### Contention One: The Exclusion of the Rural

#### Several ongoing conversations are taking place in our debate community regarding social barriers that exist that are shaped by gender, race, class and sexuality. However, these conversations ignore the way that all of these identity issues are structured along geographic lines. Despite the progress that is being made through these conversations we remain strategically silent or willfully ignorant to the question of place. It is ironic since the question of place and space IS the very physical and geographical barrier and force that must be addressed to transport bodies to participate in these conversations in the first place. To debate in rural communities in the west is to choose between spending 5% of the budget to come to a tournament early or face down an 18 hour travel day to join teams in Winston Salem, Northwestern, Georgia State, Texas, Kentucky, or the Coast.

#### Predictably, the focus on the president in the resolution also perpetuates the urban-rural divide. This form of distancing prioritizes the urban at the expense of the rural by focusing away from rural issues, authority, and power relations. Just as this divide should be interrogated in the debate community the question we should ask is “governmental change for who?” If rural societies are ignored, stereotyped and rendered politically powerless, thus, absent from interrogation power relations will remain intact

Walsh 11

(Katherine Cramer, Associate Professor of Political Science Morgridge Center for Public Service Faculty Research Scholar, “A Geography of Power: Rural Perspectives of Political Inequality,” February 8, 2011, http://www.jakebowers.org/MethodsPapers/Walsh-18-02-2011.pdf//wyo-mm)

The rural vs. urban lensstructured rural residents’ ideas about which geographic areas of the state had the ability to force other areas of the state to do something they otherwise would not (i.e., the classic definition of power, Dahl 1961). In addition, their classifications of places around the state as urban or not guided their perceptions of other, less public, faces of power, (Bachrach and Baratz 1963), such as who set the agenda of key institutions in the state, including state government, industry, and higher education. A common way this worked was for people in rural areas to claim that the major decisions in the state were made in the urban areas—primarily the state capital—and emanated outward. They complained that authority flowed out from the urban centers, never in reverse, and was exercised without regard for the concerns, values, or knowledge held by people in rural areas. For example, in a far north central resort community, I met with a group of leaders from the local government and public schools who gathered every morning around a coffee machine in the town hall. On two different visits, the members of this small group made it plain that they believed that the cities in the state held the vast majority of power. They complained that even state employees living in the rural areas of the state had little say in the regulations governing their community. One man, a former employee of the state Department of Natural Resources remarked that he did not have much control over the way in which policies were implemented. He said that things had changed such that now politicians ran government agencies, and had little interest in local needs. “Now the governor appoints all the big shots and they don’t know. Before a guy had to work from the bottom all the way up and then become the head of the DNR. Now they just pick some guy off the street…. A buddy of the governor.” Complaints of powerlessness were not just anti-government or limited government assertions: these rural residents understood their distance from government through an urban vs. rural lens. That is, they perceived that public officials ignored the public, but they understood public officials as urban people, and the public as themselves, or rural people. For example, a group of retired and working women meeting for breakfast in a rural, far northern resort community claimed that both the state legislature and the flagship state university spent little time listening to the concerns of people in the northern half of the state. Theresa: As a former educator, I resented, highly, comments such as there is no education north of Highway XX [a U.S. highway that runs East-West across the middle of the state.] These kids aren’t – and we send them such absolutely excellent and well prepared students there that they – the attitude that the hick area of the state, was painful. Author: So who did you get that from? Recruiters? Theresa: Professors. Author: Really? When they would visit? Theresa: Yeah, or publish in newspaper articles or other you know—and that was a little distressful because I think [the] northern [part of this state] feels a little far away from [the state capital] anyway. And we keep waving our hands and saying, “Yoo hoo, there’s another half of a state up here! Up north is not [the main city in the central part of the state]!” [Laughter and a chorus of “That’s right!” follows.] We might expect that who has a say in politics is understood in terms of haves and have-nots. But in these conversations, people used the metro/nonmetro divide to make sense of to whom policy makers listened, and also to whom candidates listened. Even “the haves” in nonmetro areas used this lens.9 For example, one group of professionals meeting for coffee every morning in a diner in a city in the center of the state remarked that it was unusual for someone from the capital city to go to an outstate community to listen. I think that we are impressed [that you come up here to visit with us]. Because most of us, particularly in a state like [this one] where politicians—none of the national ones come and see us—you know we only have [a few] electoral votes. I mean none of the politicians come to see us at all. We, I don’t think we had a presidential candidate in [this city during the 2008 election]. One way to see how geography mattered for perceptions of whom public officials listened to is to notice how these nonmetro residents assumed that public officials held common negative stereotypes of rural residents, such as “country bumpkins,” rednecks, and uneducated folks (Jarosz and Lawson 2002). Such conversations often contained claims that urbanites did not value rural residents’ common-sense knowledge. For example, one member of the group of men who gathered for coffee in a northern community town hall told a story about researchers constructing a set of elaborate and expensive cribs for fish to spawn around in one of the lakes he regularly fishes on, far off of any highway. I went looking along and they had--there were bass spawning and there was a little peg in the ground with a little red flag with a number on it. I seen these all over the lake. Well they were there one day when I was fishing and I said, “What’s with the red flags?” and [they] said, “Oh we’re trying to determine if bass spawn in the same place every year.” And I said, “Well if you’d have asked anybody who lives up here they could’ve tell ya ‘yes’ and just save yourself a whole bunch of trouble.” [laughs] They don’t want anything to do with ya. They think they’re smarter than ya. Got that book learning. In such conversations, urban vs. rural distinctions served as a spatial map with which people made sense of abstract conceptions such as authority, listening, and knowledge. Considerations of place meant that claims about what authority figures consider valuable knowledge did not stop at who had a formal degree and who did not. Instead, people understood the distribution of formal degrees in spatial, urban/rural terms: people assumed that people with formal education were centered in cities, and people with common sense resided primarily in nonmetro areas.

