### Topical version of the aff

#### Topical version of the aff is to eliminate the NRC secrecy restriction

#### SMRs solve waste – uses waste

Szondy ‘12

(David Szondy is a freelance writer based in Monroe, Washington. An award-winning playwright, he has contributed to Charged and iQ magazine and is the author of the website Tales of Future Past. “Feature: Small modular nuclear reactors - the future of energy?” February 16, 2012 accessed online August 22, 2012 at http://www.gizmag.com/small-modular-nuclear-reactors/20860/)

SMRs can help with proliferation, nuclear waste and fuel supply issues because, while some modular reactors are based on conventional pressurized water reactors and burn enhanced uranium, others use less conventional fuels. Some, for example, can generate power from what is now regarded as "waste", burning depleted uranium and plutonium left over from conventional reactors. Depleted uranium is basically U-238 from which the fissible U-235 has been consumed. It's also much more abundant in nature than U-235, which has the potential of providing the world with energy for thousands of years. Other reactor designs don't even use uranium. Instead, they use thorium. This fuel is also incredibly abundant, is easy to process for use as fuel and has the added bonus of being utterly useless for making weapons, so it can provide power even to areas where security concerns have been raised.

### AT Why Accept the state?

#### Their critiques of debate miss the mark—defending a topic that involves the state for the sake of deliberation is distinct from accepting it, and limiting out some arguments for the sake of that deliberation is a more productive discourse that solves the aff better

Talisse 2005

(Robert, philosophy professor, Vanderbilt, “Deliberativist responses to activist challenges," Philosophy & Social Criticism 31.4 - gendered language in this article refers to arguments made by two specific individuals in an article by Iris Young)

These two serious activist challenges may be summarized as follows. First, the activist has claimed that political discussion must always take place within the context of existing institutions that due to structural inequality grant to certain individuals the power to set discussion agendas and constrain the kinds of options open for consideration prior to any actual encounter with their deliberative opponents; the deliberative process is in this sense rigged from the start to favor the status quo and disadvantage the agents of change. Second, the activist has argued that political discussion must always take place by means of antecedent ‘discourses’ or vocabularies which establish the conceptual boundaries of the deliberation and hence may themselves be hegemonic or systematically distorting; the deliberative process is hence subject to the distorting influence of ideology at the most fundamental level, and deliberative democrats do not have the resources by which such distortions can be addressed. objectives cannot be pursued by deliberative means. The first thing to note is that, as it stands, the conclusion does not follow from the premises; the argument is enthymematic. What is required is the additional premise that the distorting features of discussion cannot be corrected by further discussion. That discussion cannot rehabilitate itself is a crucial principle in the activist’s case, but is nowhere argued. Moreover, the activist has given no arguments to support the claim that present modes of discussion are distorting, and has offered no analysis of how one might detect such distortions and discern their nature.20 Rather than providing a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of systematic distortion, Young provides (in her own voice) two examples of discourses that she claims are hegemonic. First she considers discussions of poverty that presume the adequacy of labor market analyses; second she cites discussions of pollution that presume that modern economies must be based on the burning of fossil-fuels. In neither case does she make explicit what constitutes the distortion. At most, her examples show that some debates are framed in ways that render certain types of proposals ‘out of bounds’. But surely this is the case in any discussion, and it is not clear that it is in itself always a bad thing or even ‘distorting’. Not all discursive exclusions are distortions because the term ‘distortion’ implies that something is being excluded that should be included. Clearly, then, there are some dialectical exclusions that are entirely appropriate. For example, it is a good thing that current discussions of poverty are often cast in terms that render white supremacist ‘solutions’ out of bounds; it is also good that pollution discourses tend to exclude fringe-religious appeals to the cleansing power of mass prayer. This is not to say that opponents of market analyses of poverty are on par with white supremacists or that Greens are comparable to fringe-religious fanatics; it is rather to press for a deeper analysis of the discursive hegemony that the activist claims undermines deliberative democracy. It is not clear that the requested analysis, were it provided, would support the claim that systematic distortions cannot be addressed and remedied within the processes of continuing discourse. There are good reasons to think that continued discussion among persons who are aware of the potentially hegemonic features of discourse can correct the distorting factors that exist and block the generation of new distortions. As Young notes (116), James Bohman (1996: ch. 3) has proposed a model of deliberation that incorporates concerns about distorted communication and other forms of deliberative inequality within a general theory of deliberative democracy; the recent work of Seyla Benhabib (2002) and Robert Goodin (2003: chs 9–11) aims for similar goals. Hence I conclude that, as it stands, the activist’s second argument is incomplete, and as such the force of the difficulty it raises for deliberative democracy is not yet clear. If the objection is to stick, the activist must first provide a more detailed examination of the hegemonic and distorting properties of discourse; he must then show both that prominent modes of discussion operative in our democracy are distorting in important ways and that further discourse cannot remedy these distortions

#### Decisionmaking skills and engagement with the state energy apparatus prevents energy technocracy and actualizes radical politics

Hager 92

Hager, professor of political science – Bryn Mawr College, ‘92

(Carol J., “Democratizing Technology: Citizen & State in West German Energy Politics, 1974-1990” Polity, Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 45-70)

