2017

"White" Space: The Racialization of Claremont, California

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Recommended Citation
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“WHITE” SPACE: THE RACIALIZATION OF CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

by

EMILY AUDET

SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

PROFESSOR TYSON
PROFESSOR MILLER
PROFESSOR PREEST

DECEMBER 14, 2016
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my readers—Professor Tyson, Professor Miller, and Professor Preest—for helping me through my research process. Professor Tyson, thank you for supporting and encouraging me throughout the research and writing process and for providing invaluable advice and insights. Professor Miller, thank you for being so available to talk, for sharing your knowledge of the history of California, and for providing physical space and an encouraging environment for me to work on my research. Thank you, Professor Preest, for not only reading my thesis but also for helping me navigate the academic bureaucracy to ensure I meet requirements. I would also like to thank Professor Kim and Professor Golub for helping me develop my research topic over the summer and the beginning of the semester. I would like to thank the librarians at Honnold Mudd Library (especially Lisa Crane and Mary Martin), Sean Stanley at Claremont Heritage, and Marcus Martinez at the City of Claremont for supporting my research process. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends—especially my roommate, Christina Fox—for emotionally supporting me through this process and for creating a compassionate intellectual environment where we can think through the type of issues raised in my thesis. This thesis would not be what it is without each of your contributions.
Introduction

A city of about 36,000 people, Claremont, California sits on the eastern border of Los Angeles County, with San Bernardino County adjacent to the city’s eastern edge (U.S. Census Bureau 2015a). The Claremont Colleges, a prestigious consortium of five liberal arts undergraduate schools and two graduate institutions, all lie within the city.¹ The San Gabriel Mountains border Claremont to the north. Bordering its western edges are the cities of La Verne and Pomona in Los Angeles County, and Montclair and Upland of San Bernardino County lie on its eastern boundaries.

As of the 2010 and 2015 censuses, Claremont has a disproportionately white, non-Hispanic nor Latinx, population compared to the neighboring cities and the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino. When white-identifying Hispanics and Latinx individuals are included in the count of white people, Claremont’s concentration of whites becomes much more proportional to the neighboring cities and both counties (Tables 1a and 1b). However, Claremont has about double the concentration of white, non-Hispanic nor Latinx, people compared to Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties, with about 60 percent of the city’s population comprised of non-Hispanic whites (U.S. Census Bureau 2015a). Claremont also has a disproportionately small black and African American population compared to both counties, and the smallest Hispanic and Latinx

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¹ For the past four years, I have attended school at Scripps College. As a student of the Claremont Colleges, completing this thesis revealed hidden histories of the space, of which I was previously unaware. My positionality as a white woman in the Claremont community has undoubtedly influenced my interest in, approach to, and understanding of this topic. Being a white resident of Claremont can allow me insights into the functioning of whiteness from the perspective of white people, who—either intentionally or unconsciously—participate in systems of white supremacy. However, my white privilege also makes me unfamiliar with the realities of people of color living in Claremont.
population among the neighboring cities and both counties (U.S. Census Bureau 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d, 2015e, 2015f, 2015g).²

Table 1a. Census data on Race and Hispanic Origin for Claremont and the surrounding cities, taken at the 2010 Census, the most recent available data (data taken from U.S. Census Bureau 2015a, 2015b, 2015d, 2015e, 2015g).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>White alone</th>
<th>Black or African American alone</th>
<th>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</th>
<th>Asian alone</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>White alone, not Hispanic or Latino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claremont</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Verne</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montclair</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomona</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² With 7,700 students, the Claremont Colleges could seriously impact the census data for the city as a whole (Anon n.d.). The U.S. Census Bureau requires that college students who live either on or off campus at their schools for the majority of the year list their college address as their place of residence within the census (US Census Bureau n.d.). The seven educational institutions in the consortium do not disclose their race statistics in a standardized way, making finding their race data difficult. Keck Graduate Institute does not disclose their race statistics on their website. Claremont Graduate University has less diversity than the undergraduate colleges, with 19% of the student body comprised of “ethnic minority,” or Hispanic, Native American, black, and/or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander individuals (Claremont Graduate University 2016). Of the undergraduate students, Scripps appears the least diverse, with students of color making up only 40 percent of the student body (Scripps College 2015). Pomona College has the least number of white students among the undergraduate schools, as white students comprise 32.8 percent of the College’s Class of 2019 (Pomona College 2016). The fact that the City of Claremont remains about 60 percent non-Hispanic white after including the Colleges’ generally more diverse population shows that the city has an even larger white residential population than first appears.
Table 1b. Census data on Race and Hispanic Origin for the counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino, taken in 2015, the most recent available data (data taken from U.S. Census Bureau 2015c, 2015f).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>White alone</th>
<th>Black or African American alone</th>
<th>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</th>
<th>Asian alone</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>White alone, not Hispanic or Latino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That Claremont has a disproportionately high non-Hispanic nor Latinx white population is significant. The fact that the U.S. Census Bureau created two white categories, one including Hispanic/Latinx whites and one excluding them, shows that the U.S. government’s definition of racial categories includes white Hispanic/Latinx individuals only tangentially in its definition of whiteness. The Census’s categorization of whites implies firstly that the U.S. government holds a greater right to define individuals’ racial identities than individuals themselves possess. Secondly, it implies that creating a definition of whiteness that excludes Hispanic and Latinx individuals is both possible and provides additional information about the racial composition of a place. While Hispanic or Latinx individuals may identify themselves as white, the U.S. government and other whites may not recognize that identity. Similarly, the City of Claremont routinely discriminated against Latinx individuals throughout the city’s history, as this research project later explores.
Vanderbeck (2006) analyzes the process of racialization in Vermont and identifies that Vermont promotes itself as a certain kind of white. Vermont residents are Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, and residents of the state try to distance themselves not only from people of color but also from other whites with a more tangential relationship to “whiteness,” such as the Irish and French Canadians (Vanderbeck 2006:646). I argue that Claremont engages in a similar project to Vermont. Because Claremont has a disproportionately large population of non-Hispanic nor Latinx whites, Claremont can assert that it possesses a specific type of white resident. This resident has a more direct connection to Anglo status, which Anglo whites often assert as a more ‘pure’ kind of white (Vanderbeck 2006:646). In this research paper, I explore how Claremont has been racialized as “white,” but I assert that the city has been racialized specifically as an Anglo white community.

Claremont’s existence as a white non-Hispanic nor Latinx bubble is not a coincidence. My research examines how Claremont has a disproportionately high non-Hispanic nor Latinx white population and disproportionately low black and African American and Hispanic and Latinx populations in relation to the surrounding cities and counties. My research more precisely asks, how have Claremont’s land use policies regulated the movement of people of color both into and within the city? How do perceptions of Claremont and the city’s assertion of its own identity incorporate understandings of race, both implicitly and explicitly, in their descriptions of the city? Spatial organization along racial lines significantly contributes to racial inequality in the United States (Ford 1992; Massey and Denton 1993; Lipsitz 2011). White residential enclaves allow whites to maintain their political and economic privileges within the U.S.
My research examines how Claremont arose as a white enclave and how the city has maintained its majority-white status. Analyzing the racial history of the City of Claremont can help answer how relatively insular white communities emerge and maintain their whiteness.

