Emotions, Subjectivity, and the Environment:

A Study of Environmental Involvement in a Campus Community

By

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Awareness of environmental issues and the necessity for more sustainable solutions are common topics, particularly in the academia and on university campuses. Researchers and public figures have stressed multiple times the importance of knowledge in encouraging more environmentally-friendly behaviors. Efforts to raise awareness about environmental issues are common all around the world. However, a gap remains between environmental concern and the apparent lack of overall engagement in environmentally-friendly behaviors, notably in the U.S. It appears that even though individual knowledge about the impact of human activities on the environment has increased and related information is more readily available than ever before, participation in environmental protection remains marginal. Since environmentally-friendly behaviors differ greatly from our current way of life, it is primordial to understand the complex interactions between the individual, knowledge, and the environment. Drawing on literature from feminist political ecology, masculinity studies, and emotional geography, this study aims to understand how young, educated white males in the South of the U.S. personally relate to nature and environmental discourse. Using insights from theories on emotions and affects, I argue that my participants' emotions and experiences come together to discursively build nature as an emotional

"sanctuary". At the same time however, this strong emotional bond also detaches nature from the realm of the everyday, as nature is built in opposition to the rational culture of society. I further argue that this discursive divide between nature and the everyday is shaped by hegemonic masculine ideals such as emotional neutrality. In addition, I demonstrate how environmental discourse, by its focus on scientific values and its emphasis on global issues, becomes disconnected from the everyday and nature as a place of emotion. This research provides further insights on how subjectivity and emotions can be used as a way to promote environmental protection. Through this study, I strive to present how a better understanding of emotions and subjectivity can help uncover new ways to connect environmental concerns and the everyday in order to improve community participation in environmental protection.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, neoliberalism has become the guiding ideology in a globalized world order. Neoliberalism is a form of capitalism that notably involves a sacralization of the freedom of the market and privatization of modes of production (Peck & Tickell, 2002; O'Brien and Williams, 2013). Capitalism, as an overarching ideology, emphasizes private ownership and creation of value based on sales of commodities, creating a mindset where consumption is closely related to social status and happiness (Agnew, 2005; Shararir & Alinor, 2013). However, capitalist perceptions of infinite consumption and never-ending economic progress violently conflict with the reality of our planet's limited resources. Moreover, capitalism also champions a mindset that separates human and nature, enabling the objectification of the natural realm and thus its domination by society (Merchant, 1980; Shiva, 1988). As a result, nature has increasingly been overexploited in an effort to support excessive consumption patterns. Capitalism thus champions an understanding of nature as both separated from and subordinated to culture.

This nature/culture dichotomy has also often taken gendered colors, with nature and passivity associated with femininity, and culture and progress with masculinity (Shiva, 1988; Merchant, 2005). Through the Industrial and Scientific Revolutions, capitalist and hegemonic masculine ideals have come to construct nature as an inanimate object to be conquered by "real men" (Shiva, 1988; Merchant, 2005; Anshelm & Hultman, 2014). This domination of nature is further made possible by the use of techno-scientific means (Merchant, 2005; Seaton, 2013). If these masculine ideals are continuously changing and seem to currently embrace a more caring approach to nature, it remains critical to understand how white males perceive themselves in relation to the environment. Because of their dominant position in both the scientific and political field, white males have the power to shape our societies and our understanding of the world. Analyzing how

white males' subjectivities relate to both the mainstream capitalist discourse and our natural environments is thus instrumental in analyzing how they can come to care for nature and strive to protect it.

Indeed, capitalist ideals have been criticized by proponents of environmental protection (Shiva, 1988; Mander, 2007; Shararir & Alinor, 2013). According to them, the current human activities dangerously affect the natural order, creating environmental concerns and a need to reevaluate our present behaviors. Experts therefore created the concept of sustainability and emphasized its potential for reshaping human behaviors in order to limit the impact of human activities on the environment.

Sustainability is thus a notion that was constructed in response to concerns related to environmental depletion due to overexploitation of natural capital by consumerist society. The concept became mainstream in the 1970s and can be broadly defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland, 1987). Individuals, states, and corporations perform sustainable behaviors as a way to reduce their impacts on the planet's natural resources. However, critics argue that sustainability has been rendered ineffective through its appropriation by large corporations and its transcription into the capitalist mindset (Mander, 2007; Dylan, 2012). Indeed, capitalism has pervaded sustainability's narratives, rewriting them in order not to challenge the overall system, but on the contrary, promote new consumptive patterns based on so-called "green technologies". This brings about the question: what is really being sustained? Is it truly the environment, or rather the dominant capitalist ideology?

While previous studies have focused on understanding the role played by capitalist ideology in the U.S. regarding environmental matters, they have used a global or regional scale for their

analysis and have thus failed to consider how individual subjectivities play a role in promoting or hindering engagement (Mander, 2007; Bijil, 2011; Dylan, 2012). More recently however, scholars have displayed an interest in understanding everyday life and studying patterns at the individual scale in order to make sense of emotions, embodied experiences and processes of subjectivity formation that comprise human-environment relations (Norgaard, 2011; DiEnno & Thompson, 2013; Nightingale, 2013; Harris, 2015; Bee et al, 2015). For example in the U.S., environmental protection is often opposed by politically conservative groups and climate skeptics. Both of these groups are predominantly composed of white males attached to capitalist ideals (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014). For these particular individuals, opposing environmental actions thus becomes a way to safeguard their own subjectivities and way of life. Overall, focusing on the individual scale and investigating relational concepts such as emotions and subjectivity thus enable us to make sense of particular behaviors.

My research therefore aims to use these relational concepts to make sense of the disconnection between environmental concerns and the apparent lack of overall engagement in environmentally-friendly behaviors in the U.S. population. I hypothesize that a paradox exists between the expressed restlessness concerning environmental degradation and the lack of actual involvement in environmentally-friendly behaviors. In addition, I expect to find that this paradox is even more salient in educated communities with access to information about their environmental impacts and ways to reduce them. This study aims to understand the relationship between emotions, masculine subjectivity, and environmental involvement in a college community in Eastern North Carolina. My research will more particularly address the following questions:

RS1: What are the different emotions that students relate to the environment?

RS2: How do these emotions affect their engagement in tackling environmental issues in the community?

RS3: How do participants' masculine subjectivities relate to the environment and environmentally-friendly behaviors?

This topic of research is particularly relevant in order to provide potential avenues of analysis and action related to environmental issues. Indeed, as mentioned above, there is a disconnection between people's expressed environmental concern and their lack of involvement in environmentally-friendly behaviors. I argue that understanding the everyday experiences, subjectivities, and emotions of white males in a relatively small, educated community within the U.S. can thus provide us with a better grasp at the obstacles that hinder environmental engagement. As a result, finding answers to the above questions will contribute both to literature and praxis by presenting a new analysis of a commonly researched subject, as well as providing potential new means of fostering environmentally-friendly behaviors.

The results of the research I conducted are presented in the chapters that follow. First, I will provide an overview of the literature published to date on this subject. Second, I will introduce the methodology I followed during this study. I will then expose my findings in three chapters. Chapter 4 will focus on emotions and the environment, building on a pile sorting exercise and semi-structured interview questions. Chapter 5 will more particularly address how emotions and subjectivities come together to influence interviewees' involvement in environmental actions. The sixth and final result chapter of this thesis will investigate the link between masculine subjectivities and perceptions of the environment. I will conclude this thesis by giving an overview of potential avenues to expand this research and possible applications to promote environmentally-friendly behaviors at ECU.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

My study draws on an interdisciplinary array of literature and concepts in order to enlighten questions surrounding emotions, subjectivity, and the environment. In this chapter, I take three main approaches to understand interactions between humans and the natural environment they evolve in. First, I will analyze the work of several scholars in deconstructing the nature/culture dichotomy and their approach to overcoming this conceptual divide. Second, I will bring together the work of scholars from feminist and emotional geographies, and other social sciences in an effort to highlight the increasing importance given to notions of affect, emotion, and their potential to build connections with nature. Finally, I will focus on literature from feminist and masculinities studies in order to investigate how diverse masculinities conceptualize nature and position themselves in relation to the environment.

2.1. Deconstructing the Nature/Culture Dichotomy

Nature and culture are two complex notions, which have often been positioned as conceptual opposites. It is particularly important to understand the roots and consequences of this binary relation, as it remains extremely impactful in the ways we currently perceive the environment. The Enlightenment and more precisely the period between the late 16th century and the early 17th century were particularly instrumental in securing a wide-spread acceptance of the nature/culture dichotomy in Western ideology (Watts, 2005; Merchant, 2006; Chew & Sarabia, 2016). This period is also known as the Scientific Revolution and played a major role in establishing the ways in which science and knowledge were constructed as dominating nature. During this period, Descartes' philosophy highlighted the idea of human exceptionalism through his famous *cogito ergo sum*. Because humans were able to think, to produce scientific knowledge, they were able to differentiate

themselves from nature, and achieve a, "purposive control over nature through applied science" (Watts, 2005, citing Glacken, 1967: 427).

Merchant (2006) further argues that scientific methods are constructed as tools of power over nature. She more particularly highlights the ways in which Francis Bacon's scientific methods, "use constraint and force to extract truths from nature" (518). Francis Bacon is indeed known for his contribution to the scientific revolution which was based on the use of observation and experiences to understand natural phenomena in science. Science and knowledge are thus a first approach through which nature becomes alienated from human experiences and placed under the domination of culture.

Shiva (1988) further argues that the Scientific Revolution constructed nature as, "a machine and a source of raw material" (xiv), allowing for its exploitation. This economic exploitation of nature is notably related to capitalism. Capitalism similarly constructs humans as superior to nature. Furthermore, nature is commodified and seen as only composed of natural resources, which can be used for human consumption (Seaton, 2013). In addition, Chew & Sarabia (2016) expose the ways in which capitalism, by promoting the accumulation of capital, leads to the exploitation of natural resources which could lead to a crisis in the reproduction of capital. In other words, capitalist ideology sees nature as resources to be acquired, which contributes to the depletion of natural resources because of their overexploitation. Overall, capitalist culture is thus constructed as not only different from nature but more importantly as hierarchically superior. As a result, the destruction of natural environments becomes acceptable if it enables the capitalist system to thrive.

If nature and culture have often been constructed as separate and hierarchically ordered, other authors have presented different possibilities to deconstruct the nature/culture dichotomy and

encourage a new understanding of the relationship between nature and culture. Chew & Sarabia (2016) for example, first advocate for emphasizing the ways in which humans are impacted by nature by changing our understanding of historical system crises. System crises, also called Dark Ages, are phases throughout history, "distinguished by downturns in socioeconomic conditions and political rivalry [which are] also characterized by climate changes and natural environmental degradations" (Chew & Sarabia, 2016: 5). In other words, system crises are periods of general decline. These downturns have mostly been understood in "cultural" terms, meaning as events only associated with human activities. Human actions alone were seen as being potentially able to cause change. Chew & Sarabia (2016) advocate for a reframing of our understanding of historical change in order to include the impact of nature as an agent on human activity. Chew & Sarabia's (2016) approach thus emphasizes nature's agency instead of the usual misconception of nature as passive. The argument made by Chew & Sarabia (2016) is relevant for my research as it highlights one of the dominant viewpoints concerning human-nature relations. Indeed, by describing humans as actors and nature as an object, human exceptionalism hinders a more emotional and affectual understanding of our mutually-constitutive relationship with nature. In other words, by not acknowledging the ways in which nature affects us back, we limit our sense of care for the natural world, which negatively impacts our willingness to protect it.

Another way to deconstruct the nature/culture divide is through the use of the concept of corporeality (Trauger, 2004). Scholars focusing on corporeality analyze the ways in which living in our particular bodies (may it be sexed bodies, racialized bodies…etc.) has an impact on how we interpret notions of self and subjectivity. In other words, corporeality emphasizes embodied experiences and their effect on our understanding of who we are in relation to the world around us (which includes humans, but also animals and the environment in general). This notion is thus

instrumental in challenging the dichotomy between nature and culture. Indeed, it encourages us to think about the ways in which our embodied experiences attaches us to a broader environment in which we evolve and construct our sense of self. Nature and culture should not be built as opposite entities but rather as a dynamic process; a relational current through which we make sense of our subjectivities.

Both the notion of corporeality and the critiques of human exceptionalism thus encourage us to rethink the ways we relate to nature. In the following section, I highlight the literature on affect and emotions and how they can enable us to go beyond the nature/culture divide to promote human-nature relationships.

2.2. Relating to Nature: Affect, Emotion, and the Environment

2.2.1. Theories of Affect

Affect is a key concept in understanding relationships between individuals but also between humans and the environment we live in. It is also a complex notion that can be instrumental in challenging the dichotomy between human and nature. Consequently, affect has been theorized by several schools of thought throughout the humanities. The most influential theories include, but are not limited to: affect as an embodied knowledge in phenomenological tradition (Katz, 1999), affect in relation to drive in Freudian theory (Sedgwick, 2003), and affect as an evolutional mean of preparing an organism to action in neo-Darwinist theory (Thrift, 2004). For the purpose of this literature review, I will focus on a fourth instrumental approach: Spinoza's theory of affect.

Affect, as theorized by Spinoza, is a moving, fluid concept. It, "arises in the midst of in-between-ness, in the capacities to act and be acted upon" (Gregg & Seigworth, 2009: 1). In other words, affect emerges from interactions and circulates between bodies (human and nonhuman).

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Through affect, we shape and are shaped by encounters. As a result, affect characterizes bodies as, "belonging to a world of encounters" (Gregg & Seigworth, 2009: 2). Indeed, because bodies alter and are altered through meeting other bodies, they should not be thought of as being in isolation, but rather as being part of a relational, ever-changing network of affects. Bodies constantly affect and are affected, and are thus in a constant state of becoming (Ahmed, 2004; Anderson, 2006; Gregg & Seigworth, 2009; Ruddick, 2010). It is this capacity of the body to affect and to be affected which constitutes the potential of affect (Gregg & Seigworth, 2009; Ruddick, 2010). When fully and consciously acknowledged, affect is thus, "the property of the active outcome of an encounter, [which] takes the form of an increase or decrease in the ability of the body and mind alike to act" (Thrift, 2004: 62). It is this constant movement between affecting and being affected that pushes bodies towards action or inaction. If the active outcome of an encounter is perceived as joyful or "euphoric," it will positively increase bodies' ability to act, while sorrowful or "dysphoric" affects will on the contrary limit bodies' action (Thrift, 2004: 62). Affect itself is thus neutral, but the perceived consequences of having been affected encourage or deter further involvement. The concept of affect is thus particularly pertinent for my study as affect influences both our potential willingness to take action and the ways in which we perceive the environment we live in.

Investigating affect also brings about questions regarding its impacts. Affect inherently engenders change since it constantly shapes and is shaped by bodies. It is this form of disruption that privileges, "movement rather than stasis" (Gregg & Seigworth, 2009: 4), which brings Gregg & Seigworth (2009) to wonder whether affect is, "a promise or a threat" (10). They argue that the strength of affect rests in its, "intense and thoroughly immanent neutrality" (10). This neutrality of affect becomes one of the ways in which affect itself defies polarities and encourages us to go beyond established, static paradigms and embrace a new sense of care (Gregg & Seigworth, 2009).

Theorists of affect such as Spinoza and Deleuze have indeed argued that human minds, without a clear and active understanding of affect, fall prey to what is known as, "the inadequate idea" (Ruddick, 2010: 29). This inadequate idea is, "an apparatus of imagination that performs two basic functions … first, it locates the human subject as the center, or origin of its thoughts, actions, desires, and meanings; second, it reverses the order of nature [and the principle of causality] such that effects appear to be causes, and reality seems to be organized teleologically in the service of human ends" (Ruddick, 2010: 29, citing Sharp, 2007: 4). Inadequate ideas originate in a form of passive affect which, contrarily to active affects defined above, "does not comprehend its cause adequately and ultimately limits the capacity to act" (Ruddick, 2010: 29). In other words, while affect remains passive and is not acknowledged, the body is not conscious of being affected, but rather of its own capacity to affect the world. As a result, passive affect leads to anthropocentrism: because humans are not consciously aware of being affected, they believe that they are exceptional in their ability to transform nonhuman bodies. Similarly, it is because of this passive affect that humans perceive nature as being in a "temporal stasis (…) that allows us to absolve ourselves from its fate" (Seaton, 2013: 75). Through passive affect, the nonhuman world is denied agency, which in turn "produce[s] a temporal and spatial distancing of nature [which] eases its status as commodity [or] something that is engineered and managed by humans" (Seaton, 2013: 75). In other words, through conceptualizing nature as an object, humans become entitled to exploit nature, leading to current environmental problems. Moreover, by distancing themselves from nature, humans create the illusion that they are not themselves part of nature and therefore do not share its plight. As a result, environmental issues are not recognized as a relatable and personal threat. Passive affect and inadequate ideas are particularly central to my research as they highlight how the ways in which both humans and nature are conceptually constructed through inadequate ideas lead to both current environmental problems and obstacles in protecting nature. It will thus be

important to assess to what extent research participants consciously acknowledge nature's impacts on their lives.

If passive affect has led to the false assumption of human exceptionality, there is hope to correct this mistake through the act of becoming actively affected. Ruddick (2010) notably explains this concept and the new type of knowledge it creates through the example of the encounter between a child and the wave: "it is a knowledge through the body (…). The coherent sense of self is literally ungrounded in the first encounter with the wave, but later replaced by a new social body: swimmer/surfer/wave, the combination and enhancement of active powers" (Ruddick, 2010: 30). Seaton (2013) exemplifies this state of becoming actively affected through the relationship between horses and humans in horseback riding: "I become horse-human and [s/]he becomes human-horse in a relationship of intertwined intentions, means and ends. (…) Both human and horse, are cause and effect of each other's movements. Both induce and are induced, affect and are affected. Both embody each other minds" (77, citing Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Both these examples show how becoming active in dealing with affect can help us reshape our identities in relation to the natural world. With affect then, there may be a potential to rethink "a 'politics of nonhuman friendship' to act upon our responsibilities toward the community of others with whom we share a collective and common world" (Popke, 2009: 85). In other words, affect makes us aware of our entanglement with other entities, encouraging us to rethink the concept of "in-common" to include humans and nature. By becoming aware of the connections that exist between ourselves and the world around us through active affect, we come to relate, care, and feel responsible for nature. This renewed "friendship" with nature may, in turn, strengthen our desire to protect it.

Affect is also intrinsically linked to notions of feelings and emotions. Indeed, "movements of affect are expressed through those proprioceptive and visceral shifts in the background habits,

and postures, of a body that are commonly described as 'feelings'" (Anderson, 2006: 736). In other words, feelings emerge as bodies are affected. They are instantaneous assessments of the ways in which the body has been moved. Pile (2010) describes feelings as "precognitive", while passive affect was "non-cognitive" (9), meaning that affect happened outside of the conscious realm. In addition to affect and feelings, emotions are a third category which is "formed through *qualification* of affect into 'semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized'" (Anderson, 2006: 737, citing Massumi, 2002a: 28). Therefore, emotions are affect put into personal and intimate words, in an attempt to narrate affect as it becomes part of a conscious state of being. Emotions thus become "cognitive" (Pile, 2010: 9).

Anderson (2006) warns us, however, to remain careful in conceptualizing the relationship between affect, feelings, and emotions. He notes, "the relation between the three modalities is not one of a movement from affect through feelings to emotions – that is, it has no a priori direction or causality. Through [a] process of enactment (…) the three modalities slide into an out of one another to disrupt their neat analytic distinction" (Anderson, 2006: 737). In other words, affect, feelings, and emotions are perpetually in movement, without one preceding the other. This is especially relevant for my study, as I aim to understand how my participants' experiences with natural environments shape the emotions they attach to nature. Furthermore, I also investigate how these emotions also influence my interviewees' participation in protecting nature. Consequently, a better understanding of the connection between emotions, behaviors, and places is required.

2.2.2. Emotional Geography: Connecting Emotions, Subjectivity, and Places

Emotions have several characteristics that enable us to make sense of people's behaviors. First, emotions help us make sense of the world through naming the ways in which it affects us.

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By doing so they, "help us interpret, summarize and organize information" (DiEnno & Thompson, 2013: 64).

Second, they work as motivators or obstacles to action and behaviors. DiEnno & Thompson (2013) articulate this relation by explaining how emotions can motivate us to achieve a desired state and/or avoid goal impairment and failure. Indeed, emotions are more specifically responses to the appraisal of an event and its potential consequences for us.

