

Bypassing Students' Hostility to Discussing Justice

Creating Distance by Using Simulations and Upscaling the Unit of Analysis



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The Problem: Hostility of Some Students to Discussing Issues of Justice

- Environmental Justice: Distribution of Costs and Benefits
 - Procedural, geographical, social inequality (e.g., environmental racism) (Bullard)
- Equitability, fairness, justice?
- Privilege
 - White Privilege?

Overall Dynamics

- **Legitimacy of instructor Questioned** (Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005, McIntosh, 1988; Nast, 1999);
- **Lower Instructor Evaluations** (Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009);
- **Skip classes, open hostility, silence (i.e., resistance, paralysis, rage)** (Davis, 1992; Cohen, 1995; Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009; Pence & Fields, 1999);
- **Project emotions on instructors** (Gillespie, Ashbaugh, & DeFiore, 2002)

For Individual Students

- **Guilt** (Schoem, 1993; Tatum, 1992,1994)
- **Grief of losing belief in the American Dream** (Hogan, 2006, Boatright-Horowitz, 2005)
- **Defensiveness** (attack on themselves or family members) (Donadey, 2002)

Question

How to overcome resistance and mitigate hostility when teaching about environmental justice?

My Suggested Approach (for survey classes)

A student-centric approach

- 1: **Simulations:** Introduce ideas of justice through self-discovery without students knowing the topic.
- 2: **Detachment through different unit of analysis:** Expand on self-generated concepts and maintain 'distance,' 'emotional detachment' by examining climate justice and using countries as the unit of analysis.
- 3: **Downscale:** Examine city-level data, apply concepts at smaller scale. If possible, organize speaker or trip with local NGO.
- 4: **Reflections:** Have students reflect on their privilege in journal / classroom.

The Simulation: Deriving Principles of Fairness

- Variation of public goods game
- How to allocate costs and benefits?

- Purpose: for students to generate rules and find solutions
- Instructor's aim: create disagreement, mediate conflicts

- Initial setup: Create unequal distribution in goods

Simulation: Steps

Step 1: Setup

- Rules Announced: e.g., You will lose 1 piece each if you don't collectively contribute 7 pieces

Step 2: Negotiation

- You must decide how many pieces of candy to contribute to the pool
- You can discuss and debate
- No more than 3 minutes to negotiate

Step 3: Contribution

- Bag passed around, make your contribution – you can decide to cheat or not cheat

Step 4: Consequences

- Penalties / Rewards Calculated. Group must decide how to allocate these.