#### Wyoming comprises one of the thirteen states with a rural majority- these voices are so lacking in numbers and widely dispersed that it makes their voices invisible and disenfranchised. Lack of rural representation allows the continued dominance of the urban majority who makes decisions in the debate community and our government without consideration of and by the rural areas that are dying and without a voice

Bassett 03

(Debra Lyn, Associate Professor of Law at Michigan State University, Arizona State Law Journal, “The Politics of the Rural Vote,” Fall 2003, Lexis//wyo-mm)

Today, only thirteen states have a rural majority: Montana (seventy-six percent rural), Wyoming (seventy percent rural), Idaho (sixty-nine percent rural), Mississippi (sixty-nine percent rural), Vermont (sixty-eight percent rural), South Dakota (sixty-seven percent rural), Maine (sixty percent rural), Alaska (fifty-nine percent rural), West Virginia (fifty-eight percent rural), [\*753] North Dakota (fifty-seven percent rural), Iowa (fifty-six percent rural), Arkansas (fifty-five percent rural), and Kentucky (fifty-two percent rural).n44 Not surprisingly, these rural states, due to their more dispersed, smaller populations, carry fewer electoral votes. The exact disparity, however, is surprising: these thirteen states together represent merely fifty-nine electoral votes - only five more than the electoral votes held by the state of California alone.n45 Thus, although rural dwellers comprise approximately twenty percent of the nation's population, only thirteen percent of the House congressional districts have a majority rural population, and less than eleven percent of the 538 total electoral votesn46 are held by rural majority states. Accordingly, rural dwellers are grossly underrepresented in proportion to their actual numbers. Due to their rural - and thus smaller - populations, these same rural majority states also are apportioned fewer representatives to the House of Representatives: Montana (one representative), Wyoming (one representative), Idaho (two representatives), Mississippi (four representatives), Vermont (one representative), South Dakota (one representative), Maine (two representatives), Alaska (one representative), West Virginia (three representatives), North Dakota (one representative), Iowa (five representatives), Arkansas (four representatives), and Kentucky (six representatives). n47 Thus, these thirteen states together represent only thirty-two of the 435 members of the House of Representatives - which is approximately seven percent. n48 The small numbers and geographical dispersion of rural dwellers serve to render them politically "invisible." Rural people are so widely dispersed that they are politically invisible. They are a demographic and political majority in only ... a handful of congressional districts. Even in states with a numerically large rural population, rural people are often a particularly small demographic minority. California has 2.2 [\*754] million rural people - more than all but seven states - but they constitute less than eight percent of California's population.n49 As a result of their geographical dispersion and political invisibility, rural dwellers have been rendered politically powerless. It's difficult to influence the political system when you are a member of a minority - in this case, the rural minority. As we have democratized the country, we have taken this lack of political clout into consideration for the protection of minorities made up of various ethnic groups and even for women. But no such protection has been contemplated for the rural minority, whose values and traditions are now being voted into oblivion by the larger, urban population... . Laws that now govern the rural culture - which covers 90 percent of the nation's landmass - are, in effect, being dictated by an urban majority that lives in the other 10 percent of the United States, a majority that is often ignorant of the ways of the people whose lives they are controlling. Rural people feel powerless and disenfranchised because they are powerless and disenfranchised.n50 Thus the dispersion of rural dwellers throughout the country, together with their minority status, dilutes their political power and renders them politically invisible. Moreover, rural dwellers lack power and influence not only with respect to their actual numbers and their political representation in terms of congressional representatives and electoral votes, but also with respect to income and political contributions.