During this phase, the citizen initiative attempted to overcome its defensive posture and implement an alternative politics. The strategy of legal and technical challenge might delay or even prevent plant construction, but it would not by itself accomplish the broader goal on the legitimation dimension, i.e., democratization. Indeed, it worked against broad participation. The activists had to find a viable means of achieving change. Citizens had proved they could contribute to a substantive policy discussion. Now, some activists turned to the parliamentary arena as a possible forum for an energy dialogue. Until now, parliament had been conspicuously absent as a relevant policy maker, but if parliament could be reshaped and activated, citizens would have a forum in which to address the broad questions of policy-making goals and forms. They would also have an institutional lever with which to pry apart the bureaucracy and utility. None of the established political parties could offer an alternative program. Thus, local activists met to discuss forming their own voting list.¶ These discussions provoked internal dissent. Many citizen initiative members objected to the idea of forming a political party. If the problem lay in the role of parliament itself, another political party would not solve it. On the contrary, parliamentary participation was likely to destroy what political innovations the extraparliamentary movement had made. Others argued that a political party would give the movement an institutional platform from which to introduce some of the grassroots democratic political forms the groups had developed. Founding a party as the parliamentary arm of the citizen movement would allow these groups to play an active, critical role in institutionalized politics, participating in the policy debates while retaining their outside perspective. Despite the disagreements, the Alternative List for Democracy and Environmental Protection Berlin (AL) was formed in 1978 and first won seats in the Land parliament with 7.2 percent of the vote in 1981.43 The founders of the AL were encouraged by the success of newly formed local green parties in Lower Saxony and Hamburg,44 whose evolution had been very similar to that of the West Berlin citizen move-ment. Throughout the FRG, unpopular administrative decisions affect-ing local environments, generally in the form of state-sponsored indus-trial projects, prompted the development of the citizen initiative and ecology movements. The groups in turn focused constant attention on state planning "errors," calling into question not only the decisions themselves, but also the conventional forms of political decision making that produced them.45 Disgruntled citizens increasingly aimed their critique at the established political parties, in particular the federal SPD/ FDP coalition, which seemed unable to cope with the economic, social, and political problems of the 1970s. Fanned by publications such as the Club of Rome's report, "The Limits to Growth," the view spread among activists that the crisis phenomena were not merely a passing phase, but indicated instead "a long-term structural crisis, whose cause lies in the industrial-technocratic growth society itself."46 As they broadened their critique to include the political system as a whole, many grassroots groups found the extraparliamentary arena too restrictive. Like many in the West Berlin group, they reasoned that the necessary change would require a degree of political restructuring that could only be accomplished through their direct participation in parliamentary politics. Green/alternative parties and voting lists sprang up nationwide and began to win seats in local assemblies. The West Berlin Alternative List saw itself not as a party, but as the parliamentary arm of the citizen initiative movement. One member explains: "the starting point for alternative electoral participation was simply the notion of achieving a greater audience for [our] own ideas and thus to work in support of the extraparliamentary movements and initia-tives,"47 including non-environmentally oriented groups. The AL wanted to avoid developing structures and functions autonomous from the citizen initiative movement. Members adhered to a list of principles, such as rotation and the imperative mandate, designed to keep parliamentarians attached to the grassroots. Although their insistence on grassroots democracy often resulted in interminable heated discussions, the participants recognized the importance of experimenting with new forms of decision making, of not succumbing to the same hierarchical forms they were challenging. Some argued that the proper role of citizen initiative groups was not to represent the public in government, but to mobilize other citizens to participate directly in politics themselves; self-determination was the aim of their activity.48¶ Once in parliament, the AL proposed establishment of a temporary parliamentary commission to study energy policy, which for the first time would draw all concerned participants together in a discussion of both short-term choices and long-term goals of energy policy. With help from the SPD faction, which had been forced into the opposition by its defeat in the 1981 elections, two such commissions were created, one in 1982-83 and the other in 1984-85.49 These commissions gave the citizen activists the forum they sought to push for modernization and technical innovation in energy policy.¶ Although it had scaled down the proposed new plant, the utility had produced no plan to upgrade its older, more polluting facilities or to install desulfurization devices. With prodding from the energy commission, Land and utility experts began to formulate such a plan, as did the citizen initiative. By exposing administrative failings in a public setting, and by producing a modernization plan itself, the combined citizen initiative and AL forced bureaucratic authorities to push the utility for improvements. They also forced the authorities to consider different technological solutions to West Berlin's energy and environmental problems. In this way, the activists served as technological innovators. In 1983, the first energy commission submitted a list of recommendations to the Land parliament which reflected the influence of the citizen protest movement. It emphasized goals of demand reduction and efficiency, noted the value of expanded citizen participation and urged authorities to "investigate more closely the positive role citizen participation can play in achieving policy goals."50 The second energy commission was created in 1984 to discuss the possibilities for modernization and shutdown of old plants and use of new, environmentally friendlier and cheaper technologies for electricity and heat generation. Its recommendations strengthened those of the first commission.51 Despite the non-binding nature of the commissions' recommendations, the public discussion of energy policy motivated policy makers to take stronger positions in favor of environmental protection.¶ III. Conclusion ¶ The West Berlin energy project eventually cleared all planning hurdles, and construction began in the early 1980s. The new plant now conforms to the increasingly stringent environmental protection requirements of the law. The project was delayed, scaled down from 1200 to 600 MW, moved to a neutral location and, unlike other BEWAG plants, equipped with modern desulfurization devices. That the new plant, which opened in winter 1988-89, is the technologically most advanced and environmen-tally sound of BEWAG's plants is due entirely to the long legal battle with the citizen initiative group, during which nearly every aspect of the original plans was changed. In addition, through the efforts of the Alter-native List (AL) in parliament, the Land government and BEWAG formulated a long sought modernization and environmental protection plan for all of the city's plants. The AL prompted the other parliamentary parties to take pollution control seriously. Throughout the FRG, energy politics evolved in a similar fashion. As Habermas claimed, underlying the objections against particular projects was a reaction against the administrative-economic system in general.¶ One author, for example, describes the emergence of two-dimensional protest against nuclear energy: The resistance against a concrete project became understood simul-taneously as resistance against the entire atomic program. Questions of energy planning, of economic growth, of understanding of democracy entered the picture. . . . Besides concern for human health, for security of conditions for human existence and protec-tion of nature arose critique of what was perceived as undemocratic planning, the "shock" of the delayed public announcement of pro-ject plans and the fear of political decision errors that would aggra-vate the problem.52 This passage supports a West Berliner's statement that the citizen initiative began with a project critique and arrived at *Systemkritik*.53 I have labeled these two aspects of the problem the public policy and legitima-tion dimensions. In the course of these conflicts, the legitimation dimen-sion emergd as the more important and in many ways the more prob-lematic.¶ Parliamentary Politics ¶ In the 1970s, energy politics began to develop in the direction Offe de-scribed, with bureaucrats and protesters avoiding the parliamentary channels through which they should interact. The citizen groups them-selves, however, have to a degree reversed the slide into irrelevance of parliamentary politics. Grassroots groups overcame their defensive posture enough to begin to formulate an alternative politics, based upon concepts such as decision making through mutual understanding rather than technical criteria or bargaining. This new politics required new modes of interaction which the old corporatist or pluralist forms could not provide. Through the formation of green/alternative parties and voting lists and through new parliamentary commissions such as the two described in the case study, some members of grassroots groups attempted to both operate within the political system and fundamentally change it, to restore the link between bureaucracy and citizenry.¶ Parliamentary politics was partially revived in the eyes of West German grassroots groups as a legitimate realm of citizen participation, an outcome the theory would not predict. It is not clear, however, that strengthening the parliamentary system would be a desirable outcome for everyone. Many remain skeptical that institutions that operate as part of the "system" can offer the kind of substantive participation that grass-roots groups want. The constant tension between institutionalized politics and grassroots action emerged clearly in the recent internal debate between "fundamentalist" and "realist" wings of the Greens. Fundis wanted to keep a firm footing outside the realm of institutionalized politics. They refused to bargain with the more established parties or to join coalition governments. Realos favored participating in institutionalized politics while pressing their grassroots agenda. Only this way, they claimed, would they have a chance to implement at least some parts of their program. ¶ This internal debate, which has never been resolved, can be interpreted in different ways. On one hand, the tension limits the appeal of green and alternative parties to the broader public, as the Greens' poor showing in the December 1990 all-German elections attests. The failure to come to agreement on basic issues can be viewed as a hazard of grass-roots democracy. The Greens, like the West Berlin citizen initiative, are opposed in principle to forcing one faction to give way to another. Disunity thus persists within the group. On the other hand, the tension can be understood not as a failure, but as a kind of success: grassroots politics has not been absorbed into the bureaucratized system; it retains its critical dimension, both in relation to the political system and within the groups themselves. The lively debate stimulated by grassroots groups and parties keeps questions of democracy on the public agenda.¶ Technical Debate ¶ In West Berlin, the two-dimensionality of the energy issue forced citizen activists to become both participants in and critics of the policy process. In order to defeat the plant, activists engaged in technical debate. They won several decisions in favor of environmental protection, often proving to be more informed than bureaucratic experts themselves. The case study demonstrates that grassroots groups, far from impeding techno-logical advancement, can actually serve as technological innovators. ¶ The activists' role as technical experts, while it helped them achieve some success on the policy dimension, had mixed results on the legitimation dimension. On one hand, it helped them to challenge the legitimacy of technocratic policy making. They turned back the Land government's attempts to displace political problems by formulating them in technical terms.54 By demonstrating the fallibility of the technical arguments, activists forced authorities to acknowledge that energy demand was a political variable, whose value at any one point was as much influenced by the choices of policy makers as by independent technical criteria. ¶ Submission to the form and language of technical debate, however, weakened activists' attempts to introduce an alternative, goal-oriented form of decision making into the political system. Those wishing to par-ticipate in energy politics on a long-term basis have had to accede to the language of bureaucratic discussion, if not the legitimacy of bureaucratic authorities. They have helped break down bureaucratic authority but have not yet offered a viable long-term alternative to bureaucracy. In the tension between form and language, goals and procedure, the legitima-tion issue persists. At the very least, however, grassroots action challenges critical theory's notion that technical discussion is inimical to democratic politics.55 Citizen groups have raised the possibility of a dialogue that is both technically sophisticated and democratic.¶ In sum, although the legitimation problems which gave rise to grass-roots protest have not been resolved, citizen action has worked to counter the marginalization of parliamentary politics and the technocratic character of policy debate that Offe and Habermas identify. The West Berlin case suggests that the solutions to current legitimation problems may not require total repudiation of those things previously associated with technocracy.56¶ In Berlin, the citizen initiative and AL continue to search for new, more legitimate forms of organization consistent with their principles. No permanent Land parliamentary body exists to coordinate and con-solidate energy policy making.57 In the 1989 Land elections, the CDU/ FDP coalition was defeated, and the AL formed a governing coalition with the SPD. In late 1990, however, the AL withdrew from the coali-tion. It remains to be seen whether the AL will remain an effective vehi-cle for grassroots concerns, and whether the citizenry itself, now includ-ing the former East Berliners, will remain active enough to give the AL direction as united Berlin faces the formidable challenges of the 1990s. On the policy dimension, grassroots groups achieved some success. On the legitimation dimension, it is difficult to judge the results of grass-roots activism by normal standards of efficacy or success. Activists have certainly not radically restructured politics. They agree that democracy is desirable, but troublesome questions persist about the degree to which those processes that are now bureaucratically organized can and should be restructured, where grassroots democracy is possible and where bureaucracy is necessary in order to get things done. In other words, grassroots groups have tried to remedy the Weberian problem of the marginalization of politics, but it is not yet clear what the boundaries of the political realm should be. It is, however, the act of calling existing boundaries into question that keeps democracy vital. In raising alternative possibilities and encouraging citizens to take an active, critical role in their own governance, the contribution of grassroots environmental groups has been significant. As Melucci states for new social movements in general, these groups mount a "symbolic" challenge by proposing "a different way of perceiving and naming the world."58 Rochon concurs for the case of the West German peace movement, noting that its effect on the public discussion of secur-ity issues has been tremendous.59 The effects of the legitimation issue in the FRG are evident in increased citizen interest in areas formerly left to technical experts. Citizens have formed nationwide associations of environmental and other grassroots groups as well as alternative and green parties at all levels of government. The level of information within the groups is generally quite high, and their participation, especially in local politics, has raised the awareness and engagement of the general populace noticeably.60 Policy concessions and new legal provisions for citizen participation have not quelled grassroots action. The attempts of the established political parties to coopt "green" issues have also met with limited success. Even green parties themselves have not tapped the full potential of public support for these issues. The persistence of legitima-tion concerns, along with the growth of a culture of informed political activism, will ensure that the search continues for a space for a delibera-tive politics in modern technological society.61

