Chapter 7

The Politics of One Oregon
Causes and Consequences of the Rural-Urban Divide and Prospects for Overcoming It

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Mark Henkels
Brent S. Steel

Oregon's state and local governments face many challenges today that complicate their tasks of sustaining current programs in both rural and urban areas and of finding politically acceptable solutions to the state's most pressing policy concerns. How public officials respond to these challenges will affect the long-term viability of state and local governments.

Economic change has long been among the most perplexing of these challenges. Over the past century Oregon has evolved from a rural economy based on agriculture and natural resources to an economy that is largely urbanized and industrial. In recent decades the state has developed into a postindustrial society, one in which the economy is heavily dependent on knowledge-based industries and most citizens are employed in service-sector jobs. The state has also witnessed dramatic demographic shifts, continued urbanization, increased globalization, and important technological advances. These and other changes have required state and local governments to rethink their policies in the face of new problems and political demands. As Roger Kemp, a leading expert on state and local politics, puts it: "Evolving societal conditions and public perceptions have created trends that require communities to change in order to meet the public's expectation for effective and equitable governance" (Kemp 2001, 1).

Perhaps the most difficult challenge for governance in Oregon is that these broader forces have affected Oregon's rural and urban communities differ-
ently, creating a dramatic political divide between different regions of the state. As the urban areas have generally moved into a postindustrial society, many rural areas retaining strong agrarian roots have seen their economic base deteriorate. As a result, rural and urban areas of the state hold considerably different perspectives on society and the role that government ought to play. Demographic shifts, technological advances, and other changes have reinforced these economic disparities, making the political divide between rural and urban areas even more pronounced.

If state and local governments are to adapt to the challenges they confront, it is important that political leaders understand how these broader forces have reshaped Oregon’s politics. In this chapter we identify the driving forces of the rural-urban conflict and discuss how these forces have shaped modern Oregon politics. In exploring some of the causes of polarization, we hope to identify areas of common concern and to suggest possible strategies for cooperation.

**The Forces behind the Divide**

**Post-industrial society**

Over the past four decades, many social scientists have tried to understand why Western democracies have seen so many political changes since the 1960s, including the rise of new social movements, increased disillusionment with established political parties, and the emergence of a variety of new issues into political debate, from the environment to feminism to human rights. One of the primary explanations is that these political changes have grown out of economic change. In particular, many scholars who conduct research comparing nations argue that the recent political changes in Western democracies reflect the transformation of Western economies into what is referred to as a “postindustrial society.” While scholars disagree on the characteristics of a postindustrial society, a few commonly agreed-on features can be identified (Bell 1973; Bellah 1985; Inglehart 1997):

- Economic dominance of the service sector over manufacturing and agriculture;
- A high degree of economic activity based on an educated workforce employing scientific knowledge and technology;
- Increasing population growth and employment in urban areas and subsequent decline in many rural areas;

- Unprecedented societal affluence; and
- A high level of political participation in society, including the rise of new social causes and movements.

Although there are debates within this literature, many studies have found that the postindustrial theory provides a good explanation for political change across the globe. While there are some cross-cultural differences in how these changes affect individual countries (for example, Americans are more individualistic and suspicious of government than Scandinavians are), the development of the postindustrial society is considered to broadly impact politics, making the postindustrial nations different from industrial and agricultural-based nations. At the heart of this theory is the argument that “economic development, cultural change, and political change go together in coherent, and to some extent, even predictable patterns” (Inglehart 1997, 5).

Table 1 identifies some of the key socioeconomic differences that scholars have discovered when comparing advanced industrial countries with more agrarian and industrial ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECONOMIC FEATURES</th>
<th>Agricultural-based society</th>
<th>Industrial society</th>
<th>Post-industrial society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral dominance</td>
<td>Agriculture and natural resource extraction</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic character</td>
<td>Labor intensive</td>
<td>Capital intensive</td>
<td>Knowledge intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical change</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Rapid</td>
<td>Exponential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material condition</td>
<td>Poverty/subsistence</td>
<td>Rising productivity</td>
<td>Relative affluence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL FEATURES</th>
<th>Agricultural-based society</th>
<th>Industrial society</th>
<th>Post-industrial society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Megalopolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderating</td>
<td>Low or negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>Eroding</td>
<td>Impersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant values</td>
<td>Basic/survival needs</td>
<td>Material security</td>
<td>Post-materialist values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Socioeconomic characteristics of different types of societies.
in postindustrial societies, and which we identified above, can also be found in Oregon, especially in the more urban parts of the state, which tend to be the most populated and most affluent, with the highest level of employment and the greatest concentration of high-tech businesses (Clucas et al. 2005, 9). Urban residents also exhibit the most support for many recent social movements, including the anti-globalization and environmental movements.

The rural areas of the state do exhibit some characteristics of postindustrial society; for example, the largest job occupation in eastern Oregon is in the service sector (Yohannan 2005). Yet the rural areas have not enjoyed the same level of economic prosperity and job growth as have the metropolitan areas, and many have faced continued economic challenges since the early 1980s. In 2005, the Portland metropolitan area had the state’s lowest unemployment rate, 5.7 percent, whereas southern and eastern Oregon, the most rural parts of the state, had the highest, 6.7 and 8.0 percent, respectively (Oregon Office of Economic Analysis 2007, 44). Even during the worst economic conditions since the Great Depression, these patterns persist in 2010, with many rural counties suffering jobless rates exceeding 15 percent (seasonally adjusted), and many Willamette Valley counties having significantly lower rates (Read 2010). Clearly, the transition of the state into a postindustrial society has not been beneficial to the rural regions.