To answer my first research question about land use regulations and race, I analyze relevant Claremont City Council Ordinances, General Plans, Zoning Codes, and Municipal Code dating back to the city’s incorporation in 1907. In my analysis, I search for any regulations that could affect the race or socioeconomic status of people able to live in Claremont. My analysis focuses mostly on Claremont’s history from its incorporation to the 1970s. The post-World War II period and the 1970s hold particular importance. The U.S. saw a massive movement of people into the suburbs after World War II (King 1978; Oliver and Shapiro 2006), and Claremont’s demographics were shifting during the 1970s, with a growing black population and an influx of wealthy whites from nearby Orange County (Wright 1999:373, 379). I also analyze racially restrictive housing covenants in Claremont, even though private homeowner organizations—not the city government—generally establish restrictive covenants, since these covenants are highly relevant to my first research question. To answer my second research question, I analyze how descriptions of Claremont, both about and from the city, employ concepts of race and racial difference. My analysis includes news articles, promotional materials for the city, city planning documents, and historical accounts of the city. I identify times when descriptions of the city explicitly mention race and when they contain racial undertones.
The field of geography stems from a white perspective, since Europeans formalized the discipline when using geography in their colonial efforts (Kobayashi and Peake 2000:393–94; Rose 2013:20). Geographical researchers did not start seriously addressing the relationship between race and place until the 1960s. Even then, however, most research on race in geography focused on “black” and “brown” spaces (Dwyer 1997). This recent geographical research has identified that places have social identities, including racialized identities (Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Delaney 2002; Inwood and Yarbrough 2010).

My research aims to understand the process through which Claremont acquired the racialized identity of “white.” I use an analysis of spatial regulations to examine how Claremont controlled the racial demographics within the city to ensure a majority white population. My analysis of descriptions of Claremont analyzes how Claremont asserts its racialized identity and how residents and outsiders perceive this identity. Only recently have geographers begun to examine “white” spaces, and existing research on this subject remains minimal (Kobayashi and Peake 2000). I intend for this research project to contribute to a growing body of knowledge on the process of racialization of “white” places. I use Claremont as a case study to investigate how whiteness uses spatial control to maintain structures and ideologies that give disproportionate power to white people. An improved understanding of the spatial components of white supremacy in the United States will lead to increased knowledge of how to dismantle systems of racial inequality that spatially, economically, and socially marginalize people of color. I hope this knowledge appeals to anyone interested in pursuing racial justice within the United States.
Racialization of Place

Critical race theory made the significant contribution of recognizing race as a social construction. However, the social construction of the concept of race does not make its political, economic, and social consequences any less real. In this thesis, I employ Omi and Winant’s (1994) concept of “racial formation,” or the historical process of providing meaning to and defining racial difference (55). Omi and Winant (1994) assert that racial formation proceeds through a series of “racial projects,” which they define as “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines” (56). Racial formation, or the development of meanings and associations connected to race, occurs through a successive chronology of racial projects, which create meanings and representations of race that can be employed to create unequal distributions of power and resources according to these racial definitions. This thesis focuses on the relationship between racial formation and space in Claremont, California. How do racial projects incorporate, provide meaning to, and play out in space?

Geographical theory recognizes a relationship of co-production between the social and the spatial. Delaney (2002) describes this relationship: “elements of the social (race, gender, and so on) are not simply reflected in spatial arrangements; rather, spatialities are regarded as constituting and/or reinforcing aspects of the social” (7, emphasis in original). The theory of social space posits that social identities, like race and gender, influence spatial organization, while this organization of space simultaneously shapes social identities. Inwood and Yarbrough (2010) describe the theory of social space in a specifically racial context: “a multifaceted relationship exists between place and race
wherein places are racialized while places also structure, construct, and re-produce racialized individual identities” (300). Understandings of race and place are developed concomitantly, where the identity formation of one contributes to the identity formation of the other.

Ford (1992) describes spatial organization as an “enabling technology of race” (123). Several enabling technologies of race—or vehicles which create racial difference—exist, but Ford argues that spatial organization is potentially the most prominent way through which racial categories become established and maintained contemporarily (117). Ford’s description of spatial organization as an enabling technology of race mirrors the theory of social space in its assertion that space helps produce racial identities. Ford (1992) adds to this understanding with his argument that racial technologies mask the fact that they create racial difference (123). Ford emphasizes the covert nature of spatial and racial identity co-production. Spatial organization along racial lines creates essentialist notions of race, or an understanding of racial difference as a natural occurrence, rather than as a result of constructed racial projects (Omi and Winant 1994:187). Ford’s analysis complements Omi and Winant’s theory of racial formation. Structures of power along racial lines (in this case, these structures depend upon spatial organization) employ ideological concepts of race and end up actualizing racial difference. These differences create justifications for essentialist notions of race, all the while hiding the fact that structures of power produce racial difference.

Adding an understanding of power to this concept of social space allows us to examine the relationship between racism and space. Popular notions of racism in the U.S. ignore the necessity of power to racism and instead focus on intentional, individual acts.
This focus allows white people to disregard their participation within a racist system.

Pulido (2000) describes this process:

Because most white people do not see themselves as having malicious intentions, and because racism is associated with malicious intent, whites can exonerate themselves of all racist tendencies, all the while ignoring their investment in white privilege. It is this ability to sever intent from outcome that allows whites to acknowledge that racism exists, yet seldom identify themselves as racists. (15)

A clear mismatch exists between popular definitions of racism and the actual implementation of racist acts.

Scholars provide an alternative definition of racism that recognizes its structural aspects. Omi and Winant (1994) define a racial project as racist if it “creates or reproduces structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race” (71). Racism involves a distributive system of power and resources built on understandings of racial identities as natural, distinct categories. Pulido (2000) provides a similar definition of racism perpetuated by whites: “I define white racism as those practices and ideologies, carried out by structures, institutions, and individuals, that reproduce racial inequality and systematically undermine the well-being of racially subordinated populations” (15). Omi and Winant’s and Pulido’s definitions of racism employ a systemic understanding of racial oppression. One in which racism can be acted out through individual acts of racism, but always as part of a larger structure of racial subordination (Pulido 2000:12–13). Racism uses spatial control in its implementation, and space produces race (Inwood and Yarbrough 2010; Lipsitz 2011).

