

FROM BOX SUPPERS AND CARD GAMES TO VINEYARDS AND VIEWSCAPES:
COMMUNITY DISCOURSE IN THE EXURBAN AMERICAN WEST

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ABSTRACT

Generalizing to the process of creating meaning amid exurbanization, this study considers how residents of Fremont County, Colorado have constructed community meaning as amenity-driven migration has given rise to local social and economic reorganization. I use a nested discourse analysis, first at the single-valley scale of Garden Park and second at the countywide scale, to explore how residents define what it means to live in their dynamic landscape. Results suggest that residents from across “traditional” old-timer/newcomer divides often share meanings of community and that these meanings are layered within discursive interactions that occur above and below the scale of inquiry.

Residents respond to their social and physical environments, their (often contested) construction of them, and act from within multiple discursive understandings. By focusing on a single example – the exurbanization of Fremont County, Colorado – this study explores the face of the exurban community in the American West and suggests that multi-layered local discourse analysis of the dynamics of exurban community interaction might provide insight for future community well-being.