Step 5: New Round

- Repeat (multiple times) – Rules will change

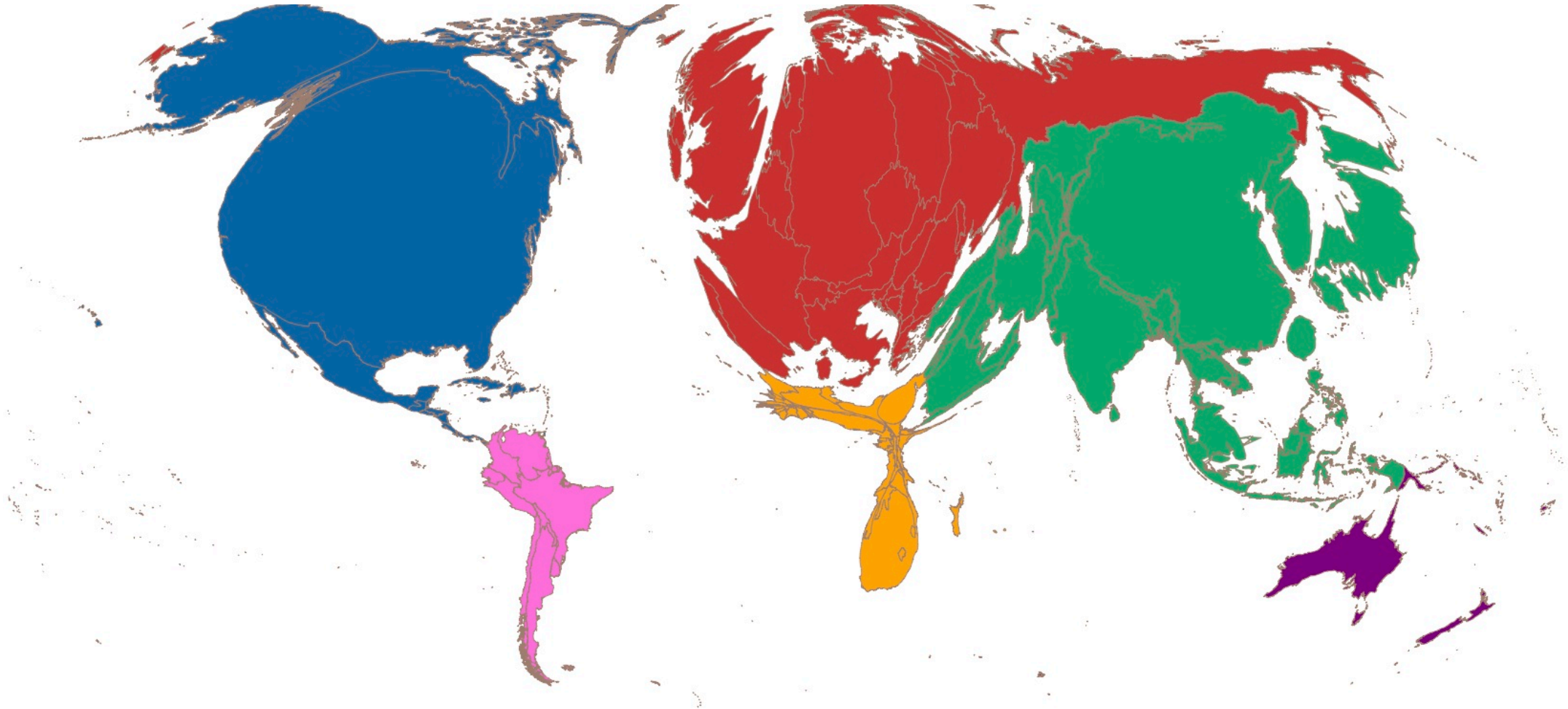
Simulation: Post-Activity Discussion

- Did you end up with more or less than you started with? By how much?
- Compare with others in your group. Who has received more? Who has less?
- What decisions did you make on who should pay? Receive benefits?
- Was it fair? Why or why not?
- What do you think could be some better rules?

