**Analyzing the Role of Social Networks in Municipal Decision-Making about High-Volume Hydraulic Fracturing**

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Policy scholars have long recognized the important role well-resourced and well-connected individuals, or “policy entrepreneurs,” play in advocating and securing the adoption of policies. Many observe that policy entrepreneurs are more successful when they have facilitative network ties. However, there is a striking lack of cross-sectional, quantitative inquiry into the specific ways in which policy entrepreneurs leverage social network connections to achieve their aims. This project addresses that gap by using an original survey (n=480, 31% response rate) of municipal officials in New York to identify policy entrepreneurs active in municipal-level policymaking about high-volume hydraulic fracturing (HVHF) from 2008 through 2014. While sub-state jurisdictions nationwide are increasingly using land-use authorities to attempt to regulate HVHF, New York’s localities were early leaders in this movement and have passed more than 300 local policies. Advocacy by key individuals is frequently cited in media narratives about New York’s wave of local policy activity. The project uses an innovative text-mining approach to collect social network data from local newspaper accounts and construct municipal-level HVHF governance networks. It statistically evaluates hypotheses about how an entrepreneur’s presence and centrality in those networks, as well as the networks’ diversity and density, affect the entrepreneur’s ability to secure preferred HVHF policies. While data analysis is ongoing, the preliminary findings support some of the hypotheses and suggest that content analysis of local newspaper articles may be a low-cost way of accessing relatively rich and otherwise inaccessible network data.