Many scholars in the field of geography use the concept of racialization to describe the process of creating racist racial projects. Kobayashi and Peake (2000) define the process of racialization as “the material processes and the ideological consequences
of the construction of ‘race’ as a means of differentiating, and valuing, ‘white’ people above those of color” (393). The process of racialization, therefore, refers to a process of production of racial identities, which U.S. systems of power incorporate in order to place individuals labeled as “white” higher in a social and political hierarchy than those labeled as “of color.” Inwood and Yarbrough (2010) provide a similar definition of racialization: “Processes of racialization involve the use of biological criteria (i.e. phenotype etc.) to separate people into distinct groups for the purpose of domination and exploitation” (299). The process of racialization mirrors Omi and Winant’s understanding of racial formation—racialization constructs essentialist definitions of racial identities in order to create unequal systems of power along racial lines. While these definitions of racialization do not incorporate spatial aspects, Kobayashi and Peake (2000) extend their definition to include place: “‘Racialization’ is therefore the process by which racialized groups are identified, given stereotypical characteristics, and coerced into specific living conditions, often involving social/spatial segregation and always constituting racialized places” (393). People of racialized identities live in what Kobayashi and Peake refer to as “racialized places.”

What, however, constitutes a racialized place? In my research, I employ Inwood and Yarbrough’s (2010) definition: “Racialization of place is a process of constructing particular geographic landscapes that help define and reinforce racialized social hierarchies, thus facilitating domination and exploitation” (299). The process of racialization includes two main components: categorizing people into racial identities and using those differentiated identities in unequal hierarchies of power according to race. Racialization of place facilitates this process through places taking on racialized identities
and through the use of spatial organization and physical segregation of racialized bodies as a tool to facilitate the unequal treatment of people of color. This definition of racialization of place incorporates both Omi and Winant’s theory of racial formation and Ford’s concept of spatial organization as an enabling technology of race.

*Whiteness and “White” Places*

“White” places play a unique role within racialized places. The nation’s popular imagination generally normalizes whiteness (Vanderbeck 2006:643), and geographic research often treats whiteness as racially unmarked and “white” spaces as the absence of racialization. Kobayashi and Peake (2000) argue that this project to construct whiteness as the lack of race constitutes a process of racialization in itself. They define “whiteness” as “the normative, ordinary power to enjoy social privilege by controlling dominant values and institutions and, in particular, by occupying space within a segregated social landscape” (Kobayashi and Peake 2000:393, emphasis in original). According to Kobayashi and Peake, “whiteness” allows people marked as “white” to hold a disproportionate amount of power structurally and ideologically, while portraying this distribution of power as normal and natural. Kobayashi and Peake’s (2000) definition also fuses the power of whiteness with space—they describe “whiteness” as the larger normative environment within which all smaller environments are located (393).

Whiteness pervades the U.S.’s physical, social, and political environment. People who claim they possess a “white” identity not only normalize white privilege but also assert whiteness as a stable, natural identity. Dwyer and Jones (2000) assert that the social construction of whiteness “relies upon an essentialist and non-
relational understanding of identity. Whiteness offers subjects who can claim it an opportunity to ignore the constitutive processes by which all identities are constructed” (210). The maintenance of a “white” identity depends on white people’s assertion of essentialism, or the idea that racial identities are natural and characteristic of everyone within a racial group, and of non-relationality, or the perspective that whiteness did not form in relation to other racial identities. The identity of whiteness gives white people the power to claim their domination of resources as a result of natural differences between races and as unrelated to the subordination of people of color.

In actuality, the “white” identity depends upon the creation of a racialized “other,” which embodies everything the “white” person is not. Ford (1992) describes the coproduction of black and white identities, writing, “…for the concept of a white race to exist, there must be a Black race which is everything the white race is not (read of course: does not want to be associated with) … it is not so much the construction of Blackness that matters, it is the construction of whiteness as the absence of those demons the white subject must project onto the other” (134). “White” identity depends upon exclusion and contingency—white people define their identity by demonizing other races and, consequently, establishing themselves as a superior race through the lack of these inferior qualities.

Places racialized as “of color” contribute to white identity formation. Dwyer and Jones (2000) describe this phenomenon: “if his white suburb is to be maintained as ‘safe’, ‘predictable’ and ‘orderly’, then its socio-spatial complement must be epistemologically cordoned as the ‘ghetto’ and its putative inhabitants cast as ‘menacing’, ‘volatile’ and ‘disorderly’” (214). “White” places form their identity through the absence of racialized
“others.” The popular narrative in the U.S. frames “white” places as normal and pure, embracing normative values of a middle-class heteronormative suburban ideal, while casting places of color—here, the “ghetto”—as morally depraved and lacking the order of white spaces. Federal public policies played a major role in developing this perspective, as the federal government subsidized the development of white suburbia, while divesting from neighborhoods of color.

*Spatial Organization in United States Public Policy*

In 1933, the federal government created the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), one of a number of federal programs started during the Great Depression to improve employment in the field of construction and to increase homeownership. The HOLC accomplished this goal through financially supporting the refinancing of mortgages near default in urban areas and by providing low-interest loans to previous homeowners whose homes had been foreclosed (Massey and Denton 1993:51). The HOLC created a system of rating neighborhoods deserving of receiving loans based on expressly racist standards. The agency ranked neighborhoods on four levels of loan deservedness, from green—the most deserving—to red—the least deserving. They characterized newer, white neighborhoods as green and older, black neighborhoods as red. The HOLC discriminated most severely against black people by consistently rating neighborhoods with even small black populations or the possibility of attracting black populations as the lowest rating. Black neighborhoods shaded red did not benefit from the government’s loan distributions, hence the term ‘redlining’ (Massey and Denton 1993:51–52; Oliver and Shapiro 2006:17).
The HOLC did not originate the use of racial categorization and discrimination in real estate, but the agency formalized the process on a large scale (Massey and Denton 1993:52). Massey and Denton (1993) describe the importance of this development by writing that the HOLC “lent the power, prestige, and support of the federal government to the systematic practice of racial discrimination in housing” (52). While the HOLC’s loan-distribution program alone was relatively small in scale, the HOLC’s actions significantly impacted racial wealth distribution across the country because other public and private credit institutions adopted HOLC’s system of determining creditworthiness. The HOLC sent out “Residential Security Maps” visualizing their racist system of ranking throughout the lending industry. Banks across the country used this rating system to determine where to lend money, institutionalizing redlining. In this way, the HOLC established discriminatory lending as standard practice among credit institutions across the country (Massey and Denton 1993:52).

The Federal Housing Authority (FHA), founded in 1934, also used the HOLC’s rating system in their determination of where to lend money. The FHA created the modern mortgage system, where individuals purchase homes through relatively small down payments and a low-interest loan, which they pay off through scheduled payments over a long period of time. The FHA stimulated construction of many homes and allowed these homes to be purchased at relatively low prices. Although the FHA did not develop explicitly anti-urban policies, the agency’s efforts encouraged white suburban, over urban, development because their policies favored single-family homes over multi-family homes, construction over repair, and used the HOLC’s rating system described above,
which redlined communities of color, generally located in inner cities (Oliver and Shapiro 2006:17).

The FHA did explicitly try to maintain residential segregation, as the agency believed this would preserve property values, whereas integration would lower these values. The agency recommended strict subdivision regulations and racially restrictive housing covenants (Oliver and Shapiro 2006:18), or clauses in deeds that forbid homeowners from selling their homes to people of color (Simpson 2012). The FHA continued making these recommendations until 1948, when the Supreme Court struck down the legal enforcement of racial covenants (Sides 2004:100; Oliver and Shapiro 2006:18). These federal policies encouraged the development of white suburban neighborhoods across the country, while abandoning urban communities of color and divesting money from these neighborhoods.