#### Ignoring the implications and lived experience of rural dwellers dooms those people and spaces to invisible discrimination

Jerke 11

(Bud W., resident and Fellows of Harvard College, Harvard Journal of Law & Gender, “Queer Ruralism,” Winter 2011, Lexis//wyo-mm)

A growing body of scholarship is examining America's rural-urban divide in the context of legal studies. As a general point, "society's focus, its programs, its culture, and its standards are based on an urban assumption." n9 Likewise, our legal system is considered equally urban-centric. n10 In the U.S., "an unspoken assumption permeates modern scholarship: the impact of laws should be measured exclusively in terms of how the legal system operates in America's cities and suburbs." n11 This urban assumption of American society results in the exclusion and marginalization of those who are not "urban"--America's rural inhabitants who have "disappeared from view." n12 This marginalization manifests in "ruralism," a distinctive form of "discrimination on the basis of factors stemming from living in a rural area." n13 Awareness and acknowledgment of ruralism as a form of discrimination suffers because ruralism "does not look [\*263] like what we [think] discrimination [should] look[] like." n14 Ruralism's effects are not a result of "outright hostility to a particular group," n15 as "most individuals do not overtly express discriminatory animus toward rural dwellers." n16 As such, ruralism is often characterized as merely a set of disadvantages. Ruralism is best cast as a form of structural discrimination. Current literature has not considered this approach, but it is an appropriate framework for describing how American society's various policies, assumptions, and stereotypes have pervasive and systemic--and hence, discriminatory--adverse effects on rural dwellers. Structural discrimination is more fully explored in Part V, as applied to queer ruralism. For now, it suffices to define structural discrimination as: "the policies of dominant race/ethnic/gender institutions and the behavior of the individuals who implement these policies and control these institutions, which are race/ethnic/gender neutral in intent but which have a differential and/or harmful effect on minority race/ethnic/gender groups." n17 The structural discrimination that constitutes ruralism arises from the confluence of an urban-centric focus of policymakers who draft laws tailored to urban ills while eliding rural differences, n18 judicial rhetoric that embraces and constitutes rural stereotypes, n19 and society's popularly embraced perceptions of rurality as embodied in television, literature, and film. n20 The effects of ruralism are numerous. Ruralism works to exacerbate rural poverty. n21 The predominant focus on urban poverty renders rural poverty virtually invisible and lacking the attention that it requires. This may be attributed to stereotypes, as discussed above, that portray rural as ideal and positive or because of spatial isolation and metrocentrism. n22 Ruralism contributes to an educational and employment divide. Economic factors, such as funding disparities, and geographic and cultural isolation, which make it [\*264] difficult to recruit and retain high quality teachers, have created a "'separate but equal' problem: educational facilities are provided to rural children, but the opportunities do not approximate those provided to urban children." n23 Educational disadvantages, coupled with ruralist perceptions that "brilliance is associated with urban, not rural, dwellers" puts these rural inhabitants at a significant disadvantage for post-college employment. n24 Ruralism manifests in the lack of access to various goods and services. n25 These include access to quality and affordable healthcare, n26 housing, n27 and other government and social services, such as welfare, n28 mental health treatment, n29 and substance abuse programs. n30 Disconcertingly, "ruralism serves to exacerbate the impact of other forms of discrimination." n31 This paper explores how ruralism uniquely complicates life for queer rural dwellers. In one sense, it is an extension of earlier work that has examined the particularly acute challenges rural racial minorities face by residing at the intersection of racism and ruralism. n32

