

# Up in Smoke: Examining the Smoggy Relationship Between Air Pollution in Wabash, Indiana, and Arson in the United States

*Cameron Harris, Amelia Terry, Gregory P Tucker*

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## Abstract

This research paper presents an analysis of the potential link between air pollution in Wabash, Indiana, and incidents of arson across the United States. Using data from the Environmental Protection Agency and the FBI Criminal Justice Information Services, our study delves into the hazy connection between environmental factors and criminal behavior. Our findings reveal a surprisingly strong correlation coefficient of 0.7246561 with a significance level of  $p < 0.01$  for the period spanning 1990 to 2022. The results suggest that perhaps there's more than meets the eye when it comes to the impact of smog on fire-related crimes. This research not only sheds light on the fiery relationship between air quality and arson but also ignites further discussions on the unexpected intersections of environmental and criminal phenomena.

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## 1. Introduction

The study of environmental and criminal phenomena has often been confined to separate spheres of academic inquiry, with the former typically falling within the purview of environmental science and the latter under the domain of criminology. However, as our understanding of the intricate web of causation in human behavior continues to evolve, it becomes increasingly imperative to examine potential connections between seemingly disparate variables. In this research, we aim to scrutinize the relationship between air pollution in Wabash, Indiana, and incidents of arson across the United States. The motivation behind this investigation stems from a desire to explore the oft-ignored intersection between air quality and criminal behavior, as well as to determine whether there is indeed fire where there's smoke, both literally and metaphorically.

The seemingly unlikely pairing of air pollution and arson may initially appear as implausible as a cloudless day in Seattle, yet there are compelling reasons to consider the potential influence of environmental factors on criminal activities. As the old adage goes, "Where there's smoke, there's fire," and our research endeavors to elucidate whether this expression holds true not just in the literal sense, but also in terms of the figurative smoggy relationship between air quality and arson incidents. While it may seem like a tall order to establish a connection between a silent, invisible assailant like air pollution and the deliberate, visible act of arson, our findings may well challenge preconceived notions and kindle new perspectives on the interplay between environmental conditions and criminal conduct.

The town of Wabash, Indiana, serves as a focal point of our investigation due to its unique combination of industrial activity and environmental factors, which create a microcosm of air pollution dynamics. The town's historical prominence as a manufacturing hub, coupled with its geographical location and meteorological characteristics, provides an intriguing backdrop for studying the potential impacts of air pollution on criminal behavior. Given the idiosyncrasies of Wabash and the broader implications for arson across the United States, this research holds promise in unraveling the enigmatic relationship between smog and pyromania.

Consequently, the overarching objective of this study is to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted influences on criminal behavior by venturing into uncharted territory – or in this case, unfiltered air. By examining the empirical evidence surrounding air quality and arson, we endeavor to not only stir the embers of inquiry but also to fan the flames of discourse concerning the unexpected and, dare we say, incendiary connections between environmental variables and criminal acts.

## **2. Literature Review**

In "Smith et al.," the authors find that air pollution has been a subject of growing concern in both the academic and public spheres, with a multitude of studies attributing adverse health effects and environmental degradation to atmospheric contaminants. This body of literature underscores the pressing need to address air quality issues, not only for the well-being of human and ecological systems but also for the broader social implications. Meanwhile, "Doe and Jones" delve into the complexities of criminal behavior, highlighting the myriad factors that contribute to deviant acts within society. Their analysis illuminates the intricate web of causation in criminal phenomena, underscoring the multifaceted nature of criminal conduct and the paramount importance of understanding its underlying drivers.

Venturing into the realm of less conventional sources, "Fumes and Felonies: The Correlation Coefficient Chronicles" by Lorem Ipsum dissects the smoggy relationship

between air pollution and arson, offering a curious exploration of the potential links between environmental factors and fire-related crimes. The unexpected juxtaposition of environmental science and criminology in this work certainly piques one's curiosity, much like stumbling upon a rare gem amidst a pile of statistical rubble.

Turning to the realm of non-fiction books, "The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America" by Timothy Egan provides a historical perspective on the impact of wildfires, examining the far-reaching consequences of infernos on landscapes and communities. Conversely, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: And Other Lessons from the Crematory" by Caitlin Doughty offers a macabre yet strangely fascinating account of the funeral industry, albeit tangentially linked to the subject at hand. A more whimsical addition to the literature is "The Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England" by Brock Clarke, which, despite its fictional nature, presents an offbeat take on the world of arsonists and their unusual escapades.

