

UNPACKING FRUIT:
RE-EXAMINING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT AGRICULTURE AND
URBANIZATION IN THE “NEW WEST” —
A CASE STUDY IN JACKSON COUNTY, OREGON

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Unpacking Fruit: Re-Examining Assumptions About Agriculture and Urbanization in the “New West”—A Case Study in Jackson County, Oregon

This case study examines the relationship between agriculture and urbanization in the context of Oregon’s comprehensive land use planning system. The first article assesses the historical relationship between rural real estate development and investment in agriculture in Jackson County southern Oregon. The second article uses the theory of global urbanization to reflect on the patterns of urbanization in Jackson County and suggests that global urbanization might provide a useful framework for connecting urban political ecology and exurban political ecology. The third article focuses on the political economies of farmland preservation in Jackson County where there have been repeated calls for increased local control of land use planning.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the relationship between efforts to preserve "the environment" and the marginalization of local people and traditional life ways is one of the central themes in political ecology (Robbins 2004). Rejection of top down, command and control models of environmental management in favor of "community based" management grew in prominence in the 1990s (Holling and Meffe 1996). These "community based" models of environmental management seek to benefit local people through engagement with community members and actively soliciting participation in decision-making. Yet this model, widely (though certainly not universally) taken up by governments, NGOs, and conservation scientists, has not proved to be a panacea for the problems of balancing the needs of local people, ecological systems, and economic development (Goodwin 1998, Hester 1996, Brenner and Theodore 2002). The complexity of understanding participation in management and the dynamics of communities¹ has been discussed and debated thoroughly in the literature on environmental management (Kellert et al. 2000, Herbert 2005). As McCarthy (2005) points out in relation to community forestry in the U.S., community based management may in fact reflect the adoption of problematic neoliberal forms of management rather than actually providing increased inclusion for marginalized local actors.

1. What exactly is meant when referring to "community" has also been debated. The concept of community as a whole and coherent object has been thoroughly examined and deconstructed. At this point the idea of a single, coherent community is highly suspect and yet is still broadly used within conservation and planning circles to indicate a concern for participation and representation.

This dissertation examines a case study in Jackson County, southern Oregon, where there have been longstanding calls for increased local control of land use regulation. It begins with the assumption that local control of land use does not necessarily result in more socially just or environmentally sustainable management (Brown and Purcell 2005). This case study takes place in the context of Oregon's statewide land use planning system, which has maintained a strong role for state management of land use since it was passed in 1973. This system has been widely praised within the planning community and recognized as effective in limiting sprawling growth (Gosnell 2011). Yet this system has not always been popular within Oregon, particularly in the more rural parts of the state (Walker and Hurley 2011). My research into this case, in line with Brown and Purcell's (2005) call to "critically analyze the complex and dynamic particularities" of each case of rescaling focuses on the following three questions, which form the basis of the three core chapters of this dissertation:

Why is there pressure to rescale land use governance in Oregon?

What is the role of the urban-rural divide in this process?

What are the implications of this localization for land use planning in Oregon?

Each of the following chapters is a stand-alone piece designed to be submitted for publication in a journal. However, to give a better sense of the overall scope of project, what follows in the introduction is a brief review of the literature on scale with a focus on how political ecologists have conceptualized scale in their work.

Then I give a short explanation of the Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving process.

This planning process was the starting point for my case study in Jackson County. The process was complex and lengthy enough that a short review here will provide context for the articles that follow. Finally I give a brief summary of the three articles and some of the ways they fit together.

Scale in Political Ecology

The literature on the concept of scale in human geography is extensive and has been reviewed numerous times (Marston 2000, Brenner 2001, Howitt 2003, Sheppard and McMaster 2004, Neumann 2009, Reed and Bruyneel 2010). My intention here is not to repeat these efforts but to briefly touch on a few key points of these debates in order to frame the current study and my assumptions about the role of scale in the politics of land use. In particular, my focus here is on how political ecologists have conceptualized scale in their work.

Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) in their foundational research described a method for understanding environmental degradation that relied on what they called "a chain of explanation." In this approach, research began with an examination of a degradation event on the landscape and then worked outwards from this event, beginning with the actions of land managers and then their relationships with "broader" political and economic forces on the regional, national, or global level (see Figure 1).

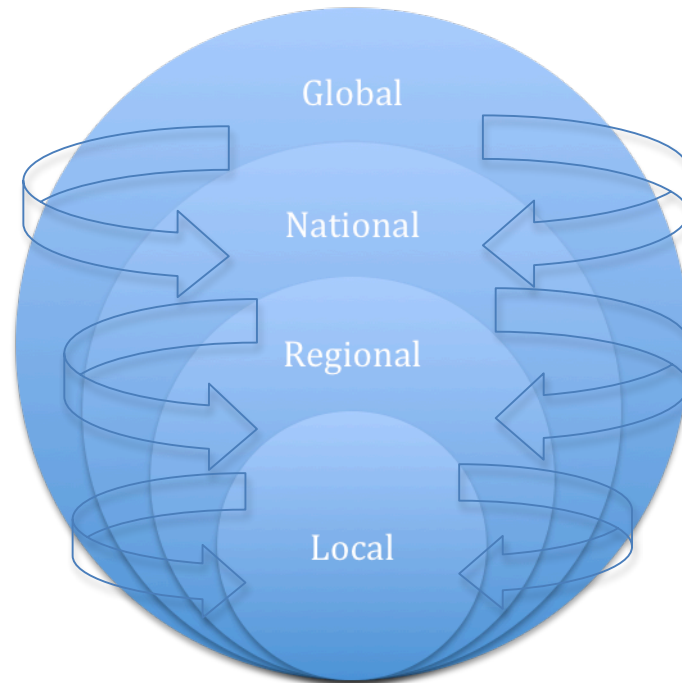


Figure 1: Nested Scales

This methodology, while not without current relevance, has been challenged by several developments in human geography -- primarily the increasing dominance of concepts of the social construction, both in relation to the categories of environmental degradation and the concept of scale itself. So today, the question of what constitutes an environmental problem and who defines these problems remains an open one. Additionally, human geographers have largely come to agreement that scale itself is socially constructed. The categories commonly used to describe various scales or levels at which political action takes place are themselves constructed through political and cultural processes. In political geography there is a significant literature on the politics of scale that examines how political actors at various levels of government engaging in "scale jumping" in order to gain an advantage in a particular political struggle.

Marston, Johns, and Woodward (2005) suggest that the entire concept of scale in human geography should be abandoned in favor of what they call flat ontologies. The intention of Marston's intervention is to open up spaces for political intervention and to demystify the power of the global in our explanations. She calls for attention to the particular sites where action takes place rather than relying on the somewhat mystifying concept of "global" forces. In Marston's terms, efforts to localize land use decision-making in Oregon are not about scale or rescaling, but rather about the particular site of political power. Will people in Salem or Portland make decisions about land use in Jackson County, or will decision-making be centered in the county itself?

While I am sympathetic to Marston's intervention, the concept of scale continues to have epistemological significance if not ontological purchase. That is, scalar terminology and scalar thinking continue to dominate political debates and be used in common parlances. Additionally, while Marston et al. (2005) seek to disempower the hierarchical nature of scalar thinking and refocus the emphasis on "globalization" onto particular sites of power and influence, I remain skeptical of efforts that a priori reject all forms of hierarchy. Levels of government are hierarchical in their territorializations. That is, national governments make laws for a larger territory, which encompasses state and local governments. While these forms of hierarchy are socially constructed and contingent, they also have histories and geography and significant grounding in material realities (Sayre 2005).

Sayre (2005) suggests that attention to the ways that ecologists handle scale may assist social scientists in conceptualizing scale. In this case there are multiple

scalar moments, some to do with scales of governance and others to do with ecological and mapping scales. Additionally there are the levels at which I chose to study the problem. I began with a focus on regional problem solving in the Bear Creek Valley, part of Jackson County. The Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving process constituted a new scale for land use governance in the area that involved not only the county government, but also local municipalities within the most highly populated part of the county. Methodologically my focus was on the development of this new regional governmental process, but understanding developments at this level also required understanding the factors operating at levels "above" and "below." To understand the formation of this regional process therefore, I examined the discourses circulating among actors involved in state level governance and the processes impacting landowners at the level of the individual household.

This case illustrates the utility of Sayre's separation of scale into grain and extent. Sayre claims these two aspects of scale, as used by ecologists, could be usefully applied by critical human geographers to better understand how scale functions. As Sayre points out, particular ecological effects are only visible when studied at the appropriate scale. Oregon's planning system has a distinct extent, but the impact of global markets for agricultural products only act at the granular level of individual farm households. So rather than a nest of scales in which global forces act upon national or state levels, imposing forces downwards, in this case it is the actions of individual land owners in response to global markets which produce the pressure "upwards" onto the mid-level scale of the state.

The Origins of Bear Creek RPS

I began my examination of scale in relation to environmental management through a case study examining the Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving (RPS) process, which was taking place in Jackson County, southern Oregon. There are several aspects of this case that make it both typical and unique, providing a lens for the examination of broad issues around the governance of land use. Oregon's comprehensive land use planning provides a unique context to study top-down environmental regulation. The system, enacted with the passage of SB 100 in 1973, provides a rare example of state-level control of land use governance in the U.S. Oregon's comprehensive planning has been widely hailed as one of the most successful systems for regulating sprawl and shaping urban growth in the U.S., perhaps the world. However, the system has been plagued by problematic efforts to overturn it since its passage. These have been fueled by claims of unfairness, particularly by many rural landowners. Like McCarthy's study of the (2002) Wise Use movement, private property activists and rural land owners in Oregon oppose a top down imposition of strict environmental regulations by far away government.

The Bear Creek RPS process began through two different planning processes, which took place in Jackson County during the 1990s. One, a grassroots effort started by a group of local citizens concerned about continuing rapid growth, and a sprawling pattern of development despite statewide planning regulations. This process began with early morning meetings at coffee shops and trips around the

valley to observe and discuss how growth was changing the region, and evolved into a process called Our Region. From 1995 to 2000 planners from the Rogue Valley Council of Governments worked with about 75 local citizens from a wide variety of backgrounds to create a regional plan for growth in the Bear Creek Valley, the location of 7 of the 11 incorporated cities in the county², where most population growth was taking place. This process resulted in a report with recommendations for how growth should take place over 50 years.

Around the same time that the Our Region process was coalescing in the early 1990s, a new set of administrative rules was put into place that required all cities over a certain size in Oregon to designate "urban reserves." Urban reserves were created to work somewhat like an urban growth boundary, but to further organize and rationalize growth. In Oregon urban growth boundaries are a required element of cities' comprehensive plans. They hold enough buildable land for 20 years of growth. Urban reserves extend the temporal element of planning for growth by establishing areas outside the urban growth boundary for growth over 10-30 years beyond that timeframe. In 1992, the City of Medford was required to create set of urban reserves. Over the next three years the city and county were unable to come to an agreement over a location for these reserves. This process was highly contentious and the disagreement between the county and city caused a lot of mistrust and frustration over being required to work together. The urban reserves statute was later modified to make the process optional rather than required.

However, the process was often cited in my interviews as prompting local

2. The cities included in this area are Medford, Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Central Point, Jacksonville, and Eagle Point.

governments to seek more productive ways to work together. In 1998 the city of Medford and the county board of commissioners set up the Multijurisdictional Committee on Urban Reserves in order to work out a plan for urban reserves for Medford. The cities of Phoenix, Jacksonville, Central Point, Eagle Point decided to also participate and create urban reserves. In 1999 the Department of Land Conservation and Development suggested that this process might reasonably be considered a regional problem solving process and invited the participants to apply for that status, which gave state grant funding to help support the process.

The Oregon Legislature created the regional problem solving statute in 1996 to allow for the resolution of difficult land use disputes through a collaborative planning process. The process requires that all affected local governments and state agencies must be allowed to participate. And in exchange, the resulting plan is permitted to vary from state administrative rules, although it should still comply with the spirit of the statewide land use goals. This rule was designed to provide a tool for regional planning which would allow local governments some flexibility, and respond to repeated complaints that statewide regulations don't fit well with local conditions. The requirement to plan regionally and achieve consensus among participating local governments has proved difficult, and prior to the Bear Creek RPS process only one regional problem solving process had been carried through to completion and it was significantly more limited in scope (Nabeta 2013).

Article Summaries

The first article in this dissertation is titled "Old West Versus New West: Exurban Sprawl and High Value Agriculture, Competing or Compatible Capitalisms."

This piece examines the history of land use in Jackson County, particularly the relationship between the development of fruit growing and real estate development. In it I argue that the political economy and culture of orchard fruit growing was essentially compatible with marketing of a rural lifestyle to wealthy and middle class urban and suburban migrants to the region. Fruit growing requires significant inputs of capital and an investment of 7-10 years before trees start to bear commercially, so new fruit growers had to have a source of significant startup funding. Once land was planted with mature fruit trees, that investment was reflected in the land price and there was significant speculation and parcelization. A number of wealthy investors, after growing tired of playing the gentleman farmer, decided instead to subdivide their properties and market them as orchard homes to middle class retirees and others looking for a rural lifestyle. This process was also facilitated by a small but ever growing tourism industry centered around outdoor recreation and health promotion.

This article contributes to the literature on the political ecology of exurbia by examining the growth of an exurban pattern of development in relation to a form of resource based industry that is significantly different in its political economy than ranching or mining, discussion of which has dominated much of literature. It also contributes to the overall focus of the dissertation by setting up the historical patterns of land use, economy, and politics that made up the environmental governance regime in place when Oregon's land use planning system was put into place in the 1970s. This historical governance regime favored parcelization and a rural/exurban pattern of sprawl. In turn, the appeal of the region to exurban

migrants and their desire to purchase rural land gave fruit growers an easy source of capital during less profitable years for purchase of technological improvements or the replanting of aging orchards. This historical background on the culture and political economy of the region sets the stage for the two other articles, which focus on recent debates over land use in the region and largely center around the existing and ideal relationship between urban and rural space.

The second article argues that Lefebvre's theorization of global urbanization is helpful for understanding conflict around urban-rural interface conflicts. In it I argue that as urban society takes hold across the globe, there is a tendency to see increasing nostalgia for real and mythological forms of rural life. Exurbanites and others seeking rural living mistakenly attempt to escape the alienation of their lives under capitalist urbanization through migration to rural space. In turn, as rural economies become increasingly subsumed and subordinated to urban domination, the image of rurality becomes increasingly commodified. I use examples from my case study in Jackson County to support this argument.

This article calls for increased engagement between political ecologists working on urban and rural issues and outlines the continuing importance of existing and ongoing research on rural and exurban issues. Rather than erasing rurality, global urbanization theorizes the continuing reemergence of the image of rurality within an increasingly chaotic fabric of urban society.

The third article examines the debate around farmland conservation in Jackson County with a focus on the role of local farmers and agricultural experts. In this article I argue that farmers' frustrations with statewide farmland conservation

policy are not simply motivated by an ideological commitment to private property rights, but rather that the particularities of local physical geographies and the political economies of farming and real estate development in Jackson County have contributed to widespread feelings that current policies are insufficient in their efforts to support a vibrant agricultural industry in the region.

This article contributes to the literature in political ecology on the role of scale in conservation policy. In particular, it starts from the assumption that local or community based natural resource management does not necessarily result in more just or sustainable outcomes (Purcell and Brown 2005). Purcell and Brown rather suggest that political ecologists should set to work "critically analyzing the complex and dynamic particularities of each situation." In the Oregon case there is significant evidence that statewide land use planning has been at least somewhat effective in controlling growth and protecting farmland from development (Gosnell et al. 2011) So this article is not suggesting that increasing local control of land use planning in Oregon would result in more just and sustainable solutions. Rather, it is worth closely examining the role of farmers in supporting opposition to statewide planning because farmers have significant symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986) in the political debates over the future of rural land in Oregon. As Walker and Hurley (2011) state "the fortunes of Oregon's farmers and the fortunes of Oregon's planning system have always gone together. Policies that help farmers to stay in business may be essential to maintaining political support for the state's planning system." Farming in Jackson County is undergoing significant restructuring and the

strains of this transformation, as the fortunes of some farmers rise while others decline, are often expressed through dissatisfaction with the land use system.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

This chapter describes the methods used in developing my case study in Jackson County. The case began with reports by state employees and members of the planning community of a troublesome land use planning process taking place. The case study progressed in an inductive manner from that basic start, adding methods as issues came to light. The planning process in question was the Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving process. However, understanding the dynamics of that process involved an expansion of the case to include the history of land use and planning in Jackson County and situating the Bear Creek RPS within the ongoing dynamics of Oregon's statewide planning system.

The methods I chose for building this case study were shaped by my critical realist outlook towards how to study environmental change and the social and physical processes that create that change. My assumption is that how we define physical changes in the landscape as problems is shaped by cultural systems, though "external reality is not collapsible to the cognitive or social domain of creator or reader" (Galt 2011).

Interviews

The study began with interviews with key informants involved in land use planning in Jackson County, focusing on the Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving Process. The first interviewees were selected because of their prominent roles in the RPS process. I then began a snowball sampling method, using multiple informants as

starting points. My intention was to understand the dynamics of the RPS process and any conflicts over the creation of a plan for growth management in the region. In addition to snowball sampling, I made an effort to interview people in a variety of positions related to the planning process itself including staff planners for the cities and county, elected officials, and representatives of various state agencies who were involved in representing the interests of the State of Oregon. I also attempted to make sure that my interviews included people living in the various different cities and in rural parts of the county.

In conducting my initial round of interviews I rapidly found there were two dominant discourses around the emerging regional plan. Supporters of the plan emphasized the amount of work having gone into the plan, the way the process had been constructed to be fair and accomplish the goals, how it had been a long tough process, but ultimately worthwhile. People with a stronger concern for farmland conservation and connections to local watchdog land use groups including 1000 Friends of Oregon said they felt excluded from the process and concerns about both the fairness of the process and the outcome which they felt was allocating too much land for urban growth. Some of these concerns were addressed as the process progressed which ultimately led watchdog groups not to challenge the final plan.

As my interviews progressed, I began to feel that further interviews with those heavily involved with the planning process would yield little additional information. So I made an effort to recruit interviewees who were only peripherally involved or seemed to have been involved at some point and were no longer active. I did this by reviewing the written records including lists of who had been involved in

various committees and groups and written comments by citizens that had been entered into the official records. I then consulted with several key informants (long time residents who were active in local politics) who gave me additional information into individuals' backgrounds and interests. I began to interview several people who were not directly involved in the Bear Creek RPS, but were experienced observers of local politics and long time residents in order to better understand the context and long term dynamics of the situation.

I also focused on obtaining interviews with farmers and agricultural experts such as extension agents as the project progressed. By the time I became an observer of the RPS process very few farmers were actively involved except a few whose lands were still under debate for inclusion in future growth areas. I worked to get interviews with as many of the members of the Resource Lands Review Committee (RLRC) as I could. This was the committee made up of farmers and agricultural experts who designated which lands under consideration for future growth should be designated as part of the "commercial agricultural base." I also interviewed a number of farmers, particularly pear and grape growers, who had been less directly involved in the Bear Creek RPS about the farm economy, their attitudes towards land use planning, and issues facing farmers in the region.

In the end I interviewed 52 people in the region on a variety of issues relating to land use planning. I created a set of interview questions, which I used during the process, but the interviews were largely open ended and unstructured. Since my goal was to allow themes and issues to emerge from interviewees during the interview I asked a few broad questions about their involvement in land use

planning and politics in the region and allowed the discussions to emerge from there. The exact questions covered during the interviews also varied significantly as the project progressed and I was pursuing interviews with particular people to following on issues others had raised. I also asked all my interviewees a few basic questions about their backgrounds, profession, length of time lived in Jackson County, and reason for moving to the area. This allowed me to get a sense of who were longtime residents and who were relative newcomers to the region.

The idea of a cultural or political clash between newcomers and local residents is long time theme in political ecology research on land use issues in the American West (Walker and Fortmann 2003). However, in my interviews I found that only a very few people involved in land use debates in the region were born in the region or had long term family ties to it. Many had lived in the region for 10-20 years or more, but there seemed to be no clear split in attitudes or politics in relation to length of residence or family ties.

All my interviews were done on the condition of confidentiality. Some interviewees noted that they had expressed their views on land use and local politics publicly many times before but others commented that they had lost friendships and business associations over these dynamics. In general I believe the promise of confidentiality allowed interviewees to speak freely about the contentious politics in the region.

I made audio recordings of all my interviews along with written notes. I reviewed my notes and the recordings during the analysis process, but did not fully transcribe all the recordings. This partial transcription process was aided by my use

of a Livescribe pen, which allowed me to play back portions of the audio recording associated with particular sections of my written notes. As the research process developed I found that certain themes were emerging and so I focused on transcribing portions of my interviews relating directly to those themes.

Observation of the Political Process

From 2009 to 2012 I attended a number of committee meetings, city council meetings, county commissioners meetings, and other hearings. Attending meetings allowed me to observe the process and particularly hear testimony from the public. Observing meetings and reviewing the testimony submitting to the official record were the main ways I was able to understand how the general public viewed land use planning. The Bear Creek RPS process took 12 years and very few people in Jackson County followed the process in the long term. While there were numerous announcements in the local papers of hearings and mailings to landowners who were potentially impacted by the proposed plan, most people in the region did not follow land use planning or this specific process. The local paper, the Medford Mail Tribune, regularly published articles and letters to the editor relating to the process, but the lengthy nature of the process ensured that only the most dedicated observers were able to follow it. In addition, although the committee meetings were open to the public, most meetings took place early on a weekday morning, making it difficult for anyone working regular hours to attend. By and large most attendants were paid staff or elected officials along with consultants for developers and landowners.

In addition to observing meetings in person I was able to obtain audio recordings of about 30 meetings of the Resource Lands Review Committee that took place between 2000 and 2005. This amounted to about 50-60 hours of audio recordings. I listened to these recordings to supplement my interviews with RLRC members.

Analysis of Written Documentation

In order to better understand the dynamics of land use politics in Jackson County I collected and analyzed a number of written documents. The Bear Creek RPS process produced a plan and supplemental documentation of several thousand pages. In addition, the OUR REGION report provided an interesting contrast since that also included a proposed regional plan. I also collected newspaper articles and letters to the editor from local newspapers. I used discourse analysis to identify themes in these written documents and relate what I was hearing in my interviews to the written record.

Archival Research

Several of the key points of contention that emerged during my observation of the planning process related to the history of land use and agriculture in the region. This led me to investigate several archives in an effort to understand how the region's growth and development going back to the original settlement of the region around 1850. This involved visits to special collections in the Knight Library at University of Oregon and the Research Library of the Southern Oregon Historical Society. I also searched the Southern Oregon Digital Archives created and hosted by

the Hannon Library at Southern Oregon University and Historic Oregon Newspapers, a searchable digital database, at the University of Oregon. The Sunset Bibliography, created and hosted by the Stanford University Libraries, was also instrumental to my research. This is a searchable online index of articles in Sunset Magazine going back to 1898. Sunset was created by the Southern Pacific Railroad to promote the western U.S. to tourists. Jackson County's location on a rail line and near Crater Lake National Park was a key element in the development of the region and this was reflected in the many Sunset articles on the region published in the early 20th century.

Maps, Geographic Information Systems, and Quantitative Data

In order to understand the claims being made in the current political processes it was important to understand as much as possible the current mix of land uses, historical land use, and land ownership in Jackson County. My approach to using GIS might best be described as exploratory data analysis or grounded visualization. Knigge and Cope (2006), reflecting recent work in critical GIS, outline a method for combining qualitative and quantitative data through recursive analysis in which the researcher examines GIS data through an iterative and reflexive process in relation to qualitative data. This process enriches both sources of data by allowing the researcher to explore emerging themes and search for potential relationships.

I obtained GIS data layers from a number of sources, primarily from the Jackson County GIS Department, but also from the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon Geospatial Data Clearinghouse. In addition, I was able to

obtain a number of historical maps from the University of Oregon Map Library, which I georeferenced, matching historical landmarks with the same features on current satellite data. This allowed me to analyze historical patterns of growth and development and compare current and historical patterns of sprawl and parcelization. Of particular use was data on the location of various soil types, land ownership, tax rates, zoning, and assessor's analysis of housing types.