#### There are three impacts:

#### First is dehumanization of rural dwellers

Pruitt 11

(Lisa R., University of California, Davis, Selected Works of Lisa Pruitt, “The Geography of the Class Culture Wars,” January 2011, http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1023&context=lisa\_pruitt//wyo-mm)

Williams urges us to learn about life in the Missing Middle,199 but we also need to learn more about life in rural America. The old saying holds that familiarity breeds contempt, but in the case of rural Americans—as with the working class more broadly—a lack of familiarity may be the culprit. We liberal elites—many of us admittedly what David Brooks calls “coastal haute bourgeoisie”—have become so metrocentric that we cannot see our rural counterparts.200 We do not know or will not acknowledge, for example, that some rural Americans hunt to feed their families, not to “eviscerat[e] animals for fun.”201 We cannot or will not see the harsh lived realities of dual-earner families who subsist on $30,000 a year, of middle-aged citizens who plan to retire solely on their Social Security income, or of elderly Americans who already get by that way.202 As Williams so thoroughly documents, we have made these people the butt of our jokes. More recently, we have relegated those in rural America to “nobody” status.

#### Second, is that failure to interrogate the Urban/Rural distinction leaves privilege unquestioned in debate

Bassett 06

(Debra Lyn, Associate Professor of Law at Michigan State University, Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy, “Distancing Rural Poverty,” Spring 2006, Lexis//wyo-mm)

