

Native Americans and Risk Perceptions: Exploring Attitudes Towards the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico

Matthew C. Nowlin and Thaddieus Conner

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Risk Perceptions

- ▶ *Research Question(s):*
 - ▶ How do Native Americans perceive risks compared to other demographic groups?
 - ▶ What are the differences between Native Americans regarding risk perceptions?
- ▶ Literature:
 - ▶ White-male effect
 - ▶ Environmental justice
- ▶ Case:
 - ▶ Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico (WIPP)

Risk Perceptions and Nuclear Waste

- ▶ NIMBYism
- ▶ *Individual Characteristics:*
 - ▶ Demographics
 - ▶ Core values and beliefs
 - ▶ Trust in government

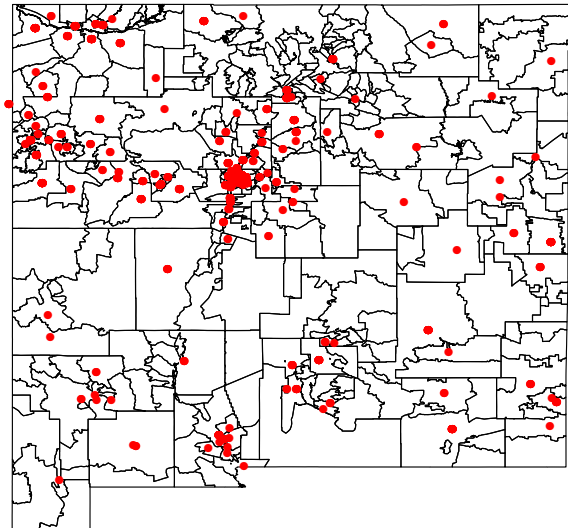
Native Americans and Risk Perceptions

- ▶ Unique from state / local governments in intergovernmental relations
- ▶ Concern about the environment
- ▶ Environmental justice
- ▶ Trust in government
- ▶ Expectations:
 - ▶ *H1: Native Americans less supportive of WIPP and perceive more risk from WIPP than Whites*
 - ▶ *H2: Native American males will be more supportive of WIPP and perceive less risk from WIPP than Native American females*

Data

- ▶ 35 statewide surveys of New Mexico residents administered between 1990 and 2001
- ▶ Total N around 25,000
- ▶ Total N for self-identified Native Americans around 850

Native American Data



Variables

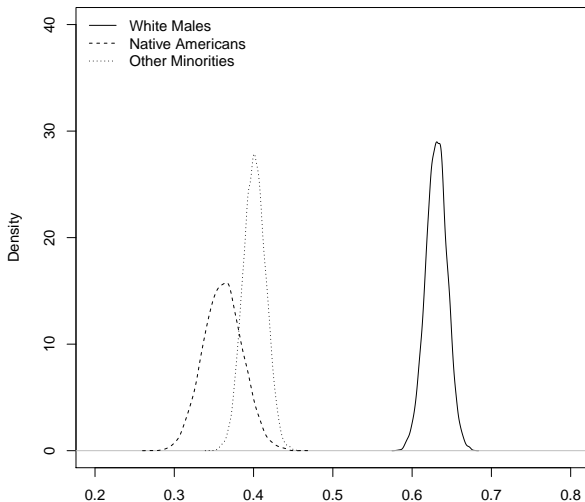
- ▶ *Dependent Variables:*

- ▶ WIPP Support–dichotomous
- ▶ Transportation Risk–one to five scale

- ▶ *Independent Variables:*

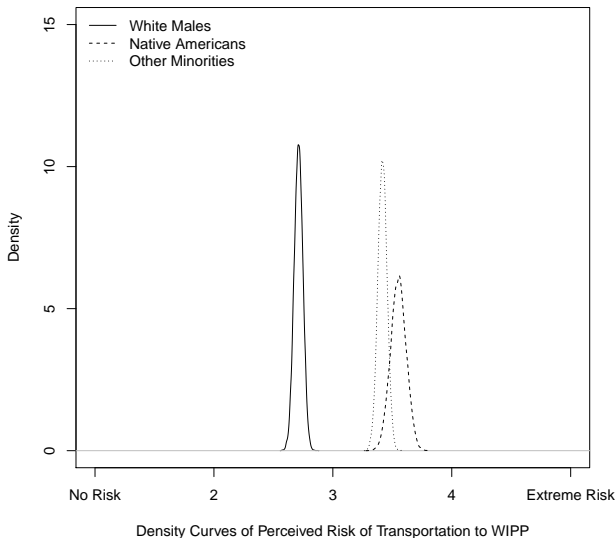
- ▶ Demographics (Age, Gender, Race, Education, Income)
- ▶ Values (Ideology, Republican, Environmental Concern)
- ▶ New Mexico Government Performance
- ▶ *Northwest County (Native American subset)*

Results (Full Sample): WIPP Support



Density Curves of the Predicted Probabilities of WIPP Support

Results (Full Sample): Transportation Risk



Results (Native Sub-Sample)

- ▶ WIPP Support:
 - ▶ Age
 - ▶ Male
 - ▶ Income
 - ▶ Republican
- ▶ Transportation Risk
 - ▶ Age
 - ▶ Male
 - ▶ Income
 - ▶ Environmental Concern ($p < .10$)
 - ▶ Northwest County

Discussion

- ▶ Native Americans views of WIPP like those of other racial minorities
- ▶ Differences between Native Americans
 - ▶ Age, Gender, Values
- ▶ Tribal affiliations
 - ▶ Counties a rough proxy