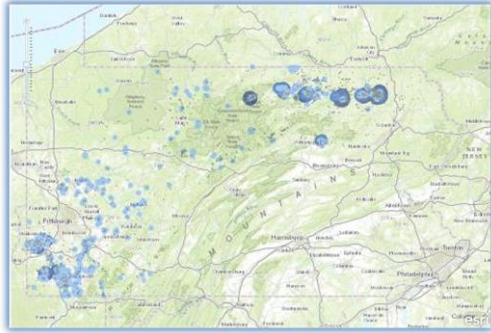


The Impact of Direct Experience with Shale Gas Extraction on Political Participation in Northeastern Pennsylvania



Kristiana Barr | Advisor: David Casagrande



Research Questions

- Has the issue of shale gas extraction itself made more people engaged in the political process?
- Are people more likely to be engaged if they are directly impacted?
- Do different types of direct experience trigger different types of political participation?

“Political activity is fostered by two factors that we address here: resources and political engagement. That is, people are likely to take part in politics if they command resources like civic skills or money and if they are politically interested, informed, and efficacious.”

Verba, Burns, and Lehman Schlozman 1997

Introduction

The intent of this project is to explore if there is any correlation between direct experience with shale gas extraction and political participation in northeastern Pennsylvania.

The long term goal of this project is to further understand the effect, if any, of the issue of shale gas extraction on political participation. In addition to being published in scholarly literature, I anticipate the results will be useful for policy-makers and activist groups.



Clarification

“Throughout the survey we will use the phrase ‘shale gas extraction’. This refers to the entire process, including drilling, hydraulic fracturing, well completion, and pipeline construction.”

Political Acts Measured

1. Voting	5. Contacting public officials
2. Working on political campaigns	6. Running for elected office
3. Contributing to political campaigns	7. Attending public meetings (and making a comment)
4. Political protest	8. Affiliation with organizations

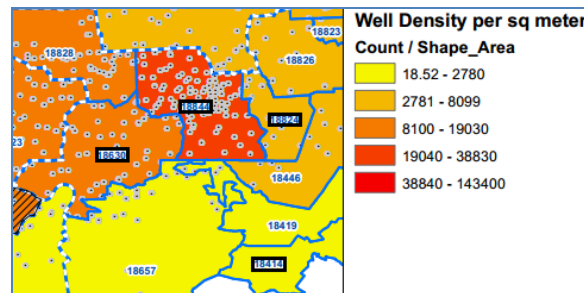


Methods

- 600 letters mailed out to residents of four PA zip codes
- Online survey with \$10 incentive
- 53 responses

Preliminary Conclusions

The issue of shale gas extraction increases political engagement
 -> it motivated those who vote “rarely” to vote in the last election
 -> it influenced who those who vote “often” voted for in the last election
 -> it motivated those who “sometimes” or “rarely” attend public meetings to do so



Further Research

- What demographics are more likely to participate or not as a result of shale gas extraction?
- Are there parts of the issue that are more likely to encourage different types of political engagement?
- Use addresses associated with survey responses to further understand relationships between direct experience and political participation using GIS
- Factoring in how people vote (candidate or party)