### 2NC Limits

#### First, a limited topic of discussion that provides for equitable ground is key to productive inculcation of decision-making and advocacy skills in every and all facets of life—-even if their position is contestable that’s distinct from it being valuably debatable—-this still provides room for flexibility, creativity, and innovation, but targets the discussion to avoid mere statements of fact—-T debates also solve any possible turn

Steinberg & Freeley 08

(Freeley, Austin J., PhD and director of debate at John Carroll University from 1958-85, and Steinberg, David L., communications lecturer and director of debate at U. of Miami, 2008 edition, “Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making”, GoogleBooks, p. 45)

Debate is a means of settling differences, so there must be a difference of opinion or a conflict of interest before there can be a debate. If everyone is in agreement on a fact of value or policy, there is no need for debate; the matter can be settled by unanimous consent. Thus, for example, it would be pointless to attempt to debate clash of ideas, proposals, interests, or expressed positions on issues, there is no debate. In addition, debate cannot produce effective decisions without clear identification of a question or questions to be answered. For example, general argument may occur about the broad topic of illegal immigration. How many illegal immigrants are in the United States? What is the impact of illegal immigration and immigrants on our economy? What is their impact on our communities? Do they commit crimes? Do they take jobs from American workers? Do they pay taxes? Do they require social services? Is it a problem that some do not speak English? Is it the responsibility of employers, law enforcement, housing, and businesses? How are their families impacted by their status? What is the moral and philosophical obligation of a nation state to maintain its borders? Should we build a wall on the Mexican border, establish a national identification card, or enforce existing laws against employers? Should we invite immigrants to become US citizens? Surely you can think of many more concerns to be addressed by a conversation about the topic area of illegal immigration. Participation in this "debate" is likely to be emotional and intense. However, it is not likely to be productive or useful without focus on a particular question and identification of a line demarcating sides in the controversy. To be discussed and resolved effectively, controversies must be stated clearly. Vague understanding results in unfocused deliberation and poor decisions, frustration, and emotional distress, as evidenced by the failure of the United States Congress to make progress on the immigration debate during the summer of 2007.

