

GREEN AND SINGLE: THE ROLE OF GREEN DISTINCTION AMONG ENVIRONMENTALISTS¹

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Abstract: This paper examines profiles on online dating sites for environmentally aware singles identifying as ‘green single’. The research was motivated by these research questions: What kind of people use these sites to search for a partner? How do green singles earn ‘green distinction’, the markings of a green identity? The main objective of this research is to find out how green singles impress a potential partner on dating sites. The paper discusses recent research influenced by the work of Bourdieu and Maffesoli. It considers a specific group of singles obtained from the quantitative and qualitative analysis of one thousand randomly selected profiles. It investigates self-presentation strategies, characteristic green performances and identity construction among green singles, particularly ‘green cultural codes’ and ‘green scripts’. The paper contributes to the knowledge on symbolic boundaries, social differentiation and collective identity in the environmentalist subculture, discussed as a kind of neo-tribal community.

Key words: online dating; green singles; identity; green distinction; neo-tribe theory.

Introduction

In recent years, interest has increased in research on neo-tribes (Greenacre, Freeman, & Donald, 2013; Hamilton & Hewer, 2010; Johnson & Ambrose, 2006; Le Grand, forthcoming). Maffesoli (1996) conducted the foundational work on neo-tribes, a term he used to describe diverse groups in so-called individualized society. Maffesoli opposes individualization theory (see for e.g. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) and argues against increasing individualization and in favour of the emergence of social groups and networks developed through ‘elective sociality’. Maffesoli’s new tribes represent quasi-communities where identity is formed in constant flux and self-identification plays a crucial role (cf. Bauman, 2005, p. 136). Neo-tribes are based on a symbolic shared space and common interests (e.g. word views, cultural pursuits, fashions, religious representations, intellectual motivations, and political commitments) (Maffesoli, 1996, p. 135). Neo-tribal theory also takes account of processes of exclusion, symbolic boundary formation and social differentiation, and Maffesoli develops a

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theory of habitus similar to that of Bourdieu (1984). However, in Maffesoli's theory habitus is not class determined.

Many authors have attempted to apply Maffesoli's (1996) conceptualization of neo-tribalism to empirical research (e.g. music tastes—Bennett, 1999, youth cohousing—Heath, 2004, alternative food practice—Le Grand, forthcoming). Together these studies provide important insights into specific aspects of subcultural groups in late modern society. They suggest that neo-tribalism provides a much more adequate framework, giving us a better understanding of symbolic boundaries, social differentiation and collective identity in subcultures.

Although “the environmentalism is an important recipient of this contemporary search for new forms of community” (Horton, 2003, p. 66), just a few studies have used neo-tribe theory to examine how environmental movement participants identify with group culture and values (see for e.g. Crowley, 2004). Horton's research draws attention to the performance of identity among environmental activists (Horton, 2003, 2006). He describes how environmental activists make distinctions between their own lifestyles and the lifestyles of others. To better understand the mechanisms behind this distinction, Horton (2003) analyzed distinctive ‘green cultural codes’ and shows how environmental identities are produced and reproduced. Horton highlights the importance of materiality to the performance of environmental identity. He argues that distinctive and distinguished green lifestyles depend on the (non)ownership of certain material objects (Horton, 2003, p. 63).

Although Horton's research provides interesting insights into the environmental identity of Lancaster's ‘neo-tribe’ of green activists, much less is known about how the international environmental movement holds together. Many authors talk about the cohesion of the international environmental movement without taking identity into account (see e.g. Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Rootes, 1999). Environmental identity has generally just featured as an object of research in the context of localized green subcultural groups (e.g. Ruiz-Junco, 2011; Thoyre, 2015); although there have been some empirical studies on the online collective identity of the environmental movement (see Ackland & O'Neil, 2011). However, these are based on digital trace data and have not precisely analyzed how identity is constructed. Research on the subject has mostly been restricted by limited access to data.

No author has previously used data gathered through online dating sites for environmentalists. Although there are dozens of national and international dating sites and tens of thousands of environmentally aware singles (‘green singles’) performing various kinds of ‘green’ identities, the research has not addressed the question of distinction. My previous paper concluded that green singles are looking for someone with the same image as them—someone with the same values and a similar lifestyle (Kala, 2016a). My preliminary assumption is that dating sites provide green singles with a space where they can find temporary ‘identifications’ within the environmentalist neo-tribe (cf. Shields, 1996, p. xii).