The rise of the postindustrial society is considered significant because it can lead to important cultural changes, which in turn influence politics. Many social scientists argue that, like the previous shift from an agricultural to an industrial society, the shift from an industrial to a postindustrial society in many nations has produced a fundamental cultural realignment. It has profoundly reshaped people’s value structures, causing many to become more concerned with what psychologist Abraham Maslow has termed higher-order needs, such as social affiliation and quality-of-life issues. These higher-order needs have supplanted more fundamental subsistence needs, such as concern for health and safety, in motivating individual and societal behavior (Maslow 1959). People in postindustrial societies typically show greater concern for quality-of-life issues and environmental protection, more tolerance for nontraditional lifestyles, and stronger support for freedom on moral issues such as abortion, gay rights, and women’s rights (Inglehart 1977 and 1997, Inglehart and Weizel 2010; Steger et al. 1989). This is especially true of younger people. Members of “Generation X” (born between 1961 and 1982) and especially of the “Millennium Generation” (born after 1982) are significantly more engaged in their communities through internships, volunteer work, and community action groups than are older people (Dalton 2009; Winograd and Hais 2009). In addition, they are significantly more tolerant and accepting of gay rights and racial and ethnic diversity and are more concerned about the environment. With generational replacement, the rising prevalence of such new attitudes places new demands on state and local government (Simon et al. 2011).

This general pattern of development from industrial to postindustrial society is consistent with Oregon’s experience. In Oregon’s early history, the principal issues of concern were basic nutrition, shelter, access to water, safe routes of travel, safety of person and property, and the like. As Oregon became more industrialized, new concerns arose, including unsafe workplaces, poor health services, dangerous waste disposal, and inadequate public education systems. In more recent decades, residents have become more attentive to higher-order concerns revolving around quality of life, the environment, and nontraditional lifestyles.

The emergence of the postindustrial society has affected rural and urban areas quite differently, and this, we believe, is at the root of our political divide. In the urban areas, where the postindustrial economy is the most advanced, we find the greatest support for these new ideas, whereas rural voters have decidedly different opinions. Random household surveys in 2008 and 2010 shed some light on these value changes (table 2). Drawing from research by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Portland Metro</th>
<th>All Urban Respondents</th>
<th>Rural Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materialist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postmaterialist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>n = 346</td>
<td>n = 537</td>
<td>n = 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>n = 607</td>
<td>n = 952</td>
<td>n = 233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Rural and urban citizens and postmaterialist values (percent). Note: The random-sample household survey of Oregon citizens was conducted by researchers at Oregon State University during September and October 2008. Responses were received from 674 households out of 1,200 contacts possible for a response rate of 56 percent. Portland, n = 346; All urban, n = 537; Rural, n = 137. The second survey was conducted in fall 2010.
Table 3. Post-materialist values and self-identified political ideology (percent). Note: The random sample household survey of Oregon citizens was conducted by researchers at Oregon State University during September and October 2008. Responses were received from 674 households out of 1,200 contacts possible for a response rate of 56 percent.

Ronald Inglehart on postindustrial societies, the survey identified three types of values (materialist, postmaterialist, and mixed—that is, individuals holding a combination of postmaterialist and materialist values)\(^4\), and revealed that postmaterialist values are more prevalent in metropolitan areas, while materialist values are more prevalent in rural areas even in a time of severe economic conditions and near-Depression levels of unemployment (Crandall and Weber 2005). Post-materialists are much more willing to identify them-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent strongly supporting</th>
<th>Materialists</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Post-materialists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Pay equity—equal pay for equal work</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Comparable worth—equal pay for comparable work</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Affirmative action—for employment in business or government</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Affirmative action—for access to higher education</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Title IX (9)—prohibits sex discrimination in education (academics and athletics)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Parental leave—government legislation providing for parental leave from work</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Day care—government-subsidized day care for working parents</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Women in combat—allowing women in the military to participate in combat</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Postmaterialist values and support for gender-equity policies. Note: Results are based on a random-sample survey of Oregon households conducted Spring 2004 by researchers at Oregon State University. Responses were received from 1,354 households for a response rate of 52 percent.

selves as liberal or very liberal and to express strong support for gender-equity policies than are those with materialist and mixed-value orientations (tables 3 and 4). It is clear that a person with a postmaterialist values orientation would likely have distinctly different political preferences from someone with a materialist or mixed orientation.

With a more affluent workforce and a more robust economy, the urban areas have come to adopt many of the values of the postindustrial society. Rural citizens, many of whom have faced severe economic problems over the past few decades, are not as supportive of those values. The differential pace of development of the postindustrial society in Oregon is the most significant factor in the existence of the rural-urban political divide. However, other related factors have also been important: urbanization, demographic change, globalization, technological advances, and a changing environmental ethic. We discuss these factors next.

**Urbanization**

When it joined the Union in 1849, Oregon was a rural state with a population of 52,465. It has been transformed to a significantly urban state with a population of nearly 3.8 million. After growing relatively slowly throughout the nineteenth century, the pace of urbanization picked up dramatically in the twentieth. Today more than 65 percent of Oregon’s population lives in urban areas (U.S. Census). Increased urbanization is a key characteristic of a postindustrial society, and it is important to consider its impact on Oregon politics.

The migration of people from rural to urban and suburban areas is typically driven by the departure of the most highly educated workers and skilled younger residents from rural areas to seek jobs or further education (Deavers, personal communication). This migration has caused rural populations to decline and urban populations to swell. Continuing growth of Oregon’s urban and suburban areas has boosted employment in the service sector, which today accounts for about 82 percent of all Oregon jobs today. Post-industrial cities are characterized by very high levels of service-sector employment, such as in the health, education, financial, and technology industries. Concomitantly, employment in the natural-resource-extraction sector, which historically has been important in rural communities, has declined to less than 1 percent of the contemporary (non-farm) labor force, leading to rural migration to urban areas for economic reasons (Oregon Economic and Community Development...
Department. Without the same diverse economic base as urban areas enjoy, rural communities have found themselves facing higher unemployment and poverty rates.