#### Lack of structured clash makes debate into an echo chamber. That prevents any knowledge gaining and turns their education claims

Talisse 5—Professor of Philosophy @Vandy

Robert, *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, Deliberativist responses to activist challenges, 31(4) p. 429-431

The argument thus far might appear to turn exclusively upon different conceptions of what reasonableness entails. The deliberativist view I have sketched holds that reasonableness involves some degree of what we may call epistemic modesty. On this view, the reasonable citizen seeks to have her beliefs reﬂect the best available reasons, and so she enters into public discourse as a way of testing her views against the objections and questions of those who disagree; hence she implicitly holds that her present view is open to reasonable critique and that others who hold opposing views may be able to offer justiﬁcations for their views that are at least as strong as her reasons for her own. Thus any mode of politics that presumes that discourse is extraneous to questions of justice and justiﬁcation is unreasonable. The activist sees no reason to accept this. Reasonableness for the activist consists in the ability to act on reasons that upon due reﬂection seem adequate to underwrite action; discussion with those who disagree need not be involved. According to the activist, there are certain cases in which he does in fact know the truth about what justice requires and in which there is no room for reasoned objection. Under such conditions, the deliberativist’s demand for discussion can only obstruct justice; it is therefore irrational. It may seem that we have reached an impasse. However, there is a further line of criticism that the activist must face. To the activist’s view that at least in certain situations he may reasonably decline to engage with persons he disagrees with (107), the deliberative democrat can raise the phenomenon that Cass Sunstein has called ‘group polarization’ (Sunstein, 2003; 2001a: ch. 3; 2001b: ch. 1). To explain: consider that political activists cannot eschew deliberation altogether; they often engage in rallies, demonstrations, teach-ins, workshops, and other activities in which they are called to make public the case for their views. Activists also must engage in deliberation among themselves when deciding strategy. Political movements must be organized, hence those involved must decide upon targets, methods, and tactics; they must also decide upon the content of their pamphlets and the precise messages they most wish to convey to the press. Often the audience in both of these deliberative contexts will be a self-selected and sympathetic group of like-minded activists. Group polarization is a well-documented phenomenon that has ‘been found all over the world and in many diverse tasks’; it means that ‘members of a deliberating group predictably move towards a more extreme point in the direction indicated by the members’ predeliberation tendencies’ (Sunstein, 2003: 81–2). Importantly, in groups that ‘engage in repeated discussions’ over time, the polarization is even more pronounced (2003: 86 Hence discussion in a small but devoted activist enclave that meets regularly to strategize and protest ‘should produce a situation in which individuals hold positions more extreme than those of any individual member before the series of deliberations began’ (ibid.) 17 The fact of group polarization is relevant to our discussion because the activist has proposed that he may reasonably decline to engage in discussion with those with whom he disagrees in cases in which the requirements of justice are so clear that he can be conﬁdent that he has the truth. Group polarization suggests that deliberatively confronting those with whom we disagree is essential even when we have the truth. For even if we have the truth, if we do not engage opposing views, but instead deliberate only with those with whom we agree, our view will shift progressively to a more extreme point, and thus we lose the truth. In order to avoid polarization, deliberation must take place within heterogeneous ‘argument pools’ (Sunstein, 2003: 93). This of course does not mean that there should be no groups devoted to the achievement of some common political goal; it rather suggests that engagement with those with whom one disagrees is essential to the proper pursuit of justice. Insofar as the activist denies this, he is unreasonable.

#### Takes out their offense—all aff claims are uncertain unless they can be scrutinized which requires deliberative norms and clash—means their impact turns don’t matter unless they’re based off their interpretation

#### Rules are necessary to give discussions direction and closure --- the alternative is endless talking that does nothing to combat structural oppression

**Tonn ‘05**

(Mari Boor, Professor of Communication – University of Maryland, “Taking Conversation, Dialogue, and Therapy Public”, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, Vol. 8, Issue 3, Fall)

Second, whereas Schudson focuses largely on ways a conversational model for democracy may mute an individual's voice in crafting a resolution on a given question at a given time, I draw upon insights of Dana L. Cloud and others to consider ways in which a therapeutic, conversational approach to public problems can stymie productive, collective action in two respects.17 First, because conversation has no clearly defined goal, a public conversation may engender inertia as participants become mired in repeated airings of personal experiences without a mechanism to lend such expressions direction and closure. As Freeman aptly notes, although "[u]nstructured groups may be very effective in getting [people] to talk about their lives[,] they aren't very good for getting things done. Unless their mode of operation changes, groups flounder at the point where people tire of 'just talking.'"18 Second, because the therapeutic bent of much public conversation locates social ills and remedies within individuals or dynamics of interpersonal relationships, public conversations and dialogues risk becoming substitutes for policy formation necessary to correct structural dimensions of social problems. In mimicking the emphasis on the individual in therapy, Cloud warns, the therapeutic rhetoric of "healing, consolation, and adaptation or adjustment" tends to "encourage citizens to perceive political issues, conflicts, and inequities as personal failures subject to personal amelioration."19

### Stasis

#### Debate over a controversial point of action is key to argumentative stasis – Steinberg 8 evidence says without structured clash it is impossible to produce effective decisions – vague understandings results in unfocused deliberation and poor decisions – it’s proven by Congress’s inability to make progress on the immigration debate during the summer of 2007 – productive debate only occurs when limits are placed – anything else is just an interesting discussion

### Decisionmaking

#### Decisionmaking is the most portable skill—key to all facets of life and advocacy

Steinberg 8

Steinberg, lecturer of communication studies – University of Miami, and Freeley, Boston based attorney who focuses on criminal, personal injury and civil rights law, ‘8

(David L. and Austin J., Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making p. 9-10)