The goal of this article is to present information on specific group of singles seeking partners on online dating sites for environmentalists. The purpose of this investigation is to provide a better understanding of distinction in a group of green singles by applying neo-tribe theory. Therefore, the study aims to contribute to identity research on the environmental movement. The main objective of the research was to answer a question similar to Horton's (2003): How do green singles earn ‘green distinction’, the markings of a green identity? The

specific objective of this article is to find out how green singles impress a potential partner on dating sites.

The article is structured into five sections, including an introduction and a section on the basic research context. The third section is concerned with the methodology used for this study. The fourth section presents the main findings, focusing on an analysis of 'green distinction'. The remaining section concludes and discusses the findings in relation to other research.

Research context

There have been numerous studies on online dating (see Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006; Manning, 2014), but none has investigated dating sites for environmentalists. These dating sites can be categorized as subpopulation dating sites with a specific target audience and defined as non-mainstream (Finkel, Eastwick, Karney, Reis, & Sprecher, 2012). For example, the Planet Earth Singles site states that it "was created by environmentalists for Environmentalists." The goal of the site is to help environmentally-inclined people without long-term partners find each other. Their clients include vegetarian singles, vegan singles, raw food singles, yoga singles, Buddhist singles, and earth singles. Although the environmentalist target population is not coherent (it includes conservationists, activists, and voluntary simplifiers' etc.), the clients identify as 'green singles'.

The paper takes its inspiration from different sources. The theory of 'qualitative individualization' provides a useful account of why some people make their identity greener. The identity-forming process, as understood by Melucci, is not just the result of our acquired or inherited traits, but is a product of our conscious actions and the result of our self-awareness (Melucci, 1996, pp. 30-31). I assume that the identity of green singles, based on individually selected pro-environmental values, may be a manifestation of qualitative individualization, as explained by Librová (2010, p. 142) with reference to Simmel's distinction between quantitative and qualitative individuality. The way green singles understand social and ecological risks allows them to redefine their patterns of action and living (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 3) and provides them with an 'autonomy of decision-making' (Lukes, 2006). Green singles are unique in that they reject consumerism and embrace the need to present themselves as people with a special way of life. Their green cultural practices could lead to the creation of a 'submerged network' of the environmental movement (cf. Melucci, 1985) that incorporates the processes of exclusion, the formation of a symbolic boundary and social differentiation (see the neo-tribe definition – Maffesoli, 1996, pp. 76-77).

This paper takes Maffesoli's (1996) conceptualization of neo-tribalism as its general theoretical dimension and interpretive framework. More specifically, the analysis was based on the conceptual framework proposed by Horton (2003), which is a reworking of Bourdieu's concepts of 'distinction' and 'habitus'—a set of somewhat unintentional dispositions organizing everyday practice based mainly on cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 183). Horton's green distinction is not earned through the rational articulation of green perspectives, but through the embodied performance of an appropriate green identity (Horton, 2003, p. 64). Horton's concept of cultural capital takes a form of (sub)cultural

capital tied to knowledge of and distinctions in tastes within the environmentalists' tribal contexts. Horton distinguishes between the 'green codes' (specific behaviors) and 'green scripts' (more settled narratives) which are used by environmentalists to produce and reproduce the internal and external boundaries of the green cultural world² (Horton, 2003, p. 74). By 'the habitus³ of environmental activists', Horton means "the cultural space within which activists' green codes are produced and developed, where those codes become habitual and embodied, and where activists' green scripts are established and sedimented" (Horton, 2003, p. 76).

Research methods

Before the research sample was determined, green dating sites were selected whose clients would be included in the research. Considering that there are several dozen dating sites targeting green singles, it was necessary to seek out those that were assumed to have comparable clientele. Only international dating sites were selected to avoid the sample being skewed by the potentially specific attributes of clients of national dating sites.⁴ Furthermore, I tried to select dating sites that had a large number of clients from which a random sample could be taken. However, the most important criterion for selection was the comparability of the descriptors (age, occupation, religion, etc.) requested of clients and shared on their profiles.

Using the above-described criteria, the following dating sites were selected: Planet Earth Singles, Green-Passions, Ethical Singles, EcoDater, and Green Singles. I retroactively confirmed their comparability by comparing the differences between the profiles of singles on each of the dating sites. For most categories, the differences in average values were not statistically significant.

