

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

---

Fall Student Research Symposium 2021

Fall Student Research Symposium

---

12-9-2021

## A Look Into Indigenous Perceptions of Oil and Gas Companies in the Uintah Basin

TiSean Chapoose

Utah State University, tiseanchapoose@gmail.com

Josie Tollefson

Utah State University, josietollefson@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fsrs2021>



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

---


### Recommended Citation

Chapoose, TiSean and Tollefson, Josie, "A Look Into Indigenous Perceptions of Oil and Gas Companies in the Uintah Basin" (2021). *Fall Student Research Symposium 2021*. 75.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fsrs2021/75>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Fall Student Research Symposium at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall Student Research Symposium 2021 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usu.edu).





# A Look Into Indigenous Perceptions of Oil and Gas Companies in the Uintah Basin

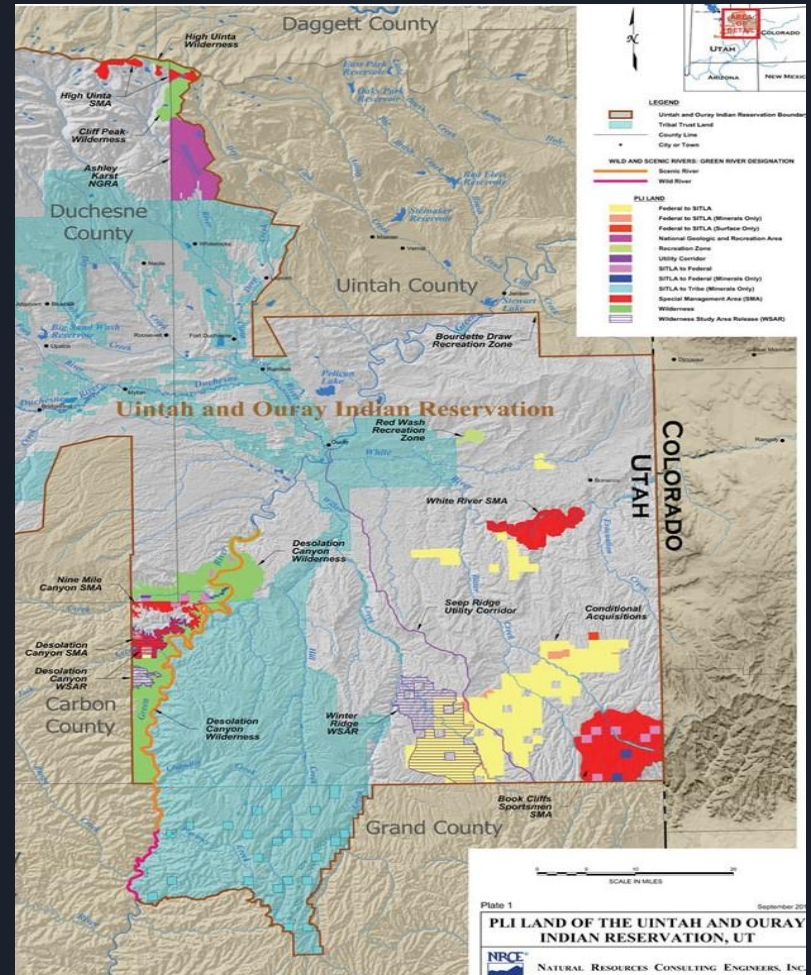
TiSean Chapoose, Josie Tollefson

# Background

The United states is a vast land with a diverse culture, all are impacted by oil and gas development from cities to rural areas.

However while research has been done on the opinions of the prominent population, little has been done on the indigenous populations of the United States.

The purpose of our study is to explore the opinions of the Ute tribe located on the Ouray and Uintah Reservation in Utah, who unlike others have a unique working relationship with oil and gas development that takes place in the Uintah Basin.





# Methodology

- RQ1: How do local residents and community leaders perceive the negative and positive impacts of Oil and Gas Development in the Uintah Basin Ute Tribe?
- Quantitative data found through interviews.
- Audio/video was recorded and then transcribed to maintain anonymity
- Data coded by subject and the analyzed for trends
- Snowball sampling
- 10 dollar gift cards given as incentive

# Data Collection

- Interview guide that loosely guided the interviews on what subjects to approach.
- Focused on personal and organic conversation
- Connections of the researchers were used to setup and conduct interviews.
- Participants were asked to give contact information of those they thought might be interested in taking part in the interview.
- Used past interview data as a basis and built upon what was already there.