After several days of intense debate, first the United States House of Representatives and then the U.S. Senate voted to authorize President George W. Bush to attack Iraq if Saddam Hussein refused to give up weapons of mass destruction as required by United Nations's resolutions. Debate about a possible military\* action against Iraq continued in various governmental bodies and in the public for six months, until President Bush ordered an attack on Baghdad, beginning Operation Iraqi Freedom, the military campaign against the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. He did so despite the unwillingness of the U.N. Security Council to support the military action, and in the face of significant international opposition.¶ Meanwhile, and perhaps equally difficult for the parties involved, a young couple deliberated over whether they should purchase a large home to accommodate their growing family or should sacrifice living space to reside in an area with better public schools; elsewhere a college sophomore reconsidered his major and a senior her choice of law school, graduate school, or a job. Each of these\* situations called for decisions to be made. Each decision maker worked hard to make well-reasoned decisions.¶ Decision making is a thoughtful process of choosing among a variety of options for acting or thinking. It requires that the decider make a choice. Life demands decision making. We make countless individual decisions every day. To make some of those decisions, we work hard to employ care and consideration; others seem to just happen. Couples, families, groups of friends, and coworkers come together to make choices, and decision-making homes from committees to juries to the U.S. Congress and the United Nations make decisions that impact us all. Every profession requires effective and ethical decision making, as do our school, community, and social organizations.¶ We all make many decisions even- day. To refinance or sell one's home, to buy a high-performance SUV or an economical hybrid car. what major to select, what to have for dinner, what candidate CO vote for. paper or plastic, all present lis with choices. Should the president deal with an international crisis through military invasion or diplomacy? How should the U.S. Congress act to address illegal immigration?¶ Is the defendant guilty as accused? Tlie Daily Show or the ball game? And upon what information should I rely to make my decision? Certainly some of these decisions are more consequential than others. Which amendment to vote for, what television program to watch, what course to take, which phone plan to purchase, and which diet to pursue all present unique challenges. At our best, we seek out research and data to inform our decisions. Yet even the choice of which information to attend to requires decision making. In 2006, TIMI: magazine named YOU its "Person of the Year." Congratulations! Its selection was based on the participation not of ''great men" in the creation of history, but rather on the contributions of a community of anonymous participants in the evolution of information. Through blogs. online networking. You Tube. Facebook, MySpace, Wikipedia, and many other "wikis," knowledge and "truth" are created from the bottom up, bypassing the authoritarian control of newspeople. academics, and publishers. We have access to infinite quantities of information, but how do we sort through it and select the best information for our needs?¶ The ability of every decision maker to make good, reasoned, and ethical decisions relies heavily upon their ability to think critically. Critical thinking enables one to break argumentation down to its component parts in order to evaluate its relative validity and strength. Critical thinkers are better users of information, as well as better advocates.¶ Colleges and universities expect their students to develop their critical thinking skills and may require students to take designated courses to that end. The importance and value of such study is widely recognized.¶ Much of the most significant communication of our lives is conducted in the form of debates. These may take place in intrapersonal communications, in which we weigh the pros and cons of an important decision in our own minds, or they may take place in interpersonal communications, in which we listen to arguments intended to influence our decision or participate in exchanges to influence the decisions of others.¶ Our success or failure in life is largely determined by our ability to make wise decisions for ourselves and to influence the decisions of others in ways that are beneficial to us. Much of our significant, purposeful activity is concerned with making decisions. Whether to join a campus organization, go to graduate school, accept a job oiler, buy a car or house, move to another city, invest in a certain stock, or vote for Garcia—these are just a few of the thousands of decisions we may have to make. Often, intelligent self-interest or a sense of responsibility will require us to win the support of others. We may want a scholarship or a particular job for ourselves, a customer for out product, or a vote for our favored political candidate.

### Debate Good

#### Political engagement is the lynchpin of solving all existential global problems

Lundberg 10

(Christian O., Professor of Communications @ University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill “Tradition of Debate in North Carolina” in Navigating Opportunity: Policy Debate in the 21st Century By Allan D. Louden, p311)

The second major problem with the critique that identifies a naivety in articulating debate and democracy is that it presumes that the primary pedagogical outcome of debate is speech capacities. But the democratic capacities built by debate are not limited to speech—as indicated earlier, **debate builds capacity for critical thinking**, analysis of public claims, **informed decision making**, and **better public judgment**. If the picture of modem political life that underwrites this critique of debate is a pessimistic view of increasingly labyrinthine and bureaucratic administrative politics, rapid scientific and technological change outpacing the capacities of the citizenry to comprehend them, and ever-expanding insular special-interest- and money-driven politics, it is a **puzzling solution, at best, to argue that these conditions warrant giving up on debate**. If democracy is open to rearticulation, it is open to rearticulation precisely because **as the challenges of modern political life proliferate, the citizenry's capacities can change**, which is one of the primary reasons that theorists of democracy such as Ocwey in The Public awl Its Problems place such a high premium on education (Dewey 1988,63, 154). Debate provides an indispensible form of education in the modem articulation of democracy because it **builds precisely the skills that allow the citizenry to research and be informed** about policy decisions that impact them, to son rhroueh and evaluate the evidence for and relative merits of arguments for and against a policy in an increasingly infonnation-rich environment, and to prioritize their time and political energies toward policies that matter the most to them. The merits of debate as a tool for building democratic capacity-building take on a special significance in the context of information literacy. John Larkin (2005, HO) argues that one of the primary failings of modern colleges and universities is that they have not changed curriculum to match with the challenges of a new information environment. This is a problem for the course of academic study in our current context, but perhaps more important, argues Larkin, for the future of a citizenry that will need to make evaluative choices against an increasingly complex and multimediatcd information environment (ibid-). Larkin's study tested the benefits of debate participation on information-literacy skills and concluded that in-class debate participants reported significantly higher self-efficacy ratings of their ability to navigate academic search databases and to effectively search and use other Web resources: To analyze the self-report ratings of the instructional and control group students, we first conducted a multivariate analysis of variance on all of the ratings, looking jointly at the effect of instmction/no instruction and debate topic . . . that it did not matter which topic students had been assigned . . . students in the Instnictional [debate) group were significantly more confident in their ability to access information and less likely to feel that they needed help to do so----These findings clearly indicate greater self-efficacy for online searching among students who participated in (debate).... These results constitute strong support for the effectiveness of the project on students' self-efficacy for online searching in the academic databases. There was an unintended effect, however: After doing ... the project, instructional group students also felt more confident than the other students in their ability to get good information from Yahoo and Google. It may be that the library research experience increased self-efficacy for any searching, not just in academic databases. (Larkin 2005, 144) Larkin's study substantiates Thomas Worthcn and Gaylcn Pack's (1992, 3) claim that debate in the college classroom plays a critical role in fostering the kind of **problem-solving skills** demanded by the increasingly rich media and information environment of modernity. Though their essay was written in 1992 on the cusp of the eventual explosion of the Internet as a medium, Worthcn and Pack's framing of the issue was prescient: the primary question facing today's student has changed from how to best research a topic to the crucial question of learning how to best evaluate which arguments to cite and rely upon from an easily accessible and veritable cornucopia of materials. There are, without a doubt, a number of important criticisms of employing debate as a model for democratic deliberation. But cumulatively, the evidence presented here warrants strong support for expanding debate practice in the classroom as a technology **for enhancing democratic deliberative capacities**. The unique combination of critical thinking skills, research and information processing skills, oral communication skills, and capacities for listening and thoughtful, open engagement with hotly contested issues argues for debate as a **crucial component of a rich and vital democratic life**. In-class debate practice both aids students in achieving the best goals of college and university education, and serves as an unmatched practice for creating thoughtful, engaged, open-minded and self-critical students who are open to the possibilities of **meaningful political engagement** and **new articulations of democratic life.** Expanding this practice is crucial, if only because the more we produce citizens that can actively and effectively engage the political process, the more likely we are to **produce revisions of democratic life** that are **necessary if democracy is not only to survive, but to thrive**. Democracy faces a myriad of challenges, including: domestic and international **issues of class, gender, and racial justice**; wholesale **environmental destruction** and the potential for **rapid climate change**; emerging **threats to international stability** in the form of terrorism, intervention and new possibilities for great power conflict; and increasing **challenges of rapid globalization** including an increasingly volatile global economic structure. More than any specific policy or proposal, an **informed and active citizenry that deliberates with greater skill** and sensitivity provides one of the best hopes for responsive and effective democratic governance, and by extension, one of the last best hopes for dealing with the **existential challenges** to democracy [in an] increasingly complex world.