Quantitative data on the historical development of Jackson County is limited. I used current and historical census data to supplement my archival research. I obtained the historical census data from the Historical Census Browser hosted by the University of Virginia Library. This allowed me to analyze the number and type of farmers during different censuses and the growth in urban and rural population in the region over time.

Conclusion

In developing my case study I chose to use a variety of methods and data sources. No one source of data is without its weaknesses and combining various data sources enriches our understanding of not only the case, but also the data sources themselves. In this case, my goal was to examine all these sources of data critically, with an eye for the ways that all data are socially constructed.

CHAPTER IV

OLD WEST VERSUS NEW WEST, EXURBAN SPRAWL AND HIGH VALUE AGRICULTURE: COMPETING OR COMPATIBLE CAPITALISMS?

Introduction

In 1973 the first land use laws were enacted and my dad was furious. He was so unhappy about it. It was just that someone was going to be telling him what to do with his property. This property has been in the family since 1902 and they were the ones who were making decisions about it. He did have a brother who built a small subdivision on his property, so I don't know if my dad had visions of that. Because he liked doing that a lot better than farming and in his diary he talks about how he divided his farm up amongst his children and he went to Medford and started building commercial buildings. That was more lucrative and more what he liked to do. That was the main thing. Just taking away some rights they felt they had.³ - *Small fruit grower, discussing her father's attitudes towards the passage of Oregon's statewide land use planning system. Interview, 2012.*

The passage of Oregon's statewide land use planning system in 1973 provides an intriguing context for the study of land use change. This regulatory system strongly limits real estate development outside urban growth boundaries. Although one of the primary goals of the planning system has been to limit the conversion of agricultural land to urban and residential uses, from the start, Oregon's farmers were divided in their attitudes toward it. Since its passage, there has been ongoing resistance and resentment across much of rural Oregon toward the imposition of regulations viewed as enacted by urban outsiders. This case study reveals some of the roots of this discontent in southern Oregon. It provides a

3. Interview with small fruit grower.

nuanced picture of the complex intertwining of farming and real estate development in Jackson County, and uncovers how early growth of the agricultural sector in the region was fueled by real estate speculation, tourism, and the arrival of urban to rural migrants with access to external capital. In this case, Old West economies (extractive industries such as mining, timber, and agriculture), rather than conflicting with New West economies (consumptive industries such as tourism and real estate development), provided capital and labor for their growth. The passage of statewide land use regulation represented a major shift in the environmental management regime of the region and a disruption of the ability of rural landowners to engage in both New and Old West economies.

This article examines the current and historical relationship between agriculture and exurban real estate development in the American West through analysis of a case study in the Rogue Valley, southern Oregon. In the popular press as well as the academic literature, political conflicts over resource management are often assumed to materialize as a result of cultural and ideological differences between newly arrived "amenity" migrants and long time residents of rural areas. The Old West and New West represent a shorthand way to refer to what are assumed to be separate and distinct economies involving two groups of people with disconnected cultures and political orientations: the "Old West" economy, based on the extraction of commodities from the vast lands of the West and the "New West" economy, based on consumption of these landscapes through tourism and recreation. This framing relies on a clear distinction between the two groups of people and the two economies. Resource economies and amenity-based rural-

residential economies are often expected to conflict, yet there has been little focused examination of the relationship between these two forms of rural capitalism. The article begins with a brief review of the literature on the New West and Old West, paying attention to how individuals and groups have been framed in relation to migration, land management, and political economies. I then provide an overview of the study area and regional context before examining the historical development of agriculture and exurban style development in Jackson County.

Literature Review

New West and Old West Economies

The rise of the New West as a set of economic, political, and cultural transformations coherently distinct from the Old West has been debated for at least two decades. Historians have long pointed to the continuities of the West in contrast to characterizations, which emphasize recent changes (Limerick 1987, Taylor 2004, Hyde 1998). Robbins et al. (2009) point out that the idea of a distinctly New West may not hold up under careful scrutiny. This chapter argues that if we look carefully into the history of the American West, it is possible to see, in some places, the existence of characteristics associated with the New West long before its widespread emergence as an increasingly dominant force on the Western landscape. From the first decades of the 20th century, as Jackson County grew, exurban style real estate development and tourism developed alongside the Old West economies, timber and agriculture, that dominated economic growth in the region. Rapid growth in rural population and residential housing industry during this period were

linked to expansion of the orchard fruit growing industry. The passage of comprehensive land use planning in the 1970s, curtailing rural real estate development in the region, represented a distinct shift in the existing environmental management regime that had been relatively stable for a number of decades.

Much of the prior research on exurbanization and amenity migration focuses on the people involved and their characteristics as a group distinct from long time rural residents. A number of studies have pointed to the differing cultural and environmental values that recent urban to rural migrants have brought to the exurban west (Hines 2010, Smith and Krannich, 2009). Exurban settlement and urban-to-rural migration have been associated with a shift in values around land management from productive to consumptive views of the landscape. In this line of reasoning, conflicts associated with the arrival of new urban to rural migrants are at least partly triggered by the differences in values between newcomers and locals. The commonly accepted narrative is that urban migrants bring with them new values resulting in acrimonious conflicts over land use and environmental regulation (Haggerty and Travis 2006, Jones et al. 2003, Travis 2007). Whereas long time residents view the landscape as a resource, a working environment, new migrants value the aesthetics of the landscape, the picturesque rivers, mountains, forests, and bucolic Old West towns.

Yet research findings on these supposed differences have been inconsistent (Nelson 2002, Smith and Krannich 2009). Assuming that new arrivals and locals consistently represent different groups culturally, politically, or economically often relies on assumptions about who long time locals are. Nelson (2002) suggests that

negative attitudes towards change have less to do with long term resident versus newcomer status than with economic status. Low-income residents report higher levels of anxiety about changes, perhaps because of lack of economic resources and support services. And while it is easy to imagine that cultural differences lead to disagreements over land management, a cause and effect relationship cannot be assumed. It might equally be argued that economic conflicts and outcomes result in the adoption of conflicting cultural identities (Robbins et al. 2009). Indeed, the ideals of the Old West: beauty, freedom, wide open spaces, and caring communities that have attracted so many "amenity" migrants in recent decades, may represent a fiction that draws in long time residents as well, making them nostalgic for a past that never existed (Hyde 1998 and Limerick 1987).

In order to avoid some of the conceptual confusion around whether new arrivals represent a distinctive group with new values, this chapter focuses on the economics of the Old and New Wests and competing rural capitalisms, rather than questions of clashing cultures or ideologies. Walker rightly pointed to the relationship between these two economies, rather than focusing his analysis on a clash of cultures: "The literature of the 'New West' that frames the resulting conflicts as clashes of cultures or ideologies misses the point that these conflicts reflect underlying tensions between competing capitalisms that commodify nature in incompatible ways" (Walker 2003). Yet a careful review of the various industries associated with the New West and the Old West reveals varying levels of incompatibility and complementary. Robbins et al. (2009) take an open approach to understanding the relationships between various forms of rural capitalism asking,

"what is the relationship between extractive development and amenity economies and how smoothly can they be combined?" A broader examination of the relationships between resource-based industries and amenity economies in different times and places might reveal a complex dynamic in which compatibility is contingent on a number of human and environmental factors. While there is no doubt that the rural West has experienced significant economic and demographic change in the last fifty years, as rural restructuring has led to a decline of Old West industries in many locations, the emphasis on amenity economies as a new phenomenon in the region and resource economies as "traditional" obscures the complex and shifting relationships between these two forms of rural capitalism.

Amenity Migration and Rural Economies

The growing body of literature on amenity migration and exurbanization emphasizes the arrival of urban migrants in previously rural areas and the political, economic, and ecological impacts of their relocation. Amenity migration and exurbanization are often linked, yet each is also used to describe a broad range of migration and settlement processes and patterns. The focus in the literature has, so far, been on the amenity migrant as a driver of economic and social change.

Abrams et al. (2012, 270) define amenity migration as "the movement of largely affluent urban or suburban populations to rural areas for specific lifestyle amenities, such as natural scenery, proximity to outdoor recreation, cultural richness, or a sense of rurality." According to this definition then, there are several defining characteristics of this migrant group: they are at least in general, affluent; they formerly resided in urban or suburban areas; and they enjoy of the visual

aspects of the landscape along with recreational experiences it can provide. What is less often mentioned, but worth noting because of the racial politics motivating their movement, is that virtually all these migrants are white.⁴

While there is archival evidence that indicates that the influx of urban to rural migrants to southern Oregon during the early 20th century fits the definition of amenity migration as people who value and are motivated by natural amenities and who migrate into rural areas with considerable economic resources, it is impossible to measure the attitudes of this historical group directly. My focus, rather, is on the role taken by boosters and real estate developers who were equally fevered in their attempts to sell land as capitalist investment and to promote an idealized rural lifestyle.

There is good reason to assume that migrants came to the valley both to make money by growing fruit and to enjoy the many amenities promoted to them by developers. Vaught (1999, 53), in discussing the horticultural boom in California during this period, argues that orchardists in particular had a different attitude towards the relationship between the city and the countryside than other rural industrialists. "Horticulture was a way of life and a business...A specialty crop community, they firmly believed, was a virtuous place somewhere between the isolated and self-sufficient Jeffersonian rural order and the market-dominated, impersonal industrial city. It was a place where educated, land-owning families live on small, orderly, and prosperous orchards or vineyards in close proximity to one

4. While amenity migration, like suburbanization produces spaces that are ideologically constructed as white, regions experiencing amenity migration are also associated with growing Latino populations (Nelson and Nelson 2010).

another. It thus fostered neighborliness, strong local social, cultural, and political institutions, and economic progress, all in an environment that was esthetically pleasing as well." Mechling (1999, 136) describes a similar early promotion strategy in Florida and Southern California, where developers and promoters marketed orange growing specifically to wealthy urban and suburban businessmen who would be interested in country clubs, tennis-courts, and golf courses.

Gosnell et al. (2009) note in their review of the literature on amenity migration that while British scholars have studied urban-to-rural migration in the U.K. since the early 19th century, U.S. scholars only began studying the phenomenon in the 1970s and have focused on occurrences of this pattern since the 1950s. This study in contrast, examines urban to rural migration and the role of "rural idyll" in the development of industrial agriculture in the early 20th century. By looking back at the history of amenity land uses in the American West, we can better understand the complexity of the relationship between what have been conceptualized as two separate and competing economies – rural resource based industries, and service-based industries focused around urban to rural migration and tourism.

The term "exurbanite" is sometimes used interchangeably with amenity migrant. However recent literature often centers on exurbia as a place or exurbanization as a process (Cadieux and Hurley 2009). Exurbia is also associated with rural gentrification, as in Spector's (1955) original characterizations of exurbanites as wealthy urbanites who move to the country but retain their cultural, economic, and political connections to their urban roots. But exactly who is an exurbanite and where exurbia is located remains somewhat unclear. Exurban

settlement is generally placed outside the outer suburban zone and is characterized by low-density settlement, sometimes defined as one household every 2 to 20 acres (Theobald 2001). This pattern has also sometimes referred to as rural sprawl, in contrast to urban sprawl, because it is characterized by a low density, often in which these residences are intermixed with "rural" land uses such as farming, ranching, and logging (Theobald 2003). However the term exurban has been used to describe a wide range of conditions in which people with few economic ties to rural economies settle outside of cities. In some schemas counties are classified as exurban if they are within metropolitan areas but most of their population lives at rural densities (Berube, Katz, and Lang 2006). Yet efforts to use particular landscape metrics to define exurbia are only of limited utility since none of these metrics are able to capture the diversity of exurbanization processes. While amenity migrants are often associated with exurbanization, amenity migrants may live in areas officially categorized as urban, rural, or anywhere in-between.⁵

Methods/Study Area

Research Methodology

The data for this article were collected largely from local historical archives and includes primary documents from the period such as local newspapers, promotional materials printed by local business leaders, early Sunset magazines, promotional and cadastral maps, and oral histories. My research into the history of the region was framed within the context of a broader examination of contemporary

5. Around Medford, amenity migrants commonly live within the city limits, as well as in small towns, and intermixed into rural areas.

land use management that involved interviews with 52 key informants, along with review of thousands of pages of planning documents, and observation of more than a dozen public hearings. Interviews with landowners and farmers, in particular, provided insights into the shifting political economies of agriculture in the region.

Study Area and Contemporary Context

Jackson County, southern Oregon (see Figure 2), is a predominately mountainous, forested landscape. Agriculture in the region is concentrated in several valleys of the tributaries of the Rogue River, the largest of which is the

Rogue Valley. The topography of the county developed as a result of the complex interactions of mountain building and weathering by glaciers and rivers. To the south, lies the Klamath National Forest and Oregon Caves National Monument, to the east the Cascades and Crater Lake National Park, to the west and north the Siskiyou



Figure 2: Jackson County

Mountains and the Rogue River Siskiyou

National Forest. Land in Jackson county is about 80% forested, with the Rogue Valley itself measuring about 10-15 miles across east to west and about 25 miles north to south. When the first Europeans settled in the valley, agriculture and forestry largely served the booming gold mining economy, but over time, these industries replaced mining as the primary economic drivers of the region.

Unlike the vast Central Valley of California, or even the smaller Willamette Valley farther north in Oregon, only a small portion of the county consists of rich loam soils. Agriculture in the county is also limited by water availability, microclimate, and soil type. Much of the Rogue Valley consists of gentle slopes and mixes of heavy clay, beds of rock, and gravel. The complex topography of the region allows unpredictable spring frosts and hail storms to damage crops in one field while those a mile or two down the road remain untouched. The dry Mediterranean climate means that access to irrigation water is a key-limiting factor in the development of agriculture.

The vast majority of the population of the county, over 200,000, lives within the agriculturally productive valley. The Interstate-5 corridor, the primary north-south transportation corridor between Oregon and California, also runs through this valley. Medford, the largest city, serves as the hub of the service economy of a vast rural region stretching over much of Northern California and Southern Oregon, primarily focused around retail and healthcare. Today, these regional services, along with tourism, have largely eclipsed forestry and agriculture as economic forces. A proportionally large percentage of the population consists of retirees, many of whom have moved to the region upon retiring. The Ashland Shakespeare Festival and the Britt Music Festival, along with a variety of outdoor recreational activities including hiking, skiing, rafting the Rogue River, and fly fishing, draw tens of thousands of tourists to the region each year.

Up until World War II, the population of Jackson County followed a boom-bust pattern with rapid growth in some decades and little to no growth in others

(see figure 3). Growth from 1900 to 1940 consisted of an even mixture of people in rural areas and town centers. During the war, an army-training base, Camp White, trained more than 40,000 soldiers at a time. The infrastructure of Camp White supported a post-war boom in the timber industry and rapid population growth in the region. In the post 1945-era, urban population growth in the region began outstripping rural growth. In 1973, Oregon passed Senate Bill 100, which set up a system of statewide

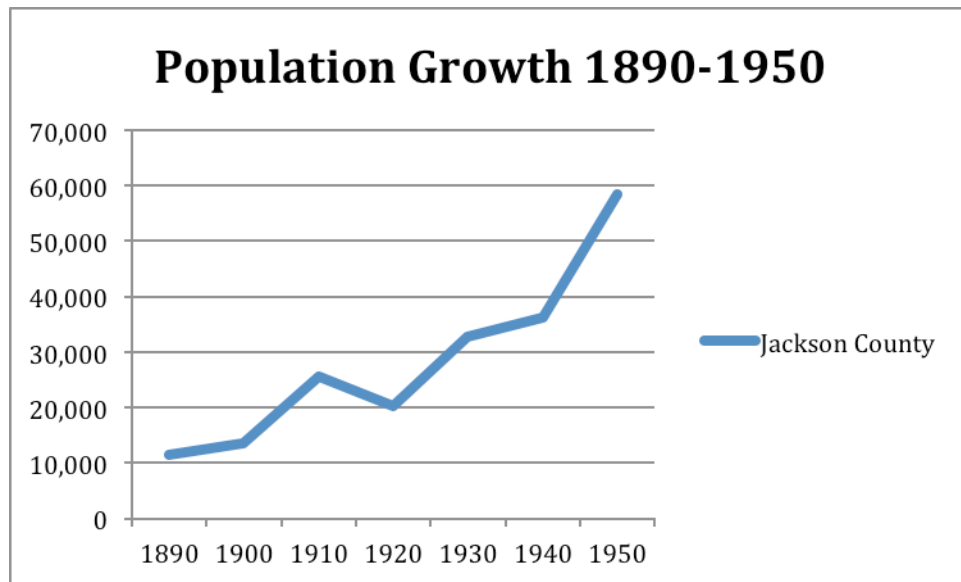


Figure 3: Population growth in Jackson County, U.S. Census

regulations designed to limit development on "high value farm and forest land". It took 10 years, however, for Jackson County to create and put into place a comprehensive plan that met statewide goals and the 1970s marked a peak in population growth rate in the valley.

Since comprehensive planning was implemented through a countywide plan in the early 1980s, rural population growth in the valley has been limited, while its towns and cities have continued their rapid growth (see figure 4). Despite careful planning over the last thirty years, the valley floor today remains a mix of commercial agriculture and large areas of residential development outside of cities at both suburban and exurban densities.⁶

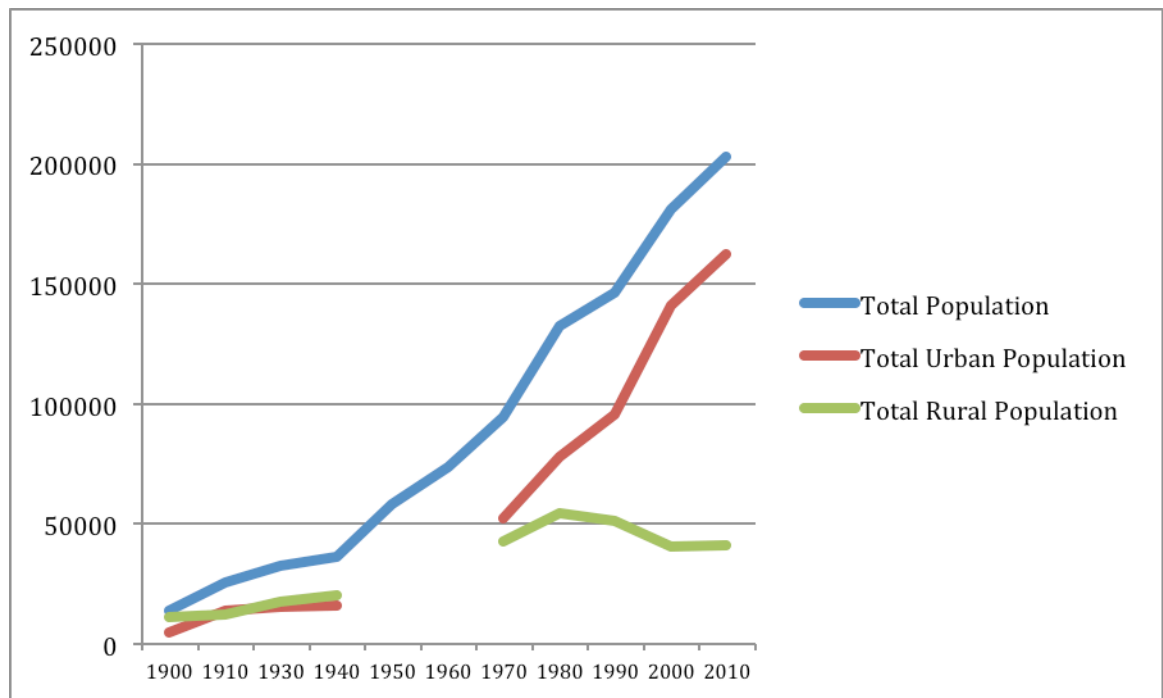


Figure 4: Jackson County population growth since 1900. Note the decline in rural population after 1980 when the enforcement of comprehensive planning began due to limits on the creation of new housing in rural areas and annexation of rural zones near cities into urban growth boundaries. Source: U.S. Census.

6. Suburban densities are commonly single family homes on 1/4 to 1/2 acre while exurban settlement is often one home per 1 acre to 20 acres.

Case Study

The arrival of the railroad and creation of an orchard industry

A boom and bust economy has dominated Jackson County since Europeans first settled it in the 1850s. A gold rush began in the region only a few years after gold was discovered in California. What marked these early years was a willingness by settlers to make use of this new territory in whatever ways would net them a hefty income. Many arrived with the intention of making their fortunes mining, but quickly realized that a profit could also be made in supplying goods and services to the growing camps and towns. The first white farmers in the region claimed the valley bottomlands where soils were rich and there was access to stream water. Markets for agricultural products in the isolated valley were limited to supplying fresh fruits and vegetables to nearby mining camps and growing wheat, which could be shipped over long distances. Farming was limited by labor shortages, lack of irrigation, and the isolated location of the valley, far from urban markets. Wheat growing also had the advantage of being relatively mechanized, which allowed farmers to make relatively large land claims. According to the 1880 census, average farm size in Jackson County was 332 acres.

Thirty years after the first land claims were made in Jackson County, the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s set in motion a major social and ecological transformation in the county, transforming it from its frontier state. A rail line connecting the Rogue Valley to Portland facilitated transport of both commodities and migrants into and out of the region. The recent invention of the refrigerated rail

car allowed the transportation of perishable goods to major urban markets across the country, opening the region to new forms of investment and settlement.

The 1890s, and the newly completed Siskiyou rail line connecting Jackson County to Sacramento opened the valley to the Transcontinental Rail Line and markets in the eastern U.S. Farmers discovered that tree fruit could be profitably grown and shipped to cities in the east, and the arrival of thousands of rail passengers, many of whom eventually became new residents. The first small shipments of apples and pears left the region for California in early 1888, just a few weeks after the line between Oregon and California was complete.⁷ The success of the first fruit shipments along with a widespread depression in global wheat prices led to rapid growth in orchards in the region. Growth in the fruit industry prompted massive land speculation in the first decades of the 20th century and the rapid parcelization of agricultural lands in the valley. By 1940, average farm size was 112 acres, somewhat smaller than the most recent averages according to the 2007 Agriculture Census. This transformation of the landscape and the regional economy could not have taken place without a massive influx of outside capital and migrants into the region.

Capital and Labor for Fruit

In contrast to wheat farming, the growing of tree fruits is capital and labor intensive. Orchard trees take 8-10 years to come into full harvest and cannot be grown from seed. In order to grow well, fruiting tops must be grafted onto vigorous rootstocks. Then the trees must be nurtured and pruned during the intervening

7. Oregon Sentinel Jan 5 1888: pg 1.

years. For these fruits to be marketed in major urban centers thousands of miles away, the delicate fruit must be carefully packaged and shipped. Fruit growing favored those who had sufficient capital to pay not only for land, but also for seedling trees, irrigation equipment, and a packinghouse. Fruit farmers also had to have some other source of income that would support them during the decade that they were waiting for their trees to produce.

Fruit farming also required much larger numbers of labor hours per acre than wheat production. Because the need for labor in farming is highly seasonal, in order to be successful a farmer needed labor to be available at the right times. As the fruit industry grew, so too did its need for labor, leading to an urgent need to attract additional workers to the region.

The early decades of the 20th century in the Rogue Valley are described by local historians as the "Orchard Boom." The period was characterized by rapid growth in both population and in the fruit industry. Cheap land and the prospect of a stable, long-term investment drew many easterners to invest in the Rogue Valley. The demographic characteristics of these easterners were in many ways similar to those of urban to rural migrants today. In some cases growers were wealthy investors from Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, or Chicago, looking for a summer home where they could also play at being a gentlemen farmer. Other new arrivals included older professionals looking for a rural lifestyle and young college graduates supported by income from family members in urban centers in the east.