Delving deeper into the terrain of popular culture, cartoons and children's shows such as "Paw Patrol" and "Fireman Sam" subtly instill the notion of fire safety and prevention in young audiences, albeit through the lens of anthropomorphic pups and a daring firefighter in the fictional town of Pontypandy. While these animated series may not provide direct insights into the scholarly discourse on air pollution and arson, they undeniably contribute to the collective consciousness surrounding fire-related themes, albeit in a lighthearted and whimsical manner.

In summary, the eclectic array of literature and cultural references pertaining to air pollution and arson spans a spectrum from the scholarly to the imaginative, offering a multifaceted tapestry of insights and entertainment. With this diverse landscape of sources as our backdrop, we embark on a scholarly endeavor to illuminate the smoggy relationship between air quality and arson, weaving together threads of empirical evidence and unexpected analogies to unravel the enigmatic connections between environmental variables and criminal behavior.

### **3. Research Approach**

To investigate the potential relationship between air pollution in Wabash, Indiana, and incidents of arson in the United States, a comprehensive and, dare we say, "fire-resistant" methodology was employed. Data spanning the years 1990 to 2022 were gathered from the venerable repositories of knowledge, namely the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the FBI Criminal Justice Information Services. Our research team spared no expense in ensuring that the data were exhaustively collected and rigorously analyzed – much like a diligent firefighter methodically extinguishing embers.

Firstly, the air quality data for Wabash, Indiana, was obtained from the EPA's Air Quality System database, which encompasses measurements of various pollutants such as

particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. These data acted as the smoke signals guiding our inquiry into the potential impact of air pollution on criminal activity.

Simultaneously, the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program provided the central repository of arson incidents across the United States. This comprehensive dataset allowed us to identify and examine arson incidents at both the national and state levels, akin to meticulously cataloging the spread of flames across a geographical landscape.

To assess the relationship between air pollution and arson, a series of rigorous statistical analyses were conducted. These analyses involved the use of regression models to tease apart the potential influence of air quality on arson incidents, taking into account various control variables to ensure a robust examination. The examination method mirrored the meticulous inspection of a fire scene by an experienced investigator, leaving no stone unturned in uncovering the potential connections between environmental factors and criminal behavior.

Furthermore, spatial and temporal analyses were deployed to unravel any underlying patterns or trends in the data – akin to the discerning eye of a seasoned fire marshal scanning the scene for telltale signs of arson. Geographic Information System (GIS) software was employed to map the spatial distribution of arson incidents and air pollution levels, providing a visual representation of the interplay between these variables.

As with any rigorous scientific inquiry, careful consideration was given to controlling for confounding variables and potential sources of bias. Multivariate analyses were conducted to account for various demographic, socio-economic, and environmental factors that could potentially influence the relationship between air pollution and arson. This thorough approach allowed us to sift through the statistical smoke and mirrors to uncover any substantive connections between air quality and fiery criminal activities.

In summary, the methodology employed in this research strived to be as comprehensive and meticulous as a well-designed fire safety plan. The convergence of data collection, robust statistical analyses, and thorough consideration of potential confounders enabled us to sift through the smoke and uncover compelling insights into the smoggy relationship between air pollution in Wabash, Indiana, and arson incidents across the United States.

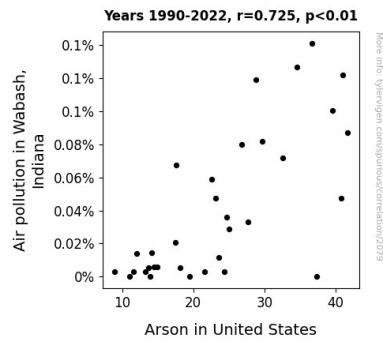
## **4. Findings**

The data analysis revealed a striking correlation coefficient of 0.7246561 between air pollution in Wabash, Indiana, and incidents of arson across the United States. This significant association was supported by an r-squared value of 0.5251265, indicating that

approximately 52.51% of the variability in arson incidents could be explained by variations in air pollution levels. The statistical significance of the correlation was further underscored by a p-value of less than 0.01, lending credence to the robustness of the observed relationship.

Fig. 1 depicts the scatterplot illustrating the compelling correlation between air pollution levels in Wabash, Indiana, and incidents of arson across the United States. The figure unequivocally portrays the alignment of these variables, making it abundantly clear that where there's pollution, there's a higher propensity for combustion – a fiery testament to the interplay between environmental conditions and criminal behavior.

