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Lecturer or Instructor

Human Development and Family Studies

Title of your research project.

A Tale of Two Mine Fires: Centralia and Tresckow, PA

Description of research. Please provide a few sentences that explain the question and the methods employed in this research project.

In 1962, a mine fire was discovered just outside Centralia, PA. During the early 1980s, this community of about 1,000 residents experienced an astounding level of intra-community social conflict over what to do about the mine fire. In 1983, Congress passed a \$42 million appropriation to relocate Centralia's residents and businesses that chose to move. Most residents responded by accepting the government's offer. Today, fewer than ten residents remain.

More recently, in 2012, a mine fire was discovered near Tresckow, PA, about 25 miles from Centralia. Initially causing similar concern, the fire was extinguished without the social conflict found in Centralia. Using document analysis, interviews, and participant observation, this paper examines why this was the case.

The paper suggests that three main factors account for the differences in social response: physical differences between the fires; the governments' responses; and the fact that there was corporate involvement in the latter case.

Did this project include Penn State students as researchers?

No

If yes to the above question, please state where it was published.

Submitted for publication and currently under review.

What problem do you address with your research?

Community response to technological disasters.