Early 20th Century Real Estate Speculation and Tourism

As noted, the arrival of the railroad in the Rogue Valley created a market for fruit from the Rogue Valley but it also greatly increased the number of visitors to the area, opened up the region to its first wave of tourism, and encouraged population growth in the region. The Southern Pacific railroad conducted widespread promotion of rail vacations and settlement in the West during this period. Thousands of people passed through the region by train every year while traveling between Portland and Sacramento. Many local leaders and businessmen were eager to promote the region for tourism.⁸

The establishment of Crater Lake National Park in 1902 first put the region on the tourist map. During the earliest years of the park, the road up to the lake was slow and rough, limiting the number of visitors.⁹ The trip from Medford was 83 miles and took about 10 hours by car¹⁰ in 1910. In 1912, the Park Service estimated 5770 tourists visited the park¹¹. But over the decade, as travel and facilities improved, visitation rose to more than 16,000 by 1919.¹² Picturesque evergreen forests and mountain streams also surrounded the valley, perfect for hunting and trout fishing. Klamath National Forest to the south, the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest to the West, and Umpqua National Forest to the North were all established

8. Medford Tribune, Aug. 6, 1911: pg 1.

9. Arant estimated the number of visitors to Crater Lake in 1905 was between 1200-1400.

10. Medford Tribune, Aug. 6, 1911: pg 1.

11. Special Population Report; Crater National Forest Special Population Report 1913; Rogue River National Forest Historical Records Collection : A-6

12. Visitation and Concessions in Crater Lake NP: 1916-present.

between 1907 and 1908. Early magazine and newspaper articles frequently featured locals and visitors enjoying the fresh air, hiking, skiing, hunting, and fishing (See figure 5).

Many boosters also had their eyes on promoting the health giving properties of the region's many mineral springs. Ashland, at the southern end of the valley, promoted a European style health spa based around the health-giving properties of the sulfurous waters of Lilitha Springs.¹³ In 1903 a promotional piece in a Portland paper reported that Ashland already hosted an extra 1000 visitors over the summer looking to take the waters,¹⁴ a significant

number for a town whose population was only 2,634 in 1900. The city government passed a bond for the development of the springs into a full resort. Although the

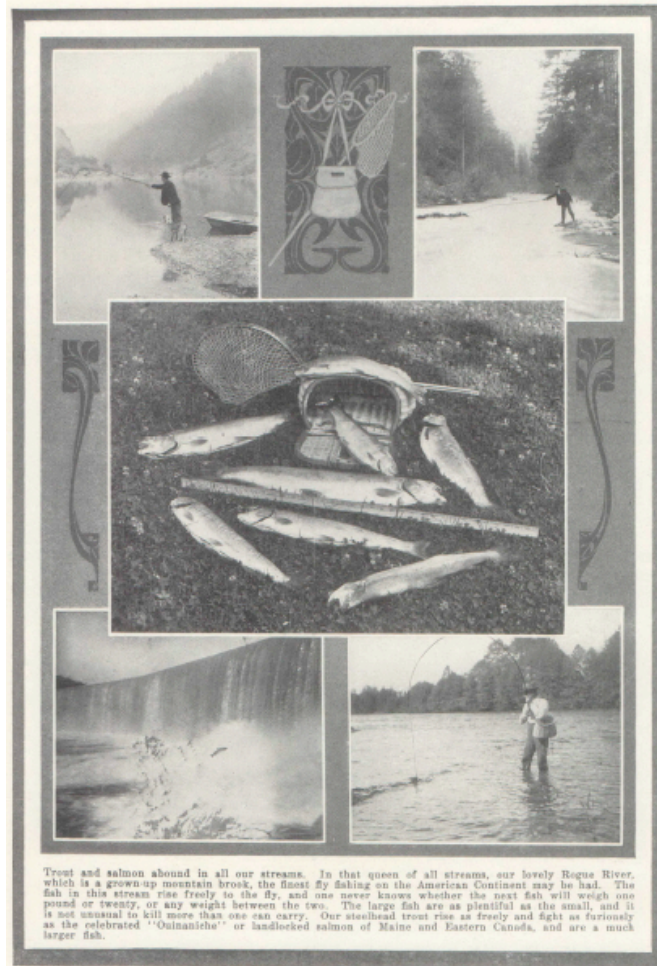


Figure 5: A 1909 promotional brochure including prominent advertising of the many opportunities for recreation in the Rogue Valley.

13. "Building a City on Health." Holt, Emerson. February 1915. *Sunset Magazine*, Vol. 34:2, pp. 356, 358.

14. *The Morning Oregonian*, April 4, 2003.

plan was never realized because of political wrangling and mismanagement, the city did build a large park around the springs and began hosting summer theatre productions.¹⁵

It wasn't until the 1960s that the early city leaders' vision of a tourism-based economy began to reach fruition. However the process was one of slow growth in the tourist sector over many years rather than a sudden transformation to a tourist centered economy in the post WWII era.

While revenue from tourism was certainly a small portion of the overall economy, visitors and promotional materials had a large impact on the growing farm sector. Many who happened to stop in Medford on their train trip, later decided to buy land in the region. Others were directly attracted by reports of opportunities for profitable farming and a pastoral lifestyle in national newspapers and Sunset magazine. New arrivals included settlers with horticultural experience and expertise, while many others were urban businessmen, professionals, and recent college graduates with no agricultural background.

Selling the Dream of the Gentleman Farmer

Promotional materials and activities in the Rogue Valley weren't limited to promoting tourism and recreation; such amenities were just a part of the genteel rural lifestyle offered to potential settlers by boosters and developers. The Medford Commercial Club, a local booster organization, built an exhibition at the Medford rail station showing the bounty of the valley, both promoting fruit from the Rogue Valley

15. The summer Chautauqua productions eventually led to the development of the now famous Oregon Shakespeare Festival, that runs practically year round in Ashland and attracts approximately almost 90,000 visitors a year (Oregon Shakespeare Festival, State and Local Economic Impact – 2012).

to tourists and promoting the region as a pastoral paradise for homebuyers (see figure 6). Sunset magazine, owned by Southern Pacific, also promoted the valley through multipage inserts. In these publications, the beauty of the valley, its pleasant climate, and many natural and cultural amenities prominently featured along with the supposed ease of successful fruit growing. The promotion of the

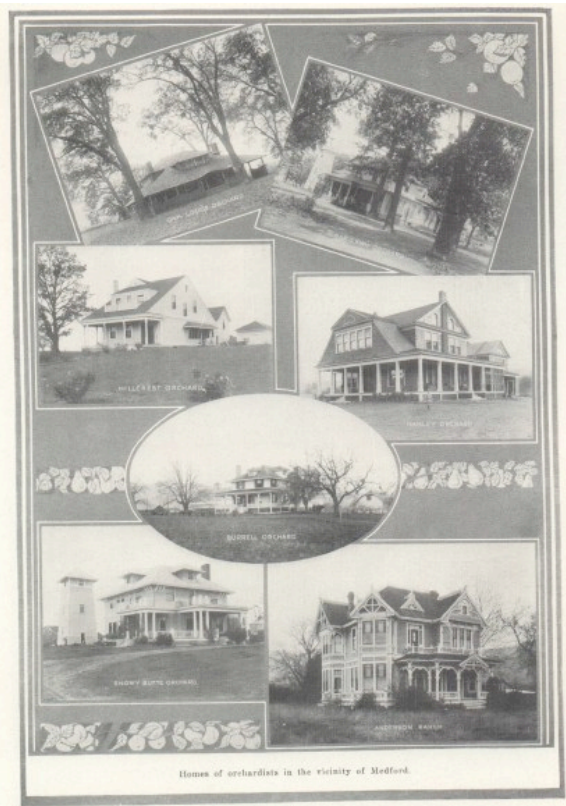


Figure 6: A promotional brochure showing the many excellent orchard homes in the valley.

employees and tourists enchanted by their travels through the valley. Such parcels were promoted to potential buyers both as homes and as potential sources of income and secure investments.

Rogue Valley produced a population boom as urban migrants flocked to the area. During the first decade of the 20th century the population of Medford grew from 1,791 to 8,840 (U.S. Census).

By 1893, real estate speculation and the subdivision of large farms had begun in the Rogue Valley. One of the first recorded examples of a farm subdivided into small parcels, the 214 acre Nickell farm, was subdivided into one-acre tracts with 30 acres set aside for streets. These were sold to railroad

Land planted in bearing orchards fetched some of the highest prices in all of Oregon at the height of the boom. In 1909, mature orchards were selling for \$2,300 an acre, while unplanted land sold for \$150-250 an acre (Cordy 1977). The high prices being obtained in eastern markets for fruit from the region¹⁶ fueled a speculative bubble for land planted in orchards, but the high prices obtained for orchard lands also reflected both the capital investment required to bring the land to bearing and their potential for future earnings. Orchard development required not only an investment in planting, but also labor to nurture trees to a bearing age. Once an orchard had been grown to maturity it could be expected to bear fruit for forty or more years.

As the boom continued, real estate speculation and subdivision became a much simpler way to make money than waiting for a fruit harvest. This real estate boom relied on the idea that a family could make a good living off of a small acreage of fruit trees and this vision of the small independent grower was widely promoted by real estate developers. Once lands suitable for orchards became scarce, speculators had no compunctions about buying up rocky lands with lean soils in the northeast corner of the valley to sell as orchard homes though they were clearly not suitable and impossible to irrigate. In some places real estate companies used dynamite to create holes large enough to plant trees in the cement-like soil.

One of the most well known developers was John Westerlund, a Chicago real estate dealer, who founded in 1903 the Western Oregon Orchard Company and began speculation on Rogue Valley orchard lands. While the company name implied

16. The Rogue Valley newspaper, The Mail Tribune, reported in 1907 that pears were "smashing all records," and on October 12, 1907 reported that a box of pears was selling for \$8.40.

a connection to orchards, Westerlund was selling the idea of the independent gentleman farmer. Newspapers from the period were filled with advertising from companies such as Westerlund's offering small orchard parcels for sale, often sight unseen. In some cases buyers were encouraged to send money to the company and in exchange their orchard would be cared for until it matured¹⁷ at which point the buyer could presumably move out to Oregon, build their house on the land, and live comfortably off the income the orchard provided. In some cases, it wasn't until the buyers started showing up in the valley that it became clear that large portions of such orchard subdivisions had not been planted and were unsuitable for fruit production.

Gentlemen Farmers Small and Large

In almost every section of the country where the fruit industry has become of commercial importance, there have been at the outset, a handful of men engaged as a means of gaining a livelihood. The quality of their product has served as an indication of the adaptability of such regions for more extensive enterprise in that line. In all these places, the great majority of the farmers have been engaged on other lines of production, with more or less of an orchard as a side issue. - *Editorial urging fruit growers to organize a growers association and cooperate in producing the best fruit. Coos Bay Times August 6, 1910: pg 3.*

In 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner gave his famous speech on the closing of the American frontier. In some ways, that speech marked the line between living in the "Old West" and romanticizing it (Limerick 1995). By 1910, when the boom in orchard subdivision was reaching its height, an increasingly urbanized America was already full of nostalgia for farm living. The orchard boom attracted many of both

17. Medford Mail Tribune, March 6, 1910: pg 12.

wealth and modest means with little to no experience with agriculture, but full of the dream of the gentleman farmer.

One of the most prominent and influential new arrivals in the Rogue Valley was the Palmer family, the millionaire owners of the famed Palmer House hotel in Chicago.¹⁸ Mrs. Palmer and her sons promoted the area to other wealthy Chicagoans, and in 1911 the Chicago Record Herald reported on a "millionaire colony" in Medford. Other millionaire investors came from Seattle. Reginald Parsons, prominent financier and philanthropist, bought the HillCrest Orchard in 1908 as a summer home and investment after hearing about the profitability of fruit growing in the Rogue Valley from business associates in Seattle. Wealthy eastern families also sent idle young men to the valley to make their fortunes as horticulturalists. Some of these "remittance men" were Ivy League graduates who received monthly income from their wealthy families on the East Coast.¹⁹

Fruit Growing and Parcelization

The census of 1920 ought to show a population of 150,000 for Jackson County. Its area and resources will amply support many times this number of people. The entire Rogue River valley should be an immense, continuous orchard, with a family upon every ten acres. Thousands of men should be employed manufacturing lumber, quarrying granite and marble, manufacturing lime and cement, and thousands more in mining. - *Editorial article advocating for growth, Medford mail Tribune, December 7, 1910: pg 4.*

The full impact of subdivision on this region in this early period is difficult to estimate. However, some sense of its impact can be made by examining the agricultural census. According to the U.S. Census between 1880 and 1930, the

18. Medford Tribune January 1, 1913: pg 3.

19. Medford Mail Tribune September 13, 1910: pg 8.

population of Jackson County grew from 8,154 to 32,918. During this period, there was massive growth in the number of small and medium sized farms in the region, with the most rapid growth happening in farms under 50 acres in size. In 1880, there were 30 farms of less than 50 acres. By 1930, there were 1066 farms of less than 50 acres, including 618 farms under 20 acres (see figure 7). Obviously, farm size is not a direct indication of individual landowner's orientation towards land management, but the growth in small and very small farms in the region is significant for two reasons. First, industry experts estimated that even during that early period, a farmer would have needed at least 40 acres to earn enough to support one household,²⁰ so regardless of intention, it is likely that most of these small farms relied on additional sources of income to supplement farm earnings. Second, parcelization and the mixing of farming and "hobby farm" populations are major concerns in relation to exurban development today and both were clearly present in the valley by 1930. Recall that a parcel size between 1 and 20 acres per residence is one common measurement of an exurban settlement pattern (Theobald 2003).

Benefits of "Hobby Farmers" for the Industry

The arrival of these aspiring farmers had several positive impacts for the fruit growing industry. First, they provided an influx of capital investment that poured into planting and nurturing orchards to maturity. Most growers, both wealthy and those of modest means, over time discovered that making a profit

20. While farm size is often used to estimate income and indicate farm type, earnings per acre vary widely depending on the crop grown.

growing fruit was more complicated than the boosters and promotional materials made it out to be. Successful growers needed horticultural skills, knowledge of marketing, business savvy, and enough capital or outside income to get them through years when drought or late frosts ruined crops. While the most well managed orchards on the best land could make a significant profit, particularly in good years, many orchardists struggled. The bankruptcy of less savvy growers provided opportunities for successful growers to buy land with mature trees from the bank or creditors for much less than it would have cost to develop a new parcel²¹.

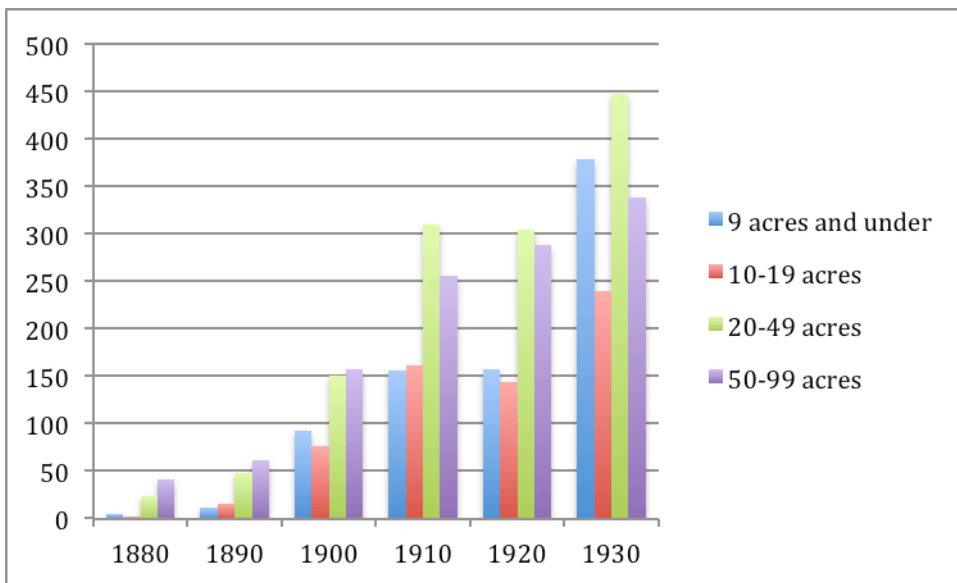


Figure 7: Jackson County farm sizes over time.

Second, the many small growers in the region also provided a ready source of labor to large orchards for harvest and processing. Some estimated that a grower

21. The Democratic Times of Jacksonville, July 14, 1898, pg 4 reported one of these sheriff sales, in which the 214 acres of orchard land belonging to the Orchard Home Association was sold to the Portland Trust Co. for \$5500.

would have needed an orchard of at least forty acres in order to make a living solely as a farmer.²² Since a large number had parcels less than that, they and their families instead patched together a living from a mix of industries, providing labor on large farms, in fruit-packinghouses, in mining, and in lumber. Women in particular were thought to make the best packers, while young people were commonly enlisted to help with the harvest, often involving the entire family in the fruit growing industry.

Finally, while small growers provided labor for the industry, wealthy large growers with summer homes on their orchards provided the capital for the development of the infrastructure needed by the growing industry. These industrialists had the capital to expend on packinghouses, and rail cars. Their most important contribution, however, was investment in the building of the many irrigation canals that eventually covered the valley. Irrigation proved key to the continued success of fruit growing in the region. Because the Rogue Valley only received on average 20 inches of rain per year, irrigation in drought years was essential.²³ Large investments were required to build these canals, which then returned profits through subdivision of newly irrigated lands and the selling of water and land to growers²⁴.

22. Culbertson, Paul. *Oral History Interview*. Southern Oregon Historical Society, Feb. 24, 1981.

23. Medford Tribune March 12, 1913: pg 4.

24. The first irrigation project in Jackson County, the Fish Lake Water Company, was privately financed. In 1910 Pat Welch, a wealthy contractor from Spokane Washington, bought the company and began promoting and selling irrigated small parcels to aspiring fruit growers. – Medford Mail Tribune, January 2, 1910.

Discussion

Remittance Men, Hobby Farmers, and Other Urban Outsiders

The district will not be the home of the workman who spends his days in smoke-begrimed and dirty factory buildings, living in unhealthy tenements with hundreds of his fellows, and barely earning just enough to live, but the home of prosperous and happy men and women, who work in the sunshine, live in modern bungalows, making their living from the orchards which they own. -*Rogue River Valley Canal Co. Advertisement, Medford Tribune January 4, 1911.*

During the years between 1870 and 1920, the number of people in the U.S. who lived in cities grew from 10 million to 54 million. The Progressive Movement that was actively lobbying to improve the health and safety of America's cities and suburbanization was well underway (Hayden 2004). The dream of a healthier, more wholesome life available in the West had already become firmly established in the minds of Americans (Limerick, Cowell, and Collinge 2009). Many new arrivals to the Rogue Valley were enchanted by the marketing promises on the pages of *Sunset Magazine* and reports of an easy country life among the apple and pear trees.

Yet, during this period, there is no evidence that the preponderance of what might now be called hobby farmers or exurbanites had a significant negative impact on the growth of the fruit growing industry in the valley. While there were undoubtedly tensions among growers, these seem to have been based largely on class differences and the stresses of an industry in which a mix of cooperation and competition, or "co-opetition", as Larsen and Hutton (2011) describe, was inevitable. Fruit growers were in competition with each other but were often forced to cooperate in order to successfully process and market their products.

Additionally, poor orchard care allowed pests and diseases to spread to neighboring

orchards, so growers made education a key priority in the industry. Real estate development and speculation represented a competitive pressure on land while at the same time providing labor and capital for the expanding industry.

Farmers as Land Owners

The speculative buying and selling of land has been an integral part of the economy of southern Oregon since Euro-American settlement began in the 1850s. In this context, the passage of statewide land-use regulation in 1973 represented a disruption of existing environmental management regime of the region under which farming, mining, and forestry had coexisted with tourism and real estate development for many years.

Oregon's statewide regulations strongly restrict parcelization and the building of new residences in farming zones. This has caused vocal resistance in the region, particularly among many fruit growers,²⁵ the very group the laws were, in principle, designed to protect. This has often been dismissed as greed by supporters of statewide regulation or an illogical belief in private property rights. However this attitude ignores the dual role that farmers hold as land owners and an overlooking of the economic realities of farming. For many farmers, the land itself represents an investment with the potential for appreciation. "The appreciation of the land was part of the reason for being in agriculture--because if agriculture didn't make any money, at least the land values would be there. So you could sell and retire. Now you can sell and go starve to death, live on Social Security. It's terrible now. We've

25. Fruit growers are by no means united in opposition to statewide planning. Many have concerns about specific elements of the regulations that they believe limit their ability to be economically successful, but express strong support for farmland conservation. Some believe current planning regulations are not protective enough.

been able-- because of our marketing and culture-- we've been able to survive. It certainly hasn't been easy.²⁶"

By limiting development on agricultural lands, statewide planning holds down agricultural land values, which potentially makes it easier for new farmers to buy land, however this does not, in itself, solve the problem of farm succession. Even farmers like the one quoted above, who has a son who wants to continue farming, expressed the difficulty of financing retirement or increasing farm income to accommodate the transition between generations without either selling part of the farm for development or building additional residences on the farm, both of which are limited by Oregon's land use regulations. Growers relied on the ability to sell less productive land for development in order to finance capital improvements, replanting of aging orchards, the creation of a comfortable retirement fund, or to facilitate the transfer of the business to a new generation.

How New is the New West?

The story of Rogue Valley over that last fifty years could be told like the stories of so many other rural communities in the American West, as a transition from an economy based on extractive industries to one focused around service, retail, and health care industries. This story of the transition between the Old West economy and the New West has been told numerous times (Hines 2010, Ghose 2004, Travis 2007, Travis 1997). The small town of Jacksonville, now thoroughly tourist in its orientation, started out as a gold rush town and its economy languished for much of the 20th century. Now dilapidated 19th century architecture has been

26. Interview with independent fruit grower, 2011.

revised for the 21st century amenity economy. The nearby town of Ashland is also thoroughly reliant on a New West consumptive economy, largely built around a theatre festival that runs through most of the year, supplemented by outdoor recreation including a small ski resort. But Ashland's attempts to build an economy around tourism and recreation began not in the 1960s or 1970s, but in the early the 20th century with dreams of a health spa, the establishment of Lithia Park, and summer Chautauqua theater productions. Other towns have begun taking advantage of recent growth in tourism and exurban migration while contrarily continuing to hold up the mythology of their "Old West" roots.

In the Rogue Valley, both new arrivals and long time residents are invested in nostalgia for the Old West. The literature on the New West has been focused on a specific type of place with a distinct history, in which the development of amenity-based economies has been relatively recent and sudden, because such places have the propensity to produce conflict. In contrast the history of Jackson County provides a picture of a different historical trajectory in which rural real estate and tourism developed slowly alongside a form of agriculture more compatible with their development than ranching or mining. This points to the potential variety of relationships between New West and Old West economies, based on the specific characteristics of both. Hines (2010) describes the creation of a "New West Archipelago," islands of post-industrial space in an industrial sea. However it would be instructive to examine the diversity of relationships between extractive industries and consumptive ones rather than focusing only on the distinctive

characteristics of such islands. Otherwise we risk assuming that these islands are surrounded by an undifferentiated sea of static, unchanging industrial landscape.

Conclusion

In this article I have emphasized the way that the Rogue valley and surrounding region were marketed for their many amenities, in addition to their potential to produce financial gain. To understand the drivers of exurban sprawl and social and environmental impacts that increased amenity based real estate development has world-wide, the researcher must move beyond an emphasis only on "amenity migrants" as individual actors, to understand real estate development and associated activities as an industry with connections to and conflicts with other rural industries. Discussions of individual landowners have drawn my attention to the flexibility of livelihood strategies and the complexity of motivations for settling in the Jackson County.

An examination of this historical case opens up a number of questions, which have yet to be thoroughly examined in the literature on the political ecology of exurbia. What has been the relationship between amenity economies and resource based production in different times and places? Under what conditions do these industries produce conflict? Thus far, little work has focused on a sustained examination of the role of tourism and the real estate industry in the development of resource-based industries prior to the recent expansion of exurban development. For example, little has been written so far about the history of Dude Ranching (Borne 1983). How large a role did this traditional amenity based industry play in rural areas and how was it related to production oriented ranching?