The sample was selected using a random number generator which selected the profiles of one hundred men and women⁵ without taking into account their country of residence. Two hundred profiles were selected from each of the five dating sites, making a total sample size of one thousand profiles. Where the dating site allowed it, multilevel random samples were taken by first selecting the country and then the profile. Since I was interested in singles that could potentially start a family, I excluded all clients who were older than fifty.

The contents of each selected profile were then coded for quantitative analysis. The following categories were studied: sex, age, sexual orientation, preferred relationship type, ethnicity, religion, political orientation, education, employment, living situation, number

² Horton explains the differences as follows: "The breaking of green cultural codes depletes green capital, but the deviation from green scripts spoils green identity" (see Horton, 2003, p. 68).

³ Some authors have reworked the concept of habitus into an ecological habitus (or eco-habitus) by setting the "ecologically relevant aspects of habitus" (see Haluza-DeLay, 2008, p.207; Kasper, 2009, p. 320).

⁴ National dating sites such as the UK's Natural Friends and Ecologist Dating, Germany's Gleichklang, and France's Amours Bio were excluded.

⁵ It was not possible to search for men and women at the same time, so I cannot say if they were equally represented in the sample, or if one sex predominated.

of children, interest in having children, willingness to move, diet, pets, activism and volunteerism. Partially completed profiles were not excluded from the sample.

This paper follows a mixed-method design, using quantitative indicators⁶ of the sample and qualitative analyses of answers to open-ended questions in which green singles were asked to describe themselves and the partner they were looking for. Considering the research is based on answers to questions that the dating site creators thought up, I was methodologically limited. I essentially limited myself to descriptive statistics accompanied by green singles statements analyses. My approach was methodologically close to thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). I concentrated on analyzing answers in which the green single assigned meaning to features of their lifestyle. Based on the similarities in the accounts, I identified several categories of narratives pointing to the green distinction and the green identity.

Results

Research sample

I took a random sample of 1,000 green single profiles from 58 countries. Based on the observed frequencies, it is possible to gain an approximate idea of who becomes a client of an international green dating site. Most frequently, the clients are residents of the USA (46%), less frequently the UK (16%) and Canada (11%); the average age for men is 35.2 years old and 35 for women. Most are Caucasian (85.1%), and there are some Latin Americans (3.6%) and Asians (2.7%). Heterosexuals dominate (95.8%). Almost half of them have a college education (48.8%). Most clients work in the tertiary sector (63.3%), most often in healthcare, education or non-governmental organizations and a smaller number are self-employed (11.7%). Some of them are still students (11.2%).⁷ Most are not affiliated with any religious denomination, but believe in God (46.4%). Politically speaking, they have more left-leaning views and include liberals (25.5%) and socialists (16.4%).⁸ Most of them live in a single-person household (48.1%) or with roommates (29.7%). A large majority of them do not live with children,⁹ nor do they have children (81.9%). However, a significant number of clients would like to have children (80.2%). As far as relationships are concerned, they are understandably single (99.7%), while 87.9% have always been single, 9.6% are divorced or separated (2.1%).

The clients of green dating sites make up a colorful patchwork of singles with differing motivations and ways of life. Despite this, they are all looking for a partner on the same sites and identify with the general term 'green single'. For the purposes of this investigation I

⁶ Due to the nature of the sample, I could only use descriptive statistics methods. I conducted a frequency analysis of the sample using SPSS.

⁷ The most frequent majors were art, education, and natural science.

⁸ More than half of the clients did not share their political opinions. And of those who did give their political leanings, one fourth was apolitical.

⁹ Only 14.6% of them live in a household which includes children, either in joint custody or permanently.

consider green singles to be a neo-tribe. In the following part, I present the green codes and green scripts which are used by environmentalist to produce and reproduce the boundaries of the environmental movement's cultural world.

Individualization of environmental responsibility

Narratives related to the individualization of environmental responsibility were prominent in the analyzed data and represent scripts important to the identity of green singles. For example *Solei*, a female Buddhist activist, proclaims: "I am very committed to leaving a liveable planet for our children and for all species." The script of individual responsibility plays an important role in green singles activism and way of life. Responsibility is portrayed by green singles as meaning greater autonomy resulting in the depoliticization and individualization of environmental problems (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 139; Maniates, 2001). Self-presenting as being responsible plays a key role in demonstrating membership of a 'green tribe'. The majority of green singles write statements similar to *Ecodivawannabe*'s:

I do what I can to keep my 'carbon' footprint to a minimum. I recycle all that I can, what I can't I either reuse or try not to buy once I know it can't be recycled or reused. I do what I can to keep my piece of 'Mother Earth' clean & green.

