)

The implications of this observation are all too apparent. When faced with stateless populations, nation-states continually revert to nativity as a precondition for political qualification, or in extreme cases pursue strategies of denationalization (and/or denaturalization) for populations deemed outside of the national norm (case in point is the current American restrictionist fixation with “anchor-babies”).

Faced with the imperatives of neoliberal globalization – flexible labor forces, the continued de- and re-territorialization that occurs as capital seeks lower production costs, the increased privatization of land and nature, looming resource shortages, worsening natural disasters, and a resurgence of exclusionary nationalism – this once marginal figure is increasingly becoming the reality, rather than exception, for a growing number of the world’s

inhabitants:

The phenomenon of so-called illegal immigration into the countries of the European Community has assumed (and will increasingly assume in coming years, with a foreseen 20 million immigrants from the countries of central Europe) features and proportions such as to fully justify this revolution in perspective. (ibid)

Agamben, thus, suggests that “the immigrant” – the epitome of bare life – represents an emergent human condition where the potential violence of sovereign politics and life itself are irrevocably entwined.

And yet, the figure of “the refugee” or “the immigrant” also curiously represents, for Agamben, the potential for unraveling the Gordian knot that links sovereignty and biopolitics through the “trinity of state-nation-territory” (1995, 118). “The refugee” as a (de)politicized subject occupies the sole venue where politics might be relocated precisely because this figure sits at the location of sovereignty’s founding violence. The refugee does not enjoy the political protections that legitimate the sovereign state, and yet suffers – more than any population – from the coercive force of sovereign power. The refugee, thus, functions as a limit situated at the nexus between sovereignty and biopolitics; the life – included in the political order solely through its exclusion – whose violent management is argued to be *the condition of possibility for the freedom of the territorially-bound nation*.

Agamben suggests that an engagement with “the refugee” could lead to a “revolution in perspective” founded upon a rejection of the traditional concept of the *citizen* (tethered to the “trinity of state-nation-territory”), in favor of the concept of the *denizen*, (tethered to the ideal of “reciprocal extraterritoriality”) modeled on the proposed division of Jerusalem into “the capital, contemporaneously and without territorial divisions, of two different states” (ibid, 118). Under this ideal, all citizens would take on the juridical and normative status of “the refugee” or “the

immigrant,” without the violent abandonment that stateless populations are so often faced with. Static concepts of inclusion predicated on membership within a territorially-bound nation-state would be transformed through a commitment to “being-in-exodus” founded upon fluid a-territorial interactions:

This space would not coincide with any homogeneous national territory, nor with their *topographical* sum. but would act on these territories, making holes in them and dividing them *topologically* like in a Leiden jar or in a Moebius strip, where exterior and interior are indeterminate. (ibid, 118)

The Political Economy of Empire: Migration and “the Multitude”

However, Agamben’s account fails to consider that the biopolitical power wielded by “the sovereign” in declaring a state of exception is not necessarily centered within a territorial nation-state to begin with. Rather, sovereignty is hedged within transnational assemblages shot through with complex and contingent articulations between contested logics emanating through ideals of political community, governance, and political economy that are deployed by a variety of actors (states, transnational corporations, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations). Premised upon the continued relevance of the “trinity of state-nation-territory,” Agamben’s theorization is deficient in both a political-economic and a spatial sense. Specifically, while turning to the figure of “the immigrant” as the contemporary embodiment of bare life, Agamben tells us little about why migration is so prevalent in the first place (i.e. the forces producing immigration today differ widely from those that created stateless people in the time-period analyzed by Arendt and re-appropriated by Agamben).

For Hardt and Negri, sovereignty has been dispersed within a deterritorialized “Empire” – a networked juridical order consisting of US military might, powerful industrialized states, transnational corporations, international financial institutions, and a variety of other powers –

pushed forward, at points, by all of these actors but fully under the control of none. Operating in a mutually constitutive relationship with this juridical order is a form of biopolitical production consonant with the dictates of late capitalism. Specifically, Hardt and Negri assert that the increasing relevance of “intellectual, immaterial and communicative labor power” (2000, 29) provides new pathways to channel production and harness reproduction toward the dictates of Empire’s imperial project:

The great industrial and financial powers thus produce not only commodities but also subjectivities. They produce agentic subjectivities within the biopolitical context: they produce needs, social relations, bodies and minds – which is to say, they produce producers. (2000, 30)

Anyone attempting to resist these biopolitical imperatives meets the coercive force of Empire, legitimated by a global state of exception that masks its violence under the purportedly universal auspices of “democracy” and “justice” (2000, 18).

However, the very impulses that make empire so all-encompassing, also make resistance possible (ibid, 29). The modes of biopolitical production that structure a period of immaterial labor – global communication, cooperation, and affect – bring the masses together in novel ways that forge new relationships and gesture toward new ways of living-in-relation. The antithesis of Empire is “the Multitude,” which represents “the possibility that, while remaining different, we discover the commonality that enables us to communicate and act together” (2004, xiii-xiv). In contrast with “the working class,” the multitude is not sutured around a single identity, but remains plural – composed of singularities, but formed around a political commitment to “the common,” representing “a new form of sovereignty, a democratic sovereignty (or, more precisely, a form of social organization that displaces sovereignty) in which the social singularities control through their own biopolitical activity those goods and services that allow for the reproduction of the multitude itself” (ibid, 206). Given this new political economic

condition:

In time, developing its productive figure based on the common, the multitude can move through Empire and come out the other side, to express itself autonomously and rule. (ibid, 101)

The emphasis on *movement* through empire should not be taken metaphorically here, as it forms a central component of Hardt and Negri's theorization of resistance. In fact, largely because of its relation to the disruptive potentiality of movement, the figure of the multitude par excellence is "the migrant." The migrant is reflective of broader political economic trends that prefigure an increasingly common condition of the mobility of labor and the "cultural mixture" that accompanies this mobility (2000, 133-4). In this sense, the migrant plays a pedagogical role:

Migrations...teach us about the geographical divisions and hierarchies of global system of command. Migrants understand and illuminate the gradients of danger and security, poverty and wealth, the markets of higher and lower wages, and the situations of more or less free forms of life. (ibid, 134)

The migrant is a liminal figure who operates on the fringes of Empire, but understands its cracks and fissures better than the wealthier, more "powerful" individuals and institutions that hold the formal levers of authority. The geographic mobility of migrants enables a unique perspective that, when coupled with their refusal of the existing order, produces a powerful foundation that a counter-movement can be constructed upon. And although historically excluded from "the working class" (ibid, 133), the migrant points to a common condition under a period of immaterial labor that enables a lack of material wealth to be turned into a source of strength. The divisions that have long produced division within leftist movements – economic, racial, national and gendered – are no longer tenable during a period where the movement draws strength from a common biopolitical production, producing new potentialities that eschew the territorialized forms of social control necessitated by Empire.

Environmentalism and “the Migrant”

There is promise in each of these conceptualizations of “the migrant” as a figure of resistance: Bolaño and Rushdie provide insight into how the cultural register might be mobilized to resist the failures of imagination that result in equating strong borders with strong nation-states and secure subjects; Agamben identifies the topological contours through which sovereign violence proceeds within territorialized nation-states, and utilizes “the immigrant” to destabilize this increasingly common conjuncture; and Hardt and Negri provide clues to the political economic pathways that are today bound up in forms of sovereign violence, and reveal how the biopolitical production epitomized by migrant populations offers strategies for the multitude.

But how do these theorizations of resistance relate to nature and, more specifically, American environmentalism? And how might these rather abstract ideals inform the strategies of environmental and social activists? While all of these thinkers are variably struggling against naturalism, they do little to grapple with how their social theories intersect with the non-human realm and the conceptions of Nature that inform environmental politics (Chaloupka 2003, Smith 2008).¹³⁴ On the other hand, where border figures have entered into environmental political theory – e.g. Haraway’s “coyote” or “cyborg” – they are typically deployed to unsettle the sharp binary between “Nature” and “Culture” or “Human” and “Animal,” in the hopes of providing guidance into more effective and ethical environmentalist strategies (Haraway 1991).