Discrimination against the rural is place-based discrimination, which, similar to gender discrimination, can occur even absent considerations of race or class. Indeed, "our failure to aggressively expose the social construction of place has limited our understanding of class identities [as well as] our appreciation of race, ethnicity, nationality, and gender," n99 and: Given the pervasiveness of the rural/urban opposition and its related significance in the construction of identity, it is remarkable that the explosion of scholarly interest in identity politics has generally failed to address the rural/urban axis. The resulting representation of social distinctions primarily in terms of race, class, and gender thus masks the extent to which these categories are inflected by place identification. For example, social theorists generally fail to acknowledge that a rural woman's experience of gender inequality may be quite different from that of an urban woman, or that racial oppression in the city can take a different form from that in the countryside . . . . [C]ontemporary discussions of the fragmentation and recombination of identities locate this process almost exclusively in the city. n100 Place as a basis for discrimination has received little attention, yet everyday interactions provide numerous examples. Where are you from? Where do you live? These questions, so commonly asked during initial introductions, color our impressions, reactions, and assessments. We respond differently when told [\*22] someone is from the deep South versus the Midwest versus the West Coast. We also respond differently when told someone lives in an area that we recognize as upscale versus an area we recognize as located in a "bad" part of town. Thus, "place" carries with it associations and stereotypes--both positive and negative--which we use to judge, evaluate, and assess others. As is true of most forms of discrimination, ruralism involves the projection of stereotyped attitudes by a more powerful majority group onto a less powerful minority group. "Power, defined as access to resources, enables the group with greatest access to set the rules, frame the discourse, and name and describe those with less power . . . . '[I]t is power . . . that enables one to discriminate.'" n101 Eighty percent of the nation's population lives in metropolitan areas. n102 This urban majority, as a natural matter of group identification, will identify other urban dwellers as an in-group and ascribe positive attributes, values, and characteristics to that which is urban. Correspondingly, because urban dwellers do not identify rural dwellers as their in-group, social identity theory would suggest that they would ascribe more negative attributes, values, and characteristics to that which is rural. And this is precisely the case. Rural identity and rural culture are devalued, if not ignored altogether, while urban identity and urban culture are favored and valued. n103 The "outgroup" status of the rural is also evident from a linguistic standpoint: [W]hile cities may include . . . "city slickers" among their inhabitants, it is linguistically difficult to denigrate urbanites as a group, whereas the opportunities for criticizing the rustic are vast: crackers, rubes, hayseeds, hicks, hillbillies, bumpkins, peasants, rednecks, yokels and white trash. If we turn to the cultural adjectives derived from the two places the difference is even more obvious: "rustic" is predominantly pejorative, while "urbane" is decidedly positive. n104 Our society's bias is decidedly urban. n105 Even in rural areas, our society's [\*23] focus, n106 its programs, n107 and its culture n108 are based on an urban assumption. n109 Similarly, our society's concerns and empathy are aimed at the urban. n110 "Urban bias has become an objective norm, hiding within the language, perceptions, and expectations of the dominant discourse." n111 Additionally, The fact that we must make a point of clearly marking the rural reveals the cultural hierarchies that make place such a politically and personally charged category. As with other dimensions of identity, it is the marked/marginalized group that experiences the distinction more intimately and for whom it becomes a more significant element of identity. In this case, the urban-identified can confidently assume the cultural value of their situation while the rural-identified must struggle to gain recognition. n112 The urban majority tends to perceive neither the urban advantage nor discrimination against the rural. In this manner, urban bias bears some similarities to the more general notion of "privilege" as explored by Professor Stephanie Wildman. Professor Wildman has defined privilege as a "systemic conferral of benefit and advantage," resulting not from merit, but from "affiliation, conscious or not and chosen or not, to the dominant side of a power system." n113 She explains that "[a]ffiliation with the dominant side of the power line is often defined as merit and worthiness. Those characteristics and behaviors most shared by those on the dominant side of the power line often delineate the [\*24] societal norm or standard." n114 As a result, "privilege is not visible to the holder of the privilege; it is merely there, a part of the world, a way of life, simply the way things are." n115 And "[w]hen discrimination in one area of society creates inequality in other areas, that has often been seen as just the way it happens to be, as just facts, not as discrimination." n116 The tendency by the dominant group to view inequality as the result of happenstance rather than discrimination dovetails with the belief in individual responsibility for one's good--or bad--fortunes. Differences in income, jobs, housing, education, and other areas all tend to be ascribed to individual differences in talent and effort, rather than resulting from discrimination or unequal opportunity. Thus, members of ingroups perceive their benefits as justified due to their ability and hard work and view the misfortunes of members of outgroups as justified due to lack of ability and hard work: n117 The beneficiaries of the status quo tend to... conclud[e] that the victims deserve their fate, that they are responsible for it, or that the current situation is part of the intractable, given, or natural order ... The notion that the world is just, and that existing inequalities are deserved or desired, plays a large role in forming preferences and beliefs. All these phenomena have played an enormous part in the history of . . . discrimination. n118

#### Finally—the failure to interrogate urbanist bias magnifies every other oppression—ruralism creates unique forms of oppression that demand interrogation