### 2nc brown extension

#### And, extend our brown 2k11 evidence – only our interp is permissive of the type of instrumental research and knowledge production about the environment which enables instrumental recommendations about changing the governments course of policy action – failure to produce this knowledge condemns one to irrelevance – not because their arguments are bad but because policymakers inherently exclude their message from consideration – only the interp can provide a middle ground to enable debaters to critique legislative fence-sitters in order to achieve social justice through the law. This is the only way to overcome the embedded material interests being served by the social racism of the zones of sacrifice they discuss.

#### And, scientific, rationalism is key to policymaking on energy and the environment. To be impactful, their social arguments should be mediated by our policymaking focus; not the other way around.

Fullwiler et. Al. 2k9

[scott t., wolfram elsner and tara natarajan, “the social fabric matrix approach to policy analysis: an introduction” in Institutional Analysis and Praxis: The Social Fabric Matrix approach”, 29-20,

Policymaking explains “an approach to policy analysis and planning that will allow us to¶ capture the complexity of the world around us and be consistent with modem science”¶ (p. 1; emphasis added). Thus, past and even current ongoing failures notwithstanding,¶ the premise here is that we know enough, care enough, and have adequate resources and¶ technology to solve our social, economic, and environmental problems. Or. stated differ-¶ ently, this book is optimistic by current standards of cynicism and pessimism. Our knowledge base is sufficient to do the research to understand our problems, our will is more than adequate, our work ethic is strong, our resources are abundant, and people are sufficiently educated to carry out the tasks in a technological society, (p. 2)¶ The shortcoming heretofore has been that “we have not had the analytical means necessary to meld our will, knowledge, and institutions into a policy paradigm that allows us to obtain success” (p. 2).¶ It is no small feat to design a method with such broad applicability as the SFM-A¶ has already demonstrated, particularly since to do so also requires a significant break¶ from previous dominant analytical paradigms that relied heavily upon reductionism and¶ determinism (i.e., noncomplexity). Instead, Hayden argues that, a new approach, if it is to be successful, must integrate modem science with an instrumentalist philosophy:¶ because we no longer believe that life—as structured in an institutional and ecological¶ milieu—is one dimensional, our measures and analytical tools cannot be one dimensional.¶ Because we no longer think that beliefs and values can be ignored, if for example, we want¶ successful irrigation systems or health care plans, an approach is needed to integrate what¶ sociologists and anthropologists know about beliefs and values with the expertise of engineers,¶ ecologists, agronomists, economists, physicians, and other expertise as needed for the problem¶ at hand. This integration can no longer be the kind that has persons working with different¶ expertise working in isolation, and their independent work then placed under one cover. The¶ analysis needs to be guided by a common model, or. to use Einstein’s term, a common frame.¶ 'The engineer’s work must be guided by belief criteria, the sociologists’ analysis should be¶ consistent with the relevant technology, the economists’ models need to be non-equilibrium¶ systems, policymakers’ actions are the results of integrated modeling, and so forth, (p. 1)¶ The editors and contributors to this volume suggest that the SFM-A provides not¶ only a powerful framework for policy research but also a framework that is com-¶ prehensive and adaptable to a wide variety of socioeconomic and policy issues.¶ Moreover, policy success obtained without such a complexity-reflecting analytical¶ approach will be coincidental.¶ In this chapter, we introduce the SFM-A by first discussing its theoretical under-¶ pinnings, then the SFM itself, and finally its larger paradigm for policy analysis.

### Policy Approach Good

#### Policy simulation key to creativity and decisionmaking—the detachment that they criticize is key to its revolutionary benefits

Eijkman 12

The role of simulations in the authentic learning for national security policy development: Implications for Practice / Dr. Henk Simon Eijkman. [electronic resource] <http://nsc.anu.edu.au/test/documents/Sims_in_authentic_learning_report.pdf>. Dr Henk Eijkman is currently an independent consultant as well as visiting fellow at the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy and is Visiting Professor of Academic Development, Annasaheb Dange College of Engineering and Technology in India. As a sociologist he developed an active interest in tertiary learning and teaching with a focus on socially inclusive innovation and culture change. He has taught at various institutions in the social sciences and his work as an adult learning specialist has taken him to South Africa, Malaysia, Palestine, and India. He publishes widely in international journals, serves on Conference Committees and editorial boards of edited books and international journal

Policy simulations stimulate Creativity Participation in policy games has proved to be a highly effective way of developing new combinations of experience and creativity, which is precisely what innovation requires (Geurts et al. 2007: 548). Gaming, whether in analog or digital mode, has the power to stimulate creativity, and is one of the most engaging and liberating ways for making group work productive, challenging and enjoyable. Geurts et al. (2007) cite one instance where, in a National Health Care policy change environment, ‘the many parties involved accepted the invitation to participate in what was a revolutionary and politically very sensitive experiment precisely because it was a game’ (Geurts et al. 2007: 547). Data from other policy simulations also indicate the uncovering of issues of which participants were not aware, the emergence of new ideas not anticipated, and a perception that policy simulations are also an enjoyable way to formulate strategy (Geurts et al. 2007). Gaming puts the players in an ‘experiential learning’ situation, where they discover a concrete, realistic and complex initial situation, and the gaming process of going through multiple learning cycles helps them work through the situation as it unfolds. Policy gaming stimulates ‘learning how to learn’, as in a game, and learning by doing alternates with reflection and discussion. The progression through learning cycles can also be much faster than in real-life (Geurts et al. 2007: 548). The bottom line is that problem solving in policy development processes requires creative experimentation. This cannot be primarily taught via ‘camp-fire’ story telling learning mode but demands hands-on ‘veld learning’ that allow for safe creative and productive experimentation. This is exactly what good policy simulations provide (De Geus, 1997; Ringland, 2006). In simulations participants cannot view issues solely from either their own perspective or that of one dominant stakeholder (Geurts et al. 2007). Policy simulations enable the seeking of Consensus Games are popular because historically people seek and enjoy the tension of competition, positive rivalry and the procedural justice of impartiality in safe and regulated environments. As in games, simulations temporarily remove the participants from their daily routines, political pressures, and the restrictions of real-life protocols. In consensus building, participants engage in extensive debate and need to act on a shared set of meanings and beliefs to guide the policy process in the desired direction