Other federal policies encouraged suburbanization, but with a discriminatory focus against black people. The U.S. government gave millions of low-interest loans to working-class families and soldiers returning from war after World War II. This lending program facilitated suburbanization and allowed benefitting Americans to increase their financial assets through homeownership. These benefits, however, disproportionately went to white Americans, and often, government agencies designed these policies with the goal of preventing black Americans from benefitting. (Oliver and Shapiro 2006:22). Federal housing policies encouraged white suburbanization and homeownership at the expense of communities of color. Not only did the federal government divest from neighborhoods of color, but the government funneled taxes from communities of color into subsidizing white suburban development (Pulido 2000:16).
The federal government passed the Fair Housing Act in 1968 to discourage discrimination in housing. Massey and Denton (1993) assert that the Act does not fulfill its duties: “Whereas the processes that perpetuate segregation are entrenched and institutionalized, fair housing enforcement is individual, sporadic, and confined to a small number of isolated cases” (15). The Act does not effectively prevent residential discrimination since it focuses on individual cases of discrimination, rather than systemic discrimination. Lack of adequate federal protection of housing rights allows discrimination to continue to this day—federal and private credit institutions continue to distribute loans on race-based understandings of credit-worthiness. The Federal Home Loan Bank Board regularly redlined neighborhoods with growing black populations up until 1970 (Massey and Denton 1993:105). A 1991 Federal Reserve study showed that blacks were less likely to get mortgage loans than whites and that low-income whites were more likely to get mortgage loans than wealthy blacks. Neither the loan applicant’s financial status nor place of residence changed the privileging of white applicants over black applicants (Oliver and Shapiro 2006:19–20). The legacy of federal housing policies ensures continued discrimination against black homeowners.

The physical isolation of black communities deters black people from gaining political power. Segregation physically isolates black people into majority-black communities, whereas most other racial groups are relatively integrated (Massey and Denton 1993:14). Massey and Denton (1993) explain why segregation is a barrier to building black political strength:

Integration thus creates a basis for political coalitions and pluralist politics, and most ethnic groups that seek public resources are able to find coalition partners because other groups can anticipate sharing the benefits. That blacks are the only ones to
benefit from resources allocated to the ghetto—and are the only ones harmed when resources are removed—makes it difficult for them to find partners for political coalitions. (14)

Residential segregation hinders blacks from forming multi-racial political coalitions to advocate for shared benefits. Federal policies that encouraged white flight and discriminated against black neighborhoods contribute to continuing political disempowerment among the black community.

Federal housing policies also increased the wealth gap between black and white Americans by institutionalizing barriers to black homeownership. Oliver and Shapiro (2006) describe the lasting impact of federal housing policies:

Locked out of the greatest mass-based opportunity for wealth accumulation in American history, African Americans who desired and were able to afford home ownership found themselves consigned to central-city communities where their investments were affected by the ‘self-fulfilling prophecies’ of the FHA appraisers: cut off from sources of new investment their homes and communities deteriorated and lost value in comparison to those homes and communities that FHA appraisers deemed desirable. (18)

This passage highlights Ford’s concept of spatial organization as an enabling technology of race. Because the FHA and HOLC perceived communities of color to be of lesser value than their white counterparts, they redlined communities of color, causing the physical quality and value of these neighborhoods to decrease.

Ford (1992) expands on Oliver and Shapiro’s concept of redlining as a self-fulfilling prophecy. He describes how decreasing property values as a result of redlining influence white perceptions of neighborhoods of color: “Without an adequate tax base, the provision of services stays low, property owners are unable to finance rehabilitation and upkeep, residents begin to despair and engage in anti-social behavior; all these ‘prove
right’ the original negative perceptions of the neighborhood” (Ford 1992:135). Ford’s analysis of the segregation and unequal treatment of black neighborhoods in the U.S. describes how racialization of place produces racial difference—redlining causes black neighborhoods to have poorer conditions than their white counterparts. White ideology in the U.S. separates these conditions from their social and political context and represents them as a result of the lack of moral fortitude of black people.

In addition to decreasing the wealth of people of color, federal housing policies artificially raised property values for whites (Lipsitz 2011), encouraging white property owners to exclude people of color in order to maintain the higher values of their property. Pulido (2000) asserts, “neighborhoods are not merely groupings of individuals, homes, and commerce, they are constellations of opportunities with powerful consequences, for both the recipient and nonrecipient populations” (30, emphasis in original). Majority-white places allow whites to preserve their artificially high housing prices and concentration of resources, which furthers white privilege and disadvantages people of color, especially those living in neighborhoods racialized as “of color.” Pulido (2000) builds on the relationship between exclusive white spaces and white privilege: “The full exploitation of white privilege requires the production of places with a very high proportion of white people” (16, emphasis in original). Pulido’s understanding of white privilege emphasizes that whites have an economic investment in maintaining racist systems, for these systems financially benefit whites.

Residential segregation allows white communities advocating policies that facilitate the capture of resources within their neighborhoods to portray themselves as
concerned homeowners rather than investors in a racial hierarchy in which they sit at the
top. Lipsitz (2011) states:

Racialized space enables the advocates of expressly racist policies to disavow any
racial intent. They speak on behalf of whiteness and its accumulated privileges and
immunities, but rather than having to speak as whites, they present themselves as
racially unmarked homeowners, citizens, and taxpayers whose preferred policies just
happen to sustain white privilege and power. (35, emphasis in original)

For example, white communities opposing busing of students of color into their school
district can use the argument of concern for school quality, rather than their interest in
benefitting from the oppression of people of color. Their argument focuses on
maintaining their disproportionate access to resources and ignores the racial context of
the issue. Geographic and race scholars have identified a white ideology that advocates
for privatization of places in order to maintain economic privileges while appearing to
ignore race (Dwyer and Jones 2000; Lipsitz 2011).

Federal housing policies facilitated residential segregation and invested into white
communities while divesting from communities of color. This system provides an
economic incentive for whites to exclude people of color from their neighborhoods. As a
majority-white city, Claremont benefits from the exclusion of people of color. The rest of
my research project addresses how Claremont ensured its majority-white status and how
the city asserts its white identity.

A Brief History of Claremont

Native History and Colonial Contact

A brutally violent settler history that displaced and abused the people native to the
land created Claremont as it is known today. The Tongva, Cahuilla, and Serrano Native
American tribes all existed in the area around Claremont, and records exist placing each of these tribes within the land that comprises Claremont today (Larson 1954; Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999; Landsberg, Stanley, and Claremont Heritage 2014:7). Two histories of Claremont name the Serrano tribe as indigenous to Claremont (Wright 1999; Landsberg et al. 2014). However, the Tongva, or Gabrielino, tribe possesses the main claim to the land. Accounts from a current Tongva resident of Claremont place the Tongva as the primary inhabitants of Claremont’s land, the State of California recognizes the Tongva as indigenous to the Los Angeles Basin, and most scholars recognize the Tongva as the primary inhabitants of Claremont’s land (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999).