## Community Resident Interview

*In this interview I am going to ask you some questions about your community and your thoughts about the impacts of oil & gas development in your community. I will also ask you some questions about your background and daily life. Your responses will be used to help us better understand public perceptions of oil & gas development in your community.*

*Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You may choose not to answer any of the questions or ask that we conclude the interview at any time. If you choose to participate in this interview, your responses to these questions will remain confidential and no identifying information will be used in any report or publication related to this project. Are you willing to participate in the interview?*

*I would like to record this interview to guarantee that I represent your comments correctly. Your confidentiality is assured. May I have your permission to make a recording of this interview?*

*Thank you for participating in this interview! Your input is very important to the project. Let's get started.*

### Introduction and Rapport Building

- How has oil and gas drilling impacted your own life? (probe for specifics)

### Community/Sense of Place Questions

- How would you describe this area to someone who has never been here before?
- How long have you lived in this area?
  - *If new to the area (e.g., 5-10 years):* Why did you move here?
  - *If lived here long-term:* What has kept you here?
- Can you tell me about how your community has changed over the last 5-10 years?
- Do you expect to stay in this area over the next 5 years?
  - *If yes:* Why?
  - *If no:* Why not?
- From your perspective, what are some of the positive attributes of this community that make it a good place to live?
- From your perspective, what are the biggest challenges this community is facing presently?
- **Do you feel connected or attached to this community?**
  - *If yes:* What makes you feel attached to this community?
  - *If no:* Why don't you feel attached to this community?



# Analysis

We will be analyzing the qualitative data with a social justice framework in mind, allowing for trends to emerge on their, however we will focus on the following categories:

- The environment
- Crime
- Revenue
- The spreading of information
- Education
- Boom and bust cycles
- Tribal leadership
- Employment

While analyzing the data all participants information will be keep confidential and they will be assigned a number in the form of U1 and so forth. We interviewed persons crossed genders, and ages.



# Results

Our findings were, there was a split of negative and positive views on oil and gas development.

When the environment was brought up there were concerns on the impacts on the natural flora and fauna, water and air pollution. However some brought up rules and regulations on oil and gas development, intern they were less likely to have opinions on environmental impacts.

There was a correlation between a rise of crime rates and boom and bust cycles, many participants noted the influx of new people coming into the Basin and being wary of them, a rise in drug use within the community and amongst the youth, along with concerns of rising sexual assaults and child trafficking.

In regards to revenue, the biggest take away was that development and revenue can not be separated as it brings in a much needed income for tribal members not only as spare money but also affecting their salaries. However many expressed that there needs be reduction in reliance on oil and gas as it could potentially stop and so could their revenue source. Alternative sources of revenue where brought up such as solar panels.

Two themes were found for how information was spread, and that was one group felt as though the tribal council did not share enough information or ways to communicate with oil and gas developers. On the other hand the other group felt as though there was adequate amount of information and communication between all parties and there was no need for an increase in communication.



# Results Continued

Many expressed that education was important, and that oil and gas brought in scholarships both from the tribe and from developers. It also brought in money that has been allocated to school supplies, new books, computers, and other equipment. Overall the opinions on its impact can be taken as positive.

As noted previously the relation of money and oil and gas was also brought up when discussing boom and bust cycles. Many noted that while in boom it brought in new restaurants and business, and the economy flourished. However once a bust cycle begins the economy begins to go down and so does the pop up of new business. There once again was a fear of relying too much on oil and gas and the potential of using up the resource.

Many noted that the tribal council was the main form of communication between the people and oil & Gas developers. Again we see the same trend of not enough information being shared by the tribal council, and while there is ways to obtain that information it should be readily available. In regards to community meetings, many said they do not participate or hear the information from someone else.

Oil and gas development does bring in employment for tribal members and family, however this employment is subjected to the fluctuating boom and bust cycles. While many were not employed by developers their income from their non-oil and gas job is impacted by it. However many believed no matter the current cycle there is employment in oil and gas.