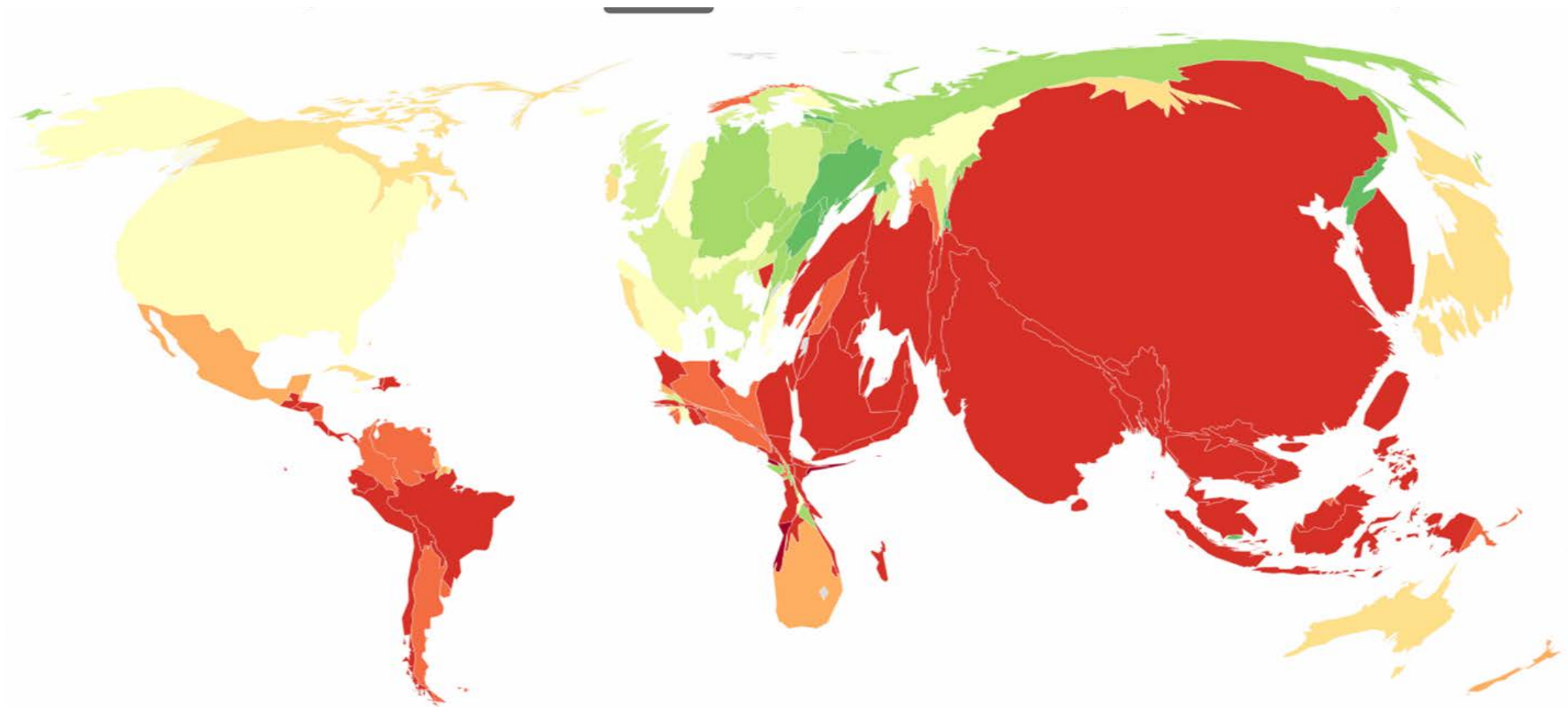
Link to Climate Justice

- Introduce issue of costs of climate change mitigation
- Link to simulation:
 - Think of the initial distribution of candies as representing wealth
 - What countries might be represented by:
 - 25 pieces of candy
 - 2-5 pieces of candy
 - 1 piece of candy
 - Contribution: paying for climate change mitigation
 - The consequences: damages due to climate change; benefits of mitigation
- Discuss climate justice in class using size-adjusted maps
 - How would their solutions translate to the international level?
 - Is equal distribution fair?
- Read Shue 1999 on equitable distribution