Third, emotions are always, "relationally produced between peoples and places" (Morales & Harris, 2014: 706). Emotions, therefore, arise in the space of encounter between bodies. They circulate between these bodies, and thus resists a strict sense of individual ownership (Ahmed, 2004; Morales & Harris, 2014). In other words, we do not strictly "have" emotions, but rather are shaped by them. Consequently, the final characteristic of emotions is their central role in the constant work of shaping one's subjectivities. Relating emotions back to concepts of affect, Ahmed (2004) argues that, "it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the 'I' and the 'we' are shaped by, and even take shape of, contact with others" (10). Therefore, emotions are instrumental in creating new subjectivities closely tied to our interactions with other bodies. Emotional geography in particular highlights our relationships with specific places. Emotions and their ties to subjectivities are thus understood as connected to the meaning we found in being and interacting with special places.

Extending the insights of emotional geographies into human-environment relations, feminist political ecology (FPE) strives to, "consider the everyday, embodied and emotional relations to resources and 'natures'" (Harris, 2015: 158). According to these scholars, a focus on the individual scale and on everyday experiences can allow us to challenge dominant models that tend to make consumption into an embodied sense of worth and belonging (Harris, 2015). The concepts of

emotions, subjectivity, and sense of place are particularly important to understand the connections between embodied experiences and care for one's environment. It also highlights the relationship between different scales of analysis, from the corporeal to communal, regional and even global scales (Harris, 2015).

As shown through the interests of these different schools of thought, emotion and place are closely intertwined. Their importance is especially exacerbated in the current context of increased threats to the natural world. Seaton (2013) describes an impending era of deep loneliness as humans alienate themselves from natural places. For those whose subjectivity is even more deeply related to nature, the perceived effects are even harsher. Willox et al. (2013) draw on the concept of solastalgia, "which exists when there is the lived experience of the physical desolation of home" (21). Their use of solastalgia echoes Ahmed (2004) who argues that, "attention to emotions allows us to address the question of how subjects become invested in particular structures such that their demise is felt as a kind of living death" (12). Considerations of emotion and subjectivity are thus primordial in order to comprehend the deep feelings associated with the perceived current threats to specific places. More importantly, it is through heightened emotional connections that a sense of responsibility towards the nonhuman can be nurtured.

Nevertheless, emotions tend to be pushed aside and regarded as undesirable in our rational, capitalist societies (Ahmed, 2004; Willis, 2012; Ryan, 2016). Willis (2012) argues, however, that over-reliance on rationality in the academy as well as in everyday contexts is deeply problematic as it, "limit[s] who we are and what we can do" (58). In order to foster a sense of care for the environment, she argues that we need to turn the tables and emphasizes the importance of emotions and narratives in order to construct, "a story to live by" (53). In a similar fashion, Ryan (2016)

describes how long-lasting involvement can be obtained by integrating concepts of emotion and affect into environmental public outreach efforts.

Thinking with affect and emotion is an unsettling experience. These concepts favor movement, connectedness, and in-between-ness when our societies are built around notions of order, individualism, and human exceptionalism. It is precisely by making us reflect on ourselves and disrupting some of our preconceived assumptions that affect and emotion enable us to challenge the current framework of our societies. By offering renewed possibilities to relate to the "nonhuman," these notions allow us to discern alternatives towards a heightened sense of care and responsibility towards the environment. Subjectivity, or our sense of self in relation to the environment around us, is one way in which this sense of care can become embodied.

2.3. Subjectivity, Masculinity, and Environment

2.3.1. Subjectivity

Subjectivity, similarly to emotion and affect, is a fluid and relational concept. It is defined by "how one understands oneself within a social context –one's sense of what it means and feels like to exist within a specific place, time, or set of relationships" (Morales & Harris, 2014: 706). In addition, subjectivity also includes one's sense of identity, which is defined as a stable, individual sense of self, in contrast to the relational and changing nature of subjectivity (Morales & Harris, 2014; Lau & Scales, 2016). Subjectivities are the way in which individuals create lived choices out of their natural environment as well as the social categories they belong to, while identity is an internally-negotiated concept. Subjectivities encompass identity and are also always place-based, embodied, and material (Nightingale, 2013; Lau & Scales, 2016). In other words, one's subjectivity is deeply relational and dynamic, and is rooted in both a human/human and

human/nature discourse. Subjectivities are thus constructed both in relation to other humans, but also through other interactions such as activities, ownership of particular objects…etc.

Indeed, subjectivity is based on the experience of being a physical person in a specific place performing physical tasks (the embodied experience of human/nature relations) but also the way in which others perceive and engage with you. For example, being a fisher is constructed based on actions realized at sea and on shore, as well as the relational experience of being a fisher in the eyes of the community (Nightingale, 2013). Similarly, the Winnemem tribe in California defines itself through its relationship to their ancestral land, with particular places being identified with specific roles and subjectivities (Dallman, 2013). As a result, attachment to a certain place is achieved when one's subjectivity is constituted through the embodied experiences associated with this particular place. Consequently, subjectivities built on human/nature relational experiences are positively related to people's motivation and engagement with preserving this natural space (Nightingale, 2013; DiEnno & Thompson, 2013; Harris 2015, Lau & Scales 2016). Indeed, when people's subjectivities are related to a particular natural space (such as fishers relating to the sea as a part of their livelihoods) they become more likely to strive to protect this particular milieu. Protection of nature thus becomes an embodied act, as preserving these places become closely related with safeguarding one's own subjectivity.

Subjectivities thus emerge from our interactions with the world around us and the way we build ourselves through the exchanges. For example, gender is one of the intersectional constituents of one's subjectivity. For the purpose of this study, I therefore decided to focus more particularly on the influence of masculine subjectivities on men's relationship to the environment.

2.3.2. Masculinity

The study of masculinities originated from an increased awareness of power relations based on gender. This recognition of the importance of gender in social studies was highlighted by feminist and queer scholars in the late 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s (Jackson, 1991; Berg & Longhurst, 2003; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Both academic endeavors were particularly instrumental in highlighting the importance of gender in the field of geography.

From the 1980s onwards, feminist geographers developed a critique of the dominance of their discipline by men and the ways in which such an invisible power structure led to an alienation of women's experiences (Berg & Longhurst, 2003; Gorman-Murray & Hopkins, 2016). Feminist geographers also contributed to the emergence of the field of masculinities' studies through their methodological approaches as well as their contributions highlighting the gendered character of everyday socio-spatial relations (Gorman-Murray & Hopkins, 2016). One of the key focus of masculinity studies within geography is thus to, "explor[e] the contested constructions of gender identities and how these are constructed, negotiated and contested in different localities or places (…) and how this changes over time" (Gorman-Murray & Hopkins, 2016: 3). Masculinity studies in geography thus recognize the fact that masculinities are not set in stone. Younger generations of men for example, through their distinct experiences, may thus challenge and change what is commonly understood as being a man.

This current focus on masculinity in geography and in other fields helps identify a subject that has often been made invisible in academic research. Berg & Longhurst (2003) argue that masculinity had historically been defined as an object, "a natural character, a set of behaviors, or a norm" (351). In other words, masculinity's status as a normative concept has paradoxically led to its invisibility: it became the standard for comparison, preventing it from being deconstructed and analyzed. A more critical approach to masculinity is proposed by Connell (1990) who defines

masculinity as, "the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (71). Berg & Longhurst (2003) add to this definition by explicating the temporal and spatial aspect of masculinities, as well as the ways masculinities are differently positioned in different relationships. In other words, what it means to be masculine or a male subject in a particular context varies depending on the place, time, and the people with whom the individual is interacting. Consequently, the expectations related to being a man and acting in a masculine fashion are not universal and is often based on place and culture. However, the dominant masculine ideal existing at a specific time and place is referred to as hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity "embodi[es] the currently most honored way of being a man, it require[s] all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimate[s] the (…) subordination [of marginalized identities]" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005: 832). Hegemonic masculinity is thus an ideal of what a man should be. Some characteristics of hegemonic masculinity in the U.S. are, for example, whiteness and a preference for stoicism and lack of emotional display (Cheng, 1999). Mastery over nature through physical achievements (such as climbing mountains) or technical expertise (such as scientific studies) are also attached to hegemonic masculinity's ideals (Shiva, 1988; Cheng, 1999; Merchant, 2006; Seaton, 2013; Anshelm & Hultman, 2014).

However hegemonic masculinity does not have to be enacted by a majority of men: it is a socially accepted concept that also limits men (Jackson, 1991). Indeed, behaviors that fit into the norm dictated by this hegemonic model are rewarded, while behaviors conflicting or outside the norm are judged and discouraged. In addition to hegemonic masculinity, a plurality of masculinities have thus been recognized and studied. Non-hegemonic masculinities are often characterized by

their relation to the hegemonic model (Hopkins & Noble, 2009; Gorman-Murray & Hopkins, 2016). For example, complicit masculinities encompass the men that receive benefits from the patriarchal system without personally representing hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, marginalized masculinities are given a disadvantaged treatment based on the intersection of masculinity with a marker of marginalization, such as race, class, and sexuality. (Cheng, 1999; Gorman-Murray & Hopkins, 2016). This particular point about the intersectionality of masculinities and the existence of marginalization based on race was highlighted by black feminists (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). They particularly emphasize the ways in which both masculinity and whiteness were constructed as the norm, consequently avoiding further academic inquiry. In addition, they analyze the ways in which masculinities are perceived relationally on the basis of race: "real men" are white, thus constructing black men as a form of marginalized masculinity.

Whiteness has thus historically been another normative criterion of hegemonic masculinity. Similarly to the notion of masculinity, whiteness and "being white" are relational, space and time dependent concepts (McDermott & Samson, 2005). As such, whiteness should not be seen as a uniform category but rather as an umbrella under which fall numerous different experiences and meanings. Whiteness is a normative and hegemonic category as it ensures dominance and privilege over non-whites (Shirley, 2006). If the invisibility of white privilege is proof of its dominant status (Shirley, 2006), some authors argue that whiteness has recently become more tangible, notably due to perceived "threats" to white identity (McDermott & Samson, 2005; Dunk, 2002). Some of these threats come from perceived increased employment opportunities for other racial groups as well as increased interactions on a daily basis (McDermott & Samson, 2005; Shirley, 2006). Interestingly, particular environmental regulations have also been seen as threatening white "traditions" such as

bear hunting in Canada (Dunk, 2002: 38). Indeed, environmental protection often entails challenges to the status-quo and to powerful groups such as capitalist, white males. Environmental actions are thus met with significant resistance since they are perceived as threats to personal identity (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014).

The Southern U.S. has been perceived by some researchers as a particularly fertile ground to investigate both issues of hegemonic masculinity and whiteness (Huber, 1995; Shirley, 2006; Thomas, 2012; O'Sullivan, 2016). These researchers analyze a particular subjectivity at the intersection of masculinity and race, namely the redneck subjectivity of particular Southern white males. Cohen et al. (1996) and O'Sullivan (2016) argue that redneck identity and subjectivity emphasizes gender differences and the need for men to appear hyper-masculine and in control. Masculinity is here seen as a way to assert dominance over both women and "feminine men". Redneck masculinity is often depicted through outdoor activities such as hunting or fishing. This particular representation of masculinity can be seen as hegemonic masculinity, which emphasizes controlling and managing nature (Seaton, 2013; Anshelm & Hultman, 2014).

In addition to emphasizing the display of hyper-masculine values, researchers also investigate the ways in which awareness and pride in being white are often associated with rednecks. Huber (1995) argue that rednecks are more aware of whiteness as they use it as a marker of dominance over the black community. Indeed, rednecks tend to belong to a lower socio-economic class and therefore emphasize whiteness as a marker of their superiority over the black community. Rednecks live at the intersection of a marginalized subjectivity based on class and a dominant subjectivity on the basis of race, and consequently highlight belonging to a privileged racial group in order to maintain dominance. Rednecks' subjectivities are also positioned in comparison to the hegemonic subjectivity of well-off, urban, white (and often male) population.

Here rednecks' marginalization is anchored in a narrative that associates them with nature and in opposition with progress and culture (Thomas, 2012). Therefore, the experiences of Southern white communities in the U.S. tend to be homogenized as an "Other" in opposition to a more progressive North (Jansson, 2010).

Following the dynamic, multiple, and relational views of masculinities and whiteness defined above, this study aims to challenge this static, monolithic view of the experiences of Southern white males. Similarly, numerous authors have investigated the ways in which masculinities are always changing (Connell, 1990; Brandth & Haugen, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity itself can be challenged and concurrently changes in order to adapt to new spaces and times. Brandth & Haugen (2005) notably locate these changes in the ways we "do gender". According to them, gendered institutional norms provide us with a repertoire of practices of what is considered to be gender-appropriate conducts. "Doing gender" is thus related to the performativity of these norms, or in other words performing manly acts such as being independent, hardy…etc. However, the gendered institutional norms we follow change over time, leading to new ways to "do" gender. In their article, Brandth & Haugen (2005) describe the transformation of rural masculinity from a hardy lumberjack mastering nature in the 1970s to an innovative businessman in the 2000s. This change is especially associated with capitalism and the commodification of forests.

Another opportunity for change is located within the ecological turn witnessed in the 1970s (Connell, 1990; Hultman, 2017). Indeed, this period saw the emergence of new critiques of the capitalist system. This denunciation of capitalism was notably centered on new ecological concerns as well as on a feminist critique of the capitalist patriarchal society (Connell, 1990). This movement thus challenged both the capitalist approach to nature as a commodity and the common

understanding of masculine ideals such as emotional stoicism. Indeed, environmentalism and care for the environment, because they aim to reform our capitalist societies, are seen as also challenging hegemonic forms of masculinity. Understanding the ways in which the environment and masculinities shape and are shaped in relation to each other is thus particularly important for this study. By focusing on the ways masculinities and nature interact, we are able to discern not only some of the characteristics of hegemonic movements but also the ways in which attunement to the environment challenges hegemonic norms to create new means to "do masculinity".

2.3.3. Masculinities and the Environment

Masculine subjectivities are relational, and therefore both influence and are influenced by environmental issues and the societal changes they require. Some scholars have thus further investigated the ways in which masculinities and the environment intersect to create different subjectivities (Hultman 2013; Anshem & Hultman 2014; Brough et al, 2016). Hultman (2017) is particularly instrumental in conceptualizing different types of masculinities in relation to the environment. He differentiates three main forms of environmental masculinities: industrial modern masculinities, ecomodern masculinities, and ecological masculinities.

Industrial modern masculinities represented one aspect of hegemonic masculinity up until the 1990s. Industrial modern masculinities, "evaluate nature as dead, man as the chosen dominator, and engineering as the method of creating wealth for all humans" (Hultman, 2016). Industrial modern masculinity is thus anchored in capitalist and neo-liberal beliefs, with a representation of nature as resources to be harvested in order to produce more goods for human consumption. This particular form of masculinity was impactful in shaping popular thinking, and also tie back to the notion of a strict nature/culture divide emphasized during the Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution (Shiva, 1988; Chew & Sarabia, 1999). Even today, masculine views of environmental

problems tend to remain anchored in a deeply scientific, pro-engineering approach (McCright, 2010).

In addition, even though industrial modern masculinity's hegemonic position was challenged in the 1990s, it continues to play an important role in current environmental discussions. Anshelm & Hultman (2014) for example, describe how climate skepticism was constructed by industrial modern men in an effort to safeguard their identity. Indeed, the changes brought upon by the need to limit the environmental impacts of industries led to a need to restructure our way of life and modes of production, which are deeply related to these men subjectivities and life experiences, and to capitalism as a whole. Climate change denial thus becomes, "a form of identity-protective cognition" (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014: 85). Climate skeptics made use of their place in high economic, academic, and governmental circles in order to advance their position. They notably used the argument of being silenced by the media in order to "create a situation in which major media outlets portray climate science as an evenly divided debate between sceptics and non-sceptics" (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014: 89). As a result, climate change is presented to the public as a controversial topic, limiting its engagement.

In addition to climate skepticism, other endeavors representative of this particular shift in hegemonic masculinity is documented by different authors. Similarly, Dunk (2002) describes the ways in which white males in Ontario, Canada, make their case against laws preventing bear hunt in the spring by using a subjectivity-based rhetoric. They too perceive environmentalism as a threat to their lifestyles and economic activities. In his article, Braden (2014) investigates illegal recreational hunting in Russia and highlights the ways in which elite violators achieve a sense of "power enhancement and differentiation from the masses" (476) through domination of nature based on hunting. In this particular case, VIP hunters display their industrial masculinity through

the use of mechanical means such as helicopter hunting. Here again, the preservation of a certain sense of self and power structure is done through a denial of environmental problems and the violation of the laws in charge of protecting nature.

In the global North, the hegemony of industrial modern masculinity was challenged in the mid-1960s by the rise of ecological masculinities (Hultman, 2016). Ecological masculinities are characterized by their recognition of, "bigger environmental questions as well as the personal responsibility for them, and being part of a transition towards societies within the planetary boundaries" (Hultman, 2016). These particular subjectivities challenged industrial modern masculinities as they criticize both the ideal of masculine stoicism and the capitalist principles of economic growth as a measure of prosperity. Nature was also re-conceptualized and given agency. In other words, nature was now seen as being able to affect men's activities and be affected by them, contrasting with the previous vision of nature as "dead" and opened to be exploited for its resources (Seaton, 2013). Ecological masculinities thus call for an in-depth restructuring of our societies and mindsets towards an ethic of care for humans and nature alike. Ecological masculinities not only challenges capitalist society, it moreover challenges hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, Brough et al. (2016) describe how caring for the environment through green consumption is perceived as feminine and thus a threat to one's masculinity. Similarly, Connell (1990) highlights how his research participants reflected on hegemonic masculinity and distanced themselves from it through their involvement in ecological movements. Ecological masculinities then, question some of the stereotypical values of hegemonic masculinity, leading to the creation of counter-hegemonic masculinities based on care for human and nature. Ecological masculinities are thus highly disruptive as they work towards protecting the environment.

As a result of the clash between industrial and ecological masculinities, ecomodern subjectivities emerged in the late 1990s and early 21st century to become the new form of hegemonic masculinity in relation to the environment (Hultman, 2016). Ecomodern masculinities are defined as, "an asymmetric combination of the determination and hardness of industrial masculinities with appropriate moments of compassion and even sense of care for a vulnerable environment from ecological masculinities" (Hultman, 2017). In other words, ecomodern masculinities managed to internalize some of the values of ecological masculinities in order to limit the threat they posed to hegemonic masculinity. Ecomodern masculinities are in themselves a way to sustain the current capitalist system by adapting it to reduce critiques that would see society restructured entirely. As a result, ecomodern masculinities emphasize technological production and economic growth as ways to remediate environmental issues. Such a discourse thus ensures that consumption and capitalist values remain untouched. Thus, even though ecomodern masculinities are more openly pro-environmental, the ways in which they propose to solve environmental issues appear to aim at sustaining the market, first, and in a second time potentially protecting nature. This asymmetry is noted in the definition of ecomodern men given above: if ecomodern men associate the values of industrial and ecological men, a strict priority is given to the previous hegemonic standards of economic growth and toughness over care for nature and expressed feelings.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is a good example of this transition from industrial to ecomodern masculinity (Hultman, 2013). In the 1980s, Schwarzenegger represented an industrial, "cowboy" masculinity through his reputation both as a bodybuilder and a perpetrator of violence in his movies such as *Terminator*. With the rise of a more caring and compassionate form of masculinity, Schwarzenegger himself had to change his public image to adapt to this new hegemonic form of

masculinity. This is showed notably in the shift toward the role of a protector in *Terminator II: Judgement Day*. In addition, when running for Governor of California, Schwarzenegger had to tamper his image of an industrial man driving a Hummer who polluted the environment. To do so, he started to emphasize an image of care for nature through the use of technology: his Hummer was now advertised to be powered by fuel cells and hydrogen, which were said to be "emission-free technologies". These technologies however only moved the pollution up the production line (the fuel cells pollute when produced) in order to hide environmental damage and sustain the illusion that solution to environmental problems can be found through the use of the market (Hultman, 2013).

Ecomodern masculinities are now the new hegemonic masculine subjectivity. The approach that ecomodern men uphold highlights technology and green consumption as a way to sustain the environment when in reality capitalist values are the ones being sustained. Moreover, ecomodern masculine subjectivities favor more emotional ties to nature, but still perceive the natural world as a passive object to manage and engineer. In this study, I aim to analyze how my participants themselves perceive and position themselves in relation to nature. To do so, I rely on concepts such as affect, emotion, and subjectivity. The details of my research figure in the following chapter, including the methodologies I adopted in order to collect and analyze my participants' experiences and understanding of environmental issues.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

My research focuses on complex, relational, and fluid concepts such as affect, emotion, and subjectivity. These notions are profoundly anchored in the sense of self of participants and can be difficult to elicit and study. In order to approach these topics with study participants, I chose to follow a mixed methodology, composed of tools such as interview questions and participatory exercises (pile sorting exercise, free list…). I combine these different tools and use both qualitative and quantitative analysis in order to address the following research questions:

RS1: What are the different emotions that students relate to the environment?

