Air Pollution in Hamilton
• PSA on Air quality in Hamilton
• Ontario MOE Air Quality monitoring in Hamilton
Reading

- Buzzelli et al 2003
- Hamilton’s landscape is socially uneven
  - With richer people getting better access to environmentally-pleasant spaces
- Lots of scholarly talk of environmental justice in the literature
Buzzelli et al 2003

• Hamilton is somewhat legendary for poor air quality
  – Steelmaking and industry plus automotive smog
• At one time there was something of a match between lower social status and poor air quality
  – Environmental injustice?
• Monitoring Total Suspended Particulate (TSP) levels in a series of stations within the city 1985-1995
  – TSP a crude surrogate for more potent air pollutants
Figure 2. Estimated TSP surfaces for Hamilton. (A) 1985; (B) 1990; (C) 1995.
• But with gradual improvements in urban air quality, air pollution no longer really correlates with the social inequalities in the landscape
• Air pollution is no longer a major factor in social justice within the city
  – Environmental side of social injustice no longer as clear
Critique

- TSP is an awkward way to gauge the health effects of air pollution
  - Does not really get at smog or SO2
  - Usable but not ideal data
Two kinds of smog:

- Sulphurous smog from burning sulphur-rich coal and oil
  - Requires inversion conditions
- Ontario MOE monitoring for this 1969 onwards
- Photochemical smog derived from automotive fuels
  - Requires inversion conditions and sunlight
- Ontario MOE monitoring for this only from 1988 onwards
Two kinds of smog:

• Sulphurous smog:
  – Tended to be localised, and could be evaded depending on neighbourhood

• Photochemical smog:
  – More generalised and difficult to evade
Critique

• Reduction of TSP may be due to reductions of Hamilton manufacturing, not effective environmental policy
• Pollution shifts from Hamilton to the steelmaking cities of the Third World?
  – Environmental injustice?
Critique

• Was air pollution essential to environmental injustice or essentially irrelevant to it?
• The environmental side of the injustice vanishes because the pollution becomes more generalised
  – And how is this really an improvement?
Since Buzzelli published

- Steel-making has scaled back
  - And the air has improved
- And Hamilton has gentrified
  - Especially in the once-gritty waterfront section
  - Artistic & creative refugees from Toronto’s inflated property market
Critique

- The areas which used to be poor and contaminated
- Are now attracting wealthier gentrifiers
- Environmental justice?