The Blue Line as the Color Line: A Historical Account of Post-Urban Water Infrastructure, Development, and Social Equity.

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THESIS

In Denver, access to water has contributed to racial and social inequality, making the metropolis the epicenter of some of the most intense and insidious resistance to racial justice and integration.
**Population Denver Metropolitan Area**

*Source: US Census Bureau*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Adams</th>
<th>Arapahoe</th>
<th>Boulder</th>
<th>Denver</th>
<th>Douglas</th>
<th>Jefferson</th>
<th>Metro Denver Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>22,481</td>
<td>32,150</td>
<td>37,438</td>
<td>322,412</td>
<td>3,496</td>
<td>30,725</td>
<td>448,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>40,234</td>
<td>52,125</td>
<td>48,296</td>
<td>415,786</td>
<td>3,507</td>
<td>55,687</td>
<td>615,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>120,296</td>
<td>113,426</td>
<td>74,254</td>
<td>493,887</td>
<td>4,816</td>
<td>127,520</td>
<td>934,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>185,789</td>
<td>162,142</td>
<td>131,889</td>
<td>514,678</td>
<td>8,407</td>
<td>235,368</td>
<td>1,238,273</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>245,944</td>
<td>293,292</td>
<td>189,625</td>
<td>492,694</td>
<td>25,153</td>
<td>371,753</td>
<td>1,618,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>265,038</td>
<td>391,511</td>
<td>225,339</td>
<td>467,610</td>
<td>60,391</td>
<td>438,430</td>
<td>1,848,319</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>348,618</td>
<td>487,967</td>
<td>269,814</td>
<td>554,636</td>
<td>175,766</td>
<td>525,507</td>
<td>2,400,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010*</td>
<td>441,000</td>
<td>566,000</td>
<td>304,000</td>
<td>611,000</td>
<td>289,000</td>
<td>537,000</td>
<td>2,800,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2010 are estimates*

**“IMAGINE A GREAT CITY”**

**DENVER’S ROLE IN UNDERSTANDING THE LEGAL, POLICY, AND HUMAN CHALLENGES POSED BY THE GLOBAL GROWTH OF MEGACITIES.**
“Five years of drought dropped water reserves to new lows and spurred efforts ...that would be independent of the already over-appropriated South Platte River rights...Denver reached the point where...Only a few months supply remained.”

The Moffat Water Tunnel Project: An Achievement in Denver’s Metropolitan Development Program (1936).
Water System of the Denver Water Board circa 1950s

An independent agency of the City and County of Denver.

Supported by user charges and directed by a Board appointed to six-year terms by the Mayor of Denver.

Largest supplier of water in the Metropolitan area.
Proposed Water Development
Arapahoe County Water and Wastewater Authority, Circa 2010
Racial Population
City and County of Denver

- 2000
- 1970
- 1960
- 1950
- 1940

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

American Indian  APA  Latino  Black  White

[Bar chart showing racial population changes from 1940 to 2000 in Denver city and county]
Racial Population
Metropolitan Denver

- American Indian
- APA
- Latino
- Black
- White

1940 to 2000

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
THE RACIAL COLOR LINE
Now

The New York Times: Mapping Every City, Every Block based on 2006-2009 census data
It is the public policy of the State of Colorado to recognize that “a person who owns a tract of land . . . may prefer to have as neighbors persons of the [W]hite, or Caucasian race.”

-Chandler v. Ziegler et al, 291 P. 822 (Colo. 1930)

Racial Segregation Through Residential Concentration . . .
McCulloch, Clayton, Berger and Ashley, Crestmoor, Bonnie Brae, Chaffe Park, Illiff’s University Additions, Regis Heights, and Clingers Gardens all had racially restrictive covenants in 1947.
...And the distribution of water resources and infrastructure throughout the metropolitan area.
Water Conduits and Water Mains size 10” and larger

Source: Preliminary Report, Sites for Low-Cost Housing Projects

Land Use and Valuation Map

Source: Preliminary Report, Sites for Low-Cost Housing Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Usage/Gallons</th>
<th>Inside City</th>
<th>Outside City</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>$1.51</td>
<td>$2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>$2.66</td>
<td>$4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>$5.71</td>
<td>$8.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>$19.96</td>
<td>$31.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>$82.46</td>
<td>$133.04</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Rates for Metered Water Service Inside and Outside Corporate Limits of City and County of Denver, 1952-1958

THE DENVER WATER BOARD “BLUE” AND “BROWN” LINE CIRCA 1950

Source: Urbanized Denver and the Metropolitan Area: A Basis For Our Policy Decision on our Utilities, Major Streets, and Annexation

“Here could lie a potentially great city!”

Memo to Denver Business and Industrial Community (undated)

From Denver Chamber of Commerce

Anti-Defamation League Collection, University of Denver Archives

Box 17, FF 9
THE "BLUE" AND "BROWN" LINES TODAY
The Metropolitan Color Line: Revisited
Conclusion

• A need to pay close attention to the social and human dimensions of water development.

• Color-consciousness, rather than color-blindness in water planning.

• Understanding the relationship between racial segregation and social inequality to existing and emerging water infrastructure.
Resources

• Ben Marsh, et al., Institutionalization of Racial Inequality in Local Political Geographies, 31 Urban Geography 691 (2010)
• Franklin J. James and Christopher B. Gerboth, A Camp Divided: Annexation Battles, the Poundstone Amendment, and their Impact on Metropolitan Denver, 1941-1988, 5 Colo. History 129 (2001)
• Audrey McFarlane, Race, Space, and Place: The Geography of Economic Development, 36 San Diego L. Rev. 295 (1999)