What is striking about this Rogue Valley case study is the specific combination of soil and climate conditions, and geography that facilitated the joint growth of fruit cultivation and real estate development. Successful commercial orchard growing is an industry reliant on particular microclimate conditions to be successful and orchards lands are certainly not a widespread land use in the Western U.S. Jackson County was situated on a major transportation corridor for many years, which meant that while it was located far from any major population centers, it received an ongoing stream of visitors, facilitating the growth of tourism and real estate development. An interesting comparison could be made to other western regions dominated by orchard landscapes, for example Orange County and Santa Clara County in California, Hood River County in Oregon, or Yakima County in Washington in order to better understand the interactions between orchards, tourism, and parcelization.

Shifting the focus from analyzing exurbanites as consumers, to the production of amenity landscapes through the real estate industry, puts exurban development in a different light. Yet few studies to date have focused on the ways that exurban development is driven by particular capitalist industries:²⁷ tourism, real estate, health care, and other service industries. Viewing amenity based industries as potentially one of the "traditional" industries associated with the American West since Euro-American settlement also moves us from discourses of newcomers versus locals or Old West versus New West economies to an

27. One exception is (Robbins, Martin, and Gilbertz. 2011)

acknowledgement of the complex and shifting economic relationships that continue to drive land use change in the western U.S.

CHAPTER IV

EXTENDED URBANIZATION AND RURAL IMAGINARIES: USING LEFEBVRE'S THEORY OF PLANETARY URBANIZATION TO UNDERSTAND EXURBIA

It is a truism to state that for the first time in history, we live in an urban age, in which more than 50% of the world's population lives in urban areas. Despite the obvious social and environmental impacts of rapid urbanization around the globe, defining what it means to live in an "urban age" remains unclear. Large percentages of the urban population live in spaces still often overlooked by urban geography: in sprawling suburbs, edge cities, exurbs, informal settlements, small cities and towns.

This paper examines a case study in Jackson County, Oregon where this ambiguity around urbanization has significantly complicated attempts to limit the impacts of population growth and urbanization. Two contradictions in this case focused my attention on ideas of "the urban" and led me to planetary urbanization as a way to re-conceptualize the relationship between urban and rural space. First, an urbanization process driven by urban to rural migration. Second, a land use planning process dominated by competition between cities for urban growth and development, while the agencies and the individuals involved continue to cling to and promote rural imaginaries of the region.

I incorporate the theory of global urbanization into a political ecology framework in order to analyze the politics of urbanization in Jackson County. Global

urbanization, as described by Lefebvre (2003), involves two moments or aspects of urbanization, concentration and extension. Brenner and Schmidt (2013) theorize that while most of urban studies research has focused on concentration, extension has overtaken concentration and is now the dominant force within the process of urbanization. In this paper I use the concept of extended urbanization (i.e., extension) to explain the complex and contradictory aspects of urbanization in my case study in Jackson County, Oregon. I begin the paper with a review of the theory of global urbanization as originally theorized by Lefebvre and its applicability to political ecology. I then proceed to analyze my case study through the lens of global urbanization focusing on the contradictions between the increasingly urbanized society in the region and the persistent role of "rural imaginaries."

Theoretical Framework

"The city is everywhere and in everything." If the urbanized world now is a chain of metropolitan areas connected by places/corridors of communication (airports and airways, stations and railways, parking lots and motorways, teleports and information highways), then what is not the urban? Is it the town, the village, the countryside? Maybe, but only to a limited degree. The footprints of the city are all over these places, in the form of city commuters, tourists, teleworking, the media, and the urbanization of lifestyles. The traditional divide between the city and the countryside has been perforated. - *Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift (2002)*

Research on exurbanization, amenity migration, and resource conflicts has largely relied on an apparently clear cultural and economic divide between the urban and the rural. The theorization of a global urban society would erase this divide, covering the globe in an uneven fabric of urbanization, seeming to indicate the gradual disappearance of the rural. So far, work on global urbanization has

appeared to ignore the concept of the rural, focused as it is on the impacts of urbanization. However, a closer examination of work on global urbanization, in particular as originally proposed by Lefebvre, reveals a continuing role for the concept of the rural in this global urban society. By returning to Lefebvre's writings on urbanization, I propose a new theorization of the role of the rural within the fabric of global urbanization. I argue that recognition of Lefebvre's theory of global urbanization actually reconnects the work of rural and urban political ecologists in productive ways by pointing to the growing extent and significance of extended urbanization processes in the metabolism of global urban society. It is a concern for the impacts of this metabolism—the shifting flows of resources, people, and knowledge that make up extended urbanization—which links the work of urban political ecology and exurban political ecology despite their somewhat disparate approaches (Gustafson et al. 2014). Even as political and economic power is increasingly centered on urban life and urbanization processes, the image of "the rural" becomes an ever-increasing point of contention in struggles over land use governance.

Conceptualizing Global Urbanization

Efforts to clearly delineate urban settlement types and urbanization processes have become increasingly conceptually confused. A number of scholars (Hoggart 1990) have proposed abandoning the urban-rural dichotomy as an empty signifier, yet discourses around these two poles continue to have broad influence in policy and political debates. In the U.S., even as cities have exploded into a mix of sprawling settlement types, partisan political discourse has increasingly divided the country

into "red and blue" regions, largely around a supposed urban-rural economic and political split. Sustainable urbanism has become a major buzzword for environmentalists and planners while sprawling growth has continued to threaten the ability of urbanizing regions to make efficient use of land and resources.

Global urbanization, which Brenner (2013) defines as "the perpetual churning of sociospatial formations under capitalism rather than presupposing their stabilization within built environments, jurisdictional envelopes, or ecological landscapes", provides a framework for examining the impacts of urbanization processes across a variety of settlement types. Brenner's conceptualization of urbanization emerges from Lefebvre (2003), who describes two moments within the urbanization process: implosion and explosion, or what Brenner calls **concentrated urbanization** and **extended urbanization**. In 1970, Lefebvre presciently theorized the emergence of a global urban society. He describes an urban society as "the society that results from industrialization, which is a process of domination that absorbs agricultural production." The dominance of the city over the country is so complete that in Lefebvre's words, "a vacation home, a highway, a supermarket in the countryside are all part of the urban fabric."

The development of densely populated central cities, that is *concentrated urbanization*, has been the central focus of urban studies. However, Brenner (2013) contends that the processes of urbanization have shifted in the last 30-40 years and now processes of *extended urbanization* have overtaken and surpassed those of concentrated urbanization. (See Appendix A for maps showing U.S. Census definitions of urban space by county since 1950. These maps show the literal

expansion of urban space as growth, particularly in the American West creates new metropolitan areas.) Brenner defines extended urbanization as the processes of transformation that support and produce urban development. In this line of theorizing, it is no longer useful to define particular spaces as either urban or rural. Particular spaces are no longer outside the urban realm of influence since urban processes are impacting the entire globe, producing vast areas covered in pollution, transportation networks, and resource extraction to support urban centers.

Extended Urbanization and Political Ecology

The concept of extended urbanization then has significant implications for political ecologists and brings up a number of conceptual questions, particularly: *Should all political ecology then be considered urban political ecology? And if there is no conceptual outside for the urban, then how can we understand the persistence of the rural in everyday life?*

If we take the theory of global urbanization seriously, the urban-rural dichotomy disappears and is replaced by an uneven fabric of urban space. Rural space can no longer be conceptualized as outside of and separate from urban space. However, this does not mean that the rural disappears. In fact, in spaces of extended urbanization like Jackson County, symbols of rural life become increasingly commodified and contested as ex-urbanites contradictorily attempt to continue their urban lifestyles while also nostalgically re-creating rural space.

Political ecology in the U.S., and the developed world more broadly, has split into a two somewhat separate lines of research, along urban-rural lines. Although urban political ecology and exurban political ecology writing on North America

emerged around the same time, their differing theoretical underpinnings have led to a perplexing lack of engagement across urban-rural lines.²⁸ Urban political ecology, has focused on socio-environmental issues within cities, framing the ecological impacts and power differentials driving them using the concept of the metabolization of nature (Keil 2005). Exurban political ecology has, in contrast, focused on the environmental changes, political conflicts, and management challenges that emerge from flows of amenity migrants into picturesque country landscapes (Walker and Fortmann 2003). Studies have tended to frame these conflicts in terms of the persistent differences between rural and urban identities, ways of life, and cultures, using cultural landscape studies to focus on the construction of discourses and ideologies of nature.

Political ecology arrived in North America in the 1980s, with a focus on rural settings and issues adopted from origins in 3rd world development. Fortmann (1996) called for using the tools of international property scholarship to help us understand conflicts over land and resources in the U.S. However within a few years Robbins (2002) suggested that political ecology needed to study up as well as down, that is examine the power of institutions and practices of officials while continuing a focus on what he calls the tools of political ecology -- "ethnography and intense focus on micro-politics." Today the largest literature in political ecology in the developed world focuses on exurbanization and amenity migration in the American West. There are also an expanding number of case studies in other regions of the developed world, including other parts of the U.S., Europe, Canada, and Australia.

28. As Blaikie (1999) pointed out, sometimes disjunctures come about not so much because of unresolved debates, but because of non-engagement.

Yet the focus on the parallels and commonalities within amenity landscapes has perhaps obscured the need for work that extends beyond the boundaries of these spaces and examines the drivers of this global phenomenon and the social and environmental displacements these changes cause (Abrams et al. 2012).

In a largely separate line of research, urban political ecologists have eagerly sought to dismantle the nature-culture divide by illuminating the myriad of ways that cities are "natural."²⁹ A major theme of this research is the flow of resources through the city and the mediations of such flows by economic, political, and social relationships. Yet while UPE has sought to erase the nature - city divide, it has largely been strangely silent about where these flows arrive from or drain to. While focusing on Marxist conceptions of metabolism, the idea of a metabolic rift (Foster and Magdoff 2000), that causes mirrored problems of depletion and pollution in both the city and the country, seems to figure less prominently as urban political ecologists have remained focused on the city.

To date, there has been little theoretical or empirical work that crosses the newly created urban-exurban divide in political ecology. In effect the creation of UPE has, at least to a degree, reinforced the nature-society divide it was attempting to dissolve by reinforcing its analog, the urban-rural divide. Only a few studies have worked across this spatial divide, particularly Robbins (2003) work on lawns, Keil and Young's (2009) work on "in between" urban landscapes in Canada, and Swyngedean and Kaika's (2005) work on the urbanization of water.

29. As David Harvey stated "There is nothing unnatural about New York City."

Now some scholars influenced by the resurgent interest in Lefebvre's concept of a global urban society (Brenner 2013) have begun to call for UPE to give up its "methodological cityism" in favor of a new focus on urbanization processes (Angelo and Wachsmuth). As part of this, a growing number of researchers have taken up work using a UPE framework to research sites outside of the city proper. Examples of this type of work include the work of Gustafson et al. (2013) on land use conflicts in exurban Appalachia, Kitchen's research on urban forests in South Wales (2013), and Pares, March, and Saurai's (2013) study of the suburban landscapes of Barcelona. These new approaches that reach across this urban-rural divide have the potential to address the broader processes of globalization and uneven development and re-situate the work of urban and exurban political ecology within those processes.

One possible stumbling block in working to reconcile these two distinct yet complementary approaches is that a central conceptual element in many exurban political ecology studies, the distinction between rural and urban identities and cultures, is viewed as leading to political conflict and potentially ecological change. However, in this paper, I suggest that rather than viewing the concept of global urbanization as problematic for the continued study of the rural, this framework provides an opportunity to engage across sub-disciplinary boundaries. Political ecologists who focus on processes of exurbanization and amenity migration—who study the margins of cities and the peripheries—have much to offer to our understandings of extended urbanization. While urban political ecologists have largely remained methodologically focused on cities, there is a rich line of research

on urban to rural migration, exurbanization, and the globalization of the rural that has already been developing our understandings of extended urbanization (Cadieux 2008, Gosnell and Abrams 2009, Hurley and Walker 2004, Larsen and Hutton 2011, Nelson and Nelson 2010, Taylor 2009, Theobald 2005).

Discussions of global urbanization have not included a conceptualization of the role of the rural, in part because the rural is no longer the constitutive "other" to the rising wave of urbanization. However, just because the rural is no longer outside the urban, does not mean the rural disappears. Rather, the rural becomes an unevenly distributed remnant within the urban fabric. Spaces dominated by extended urbanization, in particular, continue to be heavily influenced by the rural ideologies and visions, even as rural lifeways continue to decline. In places like Jackson County, these rural images are often mobilized to support particular political and economic interests while invoking romantic notions of rural community life and family farming.

Extended Urbanization in Jackson County

My case study focuses on Jackson County, in southern Oregon (see figure 8) and urbanization in the Rogue Valley, which is centered on the city of Medford. This metropolitan area has a population of over 200,000 people, many of whom live in the small towns and pockets of development surrounding the city. Besides the city of Medford, the valley is dotted with eleven incorporated municipalities and a number of unincorporated communities. While Jackson County hardly constitutes an urban area in the minds of most familiar with the region, this small metropolitan region is part of what Luke (2003) calls 'global cities', where most of the world's

urban population still lives. Small "g" global cities, in contrast to "Global" cities, are not power centers where the global economy is organized but rather these ordinary cities are significant because of their collective ecological impacts. Their small size, decentralization, and often-limited economic resources produces huge potential for inefficient use of land and resources and the production of relatively large levels of waste and pollution. In fact, the conceptualization of such places as rural contributes to tensions and contradictions in the way they grow and how growth is handled.

Contradictions of Growth in Jackson County

Growth in Jackson County and the concurrent conflicts around how to grow cannot be conceptualized simply as a matter of counter-urbanization or de-urbanization. Neither can the politics of growth be understood as a straightforward embrace of urbanization. Population growth in Jackson County throughout the 20th century and continuing to today, has largely depended on a flow of migrants from large urban areas in the U.S. and particularly California to the small cities and rural areas in the county (Hines, 2010), including a strong 'back to the land' ethic for many of the newcomers. The largest in-migrant flows into the region over the past 30 years have consistently come from the Portland metropolitan region, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Greater Los Angeles region. The region has doubled in population since the 1970s to 203,206 by the 2010 census and population projections from the Portland State Population Research Center have predicted another doubling within the next 50 years.

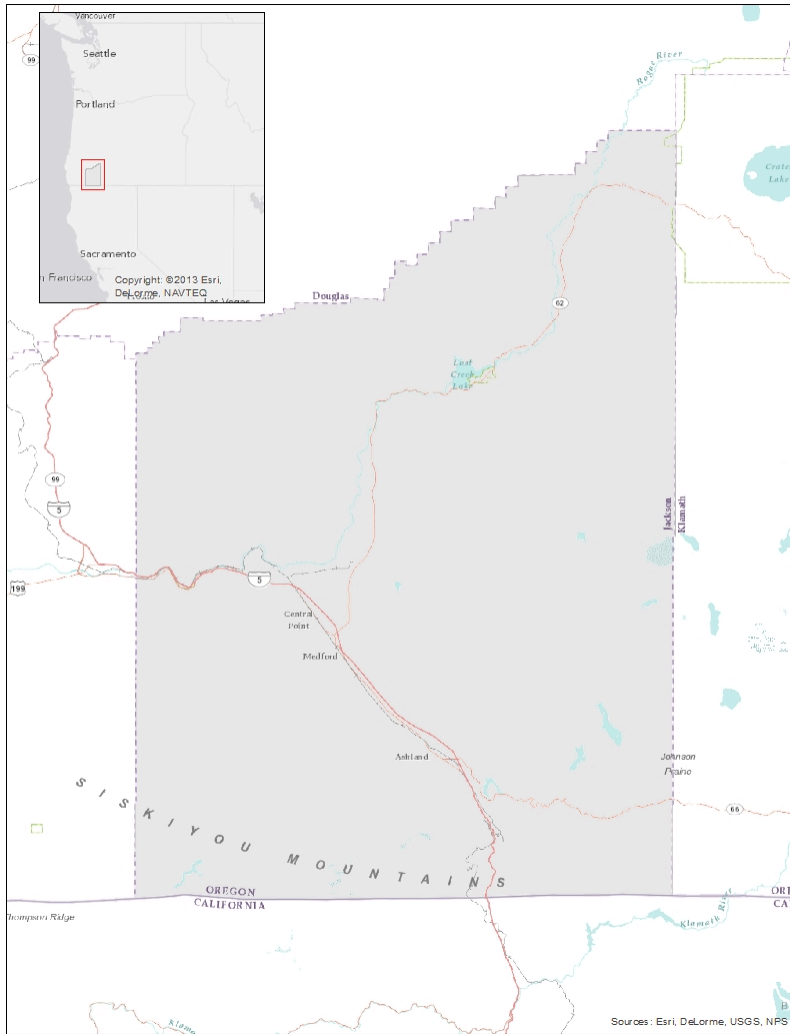


Figure 8: Jackson County

The significance of the urban origins of migrants to the region is not something that can be comprehended simply through numbers of new arrivals. What emerges from both written documentation of land use planning processes and interviews with local residents, is how people who arrive in Jackson County from large urban centers value this place for its *rural character* and desire to preserve those qualities. It is this attachment to particular visions of what it means to be rural and

rejection of urbanism that limits how growth takes place and promotes policies that damage the very qualities these places are seeking to preserve.

The steady, ongoing influx of new migrants has resulted in a growing metro area facing some of the very problems residents sought to escape from. Local municipalities are struggling with complex and often contradictory impulses in relation to ongoing processes of growth and urbanization in the region including minimizing damage to sensitive ecosystems, maintaining areas of open space and farmland, planning for increased traffic and resulting pollution, competing for growth, and at the same time maintaining the small town "rural character" that attracts migrants to the region.

Much of the population growth in the region is fueled by the movement of people away from large urban centers and towards what they perceive to be a largely rural area; this process has created a small but growing urban center which provides urban goods and services for a rapidly expanding population with urban lifestyles and tastes. The rural economies of the region are increasingly marginalized and transformed by urban desires and urban concerns. Despite a supposed concern for the importance of rural economies, power is largely concentrated in urban forms of governance and with the urban population. In the graphs below (see figures 9 & 10) it is possible to see the number of jobs in farming, fishing, and forestry in Jackson County in comparison to other metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions in Oregon. The second graph shows the percentage of jobs in relation to the total number in each region, thus accounting for differences in total population between the areas. Both as a total number and as a percentage, the

Medford metropolitan area has one of the lowest levels in the state. This reflects the largely non-commercial nature of farming in the region and the decline of the forestry industry.

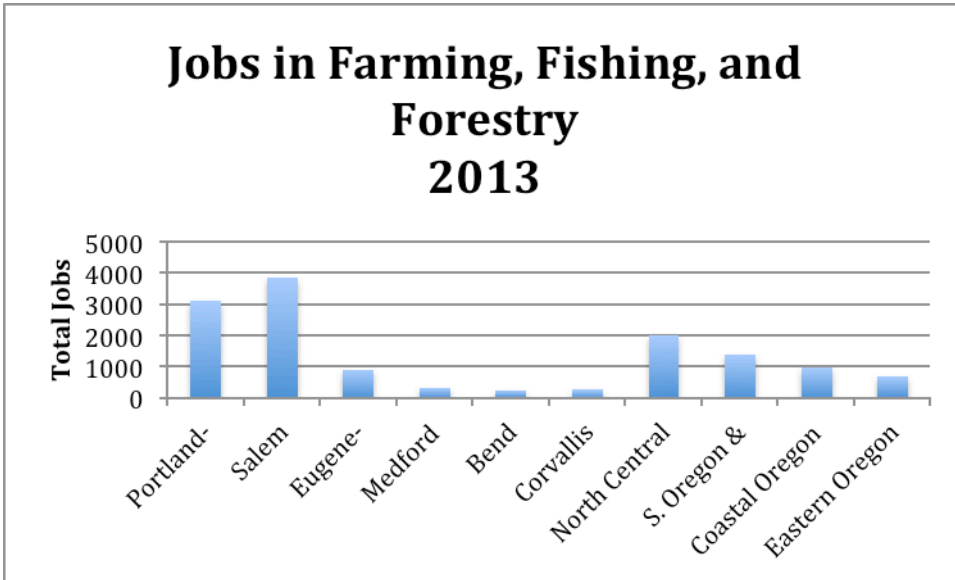


Figure 9: Total number of workers employed in farming, fishing, and forestry in 2013. From the Bureau of Labor Statistics..

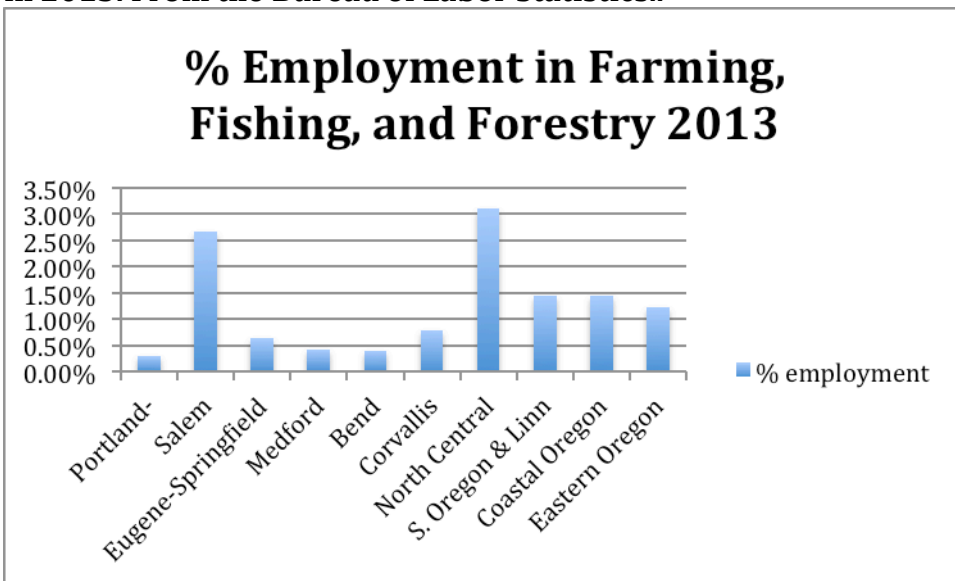


Figure 10: The percentage of the total workforce employed in farming, fishing, and forestry in 2013. From the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Understanding the two moments of urbanization, concentration and extension, allows us to view Jackson County's land use patterns and politics for what they are, an urbanization process, while acknowledging the extensive, rather than intensive form that it takes in this case. Extended urbanization acknowledges what has often been called counter-urbanization that is, in some cases, a part of the urbanization process. Migration from urban areas and exurban settlement patterns are part of a thickening and extension of the urban fabric in Jackson County.

As this global process of industrialization and urbanization was taking place, the large cities exploded, giving rise to growths of dubious value: suburbs, residential conglomerations and industrial complexes satellite cities that differ little from urbanized towns. Small and midsize cities became dependencies, partial colonies of the metropolis. (Lefebvre 2003)

Planning for Growth in Jackson County

One of the problems was the laws were designed for the Willamette Valley in the north. They were not designed for southern Oregon, which has a lot of smaller plots and variable plots all around the valley. - *Rogue Valley farmer and land use advocate.*

One way to see the problematic effects of extended urbanization in Jackson County is through the workings of land use politics in the region. Oregon's statewide land use planning regulations and the complex system through which it is enforced create a strict enforcement of the urban-rural dichotomy at the level of individual cities. Each incorporated city in Oregon is required by the state to create a comprehensive plan, which designates an urban growth boundary containing enough land for development over the next 20 years. In principle at least, outside the UGB, development is strictly limited.

The history of land use and pattern of the Medford metropolitan region however, makes constructing a strict separation between urban and rural land uses

problematic. In 1973, when the statewide planning regulations were first passed, the dominant pattern of development in the valley was already low-density rural development spatially mixed with small and medium sized farms. Local governments were opposed to state interference in land use governance, and so resisted creating a comprehensive plan for more than seven years. During this time, development continued, and perhaps even accelerated, as land owners hurried to subdivide before the new limitations were put into place.