RS2: How do these emotions affect their engagement in tackling environmental issues in the community?

RS3: How do participants' masculine subjectivities relate to the environment and environmentally-friendly behaviors?

In this chapter, I describe in details both my methodology and research site in order to give a comprehensive view of the framework I used to answer these research questions. First, I introduce my research site and to provide the context for this study. In a second section, I describe the specificities of mixed methodology and how it applies to my research. I then describe both my sampling and recruiting strategies. In a fourth section, I specify the different data collection tools I used, such as interview questions, pile sorting exercise, and free listing exercise. I conclude this chapter by outlining the analytical methods I used to make sense of my research data.

3.1. Research Site

This study focuses on East Carolina University (ECU), a public university located in Greenville, NC. ECU and Greenville are located in Eastern North Carolina which is comprised of 41 counties.
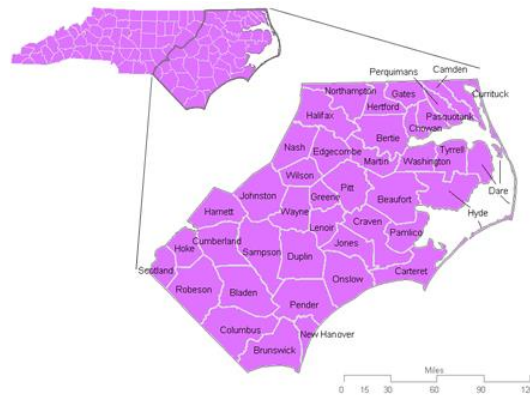
Figure 1: The 41 counties of Eastern North Carolina ("Eastern North Carolina Dataset Project")

The region was instrumental to North Carolina's development during the colonial era but lost its dominance to the Charlotte and Raleigh regions around the end of the 18th century. Nowadays, Eastern North Carolina is mostly rural (North Carolina – Britannica), with major cities including Fayetteville, Greenville, Jacksonville, Rocky Mount, and Wilmington. Except for these five cities, all cities and towns located in Eastern North Carolina count a population of fewer than 50,000 inhabitants (Population of Cities in North Carolina 2018). Most of Eastern North Carolina's economy relies on agriculture and the defense sector.

Greenville is one the fastest growing city in Eastern North Carolina, with organizations such as East Carolina University and Vidant Hospital driving the city's growth. East Carolina University is a medium-sized campus of about 29,000 students and 5,800 faculty and staff (ECU – Measure of Success, 2017). ECU's student body is composed of a majority of undergraduate students (about 81%), with 88 different bachelor's degrees. ECU also welcomes about 5,000 graduate students

(19% of the total student body), among which about 320 are medical school students (East Carolina University College Portrait, 2015). 88% of ECU's students are from North Carolina. The gender ratio in the student body at ECU is around 42% men and 58% women (East Carolina University College Portrait 2015; East Carolina University – Greenville North Carolina 2013). In 2015, 68% of ECU's students identified as white (East Carolina University College Portrait, 2015). ECU has relatively low tuition fees compared to the quality of education provided, enabling students from a large range of income to attend (East Carolina University – Greenville North Carolina 2013). It is important to note that "between one-third to one-half of all first-time, full-time students entering ECU in fall 2014 [were] first generation students" (Tilton, 2017). First-generation students are considered by higher education specialists to come from lower income families and to need more help engaging with opportunities on campus (Smith, 2015; First-Generation Students).

ECU has a particular emphasis on health careers and is home of the Brody School of Medicine. The importance of ECU as a medical education center is emphasized by its proximity to Vidant hospital. An emphasis on environmental health is specially added throughout curriculums. In addition to environmental health, ECU also proposes eight undergraduate degrees, six masters, one Ph.D. and two certificates related to environmental issues and sustainability (Sustainability at ECU).

However, compared to other universities in the University of North Carolina System, institutionalizing sustainable endeavors at ECU is still at an infant stage. Most of ECU's early efforts in the field of sustainability were induced by the necessity to follow state-wide regulations (namely to follow Senate Bills (SB) 662 (2005), SB 668 (2007), and SB 1946 (2008)) as well as the guidelines of the University of North Carolina (UNC) system Sustainable Policy, formulated in 2009 (History – East Carolina University Sustainability). As a result of these external pressures,

ECU formed its first Sustainability Committee in 2010, which was comprised of both staff and faculty members. Most sustainable endeavors at the time were focused on technical problems, such as energy consumption. This state of mind led to the hiring of an Energy Manager in 2011, as well as the first greenhouse gas emissions inventory in the same year (History – East Carolina University Sustainability). In 2013, ECU's Director of Facilities Services on Health Sciences Campus, Griffin Avin, also became Chief Sustainability Officer (History – East Carolina University Sustainability). It is important to note that the highest ranking position at ECU for sustainability is thus not a full-time position.

Before 2016, sustainability at ECU seems to have been more of a background issue related to the technical well-functioning of the university. It is only less than two years ago however that ECU created a full-time position related to sustainability and hired its first Sustainability Manager, Chad Carwein (Carwein, 2017). This hire followed a set of new requirements imposed by the UNC system. Most of ECU's accomplishments in the realm of sustainability follow this recent hire. For example, ECU obtained two accreditations in the year following the creation of the position: a bronze rating on the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) and a recognition as a Tree Campus USA. The STARS rating is particularly interesting as it assesses sustainable efforts in different universities through comparing various elements such as engagement, academics, operations, planning and administration, and innovation and leadership (STARS Participants & Reports, 2018). In North Carolina, among the 15 universities participating in the STARS rating, 5 have gold status, 7 have a silver status, and 3, including ECU, have received a bronze rating (STARS Participants & Reports, 2018). Public universities of comparable size to ECU, such as Appalachian State, all scored significantly higher.

Besides organizational endeavors, ECU is now more widely promoting sustainability among its student population. SustainECU, the official campus-wide office for sustainability, proposes monthly movie screenings as well as events such as sustainable conferences (Sustainability at ECU). Since April 2016, SustainECU also organizes Earth week, a week dedicated to promoting environmentally-friendly behaviors among students. ECU also counts a few student-led organizations working on environmental issues, notably Eco Pirates and ReLeaf.

Eco Pirates was first founded in 1978 as ECU's Environmental Health Science Club: Eco-Pirates for Sustainability. Today the association is more commonly known as Eco Pirate and involves students from many disciplines. However, it is still currently promoted on the webpage associated with ECU's Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health. Eco Pirate meets weekly and is involved in promoting sustainable behaviors on campus. On OrgSync, ECU's database for students' associations, Eco Pirate counts 109 members, from which only about 15 to 30 participate frequently. Noticeably, ECO Pirate has organized clean-ups both on Greenville's Greenway as well as in particular streets to collect litter. They have also set up fundraising for later projects and to support other sustainable endeavors such as the creation of a chapter of ReLeaf at ECU.

ReLeaf, Inc. is a local non-profit based in Greenville, NC. Founded in 1990, its vision is "To help Greenville become a city that balances residential and commercial growth while making use of one of the Earth's finest resources ... Trees!" (About ReLeaf). ReLeaf opened a chapter at ECU in the fall of 2017. The chapter was established as an effort to involve the student population in different environmental activities around the community. Joint events are organized monthly and focus on planting trees around the community. Unfortunately, the club has been less active throughout the spring 2018 with only about 10 students enrolled and very few meetings taking place on campus.

Because campus-wide effort to encourage more sustainable behaviors among students at ECU is still at its outset, little is known about what may or may not motivate students to engage with these initiatives. Moreover, for the overall size of ECU's campus, there is only a small selection of student-led environmental organization compared to similar universities. It appears that more research is therefore necessary to understand the problematics of environmental involvement, and the case study of a particular community such as ECU is especially well-suited to do so.

3.2. Mixed Methodology

My research aims to understand the dynamics happening at the intersection of emotions, subjectivity and environmental protection. My research design is therefore anchored in a mixed method approach. Mixed methods research is a type of study which, "use[s] qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques in either parallel or sequential phases (…) to answer the research questions" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003: 11). Using a mixed methods approach is highly beneficial as it, "brings together qualitative and quantitative research approaches to provide a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Dunning et al., 2008: 147). Another advantage of pursuing mixed methods research is that it combines both confirmatory and explanatory approaches, "and therefore verify and generate theory in the same study" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003: 15). Expanding on the explanatory power of mixed methods, Elwood (2011) highlights the ways in which the use of both qualitative and quantitative data and analysis methods allows to examine different processes and interactions within one's research, enabling an in-depth understanding of the issues at hand.

Mixed methods are especially well-suited for my research. My case study aims to understand concepts which are deeply rooted in participants' sense of self in relation to their environments. It touches notably on concepts such as emotions, affect, and subjectivity, which are not easily

measured and quantified. Qualitative methods of analysis are thus especially appropriate, as they are known to enable the researcher to get a better grasp on emotional and subjectivity-related topics (Bernard, 2011; Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017). Qualitative methods, "illuminate meanings, relationships, and interactions" (Elwood, 2011: 96) with approaches that allude to and describe lived behaviors and experiences. In my study, I build on qualitative methods through the use of in-depth interviews and participant observation to understand my participants' emotions and subjectivity. I complement this approach with the use of quantitative data analysis methods to analyze numerically (through the use of frequency, salience, and the creation of clusters) the data collected in free listing and pile sorting exercises. Quantitative methods allow me to determine salience and similarity ratios between my participants' answers. Quantitative methods thus enrich and highlight qualitative concepts. By drawing from both qualitative and quantitative analysis, I am therefore able to achieve a more exhaustive understanding of the issues at hand.

3.3. Sampling and Recruiting

For this study, I focused on collecting data from undergraduate, white males between the age of 18 and 22 within the ECU community. I more particularly restricted my sample to students who have lived in the Southern U.S. for at least half of their lives. For the purpose of this study, we define the South as including the states of Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas (Cohen et al., 1996). This geographical requirement will ensure that my participants' backgrounds will be set in a similar environment, enabling me to describe both affinities and differences among their experiences.

I decided to focus more particularly on this population for several reasons. First, undergraduate students are in theory an informed community, pursuing a degree in a higher education

establishment. Their previous education about environmental issues in grades K-12, as well as their relationship to knowledge in general, allows me to go beyond the mainstream information deficit model used to explain lack of environmental behaviors. Indeed, the information deficit model attributes lack of environmental involvement to the lack of information or education about these issues (Norgaard, 2011). By centering my analysis on an already educated population, I aim to show that information alone is not the unique basis for engagement. Second, studying sustainable behaviors of undergraduate students is especially interesting as these students have recently entered a period of their lives during which they learn to live on their own. This specific timeframe is favorable to the emergence of personal subjectivities as well as new individual behaviors (Watson et al., 2015). Third, through a focus on white male undergraduates, I aim to understand the specific ways in which masculine subjectivities interact with the environment to promote or hinder environmental involvement. Here it is important to note that if gender is not binary, all of my participants self-identified as males. I did not recruit participants based on their biological sex but rather based on their personal sense of belonging to the societally-constructed masculine gender.

Students were recruited primarily through purposive and snowball sampling. First, some students were purposefully recruited based on their involvement in environmentally engaged students groups, such as EcoPirate. On the other hand, students were recruited based on their enrollment in a less environmentally-focused major, such as business or finance. I especially focused on classes composed of sophomores, juniors, and seniors in order for my participants to be at least 18 years old. I contacted several professors and was given permission to present my research and recruit students enrolled in several classes selected in advanced (such as BUSI 3200 "Professional Development and Ethical Leadership", or SOCI 2110 "Introduction to Sociology") and was able to present my research in order to recruit students based on their field of study. Second, a minority of participants were also recruited through snowball sampling based on my

personal network. For example, I interviewed some students I met through my participation in ECU's French Department activities. Overall, I interviewed 18 students, among whom 8 students enrolled in a business-related major, 4 students in natural science, and 6 students in the social sciences/humanities (Appendix B).

3.4. Data Collection

I primarily used four main data collection tools: semi-structured interview questions, pile sort exercises, free lists, and participant observation. Following mixed methods, the data collected through tools such as pile sorts and free lists was later analyzed quantitatively and helped enhance my interpretation.

3.4.1. Semi-structured Interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews are particularly useful as they allow the researcher to get a better understanding of emotions, individual experiences and the social context within which the participants live (Mikene et al., 2013). Interviews may also put forward differences in opinion depending on different lifestyles or experiences. In the context of my research more specifically, I used semi-structured interview questions in order to get a better grasp of my participants' emotions related to nature and environment-related topics, as well as further my understanding of their personal experiences and subjectivity. I used open-ended interview questions to get a sense of my participants' knowledge about the environment and the ways in which knowledge itself interacted with their motivation to get more actively involved in protecting the environment. I used interview questions to complement the use of other tools and participatory exercises. These questions were framed in such a way that they improved the reading of quantitative values by supporting them with my participants' own words (see Appendix C).

Participatory exercises were also helpful in eliciting participants' answers during the interview. For example, I included a visual association exercise in order to introduce different masculine stereotypes and have research participants express how they related to these different understanding of being a man (Figure 2). For this exercise, I asked interviewees to show me what pictures represented Southern men for them, as well as what pictures they associated themselves with. They were able to choose as many pictures as they saw fit, and did not have to pick the same pictures to represent Southern masculinity and themselves. This participatory exercise and its associated visual aids helped me approach a complex topic such as masculine subjectivity by providing support for my participants' answers.

Skater	Hipster	Family man	Gamer
Fraternity member	Hunter	Student	Sports fan/player

Figure 2: Visual Association Exercise - Masculinities

If interviews are a great tool to use to better the understanding of emotional and subjectivity-based issues, they also have some limitations. Accuracy can be an issue with some interviews, as people can be inaccurate reporters of their own behaviors. Indeed, "interviews are social

encounters, and people manipulate those encounters to whatever they think is their advantage. (…) People [may] overreport socially desirable behaviors and underreport socially undesirable behavior" (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017: 85). In other words, there can be a bias for the interviewees to try to answer in the way they believe the interviewer intend them to respond. I mitigated this risk by engaging in active listening throughout my interviews. I also used elicitation techniques such as probing when I would perceive my participants' uneasiness at mentioning non-sustainable behaviors, for example.

3.4.2. Pile Sorting Exercise

I used a pile sorting exercise in order to assess my participants' level of comfort with particular environments. I had previously used this technique in a pilot study, and it had proven effective at prompting more in-depth response regarding important places of emotion. Overall, pile sorts are useful in producing similarity data, "that is, a matrix of what goes with what" (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017: 113). In other words, pile sorts allow researchers to collect information about the way our participants perceive different elements as being related or different from one another. In my case study of ECU, this data collection tool enabled me to see similarity patterns in my participants' relationships to particular places.

For this exercise, participants were asked to sort 16 pictures depending on their level of comfort with the different environments depicted (see Figure 3).

| 1. Town | 5. Mountain lodges | 9. City | 13. Mountain tent |

2. Coffee Shop	6. Shopping mall	10. Car	14. Fast food
3. Forest tent	7. Beach house	11. Church	15. Office
4. Living room	8. Boat	12. Classroom	16. Park

Figure 3: Pile Sorting Exercise Images

The 16 pictures were selected to represent outdoor recreation spaces (mountains, park…), everyday spaces (living room, classroom…), and more urban spaces (town center, city street…). Participants were asked to put pictures into piles depending on their level of comfort with the environment shown. The piles thus came to represent groups of places in which my participants

Figure 4: Qualitative Questions - Pile Sort

- *Give a title to each of your piles*
- *Why are these pictures similar in your opinion? Why did you put them together?*
- *You said that this pile represent the most comfortable environment for you. Can you explain to me why?*
- *If this most comfortable environment was endangered, would you feel a need to try to protect it?*

invested a similar degree of emotional comfort and/or discomfort. Research participants were free to make as many piles as they saw fit, as long as it was more than one unique pile. Most participants created 3 piles. Interview questions following the exercise enabled me to get a better understanding of participants' feelings associated with the environments represented by the different piles they made (Figure 4).

3.4.3. Free Listing Exercises

I used two free listing exercises. Free lists are used to "get informants to list as many items as they can in a domain" and thus enable the researcher to define more clearly these cultural domains (Bernard, 2011: 224). Cultural domains are "an organized set of words, concepts or sentences, all of the same level of contrast, that jointly refer to a single conceptual sphere" (Weller and Romney, 1988: 9). For the purpose of this study, I used the free lists to assess my participants' "domain of subjectivity" and their awareness of sustainable actions. I define my participants' domain of subjectivity as the organized set of words, concepts or sentences that jointly refer to the conceptual sphere of the self. This may include objects or people that my participants closely relate to, as well as potential "I am…" statement associated with their affiliation to these elements. In order to help conjure up important aspects of my participants' domains of subjectivity, I asked my interviewees to list objects, activities or people which they considered as being central to who they personally are (Figure 5). The free listing exercise was followed by interview questions in order to

Figure 5: Qualitative Questions - Subjectivity Free List
• *Please tell me about 5 to 7 important objects or activities that you either engage in regularly or that are particularly important to you personally* • *Can you explain to me why these elements are important to you?* • *If you could only pick one element to keep, which one would it be? Why?* • *How would you feel if you were unable to have access to these different elements?*

complement and expand upon the elements evoked by the free list. These questions aim to understand the relative degree of importance of each element listed. In addition, they hinted at a connection between the items listed and deep-rooted concepts such as, for example, sense of belonging to a particular group. My questions finally touched upon potential mitigation strategies following a need to redefine one's subjectivity in the event of a loss of these different items.

For the second free list, I asked my participants to mention at least five sustainable behaviors that they could think of. These behaviors could be both practices in which my participants engaged in regularly, and environmentally-friendly actions that they were aware of but did not personally undertake. In this instance, environmentally-friendly behaviors were understood as everyday actions consciously taken by individuals in order to benefit the environment. As a result, I was able to gather data on the frequency and salience of these different behaviors.

3.4.4. Participant Observation

Finally, I also engaged in participant observation. Participant observation "puts you where the action is, lets you observe behavior in a natural context (behavior that might be otherwise impossible to witness)" (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017: 88). For my research, I more particularly realized participant observation in two contexts. First, I observed student-led and/or student-targeted events such as meetings of Eco Pirate or forums for Green Fund, a university-wide project to create a fund for environmentally-friendly projects. Second, I attended meetings of the Sustainable Committee throughout Fall 2017 in order to assess to what extent administrative sustainable efforts were related to student engagement. These meetings are held by Chad Carwein, Sustainability Manager at ECU and were attended by approximately 40 professors and staff members. Being present at these meetings enabled me to get a more complete picture of the efforts towards sustainability made on the administrative side of ECU, and how they connect to students'

experiences. Being a student myself but having been introduced to the committee as a researcher, I was in a particularly interesting position as I experienced how both positions were perceived and acknowledged. I was thus able to approach members of the committee more easily while retaining the point of view of a student. This positionality allowed me to analyze how the measures taken administratively impacted my own experience as a student living at ECU.

Overall, participant observation enabled me to collect data on emotional responses related to environmental actions. In addition, it allowed me to connect each particular endeavors with my own experiences as an ECU student, giving more depth to what I was able to gather through observation. It also helped me to assess to what degree environmental knowledge and jargon were present in the context of environmentally-active groups on campus. Participant observations thus provided me with more context in order to situate sustainable activities on ECU's campus.

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1. Quantitative Methods of Analysis

In order to make sense of the data collected through the pile sorts and free lists, I used the Visual Anthropac software (Borgatti, 1996). Visual Anthropac allows the researcher to make sense of pile sorts by "computing measures of similarities/distances among items or participants" (Borgatti, 1996). In other words, this software enables an analysis of the frequencies that items were paired together in the case of a pile sort. This analysis creates a visual representation of items proximity, allowing for an analysis of the cultural domain of each group of items.

In order to analyze the pile sorting exercise, I had to select the number of partitions to be created by the analysis software Anthropac based on my data. Here the term "partition" refers to the number of clusters the software is asked to make. In other words, analyzing the data by 3

partitions means that once the data collected during the pile sort is given to the software to compute, it will be separated following similarity patterns into three different clusters. Each cluster then represents elements which are perceived as similar by my participants. In my case, an analysis of the data by 3 partitions was optimal. Indeed, research participants made on average 3 different piles. By basing the number of partitions on the average number of piles created by my participants, I am better able to capture the similarities in perceptions they expressed. Further analysis of the pile sorting exercise is presented in Chapter 4.