Historical Emissions



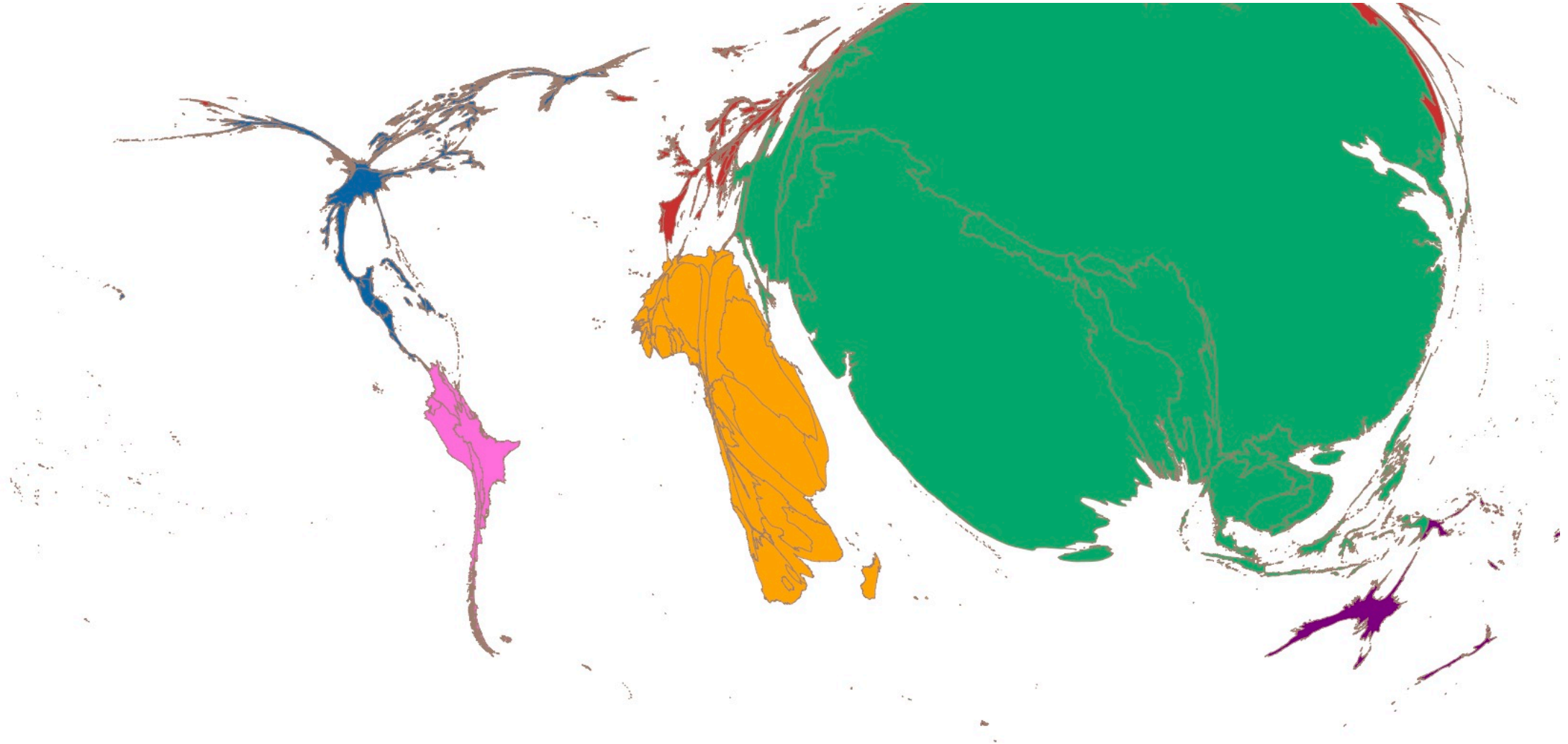
2013 CO₂ Emissions



2013 CO₂ emissions per capita



Countries By Population At Risk



Downscaling

- Students should have ideas over what is fair and equitable for climate change mitigation
 - Concepts that equal distributions may not be 'fair'
 - Geography, wealth, history, matters
- Aim: downscale concepts of justice from the international to community level
- Approach: Discussion using Urban Maps; if possible coordination with environmental justice NGOs
 - "I had only driven through this neighborhood on the way to the airport"

