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Environmental Inequality Dataset

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Title Environmental Inequality Dataset

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Subject Environmental Inequality
Environmental Policy
Environmental Justice
State Politics

Rights EPA's Risk-Screening Environmental Indicators (RSEI) model, public domain
(https://edg.epa.gov/EPA_Data_License.html)
Brown University Longitudinal Tract Database
American Community Survey, public domain

Language English

Dates 1989 - 2015

Location United States

Data processing The Disaggregated RSEI model data (also known as RSEI-GM, or Geographic Microdata) version 2.3.4 was downloaded from the Amazon Web Service created by EPA. The RSEI-GM provides detailed air model results from EPA's Risk-Screening Environmental Indicators (RSEI) model. The results include chemical concentration, toxicity-weighted concentration and score, calculated for each 810 meter square grid cell in a 49-km circle around the emitting facility, for every year from 1988 through 2014. The data can be used to examine trends in air pollution from industrial facilities over time and across geographies. In order to allow for evaluation of toxic-weighted concentration over time, we used only the core chemicals and industries that have been consistently required to report since 1988. Thus we filtered the RSEI-GM disaggregated dataset to exclude additional chemicals and industries added after 1988. Crosswalks to translate data from the RSEI grid cell system to U.S. census block geographies, provided by EPA, were used to combine RSEI results with census data

and aggregate the results to the census tract level. We used the Longitudinal Tract Database created by Brown University, which adjusts data from previous years to 2010 census tract boundaries, to combine census demographic information for years 1989 through 2004. We used the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) for years 2005 through 2009 and the 2010-2014 ACS for years 2010 through 2014. This data were then used to calculate measures of environmental inequality.

File formats CSV

Exposure Ratios Exposure Ratio compare the levels of exposure at a given percentile between two populations. Let D and E denote two demographic populations like non-white and white or poor and non-poor. The notation $T(p)$ is the toxic concentration experienced by an individual p and $T(D)$ or $T(E)$ is a collection of exposures experienced by the corresponding demographic. Further, let $T_n(D)$ be the toxic concentration experienced by an individual in D at the n th percentile. For example $T_{50}(D)$ is the median exposure of demographic D. The exposure ratio, ER, is the ratio of these exposures:

$$ER_n(D, E) = \frac{T_n(D)}{T_n(E)}$$

Variable List
State

US State

Variation Coefficient of variation of exposure values by state. This is a measure of spatial inequality that allows comparison of the exposure among states, standardized by the mean exposure. The CV aims to describe the dispersion of exposure values in a way that does not depend on the variable's measurement unit. When the CV is zero, exposure is equal across all census tracts in a state. The higher the CV, the greater the dispersion in the variable, the more inequality in exposure.

percentile50 Exposure values at the 50th percentile by state. This allows comparison of the relative risk of exposure among states, based on a percentile of a cumulative distribution of exposure at the census tract level within a state.

percentile60 Exposure values at the 60th percentile by state. This allows comparison of the relative risk of exposure among states, based a percentile of a cumulative distribution of exposure at the census tract level within a state.

percentile70 Exposure values at the 70th percentile by state. This allows comparison of the relative risk of exposure among

states, based on a percentile of a cumulative distribution of exposure at the census tract level within a state.

percentile80 Exposure values at the 80th percentile by state. This allows comparison of the relative risk of exposure among states, based on a percentile of a cumulative distribution of exposure at the census tract level within a state.

percentile90 Exposure values at the 90th percentile by state. This allows comparison of the relative risk of exposure among states, based on a percentile of a cumulative distribution of exposure at the census tract level within a state.

ratioEthnicity50 Exposure Ratio, ER50, of persons of color to non-Hispanic whites at the 50th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between persons of color and non-Hispanic whites at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that persons of color are more exposed than non-Hispanic whites. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that persons of color are less exposed than non-Hispanic whites.

ratioEthnicity60 Exposure Ratio, ER60, of persons of color to non-Hispanic whites at the 60th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between Persons of color and non-Hispanic whites at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that persons of color are more exposed than non-Hispanic whites. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that persons of color are less exposed than non-Hispanic whites.

ratioEthnicity70 Exposure Ratio, ER70, of persons of color to non-Hispanic whites at the 70th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between Persons of color and non-Hispanic whites at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that persons of color are more exposed than non-Hispanic whites. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that persons of color are less exposed than non-Hispanic whites.

ratioEthnicity80 Exposure ratio, ER80, of persons of color to non-Hispanic whites at the 80th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between Persons of color and

non-Hispanic whites at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that persons of color are more exposed than non-Hispanic whites. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that persons of color are less exposed than non-Hispanic whites.

ratioEthnicity90 Exposure Ratio, ER90, of persons of color to non-Hispanic whites at the 90th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between Persons of color and non-Hispanic whites at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that persons of color are more exposed than non-Hispanic whites. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that persons of color are less exposed than non-Hispanic whites.

ratioPoverty50 Exposure Ratio, ER50, of households in poverty to households not in poverty at the 50th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between households in poverty and households not in poverty at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that households in poverty are more exposed than households not in poverty. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that households in poverty are less exposed than households not in poverty.

ratioPoverty60 Exposure Ratio, ER60, of households in poverty to households not in poverty at the 60th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between households in poverty and households not in poverty at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that households in poverty are more exposed than households not in poverty. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that households in poverty are less exposed than households not in poverty.

ratioPoverty70 Exposure Ratio, ER70, of households in poverty to households not in poverty at the 70th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between households in poverty and households not in poverty at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that households in poverty are more exposed than households not in poverty. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that households in poverty are less exposed than households not in poverty.

ratioPoverty80 Exposure Ratio, ER80, of households in poverty to households not in poverty at the 80th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between households in poverty and households not in poverty at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that households in poverty are more exposed than households not in poverty. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that households in poverty are less exposed than households not in poverty.

ratioPoverty90 Exposure Ratio, ER90, of households in poverty to households not in poverty at the 90th percentile exposure level. This is a measure of patterned inequality that allows comparison of the exposure between households in poverty and households not in poverty at the census tract level within a state. Values above 1 indicate that households in poverty are more exposed than households not in poverty. The higher the value, the greater the degree of disparity in exposure. Conversely, values below 1 indicate that households in poverty are less exposed than households not in poverty.

giniCoefficient This is a measure of spatial inequality that allows comparison of the relative inequality of exposure among states, based on each census tract's proportion of the estimated toxic concentration, compared to the cumulative estimated concentration in each state. A Gini coefficient of zero expresses perfect equality within a state, where all values are the same (for example, where all census tracts have the same exposure). A Gini coefficient of 1, conversely, expresses maximum inequality among exposure values (where all exposure is concentrated in one census tract).