Acuña (1999), a Claremont resident of Tongva heritage, provides a detailed account of the Tongva’s history in the Claremont region in “A Journey to Tovangar (A Journey to the World),” written in collaboration with the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont. The Tongva tribe named the Claremont region “Torojoatnga,” meaning “‘the place below Joat’. Joat means both ‘snow’ and the mountain that rises above the village in the northern background. Today we call that mountain, Mt. Baldy. Claremont is the place below Mt. Baldy. The Gabrielino-Tongva knew it as The Place below Joat: Torojoatnga” (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:1).

Evidence exists of habitation in the Los Angeles Basin as early as 6000 BCE; however, researchers do not know if these early residents were part of the Tongva tribe. Archaeological evidence establishes the Tongva tribe in the region in 500 BCE, and by 500 CE, a network of Tongva villages sprawled across the Los Angeles Basin (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:4). Before colonization, the Tongva
territory spread across 4,000 square miles.\textsuperscript{3} Geographic landmarks distinguished the boundaries of the territory. The Santa Ana River defined the eastern border, and the San Gabriel Mountains and San Bernardino Mountains comprised the northern border. Mount Baldy in the San Gabriels and Mount Santiago in the Peninsular Range lay on what was the center of the northern and southern central borders of the territory (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:5). Cahuilla and Acjachemen territory lies to the east of Tongva territory, on the other side of the Santa Ana River. The Kokoemkam—called “Serranos,” or “mountain people,” by the Spanish—lived mainly in the San Bernardino Mountains (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:12).

The Spanish entered the Los Angeles Basin in 1771 when they formed the Mission of San Gabriel, which included the land that is today Claremont (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:37; Landsberg et al. 2014:11). From the beginning of a Spanish presence in the area, Spanish soldiers abused the Tongvan people through imprisonment, torture, and rape (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:37). The Mission sought to convert Native Americans to Christianity, and after Native Americans were baptized, missionaries forcibly kept them at the Mission and forced them to work for no pay. If Natives refused to work, missionaries often tortured them (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:38–39, 42; Landsberg et al. 2014:11). Missionaries also forced conversions among Native Americans through whipping and other violent means (Lehman n.d.:4). Apart from the Mission, Spanish slave raiders enslaved Native Americans to work for the Spanish state. As late as 1830, Native slaves were traded on the “Old Spanish Trail,” which extended from Santa Fe to

\textsuperscript{3} See Appendix 1 for a map of the Tongva and surrounding tribes’ territories.
Los Angeles. This practice, known as the “Indian Slave Trade,” continued after the government formally banned it, so identifying precisely when the practice ended is extremely difficult (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:39–40).

When the Mission secularized in 1834, Claremont’s land was given to the Palomares and Alvarados families for ranches (Landsberg et al. 2014:11). The first United States colonizers arrived in Southern California in 1841. At this time, the Tongva tribe was dispersed across the region, and many Tongva people worked on Mexican Land Grants (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:9). In Claremont, the Native American population was mostly concentrated on the land now known as the “Indian Hill” community in Claremont (Landsberg et al. 2014:11). Some scholars estimate that about 10,000 Native Americans were enslaved between 1850 and 1863, when California was in the hands of the United States. From before colonial contact to 1870, scholars estimate that the Native population in California shrunk from about one million people to 50,000. Murder, starvation, and the spread of European disease majorly contributed to this massive death toll (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:43–44).

Although Spanish and U.S. colonizers attempted a cultural genocide of the Native American tribes in the region—and throughout the United States—many Tongva people continued to discreetly practice their cultural traditions after colonizers arrived, and today, many Tongva people continue these traditions (Acuña and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden 1999:9). Acuña and the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden (1999) write of the Tongva, “Like wild flowers blooming where least expected and under harsh conditions they have emerged in the late half of the 20th century as a living people with a rich culture that is part of California’s heritage” (49).
History of Claremont as Part of the U.S.

Henry Palmer, a land buyer in Northern California, heard that the Santa Fe Railroad planned to build in the Claremont region. He suggested that the railroad be built above North Pomona, through the land that now comprises Claremont. In 1887, the Pacific Land Improvement Company began a failed town-building scheme predicated on the construction of the Santa Fe Railroad, which led to the formation of Claremont. The land boom lasted only from 1887 to 1888 and left Claremont as a near ghost town (Landsberg et al. 2014:19).

Pomona College, the original member of the Claremont Colleges, saved Claremont from complete abandonment. The College started in a rented cottage in Pomona but moved to the Claremont Hotel in Claremont during the winter break of 1888 to 1889, after the land boom left the hotel vacant. The College leadership initially intended for Claremont to only serve as a temporary home to the College, but then the College remained in Claremont permanently (Landsberg et al. 2014:33; Pomona College 2015). Like many of Claremont’s early institutions, the College was originally a Congregationalist institution, and as such, it attracted many Congregationalist New Englanders to settle in the area, reviving the city from its potential death (Landsberg et al. 2014:33). Henry Palmer helped establish a Congregationalist atmosphere within the region, partially by founding two Congregationalist Churches—one in Pomona and one in Claremont—and Pomona College, which no longer holds religious affiliation (Wright 1999). Claremont began with a distinctly New England style, including its early
governance systems—in town meetings, citizens would debate with each other and vote on town decisions (Landsberg et al. 2014:33).

In 1900, only about 250 people resided in Claremont, but the city grew quickly. Claremont became officially incorporated into Los Angeles County in 1907, and by 1910, 1,114 people lived in Claremont (Landsberg et al. 2014:8). Pomona College quickly gained recognition as one of the best liberal arts colleges in the country, and to accompany the growing attendance demand, educators founded the Claremont Colleges, a consortium of educational institutions in 1925. At first, the Claremont Colleges included only Pomona College and a graduate school, now known as Claremont Graduate University. Scripps College, the women’s college, became the second undergraduate school in the consortium at its founding in 1927. Claremont Men’s College, today Claremont McKenna College, formed in the late 1940s to accommodate the large numbers of servicemen coming home with GI Bills. The other three schools, Harvey Mudd College, Pitzer College, and Keck Graduate Institute, opened in 1955, 1963, and 1997, respectively (Landsberg et al. 2014:69).