Los Angeles, Toxic Release Facilities

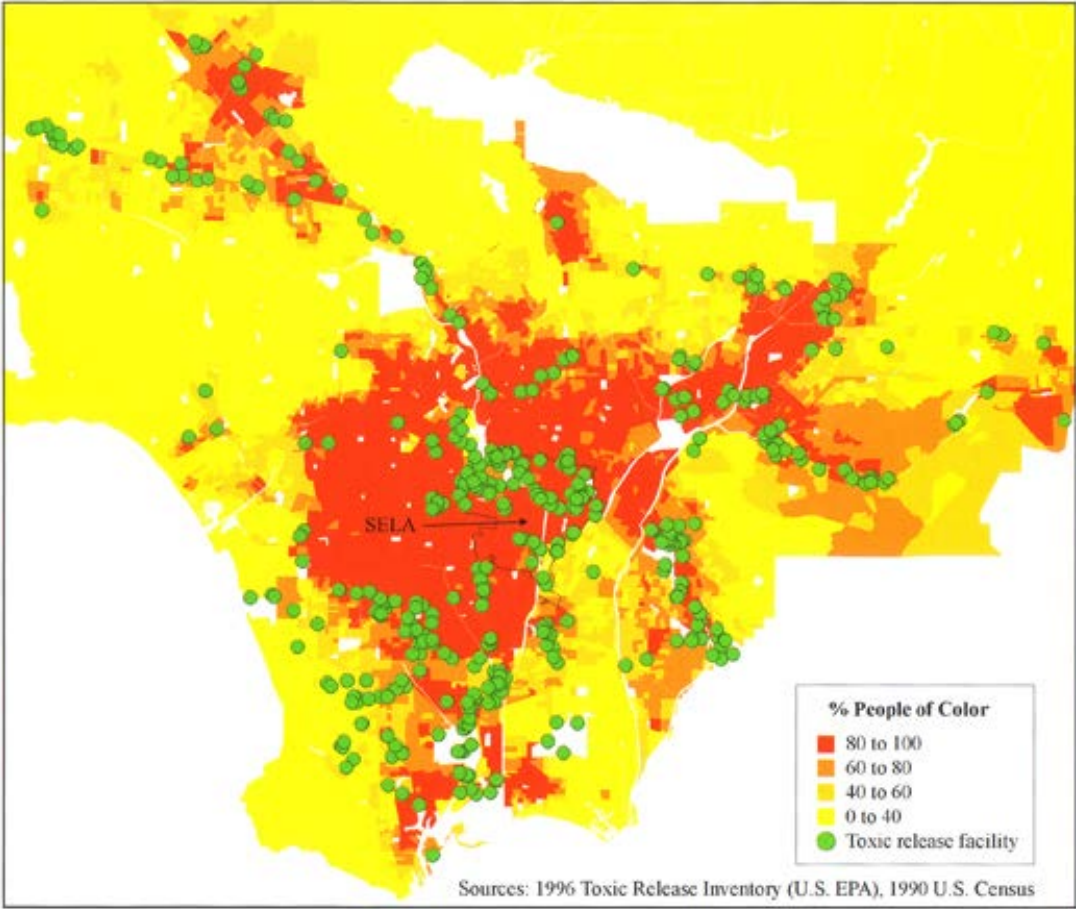
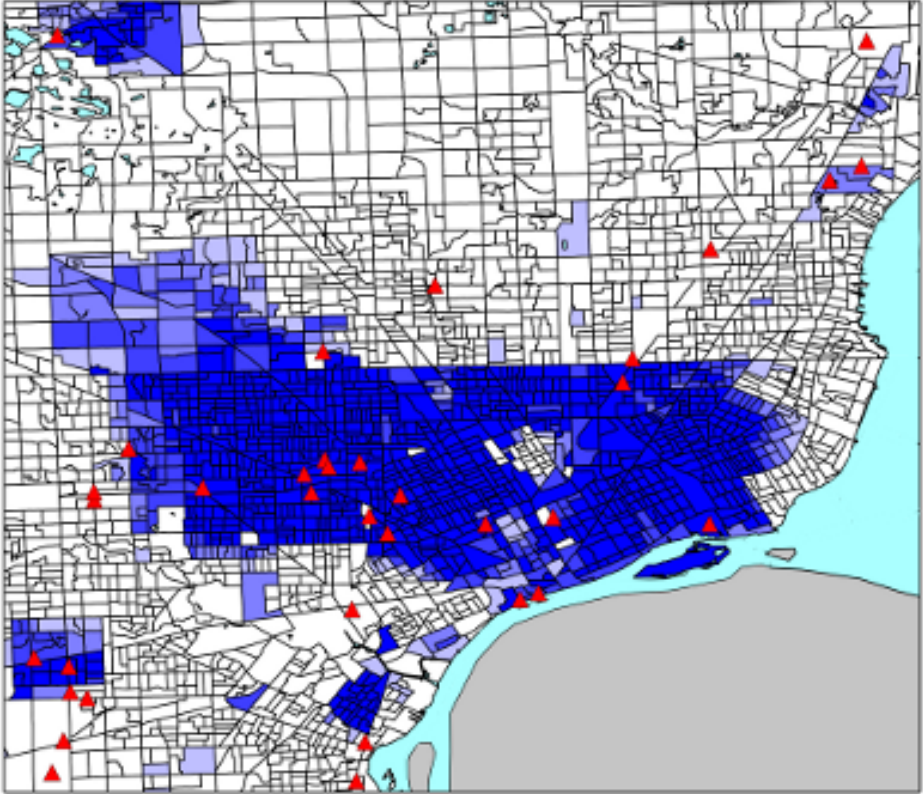
