A comparative analysis of newspaper and blog coverage of natural gas extraction policies in North Carolina

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North Carolina is home to natural gas deposits, both onshore and offshore. The state has debated whether or not to allow extraction of these resources on many occasions. This study analyzes the newspaper and blog content published during two major policy debates: offshore drilling from 1987 through 1989, and hydraulic fracturing from 2010 through 2012. A newspaper was selected from each region of the state, and articles were analyzed for stakeholder coverage and the use of thematic and episodic frames. The results of the analysis show that coverage did vary across the state, with evidence of spatially driven demand for coverage of both debates. Less apparent were time driven trends across the two debates. The political landscape of NC, as well as the large changes in news media markets, made it hard to identify the effects of time on coverage of natural gas policies.