Peter Dreher planted Claremont’s first orange trees around 1888, beginning Claremont’s citrus boom, which lasted from 1888 to 1950. Claremont formed the Claremont Fruit Growers Association with a group of other citrus growers. In packinghouses along the city’s railroad tracks, laborers packed citrus to be sent eastward to consumers (Landsberg et al. 2014:10, 53). The peak of the citrus industry in Claremont occurred during the 1940s. Latinx laborers provided most of the physical labor needed to maintain the industry.
While many Latinx laborers were migrant workers, some workers settled in Claremont, creating two Latinx neighborhoods in Claremont: the East Barrio (also known as Arbol Verde) and the West Barrio. The West Barrio contained Claremont’s first Latinx school, which had special significance considering Claremont’s schools did not integrate white and Latinx children until the 1940s (Landsberg et al. 2014:53–67). Places of religious worship in Claremont reflected the segregation throughout the city. Two Catholic Churches formed to serve Claremont’s Latinx enclaves—Our Lady of the Assumption Church and Arbol Verde’s Church of the Sacred Heart. During the 1940s to 1950s, Claremont residents tried to bridge the social gap between white and Latinx families. To achieve this goal, two clubs formed: Claremont’s Intercultural Council and the Club de Demas (Landsberg et al. 2014:53–67). The industrial engineering boom resulting from the Cold War created a surge in population in Southern California. This boom ended by 1970 but effectively destroyed Claremont’s citrus industry (Landsberg et al. 2014:93). In 1973, the city demolished portions of Arbol Verde to build Claremont Boulevard (Landsberg et al. 2014:66).

The 1940s attracted many artists to Claremont, and Claremont became well-established as an artist town. The Mexican Players drew many tourists from the surrounding area to Claremont from 1937 to 1974. They were an acting group of mostly working-class Mexican-Americans with little to no formal theatre experience. They performed traditional Mexican folklore, songs, and dances in Spanish to a mostly English-speaking audience at the Padua Hills Theatre in Claremont (Landsberg et al. 2014:107–124).
**Tools of Racial Exclusion in Claremont**

Claremont’s City Council and white residents used a variety of tools to exclude people of color and low-income people from moving into Claremont since the city’s beginning. These tools range from formal land-use regulations to private housing contracts. While most of these restrictive policies do not explicitly mention people of color (except for racially restrictive housing covenants), they discourage people of color from moving into the city through discriminating against working-class people, people perceived as delinquent, and multifamily homes. The presence of racially restrictive housing covenants in Claremont proves that whites living in Claremont desired to exclude people of color. The policy tools described below exclude people of color through indirect means. Any regulations aimed at excluding working-class individuals disproportionately affects people of color, who generally possess less wealth than whites, partially due to the discriminatory federal policies described above.

*Policing of Public Space*

Claremont City Council passed police regulations as some of their first ordinances. These regulations probably did not primarily intend to exclude people of color, considering the probably small number of people of color living in the area around 1907, when Claremont became a city. No census data exist for the City of Claremont around this time; however, at the time of the 1910 census, Los Angeles County was 95.9% white and San Bernardino County was 95.5% white (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1913:231–46). Most likely, these early ordinances primarily intended to exclude whites perceived as unwanted, yet they could be easily applied to people of color.
These regulations established Claremont as an exclusive community from its incorporation. The City Council created a precedent for excluding individuals from occupying the city’s public space based on arbitrary terms, which the city could potentially extend to any unwanted demographic. City Council Ordinance 16 declares: “No person without visible means of support or employment, and not seeking any employment, shall idly loiter about the streets, avenues, alleys, parks or public places of the city of Claremont…” (Claremont City Council 1908). The Ordinance goes on to state:

No person shall be guilty of any lewd or indecent behavior in any public place within the city, or shall appear therein in an indecent or lewd dress, or a dress not belonging to his or her sex, or shall make any indecent exposure of his or her person, or shall within the city, sell or offer to sell or give away any indecent, scandalous or lewd look, print, picture, circular, poster, bill or thing, or shall exhibit or perform any indecent, immoral, or lewd play or representation, calculated to excite scandal, immorality or disturbance of the peace, or public tranquility. (Claremont City Council 1908)

In 1911, the City Council passed another Police Regulation Ordinance, which states:

Every person who maliciously and wilfully disturbs the peace or quiet of any neighborhood or person, by loud or unusual noise, or by tumultuous or offensive conduct, or threatening, traducing, quarreling, challenging to fight, or fighting, or who, on the public streets runs any horse-race, either for a wager or for amusement, or fires any gun or pistol, or uses any vulgar, profane, or indecent language within the presence or hearing of women or children, in a loud and boisterous manner, is guilty of a misdemeanor… (Claremont City Council 1911). These ordinances attempt to exclude working-class people—through requiring people to appear as if they are employed in order to loiter in public space—as well as those seen as morally deviant, including anyone who does not dress in accordance with their assigned gender.
In addition to establishing a precedent for exclusion, these ordinances represent the City Council’s perceptions of Claremont around the time of the city’s incorporation. The City Council’s language in these ordinances frame Claremont as a quiet, peaceful, and moral community, unwelcome to loiterers, people engaging in immoral behavior, or those who disrupt the city’s peaceful state. Other scholarship about places racialized as “white” identify similar language to describe these places. Through his scholarship on the white identity of the state of Vermont, Vanderbeck (2006) analyzes how understandings of Vermont as pure, peaceful, and bucolic have been incorporated into the state’s “white” identity. Other scholars also notice a relationship between white identity formation and an assertion of places as moral and orderly (Dwyer and Jones 2000; Lipsitz 2011). Claremont’s assertion of its peaceful and morally-principled identity from its incorporation potentially facilitated the city’s racialization as “white.”

*Racially Restrictive Housing Covenants*

White Claremont residents prevented people of color from moving into the city most explicitly through racially restrictive housing covenants. Accounts from Latinx residents in Claremont during the Great Depression describe how all of the incorporated areas of Claremont excluded people of color through restrictive covenants. White Claremont residents forced Latinx people to form the barrios in Southern Claremont, unincorporated land at the time (Garcia forthcoming:8). Claremont did not exist alone in its use of restrictive covenants; many white neighborhoods in the Pomona Valley—an area including Claremont, La Verne, and Pomona—developed racially restrictive covenants (Garcia 2010:284). Padua Hills Theatre, home to the Mexican Players, was
constructed in 1928 in Palmer Canyon, a neighborhood restricted to whites at the time (Garcia 2010:127). A 1928 deed of a home in Palmer Canyon states, “The grantees further covenant for themselves, their heirs or assigns, that they will not sell, lease, or convey the above premises or any part thereof, to, and will not permit the above premises, or any part thereof, to be occupied by any person not of the Caucasian race” (Claremont Heritage Special Collections 1928).

I could not find any clear documentation of when these covenants ended in Claremont. The Supreme Court made racially restrictive covenants legally unenforceable in 1948 through their *Shelley v. Kraemer* decision. However, white residents could still engage in private, voluntary covenants among neighbors until 1953, when the Supreme Court outlawed them in *Barrows v. Jackson*. The combination of these two cases led to the dissolution of racially restrictive covenants across the country (Sides 2004:100).

**Zoning and Other City Council Ordinances**

City governments often employ zoning laws, planning regulations, and ordinances to establish spatial organization centered on race. In 1968, the National Commission on Urban Problems identified the main land-use regulations cities use to exclude unwanted populations, especially low-income people and people of color. These regulations include large-lot zoning (the requirement that zoning lots be maintained at a relatively large size), prohibiting multifamily residences, requirements for minimum house sizes, prohibiting trailer homes, and creating many subdivision requirements, including slow-growth or no-growth ordinances (King 1978:459). As many people moved to the suburbs after World War II, many suburban communities implemented more stringent zoning regulations and
ordinances to ensure that their populations maintained the desired demographics (King 1978:462).