In the 1990s, as rapid growth in the region continued, local concern about sprawl grew, which led to the development of a locally initiated effort to coordinate growth in the region. The development of this regional plan was supported by state regulation and from its inception designed to limit development on the small amounts of farmland and open space left in the valley. As the process developed however, the influence of urban centers began to place the needs of urbanization above those of rural preservation. What was ostensibly a regional planning process, focused on the needs of the region, instead became vested in the desire for growth and economic prosperity of each individual municipality. Rather than working for regional goals, the process became enmeshed in political machinations in which individual communities vied for the right to grow and develop. So despite the significant discourse around preserving rural character, the dominating focus in the planning process became urban growth. Competition to attract development ensured that each city sought to designate the largest amount of land for development permitted by state regulation.

Local residents with concerns about the sustainability of low density urban growth or the preservation of farmland and open space became disillusioned with a process that largely seemed to be serving the interests of local real estate developers and large land owners. The ideological divide in the process became one in which one group viewed the goal as preservation of rural lands, whereas city leaders largely became focused on where cities would grow. On the surface, these seem to be compatible goals, two sides of the same coin, but for those advocating higher densities and limiting the loss of farmland, placing the desire of cities for growth first insured that the location of new growth would be determined by the needs of cities rather than determinations of which lands are most deserving of preservation. The two maps below (see figures 11 &12) are the results of this transition from a focus on both urban expansion and farmland conservation. The Our Region map is one of a number of components of the informal grassroots plan. After 12 years and a formalized process, many of the innovative elements around farmland conservation were lost and instead the focus became cities' plans for urban expansion.

Urbanizing Agriculture

Extended urbanization also puts the distinction between urban and rural agriculture into question. In Jackson County, planning laws strictly delineate spaces within urban growth boundaries as distinct from rural spaces, which are zoned for farm use. This separation of urban and rural space has worked rather well in terms of limiting sprawl and directing growth in Oregon (Gosnell et al. 2011, Nelson 1992).

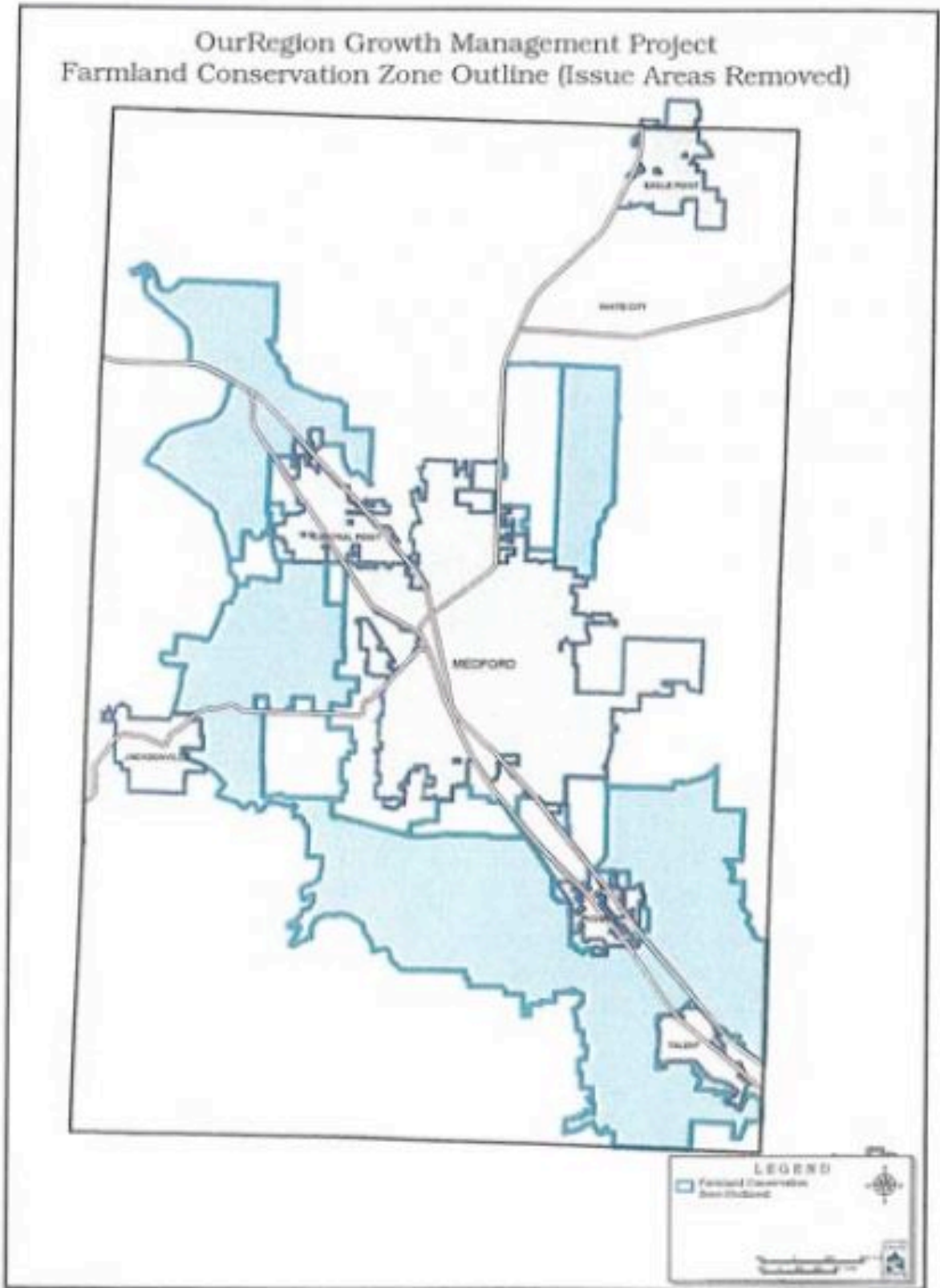


Figure 11: Our Region farmland conservation zone.

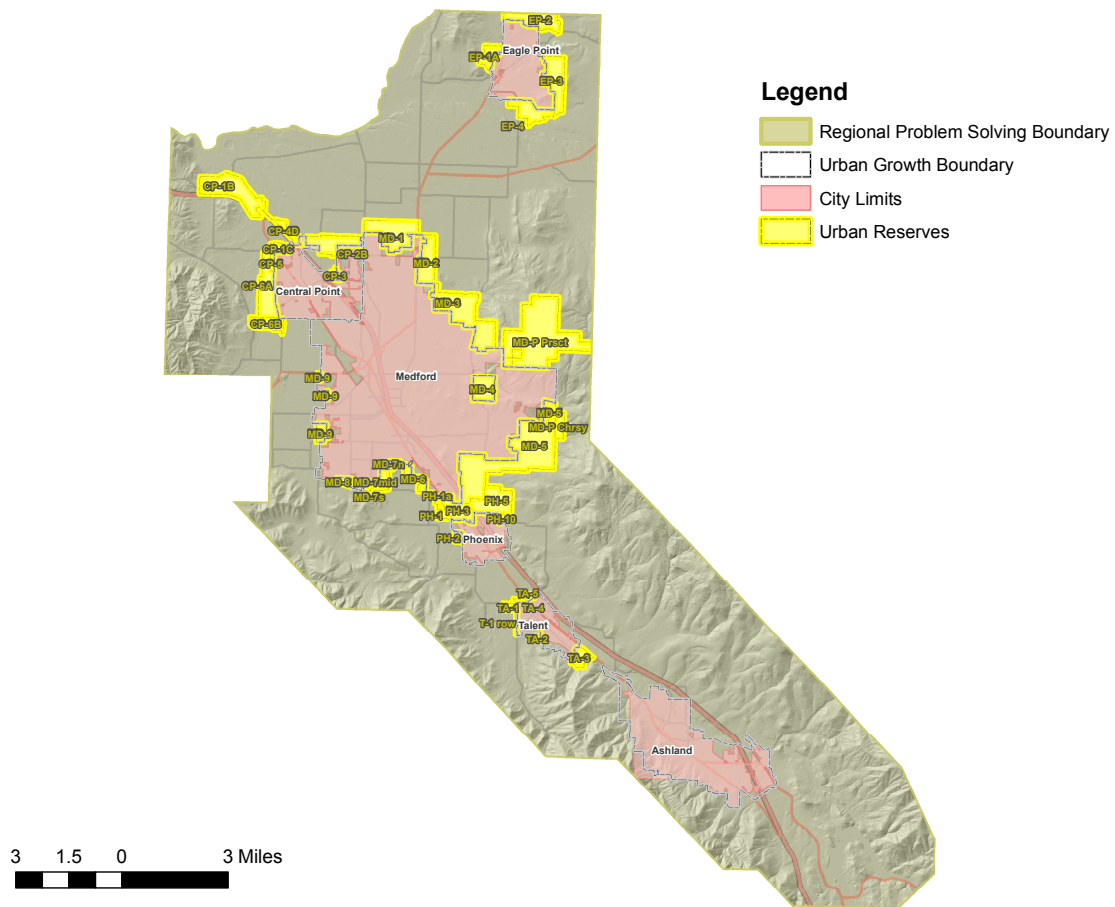


Figure 12: Bear Creek RPS urban reserves map.

However in Jackson County, agriculture outside urban growth boundaries is impacted in numerous ways by urbanization.

Farming in Jackson County faces the pressures of global agricultural markets, which increasingly place local farmers in the position of competing with farmers across the globe and even over broader periods of time³⁰. It is not uncommon for farmers in Jackson County to complain about the restrictions placed on them by not only the planning system in Oregon, but more broadly by a variety of regulations designed to uphold basic standards for workers and the environment. However, the onerous character of these regulations comes in the context of a long term widening in global competition as technologies for the transportation and storage of delicate fruits have developed.

In Jackson County the dominant fruit crop has been pears. In recent decades, pear farmers in the Pacific Northwest have faced increasing competition in the global export market from producers in China. Growers and distributors have developed more and more sophisticated ways to extend the storage life of pears, using cold storage and low oxygen environments to slow ripening. This allowed for a broadening of the season that pears from the U.S. could be found in supermarkets. The extension of the time pears could be brought to market has created additional competition as the season for pears grown in the southern hemisphere now significantly overlaps with that of the northern hemisphere. The result is increasing competition from growers in South America. All of this results in lower prices in the

30. High tech storage methods for fruit have allowed farmers in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres to come into direct competition in the supermarkets as storage times have extended.

global commodity market. Farmers in Jackson County are well aware of these increased pressures and their own connections to this global trade network (Davenport 2009). The largest producers in the valley have taken steps to globalize their production networks, buying land in other pear growing regions globally while maintaining a presence and headquarters in the region.

At the same time that they are contending with increasing global competition and falling commodity prices, farmers in Jackson County must deal with ongoing pressure and conflict from urban and exurban neighbors regarding farm practices. Oregon has right to farm laws, but Jackson County in particular is faced by a highly intertwined mix of urban and exurban settlement near farms. Additionally, the mix of small family farms, including retirement and lifestyle farms with larger commercial operations, has meant that farmers themselves don't always agree about the types of uses appropriate on farmland. Oregon's statewide land use planning is designed to limit conflict between urban residents and farming by restricting growth and development on and near farmland, however in Jackson County there were significant areas of rural residential development when the land use planning system came into play in the early 1980s.

Certainly political ecologists and environmental historians should be well aware of how farmers and other primary sector producers historically have been and continue to be incorporated into global circuits of capital (Cronon 1992). However, global urbanization puts these processes in an explicitly urban framework. Studies of the political economy of capitalist agriculture have detailed

the industrialization of the countryside, but have been less explicit in examining how this process has been tied to urbanization.

Post-Productivist Agriculture

While the growth and urbanization pressures I have outlined so far seem to indicate an inevitable decline in agriculture, under extended urbanization agriculture doesn't disappear. Instead it becomes increasingly subordinated to urban markets and urban desires. In Jackson County this can be seen through the growth in what has been called post-productivist agriculture (Holmes 2002, Evans, Morris, and Winter 2002), a form of agriculture that relies on the proximity of urban consumers even as it trades on the desire for rural experiences. In the Western U.S. waves of excess capital have found new frontiers for accumulation as amenity migrants have exploded into rural space (Sayre 2009.)

These new arrivals engage in small-scale production on their properties but often with a focus on the experience of farming, or rural life, instead of commodity production (Cadieux 2007). This urbanized agriculture is mixed with exurban residential development, and also exists in zones farther out from urban areas, within driving distance but too far out for significant urbanization/redevelopment pressure. In Jackson County, the growing urban population opens up new markets for agricultural production and the consumption of rural experiences. This can be seen in the growth of direct marketing, farmers markets, specialty local food production, vineyards and wineries that provide food and wine for consumers willing to pay for not only the product but also for the experience of visiting the farm or the farmers market (see figure 13).



Figure 13: Marketing rural space, Hillcrest Winery, Medford Oregon.

Extended Urbanization and the Rural Imaginary

If we take the theory of global urbanization seriously, the urban-rural dichotomy disappears and is replaced by an uneven fabric of urban space. However, this does not mean that the rural disappears. In fact, in spaces of extended urbanization like Jackson County, symbols of rural life become increasingly commodified and contested. This can be seen through the increasing prominence of symbols of rural life and the increasing marketing of rural experiences and rural lifestyles to urban tourists and urban to rural migrants. This includes connections to farm living, traditional small-town values, and connections to the natural landscape and recreation. In Jackson County the marketing of rural life can be seen in real estate, the local food movement, and particularly the expansion of vineyards and

wineries. Agri-tourism is expanding in Jackson County, as the influx of new urban residents grows large enough to provide markets for rural experiences. The growth in these markets relies, somewhat contradictorily, on the presence of urban consumers, so the prominent displays of rural activities increase in response to growing urbanization.

Alienation and Escaping the Urban

Looking at growth in Jackson County through the lens of global urbanization makes it clear that simply moving to a "rural" space does not allow escape from the pressures and processes of urbanization. We can see that ex-urbanites bring urbanization processes with them, even while they seek to escape from them. The literature on ex-urban transformations of rural space has, to date, largely situated these changes as part of ongoing globalization of rural space.³¹ Yet to the degree that exurbanization represents the commodification of rural space—the buying of a rural lifestyle—it becomes part of urbanization.

Lefebvre, now famous for his work on urban life, began his career as a rural sociologist and studied the impacts of urbanization on traditional ways of life in rural France. Lefebvre saw the disappearance of French peasant life, with its focus on traditions and collective action. The disappearance of rural life in France reflected increased alienation in everyday life and in work, rather than an infiltration of rural space by urban settlement patterns (Lefebvre 2008). In "Notes Written One Sunday", Lefebvre's rich description of rural festivals and their relationship to everyday life emphasizes the role of magic and ritual as key elements

31. For one exception see Taylor 2009.

in a non-alienated everyday life as experienced in peasant society. In one section he notes how community festivals relied on collective contributions for the feast and dialectic connection between nature and human life. Lefebvre implies that the difference in these rural societies was a connection between the individual and the community, and the individual and nature that did not rely on the commodity fetish and so promoted the formation of relationships between people, and not between people and things. Urbanization involved alienation: from work, from community, from everyday life (Lefebvre 2008). Understanding Lefebvre's conceptualization of everyday life as the central realm for the struggle with alienation opens up a deeper understanding of the underlying contradictions of the exurban impulse. Alienation, a central theme in Lefebvre's work on everyday life, connects the work of urban political ecologists on "second nature", metabolism, and circulation, with the work on exurban political ecology, which highlights the role of meaning, culture, and landscape.

To the extent that newly arrived residents of Jackson County are searching for ways to escape alienation and attempt to adopt the lifestyle and values, they are attempting to escape urbanization (see figure 14).



Figure 14: Billboard northeast of Medford advertising home sites with "Absolute Privacy Forever!!"

Even as these ex-urban migrants desire to escape the urban and attempt to do this through a change in residential location, they largely cling to connections to the broader urban world, and to urban ways of life. Their very presence also fuels shifts in the way that nature is metabolized.

As in a number of studies of the motivations of exurbanites (Johnson 2008), exurban settlers in the Rogue Valley often cite access to natural amenities and the "rural character" of the region as motivating factors in their choice to buy property in the region and move. While some exurbanites in the region engage in passive consumption of nature through recreation or passive forms of land management, active engagement with the non-human world through some sort of labor is a

significant driver of population growth. Various forms of agricultural pursuits are popular throughout the valley, from luxury equestrian ranches to small vineyards, to sub-urban and ex-urban homesteaders keeping their own chickens and canning their own pickles. Through these pursuits ex-urbanites attempt to gain a sense of themselves outside of capital modes of exchange and engage in a non-mediated direct relationship with various forms of 'nature'.

At the same time, these new "hobby farms" or consumptive forms of agriculture have, in the Rogue Valley, resulted in an entirely new secondary service and provisioning industry oriented towards this new hobby economy. This can be seen most clearly in the growth a small vanity vineyards in the region. The average size of vineyards in Jackson County is 5 acres. The many micro-vineyards in the region are serviced by vineyard management companies, which allow ex-urban would-be wine makers to enjoy the dream of living on a rural estate with its own vineyard while the work of growing the grapes and making the wine is taken care of by others. The finished wine, bottled and labeled is, brought back to the owners for sale or private distribution to friends and family.

Yet for all their professed desire to escape urban life, exurbanites continue to demand urban levels of social provisioning and consumption. Medford, in response to the large numbers of retirees settling in the region, has become a major center for the medical industry. The increasing sophistication and urban orientation of consumption in the valley can be seen, for example, in the arrival of REI in the valley in 2012 (see figure 15).



Figure 15: New mall under construction in west Medford, anchored by REI and Trader Joes.

Discussion and Conclusion

The intention of this paper has been twofold: first to examine the implications and utility of the theory of global urbanization for political ecology, and to use global urbanization as a framework for the examination of the contradictions of growth in my case study in Jackson County, Oregon.

Political ecologists working in the developed world have become increasingly divided into two separate camps, urban political ecologists and political ecologists who continue to work in rural or semi-rural settings. Political ecologists in the rural parts of developed countries have largely focused on the uneven production of environmental amenities, in particular the production of landscapes of privilege for the consumption of the wealthy. Whereas urban political ecologists have tended to focus on the metabolization of nature by the processes of urbanization and the ways that this process produces landscapes of environmental injustice. This division is, in

some ways, to be expected; uneven development produces a world in which privilege and deprivation are often strongly spatially differentiated. Additionally political ecology studies tend to be strongly tied to places and processes at the local scale. However, the production of landscapes of pastoral delight for the consumption of the privileged and the production of contaminated extractive landscapes are both part of the same processes of uneven development (Smith 2008).

It is important to not lose sight of the broader processes at work that produce these uneven landscapes. While some urban political ecologists have taken an important step forward in moving away from methodological cityism, additional steps need to be taken to address the theoretical and geographic divide in political ecology. In such a sprawling field, it is often easy to segregate one's focus by geographic location or resource type, but dialog across the divide is essential. This will mean that as UPE moves away from a focus on cities and towards a focus on urbanization processes, it will have to acknowledge already existing bodies of literature on non-urban, ex-urban, and *zwischenstadt* landscapes (Sieverts 2003). This literature includes significant work by political ecologists on the cultural politics of amenity migration (Walker and Fortmann 2003, Cadieux and Taylor 2013) and exurbanization. Additionally, there is a largely unacknowledged body of work on the urbanization of previously "rural" subsistence activities including activities such as gathering non-timber forest products (Hurley et al. 2008).

In order to move away from an exclusive focus on cities, UPE will have to acknowledge the ways those rural ideals and ideologies of nature will continue to

shape urbanization processes. Particularly as urbanization processes increasingly extend beyond what is widely recognized as urban landscapes.

At the same time, researchers steeped in the literature on exurban and rural resource conflicts would benefit from a theoretical engagement with global urbanization. In particular, an UPE analysis of exurbanization would shift the focus from exurbanites and locals and flows of discourse by situating those discourses within flows of capital and materials. Abrams et al. (2012) have suggested that while we now know a significant amount about amenity migrants themselves, we know less about the other actors involved with facilitating the "green sprawl" process such as real estate developers, local boosters, builders, land owners, and speculators.

For me, the value of extended urbanization is in encouraging researchers and activists alike to consider not only urban sustainability or rural sustainability, but rather to contemplate the broad range of settlement types and how patterns in one place might be related to patterns in another place. Continuing to focus on a simplistic form urban-rural dichotomy tends to limit our thinking about potential solutions for resource intensive land uses. While discussions of the growth in urban agriculture and the increasing globalization of the countryside have been ongoing for a number of years, both these patterns are encompassed within the framework of global urbanization and Levefbre's writings on alienation potentially facilitating our ability to consider the development of these phenomenon within broader patterns of development.

CHAPTER V

A STICKY SITUATION: PRESERVING HIGH VALUE SOIL OR COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE?

This is a story about dirt, dirt that turns into mud when it rains. And not just any mud; this mud sticks to your boots as you walk until your feet are heavy with the accumulating clay. During hot dry summers this dirt transforms into a cracked cement. A hundred years ago, the farmers in Jackson County called this dirt, which trapped their buggies in winter and stymied their attempts to plant in summer, "The Big Sticky." They have been cursing and fighting over this dirt for over a hundred years. This dirt has made fortunes³² for some and bankrupted others.³³ But this story is not just about dirt, it is about the political battle over whether this particular dirt will be saved from paving over. Since the passage of statewide comprehensive land use planning in 1973, farmers, landowners, politicians, and planners have been fighting over which farmland to save from development and who gets to decide.

In Jackson County, continuing opposition to statewide control over farmland conservation has led to efforts to localize decision-making. This paper examines the politics of farmland conservation in Jackson County. In particular, I analyze the political economy of farming in the region and how shifts in the rural economy have shaped the debate over which farmlands should be preserved. The details of this

32. Arthur M. Geary, "Enormous Wealth of Rogue River Orchards," *Morning Oregonian*, Portland, September 5, 1909, page F2

33. Medford Mail Tribune, Feb 17, 2002 "A sticky situation."

case are particular to the unique regulatory context of Oregon, but the broad characteristics have implications for land use governance in regions experiencing growth. Farmland conservation in Jackson County has put everyone involved in a sticky political situation.

My investigation of this case takes place in the context of what Brown and Purcell (2005) have called the local trap. That is the assumption that local "community based" management of natural resources will lead to beneficial social and ecological outcomes. This case, however examines the particular political, economic, and ecological factors that have led to a change in the scale of land use governance and asks why this change has taken place and what the implications of this change might be for the future of farmland conservation in Oregon.

This chapter examines efforts to relieve longstanding tensions over farmland protection in Oregon through engagement in scalar politics in Southern Oregon. It begins with an overview of how Oregon's comprehensive land use planning system tries to minimize growth onto the state's most valuable farmlands. In particular I focus on the Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving Process, a long term planning effort that allowed the redefinition of which agricultural lands near growing cities should be preserved based on the knowledge of local agriculturalists rather than state definitions. I then examine of the political and economic contradictions inherent in the complex task of farmland conservation in Jackson County. It studies the ongoing efforts in Southern Oregon to redefine which lands are designated "high value farmland" and considers the challenges of mixing conservation and private property rights.

Land Use Governance in Oregon

<u>Oregon's 19 Statewide Planning Goals</u>
Goal 1: Citizen Involvement
Goal 2: Land Use Planning
Goal 3: Agricultural Lands
Goal 4: Forest Lands
Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces
Goal 6: Air, Water and Land Resources Quality
Goal 7: Areas Subject to Natural Hazards
Goal 8: Recreational Needs
Goal 9: Economic Development
Goal 10: Housing
Goal 11: Public Facilities and Services
Goal 12: Transportation
Goal 13: Energy Conservation
Goal 14: Urbanization
Goal 15: Willamette River Greenway
Goal 16: Estuarine Resources
Goal 17: Coastal Shorelands
Goal 18: Beaches and Dunes
Goal 19: Ocean Resources

Figure 16. Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals

Oregon's famed comprehensive land use system was controversial from the start and has been the subject of ongoing debate and modification in the more than 40 years since its passage. While the system regulates a wide variety of uses, Goal 3 (see Figure 16), which prioritizes the conservation of farmlands was central both to the establishment of the system and ongoing debates over its effectiveness and fairness. The creation of this system was made possible politically by a coalition of

some Willamette Valley farmers concerned with encroachment by urban growth and environmentally oriented urban residents who were broadly supportive of limiting sprawl onto rural lands (Walker and Hurley 2011). The goals of these two groups have not always aligned and the question of what exactly is being preserved and for what purpose often becomes a point of conflict. Although Goal 3 clearly states that farmland is to be preserved for commercial farming because of the economic importance of the agricultural economy to the State, many agricultural producers view the system as working for the desires of urban residents for bucolic rural scenery rather than supporting the needs of farmers to make a living from the land.