Increased urbanization has had an important impact on Oregon politics by shifting political power toward urban and suburban centers and away from rural areas (Beale and Fugitt 1990), to the extent that many rural residents feel their voices on policy matters are drowned out by the interests of urban areas (Bates and Bates 1996). Urbanization has led to the rise of different policy priorities for rural and urban residents. While rural areas must grapple with economic problems and a shrinking population, urban areas confront their own challenges, including escalating land prices, a decline in affordable housing, growing traffic congestion, more-expensive construction costs, and greater demands for a variety of inner-city services, from expanded social services to improved public safety to better transportation systems (Simon et al. 2011). In short, growing urbanization means residents of rural and urban areas confront considerably different problems and therefore have different expectations about public policy.

**Demographic change**

Other important demographic changes over the past two decades have helped reinforce the divide created by the postindustrial society. Among the most significant is the growth in the state’s Latino population. Historically, the metropolitan areas have been the most ethnically diverse parts of the state. The growing migration of Latinos into the state has made these areas even more diverse. From 2000 to 2007, Multnomah and Washington were among the top ninety counties nationwide in Latino population growth, witnessing a 50 percent increase in the number of Latino residents. Combined, those two counties accounted for almost 40 percent of the state’s Latino population in 2007 (Pew Hispanic Center 2008). In addition, more than half of the state’s sixty-six thousand African-Americans live in Portland (Mapstats). The growing diversity of the urban areas makes for greater demands on social services and more-diverse opinions on public policy matters than is found in rural areas.

In general, the increased demand on social services in more diverse communities stems from important socioeconomic and demographic differences among racial and ethnic groups, including average age, birthrate, education level, and income. For example, in a community composed primarily of older white residents, there may be pressure on policymakers to address such issues as health care and property taxes. In a more diverse community, residents may be concerned not only with these issues but with public education and the availability of community programs for those in mid-life.

However, the rise in Latino population is also a rural phenomenon, occurring in almost every county in Oregon. For example, Hood River, Malheur, and Morrow counties now are more than 25 percent Latino, the highest percentage in the state. The growth in Latino populations brings issues into these rural communities that until now have been more common to urban areas. As a result, the demographic shift may eventually close some of the gap between rural and urban areas in attitudes toward government, as the social-service issues surrounding Latino populations become more similar in urban and rural settings.

Another important demographic trend has been the aging of Oregon’s rural population. In general, the median age of state residents has grown sharply over the past few decades, from just over thirty in 1980 to thirty-nine in 2007, and many rural counties have populations older than the statewide average. In 2007, the median age in Multnomah County was 37.2 years, while twelve eastern and coastal rural counties had populations with a median age of forty-four years or higher (Northwest Area Foundation). Rural governments confront a population with generally greater needs for social services for senior citizens, and less tolerance for tax increases. Moreover, because postindustrial values tend to be strongest among young people, the age differences among the counties reinforces the regional divide.

**Globalization and economic change**

“Globalization” means the current worldwide expansion of economic markets in a very broad range of goods and services. A global economy is a harsh competitive environment for local communities as they try to attract and retain businesses and jobs. Many rural communities are unable to afford the tax concessions and economic-development subsidies that wealthier communities can offer to potential employers. The influx of chain stores such as Wal-Mart threatens locally owned businesses, often weakening community culture and reducing investment in local enterprises. While these problems can occur in urban settings, they are especially pronounced in rural communities because there is less economic diversity there to start with.
Technological advances

The continuous growth in information technology is one of the key characteristics of postindustrial societies. Urban communities typically have a more highly developed technological infrastructure than rural communities, and are therefore best positioned to attract the sorts of knowledge-based businesses that characterize postindustrial societies. Infrastructure is also becoming an important concern of state and local governments, as citizens increasingly expect to use the Internet to communicate with public officials, access government information, and submit a variety of important documents. State and local governments in Oregon have tried to meet this growing demand by expanding their presence on the Web. Today, many Oregon residents can pay their property taxes, apply for various permits, make court payments, get transportation updates, and learn about local government activities online. State and local governments also use the Internet to engage citizens in the policy-making process by providing residents with the opportunity to learn and comment on important policy questions.

Citizens living in urban areas are more likely to use the Internet than rural citizens (Rainie et al. 2004, 2005). In addition, Scott (2005) found in a study of municipal web sites that “city size and scale matter in achieving overall Web site quality” (161). Smaller and more rural local governments have far fewer resources and more limited expertise to develop and maintain Web sites and Internet services, resulting in an access gap. Thus, the promise that these new technologies offer in delivering enhanced governmental services and greater public involvement in policy making remains in question for many rural communities. The difficulties confronting rural government can be seen in a 2005-2006 survey of Oregon city executives, which found that cities with fewer than twenty-five hundred residents have more limited online capacity than larger cities. Although no studies have yet addressed how this disparity is affecting Oregon’s political divide, evidence from national research suggests the presence of a digital divide can reinforce existing political and economic inequalities (Mossberger et al. 2003; Simon et al. 2011).

A changing environmental ethic

The final trend that has helped to create the regional divide has been the emergence of a new paradigm for thinking about the natural environment, one that has found much stronger support among urban than rural residents. Its development is closely tied to the rise of postmaterialist values, and its impact has been so important in shaping Oregon politics that it is worth considering separately.

The start of the twentieth century witnessed rapid growth in the number of citizens interested in the conservation of natural resources. This concern was based on anthropocentric premises—that is, on a human-oriented view of nature in which human needs and wants are given priority in natural-resource management. Supporters of conservation call for the intelligent use of natural resources so that they can continue to benefit future generations of people. The primary aim of conservation policy is to allow nature to be used to meet human needs, whether for the development of commodities, such as lumber or food, or for aesthetic or spiritual benefits, such as wilderness preservation and outdoor recreation.