In addition, Visual Anthropac also allows for the quantitative analysis of free lists by computing the frequency, average rank, and salience of each item listed by the participants. Establishing items salience is particularly interesting as it is an indicator of how early and how often an item was mentioned in comparison to others (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017). I utilized this quantitative method of analysis on the free list related to sustainable behaviors. In order to

Table 1: Codes - Sustainable Behaviors Free List
Recycling
Eco-friendly car
Reduce waste
Electricity savings
Green energy
Walking or biking
Energy efficient appliances
Don't litter
Carpool
Water savings
"Green" consumption
Pollution/trash management
Personal involvement
Political action
Compost
Community awareness
Research

work on the free list, I coded both inductively the answers of my participants in order to highlight the main themes in their responses (Table 1). I then entered the coded answers of each participant into the software in order for it to compute their frequency, average rank, and salience. Thanks to this analysis, I was able to see which sustainable behaviors were more salient in my participants' mind, and which ones were cited the most overall. Quantitative analysis was useful in providing both visual and numerical data to my study. They provided a jumping-off point for further qualitative analysis of the results provided.

3.5.2. Qualitative Methods of Analysis

Qualitative analysis is tailored towards understanding my participants' personal experiences, emotions, and subjectivity. For my research, qualitative analysis serves two purposes. First, I used qualitative analysis methods in order to make sense of the data collected through notes taken during interviews and participant observation. To do so, I coded my data using both deductive and inductive qualitative analysis methods. Deductive analysis "starts with theories (which come from common sense, from observation, or from the literature), derives hypotheses from them, and moves on to observations –which either confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses" (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017: 220). The codes used for deductive data analysis notably came from a pilot study realized in the spring of 2017 and targeted concepts such as emotions, subjectivity, and knowledge.

On the other hand, inductive analysis "involves the search for patterns from observation and the developments of explanations –theories- for those patterns through a series of hypotheses" (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan, 2017: 219). When analyzing the notes taken from interviews and participant observation, I repeatedly came across themes that I had not necessarily expected to find. I thus created inductive codes in order to encompass these new notions and analyze them further. Inductive analysis was particularly important for this study as it brought forward new, unexpected

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elements (such as, for example, numerous mentions of emotional indifference instead of the expected positive versus negative emotional responses). Overall, the use of both inductive and deductive analysis methods enabled me to reach a more exhaustive understanding, through testing hypotheses and forming new ones based on patterns appearing in the data.

Second, I applied qualitative analysis to give more context and to reconnect quantitative data with concepts of emotion and subjectivity, as these notions are not easily measured. Qualitative analysis of quantitative data notably involves searching for and presenting "meaning in results of quantitative processing" (Bernard, 2011: 337). In the case of this particular study, both pile sorts and free list were used both quantitatively and qualitatively. After my participants engaged in these exercises, they were asked a series of qualitative questions. My participants' answers provided some depth to the quantitative measurements in order to also analyze pile sort and free lists qualitatively. When analyzing these exercises, I applied both the deductive and inductive codes cited above. This enriches my research by providing solid results which tie into the personal values and emotions of my participants.

I also used qualitative analysis methods in order to make sense of the data collected through interviews and participant observation. To do so, I used both inductive and deductive qualitative analysis methods. More particularly, I looked for specific codes in the data that I had collected

Table 2: Codes – Deductive Data Analysis		
Emotions	**Identity**	**Knowledge**
I feel…	*I am…*	*I know*
It makes me...	*I am a … person*	*I am aware*
I like…	*I am not…*	*I am not sure*
I don't like…	*That's something I do a lot.*	*I am not an expert but…*
I can't do anything about it	*We are…*	*I have never done this…*
I may not be as … as I should be	*My family is…*	*I would like to become more educated about…*

(Table 2, Table 3). The codes used for deductive data analysis notably came from a pilot study realized in the spring of 2017 and targeted the concepts of emotions, subjectivity, and knowledge. These concepts appeared to be particularly salient in relation to environmental issues in the pilot study, and I decided to investigate them further. Overall, the use of both inductive and deductive analysis methods enabled me to reach a more exhaustive understanding, through testing hypotheses and forming new ones based on patterns appearing in the data.

Finally, I used discourse analysis methods in order to relate participants' words to their subjectivities and worldview. Indeed, this type of analysis focuses on how language is used to understand how we make sense of the world and how we place ourselves within it (Gee, 2014). In other words, discourse analysis focuses on understanding particular relations, actions, and ways of being within specific contexts and how we express these different notions through words. Gee (2014) more specifically describes "seven building tasks" of language: significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and knowledge (32). Discourse analysis was thus particularly well-suited for my research, as I drew from each of these building tasks in turn to achieve a more in-depth understanding of interviewees' subjectivities.

First, I emphasized elements related to significance, practices, identities, and connections to assess the ways in which research participants perceived their own subjectivities and the way they

Table 3: Discourse Analysis – Segments of Language			
Subjectivity	**Connections**	**Significance**	**Practices**
I am…	*… this is just like …*	*This is really important for me*	*That's something I do a lot.*
I am a … person	*It's the same…*	*I need to have this*	*I like to do this with my friends*
I am not…	*This is not the same thing as…*	*I don't think I could do anything without…*	*This is one of my hobbies*
We are…	*It's different from…*	*This is a focal point for me*	*I usually do this*

relate to nature. To do so, I aimed to analyze particular subjectivities as well as the connections that were established through specific segment of language. These segments of language were signals about particular types of insights and sensitivity, and were sometimes similar to signifiers used for coding (Table 3). I also paid closer attention to other segments of language related to the significance of special topics or patterns used to describe practices. This enabled me to highlight what elements are perceived as necessary to achieve a good life as well as how particular activities become embodied experiences.

Moreover, I also relied on discourse analysis in order to assess the relationship between knowledge and environmental engagement. Discourse analysis enables the analysis of "classes of social languages" which are tied in with a person's subjectivity. I therefore applied this method to examine my participants' answers as well as the social interactions I witnessed through participant observation. The distinction between "non-vernacular ('specialist') social languages" and "vernacular social languages" (Gee, 2014: 22-23) was important to analyze as it related to my participants' sense of self in relation to environmental knowledge. Non-vernacular language (or jargon) was notably used very often in meetings of ECU's Sustainability Committee. It was also emphasized by students when trying to showcase a certain level of control and knowledge of particular environmental issues. Determining instances in which the use of technical language was used as a way to establish a particular status is thus particularly important to show how environmental knowledge is perceived and used to create different in-groups. Discourse analysis thus enabled me to investigate the ways in which language plays a role in my participants' subjectivities in relation to environmental topics.

CHAPTER 4: PLACES OF EMOTION

Notions such as emotion, subjectivity, and their relation to the environment are the foundation of this research. Consequently, this fourth chapter draws on a pile sorting exercise as well as interview questions in order to elucidate the emotions my participants associate with different places. Specifically, I seek to answer the following question:

RQ1: What are the different emotions that students relate to the environment?

To answer this question, this chapter is organized into two sections. First, I will call on the voices of the interview participants to highlight different emotional responses related to natural environments as well as environmental issues. In a second section, I build on the analysis of my pile sorting exercise and its related qualitative questions to show how my participants perceive nature as an emotional sanctuary in opposition with the "real" world constituted by social settings and life obligations. Throughout this chapter, I will use pseudonyms to preserve interviewees' anonymity.

4.1. Emotional Responses to the Environment and Environmental Issues

Emotions related to the environment and environmental issues are particularly revealing of the ways that individuals relate to these concepts. In order to elicit emotional responses from my participants, I used two main tools. First, I used a pile sorting exercise in order to assess my participants' sense of comfort in different environments, including natural ones. The exercise was followed by related interview questions. In addition, I asked my participants how they usually feel when they hear or talk about environmental issues. This question enables me to assess several elements. First, my participants' perception of the spectrum of emotions related to the current discourse about the environment. Second, this also allows me to determine what personal feelings

my participants have in relation to the environment and the issues related to its preservation. The literature relating emotions and the environment usually focus on either positive emotions (Crowley, 2013; Croog, 2016; Ryan, 2016) or on negative emotions (Norgaard, 2011; Rees, 2015). I followed a similar process here, but also argued that apathy as a third category of emotions is also frequently displayed by my participants.

4.1.1. Positive Emotions

As highlighted in the previous analysis of the pile sorting exercise and its related interview questions, a majority of my participants associate strong positive emotional responses with natural environments. These emotions mostly construct nature as separate from modern society and emphasize ideas of calm, serenity, and safety related to lack of judgment. However, when talking about environmental problems, positive emotions are overall less frequently expressed than negative or neutral emotions. When positive emotions were mentioned, they were mostly related to a positive outlook on the situation, such as seeing opportunities in talking about environmental issues, or a feeling of personal satisfaction in the work accomplished to preserve nature. Positive emotions are thus grounded in actions, which closely relate to nature. They are even more prominent among the participants who have constructed a part of their subjectivity in relation to nature (such as being a beekeeper, a hunter, a surfer, or an outdoor person; See Appendix B). Similarly, both Croog (2016) and Ryan (2016) highlight how actively engaging with natural environments and acknowledging how we impact and are impacted by nature is instrumental in overcoming negative emotions and, "generate positive emotions such as hope, care and responsibility" (5). Positive emotions thus seem to originate from activities promoting affective relational encounters with nature. In turn, these experiences seem to show new ways to care for nature and enkindle hope rather than helplessness.

Table 4: Participants' Quotes – Positive Emotions Associated with Environmental Issues

"It is satisfying to help an [sustainable hunting and environmental preservation] organization during the off season, to work to be able to have results during hunting season, to have a good environment. It's the reward at the end of it I always enjoyed, it makes me happy"
"I am glad that it is a popular issue nowadays"
"I am glad that people talk about [environmental issues]"
"It's nice to be able to talk about [environmental issues] for once"

4.1.2. Negative Emotions

Negative emotions are the second group of emotional responses which have been studied in relation to environmental issues (Norgaard, 2011; Rees, 2015). It is important here to note that for my own research participants, these negative responses were mostly related to environmental issues and not to nature itself. Environmental issues thus seem to be emotionally constructed as separated from nature. Indeed, nature itself was overall a pleasant subject for my interviewees, while environmental issues seemed to be a more difficulty negotiated topic. Negative emotions represented the majority of the responses associated with environmental issues. They can be further divided into two main categories: personal negative emotions and projected negative emotions (Table 5).

Table 5: Participants' Quotes – Negative Emotions Associated with Environmental Issues	
Personal Negative Emotions	**Projected Negative Emotions**
"Thinking that we are destroying [our environment] it doesn't feel good, it makes me feel concern, anxiety"	*"[Talking or hearing about environmental issues makes me feel] pissed because just talking about it doesn't do anything"*
"It makes me feel stress because people don't care. It makes me mad"	*"[Talking or hearing about environmental issues makes me feel] pragmatic. I don't think that we have more than 15 years [to change things] and we are not going to make it"*
"[Environmental issues are] out of sight out of mind, but I also feel bad because I don't want my kids or my grandkids to have to live through that, or somebody else's kid, I don't want them to live through the mess that we caused so… It probably makes me feel sad"	*"Usually I don't like when people talk about [environmental issues] because sometimes it makes me feel like just talking about it is a waste of time, because if you really cared, if you are really serious about it you would do something about it"*
"Hearing that Oregon is on fire [which is where my grandparents live], it makes me sad"	*"I feel a lot of stress because people don't care. That makes me mad" (62)*
"I've heard something like in 70 years the beach will be under water, water is rising, it's scary that something I enjoy can be gone. It's definitely scary, yeah I definitely worry about it"	*"I hear a lot of negative, that it's too late, so what's the point [trying to do something about it]"*
"[Talking or hearing about environmental issues makes me feel] guilty. To be honest, I could definitely be doing more"	

Personal negative emotions were centered on the participants' direct personal emotional response to environmental issues. These emotions were similar to those highlighted by Norgaard (2011) in her own research about the emotional responses of communities in Norway and in the U.S. concerning climate change. Indeed, my participants mentioned sadness, notably when talking about a place with affective ties, as well as anxiety, anger, and guilt. We can see how emotions

themselves vary depending on the degree of relatability my participants experienced with the environments they talked about. More particularly, my participants expressed sadness in relation to a particular place they know or used to know. One of the research participants, Kyle, mentioned feeling sad when hearing about the fires in Oregon, which is where his grandparents live. Similarly, Robin eluded to potential distress and sadness if his mother's rose garden was to be destroyed because of the importance it has for her. This sense of sadness related to the loss of nature can be related back to Willow et al.'s (2013) concept of solastalgia and relates to the physical desolation of home. My participants expressed sadness in particular contexts where members of their families were at risk to lose a part of nature that they characterize as emotionally close to home. In the case of his mother's rose garden, Robin mentioned being ready to do everything he could to help if he ever needed to. Sadness, because of its deep relational nature, may thus be able to prompt engagement.

Projected negative feelings, on the other hand, are negative emotional responses that the participants project onto others. Participants blamed other people, who remained undefined entities, for their negative emotions. My participants described having negative emotions, notably anger, due to other people's lack of action or care. Anger could appear as potentially having similar effects to sadness in promoting action. However, in most cases, my participants mentioned being angry concerning the general state of environmental degradation and seemed to struggle to identify where to direct this anger. For example, Bruce told me, "*It makes me mad because people don't care*". Here we can see how the anger of my interviewee does not have a target, or at least not a clearly identifiable one. Thus, anger tends to become frustration and helplessness as participants did not know who to blame for environmental degradation in general. In addition to anger, interviewees also expressed projected negative emotions due to feeling judged by others. Interestingly, my

participants seemed to fear judgment from environmentally-engaged individuals. A fundamental difference thus arises between my participants' understanding of nature as a sanctuary in contrast to environmental action as potential hailing criticism and disapproval. Kyle clearly expressed this apprehension, "*but then there [are] the people that are even more so concerned than I am, and then it feels like I am getting talk (...) at about it. That kind of turns me off too*". This expectation about environmental involvement relates to my participants' perception of environmental issues as a controversial topic. Consequently, further engagement in environmental protection is hindered as study participants prefer to avoid potential criticism and denunciation of their current way of life. Negative emotions thus seemed to dominate research participants' responses to environmental issues. The avoidance patterns deployed around these negative emotions hint at a third unexpected category of emotional responses: indifference or emotional neutrality.

4.1.3. Emotional Neutrality and Indifference

If both positive and negative emotions have been investigated in relation to the environment, I came across a third type of emotional response during my interviews: indifference (Table 6). While being in natural environments is always associated with strong emotional responses (mostly positive, but sometimes negative for a few participants who identified themselves as preferring cities; See Table 7), indifference was mentioned more frequently than positive emotions when talking about environmental issues.

It is interesting to note that indifference or having, "*no strong feelings*" was often related to statements of identity and relatability of environmental issues as a whole. Peter described how, "*it doesn't invoke a lot of really deep feelings. I am more for the environment but that's not a very emotional response like other topics, it was never like that, I feel more apathetic*". Similarly, Lucas

explained, "*I have no strong feelings, I admire people that want to conserve a place that's important but it's not my call*". Such responses are especially provocative as they show how indifference is related to a lack of conscious affective relationship with the environment. In other words, indifference can be related back to Spinoza's inadequate idea (Ruddick, 2010). Interviewees are not aware of existing in relation to the environment and the ways in which they are affected and affecting by nature. As a result, no conscious emotions are experienced in relation to nature for these participants, as neither affect nor feelings are acknowledged. For example, by constructing his subjectivity apart from his interactions with nature, Lucas thus removed the possibility to feel in relation to the environment.

Interestingly, Robin identified himself strongly with the environment but still introduced some elements of indifference, "*It makes me feel about the same, (…) but climate change is a big thing, it's real for me*". Here, even though my participant perceived environmental threats as "real for him", emotions were still downplayed. Indeed, while acknowledging these threats and their impact on his life, Robin did not consciously attach any particular emotional response to these events, describing how they leave his emotional state unchanged. Connell (1990) and Hultman (2013) analyze how hegemonic masculinity favors stoic emotional displays. Emotions have been constructed by the current hegemonic discourse as irrational and inferior to the neutrality and rationality of science (Willis, 2012). As a result, emotions are often pushed aside in order to convey strength and a certain scientific approach. Emotions are more particularly repressed in hegemonic masculinity. Consequently my participants, as men, may feel the need to repress emotional responses in order to appear more in control. Masculine subjectivities may thus play an important role in shaping the emotional responses of my participants, and I will investigate them further in Chapter 6.

Table 6: Participants' Quotes – Emotional Neutrality Associated with Environmental Issues
"[Talking or hearing about environmental issues] makes me feel about the same"
"[You hear about environmental issues] on the news, but I try not to get worked up (…) you can't let them affect you"
"I feel indifferent when people say something [about environmental issues]"
"I am not concerned, I know about these [environmental] issues but I am not concerned yet"
"I have no deep feelings [regarding environmental issues]. (…) I don't have a very emotional response, not like others I was never like that, I'm more apathetic"
"I have no strong feelings [regarding environmental issues]"

The range of positive, negative, and neutral emotions expressed by research participants is developed through interviewees' daily interactions and experiences. Indeed, both emotions and subjectivities are relational and are therefore also shaped through interviewees' interactions in specific places. In the next section, I will thus build on a pile sorting exercise to assess how different environments are perceived by my study participants.

4.2. Places, Subjectivities, and Emotions

As mentioned in my methodology, I used a pile sorting exercise in order to elicit emotional responses from my participants in relation to various environments. Participants were asked to sort 16 pictures depending on their level of comfort with the different environments depicted. Their answers were then analyzed in the Visual Anthropac software using 3 partitions (Borgatti, 1996) (Figure 6). In addition to sorting different environments into piles, my participants also answered qualitative questions about each pile they had made. I used research participants' descriptions of each pile they made to title each domain. Based on interviewees' answers and the consequent

cluster analysis, I was able to more clearly characterize three main similarity domains which represent different levels of comfort: the sanctuary domain, the everyday domain, and the urban domain.

A total of 15 out of 18 research participants considered the sanctuary domain to be the most comfortable environment. They perceived the everyday domain as neutral, with both enjoyable and unpleasant encounters. The everyday domain was also largely characterized by places and environments that participants engaged with or occupied on a regular basis. Finally, most interviewees considered the urban domain to be the least comfortable for most of the interviewees. They described urban spaces as being, "*overwhelming*", "*noisy*", and "*stressful*". Most study participants also explained how they were not used to being in big cities, leading to their uneasiness. Only a few participants identified themselves as preferring cities over nature (Table 7). As a result, it appears that both the sanctuary and the everyday domains are more closely related to interviewees' subjectivities. In the context of this study, I therefore chose to more particularly focus on analyzing both these domains.
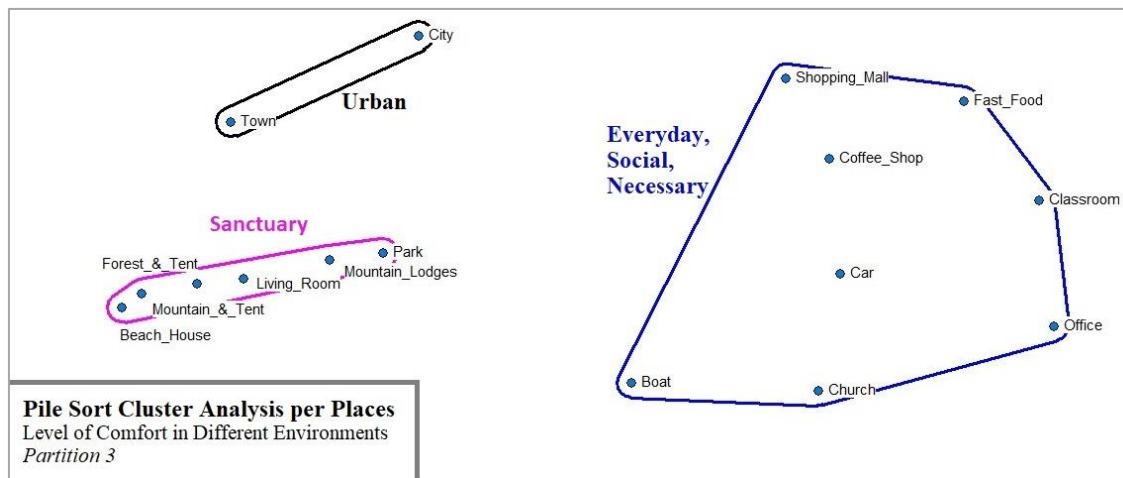
Figure 6: Pile Sort Cluster Analysis by 3 Partition

Table 7: Participants' Quotes – Emotional Responses to Nature and the City	
Positive emotional responses to nature	**Negative emotional responses to nature compared to cities**
"I would prefer secluded natural settings rather than congested places"	*"I don't like the beach, it's hot and sandy, it's not fun"*
"I grew up going to the beach, being on the water, I feel at home"	*"I feel comfortable in big cities. I am from Raleigh, you have a lot of things around"*
"[Natural environments are] simple. They are away from society. In the mountains you don't have to worry (…) it's just you, you can do whatever you want to do"	*"I feel really uncomfortable camping, it's deep in the woods (…) I like being around things, people. In big cities you always have things to do, people to see, you can go somewhere to get something you need"*
"I am comfortable in nature, I like feeling in touch with nature. Before I wasn't into that, but now I love going on a hike, it's serene, soothing"	*"I can enjoy nature but I would probably want to get back to the real world. (…) the forest is a secluded environment"*
"I love the beach, I love being outside. I enjoy camping, the isolation make me feel comfortable"	*"The picture with the cities reminds me of Raleigh or Paris, there is a sense of adventure"*
"[In natural environments] I feel more comfortable, safe"	

4.2.1. Everyday Places: Social Settings and Life Obligations

My participants identified eight environments as belonging to the domain of the everyday (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Everyday Domain in 3 Partition Analysis

This domain is particularly important as it constitutes the domain to which my participants relate the most. Indeed, interviewees often associated this cluster with a sense of familiarity. My participants mentioned how these environments relate to, "*everyday things*", or how they, "*grew up going*" to these places. These environments are thus associated with usual activities in which my interviewees have engaged regularly for years. Moreover, Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) scholars have highlighted how the concept of the everyday relates to notions of embodiment and emotions (Harris, 2015; Bee et al., 2015). Focusing on analyzing what constitute the everyday experiences of study participants therefore allows me to understand what emotions these daily environments evoke.