Claremont fits into this pattern, with the City Council passing exclusionary zoning ordinances after World War II. In 1946, the City Council passed an ordinance prohibiting trailer residences from Claremont (Claremont City Council 1946). The City Council passed an ordinance in 1947 mandating a minimum lot size of 5,500 square feet for single-family residences and 6,000 square feet for duplexes (Claremont City Council 1947). The zoning regulations enacted in 1929 lacked the minimum lot requirements later implemented in post-World War II zoning ordinances (Claremont City Council 1929). ⁴ Claremont also restricted who could move into new subdivisions by creating many requirements for the development of new subdivisions. In 1948, Claremont mandated that all new subdivisions have streets at least 60 feet wide, have concrete curbs and sidewalks on all streets within the subdivision, have a specific planting of trees, meet the city’s standards for decorative street lights, and have a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet in most of the city and a minimum lot size of 7,000 square feet in an area north of Eight Street (Claremont City Council 1948). By establishing so many requirements for the development of new subdivisions—including purely decorative features, such as the regulation of street light design and choice of trees—the City Council severely restricted who could have access to Claremont’s newly developed space. Ordinance Number 425, passed in 1950, approves even larger minimum lot sizes of 7,500 square feet for the same

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⁴ The 1929 regulations, however, revealed clear class privileges within Claremont at the time, for the definitions of a single-family residence, a garage, and a boarding house include provisions for up to five servants per dwelling (Claremont City Council 1929).
area north of Eighth Street (Claremont City Council 1950). Claremont passed all these exclusionary zoning ordinances within five years after the end of World War II.

These ordinances increased property prices in new developments in Claremont by requiring the construction of only large properties. Any new developments created in Claremont would only be accessible to households wealthy enough to afford these large properties. If one assumes that Claremont fell into the common pattern among suburban communities at this time, these exclusionary ordinances were used to prevent lower-income people and people of color from moving into the city at a time when many people were relocating to the suburbs. Whites who benefitted from government subsidization could maintain the ability to afford the raised property values in Claremont. However, these properties remained particularly inaccessible to people of color, especially black people, whom the federal government excluded from these benefits.

Current policy in Claremont builds on early Claremont’s legacy of policing public space, especially in relation to class and socioeconomic status. Chapter 10.32.210 of Claremont’s Municipal Code states, “No person shall stop, stand or park a vehicle on any street for a period of time longer than one hour between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. of any day,” with exceptions for physicians and vehicles exempted from this requirement by the Police Chief for a limited period of time (Claremont, California 2016). This statute penalizes households that are unable to store all their vehicles on their property, either from a lack of storage space (such as households without private garages), a large family living together, or a combination of the two. This statute poses a burden on multi-generational households, which often result from financial constraints or
cultural reasons, where many adults of driving age live in the same household. These families may have more trouble finding places to store their cars at night.

**White Identity Formation**

During the process of being racialized as “white,” Claremont acquired an identity related to stereotypical notions of whiteness. The documents included in my research did not explicitly mention whiteness nor white people, while they did explicitly mention people of color. The documents implicitly evoked stereotypical notions of whiteness. I identify three motifs related to race within the documents I review. The first two of these motifs—Claremont’s unique character and the city’s New England atmosphere—evoke essentialist notions of whiteness. The third motif—the city’s use of people of color as a marketing point—explicitly mentions people of color. I explore each of these themes below.

*Unique Citizens Motif*

Documents both from and about Claremont frequently assert the special quality of Claremont residents, especially in relation to the surrounding area. A document prepared for the Citizens National Bank of Claremont about the history of the city states, “Do you know that Claremont has an unusually distinguished citizenry? … this community does have a remarkable proportion of learned and eminent men and women” (Larson 1954). This document claims that Claremont residents possess a unique status because of their high education levels. The City of Claremont emphasizes this idea throughout its General Plan of 1969. The Plan identifies its priorities:
Number one must be the fact that Claremont is a college community and has
drawn to itself a particular type of person who is more than usually concerned
about the city. There is a consequential intellectual and cultural environment in
the community… There is a prevalent attitude on people’s part of wanting to be
part of something distinctive and something different. (Claremont, Calif. and Hall
& Goodhue. 1971:1)

The General Plan asserts the distinguished status of Claremont residents—they are
special people attracted to a special environment. The Plan centers this interest on the
city’s identity as a college town. The General Plan and the Citizens National Bank of
Claremont’s document base their claims of Claremont residents’ special quality on the
fact that Claremont residents received a good education. Claremont’s unofficial motto,
the “city of trees and PhDs” (Carrier 2003), reflects this understanding today through
emphasizing the high educational attainment of its citizens, as well as the city’s well-kept
physical environment.

The General Plan of 1969 prioritizes preserving Claremont’s perceived
distinguished character. The Plan includes six main features and lists the “Maintenance of
Claremont’s Uniqueness” as its first feature (Claremont, Calif. and Hall & Goodhue.
1971:5), which states, “Claremont is a community which despite its becoming
increasingly a part of a metropolitan area has maintained a remarkable degree of
distinction and separate identity, both physically and in the nature and character of its
residents” (Claremont, Calif. and Hall & Goodhue. 1971:5). The city defines its unique
identity in relation to the surrounding areas, asserting that the physical environment of the
city and the people who live there reflect this distinguished nature.

The City published the Plan in 1971, and the 1970 census revealed a significant
black population in Claremont for the first time in the city’s history (Wright 1999:379)
From the 1960s to 1980s, many wealthy whites from Orange County also moved into Claremont. Existing white Claremont residents perceived these whites as less socially-concerned than they were, and existing residents wanted to preserve what they perceived as Claremont’s small-town feel and its culturally and morally distinguished community (Wright 1999:373). The 1969 General Plan likely created its priority to preserve the quality of Claremont’s citizenry and identity in response to these two perceived threats—an increasing black population and a different type of white resident—on the city’s existing character. Like Claremont, the Los Angeles metropolitan region had a growing black population in the 1970s—the region’s black population grew 65.3 percent from 1960 to 1970 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1971:1–34). Claremont’s neighbor, the City of Pomona, had a disproportionately large black population in relation to the rest of Los Angeles County, which was 10.8 percent black at the 1970 census. Black people made up 12.2 percent of Pomona’s total population at this time (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972).

In this context of changing demographics, the Plan’s language of maintaining the city’s quality acquires a new, racialized meaning.

The Plan hopes to develop Claremont’s built environment as a tool to distinguish the city from neighboring ones. The Plan states, “To remain a separate, distinctive community, Claremont should mark its boundaries” (Claremont, Calif. and Hall & Goodhue. 1971:42). The City proposes creating obvious markers on Claremont’s borders to ensure an obvious transition into or out of Claremont. The Plan also states, “A striking sign of Claremonters’ concern is the contrast between the miles of strip commercial development along Foothill Boulevard east and west of the city and the handsomely landscaped, tree-lined portion of the boulevard where it passes through Claremont”
From the perspective of the city, Claremont’s built environment reflects the uniqueness of its inhabitants, and Claremont residents worry about their built environment resembling that of the surrounding cities.