In his analysis of the relationship between sovereignty, governmentality and nature, Thom Kuehls draws on Haraway in gesturing toward an approach through which the border

¹³⁴ Chaloupka critiques Hardt and Negri for their failure to think through the relationship between Empire and environmental politics: “even as Empire has dispensed with so much vestigial left dogma and error, it still preserved one of the left’s most intriguing blind spots, the green politics likely to be at the center of any foreseeable left resistance to global capitalism” (2003, 147). Smith critiques Agamben along the same lines: “Rarely, if anywhere in his work, does Agamben show the slightest concern about the repercussions for animals of their relegation to what has been a permanent state of exception, still less for nature in any wider sense” (2008, 11).

figures of the aforementioned social theorists might be synthesized with those informing environmental political theory:

Haraway can be read as suggesting that contemporary politics exists on border lines. Not just the border lines between machines and organisms, or humans and nature, but the border lines that divide sovereign territorial states ... The cyborg exists on the border line between the United States and Mexico, where cross-border corporations, pollution, illegal immigrants, and an increasing ‘feminization of work’ disrupt the certainty of what counts as American and what counts as Mexican. (1996, 107)

In this light, revisiting and expanding upon last chapter’s analysis of the Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign provides a lens through which to enter into a conversation with the aforementioned social theorists; considering how they might speak to environmental scholars and practitioners, and what environmentalists might have to say in return.¹³⁵

Synthesizing Social Theory and Environmental Practice

To a certain extent, the strategies pursued by the SCBC mirror the ways in which Bolaño and Rushdie, Agamben and Hardt & Negri respectively draw on “the migrant” in resisting the cultural, state-centric and political economic practices through which sovereign violence and exclusion advances. In placing “the border” and “the migrant” at the center of their aesthetic imaginaries, Bolaño and Rushdie use fiction to cut across the lines that are typically reinforced through dominant geopolitical and cultural practices. In the case of the Borderlands campaign, the stories told in “faces from the border” work to re-value the lives of both human and non-human migrants by demonstrating the beauty, creativity and freedom enabled by transnational socio-natural encounters that are marginalized within dominant cartographic imaginaries.

At the same time, the SCBC contests the American nation-state’s formal declaration of a

¹³⁵ As I work to refine and develop this analysis, I plan to return to this section and include insights from the Center for New Community.

state of exception in the border region. The “Wild versus Wall” film aims to decenter the anthropocentric gaze that a militarized border relies upon by revealing the ways in which the wall disrupts the complex socio-natural interconnections that make this geographic area socially and ecologically unique. In the film, “wilderness” is detached from its nationalistic bases as the border becomes a site of socio-ecological engagement. The Agambanian exception invoked by the Real ID Act – producing a form of sovereignty where both migrants and non-human entities are potentially reduced to bare life – is challenged as the border provides a perspective from which viewers can witness the tragedies of hyper-nationalistic militarization. The film, thus, gestures toward a model of political qualification founded upon “the denizen.” Within this model, the usually marginalized figure of “the migrant” is extended to encompass non-human lives and inserted into the center of this environmentalist organization’s ontologies, strategies and ethics.

And while the SCBC is profoundly aware of the violence done by these territorialized practices of security, the organization recognizes that the contours of sovereign power are more dispersed than Agamben’s conception indicates. The formal American institutions that permit the exception to environmental and social laws are set against the backdrop of a globalized free trade regime, and enabled by popular norms that reduce “Nature” to a resource of the nation-state, and “the migrant” to a threat to American national identity and security. This latter insight suggests that institutionalized manifestations of sovereign power are contingent upon a relational discursive field emanating from broader societal struggles.

In this light, engagement with the SCBC points to two blind spots in these social theorists’ deployments of “the migrant.” First, one commonality linking Bolaño, Rushdie, Agamben and Hardt & Negri together is the attempt to offer a grand, universalizing vision of

both structures of oppression and emancipation. For example, in making the case that “the refugee” has become the generalized (a)political figure of “our” time, Agamben does not consider the social relations that factor into declarations of bare life. The *potential* may exist for us all to be declared bare life, but the actualization of this process takes place within the confines of discourses that are shot through with national, racial, gendered, class-based and sexual conventions that lend themselves to the differential governance of various populations (Ong 2006, Sparke 2006).¹³⁶ In inviting American greens to consider structures of sovereignty from the perspective of “the migrant,” the SCBC shatters the fiction of a universalized “bare life.”

Second, structuring these universalizing views of oppression and emancipation are overly simplistic accounts of the relationship between sovereignty and space. For example, Hardt & Negri suggest that nationalism and localism as strategies of reterritorialization are fundamentally reactive, and instead urge activists to pursue global strategies of deterritorialization (2000, 45). In doing so, however, they reify deterritorialization as if the mere movement of bodies itself breaks down the machinations of Empire. This account considers neither how the unregulated movement of labor can mesh with the longings of capital, nor how particular local and national institutions and visions might be strategically employed to counter the impulses of problematic forms of sovereignty. At times, both Bolaño and Rushdie advance similar visions of deterritorialized emancipation, as do certain greens who eschew the “sovereign nation-state” in favor of the “sovereignty of nature” – which is argued to represent an inherently global or cosmopolitan project.

And yet, in critiquing Hardt and Negri’s dismissal of social activism at a range of scales, Bill Chaloupka argues that engagement with environmental politics might hold alternatives to

¹³⁶ Migrants themselves are a heterogeneous category. The “so-called Smart Border programs exemplify how a business class civil citizenship has been extended across transnational space at the very same time as economic liberalization and national securitization have curtailed citizenship for others” (Sparke 2006, 151).

these anemic conceptions of deterritorialized mobility:

[T]he green ability to balance localism and globalism ... could present a lesson to Hardt and Negri. By this logic, the truest mobility would be one that could circulate among both localism and globalism ... By this reading, 'think global, act local' could always have encoded theoretical mobility. (2003, 156)

In this amended formulation, "the migrant" can still function as a central site of resistance, but the broader political strategies of migrant populations – local practices of community building and attempts to gain social protections at the national level, in addition to organizing transnationally and globally – could have a place in the construction of the multitude. For example, the SCBC's *Faces of the Borderlands* appeals to a variety of communal imaginaries (local, subaltern, liberal national, cosmopolitan, bioregional), and the organization pursues engagement at local, ecosystemic, national and transnational scales.

Although Agamben does not fully unpack the complex, contingent relationships between sovereignty and space, his distinction between topography and topology provides support for this strategic conception of movement, giving way to a more nuanced vision of political space as discursively partitioned in complex, heterogeneous ways amidst the ever-present potentiality of the exception. Furthering this line of thought, political geographers Belcher et. al. have observed that, "[a]s a topological figure that creates the conditions for particular materialized sites, the exception is emergent, which is to say that it is not a preformed category but a dynamic set of techniques of power" (2008, 499). The exception is non-localizable in its potentiality, but its actualization is dependent upon a relational discursive field: "it is precisely because people can be 'othered' in governmentalized knowledges and inserted into an 'architecture of enmity' that they can be abandoned within a topological state of exception" (ibid 2008, 502, citing Gregory 2004). The exception does not merely "occur" within a specific space ("the border" or "the camp"), it is constituted through discursive struggles that enable the actualization of these

spectacles of sovereign power.

For example, although the logic of immigration-reduction environmentalism is frequently subordinated to the exigencies of neoliberal and geopolitical rationales, constructions of the immigrant as “ecological savage” have, at points, been successfully woven into more prominent anti-immigrant discourses of security (the immigrant as “terrorist”) and political economy (the immigrant as “job-thief”). This environmental logic is not widely employed by restrictionist policy-makers within the executive and legislative branches (those formally capable of “declaring” a state of exception), but it is frequently cited within the popular discourses that foment anger over immigration policy and create the dehumanization upon which recent draconian anti-immigrant measures that have been passed at sub-state levels depend (Park and Pellow 2011). Thus, this exclusionary logic is not centered within formal juridical institutions but weaves through a variety of scales, issue-areas and institutions. Resistance must be similarly dispersed.

Toward an Environmentalism of Movement

Out of this dialogue over the role of “the migrant,” it is possible to glimpse the contours of an alternative model of environmentalism – that I term an “environmentalism of movement.” The environmentalism of movement that I have in mind would not imply a nature that evades sovereignty; that is, in some idealistic sense, purely deterritorialized. And it also wouldn’t imply using the migrant instrumentally as a sort of “noble savage” who is somehow “closer to nature.” While this model remains to be fleshed out, the theoretical and practical cases that I examined point toward four necessary characteristics of an environmentalism of movement:

First, *movement is spatial*. The example that I opened the chapter with demonstrates that

sovereign power is no longer centered within a nation-state, but operates through contingent assemblages that cut across scales, temporalities, modes of governance and communal forms. As Hardt & Negri argue, dominant social imaginaries, organized around a territorially-bound, sovereign nation-state, are ill-equipped to combat the destructive implications of contemporary forms of sovereignty. Spatially, the contours of contemporary authority, control and legitimacy can often be located above, below and beyond the state. For Hardt & Negri the theoretical significance of “the migrant” lies in the ability of migrants to identify these sovereign forms. By virtue of their structural location within Empire, migrants possess a privileged epistemological frame. And while Hardt & Negri conceptualize sovereignty as purely deterritorialized, engagement with “the migrant” within the Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign suggests that sovereign assemblages function through contingent articulations between various scales of governance and political community.