In addition to the familiar emotions attached to these everyday places, my participants also described how different expressions of their subjectivities are tied to these particular environments. Following Nightingale's (2013) discussion of subjectivity in relation to specific environments, we can see how my participants identified themselves through their relationship with these specific

daily places: they reflected student subjectivities in relation to a university classroom, capitalist subjectivities in numerous social occasions such as the mall…etc. Moreover, because of the regular interactions with these situations, these particular subjectivities such as capitalist subjectivities, come to be perceived as a norm (Table 8). Indeed, within a capitalist system, these situations are constructed as what my participants expect to interact with daily, and they know how to position themselves in these circumstances. These environments thus become tied to their subjectivities because they constitute a "normal" environment and they inform the way my participants learned to react since childhood. These environments and associated subjectivities are further perceived as required to achieve a good life (Shararir & Alinor, 2013).

Table 8: Participants' Quotes – Perception of a Capitalist Lifestyle's Elements as a Norm and Necessity
"Academics are really important (…). You equate your academics success with your job, and your earnings, so that's at the forefront in my mind. And I imagine it will be for the rest of my life, you've got to have a job, I would like to make as much money as possible, do all of that, do well."
"It is the same [feeling of contentment] with the car, you got to be there, you don't have a choice, so it's a question of can you be comfortable. It's the same with the classroom and work, you have to be there so you need to make the best of it"
"I'm from a very small town, so having a car was important, one of the only things you could do after you turned 16 was to drive around"
"[If I had to pick one element over all others, I would choose] my laptop, because I could look online, find a bible website if I have to, I could network, I could figure out ways to make money online. It's just a lifeline, it's definitely necessary"
"[One of the most important elements for me is] Amazon Prime, it relieves a lot of stress. (…) It helps me out because I get two-day shipping, it's very nice. Also textbook are cheaper on Amazon"
"Everybody goes to the mall"

In particular, research participants mentioned the car, the office, and the church as being, "*life necessities*". They thus appeared to personify the life my participants hope to achieve: getting a good job to make good money, having a nice car, and going to church (Table 8). It is also interesting to note that interviewees described these everyday environments as closely associated with social situations and interactions with other human beings. These interactions are important and support the reproduction of capitalist subjectivities, as my interviewees come to understand their position in society in relation to other human beings. For example, some of my participants explained to me how they react and bring up different subjects depending on who they are talking with. In addition, my interviewees' various subjectivities are also connected to their interactions with others: they are sons, boyfriends, students, colleagues…etc.

My participants also described how these everyday environments also introduced certain limits and, in certain cases, claustrophobic emotions. Research participants appeared to be more aware of the need for them to negotiate their subjectivities in such situations. Logan mentioned how coffee shops and restaurants bring up the, "*expectation of society, I have to act a certain way. They [the coffee shops and restaurants] are pretty closed environments*". We can see here how social experiences in public places such as coffee shops or restaurants come to embody a sense of constraint with regards to social norms and expected behaviors. These limitations are however not challenged, as research participants perceived these everyday places as static and unchanging. Most of them are anchored in my participants' memories as children, and they see themselves continuing to interact with similar structures throughout their lives. More importantly, they wish to continue interacting with them, as these structures have come to represent concepts of professional and social successes. Indeed, study participants explained how certain places such as the classroom and the office may not be particularly comfortable but they will allow them to make enough money to

be able to buy certain objects signaling social achievement (such as a nice car or a nice house). As a result, everyday places appear to be closely related with capitalist ideals of happiness (Shararir & Alinor, 2013).

Overall, my participants seemed to perceive environments in this cluster as a "middle ground", or neither comfortable nor uncomfortable. For example, Peter described how, "*I survive in these places, but there are not places I like to put myself all the time*". These places are thus perceived as necessary to, "*survive*", to fulfill life necessities, such as career achievement (Table 8). They are however not particularly relaxing or comfortable. As Peter's response hints at, my participants seemed to need another place to get away from these everyday situations. Perceived as the polar opposite of capitalist culture, nature thus becomes a refuge, "providing escape from the spiritual and material ravages of modernity" (Seaton, 2013). In other words, the capitalist undertone of my study participants' everyday leads to emotions of loneliness and constraint, which are remediated through a reliance on nature as a place both physically and emotionally detached from these daily experiences. Nature thus becomes an emotional sanctuary, mostly characterized by strong positive emotions.

4.2.2. Nature as a Sanctuary

Participants described six environments (Figure 8) as presenting some particular characteristics which differentiated them from both everyday and urban environments. This "sanctuary" domain is comprised of all the "natural" environments whose pictures were available to my participants when doing the pile sort. It is thus interesting to note how "nature" as a sanctuary takes on several key attributes in my participants' minds. In the following analysis, I will use both the terms nature and sanctuary interchangeably.
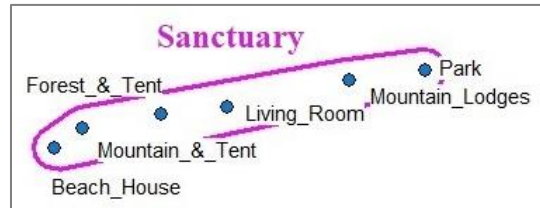
Figure 8: Pile Sort Cluster Analysis: Sanctuary Domain

First, the sanctuary domain is perceived by 15 out of 18 of the research participants as an emotional refuge. Indeed, 15 interviewees described natural environments as their most comfortable environment, associating it with strong positive emotions. Kyle explained how he would describe these environments as, "*a sanctuary, calm, and mesmerizing*". He added, "*I've been to places like this, I can remember the feelings that I had when I was there. There are very calm feelings, there is the awesomeness of it. It is very peaceful, and quiet*". This participant's experience is echoed by 15 out of my 18 participants, who characterized these particular environments as, "*solemn*", "*simple*", "*peaceful*", "*safe*", "*beautiful*", and "*intimate*". Based on their descriptions, I decided to label this particular domain "sanctuary".

Nature as a sanctuary is also closely related to emotions. This is notably illustrated by how Kyle expressed, "*remember[ing] the feelings I had when I was there*". Kyle intuitively related natural environments with positive emotions such as peacefulness, which he remembers vividly. A majority of my participants mentioned positive emotions in relation to these environments, such as being able to relax, peacefulness, and calm (Table 9). These emotions appeared to be more fully endorsed when my participants talk about these particular natural places than when discussing everyday environments or environmental issues.

Table 9: Participants' Quotes – Positive Emotions Associated with Nature
"These [natural places] are comforting, calm, aesthetic. They're pleasing to look at"
"I have always been a fan of the outdoors, of nature. Same with the beach, it's relaxing and fun. It's a personal time, away from modern society"
"I associate [being outside] with a happy place from my childhood. And still now I like being on the Outer Banks, surfing, camping, hiking, snowboarding and all that fun stuff, and fishing and hunting. (...) It's pretty relaxing"
"[Natural environments are] definitely peaceful, comfortable. They just seem relaxing"
"[I would describe natural environments as] sanctuary, calm, mesmerizing. I've been to places like this, I can remember the feelings that I had when I was there. There are very calm feelings, there is the awesomeness of it. It is very peaceful and quiet"
"Everybody likes the beach, I like the beach, you know relax, have a good time"
"I love the beach, I love being outside. I enjoy camping. [Natural places are in] isolation makes me feel comfortable"

This easiness in connecting nature to emotion seems to follow the ideals found in the nature/culture dichotomy, in which nature relates to emotions while culture and science are objective and rational (Shiva, 1988). Similarly, participants related everyday environments and interactions with societal norms promoting rational behaviors instead of emotional ones. Consequently, nature and everyday environments become conceptually differentiated. This distinction between rationality and emotions also appeared in the way interviewees perceived differently natural environments and environmental issues. Indeed, study participants related nature to emotions and were thus more inclined to mention emotional responses when discussing nature. On the other hand, environmental issues are conceptually connected to science, which led participants to avoid mentioning emotional responses and rather highlight a need for a more rational and objective approach to these issues. By attaching scientific principles to the concept of

environmental issues, participants also became more aware of potential judgment, which prevented them from feeling comfortable with this topic.

Nature however, seems to offer an emotional sanctuary to my participants through its remoteness and its material and cognitive distance from the "everyday". Indeed, because it is experienced as being disconnected from daily social life, nature appears as a safe environment where one can escape social pressure and judgment. Indeed, interviewees often mentioned how everyday environments and the social interactions happening in them introduced limits by requiring them to enact specific subjectivities. For example, during everyday encounters study participants may feel obligated to enact certain subjectivities in order to fit in: a knowledgeable individual in class or at work, a "real" man…etc. On the contrary, when they find themselves in natural environments, my participants do not feel as obligated to perform any specific subjectivity. For example, the masculine ideal of emotional toughness appears to be less predominant in relation to these natural environments, as they are not perceived as social places where my participants need to perform their masculinity. Hultman (2016; 2017) explores the ways in which the current hegemonic masculinity in regard to the environment breaks away from the previous emphasis on emotional toughness to allow for an expressed sense of care towards nature. Nature thus becomes a place where even "real men" are allowed to express emotions and sense of care. In situations outside of interactions with the environment however, hegemonic masculinity continues to value toughness over emotional display. As a result, natural environments become one of the rare places where hegemonic masculine ideals do not repress emotions, which alleviate some of the social judgment perceived by my study participants.

In addition to favoring the expression of emotions, the sanctuary domain is also characterized by its remoteness from daily life and human interactions. Both participants who perceived the

sanctuary domain favorably and those who associated it with discomfort highlighted this separation from modern life. Even the living room, which may appear to be the least natural of the environments represented by this cluster, allows a detachment from the daily world of social interactions and obligations. This detachment was perceived in two ways. A minority of participants saw this remoteness as threatening. Peter told me how he, "*prefer[s] being around things, around people. In big cities you always have things to do, people to see, I know I can go somewhere that will have something I need*". Here the remoteness of nature appeared as potentially endangering the fulfillment of participants' needs.

On the other hand, the majority of participants associated nature's solitary character with a sense of simplicity, calm, and intimacy. For these participants, nature's remoteness is an integral part of its definition as a sanctuary: away from the norms and requirements of their everyday lives, nature constitutes a refuge where they can re-center of their sense of self without fearing judgment.

The construction of nature as a remote sanctuary creates several associated assumptions about natural environments as a whole. Seaton (2013) perfectly describes the trend that emerges from my own data and offers a good jumping-off point to analyze the impacts of the construction of nature as a sanctuary. She notes, "in large part, the nature that is sought out and valued by (…) people is that which is physically removed from their everyday lives. Nature in this sense acts as a type of refuge – for both animals and humans – providing escape or protection from the spiritual and material ravages of modernity" (75). Seaton (2013) first highlights how in order to become an emotional refuge, natural environments need to be spatially distant from our everyday lives. However, such romantic ideals related to nature lead us to conceptually separate nature from our everyday life. As a result, we tend to minimize and disregard the ecological impact of our daily lives, as they appear to us as being completely separated from nature. Moreover, because nature is

constructed as a refuge, we assume that it is both safe from "the ravages of modernity" (Seaton, 2013: 75) but more importantly that it is somehow located out of time.

This relates to two main assumptions underlying the nature/culture divide: nature is perceived as being in a form of temporal stasis, contrary to culture (our daily lives) which is related to progress and change. As a result, nature as a sanctuary is conceptually constructed as an immutable object, somehow out of reach of the negative impacts of modernity. Reciprocally, nature itself, because it is perceived as unchanging, is seen as unable to impact our daily lives. This connects to Spinoza's inadequate idea (Ruddick, 2010): study participants do not perceive the impacts of nature on their daily lives but only their own effects on nature. As a result, nature itself is perceived as an object that can be moved by humans but cannot in itself evolve or affect interviewees' daily lives. Overall, my participants thus think about nature as a pristine, peaceful place away from civilization which will remain the same until they have the opportunity to visit it again. This particular conceptualization of nature contributes to shaping my participants' perceived responsibility to protect this natural and emotional sanctuary.

CHAPTER 5: EMOTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: PROMOTING OR HINDERING

INVOLVEMENT?

Emotions are a deeply affectual and relational concept. Through emotions, human shape and are shaped by the environments they interact with. In Chapter 4 I analyzed more particularly how research participants associated nature as an emotional sanctuary. In this chapter, I went one step further and aimed to understand how participants' emotions influence their degree of involvement in protecting nature. I more specifically addressed the following research question:

RS2: How do emotions affect participants' willingness to tackle environmental issues in their community?

To answer this question, I divided this chapter into two main sections. In the first section, I drew on my interviews in order to highlight what emotions and subjectivity-related concepts play a role in influencing study participants' degree of motivation to engage in environmentally-friendly behaviors. Secondly, I used interviewees' answers following the pile sorting exercise presented in chapter 4 in order to provide an example of how participants' perceived their own responsibility to protect nature as an emotional sanctuary. Through this example, I aimed to show how emotions and subjectivities come together to influence environmental protection in a particular context.

5.1. Involvement in Protecting the Environment

During my interviews, study participants approached the topic of environmental involvement in various ways. It is important to note that interviewees' answers represent a spectrum of behaviors, from current motivators for environmental involvement to perceived challenges, and including a myriad of attitudes in between, such as potential incentives for future engagement. For the purpose of this thesis, I will divide these behaviors into three main categories, but it is crucial

to keep in mind that human behaviors are fluid, messy, and always changing, and thus difficulty fit into fixed categories. Consequently, the following sections should be seen as moving patterns of behaviors rather than rigid classifications.

5.1.1. Motivators of Current Involvement

Among the more environmentally-active interviewees, all described how they feel that nature relates to their personal, everyday lives (Table 10). This closeness with natural environments is a major motivator for their current involvement in environmental protection and is fostered through different media. Robin showcased how emotional responses to nature lead him to experience an embodied sense of connection and closeness to nature. He explained, "*I have seen the most beautiful side of the world, like you know mountains, trees, nature in general. (…) It is real for me*". Here, the emotions of awe and wonder experienced repeatedly when being in nature influenced Robin's sense of self. Indeed, he expressed clearly how nature, "*is real for [him]*", showing how natural environments constitute an important part of his "reality".

Pseudonym	Subjectivity in Relation with Nature	Conscious Affectual Ties with Nature
		Table 10: Environmentally-engaged Participants and Conscious Affectual Ties with Nature
Erik	Responsible hunter Member of Ducks Unlimited	*"You can't hunt every season so I would go out, go exploring, go learn about bird behaviors. It gave a lot more appreciation for the environmental to learn about animal behaviors, it's not just to eat. When I was 10 I brought it full circle and I am glad I did (...). Honestly I didn't think about the environment before I started hunting"* *"Through [responsible] hunting I learned how to care for the land and the animals, if the ducks have no place to land and eat they will die off"* *"It is satisfying to help an [sustainable hunting and environmental preservation] organization during the off season, to work to be able to have results during hunting season, to have a good environment. It's the reward at the end of it I always enjoyed, it makes me happy"*
Luke	Beekeeper Scuba diver	*"Learning about beekeeping here is more interesting, we learn about what to do when you are in season or out of season"* *"I learn things through encounters, I hear what the older generation talks about. Now no one notice the trees, no one looks up. I know that if there is frost then there is no nectar for the bees. The red maple is the 1st tree that blooms, that it's the first honey flow. Every 3 to 5 years the honey is blue, it runs blue due to aluminum in the soil"*
Logan	Eco Pirate member Ocean lover	*"I am extremely concerned about the environment, even though I don't think that humans have much longer [to live]. I don't know if we can recover, but if the Earth can recover when we are gone, then maybe humans can recover as well"*

Pseudonym	Subjectivity in Relation with Nature	Conscious Affectual Ties with Nature
		Table 10: Environmentally-engaged Participants and Conscious Affectual Ties with Nature (continued)
Kevin	Surfer Hunter Fisherman	*"I've done for example beach clean-ups before with groups. I've done like forest clean-ups when I was in boy scouts. I agree that's important to take care of these environments because when they're gone or ruined, it's really difficult to go back to that stable environment, that stable ecosystem"* *"[People who know how to surf know about] the waves, the rip currents. Even experienced surfers can take a beating because of the waves. The situation can be scary if you're not experienced"* *"I've always enjoyed surfing, it's an outlet for self-expression, emotion. When my parents were divorcing it was a way to get away (...). Also there is a religious, spiritual relationship with God, through surfing I get a lot of self-reflection. When I'm by myself surfing, it's all religious too"*
Robin	Outdoor person	*"One of the most important elements for me is] nature, being out there, existing. Nature is trying to make its way, but humans have lost that identity with nature because of new inventions, we're getting cocky as a species"* *"[What motivates me to try to learn more about environmental issues is a] particular mindset. People in the city maybe they don't care as much, but for me I have seen the most beautiful side of the world, like you know the mountains, the trees, nature in general"* *"Climate change is a big thing, it's real for me, because if we're going to be here forever, we need to make sure we don't trash our own house you know"*

It is therefore important to note that the most environmentally-conscious among research participants are aware of the ways in which they affect and are affected by nature. This awareness

is heightened through affectual interactions in specific activities in which they are involved. For example, Erik highlighted the ways in which being a hunter connects him both to the birds he hunts but also to the wetlands located on the migratory tracks of these birds. Similarly, Luke explained to me how through being a beekeeper he learned, "*to notice the trees*" and became aware of how soil, trees, climate, and bees all relate to one another and to him as well. Here both Erik and Luke described embodied experiences in relation with nature. Both of them have become aware of the ways in which they affect and are affected by nature and have built a part of their own subjectivities through this exchange. These participants' experiences thus appear to correlate with Spinoza's argument according to which awareness of affectual interactions enables us to see beyond anthropocentric ideals and foster a sense of care for the environment (Ruddick, 2010). In other words, through becoming aware of their impact on nature and the ways in which nature shapes them too, some of my interviewees are able to see humans as being part of natural environments and not above them.

This particular awareness of their interactions with nature is also anchored in interviewees' relationships with important role models. Both Erik and Luke described how they came to develop subjectivities as hunter and beekeeper through their relationship with members of their family or really close friends. These relationships were cherished by both interviewees and played an important role in allowing both participants to become more attuned to nature through following in the footsteps of other environmentally-involved relatives. It is critical to note, however, that both Erik and Luke have now taken upon themselves these environmentally-aware subjectivities. Neither of them relies on their acquaintances to perform environmentally-friendly acts. This is particularly noteworthy when compared to some elements mentioned by interviewees as potential motivators for future environmental involvement.

5.1.2. Anticipated Future Involvement

Some of my interviewees, if they were not particularly involved currently, mentioned different elements that would help motivate to become more engaged in the future. These hypothetical requirements are particularly interesting as they also serve as a way for research participants to unconsciously support their current non-environmental behaviors and reduce the moral burden of being worried about environmental issues but not wanting to feel responsible to act. Indeed, by mentioning these requirements for future involvement, study participants feel justified in their current lack of action as it is perceived to be due to external factors. Study participants describe three main incentives for future involvement: need for guidance, enhanced sense of connection between environmental issues and everyday life, and their currently unfavorable situation as a student.

