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Using the Product of Ranks to Calculate Disadvantage from CalEnviroScreen 2.0 Data

Bay Area Air Quality Management District
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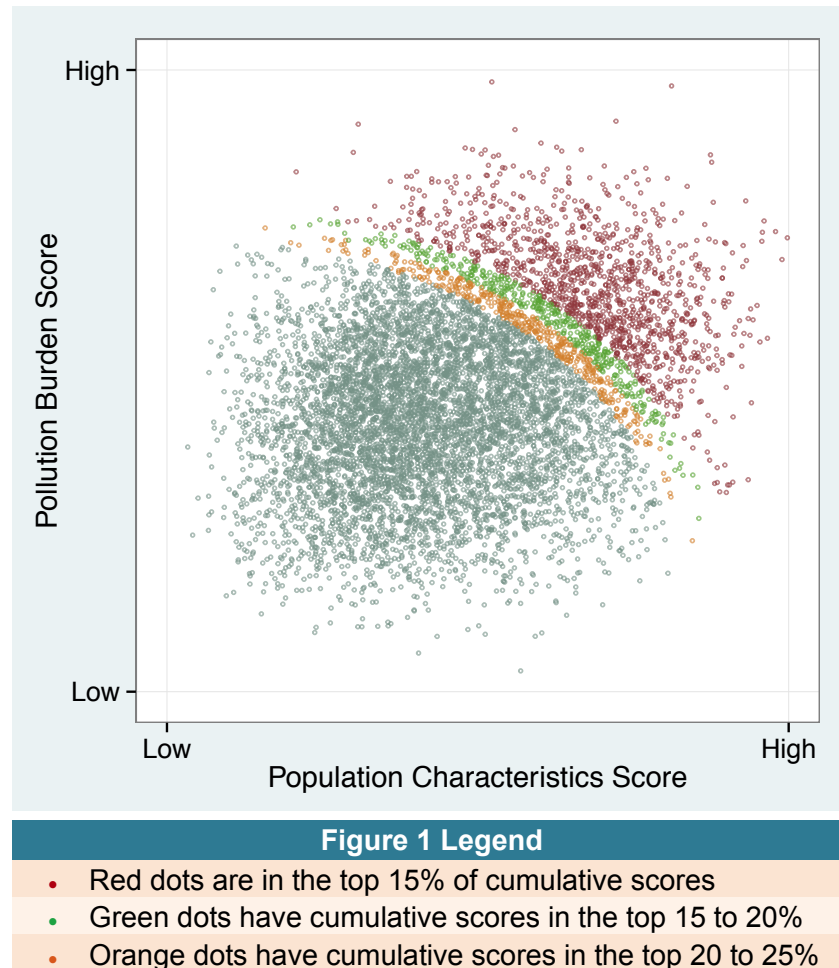
This document describes an alternative to Methods 1–5¹, called the “product of ranks”, that increases the representation of tracts having high scores on a subset of indicators. Figures and maps illustrate its application to the 19 indicators defined by CalEnviroScreen 2.0. Overall scores are equal to **Pollution Burden × Population Characteristics**, defined as:

$$\text{Pollution} = \text{Ozone} \times \text{PM2.5} \times \text{DieselPM} \times \text{DrinkWat} \times \text{Pesticides} \times \text{TRI} \times \text{Traffic} \times \text{Cleanup} \times \text{GndWat} \times \text{HazWaste} \times \text{ImpWat} \times \text{SolidWaste}$$

$$\text{Population} = \text{Age} \times \text{LBW} \times \text{Asthma} \times \text{Education} \times \text{Linglso} \times \text{Poverty} \times \text{Unemp}$$

As with Methods 1–5, various thresholds may be applied to the overall scores to identify disadvantaged communities (Figs 1–3).

Figure 1. Using the product of ranks to identify disadvantaged census tracts





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As in Methods 1–5, raw values are first transformed to percentiles (by ranking and dividing by N), with the highest rank denoted by 1 rather than N. Thus, the top score for a given indicator will be 1/N. When a tract is scored near the top on many indicators, the contribution of these small fractions to the overall product will drive its final score up. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate that census tracts with very high Pollution scores are always identified as disadvantaged, regardless of Population score—and vice versa. Intermediate cases are smoothly interpolated.^{2,3}

Advantages of this method include:

- It increases the representation of tracts with top scores on a few indicators;
- It has been recommended by scientists for screening large datasets⁴; and
- It is simple and straightforward to calculate.