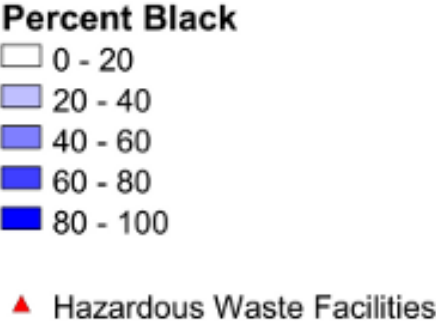
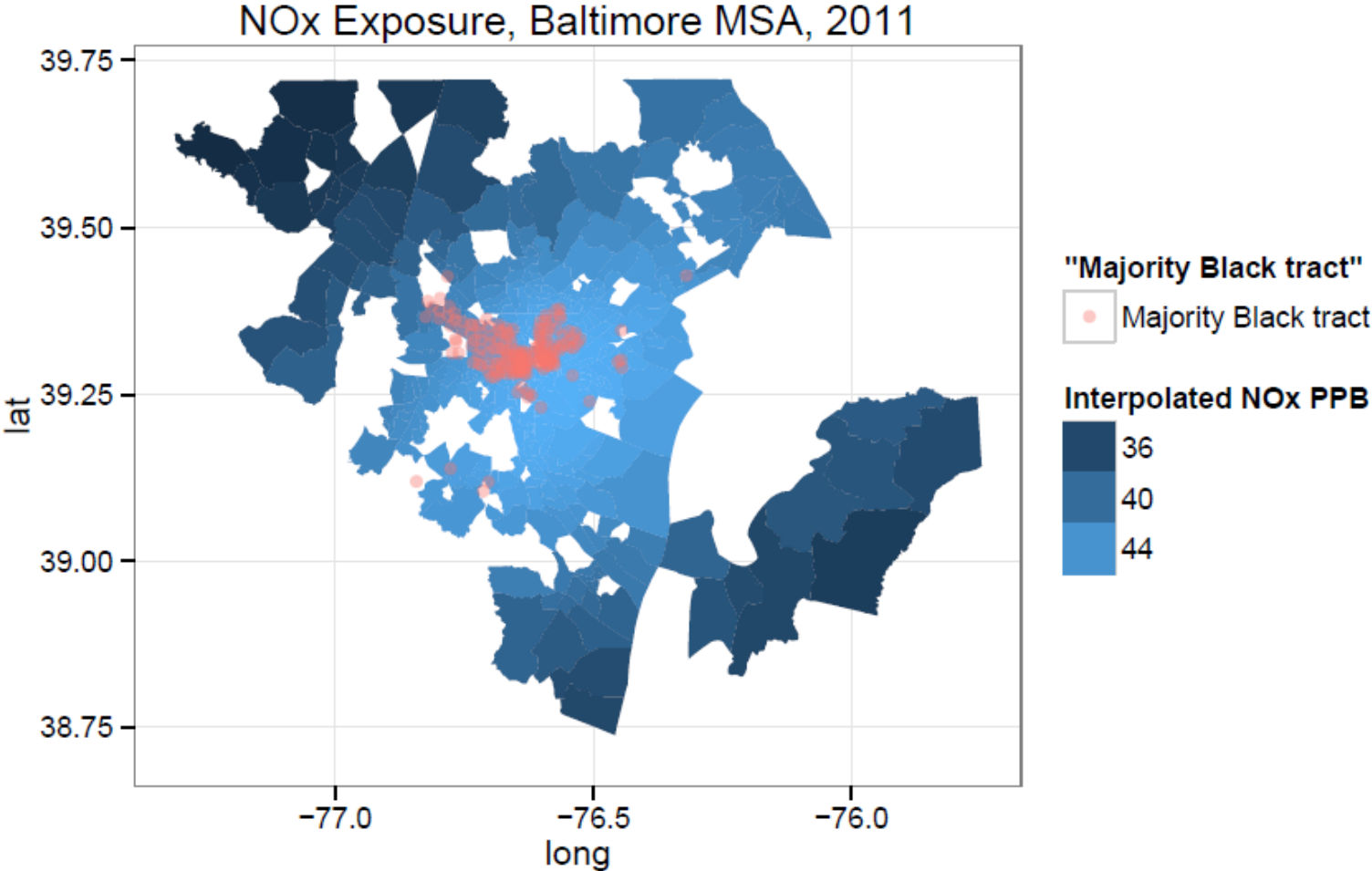