Research participants frequently mentioned the need to have someone guide them in order to become more environmentally-friendly. Guidance could take the form of having a family member or friend already involved show them what to do, being educated on how to participate, and having wider media coverage (Table 11). I argue that because of the apparent complexity of environmental issues and their perception as scientific topics, my participants feel more comfortable approaching these issues with the guidance of someone they know in order to avoid judgment. Indeed, interviewees appear to relate potential lack of knowledge with a feeling of shame. Consequently, they prefer not to get engaged in environmental protection on their own in order to avoid losing face in front of more knowledgeable people. It thus appears that even though nature was constructed as a sanctuary away from social judgment, becoming involved in protecting nature is seen as a social act. As a result, study participants are more aware of their subjectivities in relation to others and are reluctant to have to appear as laymen. Certain pressures such as fear of judgment are therefore introduced and need to be overcome.

Table 11: Participants' Quotes – Anticipated Future Involvement - Different Aspects of Guidance		
Guidance from family or friends	**Education on how to participate**	**Wider media coverage**
"I think it's a macro level issue, where it's like if kids see their parents recycling, if your family recycle, if they get solar panels or energy efficient cars, then you are going to do it (...) people imitate their family, that's called human nature."	*"[People would be more motivated to engaged in environmental behaviors] maybe if we had more educational things, like in high school or middle school, or a course about it. Here they have an alcohol course, a drug course, if you had a recycling course you would enhance participation, if you were required to do these modules"*	*"[What would motivate me to become more engaged in protecting the environment would be] having big figures come out and talk about it. (...) People that would champion the issue like Jane Fonda, Jon Stewart, people that are more politically based to tell us to come out and focus on this issue directly. It's like when Princess Diana talked about landmines, two month later 30 global leaders worldwide came together to discuss it, you can do a lot if you have influence"*
"If somebody that I care about was passionate [about protecting the environment]then I would go to show them support, to find a bond with them"	*"One of my teachers composts in her suburb, I think the big thing is to educate people about how simple it can be if they try"*	*"I guess what the news portrays is up to them, but if they could focus more on [environmental issues] that would be a benefit. Because basically what they show is what I see"*
"[For me to be more aware of environmental issues]it would have to be through a friend, like the [Tar] river clean-up I had no idea it was going on until my girlfriend invited me"	*"At the same time I am kind of ignorant in a lot of ways, but I would still [try to protect the environment] if I knew what to do"*	*"The main obstacle [for me to learn about environmental issues] is lack of coverage"*
"I am just now getting involved in [protecting the environment] so I wouldn't really know where to begin. I would feel more comfortable if I was with people who know what they're doing"	*"I am willing to take action to preserve nature (...) but I don't know what actions to take to protect it. I feel like I would need more guidance."*	

As I mentioned earlier, even though guidance does seem to be positively related to involvement, it can also be used as a way to avoid direct responsibility to take care of environmental issues. Indeed, by mentioning the need to be shown how to become more environmentally-involved, study participants remove any personal responsibility in taking action on their own. Trying to become knowledgeable by themselves is not considered. This contrasts with the ways in which currently environmentally-active interviewees would take responsibility and thus would become actors of environmental protection rather than observers.

If some interviewees were currently environmentally involved thanks to their awareness of affectual interactions between human and nature, other participants mentioned a lack of apparent connection between environmental and their daily lives as limiting their engagement. However, study participants do not perceive this gap as insurmountable.

More immediate, personal, and visible impacts of environmental destruction would act as a way to connect environmental issues and the everyday. Zac explains, "*If I knew it would affect me personally or my family or my little brother then I would [be more environmentally-friendly"*. Zac expresses how environmental issues are perceived as a phenomenon happening far away, and thus appear disconnected from the local lives of Zac and his family. Similarly, relating environmental action with his mission work, Kyle tells me "*Seeing my positive impact would motivate me to do more*". Both Zac and Kyle describe how environmental issues and potential environmental actions are perceived as out of sight and out of mind. In Zac's case, he explains how not seeing environmental impacts on his daily life prevents him from feeling a need to act. For Kyle, it is the impression that he will not see the concrete impact of his actions on the environment which limits his action. Both interviewees thus hint at the need to actually see the connection between themselves and environmental issues in order to become more engaged.

The issue of lack of apparent connection with environmental problems is particularly interesting as it connects back to the ways in which nature is perceived as disconnected from our daily lives (see Section 4.2.2.). It thus appears that the status of sanctuary given to nature by participant plays a negative role in their capacity to relate to nature. Indeed, as natural environments are sought for precisely because of their perceived distance with the modern world, my participants seem to struggle to connect their everyday actions and potential benefits for the environment. More importantly, because nature is constructed as unchanging and timeless (Seaton, 2013; Merchant, 2005), my participants have difficulties relating the environmental issues they hear about with their own experiences of nature.

Furthermore, this perceived lack of relatability with nature and environmental issues may be traced back to Spinoza's inadequate idea (Ruddick, 2010). Indeed, because my participants have not yet completely acknowledged the ways in which they both affect and are affected by nature, nature itself appears as distant from the reality of their everyday lives. Affect and emotions thus appear to be primordial in fostering engagement. Indeed, we saw how when this inadequate idea is changed and affectual interactions with nature acknowledged (such as in the case of Erik and Luke), involvement is facilitated. Through subjectivity changes related to this acknowledged affect, participants seem to also more easily sustain their environmental efforts.

Finally, interviewees also mentioned their current subjectivity as college students as unfavorable to environmental involvement. They notably describe environmental solutions as too expensive, requiring a house, or simply too difficult to access (for example, if their community does not have recycling bins). These particular obstacles are interesting as they show how being environmentally friendly is mostly constructed in my participants' minds as an issue to be resolved through consumption. Indeed, they do not yet have enough money to buy solar panels or an electric car, but in the future they may become more engaged if they make enough money to do so.

Becoming more engaged in thus framed as a wallet issue rather than an action based issue. Moreover, being a student is perceived as particularly unfavorable to being environmentally friendly because of lack of property ownership. Indeed, because my participants do not own the apartments they live in or do not intend to live here after graduation, environmentally-friendly behaviors (such as investing in solar energy, composting, etc.; See Table 15) appear inaccessible or not relevant due to the shortness of their stay in Greenville.

Here again, research participants speak of more favorable future situations as a way to reduce their own agency in not being able to be more environmentally-friendly. If this may be perceived as an issue in itself, it also showcases the ways in which capitalism shapes interviewees' thoughts about environmental solutions and agency. Indeed, for my interviewees, being a student and thus not receiving a salary is seen as limiting the ways in which they can act. Subjectivities which allow higher levels of consumption are thus required to make a change, rather than organized actions for example. Similarly, Dustin explains, "*If I was offered a job in green energy (…), if I could earn money doing something interesting and also helping the environment*". Dustin's answer showcases how being able to pursue capitalist ideals (such as capital accumulation) becomes a pre-condition for environmental care. Capitalist subjectivities thus seem to outweigh environmental concerns.

In addition to current incentives and potential future motivators, study participants also mention challenges they face in becoming more environmentally-friendly.

5.1.3. Challenges to Environmental Involvement

During my interviews, I also directly asked my participants some questions related to obstacles they encounter in becoming more environmentally-friendly. Four main challenges emerge from my participants' answers.

First, my participants have difficulties becoming more engaged in environmental protection because of a perceived lack of trustworthy information. Indeed, they view environmental issues as

a controversial topic, on which no real consensus has been reached yet. My participants perceive environmental science as lacking in definite information, which acts as a deterrent to their own involvement. Research participants specifically mention wanting to, "*know the absolute truth, not just an opinion*" about environmental issues. They notably put an emphasis on needing, "*hard facts*", "*support[ed] by science*". Environmental issues are further perceived as a heated topic of debate. This amplifies the idea that environmental knowledge can be biased by opinions, while also deterring involvement as most of my participants prefer to remain neutral rather than appearing too engaged and risk entering an argument. Lucas notes, "*environmental solutions are very controversial, some people feel very strongly about them. There's also lots of debate around environmental issues, like global warming. Within the fraternity we always debate on the group chat, environmental issues are a heated debate out of all the things we argue about*". Robin expressed to me how the context of our interview was different from most discussions on the environment, "*it's just nice to talk about [environmental issues] for once without people getting super angry at you, I can just state my opinion and not get judged for it, because recently there's been a lot of judging no matter what*". Overall, we can see how even for educated individuals, environmental issues remain seen as an ongoing debate. This is particularly true in the U.S., with climate skepticism being advocated by many conservative individuals in positions of power (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014). The balanced depiction of both skeptics and non-skeptics leads to my participants' sense of environmental issues being mostly based on opinions and not on hard facts. As science and an only "Truth" are still put on a pedestal, undermining environmental studies perception as a hard science is thus a powerful deterrent tool used by skeptics.

The second obstacle to involvement highlighted by my participants is environmentally-friendly behaviors being in conflict with their personal sense of self or priorities. Several of my participants notably mention their love of cars or the need to have a big car. All among them have

a particular story surrounding cars or motor vehicles. For a lot of them, their first car represented a sense of independence and freedom, which highlights particular cultural values. In addition, cars are important to these young men as they tie back to the technological, mechanistic aspect of hegemonic masculinity (Cheng, 1999; Brandth & Haugen, 2005; Hultman, 2013). Consequently, environmental care becomes conditional to still being able to perform this more hegemonic masculine part of their subjectivity. Erik, while being particularly involved in protecting wetlands for ducks and promoting hunting as an ecological activity, admits that he and his environmentally-conscious friends still drive big cars. Such disparity fits into Hultman's (2013) framing of an asymmetric relationship between caring for the environment and hegemonic values of toughness and strength. Here this participant struggles between his ecological activities and his need to perform a form of hegemonic masculine subjectivity through the use of a big car. Environmental care is thus subordinated to toughness, creating an obstacle to further engagement.

Third, research participants mention the emotional burden associated with caring for the environment. Similarly to what Norgaard (2011) found in her own research, my participants express helplessness, fear, and anger in relation to environmental degradation. However, among my participants, avoidance techniques were more particularly aimed at performing emotional neutrality (see Chapter 4, Table 6). Indeed, in Norgaard's (2011) study, avoiding to research or talk about environmental issues is presented as a way not to go over the negative emotional threshold that individuals are able to handle. My participants more particularly appear to avoid thinking about environmental issues in a process of trying to sustain an apparent emotional toughness. Joe explains, "*I feel intrigued when I hear about [environmental issues] but we don't talk about it because if we don't talk about it, it makes it not real*". Similarly, Dustin states, "*In a way it makes me feel bad because in a way [environmental issues are] out of sight out of mind, because I now that the environment is not going to be so bad that we are not able to live in it when I die, so I am*

like in 50 years it will be bad but it will be the end of my lifetime". In other words, my some of my

participants perceive the emotional burden that would come with caring about the environment as

avoidable. Unconsciously, choosing not to care too much about the environment thus becomes a

way to preserve their own emotional state by pushing these issues to the back of their minds. In

addition, as we discussed above, research participants seem to prefer emotional neutrality as it is

both constructed as a hegemonic masculine ideal (Hultman, 2013) and relates back to scientific

ideals of objectivity (Willis, 2012). As a result, research participants prefer to avoid environmental

issues as this topic which could enkindle strong emotional responses which conflict with the

performance of both hegemonic masculine subjectivity and scientific subjectivity.

Similarly, interviewees mentioned preferring to avoid conflict related to environmental care

with their acquaintances, even if these people may be perceived as having environmentally harmful

behaviors. In this case, in order to avoid conflict (and thus feeling/provoking anger), research

participants will more often abandon their own environmentally-friendly behaviors when living

with a non-environmentally friendly individual rather than trying to discuss it with them.

Emotions and subjectivities thus come together to inform interviewees' decision regarding

environmental protection. Environmental involvement is therefore not a binary between those who

are engaged and those who are not. Rather, environmental involvement is based on a spectrum of

deeply relational behaviors. The following section provides an example of how participants'

perceive their own responsibility to protect emotional places such as the sanctuary environment

they defined in the previous pile sorting exercise (see Chapter 4, Figure 8).

5.2. Perceived Responsibility to Protect the "Sanctuary" Environment: An Example

Through this example, I aimed to determine to what degree interviewees felt personally

responsible for protecting the environments they felt the most comfortable in, as defined in the pile

sort presented in Chapter 4 (see Figure 8). I chose to focus on their most comfortable environments as it is more closely related to my participants' subjectivity. Indeed, when interacting with natural environments research participants mentioned being able to be themselves more easily than in everyday situations where social expectations come to shape the subjectivities interviewees have to perform.

The question, "if this particular environment was endangered would you feel the need to step up to try to protect it?" bridges my participants preferred environment and their willingness to act to keep it safe. Of the 18 undergraduate white males interviewed in this study, 15 categorize three or more of the environments constitutive of the sanctuary domain (see Figure 8) as their most comfortable environments. As a result, their responses related to their willingness to protect their most comfortable environment also applies to natural environments as a whole. In the following analysis, I focus on this majority of participants who equated the sanctuary domain with their preferred environment in order to assess their willingness to protect it.

In general, a majority of participants express their willingness to try to do something to preserve their sanctuary environment. Some of this motivation is related to participants' personal relationship with somebody that they identify with their sanctuary environment. For example, Robin described his mother's rose garden as being something that he would want to protect because of the garden's importance for his mother. Participants usually mentioned what they consider to be the source of a potential threat to the sanctuary environment. Among the participants who do mention the origin of the threat, half directly mention human/society impacts such as water pollution by chemicals being poured in rivers, while the other half refers to the threat more indirectly, using passive voice to avoid having to mention a subject (Table 12). Strong negative feelings were predominant when talking about these threats. However, even though almost all

participants expressed a willingness to protect their sanctuary, very few actually mentioned a way to do so. Most participants either did not describe their engagement further or mentioned their need to be guided due to a lack of knowledge on how to actually help. This pattern is particularly revealing. Indeed, my participants were all very quick to affirm their willingness to protect the environment. Doing so helped interviewees appease the moral requirement that may be felt when talking about the responsibility to protect nature. However, by not describing further the ways to achieve such a result, my participants created a certain conceptual distance between themselves and the issues these environments may face.

Table 12: Participants' Quotes – Perceived Threats to the Environment	
Humans/Society as Environmental Threats	**Indirect Mention of Environmental Threats**
"As human population is increasing, nature is decreasing. I wouldn't want these [natural] areas to disappear"	*"If thinks like wood were endangered, trees cut down, I would try to find something"*
"[Natural environments] are endangered because of people themselves. (…) We need more birth control to limit population growth"	*"Now forests are on fire and it makes me mad"*
"I wouldn't let [natural environments] go, I would try to prevent encroaching of society on these areas (…) For example in Brazil I heard that there was a new dam and it affected the environment. A native tribe tried to campaign against it but it failed and it was never the same. When you affect nature it comes back at you"	*"My Dad told me about forest fires, there not manmade, it's just unfortunate. These big wild fires, the forest will be destructed for a couple of years"*
"I've heard that camels die in the desert [in the Middle East] because they eat plastic and it creates a marble in their stomach. It's also the culture of the people there, the idea that everything goes back to the sea so they just throw stuff away"	*"In class we talked about things like deforestation, the overall effect of mining and fracking, these are big issues. Or bleaching with CO2"*

Responsibility is further circumvented through mentioning scientific knowledge as a requirement to protect nature. Through an emphasis on environmental science in approaching nature, scientists are unconsciously constructed in the media and by society as a whole as the only individuals having the capacity to protect the environment (Kalof, 1998). Scientific knowledge about the environment is thus perceived by laymen as required to get engage in environmental protection (DiEnno, 2013; Segi, 2013). Scientists thus come to be perceived as the only potential actors in protecting these natural places. As a result, because their own subjectivities differ from those of environmental scientists, my research participants feel that they are not personally able to take action on their own. They thus conceptually deny their own agency in the process of protecting the environment based on their perceived lack of scientific knowledge. By removing some of their own agency, study participants thus avoid some responsibility in protecting the sanctuary domain. In other words, by emphasizing their subjectivity as laymen, interviewees shift the responsibility from themselves towards those they consider to be experts, and who are interestingly not specifically identified by name.

Emotions, subjectivities and affect thus play a critical role in shaping the ways in which interviewees perceive, relate, and feel responsible for protecting nature. If my participants' subjectivities are sometimes built through affectual interactions with nature, social ideals and notions such as particular hegemonic masculine subjectivity or a perceived nature/culture divide also come into play to construct participants' relationship with nature. In the following chapter, I will more particularly focus on understanding how interviewees' masculine subjectivities shape the ways they interact and perceive nature and environmental issues.

CHAPTER 6: MASCULINE SUBJECTIVITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Subjectivities characterize how we define ourselves within a social context, and is thus related to particular places, times, and interactions (Morales & Harris, 2014). In this chapter, I use the term subjectivities as a plural, as subjectivities change and are shaped through relationships. I argue that masculine subjectivities are plural, relational, and always changing. Similarly, there is no unique way in which masculinity and environment are related. However, there has been an overall tendency for men to adopt the ecomodern masculine archetype in regard to environmental issues: emotions related to caring for nature are more readily acknowledged, but solutions remain anchored in capitalist ideology (Hultman, 2013). Consequently, protecting the environment continues to be seen as related to scientific expertise and consumption of "green" technologies as the main solution available.

In this chapter, I thus focused in particular on answering the following research question:

RS3: How do participants' masculine subjectivities relate to the environment and environmentally-friendly behaviors?

To address this question, this chapter is divided into two sections. First, I analyzed the particular masculine subjectivities of my study participants. I further investigated how interviewees perceive the stereotypical Southern masculine values in relation to their own masculine subjectivities. In addition, I highlighted how their personal masculine subjectivities relate to the environment. In this section, I used data gathered through semi-structured interviews, a visual association exercise, as well as data from participant observation to support my points. Second, I investigated how my participants construct their subjectivities and act in response to potential

threats to their sense of self. To do so, I particularly drew on both semi-structured interview questions and a free listing exercise.

6.1. Masculine Subjectivities

Gender is a particular element of one's subjectivity. Indeed, we perceive ourselves and others depending on our gender and how we perform being female, male, or transgender. As a result, my participants all perform particular forms of masculinity, which in return influence the way they act or position themselves in the world. In this section, I therefore investigate further what it means to be a man according to my participants. I use semi-structured questions in order to highlight what my interviewees relate to the concept of masculinity, as well as how they position themselves in comparison to the stereotype of the Southern white male. Finally, I analyze how the different masculinities represented by my research participants approach nature and the challenges posed by environmental issues.

6.1.1. Discursive Construction of Masculine Ideals

Throughout my interviews, several themes came up in relation to what my participants perceived to be important characteristics of a man. First, a majority of interviewees mentioned a father figure who served as a masculine role model. Study participants tend to look up to these men and wish to follow in their footsteps. For example, Robin told me about how his dad built their previous house from the ground up, providing shelter for his family even though they did not have a lot of money at the time. He went on to explain: "*Now my dad is successful, he put me through college, I can't be more thankful for that. After I graduate it would be cool to take over my dad's job to help the family. I have a lot of values that I learned from him*". Through Robin's story, we can see how the image of a strong father figure had a profound impact on Robin's perception of

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masculinity and on the way he wishes to construct himself as a man. His father is seen as having worked hard to ensure the success and happiness of his family. Moreover, Robin feels compelled to follow in his father footsteps and take over his dad's company in the future, in order to continue his legacy.

This specific story also offers an insight into another notion research participants related to masculinity. They specifically emphasized certain duties a man is expected to fulfill. As highlighted by the story above, Robin relates being a man with the expectation to work hard to make sure that his family has a place to stay and a comfortable standard of living. Most of the interviewees relate to this idea, which notably relates to what they hope to achieve thanks to their education at ECU. Indeed, they mention how being able to study at the college level will help them build a good life for themselves, specifically through finding good jobs. The masculine model research participants try to emanate is thus related to the ideal representation of a middle-class family man. The role of a man as head of the family is further emphasized by references to the duty of a man to protect his family. Robin relates environmental protection to protecting the experiences his kids could have in the future. He explained, "*I would do anything to protect [these natural environments] so that my kids could possibly experience it, because they will hear me talk about it and they will want to go see. And there has been places my Dad told me about and there are not there anymore because of forest fires*". Here, protecting the environment becomes tied to protecting children's innocence and opportunities to play in natural environments. Robin and 4 other interviewees see experiencing nature as a child as a way to connect between different generation: between Robin and his father, and in the future between Robin's children and himself. Losing natural environments therefore equates to losing some relational ground between people.

Participants describe sadness at the idea of this potential loss, which highlights how nature as a relational space is also emotionally charged.