By the early 1970s, however, a new environmental paradigm had emerged across the nation and in many of Oregon’s communities, one that is more centered on biological or ecological processes (Dunlap and Mertig 1992; Milbrath 1996). The biocentric approach elevates the value of all natural organisms, species, and ecosystems to center stage and, in some versions, makes the health of the planet’s entire environmental system the focus of moral consideration. Advocates of this orientation do not ignore human needs, but they place them in a larger ecological context. Adherents of this view

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent agreeing and strongly agreeing</th>
<th>Portland Metro</th>
<th>All Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The so-called &quot;ecological crisis&quot; facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset by human activities.</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. We are approaching the limit of people the earth can support.</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Rural and urban support for a new ecological paradigm. Note: The random-sample household survey of Oregon citizens was conducted by researchers at Oregon State University during September and October 2008.
tend to assume that there is intrinsic value in protecting pristine ecosystems, wilderness areas, wildlife, and indigenous plants.

While there is support for this new environmental ethic throughout Oregon, it has been particularly strong in urban areas (Table 2). Many urban residents have opinions on natural-resource issues and land-use policy that are quite different from those of many rural residents, who remain more supportive of conservation policies. With the increased urbanization of the state and the growing concentration of power in urban areas, the state has become willing to adopt environmental-protection rules that are unpopular in rural communities, which has helped to exacerbate the regional divide (Dietrich 1992; Carroll 1995).

**Impact on Oregon Politics**

The late 1960s into the mid-1970s are often depicted by political observers as a golden era in Oregon politics, a time in which political leaders were able to work together to pass some of the state’s most innovative policy reforms, such as the beach bill and comprehensive statewide land-use policies. Writing in the mid-1970s, historian Gordon Dodds said: “Oregon was becoming known for the substance rather than the structure of its politics” (Dodds 1977; see also Bodine 1993). Yet since at least the mid-1990s, the state’s politics has been characterized not by cooperation and consensus but by conflict.

The rise of the postindustrial society and the emergence of these other forces have been significant because they have helped produce this conflict. What is particularly important is that these forces have pushed the state through a partisan realignment, one in which rural voters have grown increasingly supportive of the Republican Party and urban voters more supportive of the Democratic Party. To be sure, there are many urban Republicans and rural Democrats in Oregon today. Furthermore, many suburban communities are closely split between the two parties (Dover 2005, 61). Yet the strong support that the Republican Party receives from rural communities has made it a leading champion of rural concerns in state politics. Conversely, the Democratic Party’s strong urban base has made it particularly attentive to urban concerns. As the parties grew increasingly divided along these rural-urban lines in the 1980s, the two sides eventually exploded into conflict, generating some of the state’s most intense battles in the legislature and over ballot initiatives. The political conflict between rural and urban Oregon that we see today represents a continuation of those battles. To understand the impact of the rural and urban divide on Oregon politics, it is important to look at how the divide has become drawn along partisan lines.

**A partisan realignment**

Over the past decade, many political scientists have argued that the nation has gone through a realignment of the major political parties that is at least in part based along rural and urban lines. Looking at trends in congressional elections, Stonecash et al. (2003) wrote:

> The parties now differ significantly in terms of the types of districts that they represent ... Increasingly, Democratic candidates win in districts that are low income, have a relatively high percentage of non-whites, and are urban. Republicans now dominate elections that are relatively affluent, white, and rural or suburban. (28).

This realignment of voters nationwide is generally considered to have started in the 1960s, as many Democrats began to split their vote to support Republican presidential candidates. The election of Ronald Reagan as president in 1980 further divided voters. Pushing a clear conservative agenda, Reagan appealed to many Americans who had grown disillusioned with government in the post-Vietnam and Watergate era, drawing them into the Republican Party. With Reagan and the Republican Party championing lower taxes, reduced government spending, and a stronger military, the Democratic Party responded by offering economic and social programs that appealed to more liberal voters. Prior to these events, the Republican and Democratic Parties both appealed to a broad spectrum of voters on the left and the right. As the two parties began to present voters with distinctive policy choices in the 1980s, however, support for them began to change, generating the new partisan alignment (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006, 177).

Oregon has gone through a similar realignment, one that is based heavily along rural-urban lines. The presence of this realignment can be seen by examining party registration in rural and urban areas of the state over time. To do this, we divided the state into seven regions that differ in the extent to which they are urbanized. Using this categorization gives a more precise picture of the changes in the state than simply dividing the state into rural and urban areas. We then examined the registration figures for the two major
political parties in each of these regions since 1968, two years after Tom McCall was elected governor and the golden era of Oregon politics is often considered to have begun. The seven regions are:

**Eastern Oregon.** Despite its growing service sector, especially in tourism, this area remains heavily dependent on agriculture and natural-resource extraction. Although population trends are highly variable here, with Bend a notable area of growth, the region represents the most rural part of the state (Crandall and Weber 2005).

**Southern Oregon.** These western Oregon counties resemble those of eastern Oregon in their strong dependence on natural-resource production, especially timber, and in the dominance of conservative cultural values. The significant influx of retirees, in the area around Ashland and Medford in particular, and the steep decline of timber production have moved the economy toward greater reliance on service activities. In general the region remains predominantly rural.

**Mid-Willamette Valley.** This area combines a strong agricultural sector with a legacy of industrial development and an increasingly strong service sector, especially in the Salem area. Except for Salem, communities remain identified with agricultural and natural-resource activities with some centers of industrial employment. Many areas within the Mid-Willamette Valley retain a rural character, but with the presence of Salem—the state's second largest city—the region is less rural than are eastern and southern Oregon.

**The North Coast.** This region is complex, characterized by a strong former reliance on natural resources and agriculture that is slowly giving way to service-sector activities, particularly tourism. Although some measures depict it as rural, the region's dependence on tourism and the presence of many retirement and vacation residents give it a different character from other rural regions of the state. It includes Columbia County, which has become a bedroom community of the Portland metropolitan area (Vander Vliet 2003).