Figure 2. Identification of disadvantaged census tracts, by region

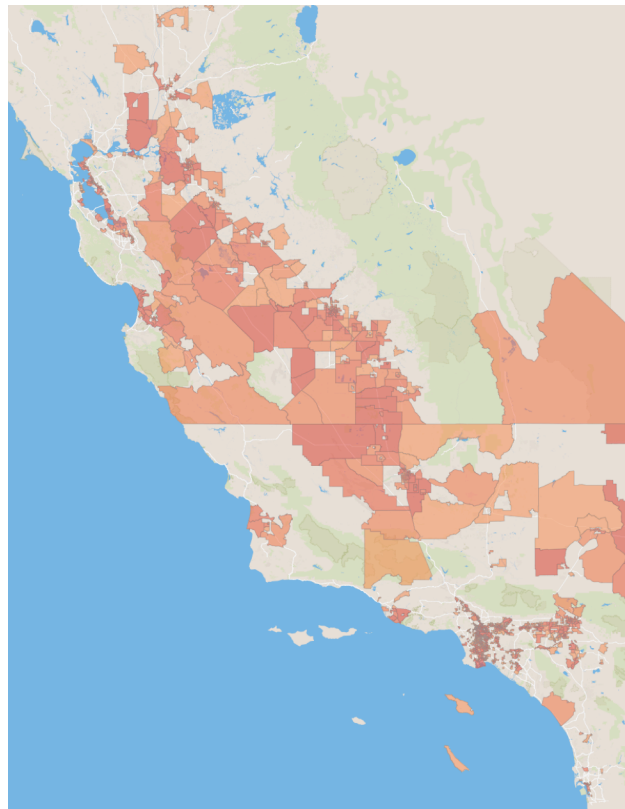




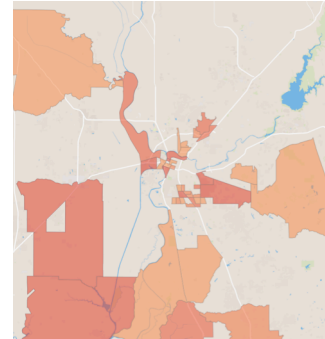
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Figure 3. Census tracts scoring in the top 5% (red) to 20% (orange)

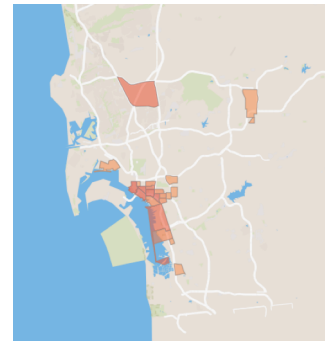
(Interactive online version: <http://tiny.cc/CES-Method6>)



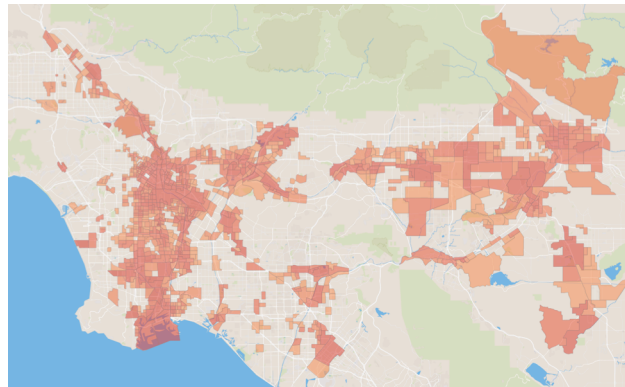
Central and Southern California



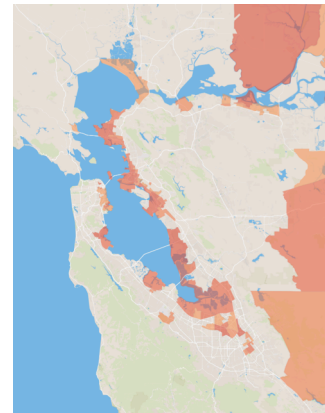
Sacramento Area



San Diego Area



Greater Los Angeles Area



San Francisco Bay Area

¹ OEHHA. Approaches to Identifying Disadvantaged Communities. <http://oehha.ca.gov/ej/ces2.html>, August 2014.

² The likelihood of being ranked at the top of one list purely by chance is $1/N$. The relative likelihood of having 19 rankings equal to or greater than a tract's actual rankings can be compared to the product of its 19 scores.

³ Missing data can be accommodated via the application of geometric means, analogous to the arithmetic means used in Methods 1–5. Further details are available in Breitling (2004, above). See <http://rpubs.com/holstius/CES-Method6>.

⁴ Breitling R, Armengaud P, Amtmann A, Herzyk P. Rank products: a simple, yet powerful, new method to detect differentially regulated genes in replicated microarray experiments. *FEBS Lett.* 2004 Aug 27;573(1-3):83-92.