Many farmers outside of the Willamette Valley in particular opposed statewide planning from the start. In order to respond to concerns of various interest groups, the Oregon legislature has enacted various modifications to state planning regulations in almost every legislative session since 1973. The vast majority of these modifications were designed to clarify the goals of the program or intended to provide increased flexibility to permit uses determined to be compatible with farm uses (see figure 17).

Private property rights advocates maintain that Oregon's land use regulations constitute a "regulatory taking" of the rights of landowners. This assertion became the basis for the passage of Measure 37 in 2004, which substantially weakened the limitations on how land owners could use their rural parcels by requiring local governments to compensate land owners, who owned the land before 1973, for any laws that limited owners' ability to use their land in any way desired. The financial

and regulatory mayhem caused by Measure 37 was reduced with the passage of Measure 49 in 2007, which permits some limited additional development rights for property owners without allowing unlimited development on rural lands.

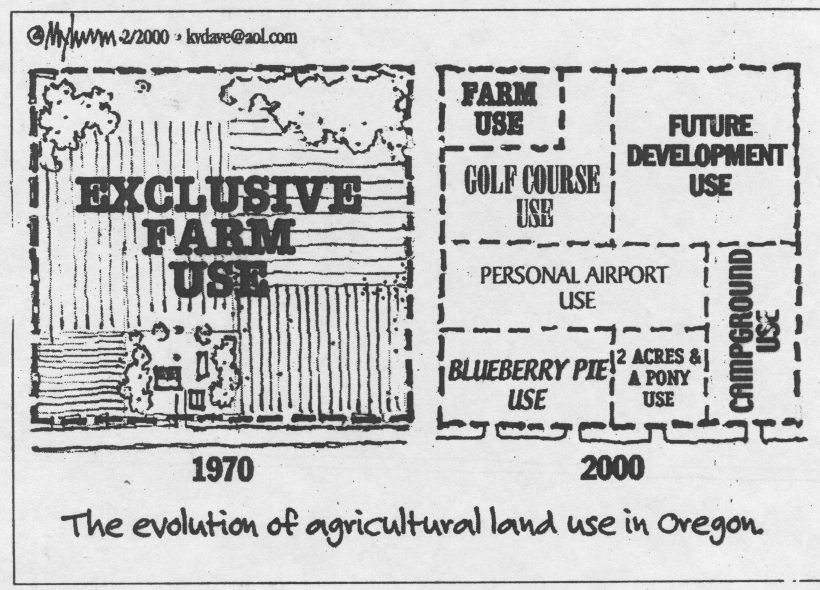


Figure 17: Political Cartoon, Capital Press, Feb. 11, 2000

While the controversial efforts of property rights advocates, represented by the struggle to pass and then repeal Measure 37 along with a number of earlier bills designed to weaken anti-sprawl regulation in Oregon, took place at the state level, a separate yet related argument has challenged the Oregon land use system through efforts to localize decision making and call for increased decision making power for the local community. The perceived strong urban-rural divide in Oregon between the Portland-Willamette Valley region and the rest of the state has resulted in ongoing debates over whether land use laws designed to protect the Willamette Valley from growth in the Portland Metro area are appropriate and effective in other parts of the state.

The argument is that rural portions of the state face different economic and ecological conditions and that urban Portland area politicians and their constituencies fail to understand the realities of rural livelihoods in the rest of the state. Landowners, politicians, and private property rights activists from eastern and southern Oregon have waged an ongoing effort to weaken statewide land use regulations through engaging in a scalar politics. They argue that the land use decisions should be made by local leaders who best understand the needs and desires of local people, local economies, and local ecological conditions. Planners and supporters of the system have largely dismissed these campaigns as simply an outgrowth of greedy landowners valuing their own profits over public goods.

One of the legislative mechanisms created by state government in the 1990s for increased flexibility from state regulations is regional problem solving. Rapid population growth during the 1990s in Oregon increased challenges for statewide planning. Regional problem solving was designed to allow for limited variance from statewide land use regulations but requires that the variance still adheres to the spirit of the state wide goals. In exchange for this variance from regulations, the state requires regional cooperation that is the inclusion of all state and local agencies and other local stakeholders in the process.

Regional problem solving is a compromise between demands for local control of land use governance and the statewide regulatory system. As Abrams and Gosnell (2012) note in describing regional other variations in Oregon's planning regulations, the state retains some measure of "command and control" under regional problem solving. Therefore regional problem solving is not simple

devolution of authority, but rather an attempt by state government to acknowledge concerns about the "top down" nature of Oregon's land use planning system and recognize the increasing dominance of discourses of community based natural resource management within policy and planning circles.

Methods

This research is based on a mixed method approach involving interviews, observation, discourse analysis of document, and GIS in order to examine the political struggle in Jackson County over farmland conservation. Between 2009 and 2012, I conducted 52 open-ended interviews with landowners, farmers, planners, state agency staff, and elected officials in Jackson County. Interviews began with key actors within the Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving Process and expanded through purposeful sampling, which was designed reach out to stakeholders with a variety of outlooks and roles in land use governance. In addition, during that time I observed more than ten public meetings around land use planning and farmland preservation issues.

I supplemented these interviews and field observations with a review of the thousands of pages of documents on land use planning processes. I was also able to access recordings of 31 meetings of the Rural Lands Resource Committee, the local group, which was in charge of designating which rural lands near Bear Creek Valley cities were most important for agriculture. These meetings largely took place between 2000 and 2002, but the group continued to meet sporadically until 2005. The GIS data used in my analysis of soil types, land cover, property ownership,

zoning, and taxation were provided by Jackson County, the Oregon Department of Forestry, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Setting

Jackson County is located in southern Oregon, west of the Cascades and north of the California border and the Klamath National Forest. More than eight percent of the land in the county is considered forest resource land and slightly more than fifty percent of lands are publicly owned. Lumber and farming were the predominant economic drivers in the region for much of the 20th century. However forestry and lumber industries have faced declines in recent decades as rural restructuring took hold. Increased international competition, technological innovations that reduced need for labor, and consolidation reduced the number of jobs available in agriculture, timber, and mining.

In the late 1980s this region became a hotspot for one of the most well know land use conflicts in the western U.S., the "spotted owl wars." The conflict over the fate of old growth forests and logging on public lands was fueled by the large number of newly arrived urban to rural migrants who brought with them new attitudes towards conservation and public goods. These included many idealistic back-to-the-land counter culture types and middle class homeowners.

Less well known outside the region is the equally contentious politics of farmland conservation, brought on by rapid rural gentrification and unintentionally exacerbated by the passage of comprehensive land use planning. Comprehensive land use regulation had provisions for moderate and low income housing within towns and cities, but limited subdivision and the building of new homes on rural

parcels, pushing low income residents out of rural areas and into towns (Brown 1995). Initial iterations of comprehensive planning in Jackson County did little to slow gentrification and low-density sprawl on farmland. New arrivals continued to trade in moderate homes in California's inflated real estate markets for large rural properties in Southern Oregon and build palatial homes on them. Depreciation in the agricultural infrastructure, increasing global competition, and the passage of worker and environmental protection laws led to rising operational costs and declining profits for farmers. This, combined with an aging farmer population, led many small commercial farmers to sell their land. The combination of declining rural industries, rapid growth and gentrification, and restrictive land use regulations has exacerbated broad political divides in the region over how best to balance private property rights and public goods in the governance of land use.

The early proliferation of rural sprawl in Jackson County can be attributed to both the physical geography of the region and the historical development of the regional economy. In contrast to the wide valley floors and rich, deep soils of the Willamette Valley or California's Great Central Valley, Jackson County is largely mountainous and the rich soils needed for most crop production lie in narrow bands along the riparian flood plains of the many small rivers and streams in the region. Towns and cities grew up on the relatively flat floor of the Bear Creek Valley, covering much of the best soil in the region. The valley's Mediterranean climate and

location in the rain shadow of the Siskiyou Mountains made easy access to water key challenge for early agriculturalists.³⁴

Outside these narrow bands of riparian soil, much of the soil in the region is rocky and sloping, more appropriate for less intensive uses such as grazing cattle. Yet the early parcelization of the landscape by real estate speculators left few areas large enough to support a commercial scale cattle operation. Rather, marginal lands provided low income residents the opportunity to creatively piece together a living from a mix of land based subsistence activities and seasonal work in the timber and agricultural industries. By the 1980s, when Jackson County's first comprehensive plan was put into place, the Bear Creek Valley was already covered in a patchwork of moderately size commercial farms and small residential parcels. This mix of small holders and rural gentrification with commercial agricultural production in the region made regulating the rural landscape in the region a highly complex and controversial process.

Resistance to statewide land use policies has been longstanding in Jackson County. The passage of Senate Bill 100 only served to increase the rate of rural subdivision as land owners took advantage of the delay between the passage of the law and the creation of the county's comprehensive plan (Aklin 1995). Even after the plan was put in place in 1983 the county continued to approve dwellings on lands it considered marginal for farm and forest production, violating state policy and provoking a lawsuit by the Jackson County Citizens League, a local watchdog group. For several years, DLCD seized control of Jackson County's planning.

34. Medford averages about 18 inches of precipitation a year, a comparable amount to the Sacramento Valley.

Reverence for private property rights and aversion for government interference is common in Southern Oregon, an isolated rural region that attracts residents looking for an independent lifestyle.³⁵ Politically both new arrivals and long term residents tend to appreciate independence and self-reliance. Negative attitudes towards statewide policies can be attributed, at least in part, to predominantly conservative politics in the region. While the region has a history of conservative values, historically there have also been strong class and political divisions in the region. These have only increased as new arrivals both embraced the cultural norms of the area and brought with them their own variation of those norms. To a certain extent, residents on both the political left and right have shared a distrust of government and desire for a rural lifestyle emphasizing community and mutual aid over regulation. Walker and Hurley, drawing from an essay by SOU historian Jeff Lalande, call this tendency towards independent thinking and distaste for big government "an ornery tradition" (2011). On the other hand rising population densities have increased conflicts between neighbors over land uses and led some residents to question the benefits of completely unrestricted private property rights.

Yet a simplistic explanation of political conflict in Jackson County, based on differences in political outlooks alone, hides broader issues that make the preservation of farmland in the region challenging and drive dissatisfaction with land use regulation. While there is broad agreement with the goal of preserving

35. This is the region that spawned the State of Jefferson independence movement.

farmland and supporting agricultural economies in the region, the best way to accomplish these goals remains a subject of ongoing debate. For many in the region, the statewide system of farm zoning designated far too much land in Southern Oregon as valuable farm or timberland, resulting in many lands of marginal economic value being un-developable for other uses. For many others, the state system doesn't go far enough since the goal is to direct growth and minimize the loss of farmland, not to limit or prevent growth onto farmland altogether.

Contradictions of Farmland Preservation in Jackson County

Continuing growth is inevitable in most residents' framings of the future of Jackson County . The question is simply what form that growth will take. There is also broad agreement that farming and particularly farmland should be preserved as much as possible as growth proceeds. The question becomes which farmland should be preserved and in particular, which landowners should benefit when land is converted from exclusive farm use to urban zoning.

Oregon's comprehensive planning places farmland in a protected category, but determining which lands should be protected is no simple matter. One of the key tools planners use to determine which soils are the most valuable for farming is the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soil classification system. The NRCS classification system divides soils into eight broad classifications, ranked from 1 to 8. In the 1930s soils scientists at the NRCS created the soil capabilities classification system as a simplified way to describe the physical characteristics of soils. NRCS soil scientists worked with farmers to create soil conservation plans for their properties and the classification system was a simple method for understanding which soils

can be used for crops without being rapidly degraded and which soils should be limited to grazing or left undisturbed (Helms 1992). Class 1-4 soils are considered arable and can be used for cultivation. Class one and two soils are commonly discussed as the most nutrient rich and able to grow the broadest range of crops. In Oregon planning it is these Type 1 and 2 soils that are most likely to be considered "high value" and contested if they are included lands designated for development or future urban growth.

The question of which plots of land should be preserved for future farming is a source of significant disagreement between state planners and local farmers in Southern Oregon. When the first comprehensive plan for Jackson County was made after the passage of Senate bill 100, only a small portion of the lands being farmed in the area were Class 1 or Class 2 soils. Large areas of land were designed for exclusive farm use based on their current and historic use for farming.

The Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving process committed to a process that prioritized the preservation of lands in the "commercial agricultural base" from urban growth over the next fifty years. The emphasis on the "commercial agricultural base" is consistent with statewide planning system to preserve farm and forest land for commercial uses. However, the RPS process relied on a committee of local experts to determine which land should be considered part of the "commercial agricultural base" rather than focusing specifically on the NRCS soil classification system.

Farmers, as landowners, are in a contradictory position in relation to the use values of their land and its potential exchange value. As farmers the potential of the

land to grow crops essential to making a living, however, the market value of the land is also a key asset in case of economic hardship. Because of what is perceived to be an unfair advantage in the land market, caused by the suppression of agricultural land values by Oregon's comprehensive planning system, there are a number of discourses around the economic difficulties of farming that become central to local discussions around the fairness of the land use planning system. Rural landowners often discuss the rural-urban divide in Oregon and how urban people simply don't understand the realities of rural life in Southern Oregon. Land owners and private property rights advocates engage discourses that challenge the validity of Oregon's statewide zoning and engage the idea of local expertise as best suited to determine which lands are suited for continued farming.

The Bear Creek RPS process began after an attempt to identify areas around Medford for urban expansion broke down. According to locals, the state priority system for which lands should be urbanized was forcing growth onto some of the last remaining high value farmland in the valley. This is because as cities grow, they are first required to look at areas of rural residences as potential areas for city growth and only take in high value farmland if no other land can be identified for growth. Around Medford the best farmland lies to the west, in an area of mixed small farm parcels and rural residential parcels. The smaller size of the farm parcels and their potential conflict with their urban neighbors means that there is some logic according to the Oregon system to converting some rural residential lands and some nearby small farm parcels to urban uses (see Figure 18). However, that would have meant continuing to pave over some of the richest soils in valley. Many

involved in the Medford planning process felt (correctly or not³⁶) that they were being required by the state to grow in this pattern despite the objections of rural landowners and Jackson County.

The thing with the priority of lands is if you've got a string of exception lands that go out into farmlands you could figure it in such a way that you could actually bring that in a lot of good farmland encircled by exception land. That would be one of the higher priorities. Jackson county has a lot of exception lands sprinkled throughout its farmlands-- and it seems to coexist fairly well-- so basically what you're doing is upsetting that balance. And you could be forcing cities to take good viable farmland in because of the geometry of these exception lands. That's something that they didn't want and they pointed to the area between Jacksonville in Medford as a prime example of that occurring if you if you stuck directly to the priority of land system itself. -
Local planner

Beyond the belief that statewide planning was forcing growth into areas of high value farmland, locals, and particularly farmers often bring up a number of other issues with how farmland is regulated under statewide planning. Farmers expressed concerns over the accuracy of official maps used for determining soil types and also the ability of the NRCS system of soil classification to capture the nuanced realities of the soil on their particular farm and its actual capabilities.

36. State planners and 1000 Friends representatives claimed that the cities could have chosen to grow in a different pattern without engaging in the RPS process.

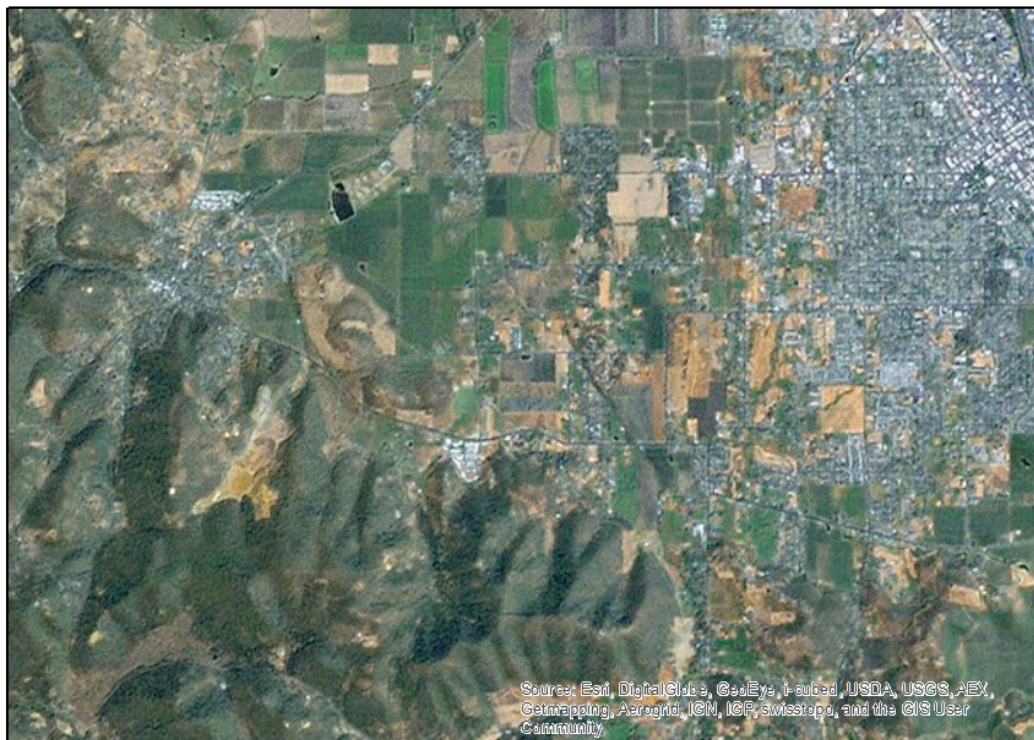
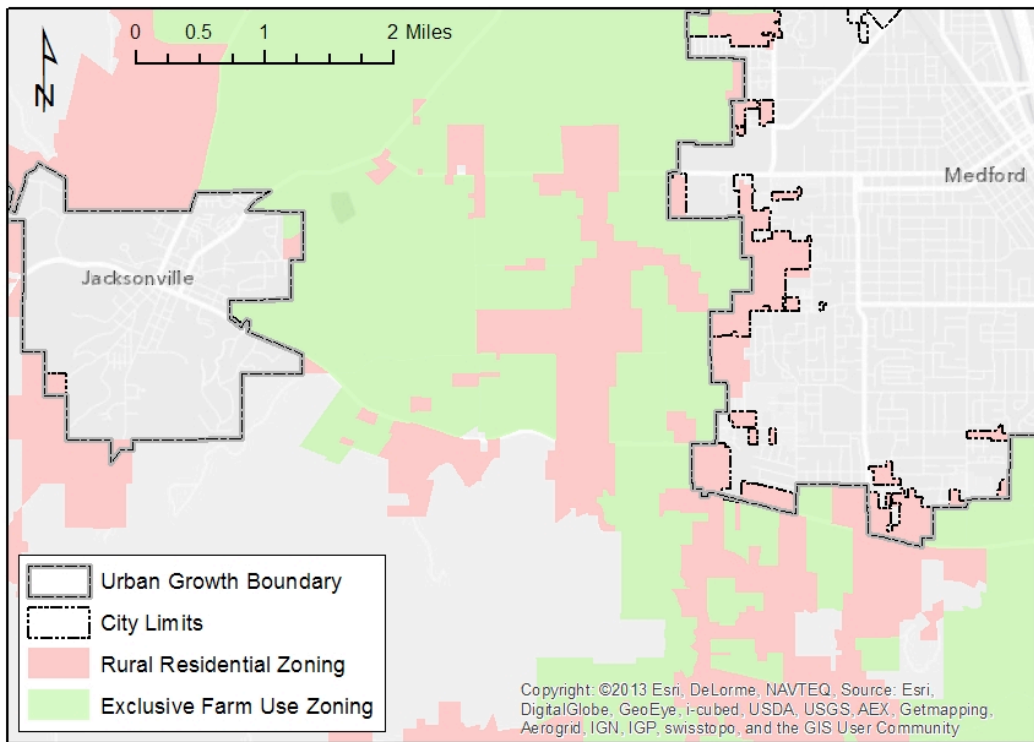


Figure 18: Rural and Farm Zoning west of Medford

These concerns are so often heard by state planners and other defenders of the system that they are usually dismissed as myths or cynical attempts to get around land use laws for personal gain. While these discourses about problems with how land was zoned for exclusive farm use have certainly been picked up by opponents of the system and used by speculators or farmers looking to profit from the sale and development of their land, in my interviews even farmers who were strong supporters of the farmland protection often brought up issues with the how farm zoning was applied and the restrictions it imposed on their ability to make use of their lands.

Soil mapping Errors

Whether they supported the state land use regulations or not, many farmers agreed that the map used by the county planning office was not accurate in relation to the actual capabilities of the soils on their land. Since soil classification maps are often a key factor in the permitting of a new residences or other non-farm uses, the accuracy of these maps is a significant issue for landowners.

The soil map that they still use for appraisal purposes was developed way back when they did the original soil survey and that is still used taxlot by taxlot. In fact its an old map thats followed in part that they guard with their lives down at the appraisers office but that is still used to determine the tariff on various taxlots...ancient, ancient old information. There has been no recent inventory of suitable or high value farmland, so the current mapping is way out of date. We have acres that are considered Type 1, high value and acres that are not but the mapping is not accurate. - *Jackson county farmer, describing his frustration at the soil mapping.*

While farmers often indicate that official soil maps are old and inaccurate and so should be remapped, there may also simply be a scalar mismatch between the NRCS desired levels of accuracy and the expectations of landowners. The NRCS

report on the Jackson County soil survey states that "the minimum size of map unit delineations was 5 acres" meaning that the map was not intended to be accurate when examining soil patterns in areas smaller than 5 acres (NRCS 1993).

Because the permitting of particular uses may depend on proving the non-productivity of the land, landowners frequently employ their own independent soil surveyors to provide evidence of the inaccuracies of soil mapping on their property. The accuracy of independent surveys are then viewed with suspicion by watchdog groups and disagreements over soil types can become quite controversial. In January 2000, for example, a local watchdog group, the Jackson County Citizens League trespassed onto private property in order to obtain soil samples to refute the landowner's claims. They were able to successfully block development on that property, but were then sued for damages by the landowner for the trespass.

Soil classification and actual uses

In addition to the limitations of the NRCS soil map in terms of the scale of the map, farmers in Jackson County often discuss numerous factors not captured by the soil classification system. Even though the soil classifications are based on fairly stable concepts like the amount of nutrients in the soil and the soil texture, the implications of these physical characteristics for particular crops and particular farmers vary significantly.

The dominant agricultural crop in the valley for much of the 20th century was pears. The Bear Creek Valley is one of the largest pear growing districts in the U.S. The dominance of pears in the region rather than other tree fruits is directly related to the ability of pear trees to grow successfully in heavy clay soils.

Some of the more productive soils for pears have more clay or more silt in them. Our hill in the pasture was mapped as Brader-Debenger series which in some areas is limited in productivity due to stoniness and shallowness and in other areas it is less than three feet of soil over clay layer which acts as...it holds the water on the surface so it is not as well drained. But if you take that soil that you have got three feet over the clay layer and burm it up it is wonderful for growing pears and I have six acres of pears on that soil and it produces some of the best looking pears I have got but it is mapped as Class 5 even though the whole hill and everything 70 - 90 some acres is classified as Brader-Debenger and maybe the hill has a problem with stoniness and some of the pasture with shallow soil, but there is probably 25 acres that is good productive soil out there even though it is mapped that way. *-Local pear farmer discussing the soils on his farm.*

According to this farmer, pears can be grown successfully on soils that might be considered less valuable for farmland conservation. At the same time, other growers complain about soil limitations not recorded in the NRCS classification system. For example, a lack of available irrigation water or plant nutrition problem called chlorosis.

