Connecting the Dots: COVID-19, Energy Policy, and the Role of States

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Meet Our Team

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Overview

• What is this moment?
• COVID-19 and Environmental Justice
• COVID-19 and Energy Access
• Energy Justice and the Role of States
COVID-19's Devastating Impact On African Americans

African American share of state/city populations and COVID-19 deaths (as of Apr 06, 2020)

- **Share of state/city's population**
  - Louisiana: 32%
  - Illinois: 15%
  - Michigan: 14%
  - North Carolina: 22%
  - Chicago: 30%

- **Share of COVID-19 deaths**
  - Louisiana: 70%
  - Illinois: 42%
  - Michigan: 41%
  - North Carolina: 22%
  - Chicago: 69%

Sources: 2010 Census, respective state/city health departments
Coronavirus cases per 10,000 people

White  23
All     38
Black   62
Latino  73

The Fullest Look Yet at the Racial Inequity of Coronavirus

Results: We found that an increase of only 1 \( \mu g/m^3 \) in PM\(_{2.5}\) is associated with an 8% increase in the COVID-19 death rate (95% confidence interval [CI]: 2%, 15%). The results were statistically significant and robust to secondary and sensitivity analyses.

Conclusions: A small increase in long-term exposure to PM\(_{2.5}\) leads to a large increase in the COVID-19 death rate. Despite the inherent limitations of the ecological study design, our results underscore the importance of continuing to enforce existing air pollution regulations to protect human health both during and after the COVID-19 crisis. The data and code are publicly available so our analyses can be updated routinely.

Wu et al. (2020).
POLLUTION EXPOSURE BY POPULATION (2003–2015)

EXPOSED TO 63% MORE POLLUTION THAN THEY PRODUCE

LATINX AMERICANS

EXPOSED TO 17% LESS POLLUTION THAN THEY PRODUCE

BLACK AMERICANS

NON-HISPANIC WHITE AMERICANS

Source: Christopher W. Tessum et al., “Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial–ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (March 2019).
COVID-19 in Greater Boston Area

Confirmed Cases per 100k
- Less than 5 cases
- 5 - 100
- 100 - 500
- 500 - 1000
- 1000 - 2000
- 2000 - 7203

NATA Respiratory Hazard Index
WE CAN’T BREATHE

Image: MedPage Today

Image: Environmental Integrity Project
EJSCREEN 2 Factor Demographic Index and Solar

2 Factor Demographic Index
- 0 - 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 45
- 45 - 100

Installs per Housing Units by BG
- 0.5
- 1.5
- 3
- 6

EJSCREEN 2 Factor demographic index = (%LI pop/BG pop) + (%minority pop/BG pop)
A missed opportunity for economic justice:

“We don’t own anything!”
Energy Burden and Energy Insecurity

**Energy Burden:** Percentage of household income that goes toward energy costs.

The lower your income, the more you spend on energy.

**Energy Insecurity:** Lacking reliable access to uninterrupted energy sources at an affordable price.
Avg. Energy Burden (% Income) for the United States

The United States
- Electricity
- Gas
- Other

AMI:
- 0% - 30%
- 30% - 60%
- 60% - 80%
- 80% - 100%
- 100%+

Fuel Type: Utility Gas, Bottled Gas, Electricity, Fuel Oil, Coal, Wood, Solar, Other, None
Building Type: 1 unit detached, 1 unit attached, 2 units, 3 - 4 units, 5 - 9 units, 10 - 18 units, 20 - 49 units, 50+ units
Rent/Own: Renter-occupied, Owner-occupied
Households experiencing household energy insecure situations, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Percent of Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report any household energy insecurity</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce or forgo basic necessities to pay energy bill</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive disconnect notice</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep home at unhealthy or unsafe temperature</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Residential Energy Consumption Survey 2015
Shares of Households by Race Experiencing Energy Insecurity, 2015

- Hispanic or Latino: 45.0%
- White Non-Hispanic or Latino: 25.4%
- Black or African American: 52.2%
- Asian: 20.4%
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 61.5%
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: 50.0%

Energy burdens (at the county level) for LMI households. The lightest color reflects <6% of annual income spent on housing energy bills, and the darkest is >19%.

Source: Union of Concerned Scientists
COVID-19 and Utility Shut-offs

Analysis: Center for Biological Diversity
COVID-19 Exposes Twin Burdens

- Environmental burdens borne by BIPOC communities
- Economic burdens borne by BIPOC communities
- Shut-offs to commence July 17th
Energy Justice: An Opportunity for States
An Energy Justice Approach to Energy Policy in this Moment

• Recognize prior harms.
• Include the voices of frontline communities in energy policymaking.
• Adopt solar policies and incentives that center BIPOC communities.
• Reduce energy burden.
Thank you.
Extra Slides
What is energy justice?

Energy justice refers to the goal of achieving equity in both the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on those historically harmed by the energy system (“frontline communities”).

Energy justice explicitly centers the concerns of marginalized communities and aims to make energy more accessible, affordable, clean, and democratically managed for all communities.
1. The Core Three Tenets of Energy Justice
   - Distributional Justice
   - Procedural Justice
   - Recognition Justice

2. Cosmopolitan Justice Across the Energy Life-Cycle (system)
   - Extraction
   - Production
   - Operation & Supply
   - Consumption
   - Waste Management

3. Applied Principles for Practice of Energy Justice
   - Availability
   - Affordability
   - Due Process
   - Transparency & Accountability
   - Sustainability
   - Intra & Inter-generational equity
   - Responsibility

The Three Phases of Decision-Making for Applying Energy Justice, From Theory to Practice

A STRATEGY FRAMEWORK FOR JUST TRANSITION
RESIST — RETHINK — RESTRUCTURE

Extractive Economy

WORK
Consumerism & Colonial Mindset
Extraction
Dig, Burn, Dump
Exploitation

GOVERNANCE
Militarism

VALUES FILTER
THE WAY WE MOVE CAPITAL MUST:
Shift economic control to communities
Democratize wealth and the workplace
Advance ecological restoration
Drive racial justice and social equity
Renationalize most production and consumption
Retain and restore cultures and traditions

Living Economy

WORK
Caring & Sacredness

GOVERNANCE
Cooperation
Ecological & Social Well-being

VALUES FILTER

CHANGE THE RULES
DRAW DOWN MONEY AND POWER
DIVEST FROM THEIR POWER
STANSE & STOP

BUILD THE NEW
SOLUTIONS THAT ARE VISIONARY AND OPPOSITIONAL

Developed by Movement Generation
with OUR POWER CAMPAIGN
COMMUNITED UNITED FOR A JUST TRANSITION
JUST GIVING 2016
EDGE FUNDERS ALLIANCE VERSION
What is energy justice?
What is energy justice?