The idea that Claremont desires to stand out from an area with a growing black population is not a coincidence. Claremont defines itself as unique in relation to the surrounding area. This definition of contingency reflects white identity formation, for the white identity defines itself through defining and then excluding a lesser racialized “other” (Ford 1992; Dwyer and Jones 2000). The motif of Claremont’s uniqueness furthers the notion of white superiority by playing off essentialist notions of whiteness (a distinguished populace). It also frames the city’s disproportionate resources as proof of Claremont’s eminent character, rather than as a result of the city’s white privilege. Through professing its unique quality, Claremont implicitly asserts its white identity.

New England Beginnings

Claremont also implicitly claims its white identity through highlighting its New England founders and atmosphere. New England possesses one of the largest concentrations of white people in the country. The three states with the highest proportion of white people at the 2010 Census—Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire—all lie in New England. In these states, whites comprise 95.3, 95.2, and 93.9 percent of the population, respectively (US Census Bureau Public Information Staff n.d.). Vanderbeck’s (2006) research on the racialization of Vermont shows that Vermont is racialized as a particular type of “white,” one connected more directly to the state’s English heritage and, as such, more ‘pure’ than other contested kinds of whiteness. Claremont furthers its
racialization as an elite white community in an area of several Hispanic, Latinx white cities through relating itself to New England.

Books detailing Claremont’s history emphasize its foundation in Congregationalist New England culture (Wright 1999; Landsberg et al. 2014), and authors recognize the continued presence of a New England atmosphere in the city. The League of Women Voters of Claremont (1976) created a profile of Claremont in 1976, which states,

Claremont has been called ‘a bit of New England with a sombrero’ and inherent in the New England tradition brought west was a strong sense of community service, a profound commitment to education at all levels, an expectation of high moral standards in civic and business as well as personal life, and a frugality combined with energy and determination which overcame the hardships of a pioneer college and community. (6, emphasis added)

This description of Claremont asserts essentialist notions of whiteness, as it asserts that Claremont possesses innate moral values due to its New England beginnings. This description also uses a sombrero as a reductive symbol of the city’s Mexican history and the presence of Latinx people within the city. Claremont organizations frequently mention the presence of Latinx culture in the city. The next section explores this topic more thoroughly.

*Exploitation of the Presence of People of Color*

Claremont uses the presence of people of color, particularly Mexican-Americans and Native Americans, as a tourism marketing strategy to assert the city’s cultural competency. The Mexican Players, who performed at Padua Hills Theatre in Claremont from 1937 to 1974, attracted mostly white people from the surrounding area to Claremont
to see them perform (Landsberg et al. 2014:107). The Padua Institute, a non-profit organization that ran the Padua Hills Theatre described its purpose in 1957:

Its purpose, besides the presentation of the highest type of entertainment, is to keep alive the romantic Spanish and Mexican traditions of California and to give the public an intimate and friendly understanding of our Latin American neighbors. The Institute gathers and brings alive the songs, customs, arts and traditions of Spanish California and of Mexico. It also affords a wonderful opportunity for training and self-expression to a talented group of Mexican young people. (Anon 1957:4)

The Institute intended to give “the public” a better understanding of their Latinx neighbors, implying that “the public” is not Latinx and presumably is white. The Padua Institute promoted the Mexican Players as a cultural aspect of Claremont at the same time white Claremont residents physically marginalized Latinx individuals in barrios.

Claremont residents also used the Native American presence in the city as a marketing technique. During the city’s citrus boom, the Claremont Fruit Growers Association marketed their citrus product as “Indian Hill Brand” (Lehman n.d.:13). This industry used the name of the hill where Claremont residents marginalized Native Americans as a marketing technique. In the early 1900s, developers considered constructing a trolley line from Pomona to Claremont, and residents perceived Claremont’s marginalized Native American population as a tourist attraction within Claremont. In the Claremont Courier, Claremont’s local newspaper, a resident wrote about the trolley in 1909: “every tourist would be sure to take advantage of the opportunity to visit Pomona College or to ‘see the Indians’” (qtd. in Lehman n.d.:14).

This resident clearly perceived the presence of Native Americans in Claremont as a
tourist attraction. Claremont conceives of itself as white community, while residents and commerce within the city promote and appropriate the cultures of people of color.

**Conclusion**

Although people of color always lived in Claremont—even before the land became known as Claremont—Claremont is racialized as “white.” Claremont accomplished this racialization through exclusive land-use regulations and through an implicit assertion of its white identity. The city’s regulations create structural barriers that prevent people of color from moving into Claremont. The city also established a popular identity as a “white” community through the city’s and residents’ use of white stereotypes in descriptions of Claremont and through attempting to relate the city to New England, while simultaneously trying to distance Claremont from neighboring cities, which have comparatively larger Hispanic and Latinx populations. At the same time, Claremont uses the presence of people of color within the city as a selling point for the city. This project of racialization can be seen on multiple scales. Claremont’s racialization exists in relation to Claremont versus the neighboring cities, but it also occurs within the city itself. White residents forced Latinx individuals into barrios and segregated schools in Claremont, while depending on their labor during the city’s citrus boom.

White identity formation, although a key aspect of spatial organization, does not comprise the entire process of spatial organization’s production of racial inequality in the United States. Claremont exists in a larger system of power, where federal public policies encouraged white homeownership and suburbanization at the expense of communities of
color. Racialization of place includes an analysis of how places with racialized identities contribute to racially-biased systems of power and access. This research project uses Claremont as a case study to analyze how places develop a “white” identity; however, further research should examine how places benefit from this “white” identity after they establish it. Claremont possesses unique qualities that make it a good case study of racialization and subsequent resource capture. The city exists as majority-white city in a more multiethnic region, and the Claremont Colleges played an essential role in Claremont’s development from the city’s beginning. Because Pomona College existed in Claremont before the city’s incorporation, studying the relationship between the Colleges’ and the city’s development could serve as a good case study to examine if resources attracted white people or if the presence of white people led to better resources.

My research corresponds with other research on majority-white places. Claremont used exclusionary zoning regulations common to suburban white communities after World War II (King 1978). Claremont also employed language typical of describing “white” places, especially notions that white communities are peaceful and moral (Dwyer and Jones 2000; Vanderbeck 2006). My research identifies the primary actors in the racialization of Claremont—the city government and private residents—and outlines the formal and informal processes these actors used to racialize the city. My research exposes the socially and politically constructed nature of race and provides a case study of white racial formation in one suburban, college town in Southern California.
Appendix 1. Map of the Tongva territory and surrounding tribes; copied from Reid (1968: endpages).
References


Claremont Heritage Special Collections. 1928. Grant Deed for Edith M. Lawrence and John J. Lawrence, Title Insurance and Trust Company.