**Portland suburbs.** Despite sharing in Portland's economy, Washington and Clackamas counties have distinct differences from Portland and are less urban than Portland and Multnomah County.

**University counties.** Benton County and Lane County are distinctive as the homes of Oregon State University and the University of Oregon, respectively. Although Lane County in particular has a significant agricultural and industrial sector, overall this region is dominated by education, research, high-tech industry, and other spin-off activities that are largely categorized as service.

**Multnomah County.** Dominated by Portland, this region embodies both the economic and social characteristics associated with postindustrial society. Services dominate the economy, while economic change and growth are driven by globalized industries.

Partisan registration for all seven regions was fairly even in the 1960s (table 6), with the Democratic Party maintaining an advantage everywhere, and trending upward in all seven areas before peaking in the late 1970s. After reaching that peak, the figures began to diverge by region. Over the next two decades the eastern and southern counties grew increasingly Republican, while Multnomah County remained strongly Democratic. The other regions also saw a decline in support for the Democratic Party after 1976, though not to the same degree as in eastern and southern Oregon. In short, the table shows that the most rural parts of the state have grown increasingly Republican, while the most urban area—Multnomah County—has maintained a strong Democratic advantage. The partisan trends in other regions of the state fall in between these extremes, with the mid-Willamette counties gaining a Republican edge and the north coast and university counties maintaining a sizable Democratic majority, though not to the same extent as in Multnomah County. These patterns in voter registration tell us that the

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Table 6. Democrats as percentage of major party registration, 1968-2008. Source: Oregon Secretary of State, Official Voter Registration and Turnout Statistics.
state went through a partisan realignment based on the rural-urban divide beginning in the early 1980s. It is interesting to note, however, that all regions experienced gains in Democratic Party registration in 2008. The meaning of this recent change is a topic we will take up in the conclusion.

While voters have become more sharply divided along party lines, they have also come to identify more strongly with their party’s ideology. The result is that partisan affiliation is far more important in shaping politics today than it was in the so-called golden era of Oregon politics. Recent research on the American electorate as a whole has found that voters have become more ideologically coherent in their policy preferences and are more likely to identify with the political parties based on their ideological positions. As a result of these trends, American political parties are not only divided along rural and urban lines but along ideological ones as well (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006). Thus the partisan polarization we see in the nation reflects profound ideological differences that now exist within the electorate. The Republican Party has emerged with an ideologically conservative rural base, while the Democratic Party has a strong ideologically liberal, urban one. Given the economic, social, and technological trends that have reshaped Oregon, there is no reason to believe that Oregon voters are any different from those in the rest of the country in being divided by ideological, partisan, and rural-urban lines.

The regional conflict in governance

In the early 1990s, as the Oregon electorate grew further apart along all these regional lines, the polarization finally exploded in the functioning of the state government. While there were some earlier clashes between rural and urban areas, several key events beginning in 1990 brought the regional conflict to a head.

The first was the June 26, 1990, decision by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to list the northern spotted owl as a threatened species under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The listing forced the federal government to severely restrict timber harvesting on federal land, and it also required private landowners to take steps to avoid harming the owls (Meyers 1991).

At the time of the listing, the federal government was channeling 25 percent of federal timber receipts to county governments, which helped pay for a large share of the counties’ activities (Pytte 1990). The loss of both jobs and federal assistance would leave local governments floundering. Prior to the listing, there had been simmering disagreement between rural and urban areas over land-use and environmental regulations, but the listing galvanized rural residents over what they saw as a threat to their communities and livelihood. The battle sparked by the spotted owl quickly grew beyond just a concern over saving jobs into a conflict over many related issues revolving around land use and government regulation. The anger in rural communities led to the formation of a coalition of groups that sought to protect access to public lands for commercial use and to protect private property rights. Composed of groups representing timber, farming, ranching, mining, and property rights advocates, the seventy-seven-thousand-member Oregon Lands Coalition soon became a leading player in promoting the economic and conservation values of rural communities (Durbin 1992).

A few months after the listing, another issue arose in a different policy realm. On November 6, 1990, state voters passed Measure 5, an initiative petition that limited property taxes and required the state to compensate local school districts for lost revenue. Taxes and school funding have long been important in Oregon politics, but Measure 5 intensified the conflict over these issues, while making it more difficult for the state to balance its budget. The battles related to Measure 5 immediately began to be drawn along rural-urban lines, whether the issues were over school funding or raising state revenue to balance the budget (Church 1993).

A final event that occurred in 1990 and helped increase the regional conflict was that the Republican Party gained control of the state House of Representatives for the first time since the 1971 session, giving rural communities a greater voice in state affairs—though with the Democrats in control of the Senate, neither party could control the legislature’s output. The big issue confronting the legislature in the 1991 session was how it was going to respond to the financial changes produced by the passage of Measure 5. The geographical divide made it difficult for the legislature to find consensus on that and other issues (Mapes 1991; Mapes and Hill 1991). As the session wore on, it became clear how important the rural-urban split had become in state politics: “The split between the two Oregons has always been around, but Measure 5 and the transfer of power to Republicans in the House have strengthened the rifts” (Mapes 1991).

A new area of conflict opened up in 1992, this one over cultural and moral values. The 1992 election included Measure 9, an initiative petition that would have limited civil rights protections for homosexuals and prohibited Oregon governments from “promoting” homosexuality. In the preceding election, the
Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA) had sponsored two anti-abortion initiatives that had galvanized the opposing views of rural and urban areas, yet Measure 9 brought the divide over moral questions to an entirely new level. Led by Lon Mabon and the OCA, the effort to restrict the rights of homosexuals became a “thunderous crusade” for social conservatives (The Oregonian 1992, 1993a). Although the battle was not drawn solely along rural-urban lines, the state was heavily divided by region, with rural voters strongly supporting the initiative and urban voters opposing it (Meehan 1992).