For Hardt & Negri, as well as Bolaño and Rushdie, attention to this spatial movement breeds resistance against violent and exclusionary manifestations of sovereignty. Bolaño and Rushdie make the case that trans-cultural encounters enabled by migration push back against the territorial boundaries engrained in popular imaginaries and state cartographies. Similarly, constructing their ethico-political vision around human and non-human migrants, the SCBC creates an alternative socio-natural ontology that both more accurately identifies authoritative sovereign assemblages, and also resists and reconfigures these assemblages along pathways that lead to new communal imaginaries and modes of governance. While mainstream environmentalism – including the broader Sierra Club – continues to grapple with the “problem” of immigration, the SCBC’s more refined spatial vision enables alternatives that are socially and ecologically inclusive.

Second, *movement is discursive*. Agamben asserts that one cannot grasp contemporary configurations of sovereignty through a purely topographic lens. As an emergent technique of power, the localized iterations of exceptional decisions that reduce specific populations – human and non-human – to bare life are dependent upon discursive struggles. The norms, identities and knowledges that construct systems of meaning create the conditions of existence for the materialization of spaces of exception. In this sense, boundaries come in many forms that must be challenged. Of specific importance, while the social theorists that I reviewed do little to engage directly with environmental politics, environmental political theorists deploy border figures in order to break down the discursive boundary between Nature and Culture. The SCBC similarly works to highlight the unique encounters that emerge between human and non-human migrants in the border region, and insists on the inclusion of multiple voices in dialogues over social and ecological policy. Through this ontology, the category of “Nature” itself becomes mobile and poly-vocal. More so, through its outreach, the SCBC works to contest the broader discursive terrain through which conceptions of nature and nationalism embedded in the logic of immigration-reduction environmentalism might themselves migrate to geographic areas far removed from the US/Mexico boundary (e.g. the Town Hall meeting that I discussed in Chapters 5 and 6).

Third, *movement is relational*. The structural locations of various human and non-human lives within specific sovereign assemblages are vastly asymmetric. As such, ethical obligation for ameliorating instances of social and ecological violence must be similarly asymmetric. For this reason, volunteers with the SCBC, aware of their positionalities in relation to a variety of social and ecological Others, work to pick up trash left by migrants in the border region. And unlike some of their Sierra Club counterparts and several prominent policy-makers, the SCBC

recognizes the political economic, institutional and normative structures that place migrants in such a precarious situation, and pays heed to the social and ecological debt that is accumulated by those occupying privileged positions within these structures.

Finally, *movement is strategic*. Whereas Hardt & Negri seek a future without sovereign power, and many eco-centrists gesture to the deterritorializing prospects of the “sovereignty of nature,” an environmentalism of movement molds its strategies in line with the contingent spatial, discursive and relational contours of specific manifestations of sovereign power.

Strategic mobility is, thus, not found in the dogmatic embrace of globalism, cosmopolitanism, or bioregionalism, but on attention to contingency and openness to new alliances. Mobility does not simply reify border-crossing as emancipatory, but – to paraphrase Rushdie – focuses on taking strategic steps across specific lines. With its openness to various forms of political community, efforts to engage activists and policy-makers at multiple scales, and alliances with both environmental and social justice organizations, the SCBC has begun to move in this direction, providing a model for mainstream environmentalist organizations – like the broader Sierra Club – to expand this border thinking into their day-to-day practices so that the ethos of sovereignty they work to construct might be a more inclusionary one.

CONCLUSION

Édouard Glissant, the Martinican poet, theorist and activist, begins his seminal work, *Poetics of Relation* (1997 [1990]), with a description of forced migration. He invites the reader to imagine the terror felt by slaves as they were loaded onto ships – “the swirling red of mounting to the deck, the ramp they climbed, the black sun on the horizon, vertigo, the dizzying sky plastered to the waves” – headed toward an abyss they could not comprehend. This initial terror was only the beginning:

The next abyss was the depths of the sea. Whenever a fleet of ships gave chase to slave ships, it was easiest just to lighten the boat by throwing cargo overboard, weighing it down with balls and chains. These underground signposts mark the course between the Gold Coast and the Leeward Islands. Navigating the green splendor of the sea ... still brings to mind, coming to light like seaweed, these lowest depths, these deeps, with their punctuation of scarcely corroded balls and chains. In actual fact the abyss is a tautology: the entire ocean, the entire sea gently collapsing in the end into the pleasures of sand, make one vast beginning, but a beginning whose time is marked by these balls and chains gone green. (1997, 6)

In this passage, Glissant begins to underscore the relations between knowledge (the slave confronting a reality that is unintelligible), the violences of sovereign power (the reduction of African populations to mere cargo), the exclusionary historical residues that continue to haunt the present (the “balls and chains gone green”), and the potentialities that lie in new political conjunctures (the “vast beginning”). His poetics of relation is both a critique of ethnocentric epistemologies that reduce subaltern cultures to objects to be grasped in their essence, and a positive political project that seeks to harness the creative potential of intercultural interaction.

Within this project, Glissant contends that “the unknown,” though once terrifying, can today be employed as a source of strength; it is a means to de-center the gaze through which marginalized

Others have been made *transparent*, as well as a rallying point for those Others who “clamor for the right to *opacity* for everyone” (1997, 194, my italics).

Today’s migrants confront a far different reality, are subject to different modes of sovereign violence, and struggle under the weight of different histories than Glissant’s description of the forced migration of African slaves. Nonetheless, his project is, I would argue, as relevant to the struggle for migrants’ rights as it is to the struggle for autonomy and authority in the Antilles. In order to extend Glissant’s poetics to these unique experiences, though, the divergent pathways through which violence, exclusion and abandonment proceed must be considered. Critically, this dissertation has suggested that “nature” – constructed as a source of intrinsic value – is today emerging as a prominent site of discursive struggle that is deployed by societal interests of many stripes. Some of these interests have violent, exclusionary goals. Others do not, but are nonetheless persuaded by the epistemological influence of nationalized ideals of nature, or the progressive connotation that a commitment to nature entails. In a different sense than Glissant intended, *balls and chains are going green*.

Sovereignty, Nature and Biopolitics

How do these green forms of violence, exclusion and abandonment advance? In the introductory chapter, I observed that Michel Foucault offers a useful distinction between sovereign power – which functions overtly and spectacularly through the medium of violence applied directly to the body – and a host of other more subtle modes of power (disciplines, governmentality, and biopolitics) – which function through the medium of scientific “objectivity” and social norms that target individual bodies and populations. Of particular importance is Foucault’s conception of biopolitics, which explores the ways in which power

takes hold of life, seeking to enhance, restrain or redirect the biological forces of various populations.

And yet, in the name of allowing “the race” or “the nation” to maximize its vitality, this more subtle mode of power can also become “inscribed in the mechanisms of the state” (Foucault 2003, 254) in such a way as to authorize the violent management of marginalized populations (interestingly, Foucault speaks directly of the eugenicists in this discussion). Giorgio Agamben picks up here, seeking to further flesh out the ways in which the direct violence of sovereign power intersects with the normalizing impulses of biopower. Agamben contends that these two modes of power converge most directly under conditions of a “state of exception,” where the sovereign suspends the “normal” order in the very name of saving that order, and populations deemed threats to the sovereign are stripped of all capacity for political life. I have related Agamben’s theory to environmental politics in asserting that environmentalists – and non-environmentalists who strategically deploy green logics – are increasingly calling upon both “the state” and “society” writ large to recognize an ecological state of exception. They argue that extreme and immediate measures must be taken in order to save a nature-in-crisis.

Environmental crises – whether perceived or real – will continue to animate 21st century political dialogues. My contention, however, is that there is another crisis – one that is less frequently explored – that fuels these attempts to declare ecological exceptions. Bruno Latour argues that the practices of purification that neatly partition off “the cultural” from “the natural” (the human from the non-human) are constantly destabilized by hybrid natural-cultural networks that have always existed, but that are becoming ever-more difficult to ignore (1993, chapter one). From this perspective, the apocalypticism that is so prominent today is not related solely to the presence of existential environmental crisis, but to a conceptual one. The nature/culture dualism

is in crisis, and sovereign nation-states and natures alike are being mobilized to do something about it.

Contemporary American environmentalist debates over immigration sit at the epicenter of this conceptual storm. The “immigration problem” only exists from the perspective of this dualism. Implicit throughout this dissertation has been an argument that diverse nature-cultures (or “socio-natures”) have always been, and continue to be, woven into theories, practices and institutions of sovereignty. This despite, on the one hand, political theories founded upon allegedly pure “states of nature” that are argued to provide insight into how civilizations ought to be constructed and governed; and, on the other, ecological theories founded upon allegedly pure natural scientific concepts that are argued to provide insight into how civilizations ought to be constructed and governed. Both types of theorizing easily translate into discourses of exception – some “natural” order is threatened and extreme measures must be taken to save it. As the intrinsic value of nature is further thrust upon political agendas, and theorists and practitioners continue considering the potential directions in which the greening of sovereignty might proceed (as well as evaluating the desirability of greening sovereignty), the nature/culture divide is being rearticulated but persists in environmental and social imaginaries nonetheless.