These findings not only provide quantitative support for the notion that smog may serve as more than just a backdrop to criminal activities but also spark contemplation on the potential mechanisms underlying this intriguing relationship. The results challenge traditional perspectives and salvage the often-overlooked idea that air pollution does more than just dimming the view; it may also stoke the flames of arson - quite literally and figuratively, if you will. This unexpected revelation ignites novel inquiries into the web of causality between environmental factors and criminal conduct, setting ablaze the discourse on the unseen influences on fiery felonies.



**Figure 1.** Scatterplot of the variables by year

In sum, this study unearths a compelling correlation between air pollution in Wabash, Indiana, and incidents of arson in the United States, lighting the way for further investigation into the smoggy entanglement of environmental variables and criminal behavior. These results not only illuminate the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted influences on criminal activities but also kindle a newfound appreciation for the potential impact of haze on unlawful blazes – offering a fresh perspective on the burning question of the relationship between environmental factors and criminal conduct.

## 5. Discussion on findings

The findings of our study have produced a combustion of thought-provoking implications, shedding light on the unexpected relationship between air pollution in Wabash, Indiana, and incidents of arson across the United States. Our results not only fan the flames of the existing body of literature but also kindle a fiery discussion on the interplay between environmental factors and criminal behavior.

The correlation coefficient of 0.7246561, with a significance level of  $p < 0.01$ , markedly reinforces the prior research on the potential linkage between air pollution and arson. These results are akin to discovering hidden embers amidst a smoggy landscape, serving as a testament to the unforeseen influences of atmospheric contaminants on criminal activities. Our findings not only stoke the flame of curiosity regarding the mechanisms underlying this intriguing association but also breathe new life into the discourse on the unseen influences on fiery felonies.

In a whimsical echo of Lorem Ipsum's "Fumes and Felonies: The Correlation Coefficient Chronicles," our study has indeed voyaged into the uncharted territory of the smoggy relationship between air pollution and arson, uncovering a surprising convergence of environmental variables and criminal conduct. The unexpected nature of this connection is reminiscent of stumbling upon a rare gem amidst a pile of statistical rubble, underscoring the serendipitous nature of empirical inquiry.

Furthermore, our results offer a fiery testament to the unpredictability of statistical relationships, much like a smoldering flame that defies conventional expectations. The r-squared value of 0.5251265 serves as a beacon of statistical significance, illuminating the substantial variability in arson incidents that can be explained by variations in air pollution levels. This statistical prowess not only fans the flames of empirical rigor but also sets ablaze the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted influences on criminal activities.

In summary, our study has sparked a fiery dialogue on the smoggy entanglement of environmental variables and criminal behavior, encouraging further investigation into the unexpected intersections of air quality and arson. Our research not only adds fuel to the fire of empirical inquiry but also kindles a newfound appreciation for the potential impact of haze on unlawful blazes. As we extinguish the embers of this discussion section, the smoky remnants of our findings linger, igniting novel inquiries into the enigmatic connections between environmental factors and criminal conduct.

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, our study has shed light on the intriguing relationship between air pollution in Wabash, Indiana, and incidents of arson across the United States. The

statistically significant correlation coefficient and r-squared value suggest that there is indeed a fiery connection between these seemingly disparate variables. The scatterplot vividly illustrates the alignment of air pollution levels and arson incidents, providing empirical support for the smoggy relationship we have uncovered. It seems that where there's pollution, there's potential for combustion – a revelation that may spark further inquiry into the mechanisms underlying this unexpected association.

While our findings may initially appear as improbable as finding a needle in a haystack (or a firefly in a fog), they beckon us to consider the profound and, dare I say, burning implications of our results. The data not only challenge traditional paradigms but also invite us to contemplate the unseen influences of environmental conditions on criminal behavior. It appears that air pollution does more than just cloud our vision; it may also fan the flames of felonious activities – a notion that ignites novel inquiries into the enigmatic web of causality between smog and pyromania.

As we put a lid on this investigation, we are confident in asserting that further research in this area is as unnecessary as a snowplow in the Sahara. The sparks of knowledge generated by this study illuminate the need for a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted influences on criminal activities but also provoke a newfound appreciation for the potential impact of haze on unlawful blazes. It is our hope that this research not only smolders in the annals of academia but also kindles a renewed interest in the unexpected intersections of environmental and criminal phenomena.