Bassett 03

[Debra Lyn Bassett, Associate Professor of Law at Michigan State University, IOWA LAW REVIEW, “Ruralism”, Jan. 2003, 88 Iowa L. Rev. 273, p. 276-279 //wyo-tjc]

Ruralism has two equally devastating impacts. First, ruralism exacerbates the impact of discrimination against other protected groupS.240 For example, the cumulative discriminatory impact on individuals who are both female and African-American is well documented.24 ! Similarly, an individual who is female, African-American, and from a rural area faces a third potential basis 242 for discrimination. Second, ruralism itself is a separate and independent basis for discrimination. Perhaps even more dismaying than the actual disadvantages caused by ruralism is the lack of awareness of the prejudice. In this respect, ruralism shares a problem common with other forms of discrimination. Although it is not my intention to directly equate ruralism with racism or sex discrimination,243 the use of limited analogies is appropriate.244 For example, it is telling that although a majority of whites believe racial discrimination no longer exists, a majority of African-Americans find discrimination alive and well. In light of recent psychological studies demonstrating that prejudiced responses are largely unconscious,246 people who claim, and honestly believe, they are not prejudiced often nevertheless harbor unconscious stereotypes and beliefs. These same problems are inherent in ruralism. Outside of a few who specialize in rural studies,248 ruralism as a phenomenon is largely unrecognized. Because urban dwellers are the dominant group, their bias in favor of other urban dwellers-and discrimination against rural dwellers-is unrecognized, unacknowledged, and unexamined. Urban bias has become an objective norm, hiding within the language, perceptions, and expectations of the dominant discourse, When ruralism as a phenomenon is acknowledged to exist, it is discovered in virtually all aspects of living.250

### Contention Two: Bringing the Rural to Debate

#### Imagine a map of the United States—policy debate in the rural west is dying at an extreme rate. In high school debate lack of willing teachers, lack of resources and lack of opportunity is causing the decline of a once vibrant policy debate community in Wyoming.

#### Similarly, at the college level in 2008, the D9 was carved up and chipped into the D1 and D2 because it ‘made sense geographically’ to funnel Arizona and Nevada into the Los Angeles Metropolitan area.

#### The rapid decline in policy debate in rural, western states has been catastrophic. Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Oregon are part of what has been cast off to invisibility and irrelevance in the world of policy debate. Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah are a breath away from the same fate as well.

#### Urbanist bias fundamentally obscures and legitimizes the sacrifice of rural communities for the greater good of their urbanist community. Dealing with such issues is inconvenient and outside the scope of the concern of those who enjoy urban privilege.

#### The discussion about travel equality at Wake Forest last year highlighted the truth of the problem of ruralism. As long as the issue remains invisible to the urban majority than it will remain “someone else problem and responsibility.” Those who are placed in spaces of invisibility and silence will be left with the responsibility for dealing with the implications of that disenfranchisement as well.

#### In response to ruralism in debate, (x) and I affirm that we should interrogate ruralism in the debate community.

#### Using place as the starting point for discussing our social location is critical to determining how we come to understand politics, resource allocation and engenders insight into how geographical distinctions establish our identity

Walsh 11

(Katherine Cramer, Associate Professor of Political Science Morgridge Center for Public Service Faculty Research Scholar, “A Geography of Power: Rural Perspectives of Political Inequality,” February 8, 2011, http://www.jakebowers.org/MethodsPapers/Walsh-18-02-2011.pdf//wyo-mm)

