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Taya Godfrey

Utah State University, taya.godfrey9@gmail.com

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Feminism in Fracking: An Analyzation of Women's Activism Regarding Hydraulic Fracturing

Taya Godfrey, *Utah State University* Dr. Mehmet Soyer, *Utah State University*

Introduction

Research Question: What motivates females to become anti-fracking activists?

Definitions:

- **Hydraulic Fracturing:** A way of obtaining natural gas and oil from deep within the earth by injecting high powered water and chemicals into shale rock to fracture it, and therefore release natural resources (Manfreda, 2015).
- **Activism:** An individual motivated by circumstances to seek to create social change through education, politics, or other means.

Purpose:

To discover what motivates women to be involved in anti-fracking activism as to encourage further female activism.

Source:

- Gullion, J. S. (2015). Fracking the neighborhood: Reluctant activists and natural gas drilling.
- Manfred, J. (2015). The origin of fracking actually dates back to the Civil War. Business Insider.

Study conducted with support of Utah State University Undergraduate Research Fellowship under the direction of Dr. Mehmet Soyer.



Taya Godfrey
Utah State University
Sociology
taya.godfrey9@gmail.com

Literature Review

Health, economic, and political impacts concerning fracking:

- Higher instances of cancer, neurological symptoms, birth defects, and a myriad of other health issues (Wilson)
- Boosted economy, more jobs (Mehany)
- Political independence (Margonelli)

Women's activism:

- Females are more likely to support activists, more likely to volunteer and or donate to environmental causes, more likely to lead environmental movements when it is associated with their local community, and are more concerned than men when it comes to the health and safety of themselves and others due to environmental hazards. (Caiazza)

Sources

- Caiazza, A. and A. Barrett. *Engaging Women in Environmental Activism: Recommendations for Rachel's Network*
- Margonelli, Lisa. *Oil on the Brain: Petroleum's Long, Strange Trip to Your Tank*
- Mehany M, Guggemos A. *A Literature Survey of the Fracking Economic and Environmental Implications in the United States*
- Wilson, S., Sumi, L., Walker, B., and Goldman, J. *Natural Gas Flowback: How the Texas Natural Gas Book Affects Health and Safety*

Methods

- IRB sought and obtained through Texas Woman's University
- Snowball sampling- using word of mouth and social media
- Semi-structured interviews with 8 women
- Qualitative exploratory analysis
- Grounded analysis using NVIVO 11 qualitative data analysis software
- Theories derived from patterns, themes, and common categories

Preliminary Results

"You can only live around something that's not right for so long before you feel the need to stand up and say- you can't complain about it if you don't do something about it so you got to do something about it."

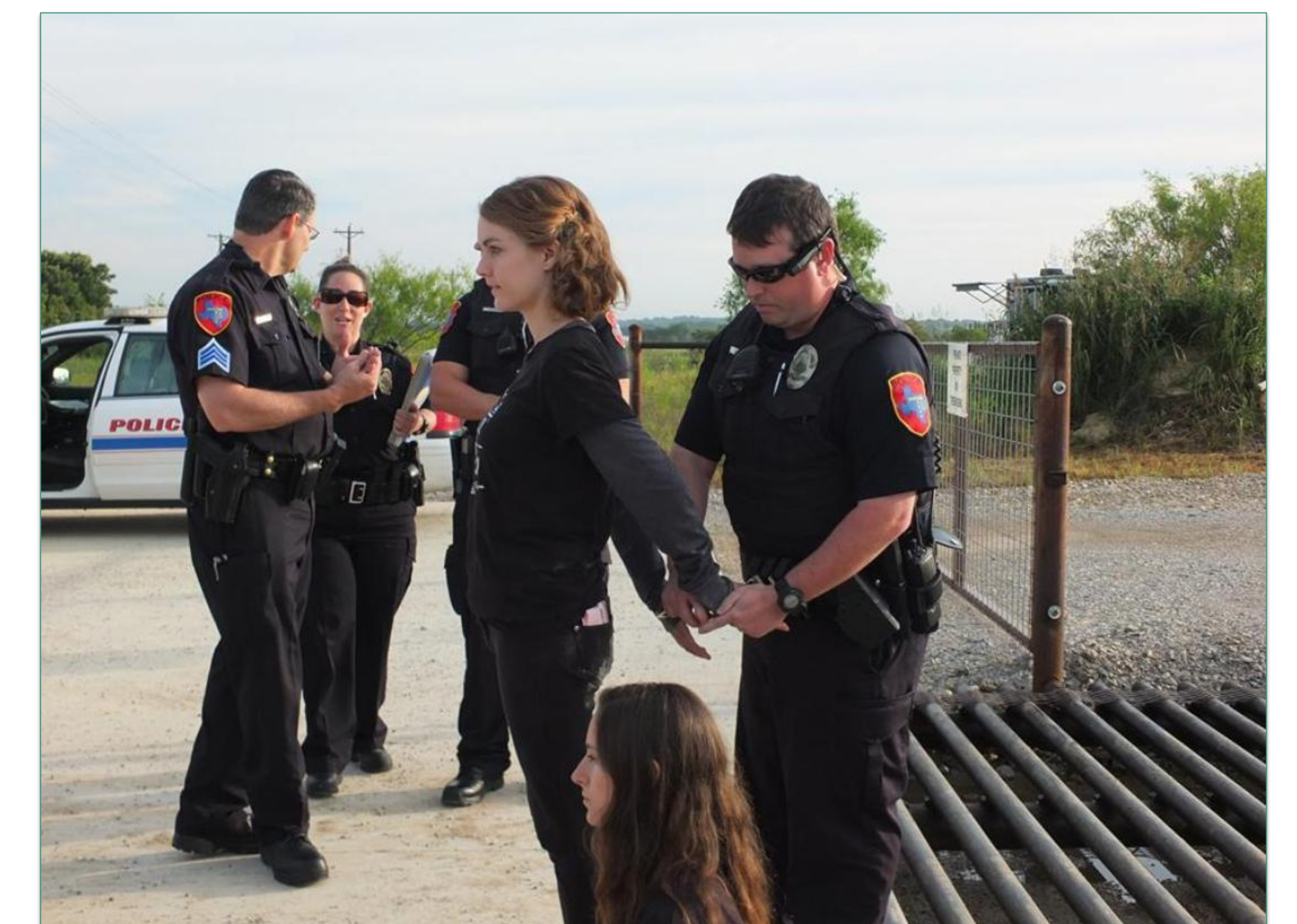
- Research Participant

"I really felt like something has to be done. This is a human rights issue."

- Research Participant

**quotes taken from interviews done in Denton Texas*

Figure 1- Civil Disobedience as a Form of Activism



Fort Worth Weekly News Roundup June 1, 2015. Civil Disobedience as a demonstration of activism

Conclusions

Our initial findings indicate a pattern in the motivating factors behind female activism.

We now plan to continue our study in other locations throughout the United States in order to test these theories and determine if the common themes found in the initial study translate to other locations.

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