It is also clear from many statements that the environmentally responsible lifestyle of green singles is not seen as being problem-free by the mainstream. The green script of environmental responsibility represents the most important boundary as is evident from *Lerochka*'s statement:

Trying to live in the most responsible way appears difficult almost when you're not supported by your family or friends. That's why it seems important for me to find a person who will share my views without saying I'm a fundamentalist or such things. I'm just trying to protect the space I'm living in and my own health in the most simple and natural way (*Lerochka*).

Self-awareness and spirituality

We can observe a greater interest in the self amongst green singles, both physically and spiritually. Their profiles frequently describe their individual paths to self-awareness, self-development, and self-discovery. They believe truly caring for nature is dependent on caring for oneself, on self-discovery. For example, *Lightdiviner* says: "I am indeed most passionate about self-awareness and personal healing. Real and true healing of our planet and people starts with us personally." Their lifestyles often involve practicing Eastern forms of exercise and mediation: yoga, tai-chi, reiki, etc. At the same time, surprisingly, they often distance themselves from fashionable trends that emphasize the physical aspects of exercise, and point out the spiritual aspects of their approach. Green singles emphasize their different cultural capital (stemming from spirituality) which allows them to see the world differently, and behave according to a different set of rules to the mainstream (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 254-5). They also put the spiritual aspect of their lives above other aspects, for example as *Dancingfish* states:

I've been on a more 'mainstream' dating site, but I realized I kept seeing guys with 'agnostic' next to their name and I want someone who I can share my faith with. I'm really feeling the need to put my practice (whether it's yoga, meditation, kirtan¹⁰, or a walk in the woods with a friend) above everything else.

Their spiritual life is a very important green code. However, religiosity does not just play a role in their daily life; it is a path to knowledge, to creating a more authentic and holistic self. They use established religions and spiritual teachings (especially Eastern ones) as a source of information for their individual spiritual development (see de-traditionalization of religiosity in Luckmann, 1967).¹¹

Voluntary simplicity

Narratives about voluntary simplicity, rural exodus and community living are quite frequent among green singles. The desire to be self-sufficient and live simply (preferably in intentional communities) is a major characteristic of the predominant script of green singles as follows from *Beingoflove's* statement: "Settling on land as far away from cities as possible, growing food for my family and community and being as self-sufficient as possible are of top priority." However, for most of them it is just an ideal to be achieved. Some authors point out that the desire is related to the phenomenon of seeking the 'authenticity of the locale', of a milieu that promotes 'self-actualizing behaviour', 'slowness' and even 'simplicity' (Parkins & Craig, 2006, p. 4; Librová, 2008, p. 1115; Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Kala, Galčanová, & Pelikán, 2016b). Some green singles can be included among the 'lifestyle migrants' who escape from the city after they realize that the struggle against global forces ("the evil of capitalism") is unwinnable (Osbaldiston, 2012, p. 11). See for example *HunterGatherer's* statement: "Back in college I realized what a mess this planet is in, and decided to pursue the hunter-gatherer lifeway. I traveled the country, teaching Environmental Education, going to primitive skills gatherings, visiting various intentional communities". Their lifestyle should demonstrate their responsibility as *Popo's* statement shows: "I have always tried to live self-sufficient for my own sake and planet's sake too!" Among green singles, it is possible to observe a transformation from the consumerist stuff lifestyle to a new approach to "the good life" (see Hoey, 2006, p. 351).

Green singles are not just part of the growing eco-consumer industry (see Maniates, 2001). They are usually truly responsible and often dedicated. From the profile statements described above, it is clear that green singles define themselves against consumerism and enjoy new forms of luxury, as described by Enzensberger (1996). Instead of unnecessary material commodities, they concentrate on the essentials: time, attention, space, calmness, nature, and security. It could be said that they live, or that they would like to live, a life of voluntary simplicity, "that is, intentionally, consciously, and meaningfully" (Elgin, 1993, p.

¹⁰ Kirtan is kind of call-and-response style song particularly of spiritual ideas.