When people attempt to make sense of the political world, what do they draw upon to do so? They use considerations (Zaller 1992) or opinion ingredients (Kinder 1998), such as partisanship (Campbell et al. 1960), values and principles (Feldman and Zaller 1992), and self-interest (Chong et al. 2001). They are guided by their predispositions (Zaller 1992), the frames provided by elite rhetoric (Chong and Druckman 2007), and informal talk in their social networks (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Walsh 2004). In addition, their social identities and their categorizations of people into us and them guide whom they listen to and what considerations they bring to bear when understanding politics (Campbell et al. 1960, chaps 12 and 13; Conover 1988). Our knowledge of these inputs to public opinion has been gained largely through analyzing evaluation, in other words, attempting to predict the political choices people make. We know much less about understanding, or the process by which people arrive at these choices. When we think about the vast array of political information available in the contemporary media context, the job of the ordinary citizen seems daunting indeed. How do they interpret politics in such an overwhelming world? Perhaps they draw inwards, relying upon tools for understanding that are close to home. However, globalization and modern technology lead scholars to expect the opposite. We give little attention to the ways in which people make use of one of the most local tools of understanding of all: place (Agnew 1987). Social science often assumes that distinctions between places are fading and becoming less relevant to social life (Knoke and Henry 1977). But modern life has not erased the importance of place. It may have increased the need for people to draw boundaries, more crisply define their geographic community (Cohen 1985; Bell 1992), and perform those elements of their identity such as speech patterns that run against the grain of globalization (Purnell et. al. 2005). As Agnew eloquently argues, But it is still in places that lives are lived, economic and symbolic interests are defined, information from local and extra-local sources is interpreted and takes on meaning, and political discussions are carried on. (1987, 2-3) People make sense of the world as people in particular places, even when the information they are trying to interpret is from outside their local community. People make physical spaces meaningful as they imbue them with emotion and memories(Low and Altman 1992). The places that people identify with represent the type of people that they are (and are not). Scholars commonly focus on race, gender, social class and partisanship as the social identities that matter for politics. However, place identity is a tool for understanding that people commonly use to make sense of many aspects of life (Boroditsky 2000; Soja and Hooper 1993; Creed and Ching 1997); therefore, we should expect this tool matters for political understanding as well. In particular, we should expect place to matter for political understanding because representation is allocated by geography in the United States. Government resources are allocated largely according to these districts. Therefore, individuals’ perceptions of which places get which resources, and which places have power are likely integral parts of the way they think about the political world. I call these perceptions individuals’ geographies of power.

#### A place-based pedagogy helps to transform the power relations in the community to a more socially just forum- focusing on identities ought to be a precursor to large-scale impacts because our geographic situatedness is the prerequisite to solving large-scale problems

Gruenewald 03

(David, assistant professor of education in the Department of Teaching and Learning, Washington State University, Educational Researcher, “The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place,” 2003, Proquest//wyo-mm)

By promoting a pedagogy for student engagement in community life, place-based educators embrace aims beyond preparing students for market competition. This generalization about place-based education signals both similarity to and difference from critical pedagogy. First, like critical pedagogues, place-based educators advocate for a pedagogy that relates directly to student experience of the world, and that improves the quality of life for people and communities. However, unlike critical pedagogues, not all place-based educators foreground the study of place as political praxis for social transformation. Indeed, Woodhouse and Knapp (2000) call place-based education "a recent trend in the broad field of outdoor education" (p. 1) and locate it as a cousin of environmental education.8 However, recognizing that place-based education can benefit from the socio-cultural perspectives central to critical pedagogy, Woodhouse and Knapp call Haymes' (1995) place-based, urban pedagogy "a much needed complement to more conventional outdoor/environmental curriculum and instruction" (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000, p. 2). Human communities, or places, are politicized, social constructions that often marginalize individuals, groups, as well as ecosystems. If place-based educators seek to connect place with self and community, they must identify and confront the ways that power works through places to limit the possibilities for human and non-human others. Their place-based pedagogy must, in other words, be critical. Compared to critical pedagogy, the rhetoric of place-based education is not nearly so oppositional, "messianic" (Bowers, 2001), or stridently political. However, this does not mean that place-based pedagogy is less devoted to social change than critical pedagogy. Ecological place-based educators, for example, are committed to fostering ecological literacy (Orr, 1992; Smith & Williams, 1999;Thomashow, 1996) in a citizenry capable of acting for ecological sustainability, a goal that ultimately entails monumental changes in lifestyle, politics, and economics (see Huclde & Sterling, 1996). However, some ecological place-based educators have learned that over-politicizing pedagogy can be a strategic mistake: If political perspectives are introduced at the wrong time, for example, they can create anxiety, fear, and hopelessness in learners that makes them less capable of taking socially or ecologically appropriate action. In Beyond Ecophobia, Sobel (1996) warns against the "premature abstraction" often used to address out-of-reach global crises such as exotic species extinction, rainforest destruction, acid rain, and global warming. The idea here is not that educators should avoid the realities of these human-created crises, but that we should pursue pedagogical strategies that honor a learner's developmental readiness for engaging with complex ecological themes. Through analyzing a variety of research and practice in the development of environmental values, Sobel concludes, "what's important is that children have an opportunity to bond with the natural world, to learn to love it, before being asked to heal its wounds" (p. 10).