As these events played out, the battle between the regions began to reach into the operation of state government. While the 1991 legislative session had had conflict, the ability of the two sides to find common ground fell apart in 1993, with the opposing sides repeatedly lined up along partisan and regional lines in one major policy debate after another. On one side was the Republican House majority, which was supporting rural positions; on the other was the Senate Democratic majority, which was supporting urban ones. The legislature finally adjourned in August; the policy battles had forced it to remain in session for a record number of days (Kiyomura 1993; The Oregonian 1993b).

The partisan conflict in the 1993 session was so intense that it is often considered a turning point for governance in Oregon from which the state has never recovered (Bend Bulletin 2006; Sadler 2005). At the heart of the conflict were the profound ideological and value differences between parties, differences that were a product of the state’s rural and urban divide. While the harsh political battles seen in Oregon today are often blamed on partisan politics, the real cause of the turmoil has remained these ideological and value differences between the rural and urban parts of the state.

Support for Public Policy

The one question that remains to be answered is: How deep and wide is this divide? Just how does the rural/urban split actually shape the public’s attitude to different public policies? In this final section, we examine voters’ opinions on a variety of issues to determine the extent to which the divide affects public policy. Our concern is whether the economic and social forces associated with the postindustrial economy act as a wedge in a wide range of policy areas and whether there are areas where it might be possible to build consensus.

We explored how residents of each of our seven regions voted on certain ballot measures in this decade and in the early 1990s. We decided to look at ballot measures because these votes provide a direct measure of public opinion on specific policy proposals. We chose measures dealing with four policy areas: fiscal matters, health and education, the environment, and cultural or moral issues. The measures are summarized in the Appendix to this chapter.

We looked at voting during two periods (1990-1996 and 2000-2007) with the goal of determining whether political values have shifted in response to the profound shift in Oregon’s economy during the past decade. Our focus was not on which measures passed, or even the margins by which they passed or failed, but on detecting regional patterns in voters’ opinions on public-policy questions. More specifically, our analysis considers the extent to which people in the different regions hold postmaterialistic values, which, as we have seen, are more often associated with liberal than with conservative policy preferences. In essence, we are comparing the liberal and conservative character of each region, because we believe the convergence, or divergence, of voters’ values across the regions is particularly important in understanding how deeply the state is divided. If the state is indeed split by the rise of the postindustrial society, and the other trends described above, then we would expect to find the following:

**Fiscal policy.** Post-industrial economies are marked by investment in social infrastructures, particularly in human capital such as education. The willingness of residents in postindustrial economies to invest in such infrastructure, combined with their greater identification with such postmaterialist values as equity and quality of life, implies greater support for government taxation and spending in these communities. Residents of areas whose economy is based on agriculture, natural-resource extraction, and industry, on the other hand, would be expected to favor fiscal conservatism and smaller government, since they are generally more concerned about basic material needs and generally perceive that economic success is related primarily to labor and private investment. In other words, we would expect to find more support for taxes and spending in the more urban areas, and less in rural ones. We looked at two tax and revenue measures from the mid-1990s, Measure 5 in 1994 and Measure 25 in 1996. For the first decade of the twenty-first century we examined two tax measures, 30 (2004) and 41 (2006), and one limiting government spending, Measure 48 (2006).

**Education and health care.** Ballot-measure voting on education and healthcare policy provides another perspective on voter attitudes toward the proper role of government. We would expect the rural regions of the state, being
more conservative, to be generally opposed to government spending and direct government involvement in education and health care, while urban areas should be more supportive of government spending. For the 1990s we examined the voting on school vouchers, Measure 11 (1990), and a proposed increase in tobacco taxes, Measure 44 (1996). For the 2000s, we looked at measures focusing on education (Measure 19 in 2002), health care (Measure 23 in 2002), and a tobacco tax (Measure 50 in 2007).

**Environmental issues.** Voting on environmental issues is a frequently used measure of postmaterialist values. Environmental concern represents higher-order needs or values beyond those of subsistence, economic growth, and health and safety. For these reasons, it is likely that the more urban counties would disproportionately favor environmental policies, while the more rural communities of eastern and southern Oregon would oppose them. For the 1990s, we looked at measures dealing with recycling (Measure 6 in 1990), salmon harvests (Measure 8 in 1992), mining rules (Measure 14 in 1994), and cougar hunting (Measure 18 in 1994). For the 2000s, we looked at measures involving timber production in state forests (Measure 34 in 2004) and property rights (Measure 37 in 2004 and Measure 50 in 2007). Together these represented a wide cross-section of environmental and land-use issues.

**Cultural issues.** As noted earlier, the postindustrial economy and contemporary urbanization are commonly associated with new perspectives on personal freedoms such as women’s rights, gay rights, and abortion. The materialist value systems more prevalent in the less wealthy and generally less urbanized areas may be linked to a more deferential or supportive attitude towards authority and tradition than that found in postindustrial societies (Inglehart and Baker 2000). The closeness of agricultural and natural-resource dependent communities and the desire to prevent the erosion of their sense of community may also lead to support for traditional conservative cultural values. For the 1990s, we looked at the 1990 anti-abortion measures, 8 and 10; Measure 9, restricting the civil rights of homosexuals, in 1992; and two 1994 measures, physician-assisted suicide (Measure 16) and restriction on speech regarding pornography (Measure 19). For the 2000s, we looked at the vote on gay marriage (Measure 36 in 2004) and on parental notification for abortions (Measure 43 in 2006).

The results of the analysis are shown in table 7. For consistency, the table shows the average voting percentage for the more conservative positions. The voting pattern across all four issue areas and in both time periods is consistent with the picture we have drawn of the state: The most rural parts of the state—eastern and southern Oregon—tend to be the most conservative. The mid-Willamette Valley also tends to vote more conservatively. On the other hand, the state’s most urban region—Multnomah County—tends to be the most liberal, with the university counties following close behind.