#### That allows us to influence state policy AND is key to agency

Eijkman 12

The role of simulations in the authentic learning for national security policy development: Implications for Practice / Dr. Henk Simon Eijkman. [electronic resource] <http://nsc.anu.edu.au/test/documents/Sims_in_authentic_learning_report.pdf>. Dr Henk Eijkman is currently an independent consultant as well as visiting fellow at the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy and is Visiting Professor of Academic Development, Annasaheb Dange College of Engineering and Technology in India. As a sociologist he developed an active interest in tertiary learning and teaching with a focus on socially inclusive innovation and culture change. He has taught at various institutions in the social sciences and his work as an adult learning specialist has taken him to South Africa, Malaysia, Palestine, and India. He publishes widely in international journals, serves on Conference Committees and editorial boards of edited books and international journal

However, whether as an approach to learning, innovation, persuasion or culture shift, policy simulations derive their power from two central features: their combination of simulation and gaming (Geurts et al. 2007). 1. The simulation element: the unique combination of simulation with role-playing. The unique simulation/role-play mix enables participants to create possible futures relevant to the topic being studied. This is diametrically opposed to the more traditional, teacher-centric approaches in which a future is produced for them. In policy simulations, possible futures are much more than an object of tabletop discussion and verbal speculation. ‘No other technique allows a group of participants to engage in collective action in a safe environment to create and analyse the futures they want to explore’ (Geurts et al. 2007: 536). 2. The game element: the interactive and tailor-made modelling and design of the policy game. The actual run of the policy simulation is only one step, though a most important and visible one, in a collective process of investigation, communication, and evaluation of performance. In the context of a post-graduate course in public policy development, for example, a policy simulation is a dedicated game constructed in collaboration with practitioners to achieve a high level of proficiency in relevant aspects of the policy development process. To drill down to a level of finer detail, policy development simulations—as forms of interactive or participatory modelling— are particularly effective in developing participant knowledge and skills in the five key areas of the policy development process (and success criteria), namely: Complexity, Communication, Creativity, Consensus, and Commitment to action (‘the five Cs’). The capacity to provide effective learning support in these five categories has proved to be particularly helpful in strategic decision-making (Geurts et al. 2007). Annexure 2.5 contains a detailed description, in table format, of the synopsis below

### Policy Approach Solves

#### Dialogic engagement over pragmatic policy proposals creates linkages and strategies capable of combatting environmental racism and injustice

Fan 4

Fan, PhD sociology – Institute for Environment, Philosophy and Public Policy @ Lancaster University, associate professor – National Yang-Ming University, ‘4

(Mei-Fang, “Democracy and Environmental Justice: The Case of Nuclear Waste Disposal in Taiwan,” Paper for the Political Studies Association 54th Annual Conference, Section 8-5: Democratisation and Sustainability 2, 6-8 April)

Habermas’s ideal of consensus is seen as outmoded (Lyotard, 1984: 66), unattainable and undesirable as people can have different reasons for agreement on a particular action (Dryzek, 2000: 170). Habermas recognizes this problem and his later work Between Facts and Norms attempts to be more open to difference, which includes ‘pragmatic discourse about what should be done in terms of translating consensus into binding decision capable of implementation, and negotiations concerning what to do when values and interests irreducibly conflict’ (Dryzek, 2000: 24-5). Intercultural dialogue does not need to seek unanimous agreement. As Antonio (1989: 743) puts it, ‘pragmatist social interaction depends on the capacity to share attitudes and does not rely on value consensus; sympathetic understanding of the other does not require agreement or homogeneity.’ Following the conception of pragmatism, intercultural dialogue over environmental justice allows arriving at agreement on goals or actions without necessarily reaching a shared set of reasons for these goals or actions or value positions. Hutchison (2003: 34-6) argues that borders based on territorial, cultural, ethnic or religious categories as a production of socialization restrict the participation of ‘outsiders’ in discourse on issues that are of concern to them. Group interaction or intercultural dialogue is undermined by dominant modes of thought, by history and by context. For dealing with difference of values, she argues, pragmatism provides an alternative framework that ‘prompts flexibility and acceptance when thinking of those “outside” our borders’ (p.36). According to Rorty (1999: 48), ‘all our knowledge is under descriptions suited to our current social purposes’, which best copes with our situation. A pragmatic approach to intercultural dialogue suggests we seek ‘to extend the reference of “us” as far as we can’ and strive for ‘as much intersubjective agreement as possible because we realize that ‘no interpretation of reality is innately superior (Rorty, 1991: 23; Hutchison, 2003: 36). Relying on research conducted by social psychologists which shows that that ‘the boundaries of the moral community within which people are willing to apply principles of justice to fellow members are affected by perceptions of similarity and common identity’, Miller (2002: 219) provides critique of radical differences between groups within the community because ‘people who identify exclusively with their ethnic sub-groups as opposed to embracing a more inclusive identity alongside it are less willing to accept the authority of procedures that may be used to resolve disputes or allocate resources, and become more concerned about well or how badly they have fared personally in the outcome.’ He suggests participants in the dialogue need to be more justice-driven: You must strike a fine balance between emphasizing what you have in common with other members of your audience, so as to win their sympathy and motivate them to see you as someone to whom justice is owned, and emphasizing the ways in which you are different, and which mean that you have special needs or suffer special disadvantages. (Miller, 2002: 221). I think Miller had it right that the dialectics between commonality and difference is important for the process of intercultural dialogue. Notions of environmental justice should be understood in a more pluralist and pragmatic fashion in a multicultural society that is more open to others with difference, and does not demand unanimous agreement in the dialogic process as a basis for collective decision. Intercultural dialogue helps people realize a variety of different ways of thinking about environmental justice, but the validity of ideas should be tested through their efficacy in practice (Rescher, 1993: 192-3). Siegfriend (1996: 275) makes a similar argument from a pragmatic feminist perspective that this method ‘does not mean avoiding conflicts or denying differences.’ A pragmatic approach to intercultural dialogue can best cope with the complex situation, and the norms or values arrived at through intercultural dialogic procedure would enhance interactions and the recognition of group differences. Fvanoff (2002: 57) argues that our socially constructed ideas and values can be challenged and reformulated in ways that are more adaptive to changing situations. Constructivism sees norms and principles as being actively ‘produced’ through the process of dialogue in which the participants are open to the differing perspective of others, acknowledge the limitations of their own particular perspectives, and change their initial positions as they learn from each other. Following Evanoff (2002), I argue that the differing idea of environmental justice held by the Yami, the Taiwanese and other Taiwanese aboriginal environmental communities are not inevitable or absolute. New values and norms can be created through the interactions and dialogue among a variety of environmental communities that enables us to best stand in nuclear waste dilemmas. According to MacIntyre (1988), no existing tradition implies a university conception of justice and the coming together of communities with various traditions might open up new alternative possibilities and enlarge our views of justice. He outlines three stages of the process of developing a wider perspective and new concepts: A first in which the relevant beliefs, texts, and authorities have not yet been put in question; a second in which inadequacies of various types have been identified, but not yet remedied; and a third in which response to those inadequacies has resulted in a set of reformulations, reevaluations, and new formulations and evaluations designed to remedy inadequacies and overcome limitations (1998, 355). Dialogue between the Yami, the Taiwanese and other aboriginal environmental communities with various traditions can facilitate reflection on the various positions and the transformation of those beliefs or concepts unable to deal with the conflicts between them and nuclear waste dilemmas. The multiple understanding of environmental justice and competing views on nuclear waste management held by the Yami and Taiwanese groups can be critically tested, and a variety of environmental communities need to reflect on the questions of what should be done. Following Mendus’s (1989) discussions of Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism, Philip (1993: 157, 161) argues for ‘more dynamic sense of differences as changing.’ She rightly suggests that difference ‘challenges dominant groups to reassess their own values and perspective, but also challenges subordinate and excluded groups to go beyond sectarian loyalties.’ This does not mean that difference can be denied, but seeks for ‘a wider sense of belonging.’ The idea held by the Yami and Taiwanese environmental communities might on the surface appear incommensurable, but different principles might be integrated into a larger framework that are widely accepted in a given social context and appropriate to address nuclear waste dilemmas. Intercultural dialogue among a variety of environmental communities helps enhance a sense of recognition, build bridges between the Yami, the Taiwanese and other Taiwanese aborigines, and remove the barriers to establishing alliance between them.