¹¹ Affiliation with traditional churches and the practice of traditional faiths are quite rare phenomena. A majority of green singles follow their own spiritual path; 46.4% of them believe in God, but to do not belong to any religion.

24). *Hardcoreactivist's* profile statement explicitly speaks for this: "I live between simplicity and resourcefulness; I don't need to work for anyone other than myself. Life provides so many opportunities to make enough to live luxuriously!"

For all green singles making an alternative living, the support of a community is very important. On one hand it teaches them how to live a self-sufficient way of life, and on the other hand it provides them with an outlet for distributing their surpluses and for filling up on things they lack. Quite often the community is understood in terms of the ecological community, in which the world consists of the relations between all living things: "I am hoping to connect with heart centered people that are inspired to live our lives with less of a foot print and create a more heart centered connection with each other and nature" (*Sunflower*). Even though dreaming about a life in the countryside or in an intentional community are a relatively frequent theme in the profiles of green singles, "only" 7.7% live in some form of intentional community.¹²

Green codes

In my research, I discovered several 'green cultural codes'—communication cues (see also Ellison et al., 2006) and tokens (see also Liu, 2007)—that the studied singles share and which may indicate a certain collective identity. Green singles frequently try to make sure that their lifestyle and all of its manifestations correspond to their way of life. It seems to be crucial to their representation and to making an impression on the right persons. I have observed that green singles seek appropriate nicknames and opening phrases to highlight their identity. I assume that the use of words and phrases such as 'Mother Earth' is semantically empty but that they act as a substitute for linguistic codes.¹³

Material culture is also a significant constitutive component of green identity (see Horton, 2003, p. 63). Many are unwilling to wear fur, leather, or precious stones that have a large ecological footprint. DIY¹⁴ culture and hand-made fashion accessories are popular. Profiles without the client's picture usually include a textual description of the visual identity. "I wear wellies far more than makeup" (*Lilybee*). Vegetarians and vegans in particular emphasize that they do not wear leather, or that their clothing is organic. It would be worth having a separate analysis of the profile photographs to study e.g. the fashions people wear (like colorful clothes, natural adornments etc.). Other shared cultural codes include spending time in the countryside, longing for a life in the country or actually living in the country, specific shopping habits, artistic ambitions, and the absence of televisions and cars. Expressions of ascetic values (i.e. various self-restrictions) and endeavoring to be

¹² Nonetheless, the fact that green singles desire life in a community tells us that they would like to find refuge in a community and that they are looking for a purpose that would give their life meaning. I assume that this tendency to reintegrate can be considered significant. Through communities of like-minded individuals, which Maffesoli (1996) labels *elective affinity groups*, the individual can become a driving force behind profound environmental change.

¹³ A sociolinguistic analysis of the profiles of green singles could produce further interesting findings.

¹⁴ Do it yourself – the activity of decorating, building, modifying, or repairing things at home by oneself without the direct aid of professionals.

independent of the “system” are typical: self-sufficiency, travelling on foot or by bicycle, doing unpaid work.

From the statements of clients on green dating sites, it is evident that they create clear ‘symbolic boundaries’ in order to distinguish themselves from the mainstream, such as for example *Lerochka*: “I strive to extricate myself, spiritually and philosophically, from the mainstream... I’m here to live a life that is diverse and meaningful; to become a complete human being; and to change the world around me in so doing.” Green singles define themselves in opposition to mainstream people, who are described as having no conscience, ignorant, selfish, consumers, etc. In their view, it is necessary to help such people grow, to educate them, and to make them aware. The “environmentalist”/ “consumerist” dichotomy is similar to the classic categorization of “clean”/ “unclean” groups of people (see Bauman, 1990, p. 43-57). Generally, cleanliness is a particularly strong topic for green singles, as *Gentlemayden*’s statement demonstrates: “It hurts me to see all the litter on the sides of our highway. I clean what I can & try to forgive those idiots that don’t know any better.” From this statement there is evidently a sharp boundary between people who do right and people who do wrong. Creating boundaries is part of the process of forming one’s own identity, which at the same time strengthens collective social norms (see Lamont & Molnar, 2002). I suppose that within the group studied, certain cultural repertoires¹⁵ have developed, i.e. shared patterns or means for constructing a symbolic world on which green singles base their arguments. It is interesting to note their emphasis on morality when they define themselves against other groups (see vegetarians and vegans).