The Ethos of Green Sovereignty

What theoretical lens can provide insight into the relationship between environmental crisis, nature and sovereignty? Extant approaches to theorizing sovereignty and nature tend to fall across a spectrum. At one end, Robyn Eckersley asserts that sovereignty can be stretched in more ecologically beneficent and socially inclusionary directions through changes in deliberative procedures and institutional forms. The most provocative of these shifts includes the

identification of “communities at risk,” which would provide a seat at the table for those populations impacted by a nation-state’s ecological and social practices. For Eckersley, greening the state is viewed as the most promising avenue to achieving ecological progress. At the other end, Mick Smith contends that attempting to green sovereignty inevitably leads to ecological and social destruction. The nation-state, according to Smith, simply appropriates the language of nature in order to advance geopolitical and capitalist projects that reduce non-human and human lives to “bare life.” Ecological emergencies are declared instrumentally, as a way to provide a green veil over definitively anthropocentric projects.

Both discussions contain valuable insights. Eckersley recognizes that sovereignty is malleable, and can be reshaped through contingent discursive struggles. Smith recognizes that in order to fully flesh out the relationship between sovereignty and nature, one must examine the implications of the sovereign’s capacity to declare a “state of exception.” However, I believe that both efforts are also disabled by a residual naturalism. With regard to Eckersley, my concern is that as efforts to green the state achieve increasing popularity, the constructions of nature that animate contemporary American political discourses – and that would drive deliberation in any sort of public sphere, however formally inclusive it might be – will lead to the intensification of exclusionary modes of nationalism. The intersubjective nature that emerges within the green state is likely to be articulated through the very same epistemological practices (Malthusianism, Darwinism, romanticism, etc.) that are employed by environmental restrictionists. With regard to Smith, my concern is that his approach paints sovereignty with too broad a brush; assuming that “the sovereign” is somehow insulated from societal discourses and popular pressures. His way out, an anarcho-primitivism that evades sovereignty, fails to unpack the micropolitics of this localistic, radical ecological arrangement.

In contrast to both of these approaches, I contend that efforts to green sovereignty need to first carefully evaluate the contingent biopolitical terrain on which “nature” resides (considering how constructions of nature are bound up in forms of national identity, assumptions about development, practices of boundary-making, and so on). In this vein, I argue for extending William Connolly’s notion of the “ethos of sovereignty” to the realm of environmental politics. My assertion is that whether or not attempts to green sovereignty are desirable depend upon contingent articulations between conceptions of nature, political community and governance.

One of the fundamental challenges for progressives is to be cognizant of the ways that discourses of ecological exception interweave with exclusionary configurations of sovereignty in ways that attempt to reduce marginalized populations to “bare life.” American debates over the environmental impacts of immigration provide a unique lens into this discursive struggle. Each of the environmental restrictionist discourses that I outline relies upon a construction of crisis, and yet they each conceptualize nature, political community and governance (and articulate the relationships between these ideals) in ways that differ dramatically.

The Discursive Terrain of Environmental Restrictionism

In focusing on articulations of nature, political community and governance, I have identified three discourses of environmental restrictionism that variably attempt to reconfigure American sovereignty.

To begin, the discourse of *social nativism* is employed by xenophobic and/or white nationalist groups who are either engaged in environmental restrictionist alliances, or are debating the role that a commitment to the non-human realm might play in the philosophy of the far-right. While there appears to be genuine discussion amongst social nativists over the

possibility of committing to protect nature, they have typically deployed nature instrumentally in order to advance their xenophobic, racist agendas. Nonetheless, nature plays two central roles in the efforts of social nativists to construct a vision of the Anglo-European Nation in peril: functioning (1) as a marker of order – designating God’s law, scientific law, or political law – that is linked with the Anglo-European nation; and, (2) as a symbol of anarchy that is attached to non-European cultures. Within the social nativist discourse, the ethos of sovereignty is overtly racialized, and non-white bodies are constructed as biopolitical threats to the vitality of the white nation. As the resonance of this overtly exclusionary discourse is limited to the far-right, social nativists seek out alliances with more moderate immigration-reduction organizations, and turn to alternative discourses.

The discourse of *ecological nativism* is employed by anti-immigrant organizations like the Carrying Capacity Network and Social Contract Press, and, at times, also appears in the publications of mainstream immigration-reduction organizations, like the Federation for American Immigration Reform. The crisis constructed by eco-nativists is simultaneously national and natural; the eco-nativist nature becomes intelligible through a combination of Darwinian, Malthusian and romantic epistemological practices that are all intricately woven into culturally-essentialist ideals of nationhood. The notion of “cultural carrying capacity,” in particular, serves to extend ecological concerns over population growth to the social register – providing natural scientific legitimation for projects seeking cultural homogeneity. Since the 1980’s, eco-nativism has provided a crucial institutional and discursive bridge that – by appealing to both nativists and environmentalists – has served to expand the ranks of the American anti-immigrant movement.

Today, however, the ethos of sovereignty sculpted by eco-nativists, influenced by the life boat ethics of Hardin, is too overtly essentialist to influence mainstream American “liberals” and environmentalists. As a consequence, I contend that immigration-reduction organizations in the United States are currently transitioning to discourses of liberal communitarianism. With regard to environmental restrictionists, this has meant a shift to a discourse of *eco-communitarianism*.

Eco-communitarianism plays both ontological and strategic roles within the current environmental restrictionist movement. On one hand, this is the lens that many mainstream environmentalists who are sympathetic to the restrictionist argument view the immigration/environment connection through.¹³⁷ On the other hand, this is the discourse that the broader environmental restrictionist coalition (i.e. social and ecological nativists) strategically turns to in its efforts to expand its support by appealing to American “liberals.”

Eco-communitarians articulate a narrative of socially and ecologically “progressive” communities under attack by neoliberal globalization. Their attempt to reconfigure sovereignty resonates in many ways with progressive attempts to “green the state:” explicitly disavowing racism; embracing a multicultural, interspecies, intergenerational nation; cultivating attachments to “wild places,” and seeking to construct a socially-democratic steady state. Their *direct* target (at least rhetorically) is not immigrants, but the de-territorializing impulses of neoliberal globalization – with which they carefully link immigrants.

The ethos of sovereignty articulated by eco-communitarians is far more nuanced and socially acceptable than those of the other two discourses of restrictionism. And yet, the transnational political economic linkages that eco-communitarians recognize in their description

¹³⁷ For example, in Jonathan Franzen’s novel, *Freedom*, one of the main characters, Walter, is an environmental restrictionist. Walter is genuine in his commitment to nature, does not appear to be racist, and is too likable to be a social nativist or eco-nativist. Walter is, in many ways, the model of the eco-communitarians that I’ve talked to and studied; saving nature comes to be seen as an end that is both detached from all social processes and overrides every alternative ethical commitment.

of how sovereignty has been reconfigured by neoliberal globalization are cleansed from the analytic slate as they move into their consideration of ethical obligation. This conception of ethical obligation is driven by an overarching narrative of ecological exception; an assertion that at the current political conjuncture, the natural crisis facing “us” is so grave, that the normal social concerns that drive American progressives’ desire to be inclusive must be *temporarily* suspended. As a consequence, despite their apparently sensible rhetoric, the prescriptions that eco-communitarians advocate remain draconian.

Table 8.1: Discourses of Environmental Restrictionism

	Social Nativist	Eco-Nativist	Eco-Communitarian
Organizations	Council of Conservative Citizens, VDare, American Immigration Control Foundation	Carrying Capacity Network, The Social Contract, restrictionist material geared toward consumption by members of organization	Progressives for Immigration Reform, NumbersUSA, Alliance for a Sustainable USA, Californians for Population Stabilization, restrictionist material geared toward public consumption
Individuals	Peter Brimelow, Virginia Abernethy, Steve Sailer	John Tanton, Garrett Hardin, Edward Abbey	William Rees, William Reyerson, Herman Daly, Roy Beck
Crisis	Nation imperiled by non-European cultures	Nation/Nature imperiled by population growth	Natural places and communities that protect them imperiled by neoliberalism
Nature	<i>Source of Order</i> (variably legitimated by God's Law, Scientific Law, and/or Political Law)	<i>Signifier of civilization</i> (i.e. Overpopulated "third world" cultures do not value wilderness)	<i>Marker of "progressive" nationalism</i> (i.e. Nation's "wild places" exist in opposition to "global spaces" of neoliberalism)
	<i>Symbol of Anarchy</i> (e.g. "Waves" of refugees)	<i>Socio-biological Truth</i> ("Cultural Carrying Capacity")	<i>Marker of "progressive" internationalism</i> (i.e. global nature threatened by spread of American consumptive patterns to immigrants)
Political Community	Anglo-European Nation	Anglo-European Nation	Multicultural, Intergenerational, Interspecies Nation
Governance	Libertarian State	Demographic Steady State	Social Democratic Steady State
Role within Environmental Restrictionist Alliance	Provides hyper-mobilized base. Appeals to emotion	Provides discursive and institutional bridges linking environmentalists and nativists	Appeals to greens concerned with social implications of immigration reduction

Environmentalism, Resistance and Movement

The vast majority of responses to restrictionism – by academics, activists and the media – have missed this shift to eco-communitarianism. Responses have relied upon on a discourse of *eco-cosmopolitanism*, which clings to an ideal of nature that is cleansed of cultural pollution and provides a clear pathway to de-territorialized emancipation. Eco-cosmopolitans reject any attempt to green sovereignty as inherently ecologically and socially destructive, and assert that a real commitment to the facts of nature leads “us” toward global modes of governance and cosmopolitan communities.