#### Policy and scientific knowledge, combined with state engagement, key to environmental justice activism—university spaces are key

**Grineski 6**

Grineski, associate professor of sociology – University of Texas El Paso, ‘6¶ (Sara E., “Local Struggles for Environmental Justice: Activating Knowledge for Change,” *Journal of Poverty*, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 25-49)

Environmental knowledge and how it is acquired and deployed are important features of local environmental politics in the US. “Communitybased participatory research” denotes research projects that involve cooperation between academic and non-academic researchers in creating knowledge intended to inform change (Israel, 2000). Within movements for environmental justice (EJ), community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a powerful tool for influencing change because, as one environmental justice activist explained, “Effective collaborations move us all toward a healthier and safer community using strategies arrived at through consensus of informed experts, community leaders and residents” (Shepard, 2000, p. 38). While Israel (2000, p. 21) recognizes the role of the university in CBPR as being unequivocally committed to research that benefits the community “either through direct intervention or by using the results to inform action for change,” this paper explores an additional role for the university, that of catalysis. In this paper, I use catalysis as a metaphor for a role the university can plan in movements for EJ. A catalyst is an agent (usually an enzyme) added to a chemical reaction to increase its speed by, for example, allowing it to occur at a lower temperature. Social capital can accrue to politically marginalized communities through the direct participation of scientists in their environmental struggles. In addition to examining the role of the university, I explore how neighborhood struggles for EJ can result in change through the activation of knowledge in certain political-legal frames. The interpenetration of lay knowledge and expert knowledge during CBPR can spur environmental justice action when enabled by political-legal structures and subvert the supposed binary between science and advocacy. I also discuss how local actions for socio-environmental change can be limited by uncertainties in knowledge and inadequate political-legal frameworks¶ ---MARKED---¶ , even in the presence of apparent environmental injustices and best CBPR practices. As the federal government hastens toward market-based environmental regulations attuned to corporate incentives and voluntarism, and environmental laws continue to be weakened, it becomes increasingly difficult for groups to challenge environmental injustices (Girder &Smith, 2002). Thus, pressuring the State for new environmental laws and rigorous enforcement of existing laws remain important strategies for EJ groups (Pellow, 2001a). I use an ethnographic approach to examine these issues, studying a CBPR effort in a poor, Latino neighborhood called Homedale in Phoenix, Arizona (see Figure 1) involving Arizona State University researchers, two professional community activists, and local residents. Homedale is a neighborhood built post-WWII and bordered by, among other things, a power plant, recycling plant, rendering plant, junkyards, warehouses, and a busy interstate truck stop. Minority and low-income urban neighborhoods have historically suffered environmental injustices in the form of unequal distribution of hazards in the United States (Brown, 1995; Szasz&Meuser, 1997). Environmental justice can be defined as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies” (Bullard&Johnson, 2000, p. 558). In Phoenix, research has indicated that low-income and minority neighborhoods bear unequal environmental burdens (Bolin et al., 2000, 2004). An increase in number of industrial facilities, and a growing awareness that the siting of these facilities in low-income minority neighborhoods is sometimes intentional has spawned numerous community-based EJ movements, for example, those in Chester, Pennsylvania (Cole & Foster, 2001), Love Canal, New York (Levine, 1982), Woburn, Massachusetts (Brown, 1987), and Phoenix, Arizona (e.g., Pijawka et al., 1998; Sicotte, 2003). Grass roots activism often produces personal and political empowerment among its members. This was well documented in the Love Canal case1. Love Canal was especially important historically, as it revealed the limits of federal waste policies enacted in the late 1970s and pioneered new forms of environmental leadership, in which women, the poor, and people of color dealt with scientific issues of toxicity and health in order to challenge large hazardous industries (Gottlieb, 1993). An “environment justice frame” includes demand for social justice, respect for grassroots knowledge, expectation of just compensation for harms, and close links to civil rights principles (Capek, 1993). Within the academy, social scientists and public health researchers usually conduct EJ research. Science within the EJ frame is thus a situated science; normative claims about social justice and fairness infiltrate research agendas. Due to their involvement and research products, it has been argued that academics have been more central to the environmental justice movement than they have been to any other social movement in the US (see Cole & Foster, 2000, pp. 20-26 for complete discussion). Knowledge developed about the environment, including that which emerges in EJ struggles is usually classified in terms of whether it is “lay” or “expert.” Lay knowledge is a locality-based way of knowing characterized as meanings or understandings people attach to a place that shape social actions and help them understand the world (Popay et al., 1998). It is: Stabilized and fixed through an articulation of place and identity. Because one is from a place, one has certain knowledge and speaks from that place. “Expert” knowledge on the other hand, appears to transcend these historical-geographic boundaries and looms as applicable anytime and anywhere by those who have gone through the process to transcend their own locality (i.e., become experts). (Fraser & Lepofsky, 2004, p. 7)