Alternative food practice

One of the more notable ways in which the green singles self-present is the way they talk about their diet. In particular, vegetarianism is constantly thematised and sometimes manifested also by choice of nickname (e.g. *Veganlioness*, *Mindful vegan soul* etc.). In the sample, vegetarians (39.2%) and vegans (16.2%) were significantly overrepresented.¹⁶ Only 29% of green singles have a conventional diet. Considering their interest in health and purity of body, it could be expected that the main motivation for refusing to eat meat is health. The reasoning of green singles is, however, surprisingly often based on ethical reasons. It was interesting to find that most clients shared the fact that they were a vegetarian first of all. In accordance with Horton’s conclusion, I would also consider diet to be one of the most important distinctive characteristic of a green identity (Horton, 2003, p. 70). Not eating meat becomes crucial in distinguishing green singles from the mainstream, with clear implications for relationships. To illustrate this is the relatively harsh sounding viewpoint of *LDN*:

I’m also firm opponent to speciesism. I’m tired of being surrounded by people who consciously ignore or pick apart my high ethical standards. I won’t settle to date any more meat-eaters! I’m looking to meet people who share my philosophies and interests.

¹⁵ In this context, Michele Lamont is discussing differences between nationalities.

¹⁶ Research findings on the frequency of vegetarianism in populations understandably vary from culture to culture. For example, 5.2% of the adult population of the USA is supposedly vegetarian (Kalof, Dietz, Stern, & Guagnano, 1999).

Although green singles are alone, they do not lower their values when looking for a partner. In terms of identity, finding someone with the same values is critical, especially for vegetarians and vegans because they use food as a means of differentiating themselves from the mainstream in the same way as the upper class distinguish themselves from the lower class (see also Bourdieu, 1984).

Activism and volunteerism

Activism and volunteerism feature among the most characteristic green performances within the environmentalist neo-tribe. Public engagement in environmental issues is also an important part of the green habitus of the singles. Being an active citizen is the appropriate behaviour, and it works as a 'cultural code' on profiles on online dating sites. According to the claims made by green singles on their profiles, 33.7% are involved in some form of activism. It is not surprising that those most involved are young people up to the age of 26 (43% of this category), and as their age advances the level of their activism decreases. Activism and volunteerism are mostly understood as the outcome of acting in accordance with certain values (green scripts). There are various reasons why green singles are involved in activism. I would say that animal rights and global problems (such as climate change) most commonly motivate them into being activists. The values they hold are reflected in their activism, such as with *Nadie*: "I've been a veggie for eight years and I love being part of demonstrations or of protest against animal cruelty." Some green singles spend most of their time involved in activism. "Since I got involved with activism (campaign for action on climate change), my studies have come second to that" (*Moriarty*). If activism penetrates deeper into people's way of life, it has, in my opinion, great significance for identity.

Concluding remarks

This article summarizes some of the results of mixed methodology research into the profiles of clients of environmental dating sites. The goal of this article was to present a specific group of people who identify as green singles. The purpose of this investigation was to apply neo-tribe theory to provide a better understanding of the process of making distinctions within a group of green singles. The paper has contributed to the extension of knowledge on symbolic boundaries, social differentiation and collective identity in environmentalist subculture.

The article has shown that green singles share the same symbolic space, word views, cultural pursuits, fashions, religious representations, and intellectual motivations. This paper has argued that certain elements of the green singles way of life are manifest in the construction of a green identity. This study has identified some major green scripts, narratives about lifestyle, to which green singles must conform (individual environmental responsibility, self-awareness and a willingness to live simply). This study has also shown that green singles distinguish their lifestyles in opposition to the mainstream. In order to make an impression on the right person they emphasize that they have the same habitus (cf. Horton, 2003). For many of them, it is also crucial to find a partner with similar values, willing to accept their way of life. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this

study is that green singles use 'green cultural codes' to create 'symbolic boundaries' to distinguish them from the mainstream and to identify them as belonging to the environmental neo-tribe. From the statements of clients of green dating sites, it is evident that vegetarianism (or veganism) and activism are some of the more notable ways in which they self-present and are the most characteristic green performances.

When interpreting the results, it is necessary to take into consideration the limits of the research (the questions were designed by the web site creators) and the possibility that the clients may have projected their own image of themselves into their profiles. This analysis provides only a basic insight into this issue and in order to understand the phenomenon of green singles in more detail it would be necessary to conduct a deeper qualitative study based on carefully phrased questions.

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