While I am broadly sympathetic to the aims of this discourse, I believe that it is politically disabling on several grounds. First, because it does not reflexively consider how genuine commitments to nature may actually intersect with socially exclusionary projects, it has failed to identify and respond to the most sophisticated iterations of environmental restrictionism – those most likely to influence American “liberals” (i.e. eco-communitarianism). Second, in continuing to forcefully articulate a distinction between nature and culture, the eco-cosmopolitan discourse unwittingly reinforces the very binary that environmental restrictionism depends upon.

Despite the embrace of eco-cosmopolitan rhetoric, however, the grounded practices of several opponents of restrictionism provide pathways to a discourse that I refer to as radical *political ecologism*, which enables an alternative reading of the relationship between sovereignty and nature. Through analyzing the practices of the Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign and the Center for New Community, I have argued that in orienting their environmental practice around “the migrant,” these organizations have been more accurate in their identification of the sovereign assemblages through which ecological destruction and social exclusion proceed; more effective in their alliance-building with both environmental and social interests; and more ethical

in their engagement with human and non-human Others. These organizations do not reject attempts to green sovereignty but work to re-channel them away from their nationalistic foundations and toward an ethos that is more inclusive and generous in its encounters with alterity. Engagement with the SCBC and CNC provides the foundation for what I term “an environmentalism of movement.”

Final Thoughts

To conclude, the goal of this dissertation has been twofold. First, I have attempted to render environmental restrictionism transparent; to invert the gaze away from migrants and toward the networks, logics and strategies of their accusers. My contention here is that the continued resonance of environmental restrictionism tells us more about American environmentalists than it does about the ecological impact of immigrants on “America’s environment.” Through my analysis, I have identified three discourses of restrictionism, and asserted that the eco-communitarian discourse – that most likely to persuade mainstream American environmentalists – has not previously been examined and critiqued.

Second, I have attempted to push back against the way that the “immigration problem” has been formulated within American environmentalism. Instead of asking: “what is the impact of immigrants on the environment of the United States?” I shift the discussion to: what would an environmentalism founded upon the unique socio-natural encounters of the migrant look like? In this sense, the idea is to invite American environmentalists to step across the lines – physically, conceptually, strategically, etc. – that have artificially constrained their practice. So that “we” might move toward an environmentalism that is both more ethical and effective.

Who is this “we” that I speak of? I think that the answer is, it depends. The “we” of American environmentalism ought to be a project-in-motion cultivated through engagement with a range of human and non-human others. The we at a particular time and place depends upon ontological, ethical and strategic considerations (perhaps, at times, this *we* won’t include *me*). Returning to Glissant might help to flesh this out. His poetics of relation recognize the centrality of specificity, particularism and contingency, and yet they simultaneously espouse, in an almost universal manner, the value of rhizomatic thought (“in which each and every identity is extended through a relation with the other”).

Interestingly, toward the end of Glissant’s work, he recognizes the appeal of a community formed around ecology. In discussing this potentiality, he distinguishes between “ecological mysticism” – which represents “mankind’s drive to extend to the planet Earth the former sacred thought of Territory” – and a “politics of ecology” – which “will bear the germ of criticism of territorial thought,” and serve as “a driving force for the relational interdependence of all lands” (1997, 146). The latter alternative – far from signaling an abstract embrace of globalism or cosmopolitanism – moves toward a more nuanced reading of socio-natural interconnection that is worthy of critical reflection. It is this “we” that an environmentalism of movement must embrace.

I am doing the same thing in the way I say we – organizing this work around it. Is this some community we rhizome into fragile connection to a place? Or a total we involved in the activity of the planet? Or an ideal we drawn into the swirls of poetics? Who is this intervening they? They that is Other? Or they the neighbors? Or they whom I imagine when I try to speak? The wes and theys are an evolving... They find full sense in the extension of discourse, in which preemptory abstract notions gain full force only through force of accumulation, since they cannot burn in the bodies charcoal live. The word mass burns, from its amassing. They find full sense in the echo of the land, where morne meets beach, where the motifs are entwined in a single vegetation, like words off the page.
(Glissant *ibid*, 206-7)

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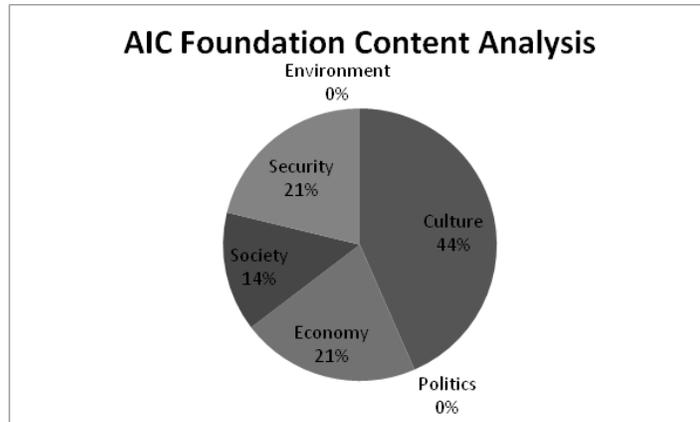
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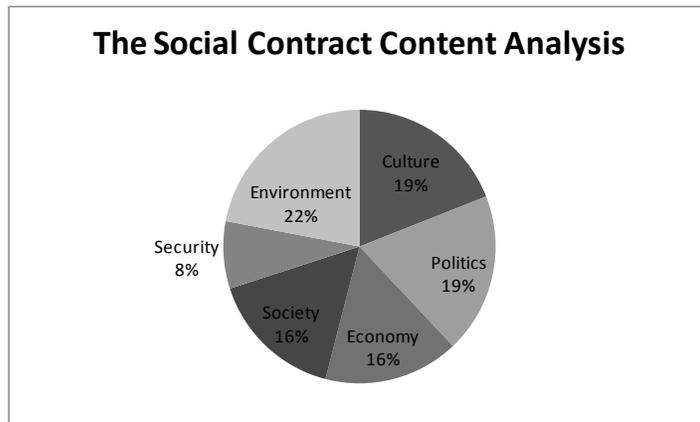
APPENDIX A Restrictionist Groups and Individuals

Groups

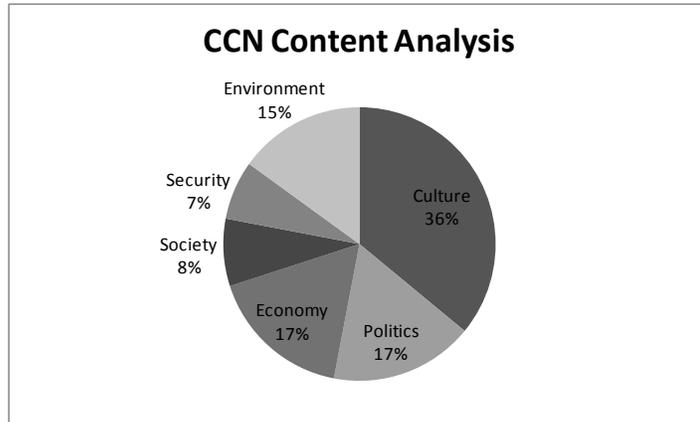
- 1) American Immigration Control Foundation: founded in 1983 by current President John Vinson. Does not display any overt environmental concerns although it is a part of the current America's Leadership Team coalition. <http://aicfoundation.com/>



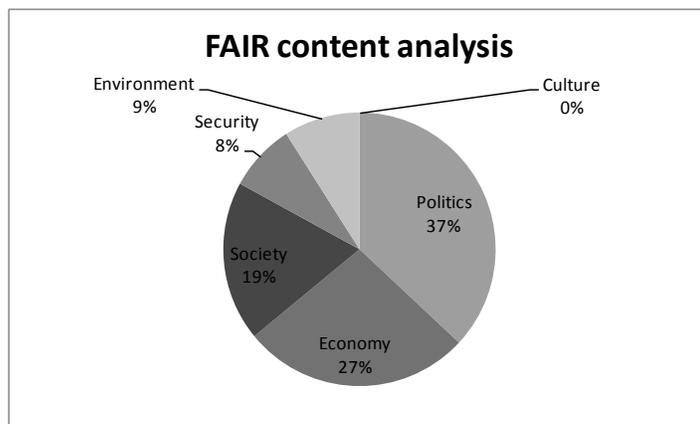
- 2) Social Contract Press: founded by Tanton to publish and disseminate materials that argue for the restriction of immigration. Publishes a quarterly journal, *The Social Contract*. Environmental issues are recognized but their centrality to the contributors' positions is unclear. <http://www.thesocialcontract.com/>