Figure 1.1: People of Color and Toxic Release Facilities in Los Angeles County

Detroit, Hazardous Waste Facilities



Baltimore, NOx Exposure



Baltimore, Temperature

“Neighborhoods with lower income, more poverty, less education, more ethnic minorities, more elderly people and high crime risk tended to have higher Land-Surface Temperature”

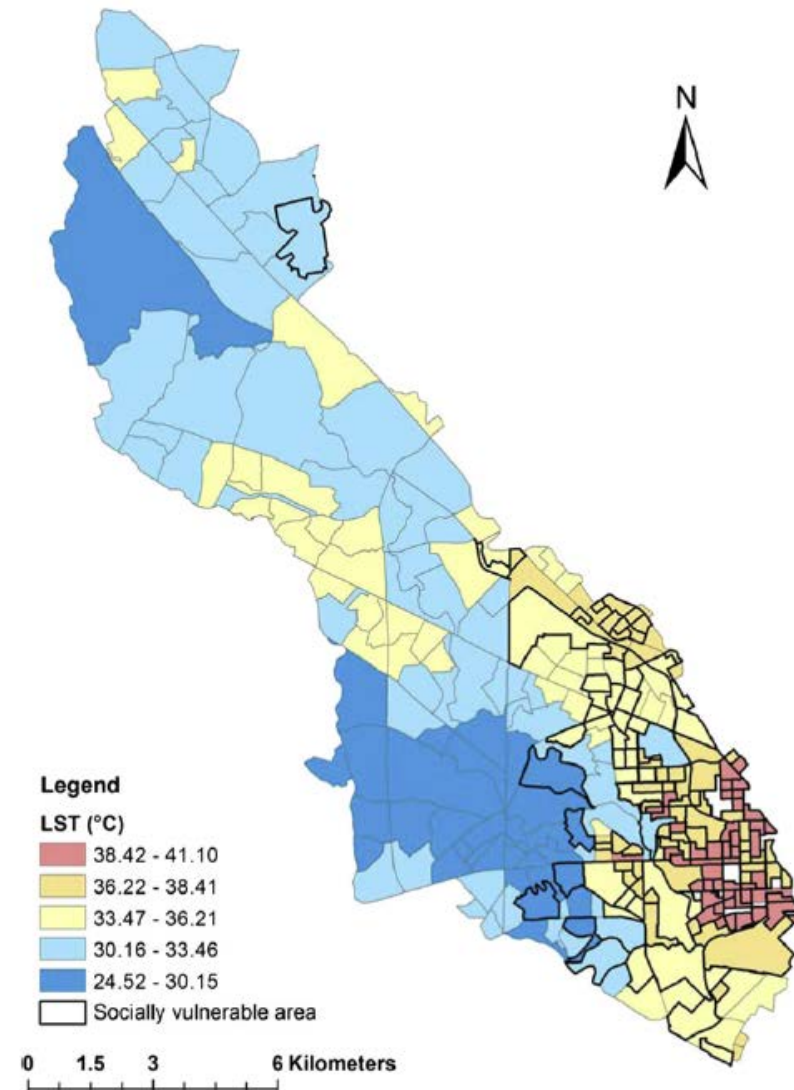


Fig. 3. Land surface temperature and socially vulnerable areas. Socially vulnerable areas are defined as census block groups where four or more social variables used in the analyses had values worse than average. There are 143 socially vulnerable areas identified.

Student Reflections

- Anonymous 'privilege' score
 - Similar to privilege walk
 - Allows comparison to other students without singling out individuals
- Journal Reflections
 - Safe space for students to explore in writing or discuss their thoughts
 - E.g., What was it like in the neighborhood where you grew up? Can you think of environmental justice neighborhoods? If so what were they like?

Conclusion

Takeaways

- 1. Higher participation, and positive feedback**
- 2. Students consider whether injustice can occur even when unintended (e.g. Tiebout Process)**

Conclusion

Activity / slides / lesson plan: <http://www.henin.net>

Thanks for your attention.