At various depths below the soil surface in various parts of the valley there is a layer of lime, essentially chalk. And I have been in orchards where the first two or three feet, digging, looked great and the trees grow great for the first few years. And then when you get three feet down, for example, just outcrops of chalk. It ties up iron, so that the trees can't get iron and become very unproductive. Some of the area in the southern margin of the proposed 50 year growth boundary for Medford included land like that. And a shallow crop could grow there, but it is not very promising. *- Agency staff, describing the lime induced chlorosis problem with some soils in the valley.*

Yet claims of irrigation problems or chlorosis are often met with skepticism by planners and conservationists because the financial incentive for land owners is so large.

Today pear growing in the region is declining as older growers retire and older orchards are torn out and not replanted. For many in the valley, the future of agriculture as an industry is wine grapes. Yet wine grapes are also a highly unusual

crop in terms of the economics of production. In order to produce the concentrated flavors needed for high priced wines, growers reduce production on each vine. In order to do so growers limit irrigation and prefer nutrient poor, well-drained soils located on slopes rather than the richest soils of the alluvial valley bottoms. So neither of the dominant crops in the region are best suited to the lands that state regulations say are highest priority for protection.

Zoning "Mistakes"

Farmers and other rural land owners also often express frustration with what they feel are zoning errors. In some cases they believe that their land should never have been zoned for agricultural use. In this discourse only lands highly productive soils should be zoned exclusive farm use. In these discussions the issue is not a mistake in the soil mapping, but rather a perceived mismatch between the farm zoning and the capabilities of the soils. For many land owners, there is a sense that if their land is zoned for farm use they should be able to earn a profit from farming that land. If the land is only suitable for limited activities such as low intensity grazing, there is a sense that it was a mistake for it to have been zoned for exclusive agricultural use.

Defining the "Commercial Agricultural Base" and Debating the Future of Farming

The strain of a number of economic challenges in relation to farming and continued amenity migration and gentrification on farmland have contributed to the current climate towards statewide planning in southern Oregon, placing pressure on state agencies and the legislature to devolve control over farmland conservation

decisions to local authorities. In Jackson County, the Bear Creek RPS process appointed a group of local agricultural experts to the Resource Lands Review Committee (RLRC). The RLRC was in charge of reviewing all the lands that cities were proposing as potential new areas for urban growth and deciding which lands should be considered part of the "commercial agricultural land base."

In designating lands, the committee considered a number of factors. The committee agreed that soil, access to irrigation water, and microclimate were the most important factors. But there was less agreement about other economic, site, or locational issues such as parcel size, neighboring land uses, topography, current zoning. Early on in their deliberations, the committee worked with GIS staff who created models based on the criteria they prioritized. However, they rapidly came to prioritize what they called a "heuristic"³⁷ thinking, relying on the life experiences and collective expertise of the group rather than focusing on a complex system of rankings or quantifications.

While staff and planners often sought to keep discussions focused and limited to the task of designating particular areas part of the commercial agricultural base, members of the RLRC and testifying land owners often took the opportunity to discuss the broad social and economic changes they saw taking place and to consider the future of agriculture in the region. While the restructuring in the agricultural economy and the challenges for farmers are broadly agreed upon, this agreement did not lead to a common vision for of the future of agriculture in the region and the potential steps to support a healthy farming economy.

37. RLRC meeting 10/24/2000

Defining what constitutes land within the commercial agricultural base was a challenge for the committee. Much of the best agricultural soils in the valley are already covered by urban levels of development and much of the remaining lands within areas zoned for exclusive farm use are divided into such small parcels that making a living from farming would be difficult.

The main commercial crop for the region, pears, has experienced a major decline and consolidation as global prices have stagnated and farmers' expenses continued to grow. Most pear growers in the region are retiring, leasing or selling their orchards to the few remaining large producers. As a result, the needed infrastructure for packing and shipping fruit was in serious decline. For some, the changes in the agricultural industry simply signal the gradual but inevitable end of commercial agriculture in a rapidly urbanizing region.

Others see the growth in vineyards and wineries as a new beginning and direction for agricultural lands. By 2001, there were 78 vineyards and 1334 acres of vines planted in the Rogue Valley AVA, which includes parts of Jackson County and neighboring Josephine County. This represents a huge growth from 1987, the first year vineyards were surveyed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture, when there were only 305 acres planted in the region (Jones and Light 2001). A growing number of wine industry entrepreneurs are betting on the future of wine in the region. "I know that a lot of people think that wine grapes are the future. There is caution on one part, because the market could become saturated but there are a lot of people who are saying it can be made to work and you have to get a critical volume in this valley before the brand of this valley can become known for there to

be a market." -RLRC member discussing the potential for vineyards in the region. One horticultural expert claimed that about 80% of orchard lands in the valley could be used to grow wine grapes.

Yet the viability of the wine industry is something that many pear farmers question. Some members of the RLRC brought up research that points to global overproduction of wine grapes and openly wondered whether growers are able to make a profit. Additionally, while the number of acres and the number of vineyards are continuing to grow, the average size of vineyards is declining, and many in the region see the proliferation of hobby vineyards over commercial production.

For some, commercial farming by definition would mean making a living from farming. However, there is broad awareness in the valley of the many challenges of earning a living exclusively from farming. The RLRC committee engaged in broad discussions of the challenges farmers face in making a living. One of the broadly agreed upon concepts discussed by the RLRC was the creation of an "enhanced agricultural zone" that would "enhance the economic viability of farms and their sustainability long term" through various protection measures or enhancements. Discussions of these potential measures included many of the tools used to promote farmland preservation in other parts of the world, including buffering between farms and urban developments, transfer of development rights, tax breaks, and easier permitting processes for direct marketing on farms (farm stands, wine tasting rooms). The restrictions on the types of uses permitted on land zoned EFU were also commented on in terms of hurting farmers attempts to vertically integrate their businesses and remain profitable. Many within the agricultural community

expressed the feeling that farmers' who need money to retire or simply can no longer make a living on a parcel should be allowed to sell land for development.

Perhaps one of most divisive issues when discussing the future of farming was the relationship between "commercial" growers and hobby farmers. Since hobby farmers are, at least in principle, also growing agricultural products, some on the committee believed that small agricultural lots could potentially be part of a system of buffers between urban growth and commercial agricultural parcels. Many saw part-time farmers as part of "commercial" agriculture and so their property worthy of protection from growth. Even new farmers who would like to be making a full-time living from farming often take years to build their businesses and may not be making a profit in a particular year or may not be making enough to support their household without additional outside income. However, other farmers complain that hobby farmers are actually the source of the most complaints and conflicts in contrast to urban neighbors. In general, the division between hobby farming and commercial farming is unclear and the idea of only supporting farmers whose main occupation was farming is untenable since the vast majority of farmers in Jackson County, like the rest of the U.S., are part-time or retired from other occupations (see Figure 19).

The committee frequently heard testimony from landowners as to the productivity of the properties for agriculture. The validity of that testimony however, was colored by owners' positionality within the agricultural community and that person's ability to speak to their efforts to make the property productive. The presence of speculative owners is widely acknowledged among those active in

land use issues in the region. In some cases owners were very open about their status as investors and still argued that the land they had purchased was not productive, maintaining that their intentions when they bought the property should have no influence on the committee's decisions.

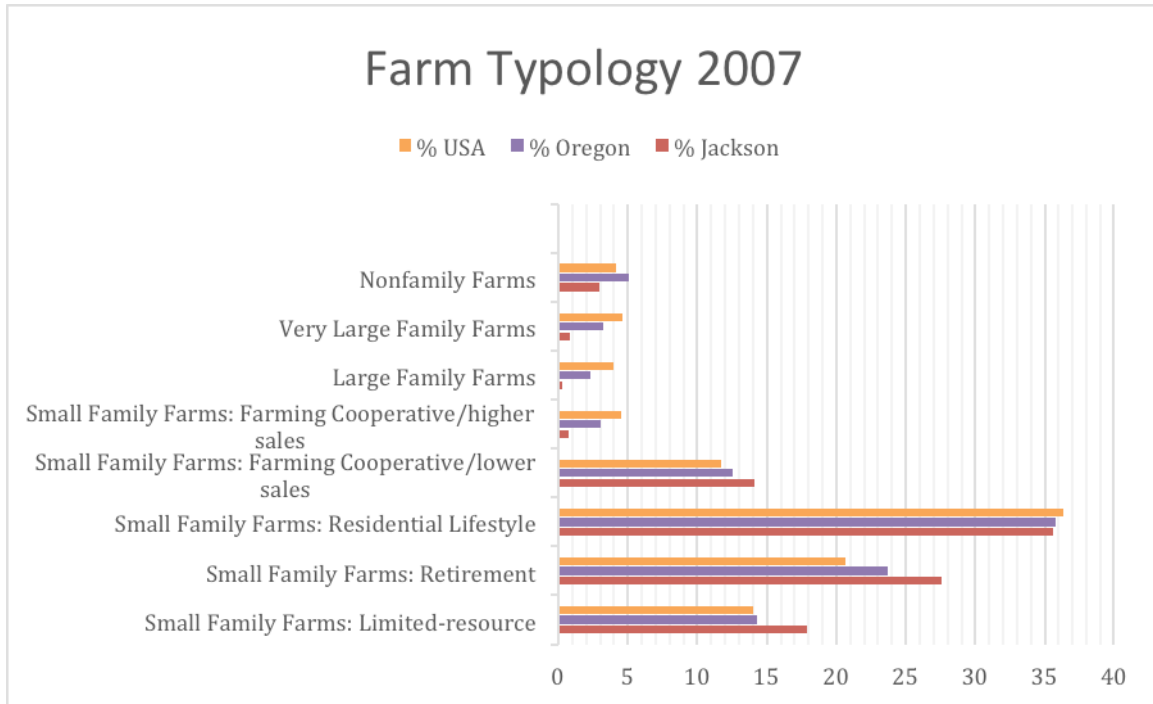


Figure 19: USDA farm typology. See Appendix B for definitions of these farm types.

There was a huge influence on the part of individual land owners and that included a couple of key speculative owners, those who had come up and bought up large tracts of land with the thought that they could influence the process to bring those lands into the urban growth areas. They were really active, on the rural lands committee they came in and just railed on the committee and this was a committee of professionals who were technically inclined and were not use to this and I'll tell you, it was a real difficult process for many of the people on the committee to deal with. Many of the people on the committee were ready to drop out because they were being harassed essentially." - *Committee member commenting on the influence of landowners in the decision making process.*

Yet distinguishing between speculators and farmers who have honestly made an effort to put their land to productive uses and found serious bio-physical limitations requires more than a knowledge of the art and science of agriculture, it also requires a knowledge of the intentions of the specific landowner. Other landowners maintained that while a particular plot of land was no longer productive because of soil problems, microclimate issues, or increasing conflicts with neighbors, they intended to buy a more productive agricultural property in the region if their property became eligible for development. One farmer, whose property was located next to a city and ended up in a future growth area explained it like this: "I mean we are trying to utilize that land, to make it as productive as we can. But those forty acre farms, unless you are doing vegetable or something very intensive, you can't generate a living income...If the housing market rebounds a little bit the odds are I can make a profit selling my property for enough money to actually buy a [larger] farm where I could have a viable operation."

Even well known growers with long family histories in the region were still balancing the productive value of their lands with its potential value if it became developable. One of the largest pear growers in the region waged an active campaign directed at the media and local politicians arguing that the only way his business could survive was if some of his land was designated for future urban growth. When coming to testify in front of a county commissioners' meeting on the RPS plan, he brought with him approximately 20 employees who all dutifully testified on his behalf about the importance of the business to their lives and their long histories working with this grower. Another large pear grower, who was active

in the RPS process, was widely criticized by many in the agricultural community for making open statements in the press about his dismal view of the future of agriculture in the region and denouncing the work of the RLRC committee in order to influence politicians to include more of his farmland in the urban growth areas.

Intraclass Conflict and Farmland Preservation

Conflict among Jackson County farmers about the future of agriculture in the region should be seen not only in light of value differences, but also as a response to ongoing processes of rural gentrification that Oregon's planning system has had limited success in preventing. In Jackson County aging orchards are providing their owners with decreasing returns. Some growers have been able to replant older orchards, but large capital investments are required and potential profits from pear farming are declining. Because of the regulatory limitations on development on farmlands, farm owners are left with limited options in terms of realizing returns from their properties.

The appreciation of the land was part of the reason for being in agriculture-- because if agriculture didn't make any money, at least the land values would be there, so you could sell and retire. Now you can sell and go starve to death, live on Social Security. It's terrible now. We've been able-- because of our marketing and culture-- we've been able to survive. It certainly hasn't been easy -Pear farmer discussing the impact of comprehensive land use planning on agricultural land values.

The literature on Oregon's comprehensive planning system has shown evidence of significant if perhaps moderate impacts in terms of limiting sprawling growth (Gosnell et al. 2011). However, comprehensive planning includes a fairly limited set of tools for protecting agricultural land from gentrification. In Jackson

county several factors have converged to promote gentrification on land zoned for exclusive farm use in particular large scale processes of capital investment, depreciation, and reinvestment interacting with the particularities of this place and the governance regime.

Neil Smith's rent gap theory (1987) describes the process of gentrification in urban settings as beginning with disinvestment as neighborhood housing stocks age. In Jackson County, aging orchards and the high cost of replanting have discouraged pear farmers from reinvesting in a crop which has become less profitable in recent decades. Global competition in the pear market has increased as new pear growing regions have opened up in China and South America. In the U.S. pear consumption has been falling for decades. Environmental and labor regulations have raised the cost of production for farmers in the U.S. Rising transportation costs have negatively impacted producers in Jackson County in particular as the county is significantly further from major population centers and transportation hubs than other pear growing districts in the Northwest and California.

Eliza Darling (2005) points to a strong role for state-regulation in producing a rent gap and gentrified housing in the rural region around Adirondack Park rather than a decline in resource industries in the region. Similarly Oregon's comprehensive land use planning system has played a significant role in shaping and even promoting particular types of gentrification in Jackson County. Because farm zoning makes land undevelopable, farmland retains relatively low prices per acre. Speculators and gentrifiers, from outside the local area, benefit when they purchase land from the lower land prices provided by farm zoning. They are able to

buy large acreages in Southern Oregon and build palatial homes for the same price they might pay for a small home or apartment in the inflated residential markets of the San Francisco Bay Area or Silicon Valley. Farm zoning in Oregon produces a sort of low-pressure area in land markets and amenity migrants rush in to fill that void. As a result, gentrification on lands zoned EFU is, paradoxically, proceeding more quickly than on lands zoned for either urban uses or rural residences (see Figure 20).

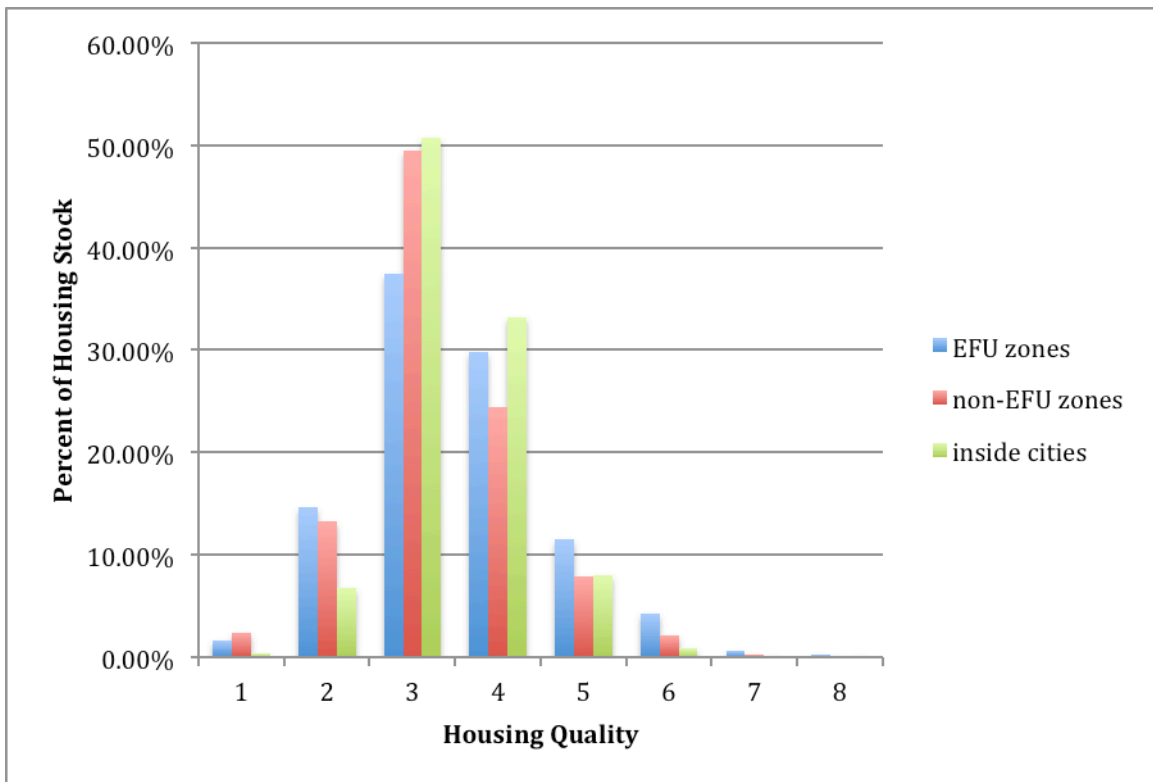


Figure 20: This graph is based on a GIS analysis of assessors' codes of quality of single-family homes. The higher the number on the x-axis, the higher the assessor's ranking of the home's building qualities. There are 583 homes of quality 7 and 8 in Jackson County. Of these, 457 are located in rural areas.

Oregon planners have attempted to limit gentrification on farmland by enacting income requirements before farmers can build new homes on land zoned for exclusive farm use. This has the effect of limiting the proliferation of new houses

within farm zones, but does not limit remodeling of existing farmhouses by new amenity oriented owners. One of the farmers on the RLRC committee described the remodeling activities of his neighbors:

I was on my way home the other night and I was looking at that stable up there on Wagner Creek. I don't know how much money they put into that! It's changing you know, it was a dirt-poor piece of ground and it looks like two parcels consolidated. And in that part of the valley people have caught on: 'Don't fight that \$80,000 or \$40,000 criteria for building a farm house. Go buy a rundown farmhouse with 20 or 30 acres and get a remodel permit.' A neighbor of mine had a 1200 sq. foot home, he's now living in a 3400 sq ft home, a remodel and that's what's going on up there. And a huge stable, I can't even guess how much money went into that. Pears are way down, people have different ideas about the activity. A lot of farms are family style. It almost looks like a sort of a 4-H setup, mixed use.

Frustration at the limitations placed on them by Oregon's planning system can be seen particularly as a form of intra-class conflict (Philips 1993, Cloke and Thrift 1987, Hines 2010) in which existing production-oriented land owners, who saw themselves as "ruling this valley" now see themselves as losing out to a wave of new arrivals with capital to invest. One farm manager described the tension between pear farmers and those in the wine industry like this:

Pear growers as a group have been more conservative and more development oriented. They historically owned a lot of land and due to the economics of the pear industry for many years, felt that a much better use for their land would be development rather than farming. And it has been a stated goal, and I think there is some validity to it, that the land base that they have is much larger than what they are really able to market. And the cost of replanting was quite high so being able to sell off land for development and put that money back into orchards was a goal of many growers. Some were able to make that work and some took the money and ran. It was definitely a very tough business to be in. Some of the land was sold to prospective vineyard owners. I think a lot of that is really economically viable. For a number of years there was this kind of friction between vineyard owners and pear growers because there was this feeling that it would be just as tough to get going and for vineyards to be economically viable. And there was a lot of the people in the wine industry

that had the goal of protecting the land base, not developing it. And the pear growers really wanted to develop it, so there is that tension back and forth.

The devolution of responsibility for designating which farmlands will convert to urban uses and which will remain in farm uses, provides a tool for local land owners, who view themselves and other long-term owners as unfairly disadvantaged by the system, to realize value on their own property and to limit the ability of a new group of land owners, including speculators and gentrifiers, to benefit.

Discussion and Conclusion

The Bear Creek RPS process has now been concluded with relative success after more than 12 years of work by local stakeholders to build a plan that could be supported by participating municipalities, Jackson County and DLCD but would not be challenged by either state planners or watchdog groups such as 1000 Friends of Oregon (see Figure 21 for a map of current urbanization and “future growth areas”). Although the specifics of this case are unique to Oregon, the challenges of governing growth and development in traditionally agricultural regions facing potentially sprawling urban growth are broadly applicable. As this case points out, it is not simply a matter of sorting speculators and amenity oriented new arrivals from “authentic” agricultural producers. A number of studies have pointed out the paradoxical interests of amenity migrants who both contribute to sprawl and are often the loudest voices decrying further development on rural lands (Taylor and Cadiuex 2013, Walker and Fortmann 2003). Agricultural producers can also embody complex and contradictory positionalities as both authentic representatives of

farming interests and as potential speculators. As one grower put it: "In the resource community one faction says look we - agriculture has never been a high tech, high margin industry. That's just the way it is, it's long term. The other faction says, if we can convert, we can continue to capitalize the balance of the operations. I think we saw a little bit of that on the committee going both ways."

The complex and competing interests of rural land owners makes the task of producing policies to conserve agricultural lands while also preserving private property rights Herculean in all but the most gentrified of landscapes. In Napa County, California, one of the most highly valued agricultural landscapes in the world, the value of agricultural land for continued production and tourist consumption makes it politically feasible to pass strict protections for agricultural land and strictly limit urban encroachment (Walker 2007). The work of the RLRC committee in designating lands in the "commercial agricultural base" and the concerns of Jackson County farmers and rural land owners over the impacts of comprehensive planning on their ability to successfully farm point out the challenge of designing farm conservation policies that both preserve agricultural lands and support farmers. It is frequently unclear which activities will be compatible with neighboring farms. This can be seen, for example in recent debates over the number of events that wineries located on resource lands are allowed to host. Senate Bill 841 was passed in 2013 and limits the number of non-wine related events (parties, weddings, concerts) that wineries can hold each year, attempting to ensure that land in farm zones is primarily being used for farming and production agricultural products.