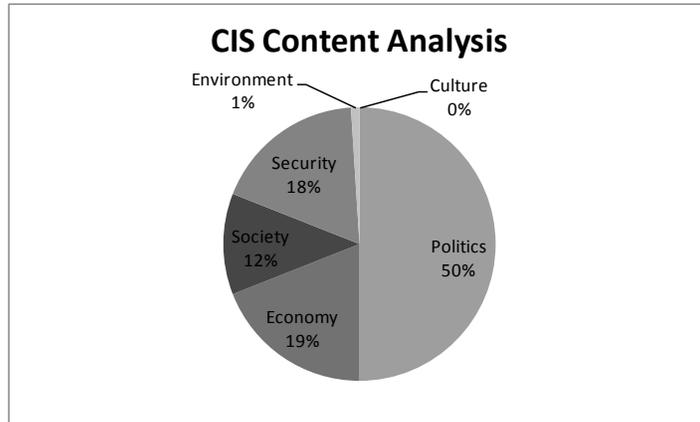
- 3) Carrying Capacity Network: An organization that blends explicit concerns over environmental degradation with explicit concerns over national culture (for instance, defines carrying capacity as “the number of individuals who can be supported in a given area within natural resource limits *and without degrading the natural social, cultural and economic environment* for present and future generations”). Several prominent ecological economists serve on its advisory board, but its president is a self-described “ethnic separatist.” <http://www.carryingcapacity.org/>



- 4) Federation for American Immigration Reform: founded by Tanton in 1979, claims to have over 250,000 members. As one of the more vocal and recognizable American immigration reduction organizations, representatives from FAIR often testify before Congressional committees and are quoted in reputable news sources. <http://www.fairus.org/>

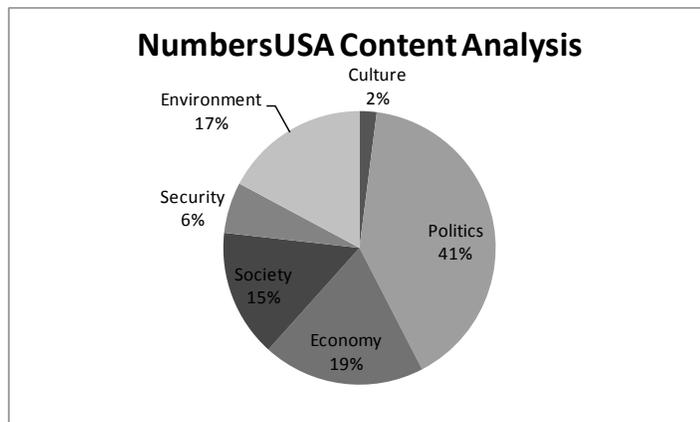


- 5) Center for Immigration Studies: Another Tanton creation (formed in 1985) that routinely presents itself as the “objective” expert on matters related to immigration. According to website, was recently awarded a six figure contract from the US Census Bureau. Like FAIR, representatives often testify before congress and are frequently quoted in reputable news sources. The CIS claims that Tanton only provided seed money and has had little involvement in day-to-day operations. <http://www.cis.org/>



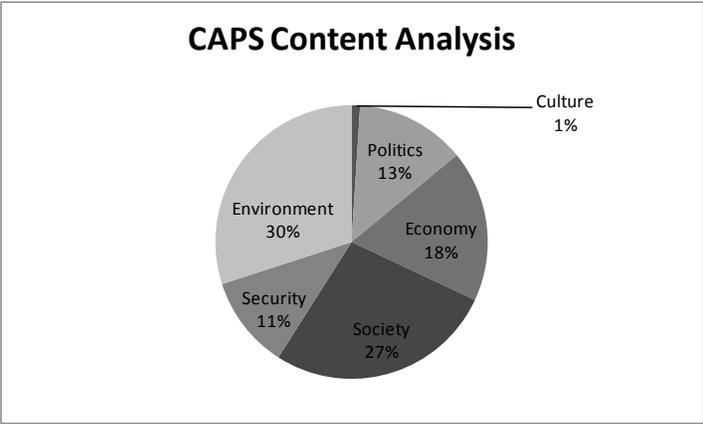
- 6) NumbersUSA: founded by former environmental journalist Roy Beck. Like CIS, prefers to position itself as nonpartisan and/or moderate. Focuses on “objective” statistics, rather than outright appeals to nationalism. Offices in Arlington and DC.

<https://www.numbersusa.com/content/>

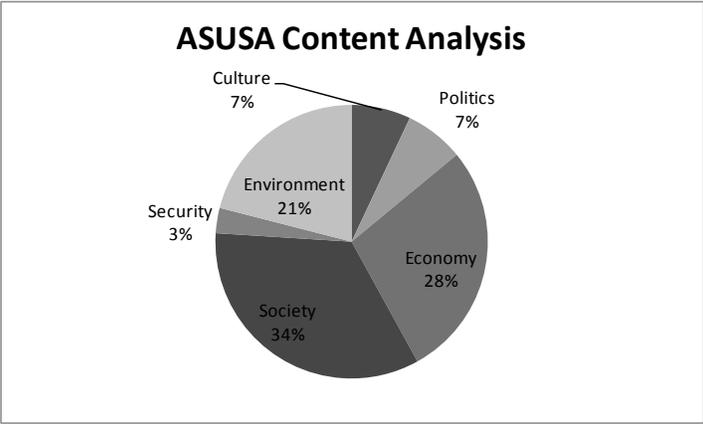


- 7) Californians for Population Stabilization: founded in 1986 by former members of Zero Population Growth out of dissatisfaction with the organization’s refusal to focus on national, as opposed to global, population issues. Many board members have significant histories of environmental involvement, but their focus often veers far from the environment.

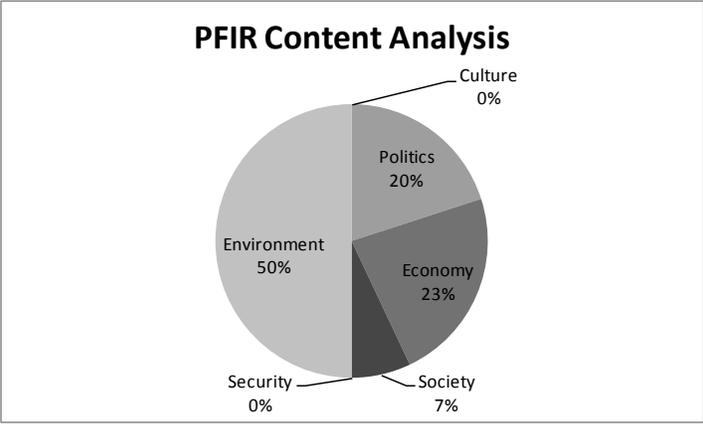
<http://www.capsweb.org/>



8) Alliance for Sustainable USA: Headed by Yeh Ling Ling, and a national board of advisors with several prominent leaders of PFIR and CAPS. Was formerly named, “Diversity Alliance for a Sustainable USA.” <http://asustainableusa.org/>



9) Progressives for Immigration Reform: A recently formed organization comprised of self-identified progressives who are in favor of restricting immigration. As the name indicates, PFIR aims to target American “liberals” and progressives. <http://www.progressivesforimmigrationreform.org/>



Key individuals

Virginia Abernethy: former editor of *Population and Environment* and Chair of Carrying Capacity Network. She also has close ties with the Council of Conservative Citizens and served on the advisory board of the Occidental Quarterly (a “Euro-American Nationalist” journal). Recently joined board of white nationalist, American Third Position. FAIR has actually spoken out against Abernethy for her extreme views.

Sharon Barnes: Columbia MBA on FAIR board of directors. Has been “active in population, environment and women’s issues.”

Roy Beck: founder and executive director of NumbersUSA. Has published a book and numerous articles on impact of immigration on the environment (particularly suburban sprawl). Claims the the UNEP and UN Population Fund have cited his sprawl studies.

Leon Bouvier: Holds a PhD in demography, a senior fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies and a CAPS advisory board member.

Marilyn Brant Chandler DeYoung: current Chair of CAPS. Served on Nixon’s President’s Commission on Population Growth (Rockefeller Commission) as well as Board of Population Crisis Committee (now Population Action International), and Population Education Committee.

Philip Cafaro: PFIR President, and associate professor of Philosophy at CSU. Has several publications that argue in favor of limiting immigration for environmental reasons.

Steven Camarota: Director of Research for CIS. Recently served on panel debating the impacts of immigration and environment, and has also noted these immigration/environment linkages in congressional testimony.

William Catton Jr.: also board of advisors for FAIR and Carrying Capacity Network

Robert Costanza: Ecological economist and board of Advisors for Carrying Capacity Network.