Another masculine duty is to teach specific skills and values to their potential sons. Research participants mention that a man should teach his sons to be independent, respectful, and able to work with their hands (Table 13). In addition, interviewees refer to certain outdoors activities such as hunting, fishing, and other sports such as football and golf as experiences a man should share with his sons. These activities are defined by participants as normatively masculine, in the sense that they are always practiced with others males and constitute ways to relate with them. Women's potential participation in these activities is not mentioned. These skills appear to define a particular ideal that men must achieve. Similarly, Dunk (2002) describes how white men engaged in hunting in Canada refer to their identity as white males by stating that they can support themselves "without resorting to the modern world by reaching back into a traditional activity and putting food on the table for [their] families. It [also] conveys a meaning and an important lesson to [their] children" (44). In other words, a societal expectation for particular white males is to be able to survive and ensure the survival of their family based on the use of natural resources. Therefore, an ideal man is self-sufficient. The direct use of natural resources without going through modern refinement seem to exude toughness, character, and respect. Even though my study participants may not completely adhere to this masculine ideal, it appears to be pervasive enough for them to acknowledge its existence and to place these expectations on their own fathers.

Table 13: Participants' Quotes – Fathers' Duty to Teach their Sons and Impact on Participants' Subjectivities
"[When I was growing up] I met a man in the ghetto (…), he became my best friend. He's a beekeeper so he taught me. He is about 70 now (…). His wife and him kind of adopted me. He taught me how to hunt, the type of things a father should teach you"
"My great-grandparents had farmland, about 100 beef cattle, 100 hectares. So I would drive around and help build a chicken coop, fences… I would do that with my dad in the summer"
"I started to duck hunt with my dad in Arkansas, there's good hunting there. When duck season starts ducks migrate south, I'm excited for that"
"My dad is very supportive [of my studies], he told me if you do well you then you can go anywhere"
"Scuba diving is important. When I was 18 I went to Oman to meet my dad, he told me 'that's what I do so if you want to know anything about me you have to do it too"
"My dad likes sports so he wanted to me to get involved when I was little and so we just kinda kept doing"
"Hunting is definitely something from the South, it's a tradition, a way to support yourself and your family"

Finally, the last role of a man appears to be the need to remain stoic and not show pain. For example, Lucas told me how he broke his arm and his father, before realizing the extent of the injury, told him to toughen up and that he couldn't be that bad. This anecdote shows that there is sometimes a notion that men need to be tough and that showing pain or emotion is perceived as being weak. Hultman (2013) describes how before the 1970s, hegemonic masculinity was embodied by figures such as Schwarzenegger's Terminator: a machine who do not know pain or emotions. If my participants have now distanced themselves from this old hegemonic ideal, its influence seems to remain, notably through the interactions with older men such as their fathers.

6.1.2. Southern Masculine Stereotype and Personal Masculine Subjectivities

Masculine subjectivities are constructed through lived choices made out of experiences within natural environments or social categories different men belong to. They also emerge out of interactions, "within specific places, time, or set of relationships" (Morales & Harris, 2014: 706). Consequently, as they construct and negotiate their own masculinities, my participants also have to interact with other types of masculinities. Since my study takes place in the South East of the United States, I decided to investigate how my participants perceived Southern masculinity and how they related to it.

Masculinities are multiple and always changing, and therefore there is not a unique form of southern masculinity. Rather, what it means to be a man in the South of the U.S. changes and is shaped by the different experiences of these men. Masculine subjectivities are therefore not built only based on geographical culture, but through the embodied experiences of these men and the relationships they develop with both human, everyday, and natural environments. To investigate how research participants engage with different masculinities, I used a visual association exercise using 8 different pictures representing stereotypical masculine subjectivities (see Methodology, Figure 2). I then asked them to identify separately first which of these pictures represented the stereotype of "Southern men", and second which pictures they related to personally, and second which one. Table 14 shows which pictures interviewees associated with Southern men, as well as how frequently different participants selected these representations.

Table 14: Perceived Characteristics of Southern Masculinity	
Items	**Frequency (%)**
Hunter	80.0
Sports fan/player	73.3
Fraternity member	66.7
Family man	40.0
Gamer	13.3
Skater	6.7

Hunting was mentioned most often, followed by contact sports such as football. In particular, my participants seemed to associate southern masculinities with the ideal of toughness and the need to appear self-sufficient and able to support themselves through activities such as hunting or fishing (Dunk, 2002). Hunting and fishing thus represent skills that enable men to survive on their own. As a result, southern masculinities appear to be constructed as more rustic lifestyles and sometimes position themselves in opposition to more polished northern urban masculinities (Jansson, 2009; Thomas, 2012; O'Sullivan, 2016).

However, my participants, who have all lived for more than half their lives in the South, do not strongly associate themselves with what they consider to represent southern masculinity. The main difference they articulate between their own subjectivities as men and the stereotypical definitions of southern masculinity is anchored in their status of educated college students. Indeed, 60% of my interviewees identified themselves with the student. This shows how everyday activities they engage in, such as studying, are instrumental in establishing their subjectivities. Moreover,

being educated at the college level and aiming to belong to a more middle-class, suburban community appears to differentiate my participants from the more rural understanding of southern masculinity. For example, Luke facetiously pointed out the picture of the student and explained, "*Pen and paper is definitely not a [stereotypical] Southern men thing*". For Luke, being a student and passionate about biochemistry is thus opposed to stereotypical Southern masculine values. However, some elements associated with stereotypical southern masculinities, such as learning to hunt and taking care of one's family are still salient in my participants' sense of being a man.

Study participants' responses thus confirm that there is not a unique form of southern masculinity. In the case of my interviewees, they remain attached to typical "southern" values such as providing for the family and becoming independent through hunting. However, they also embrace a technologic approach and seem more open to discussing emotions. This specific understanding of their own masculinities is particularly interesting as it connects to how my participants relate to nature.

6.1.3. Masculine Subjectivities and the Environment

Research participants thus seem to embrace both some traditional masculine values such as the importance of self-sufficiency and more modern ones such as viewing technology as important to who they are. Hultman (2013) characterizes this new type of hegemonic masculinity, which he calls "ecomodern men", and investigate further the relationship between these ecomodern men and nature. According to him, ecomodern men have dissociated themselves from modern industrial men in the sense that they allow themselves to show more emotions and care. This sense of care is particularly articulated towards nature. I argue that my participants' approach to nature and environmental issues follow a similar pattern. Indeed, similarly to Hultman's (2013) examples of ecomodern men, my interviewees do express a sense of concern for nature. However, this care for

nature is still subordinated to the fulfillment of respectively more valued ideals such as toughness and technological expertise. This interpretation of nature appears in some of the ways in which my interviewees think about the environment in relation to their own masculinities.

First, the concepts of physical challenges and personal achievements are important for 16 out of 18 of my participants, as they allow them to showcase their masculinity. In this framework, competition with nature, in particular, is highlighted as one way my interviewees achieve a sense of pride. For example, Erik describes fishing as a struggle against nature and explains how, "*fishing is more of a fight, especially off-shore fishing, it gives you an adrenaline rush that's bigger than anything*". Here fishing is constructed as a fight against both fish and the ocean. This battle with natural forces and the pride brought by success is bigger than anything else. Similarly, Dustin explains how he prefers hiking in a mountainous environment as opposed to in a forest, *"[when I am] on top of the mountain, it feels like I have conquered the world (…). [In the forest] you're in a secluded place, I feel more empowered in the mountain*". Here, the mountain is preferred to the forest as it enables a visible and tangible sense of conquest through reaching the summit. The mountain is thus associated with a form of physical effort that can be praised, while walking in the forest is perceived as secluded and thus not as much of a gratifiable experience. In a similar fashion, being on top of a mountain is associated with dominating the mountain itself, as Dustin describes how he feels as if he had conquered the world by standing on a summit.

In both Erik's and Dustin's cases, we can see how interviewees discursively construct this outdoor activity as a battle against the force of nature. The use of terms such as "conquer" emphasizes that they gain pride in these activities because they are perceived as winning against nature itself. Thus, even though study participants do care about natural environments, this care is also paired with the idea of men as dominating natural forces.

Moreover, land ownership is also described as a way through which one comes to care for the environment. When talking about what would motivate him to learn more about environmental issues, Kyle mentioned, "*The fact that I use the environment, it makes me want to preserve it for me and my future. I would want my kids to be able to have the same benefits I have, or at least not to have any less. So I also would want a piece of land and I would want to preserve that part*". Here, the environment is perceived in capitalist terms, as a benefit to be possessed. Similarly, the land is perceived as an object to be individually owned and cared for, and is thus denied agency (Seaton, 2013). Hultman (2013) explains how ecomodern men if they do care for the environment, do not challenge the current capitalist model in which nature is constructed as a resource. This is particularly relevant for my thesis as it leads to inadequate ideas and passive affect (Ruddick, 2010): through denying nature's agency, ecomodern men and other capitalist subjects are not aware of the ways in which nature also affect them. As a result, they create a discursive distance between themselves and nature, which works to undermine the sense of responsibility and ultimately engagement to preserve nature.

Another characteristic of ecomodern men that my participants embody is the understanding of technological solutions as a way to save the environment. In this view, the current capitalist system does not need to be fundamentally changed, and technology itself can save nature. Robin notably explained to me how the car industry could potentially save the environment. Passionate about cars and racing cars, he explains to me how special exhaust pipe in particular cars can actually remove the pollution from the air. He adds "*we should be paying the [transport] companies because they are actually purifying the air*". Here, technology is seen as a way to care for the environment without having to challenge our lifestyles or our current subjectivities. Ecomodern men thus do not challenge the current system, and sustainability becomes as much or even more

about sustaining our capitalist societies rather than sustaining the environment (Mander, 2007; Dylan, 2012).

The hegemonic character of ecomodern masculinity and the particular environmental discourse it highlights are thus also related to a specific vision of knowledge and science. In our capitalist societies, science has often been implicitly linked to masculine values and understandings of the world (Cheng, 1999; Merchant, 2006). Similarly, our current capitalist framework works to construct the study of environmental issues as an environmental science, which is also tied to engineering. This specific framing appeals more particularly to a masculine technical sense. Discussing environmental issues thus becomes a technical, scientific topic, which requires a certain level of expertise. This technical approach of environmental issues transpired in my own research, notably during participant observation at official sustainability committees. These meetings were more particularly targeted towards sharing information about sustainable undertakings in managing the university and involved both faculty and staff. In most meetings, both issues encountered and actions taken to promote environmental protection were discussed in a jargon-heavy language. Some of the technical topics discussed included cooler plant efficiency, flow control, and greenhouse gas emission inventories. In addition, most attendees were men. This correlates with the perception of environmental issues as something to be fixed through engineered solutions, which are constructed as a masculine domain of expertise.

This specific framing of environmental protection as a technical, scientific issue is further highlighted by students' remarks during interviews. When talking about environmental issues, students themselves try to reflect technical knowledge through displaying a certain level of education, associating themselves with recognized scientific institutions, or using technical terminology. Several research participants mention education as a requirement for caring about the

environment. For example, Joe explains the lack of engagement of some of his friends on the basis of them not being very educated. Similarly, other interviewees describe how they can talk about environmental issues with some of his friends only because they are also pursuing a college education. We can see here that research participants construct environmental engagement in relation to knowledge and education.

A few participants also referenced famous scientific institutions to emphasize their own scientific subjectivities. For example, Robin referred to his grandfather's work as a NASA scientist in order to highlight his own scientific knowledge. He explained how he read his grandfather's old NASA notebook and how, "*it said that [climate change] may only be variation of climate, more like a wave between periods of hot and cold*". Here, Robin creates a connection between a famous scientific agency (NASA) and himself, in order to construct himself as part of the scientific world.

Likewise, most of the research participants used technical terms and phrases in order to emphasize their environmental knowledge. Some of these technical terms included phrases related to environmental issues such as, "*fracking*", "*overfishing*", "*sea level rise*", and "*dumping chemicals in rivers*". Other terms were focused on potential solutions such as, "*hemp soap*", "*hemp paper*", "*biodegradable plastic bags*", or "*green energy*". Similarly, when my interviewees were asked to list environmental actions they know of, two of the most salient solutions cited were technical solutions: eco-friendly cars and renewable energies (Table 15).

Environmental Behaviors	Salience	Frequency (%)	Average Rank
Recycling	0,702	83,3	1,87
Eco-friendly car	0,354	61,1	3,18
Renewable energy	0,257	33,3	2,17
Electricity savings	0,219	44,4	3,75
Walking or biking	0,183	33,3	3,67
Don't litter	0,18	27,8	2,8
Green consumption	0,157	27,8	3,4
Carpool	0,141	27,8	3,6
Energy efficient appliances	0,135	22,2	3,25
Reduce waste	0,129	33,3	4,33
Water savings	0,123	22,2	3,25
Compost	0,106	16,7	3
Personal involvement	0,058	16,7	5
Pollution/waste management	0,055	16,7	5
Community awareness	0,041	11,1	5
Research	0,032	5,6	4
National political action	0,022	11,1	5
Healthier lifestyle	0,022	5,6	4
Global political action	0,022	5,6	4

Table 15: Free-List - Environmental Behaviors

The use of technical terms by research participants highlights two important elements. First, when talking about environmental issues, participants appear to try to perform scientific subjectivities through the use of a scientific vocabulary. Study participants thus perceive talking about environmental issues as requiring a certain level of scientific knowledge. Moreover, the solutions to environmental problems themselves appear to require a certain level of technical understanding. Through this emphasis on the technical aspect of these solutions, they become constructed as out-of-reach of the general, non-scientifically trained population. As a result,

consumption becomes the only possible route to perverse nature for non-scientists. For example, both eco-friendly cars and renewable energies are engineered objects and processes which are perceived to be able to save nature. As a result, the centrality of technical, "green" solutions thus maintain the current capitalist system through encouraged consumption.

As a result of this emphasis on technical terms and the conceptualization of science as out of reach of the general population, some of my research participants enrolled in non-scientific Majors feel detached from these issues. For example, Lucas, a Political Science and Communication Major, explained that environmental issues are ultimately "*not [his] call*". Likewise, when talking about obstacles to environmental engagement, Erik stated, "*There is cleaner energy, but I am not a scientist so I cannot do that*". Here some of study participants' subjectivities as non-scientist thus becomes a perceived obstacle to involvement. Having a positive impact on the environment is therefore constructed as only attainable by experts and scientists, which limits how some of my participants relate to these issues.

Finally, there is a form of scalar disconnect between the current framing of environmental issues as a global problem and the way my participants' subjectivities are constructed in relation to everyday, local places. Indeed, when talking about environmental issues, my participants often mention iceberg melting or oceans filled with trash, but the image of snowy landscapes, endangered polar bears or floating plastic bags do not connect directly to their daily lives. Consequently, environmental problems are mostly perceived as unfortunate events happening to others, rather than imminent and local threats. As a result, involvement in environmental protection becomes optional because my participants' subjectivities and livelihoods do not seem to be directly concerned by global environmental problems.

Our capitalist, techno-scientific society constructs environmental discourse at the intersection of science and global concerns, which works to disconnect it from the daily lives of my participants. This particular framing also limits engagement in protecting nature. Several participants, however, highlighted how they acquired a more hands-on, locally based knowledge through activities such as hunting and beekeeping. For example, Luke told me, "*I might not know what's happening in China, but I know about my own environment. I could talk about the poplar, the bees and what's locally ecological, I am aware of that*". Luke makes the distinction between the mainstream understanding of environmental issues, which tends to focus on a global scale, and his own knowledge and environmental engagement through a local activity such as beekeeping. Through these activities then, my participants were able to understand local ecological processes and work to preserve them even when they were not enrolled in scientific studies. Indeed, this type of local environmental involvement transcended majors, as for example Erik, who self-identified as a sustainable hunter, is enrolled in Operation and Supply Chain Management, while Luke is a Biochemistry major. It thus appears that there needs to be a reframing of particular forms of knowledge related to the environment, in order not to prevent involvement by favoring specific subjectivities. On ECU's campus, this may be translated into environmentally-focused, interdisciplinary programs and actions reaching out to students in fields outside of engineering and geography for example.

6.2. Subjectivity: Relating to the World

Subjectivity is defined as "how one understands oneself within a social context – one's sense of what it means and feels like to exist within a specific place, time, or set of relationships" (Morales & Harris, 2014: 706). Subjectivity thus arises not only among human-human interactions but also through in relation to activities, objects, concepts…etc. To better understand how research

participants' build their own subjectivities, I therefore investigated everyday elements that interviewees perceive as central to who they are. To do so, I relied on a free listing exercise and some related interview questions. For this exercise, I asked my interviewees to list at least 5 elements that they feel are fundamental to who they are. As a result, I was able to gather data on my interviewees' subjectivity domains, or in other words what elements they perceive as similarly relating to their subjectivities. The following sub-sections showcase the data gathered and consequent analysis.

6.2.1. Everyday Elements and Subjectivity Domain

First, I analyzed the answers provided by research participants when asked to name 5 elements they considered central to who they are. Even though the specific elements listed vary from participant to participant, they mostly belong to five main categories: objects, activities, places, concepts, and people (Table 16).

	Objects	Activities	Places	Concepts	People
Table 16: Free List – Subjectivity Domain: Main Categories per Number of Times Cited					
Total times cited	30	25	15	14	9
Examples	*"Phone"*	*"Hunting"*	*"Gym"*	*"Education"*	*"Family"*
	"Friend's necklace"	*"Fishing"*	*"Church"*	*"Fear of falling"*	*"Friends"*
	"Guitar"	*"Playing video games"*	*"Beach"*	*"Roman values"*	*"Small groups"*
	"Laptop"	*"Writing"*	*"ECU"*	*"Philanthropy"*	*"Fellowship, friends"*
	"Car"	*"Cooking"*	*"Ocean"*	*"Nature"*	

Objects were the category the most often cited by my interviewees. Here, I define objects as inanimate items owned by study participants or their close relatives. If objects were cited the most often, these objects were however frequently used as a medium to either represent a concept (for example, the bible to exemplify faith), a relationship (such as one of my participants' grandmother ring), or an element of subjectivity (having a laptop for a student). It is particularly interesting to see how ownership of a particular item thus becomes necessary to the embodiment of certain values or subjectivities. For example, several of my interviewees mention their laptop as central to who they are. When I investigate further, they explain how owning a laptop is instrumental in being a good student. We can see here that certain objects are also associated with the performance of particular subjectivities. Greg notably explains how he is reluctant to mention the laptop as particularly important to who he is, but that currently being a student makes it unavoidable. Greg's unwillingness to associate himself with the laptop is mirrored by Hector's feeling about video games: both interviewees dislike how these objects emphasize a more materialistic aspect of their own subjectivities.

The emphasis on items' ownership in order to achieve particular subjectivities seems closely attached to capitalist ideals. Indeed, in capitalism, private ownership and consumptions are associated with achievement of a particular social status and happiness (Agnew, 2005; Shararir & Alinor, 2013). This is particularly relevant to this study, as coming to care for the environment challenges the consumerist ideals of capitalism (Shiva, 1988; Connell, 1990; Mander, 2007; Hultman, 2016).

The fact that objects are most often cited as important subjectivity-related elements thus highlight one of the major obstacles to challenging capitalism: consumption. Indeed, we have come to make sense of ourselves through consumption. Environmentally-friendly ideals thus ask us to

reformulate our subjectivities in relation to places and the natural environment rather than through ownership and consumption.

One way to reshape our subjectivities may be through embodied activities which emphasize respect and relationship to nature, such as beekeeping or responsible hunting. It is interesting to note that activities are cited 25 times, only 5 times less than objects, and are thus recognized as being closely intertwined with my participants' subjectivities. Interviewees particularly highlighted how such activities enable them to belong to particular communities, acquire specific knowledge, and show their own skills through potential competitions.

Places are the third most often cited category and are mentioned 15 times in total by 9 of my participants. Among the places mentioned, some particularly stand out. Notably, the gym is cited 4 times, followed by the beach, ECU, church, and nature which are all cited twice. Here again, these places tie back to specific subjectivities: being a man, a student, a Christian, and outdoor person. The gym in particular is a common space through which my participants achieve a sense of pride in their masculinity. Several interviewees mention feeling better about themselves now that they spend more time at the gym. In a like manner, ECU enhances my participants' sense of self-worth by enabling them to belong to an educated, middle-class community. Here, both the gym and ECU enable study participants to work towards getting close to the hegemonic masculine ideal of a white, middle-class, physically fit man.