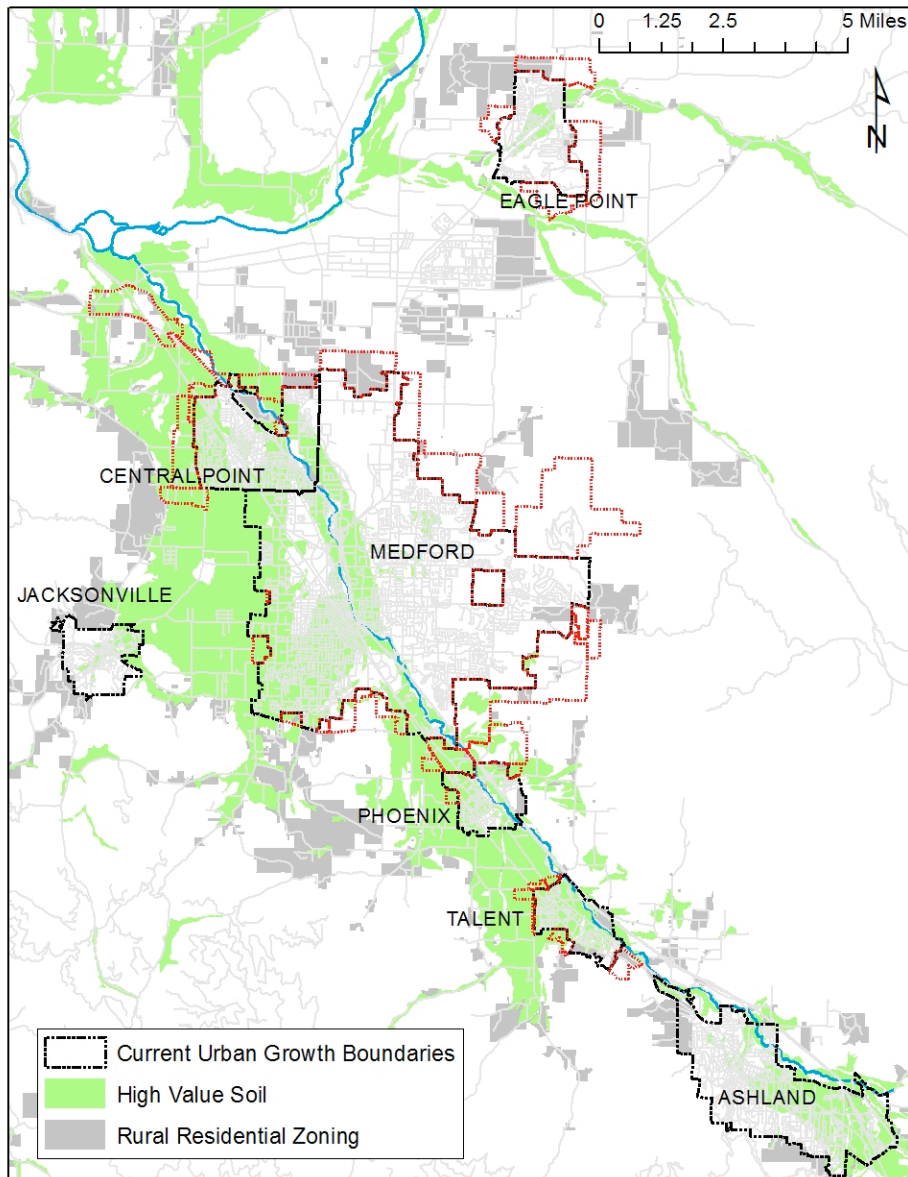


Figure 21: Map of current and future urbanization and high value farm soil.

Yet while no one challenged the plan, in 2010 the Oregon legislature passed modifications to the RPS statute to ensure that further regional problem solving processes would be less comprehensive in scope and less protracted in their development. The long-term impacts of this plan have yet to be seen and the future

of agriculture in the county is still uncertain. How fast will population growth and urbanization proceed? Can farming co-exist with expanding cities? Does the future of Jackson County look more like the Napa Valley or more like Silicon Valley?

Although this article has focuses on the Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving process and struggles over which farmland in the Bear Creek Valley should be protected from development, efforts to redefine "high value" farmland have not abated with the successful conclusion of the Bear Creek RPS. In 2011 and 2012, bills were introduced into the Oregon legislature that would have allowed Jackson, Josephine, and Douglas counties to create their own regional definitions of what constitutes valuable farm and forest lands. Neither of these bills were passed, but in 2012, Governor Kitzhaber signed an executive order allocating \$550,000 for a "Southern Oregon Pilot Program" under which the three counties are working to create alternative definitions of what constitutes valuable resource lands, correct what are called "mapping errors" made when the county comprehensive plans were first put into place, and create "revised methods for the authorization of dwellings" on resource lands.

Like the regional problem solving statute, the Southern Oregon Pilot Program allows the state government to counter attempts to dismantle statewide planning through calls for local control, through a compromise under which county governments must cooperate and agree on a set of guidelines in order to submit them to state agencies for approval. In Jackson County, the RPS process has largely settled the question of which lands are likely to be available for urban development in areas adjacent to cities. However, there are also wide swaths of land away from

cities that are zoned for exclusive farm use. These lands could be opened up for parcelization and exurban style low-density development if comprehensive planning opponents are successful in redefining what constitutes "high value" farmland in Southern Oregon.

Efforts like these to weaken land use controls through more local control point to the continued need for supporters of state growth controls to work with agricultural producers and rural landowners to find ways to address their concerns. Many of the economic issues faced by farmers, such as access to credit and assistance with startup costs for new farmers, are beyond the scope of land use regulation, but are essential to the continued success of both agriculture and growth control in Oregon. Supporting farming maybe the best way out of this sticky situation for Oregon's planning system.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The previous three chapters constitute a partial record of my answers to the research questions posed in the introduction of this document:

- Why is there pressure to rescale land use governance in Oregon?
- What is the role of the urban-rural divide in this process?
- What are the implications of this localization for land use planning in Oregon?

I say that these are partial answers because these chapters touch on some, but not all of the issues that shape land use politics in Jackson County.

Rescaling

The pressure for increased local control over land use planning in Jackson County is more complex than the common discourses on rescaling in Oregon would suggest. For supporters of Oregon's statewide land use system rescaling represents a significant threat to the stability of that system. As a result, suggestions that state planners fail to understand local conditions are met with skepticism and derision. There is no question that private property rights activists are using arguments for local control as a conscious strategy for weakening the state system.

Political discussions of this issue often focus on whether the physical geography of the various regions of Oregon justifies variations in how land use is governed. While there is no doubt that Jackson County's physical geography is significantly different than that of the Willamette Valley, my argument is not that

these physical differences necessarily call for a different governance strategy, but rather that the physical geography, along with the historical development of the region and political economy, shape the local culture and attitudes towards land use governance in the region. In particular, the economic marginality of agriculture in the region and the long history of tourism and gentrified rural settlement make the strong division between urban and rural land uses imposed by state regulation appear to many locals as disruptive of the historical governance regime and land use conventions.

The three preceding papers also illustrate the complexity of scalar interactions in environmental governance. In relation to scale, this case makes two points. First, that the local is not simply in contrast to the global or a site for domination, but rather that forces at the local scale can influence environmental governance at the regional level.

Urban-Rural Interactions

One of the key discourses that reinforces the calls for increased local control in Jackson County relates to the urban-rural dichotomy and Jackson County's place in relation to that divided. While places like Jackson County are commonly thought of as rural, these places are increasingly dominated by extended urbanization. That is, these places are part of global processes of urbanization and dominated by urban desires and urban economic forces. The fabric of urban society is rapidly thickening in such locations with significant ecological and social consequences.

The three articles that make up this dissertation have each centered in various ways on the urban-rural dichotomy, which has been central to both the success of

and challenges to Oregon's land use planning system. The first paper argued that from the start of Jackson County's development as a region there was a different sort of interaction between urban or exurban desires and rural economies. The second paper outlined a theoretical framework for understanding the interactions between urban and rural spaces and ideals using the theory of extended urbanization to understand these interactions. The third paper closely examined how the planning system works for farmers in Jackson County and how urban desires and urban ideas of farmland conservation tend to dominate over a more nuanced portrayal provided by the farmers themselves.

In total, these papers make a case for the utility of a theory of extended urbanization in understanding how urbanization impacts historically rural regions. At the same time I have argued that the concept of the rural has continuing relevance despite the rapid urbanization of global populations and the increasing dominance of what Lefebvre calls global urban society.

Bear Creek RPS

On November 12th 2012 the Land Conservation and Development Commission, the panel that oversees Oregon's land use policies, approved the Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving regional plan. The final approval of this plan validated work going back approximately 20 years to the start of the Our Region project in the early 1990s. By 2012 the approval of this regional plan was a forgone conclusion. The effort had taken on enough inertia that the details of the plan were not at issue. Rather, there was overwhelming investment in the plan by the city governments involved, even among those city councilors who normally oppose statewide

planning. For LCDC, opposing the Bear Creek plan would have meant confirming opponent's arguments about the system's inflexibility and the state's disdain for local concerns.

The key aspects of the final plan are urban reserves for the cities of Medford, Central Point, Phoenix, Talent, and Eagle Point, guidelines for agricultural buffers, and the appointment of an agricultural task force. The success of this plan is impressive considering the widespread mistrust of statewide planning and big government among many in Jackson County. At the same time, many of the most innovative and interesting proposals that had been considered for inclusion in the plan were dropped during the 12 years of negotiations. Largely, the planning process became focused around designating urban reserves. Since the approval of the Bear Creek RPS however there have been ongoing controversies around land use and regulation of farmland in Jackson County.

Implications for the Future of Land Use Policy

On May 20th 2014 Jackson County voters decided to pass initiative 15-119, which banned the growing of genetically modified crops in the county. The controversial passage of this legislation represents a growing political alliance in the county between urban consumers and the ever-growing contingent of small farmers in the region who value organics, local food production, and particular environmental values of land care over productivity at any cost.

Yet again Jackson County is at the center of a dispute over land use. Last October the Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 863, which prohibits counties in Oregon from passing GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms) labeling laws or crop bans. Jackson

County's initiative is exempt from this ban because it was already on the ballot. GMO supporters spent almost a million dollars funding a massive local advertising campaign to defeat this initiative.

At the same time, this fight is not just about Jackson County. Three other counties in Oregon have put GMO bans on their ballots despite the statewide ban. Meanwhile a number of other states across the U.S. have passed preemptive bans on local laws that would limit GMOs and a few counties have successfully banned the growing of GMO crops. Farm and food policy are clearly subjects of rising controversy and Oregon, a state with significant populations on both extremes of the political spectrum, is likely to continue to be a magnet for such controversies.

Although urban land uses continue to take up a relatively small percentage of the global landscape, increasing pressure on food systems from human-induced climate change and increasing transportation prices makes conservation of farmland an issue of intensifying significance. However, even if farmland conservation and food policy was not an area of concern, there are a number of other reasons to care about growth controls and farmland conservation policies.

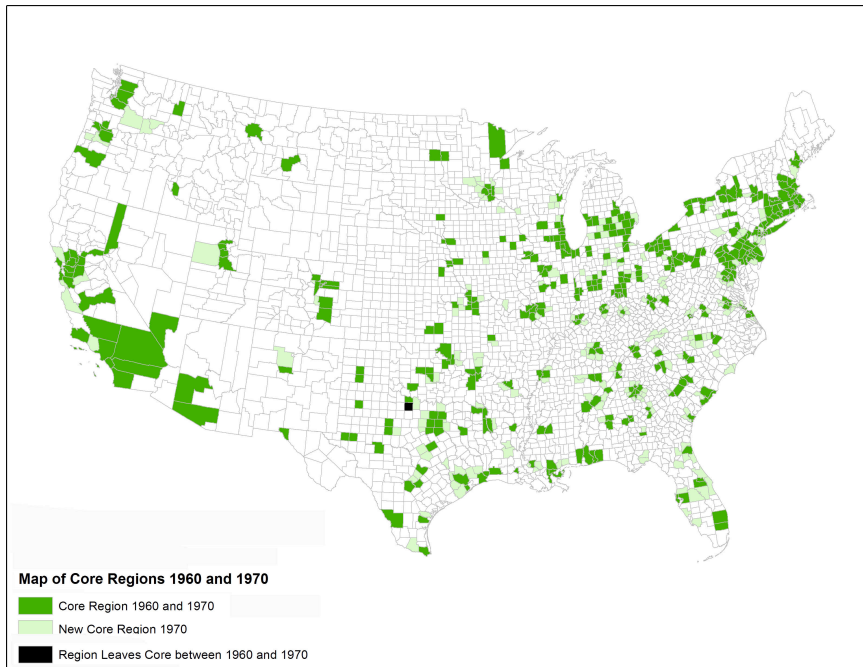
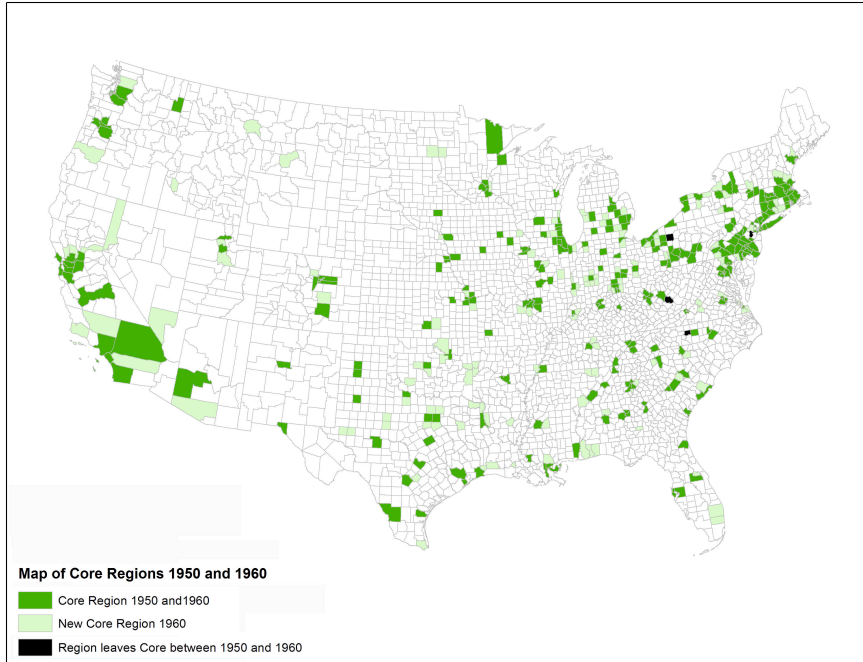
In Oregon, as in all 50 U.S. States, farm properties receive significant reductions in their property taxes in order to encourage land to remain in farm uses and discourage sprawl. If my results from Jackson County and the extensive literature on amenity migration to rural areas are any indication, those tax breaks are increasingly going to land owners who are farming in order to enjoy a rural lifestyle rather than producing products or revenue from their farms. On the other hand, it may be that tax breaks for farming and other farmland conservation policies

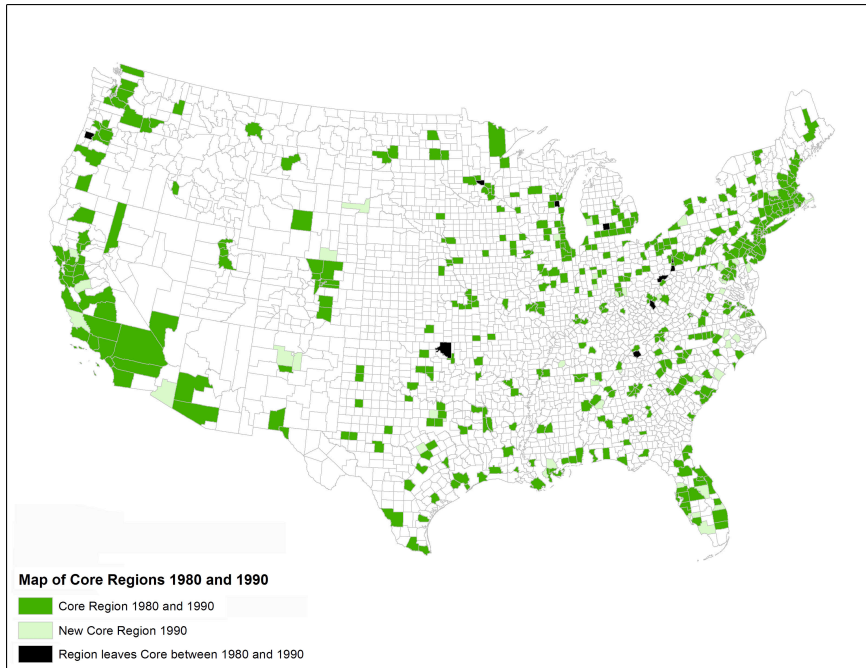
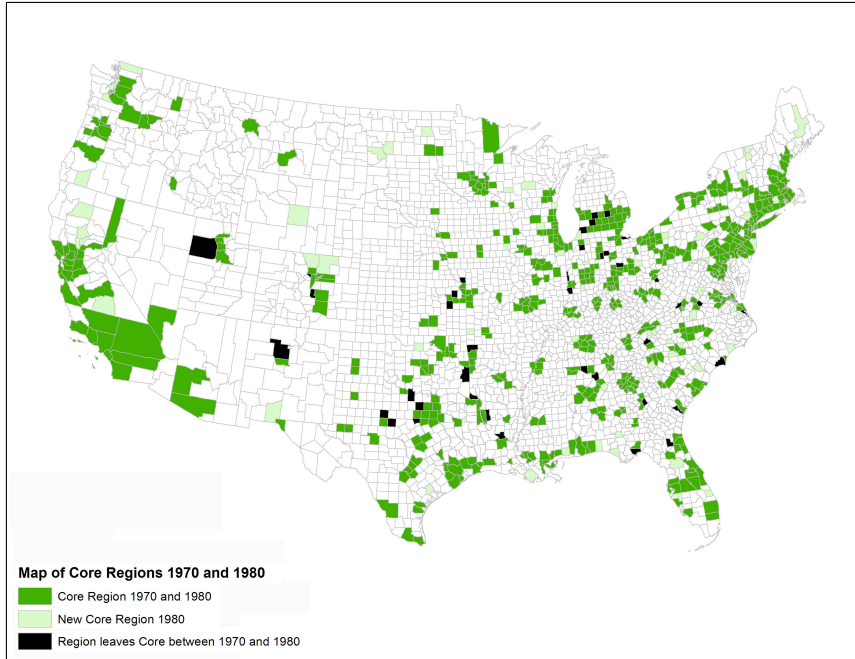
such as Oregon's exclusive farm zoning are rather a way to preserve a certain aesthetic of the rural landscape for visual or experiential consumption by urban tourists and amenity migrants.

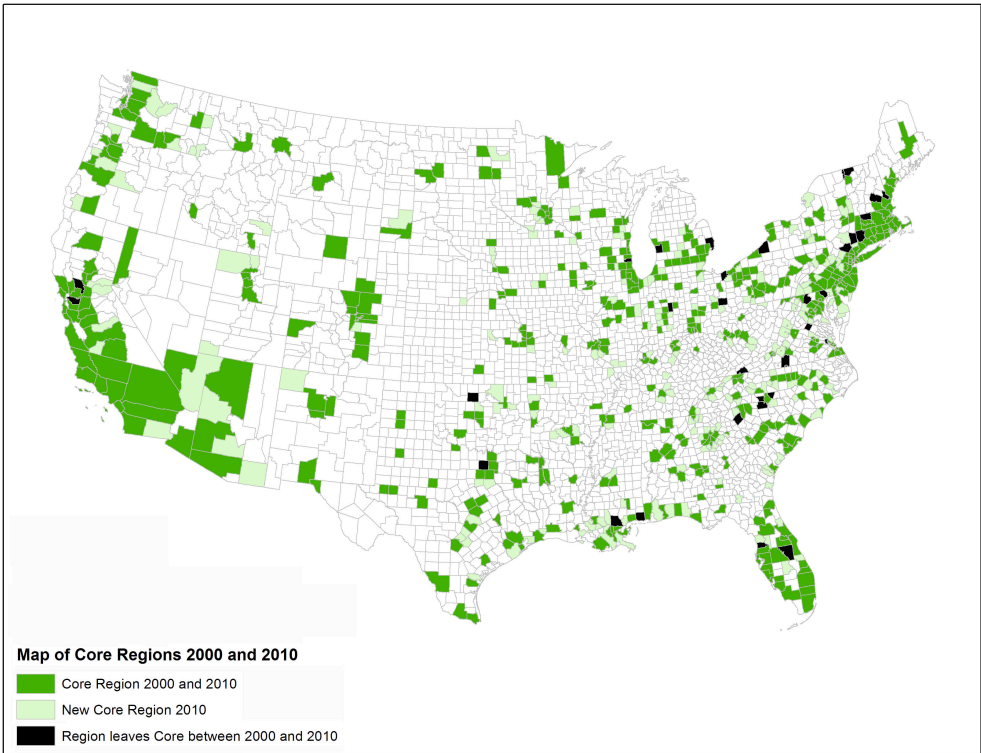
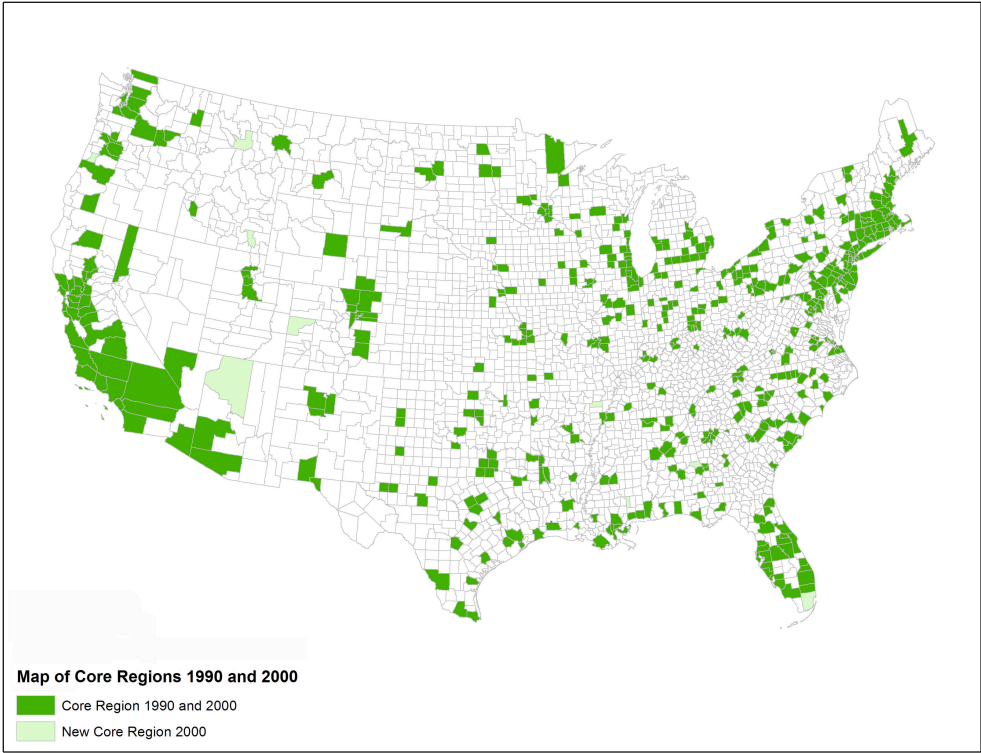
In Jackson County, as in the rest of Oregon, there is broad support for farming and policies that assist farmers. However, this has not always translated into support for statewide land use planning. My research illustrates the complex ways that conservation policies, such as Oregon's statewide planning system, impact individual landowners and the challenges to designing a policy that will support a healthy farm economy in regions that are increasingly marginalized and urbanized. Oregon farmers are not a single group; rather they are increasingly diverse in terms of gender, race, class, and motivations for taking up such an economically challenging occupation. As Oregon's system continues to evolve, if it is to succeed there will have to be continuing discussions among Oregon citizens and policy makers over what they value about agriculture, what types of farming should be supported, and what policies will be needed to ensure a thriving agricultural economy.

APPENDIX A

CORE METROPOLITAN COUNTIES







APPENDIX B

EXCERPT FROM ERS FARM TYPOLOGY FOR A DIVERSE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Robert Hoppe, Janet Perry, and David E. Banker, Agriculture Information Bulletin No. (AIB-759) 8 pp, September 2000

Defining the Farm Typology Groups

Small Family Farms (sales less than \$250,000)*

Limited-resource. Any small farm with gross sales less than \$100,000, total farm assets less than \$150,000, and total operator household income less than \$20,000. Limited-resource farmers may report farming, a non-farm occupation, or retirement as their major occupation.

Retirement. Small farms whose operators report they are retired (excludes limited-resource farms operated by retired farmers).

Residential/lifestyle. Small farms whose operators report a major occupation other than farming (excludes limited-resource farms with operators reporting a nonfarm major occupation).

Farming occupation/lower-sales. Small farms with sales less than \$100,000 whose operators report farming as their major occupation (excludes limited-resource farms whose operators report farming as their major occupation).

Farming occupation/higher-sales. Small farms with sales between \$100,000 and \$249,999 whose operators report farming as their major occupation.

Other Farms

Large family farms. Farms with sales between \$250,000 and \$499,999.

Very large family farms. Farms with sales of \$500,000 or more.

Nonfamily farms. Farms organized as nonfamily corporations or cooperatives, as well as farms operated by hired managers.

* The \$250,000 cutoff for small farms was suggested by the National Commission on Small Farms.

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