As predicted, education and health measures received stronger support from the more urban areas of the state, especially Multnomah County and the university counties. The eastern and southern counties oppose environmental regulations much more strongly than any other parts of the state, while the other counties that depend significantly on agriculture and resource production consistently oppose environmental regulations, though less strongly. Voting on education, health, and environmental measures indicates the divided nature of the state’s economic base, with postindustrial areas viewing government much more favorably. On cultural issues, the rural counties consistently vote in a far more conservative pattern than the Portland metropolitan area and the university counties. The most interesting aspect of this pattern is that the different regions of the state appear to be drifting further apart on cultural issues. A convergence of cultural values is not likely until this trend reverses, although Portland’s cultural liberalism is spreading into the suburbs.

Voting patterns on fiscal issues offer one of the few exceptions to our expectations. In particular, the Portland suburbs were more closely aligned with the rural regions of the state than with Multnomah County or the university counties. The very consistent 10-point greater support for taxes in Multnomah and the university counties reflects stronger support for the programs associated with government spending and greater acceptance of governmental activism.
One partial explanation for the fiscal conservatism of suburban counties may be that they still have significant rural areas, but a more powerful explanation is that suburban residents retain a concern for economic growth associated with industrial society. As a result, they perceive government as a threat to individual economic autonomy and the private-investment model of wealth creation and personal satisfaction. Battles to control the suburbs have marked the American political scene for the past decade, with business-oriented conservatism having the edge until recent elections, when the Republican Party's emphasis on cultural issues appears to have eroded its suburban power. President Obama's recent Democratic regulatory activism, tax proposals, and health care plan may enable Republicans to reconnect with suburban voters' pro-business concerns once again. The November 2010 election indicates the importance of the complex nature of suburban districts. While Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Kitzhaber won a plurality with more than 49 percent of the vote in Washington County, he received just over 44 percent in the more-rural suburban county of Clackamas.

The results from this voting analysis reveal two key characteristics about the state. The first is that the regional divide in the state clearly reflects differences in economic bases, and the accompanying trends of urbanization, globalization, technological development, and evolving environmental values. The consistency of these findings makes us confident that the divergent rise of the postindustrial society explains a great deal of why Oregon is divided along regional lines. The second is that the state has gone through a partisan realignment that is also ideological in character. The more rural parts of the state are not only Republican but consistently hold conservative policy preferences on a wide range of issues. The urban parts of the state are not only Democratic, but their residents hold liberal policy preferences.

**Toward a More Unified Oregon?**

Can the divide between rural and urban Oregon be bridged? These findings indicate that it will be hard to discover common ground between Oregon's rural and urban areas given the divergent economic, social, ideological, and partisan values. It will be very difficult for state and local government officials to come up with solutions to the state's most pressing policy concerns that are politically acceptable to both rural and urban areas. Yet even within these findings, one can see glimmers of hope.

First, as we have made clear throughout this chapter, the state has been going through significant economic, social, and technological changes that have contributed to the political divide. Over time, it is quite likely that Oregon will see new developments that may help diminish this divide. For example, the rise of universal wide-band Internet access reduces the difficulties of moving postindustrial economic activities to rural areas. Moreover, despite recent setbacks, the increasing diversity of the economy in the Bend area demonstrates a model for development that directly connects the rural areas with the global economy as more than simply a source of raw materials. While not a panacea, the development of more specialized, value-enhanced agricultural activities such as winemaking, craft brewing, and specialized crops also offers routes for closing the distance between rural and urban economies.

More than anything else, if the state government took steps to boost the economic position of the rural communities, the rural and urban areas would no longer be as divided by differences in economic well-being, which might lead to more agreement on other policy issues. On the other hand, of course, if the nation's current economic troubles continue to worsen, the regional divide may diminish as both rural and urban areas worry about their economic futures. Beyond economic change, the rural areas are likely to continue to become more ethnically diverse and better tied into new technologies. As these changes occur, the regions will become more similar. Finally, it may also help temper the conflict if the Democratic Party is able to retain, or even expand, the gains in registration it made during the 2008 election (see Table 6). It is hard to know what this increase in registration means and where it will lead, since it is so recent, yet it may suggest increasing ideological similarities across the regions.

There are signs that the Democratic Party has made lasting gains in the state. For one, the Republican Party was unable to capture the governor's office or any of the congressional seats in the 2010 election despite the broad success it enjoyed nationwide. In addition, there was almost no change in party registration in any of the regions since 2008. The 2010 election demonstrates that Democrats can retain statewide power in the face of contrary national trends. The continuation of their statewide supremacy may also reflect the depth of Oregon's regional division. Kitzhaber's victory in the governor's race was based on winning only six counties; by far the most important contributor to his success was the support of more than 70 percent of voters in the most populous county, Multnomah. The
Oregon House split 30-30, along the same rural-urban lines we identify here (Oregon Secretary of State 2010a). Kitzhaber will have to find a way to reach across this divide.

Second, the findings presented in table 5 provide another ray of hope. While the rural and urban areas clearly differ strongly on environmental issues, there are some areas of agreement. Of particular importance is that the respondents in both the rural and urban areas tend to agree that the “ecological crisis” facing us today has not been exaggerated. The consistency of this response across regions tells us that residents throughout the state may ultimately find some common ground on environmental matters. Of course, as long as rural areas face economic hard times, and as long as environmental policies are seen as a threat to jobs, then this may be unrealistic. However, if the state can find common ground on environmental matters—one of the areas in which the regions are most divided—it would raise hope that it could be found elsewhere.