In addition to these places nature in general, as we discussed last chapter, is perceived as a place to reflect upon one's sense of self, similar to going to church. It is interesting to note that Kevin explicitly makes the connection between the spirituality of surfing in the ocean and going to church. He explains how surfing is an outlet for self-expression, and while being by himself on the water he can feel a deeper spiritual connection with God. Overall then, these places become linked

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to subjectivities because they either positively enhance my participants' perception of their self or because they enable them to reflect on their own subjectivities.

6.2.2. Preferred Everyday Element and Relation to Subjectivity

To further this analysis of my participants' subjectivities in relation to everyday elements, I asked them to choose only one element mentioned in their list that they would keep above the others. Doing so allowed me to identify what element was perceived as most important in order to sustain my interviewees' current subjectivities. Table 17 highlights the different categories which my participants' answer belong to.

Table 17: Free List – Subjectivity Domain: Categories Cited as Most Important					
	People	**Objects**	**Activities**	**Places**	**Concepts**
Total times cited	6	5	3	2	2
Examples	*"Family and friends"*	*"Chemistry glassware"*	*"Mission work"*	*"Gym"*	*"Roman values"*
	"Friends"	*"Grandmother's ring"*	*"Cooking"*	*"Gym"*	*"Academics"*
	"Talking with friends"	*"Movies"*	*"Watching documentaries"*		
	"Small groups"	*"Trees"*			
	"Fellowship, friends"	*"Laptop"*			
	"Dogs"				

It is interesting to see how "People", which was in the previous exercise the least frequently mentioned category (see Table 16), stands out as the most important for my participants. Interactions with people most often brought up concepts such as subjectivity, learning, and sense of belonging. Kevin notably explains: *"[I would keep the] fellowship, the relationship with my*

friends, it is the most important thing in this life, being with people, you grow with them, people you can turn to for anything important". Here the use of the term fellowship as well as the idea of being able to turn to your friends in time of need relates to a certain sense of belonging to a particular community. Through his friends, his fellowship, Kevin feels that he belongs to a group and this gives him a sense of safety. Moreover, both notions of subjectivity and learning are hinted at when Kevin mentions how he grew with his friends. The idea of "growing with someone" refers to the idea of learning together, but also highlights the relational aspect of subjectivities. Indeed, here Kevin acknowledges how through his relationship with his friends he "grew" as a person, meaning that his subjectivity was reshaped through the interaction with others. I thus argue that people are often cited as the most important elements of the subjectivity domain because their impact on reshaping one's subjectivity is more commonly acknowledged, in opposition to other elements such as natural places. Indeed, humans are conceptually characterized as actors while nature, places, and animals are perceived as passive and thus not able to have an impact on humans (Shiva, 1988; Ruddick, 2010; Seaton, 2013; Chew, 2016). As a result, human influence on our subjectivity is acknowledged and cherished, which explains my participants' tendency to highlight these interactions as the most important element of their subjectivity domain.

Even when "Objects" were chosen as most important subjectivity-related elements, they were always personified and often associated with a particular relationship. These items then often came to embody concepts such as sense of self, heritage, and strong bonds to the family. For example, Mike picked his grandmother's ring as his most important subjectivity-related item. He described, "*I would pick my grandmother's ring, she was one of the most stand-alone figure in my family. She taught me a lot of what I know now, she was my moral guide and having a little piece of her is very important to me*". Here the ring symbolizes the relationship between Mike and his deceased

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grandmother. The ring itself thus symbolizes this woman's heritage, and Mike cherishes it as it reminds him of the impact his grandmother had on his life. Here again, what is cherished and remembered appears to be particularly important human interactions through which my participant's subjectivities were reshaped. Mike remembers his grandmother because of her impact on his family and on himself.

Overall, this free listing exercise aimed to gather and analyze what my participants associated with their sense of self. Two main findings emerge from this exercise. First, "Objects and "Activities" are most often identified as important elements of my participants' subjectivities. Activities are actions through which my participants' subjectivities come to be embodied. This experience makes these activities particularly memorable as my participants come to understand themselves through these repeated actions. For example, through practicing fishing regularly one characterizes oneself as a fisher (Nightingale, 2013).

In addition, my interviewees also characterize themselves through the ownership of particular objects. I argue that this can notably be traced back to capitalist ideals which emphasize the need for ownership in order to achieve social status and happiness. In the end, the most valuable elements cited by my participants mostly relate to people who were influential in shaping my participants' subjectivities. These acknowledged affects thus seem to result in more deeply embodied and memorable experiences, which are cherished by my interviewees.

6.2.3. Responses to Threat to Participants' Subjectivities

In order to complete my analysis of my participants' subjectivity domain, I chose to investigate their responses to perceived threats to their current subjectivities. Indeed, environmental protection will require us to change our ways of life, which may be perceived as a threat to

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participants' current subjectivities. Determining how interviewees react to changes in their subjectivities thus enables me to analyze what responses may arise in relation to adjustments needed to protect the environment. To do so, I asked my interviewees how they would feel if they did not have access to any of the elements they cited as part of their domain of subjectivity. This question brought up strong negative emotions. My interviewees notably used expressions such as "*devastated*", "*detrimental for my health*", "*purposeless*", or "*I would just die*". These acute negative emotions show how threats to subjectivity are perceived as deeply personal, emotional, detrimental, and even fatal. If threats to subjectivities were unanimously perceived as distressing, my participants provided two main types of responses to these threats: adaptation or fatalism.

Out of my 18 participants, 14 answered using by proposing mitigation strategies. Here, I use the term adaptation to describe the action of changing one's behaviors in order to reduce the severity or painfulness of a particular situation. Indeed, most interviewees explain that they would have to find something else to do. Some of the adaptation strategies they offer are short-term and rather static, such as doing something else until things go back to the way they were. Such responses show how my participants struggle to imagine living under different conditions. If their subjectivities were threatened, they would preferably wait until they would be able to go back to performing them identically. In opposition to these static adaptation strategies, a few of my interviewees use a more violent terminology when describing their attempt to mitigate these threats. Joe explains how he is "*a survivor*" and would therefore find a way to continue living. Peter claims that he "*would destroy whatever stands in the way (…), I would fight for it even though I am not a fighter*". In these cases, the threat to their sense of self pushes my participants to defend themselves violently. Potential disruptions of the current system are perceived as invaders and enemies who

have to be fought back. Such discourse thus highlights how direct challenges to the current ideal are strongly opposed because they are perceived as threatening the very core of our existences.

Only 5 interviewees responded to these threats with fatalism. Here, I use the word fatalism to describe a form of resignation to the current state of things. Even though they still perceive the situation as negative, the participants who answer with fatalism do not try to mitigate or change the situation. They do not mention the desire to wait for things to come back to normal or to make it happen by force. On the contrary, they seem to resign themselves to continue living in a different, more stressful world. Interestingly, three of the more environmentally engaged participants in my sample adopted a rather fatalistic standpoint. I hypothesize that because of their rather fatalistic viewpoint, these interviewees are more aware of the need to induce change now in order not to have to face these dire situations. Because they focus on the fact that there is no turning back once such circumstances are reached, they may try to act preemptively in order to improve the odds of avoiding these scenarios. Contrarily, participants who were more inclined to try to mitigate threats to subjectivity perceive the situation as still being able to be fixed and thus do not worry about it until it becomes imminent.

Overall, the analysis of my participants' responses to threats to their sense of self allows us to identify more clearly the ways in which they react to change. Because environmental issues fall under such potential threats, we can see how two different attitudes prevail. Participants who preferred adaptation do not perceive such a threat as absolute. In other words, they unconsciously believe that they will be able to either wait out the issues or fight in order to bring back a previous state of things. This viewpoint may be problematic if it leads to avoidance of the issues until it is too late. Somewhat paradoxically, more fatalistic views of subjectivity threats tend to follow a more long-term approach, acting now in order to prevent damage that may not be fixed later.

Understanding these different thought process therefore help us to identify potential obstacles or

motivators for engagement in relation to environmental issues.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

When starting this thesis, I was motivated by the need I felt to understand better the motivations and challenges associated with environmental protection. Over the years, there has been an emphasis in the U.S. on trying to inform people about environmental issues in hope that awareness would lead to environmentally-friendly actions (Norgaard, 2011). It appears however that this reliance on spreading awareness does not suffice. I decided to pursue my research at East Carolina University, a medium-sized university in Greenville, North Carolina, as an attempt to understand how more complex elements such as affect, emotions, and subjectivities come together to shape our relationship with nature and our willingness to protect it. Furthermore, I decided to focus on the experiences of white males at the undergraduate level. Indeed, because of their dominant position in both the scientific and political field, white males have the power to shape our societies and our understanding of the world. Understanding how my participants perceived themselves in relation to both nature and the current capitalist system therefore helped highlight how they can come to care for nature and strive to protect it. I more particularly made several points throughout this case study.

First, one of the goals of this thesis was to understand the different emotions students relate to nature and environmental issues, and how these emotions affect their participation in protecting the environment. I argued that participants not only describe positive (such as hope) and negative (such as helplessness or sadness) emotions when talking about environmental issues, they also predominantly mention apathy or emotional neutrality. Emotional neutrality ties back to the inadequate idea describe by Spinoza: some research participants do not perceive themselves as being in relation with nature, which leads to a lack of acknowledged emotions tied to nature's fate

(Ruddick, 2010). This negatively impacts their engagement, as apathy works towards creating a gap between study participants and environmental issues.

Interestingly, emotions related to environmental issues differ from emotions related to nature. Through a pile sorting exercise, I was able to identify how nature is constructed as a sanctuary for most study participants. This understanding of nature both highlights how natural environments are overwhelmingly associated with positive emotions but are also perceived as spatially and emotionally remote from everyday environments. Indeed, everyday environments such as the university, work, being in a car…etc. are perceived as less comfortable but more relatable as they are places participants interact with daily. Overall, both the emotionally neutral responses to environmental issues and the construction of nature as a remote place disconnected from the everyday work to limit research participants' environmental involvement.

Throughout this study, I thus highlighted how participation in environmentally-friendly behavior is a complex topic that cannot be reduced to lack of education on environmental issues. Through analysis of data collected during interviews with white males undergraduate at East Carolina University, I showed that concepts such as affect, emotions, and subjectivities have a fundamental role to play in understanding environmental participation.

This research also focused on understanding how the masculine subjectivities of the study participants related to nature. Most of the time, participants' subjectivities were related to frequently performed activities, close relationships, or ownership of particular objects. The emphasis of ownership appeared to tie back with capitalist ideals emphasizing the accumulation of capital as a means to measure happiness and social success.

Furthermore, I showed how there is no single masculine subjectivity, but rather various subjectivities that participants take on depending on the context they find themselves in. I argued that interviewees did not embody the stereotype of Southern masculinity, but remained attached to some particular "Southern" values while distancing themselves from others. For example, participants remained attached to the idea of becoming self-sufficient through hunting but perceived themselves as more literate than stereotypical Southern men. In relation to the environment, research participants seemed to frequently enact hegemonic ecomodern masculinities (Hultman, 2013). Ecomodern masculinity more particularly emphasized technological and engineered solutions in order to protect the environment, which in itself also serves as a way to sustain the current capitalist system.

In addition, research participants' attachment to ecomodern masculine values also works to construct environmental issues as problems to be solved through science. Because of this emphasis on environmental issues as a domain of scientific expertise, participants who did not perceive themselves as scientists did not feel responsible for protecting the environment due to their lack of expert knowledge.

Overall, my research contributes to the emerging literature on masculinity and the environment, as well as scholarships such as emotional geography and theories of affect. I support these schools of thought by providing new insights into how white males' engagement and care for the environment is shaped by a variety of influences such as hegemonic masculine ideals (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hultman, 2016), emotions (Norgaard, 2011; Crowley, 2013; Croog, 2016; Ryan, 2016), and active affect (Ruddick, 2010; Seaton, 2013). Through this study, I argue for acknowledging the importance of the subjective, everyday scale in understanding the relationship between masculine subjectivities, emotions, and the environment. My research, as well as the

works cited here, hope to provide a new way to think about our relationship with nature to promote its protection.

In addition, this study enables me to identify several avenues to promote environmental actions in a campus community. First, I argue that in order to promote a more active sense of care for the environment, it is important to emphasize activities through which individuals come to interact with nature in a more relatable manner. Indeed, caring for the environment among my research participants was closely related to the creation of subjectivities in relation to nature. Such subjectivities were created and shaped through embodied, relational experiences such as beekeeping or responsible hunting. In other words, through these outdoor activities, participants came to understand how nature impacted their actions and how they impacted nature in return. I therefore argue that such activities enabled interviewees to become more environmentally-aware and to gather hands-on, relatable, and local knowledge about the natural environments they interact with frequently.

Second, we need to move away from the conceptualization of environmental issues as a domain of scientific expertise. As shown through my research, emphasizing knowledge as the only way to care for the environment has become a major obstacle to participation. More particularly on a college campus, students who are not majoring in scientific fields such as biology, engineering, or geography may apprehend judgment if they try to become more environmentally-engaged, leading to their lack of action. Consequently, it is crucial for future environmental programs at ECU to be presented as open to a diversity of majors. Moreover, student participation to the official sustainable committee could ensure that students' voices and viewpoints are taken into consideration while designing sustainable strategies.

We all live busy lives. Having to think about environmental issues sometimes becomes a burden we try to avoid, and nature fades into the background, overshadowed by our daily needs and obligations. While I was writing this thesis, a family member told me: work hard but do not forget to take the time to stop and smell the roses. I would like to encourage all who may read me to do the same. Indeed, through this thesis, I aimed to highlight that there are ways in which we can become more aware of how we affect nature and nature affects us back. By becoming aware of this simple fact, we may learn to care more deeply for the places we live in, thus leading us to stand up to protect them. In other words, if we take the time to stop and smell roses, maybe we will come to nurture a new sense of care in relation with nature and the world we are a part of.

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APPENDIX A: IRB LETTER

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Camille Kresz
CC:
Beth Bee
Date: 7/11/2017
Re: UMCIRB 17-000380
Emotions, Subjectivity and Sustainable Behaviors

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 7/11/2017 to 7/10/2018. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category #6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Email Script	Recruitment Documents/Scripts
Informed consent form	Consent Forms
Interview Questions.docx	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Thesis Proposal - Camille Kresz	Study Protocol or Grant Application

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANTS

Pseudonym	Major	Important Memories	Organizations enroll(ed) in	Main Element of Subjectivity
Andrew	Supply Chain Management	- Playing sports, sisters and him going to each other's games - Fishing with father	Previously: - Church youth group - Future Farmer of America (FFA)	Military member
Erik	Supply Chain Management	- Playing golf with grandfather - Respectful hunting, learning about birds' behaviors	Previously: - Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corps (JROTC) Currently: - Ducks Unlimited - Fraternity	Responsible hunter
Luke	Biochemistry	- Meeting a veteran who became a father figure and a best friend. Taught him to hunt and keep bees - Staying with his uncle and his German aunt. Realization that women can be opinionated	Previously: - Beekeeping in Fayetteville Currently: - Scuba diving club (father is a Navy Seal) - ECU Beekeeping club	Beekeeper Scuba diver
Matthew	Computer Science	- Getting off the bus after school and walking across the field to go home	Previously: - Robotics club in High School	Gamer

Logan	History/ Education	- Spending time with great aunt with whom he had a mother-son relationship - First car accident, wake-up call, childhood behind him	Previously: - Cub Scouts - Marching band - Jazz band Currently: - ECU's Eco Pirate	Eco Pirate member Ocean lover (associated with his mother's love for the ocean)
Mike	Anthropology	- Going to the Smithsonian museum with his mother	Previously: - Boyscouts Currently: - ECU's Anthropology Student Association	Student Passionate of archeology
Joe	Community Public Health	- Delivered twin calves on Christmas morning, but had to kill the mother	Previously: - Occupational Student of America (medical club) - Future Farmer of America (FFA) Currently: - Thought about joining ECU's fishing club, but did not want to volunteer a boat	Outdoor person From a logging family
Zac	Criminal Studies	- Getting his first guitar when he was 5 - Going to Disneyworld with his parents, cousins, grandparents,	Previously: - Boyscout until 5th grade Currently: - ECU German club - German Honor Society,	Student Movie collector

			uncle and aunts.	Fraternity Delta Phi Alpha	
Peter	Accounting/ German	- Seeing the Hurricanes win the Stanley Cup the day before his 10th birthday. Went with dad and little brother	Previously: - Indian Guys (as part of the YMCA) - NC State Grange (non-profit for rural community service) Currently: - ECU Fraternity Sigma Phi Epsilon (removed from campus) - German club	Hockey fan Future political career
Bruce	Anthropology / Sociology	- Talking with his best friend Daniel, drive out in the middle of nowhere together - Coming out as gay, received threats but made him learn about himself	Previously: - Cubscouts - Orchestra in elementary school - Playing the clarinet in school band (middle school and high school) - Writing club in high school Currently: - Word of Mouth, spoken word, poetry, slam club - Honors College	Poet, writer Gamer
Dustin	Finance	- Running up the hill with his sister to go see their great grandmother	Previously: - Football in high school Currently: - ECU's Financial Management Association	Christian Sport fan Amazon user Student

		- Playing football in high school	- ECU's Resident Advisor (job)	
Kyle		- Going to the lake with family, doing water sports, then hiking and camping	Previously: - 4H, a positive youth development and mentoring organziation - NC State Grange - Electric club - Beekeeping club for six years - Shooting sport's club, competed in State wide competition Currently: - Marines Corps	Marine Christian, going on mission trips
Hector	Computer Science	- Last night with his father before he left for Iraq when he was 8	Previously: - Trivia competition from elementary to high school - Baseball in high school - National Honor Society, community service Currently: - ECU's Eco Pirate	Eco Pirate member Outdoor person
Kevin	Business	- Helping his father fixing his great grandparents' farm - Going to the pool with his mom	- Boyscouts - DECA, an educational organization focusing on leadership and business skills	Surfer Hunter Fisherman

		- Golfing at the beach with grandfather	- Theater in high school Currently: - Founder of ECU's surf club - Internship at a geothermic engineering company	
Robin	Finance	- Getting his 1st dogs for Christmas - Day his sister was born - Learning to ride a dirt bike with his father	Previously: - Baseball team - Lacrosse - Dirt bike small league. His father would bring him	Outdoor person
Oliver	Business	- Going to camp Sea Gull for 10 summers in a row	Previously: - Indian guys with his father at the YMCA - Rugby in high school Currently: - Choir at ECU, was in a choir since middle school. His mother plays the piano and his sister sings - Fraternity Sigma Tau Gamma, help for philanthropy such as special Olympics	Passionate about good food and wine Interest in solar and wind energy
Lucas	Business MIS	- Camping trips - Playing the final of a piano	Previously: - Boyscouts - Running track in middle school	Working out Car lover

		recital when was 15 - Running track and winning competition	- Lacrosse in middle school and high school. League Lacrosse in high school. - Church youth group - Piano Currently: - Fraternity Delta Chi	
Oliver	Political Science/ Communication	- After parents' divorce, his father bought him a slipping slide. Broke his arm on it.	Previously: - Cub scouts - Orchestra in middle school - Theater in high school Currently: - Gay Alliance - ECU Tabletop society - ECU LGBT group - French club	Student Political interest

- **Please put these different pictures into piles, based on your level of comfort in each of these environments. Do not make only one pile or make piles with only one items in them.**
  Give a title to each of your piles

- **Why are these pictures similar in your opinion? Why did you put them together?**

- **You said that this pile represent the most comfortable environment for you. Can you explain to me why?**

- **If this particular environment was endangered, would you feel a need to try to protect it?**

- **Tell me about where you grew up**

- **Tell me about the favorite childhood memory you have and why it is important to you**

- **Were you currently or have you ever been in an association/organization? Can you tell me more about it?**

- **Tell me more about what type of hobbies other guys from your hometown or in your friend group here at ECU practice regularly**

- **Among these pictures, which ones would you consider to be a representation of a U.S. Southern man? Why?**

- **Please tell me about 5 to 7 important objects or activities that you either engage in regularly or that are particularly important to you personally**

- **Can you explain to me why these elements are important to you?**

- **If you could only pick one element to keep, which one would it be? Why?**

- **How would you feel if you were unable to have access to these different elements?**

- **To what degree would you say that you are aware of environmental issues?**

- **How do you learn about environmental issues?**

- **What do your friends think about climate change?**

- **What are some obstacles to learning more about environmental issues?**

- **What motivated you to try to learn more about environmental issues?**

- **How does talking about/hearing about the environment make you feel?**

- **Do you consider yourself to be someone who is concerned about the environment?**

- **Please cite at least 5 ways to be more environmentally friendly that you can think of**

- **Which of these behaviors have your practiced yourself? Why or why not?**

- **Is there anything that would motivate you to do all of these things? What are the obstacles to doing these things?**