Herman Daly: Ecological Economist and board of Advisors for Carrying Capacity Network.

Richard Duncan: contributor to Social Contract Press. PhD in electrical engineering and frequent writer on “peak oil.”

Leah Durant: Executive Director of Progressives for Immigration Reform.

Robert Gillespie: FAIR and CAPS Board of Advisors

Otis Graham: CAPS Board member and historian of American history. PhD from Columbia. (FAIR board of advisors). Also on the CIS board of directors.

Lindsey Grant: scholar who has published numerous books making the case for immigration restriction. Environmental concerns always figure prominently.

Michael Hethmon: General Counsel of Immigration Reform Law Institute (the legal arm of FAIR that has been actively involved in sculpting the anti-immigrant laws passed in American states – like SB 1070). A recent *Washington Post* article asserts that Hethmon came to the immigration reduction movement as “a bookish lawyer afraid that immigrants would overburden the environment” (Farhenthold 2012).

Stuart Hulbert: Secretary of CAPS and emeritus professor of Biology at San Diego State. PhD from Cornell University.

Diana Hull: former President of CAPS, and a former member of the Sierra Club Population Committee, as well as the Southern California Demographic Forum. Is also a member of the Fair Board of Advisors. Has a PhD in public health.

Julie Kirchner: executive director of FAIR.

Leon Kolankiewicz: Demographer with interview on NumbersUSA website, PFIR board of advisors.

Mark Krikorian: Executive Director of Center for Immigration Studies since 1985. Does not personally write on environmental issues although the organization has devoted significant attention to environmental restrictionist arguments.

Dick Lamm: Former governor of Colorado. Affiliations include: CAPS advisory board; FAIR Board of Advisors; contributor to Social Contract Press; PFIR board of advisors

Yeh Ling Ling: former immigrant on FAIR board of advisors and Director of Alliance for a Sustainable America.

Martin Litton: CAPS board of advisors and former member of Sierra Club Board

L. Hunter Lovins: formerly on board of advisors for Carrying Capacity Network

Daniel Luten: CCN board of advisors

Wayne Lutton: Editor of *The Social Contract*. Controversial figure with ties to the blatantly racist Council of Conservative Citizens.

Donald Mann: President of Negative Population Growth.

Ira Mehlman: Media director for FAIR and former special assistant to Governor Lamm.

Frank Morris: FAIR board of directors and Vice President of Progressives for Immigration Reform. Held a position in state dep't and was executive director of Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. PhD in political science from MIT. Vice President of Progressives for Immigration Reform. CIS board of directors.

Richard Peltó: frequent contributor to the Social Contract Press.

David Pimentel: Professor of Ecology at Cornell and Advisory Board member for PFIR.

Marcia Pimentel: CCN board of advisors

William Rees: CCN board of advisors and ecological economist.

William Ryerson: former President of Progressives for Immigration Reform and CAPS board of advisors. Long history of environmental activism. Currently heads the Population Media Center.

Dick Schneider: CAPS Board member and environmental writer.

George Sessions: CAPS advisory board and noted deep ecologist.

David Simcox: contributor to *The Social Contract*.

Dan Stein: former executive director of Immigration Reform Law Institute and current President of FAIR. Has reportedly testified "more than fifty times" before Congress.

John Tanton: Former chairman of the Sierra Club Population Committee ('71-'75) and president of Zero Population Growth ('75-'77). Founded FAIR, the Social Contract Press, Center for Immigration Studies and several other prominent anti-immigrant organizations.

John Vinson: President of American Immigration Control Foundation

Alan Weeden: FAIR board of directors and Weeden Foundation.

Don Weeden: Weeden Foundation. Recently served on panel with Cafaro, Camarota and several others debating the impacts of immigration and environment.

Ben Zuckerman: Vice President of CAPS. Professor of Physics and Astronomy at UCLA. Has been "very involved" with the Sierra Club population debates.

APPENDIX B

Opponents of Restrictionism

America's Voice: One of the major American immigrants' rights organizations. Actively involved in pushing for immigration reform at the national level. <http://americasvoiceonline.org/>

Border Action Network: Founded in 1999 to work for immigrants' rights in Arizona border communities. <http://borderaction.org/web/>

Center for New Community: Chicago-based organization founded in 1995. The CNC works locally and nationally to oppose racism and nativism and advance social justice. Currently has a campaign on "Migration, Race & the Environment." <http://www.newcomm.org/>

Committee on Women, Population and Environment (CWPE): Alliance of feminist activists and scholars that calls attention to gendered, racial and class-based implications of Malthusian logics. <http://www.cwpe.org/>

Environmental Health Coalition: Bi-national coalition working for environmental justice in the San Diego-Tijuana border region. <http://www.environmentalhealth.org/>

Fort Collins Community Action Network: Alliance of environmental and social justice advocates in Northern Colorado. Formerly called the CJPE. <http://fccan.org/>

Imagine2050: A Center for New Community project that attempts to critically analyze what it means to be American through deconstructing restrictionist logics. Particular focus on youth activism. <http://imagine2050.newcomm.org/>

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights: Founded in 1986 to protect human rights of all immigrants and refugees. Several members were involved in Sierra Club immigration debates. (Did not respond to requests for interviews) <http://www.nnirr.org/drupal/>

Political Ecology Group: San Francisco-based group that is an offshoot of the CWPE. Explicitly geared towards targeting the environmental restrictionist logic and working to build alliances between environmentalists and immigrants. <http://cwpe.org/node/148>

Population and Development Program: Progressive think tank housed at Hampshire College that focuses on the gendered and racial implications of population control. Publishes *DifferenTakes* Issue Paper Series. <http://popdev.hampshire.edu/home>

Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign: Works to call attention to and ameliorate the destructive environmental and social impacts of the US-Mexico border wall. <http://www.sierraclub.org/borderlands/>

Southern Poverty Law Center: Combats white nationalist, nativist and other discriminatory thought. Has dedicated significant attention to environmental restrictionism and the "John Tanton Network." <http://splcenter.org/>

APPENDIX C
Sample Introductory Email

Dear _____,

My name is John Hultgren and I'm a PhD student doing my dissertation research on the debates over the environmental impacts of immigration. As part of this research, I'm contacting individuals on both sides of the debate in the hopes of better understanding the arguments both for and against limiting immigration in the name of nature.

I've recently come across some of your statements and research on the topic, and I was wondering if I might be able to interview you at some point via phone (or email if you'd prefer) at your convenience. If you have a few minutes, I'd be very interested in hearing more about your background in these debates and your thoughts on them.

Attached I've included a more formal letter explaining my research. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
John Hultgren