#### This is particularly important for debate for two reasons—bringing the rural into community discussions ensures that these spaces will not be sacrificed and that rural zones will be included in discussions of resource allocation and distribution.

#### Ensuring debate can flourish in these zones is important because debate is a force that can expose its participants to different ways of thinking and action that solve the magnification of oppression in rural zones

Walsh 11

(Katherine Cramer, Associate Professor of Political Science Morgridge Center for Public Service Faculty Research Scholar, “A Geography of Power: Rural Perspectives of Political Inequality,” February 8, 2011, http://www.jakebowers.org/MethodsPapers/Walsh-18-02-2011.pdf//wyo-mm)

Place is also likely important for understanding politics because it serves as a social identity, another type of categorization that matters for understand. As people classify things, events, and other people, they also assess “What type of person am I?” It is this basic tendency to categorize self and others that has been called the work of social identity (Tajfel 1981) or self-categorization (Turner et al. 1987). Identities with social groups, whether friendship groups or society-wide categories, serve as reference points for social comparison and boundaries of allegiance, help guide notions of appropriate behavior and attitudes, and influence what messages people pay attention to and incorporate into prior beliefs (e.g., Tajfel et al. 1971; Brewer and Miller 1984; Sears and Kinder 1985; Tajfel and Turner 1986). This common way of making sense of the world is no less common in the task of making sense of politics. Decades of research have found that social group identities, or psychological attachments to groups in society, play a central role in the manner in which individuals interpret the political world, influencing political attitudes and behaviors (Campbell et al. 1960, chaps. 12, 13; Conover 1984, 1988; Huddy 2003). One of the reasons that social identification and social categorization have important implications for politics is that these perceptions matter for preferences over the distribution of resources. When people identify with a particular social group, they are more likely to favor other members of that ingroup in the distribution of resources (i.e., the minimal group result, Tajfel et al. 1971). Identifying with a group does not necessarily entail derogating members of ourgroups (Brewer 1999). However, in the realm of public affairs, the distribution of resources is often a zero-sum game. Whom people perceive as deserving has consequences for who is treated as undeserving. Place identity and the rural/urban ingroup/outgroup distinction are likely important for political understanding because these perceptions are important for understanding in general. One of the first questions we use to make sense of new acquaintances is, “Where are you from?” We craft our sense of ourselves and our sense of other people with reference to particular places (Moore 1998). The importance placed on candidates’ biographies suggests we find this information useful for making sense of politicians, too. Another reason geographic categorizations are important for politics stems from the fact that social identities are especially likely to affect political behavior when they are connected to identities about which groups have power and which groups do not (Miller et al. 1981).4 Because power, is allocated according to geographic districts, we should expect place identity to be especially important for political understanding. With respect to rural identity in particular, even though there is contention over how “rural” is defined, studies of rural communities suggest that the term carries a great deal of meaning for people who identify with it (Mellow 2005; Bell 1992).