Finally, on fiscal issues, the election results shown in table 7 reveal that the divide between the most rural and urban parts of the state on economic matters is not nearly as wide as it is on many other policy matters. The votes indicate that there is some agreement across the state on broad rules governing revenue and spending. Moreover, when one looks at the vote on some specific measures, rather than the averages shown in table 7, there are additional areas in which the rural and urban parts of the state agree. For example, in the 1990s, eastern and southern Oregon residents voted as consistently against school vouchers as did those in Multnomah County. The cross-regional agreement on these issues suggests that the state may be able to find common ground on some specific spending and revenue policies, especially in broad educational and social programs, or on policy matters that do not squarely fit into the ideological divide.

However, given the different economic and social problems confronted by rural and urban communities, one should not expect state policies and programs to succeed if they treat rural and urban regions the same. Statewide policies on revenue and expenditures may find more acceptability if there are significant elements of local control.

Despite these glimmers of hope, finding common ground may be difficult for some time. Clearly, the wide split in the state on cultural issues suggests that the regional division on these types of issues shows no signs of moderating. Moreover, the continued chasm on environmental matters seems just as unlikely to end, despite the agreement in some of the survey questions we discussed. The state is likely to function more efficiently if it continues to see unified partisan control of the legislature and governor’s office, but having unified control does nothing to end the regional divide. The problem confronting the state, as one columnist wrote recently, is that the rural-urban split “isn’t simply political, open to split-the-difference deal-making. It’s driven by basic values differences, on land and lifestyle issues . . . steel traps and gay rights” (Sarason 2001).

As long as Oregon is divided by different values and ideologies, it will be difficult to find agreement on major policy issues. Agreement will be reached only when the political values and ideologies held by Oregonians become more alike, or, alternatively, less all encompassing. Given the vast economic and social differences across the state that we have described, it seems unlikely that rural and urban residents will soon become more ideologically alike. Thus perhaps the only way in which the state will find agreement is if it can move some policy debates outside the normal political discourse, so that they are isolated from the ideological conflict that has come to define Oregon politics in recent decades. To many Oregonians, the state confronts a variety of problems that need to be solved, from inadequate health care to poor education to fiscal instability. While the rural and urban divide may make it difficult to address these issues, it does not make it impossible to do so if state residents can put aside their disagreements on social values to resolve shared problems. While it may seem simple to focus on the concerns shared by rural and urban Oregonians, the state’s political divide makes cooperation a relentlessly difficult challenge.

Appendix: Ballot Measures Demonstrating Oregon Policy Voting

Fiscal measures

- Measure 5 (1994). Require a public vote on all tax and fee increases. Rejected with 44.7 percent “Yes” votes.
- Measure 30 (2004). Overturn temporary tax increase to replace lost revenues due to economic downturn. Passed with 59 percent “Yes” votes.

Health and Education Measures
• Measure 11 (1990). Create school vouchers. Rejected with 42.2 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 44 (1996). Create a 25-cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes with revenues to be spent on health-care programs. Passed with 55.5 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 19 (2002). Use school stability fund principle to support K-12 education immediately and set up provisions for future fund support. Passed with 51.9 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 23 (2002). Establish universal health-care system with new taxes. Rejected with 21.5 “Yes” votes.
• Measure 50 (2007). Create an 87-cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products. Rejected with 40.7 percent “Yes” votes.

Environmental Measures
• Measure 6 (1990). Require material to be recyclable. Rejected with 32.3 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 8 (1992). Restrict salmon-fishing techniques in the Columbia River. Rejected with 41 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 14 (1994). Create more restrictive regulations over mining activities. Rejected with 42.4 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 18 (1994). Strictly regulate bear and cougar hunting. Passed with 51.8 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 34 (2004). Restrict timber harvests on state forests. Rejected with 38.3 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 37 (2004). Protect property rights by requiring states to compensate regulatory takings. Passed with 60.6 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 50 (2007). Reform regulatory takings laws to support state land-use regulations. Passed with 62.1 percent “Yes” votes.

Cultural-issue Measures
• Measure 8 (1990). Restrict abortion. Rejected with 32.3 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 10 (1990). Require parental notice for minors seeking abortion. Rejected with 47.9 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 9 (1992). Forbid state from facilitating, and require state to discourage, homosexuality. Rejected with 43.5 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 16 (1994). Allow physician-assisted suicide. Passed with 51.8 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 19 (1994). Exclude obscenity and pornography from constitutional protections under state constitution. Rejected with 45.7 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 36 (2004). Require that a marriage be only between a man and a woman. Passed with 56.6 percent “Yes” votes.
• Measure 43 (2006). Require parental notice for minors seeking abortion. Rejected with 45.2 percent “Yes” votes.

Bibliography


Chapter 8

Critical Linkages

Strengthening Clusters in Urban and Rural Oregon

Sheila Martin

Introduction

People living in the urban and rural parts of our state are linked in a number of ways. First, they are linked through relationships developed through migration. Migration has occurred in both directions: from the rural areas to urban areas for the purposes of education, work, and social interaction, and from urban to rural areas to retire or simply to find an alternative way of life (Hammer 2008).

Urban and rural Oregonians are also linked through trade in goods and services. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, almost $7.4 billion in goods and services purchased by the periphery comes from the core area of Oregon, while the core purchases $1.8 billion in goods and services from the periphery. As was documented in Chapter 6, urban and rural Oregonians are also linked by the state's revenue-sharing system that is used to equalize the services available for the citizens of its state, especially for education and health care. This linkage is critical, because it means that economic vitality in one part of the state provides benefits to citizens in other parts. In effect, we all benefit from economic success in one part of the state because state tax revenues are shared statewide. Finally, urban and rural Oregonians are united by a state boundary and a government that ensures that decisions made in Salem affect all parts of our state.

Oregonians are also connected through their business relationships, which link the urban and rural economies in fundamental ways. Earlier in our state's history this economic connection was obvious, because the natural-resources industries were fundamental drivers of the economy in both urban and rural