**Appendix D
Results of Content Analysis**

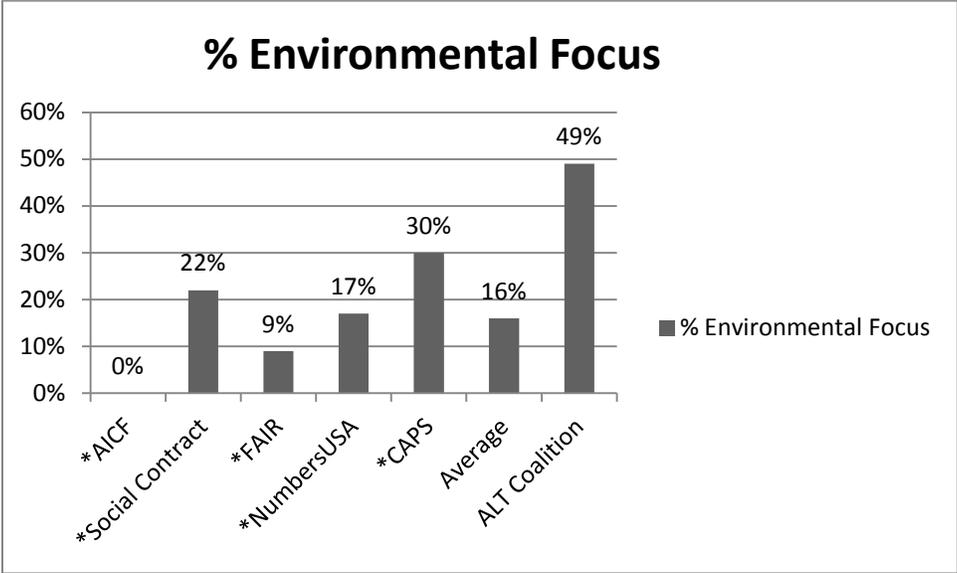


Figure 1: Individual Organizations versus “America’s Leadership Team” Coalition

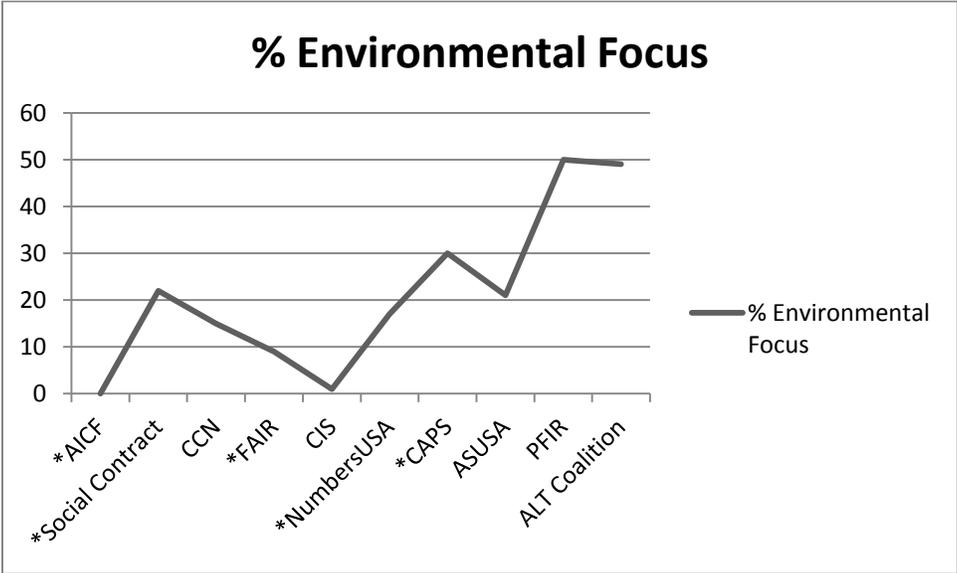


Figure 2: The Environmental Restrictionist path toward “eco-centricity”

Appendix D – cont.

Table 1: Results of Content Analysis

Organization	Culture	Politics	Economy	Society	Security	Environment	Total Coded	% Environment	Environment in Mission Statement?
*AIC Foundation	12	0	6	4	6	0	28	0%	No
*Social Contract	56	54	47	46	24	65	292	22%	Yes
Carrying Capacity Network	21	10	10	5	4	9	59	15%	Yes
*Federation for American Immigration Reform	0	71	52	37	16	17	193	9%	Yes (one of 3)
*NumbersUSA	1	19	9	7	3	8	47	17%	Yes
Center for Immigration Studies	0	45	17	11	16	1	90	1%	Yes (one of 5)
Alliance for a Sustainable USA	6	6	25	31	3	19	90	21%	Yes (one of 4)
*Californians for Population Stabilization	1	12	17	25	10	28	93	30%	Yes
Progressives for Immigration Reform	0	6	7	2	0	15	30	50%	Yes
America's Leadership Team Coalition	5	0	3	21	0	28	57	49%	n/a
*Members of ALT Coalition									

Appendix E

Explanation of Coding

I examined the websites of nine organizations that have publicly voiced support for the environmental restrictionist logic (as well as the recent America's Leadership Team Coalition), in order to gain insight into how central a commitment to nature actually is to their organizational goals and/or strategies. In addition to the environment, I sought to better understand what other issue areas were being deployed to advance the particular organization's restrictionist logic.

Overall, there are six categories that I believe capture the breadth of the restrictionist logic. When reference was made to one of these categories, I made note of it, and – as the charts illustrate – I counted the number of times particular categories were referenced overall. Below is an explanation of the categories:

- 1) **Culture** – documents and phrases that focused on the impact of immigration on national cohesion, that made explicit references to “Other” ways and traditions of living (e.g. the “Arab” or “Latin” threat), and/or that voiced anxiety over the decline of specific “American” ideals.
Examples of terms coded as cultural: unity, division, balkanization, assimilation, language, ethnic conflict
- 2) **Politics** – documents and phrases that focused on formal political institutions: that made reference to congressional bills, the enforcement of laws, proposals by the president and legislators, bureaucratic institutions, voting trends, etc.
Examples of terms coded as political: amnesty, the open borders lobby, the Dream Act, the Obama Administration, Arpaio, the ICE
- 3) **Economy** – documents and phrases that focused on the impact of immigration on the American economy; that made reference to jobs, taxes, economic growth, etc.
Examples of terms coded as economic: development, growth, jobs, unemployment, “working Americans,” poor, middle class
- 4) **Society** – documents and phrases that focused on the broader societal impacts of immigration; that made reference to public health, education, healthcare, etc.
Examples of terms coded as societal: infrastructure, quality of life, traffic jams, the public school system, housing costs
- 5) **Security** – documents and phrases that focused on violent conflict (or the potential for violent conflict) stemming from immigration.
Examples of terms coded as security: border fence, drug cartels, trafficking, terrorists, criminality
- 6) **Environment** – documents and phrases that focused on the impact of immigration on non-human entities.
Examples of terms coded as environmental: sprawl, open space, wilderness, national parks, biodiversity, invasive species

*Note: “Total Coded” refers to the total number of codings from all categories.

Explanation of Documents Analyzed (by organization):

- 1) AIC Foundation: The AIC Foundation’s website is relatively small, consisting only of three introductory paragraphs and books, booklets and videos for sale. I analyzed the sections summarizing these books, booklets and videos.
Content analysis performed 12/4/2011
- 2) The Social Contract Press: The Social Contract Press publishes a quarterly journal, *The Social Contract*. Each issue has a definitive theme, so I analyzed the themes of every issue dating back to the journal’s inception. I also analyzed the main themes of the individual articles for the past five years.
Content analysis performed 12/4/2011
- 3) Carrying Capacity Network: The CCN website is comprised of an introduction to the organization, articles pertaining to five issues areas, as well as periodic “Action Alerts” that keep subscribers up to date on the CCN’s viewpoints. I analyzed the organization’s mission statement, the five main issue areas, and 14 Action Alerts (dating back to 12/2009)
Content analysis performed 12/5/2011
- 4) Federation for American Immigration Reform: I analyzed four parts of FAIR’s website: 1) the articles and research emphasized on the home page; 2) the “Immigration Issues”; 3) the “Press Releases”; and (4) the “Publications.” Note that some of the content on FAIR’s site does not fit easily into the six aforementioned categories (e.g. maps of immigration population by state under the “Immigration Facts” heading), so this portion of the website’s content was excluded from analysis.
Content analysis performed 12/4/2011
- 5) Center for Immigration Studies: For the CIS, I analyzed: 1) the main “Topics” that are highlighted on the left of the home page; (2) the “New Immigration Research”; 3) recent blog postings, and (4) publications for all of 2011 (up to 12/5).
Content analysis performed 12/5/2011
- 6) NumbersUSA: I analyzed the following sections of the site: the home page, recent blog postings, “What NumbersUSA is all about,” “Issues,” and “Hot Topics.”
Content analysis performed 12/4/2011
- 7) Californians for Population Stabilization: I analyzed the following sections of the site: articles highlighted on the home page, “Advertising Impact,” “How it Affects You,” and “Think Population.”
Content analysis performed 11/30/2011

- 8) Alliance for a Sustainable USA: I analyzed the following sections of the site: the home page; “Why we must address US population growth”; “What is the sensible way to help foreign poor”; “FAQs about population and immigration in America”; “Why sustainable immigration also benefits legal immigrants”; “How immigration advocates’ reform will increase US population growth”; and “How record high immigration exacerbates our concerns.”
Content analysis performed 12/9/2011
- 9) Progressives for Immigration Reform: I analyzed PFIR’s Principles, blog posts (from 8/23/11 – 11/23/11) and Recommended Reading.
Content analysis performed 12/5/2011
- 10) ALT Coalition: I analyzed the six advertisements that comprise the recent advertising campaign.

**APPENDIX F
INTERVIEWS**

Interviewee	Background/Institutional Affiliation	Format	Date
Cheryl Distaso	Fort Collins Community Action Network (Coordinator)	In person	2/22/2011
Rebecca Poswolsky	Center for New Community (Field Organizer)	Phone	3/17/2011
Kim Medina	Immigration Attorney	Phone	1/7/2012
Michael Dorsey	Former Sierra Club Director	Phone	10/5/2011, 10/10/2011
Dan Millis	Sierra Club Borderlands Campaign (Coordinator)	Phone	1/12/2012
Frosty Wooldridge	Population Activist, FAIR Board of Advisors	Phone	5/19/2011
Phil Cafaro	Progressives for Immigration Reform (President)	In person	2/8/2011
Don Weeden	Population Activist, Weeden Foundation	Phone	4/13/2011
Dick Lamm	Former Governor of Colorado, FAIR Board of Advisors	Email	10/9/2011
Yeh Ling Ling	Alliance for a Sustainable USA (Executive Director)	Phone	5/19/2011
Marilyn Chandler Brant DeYoung	Californians for Population Stabilization (Chair of the Board)	Phone	5/23/2011
William Rees	Ecological Economist, Carrying Capacity Network (Board of Advisors)	Phone	10/11/2011
William Ryerson	Population Media Center (President)	Phone	10/17/2011

*Note: The institutional affiliation, where included, is intended to provide insight into the individual's activism. Their views may not reflect those of the institution they are associated with.