

# Data and the State

PUBPOL 2130 / INFO 3130



## Suburbs and Neighborhoods

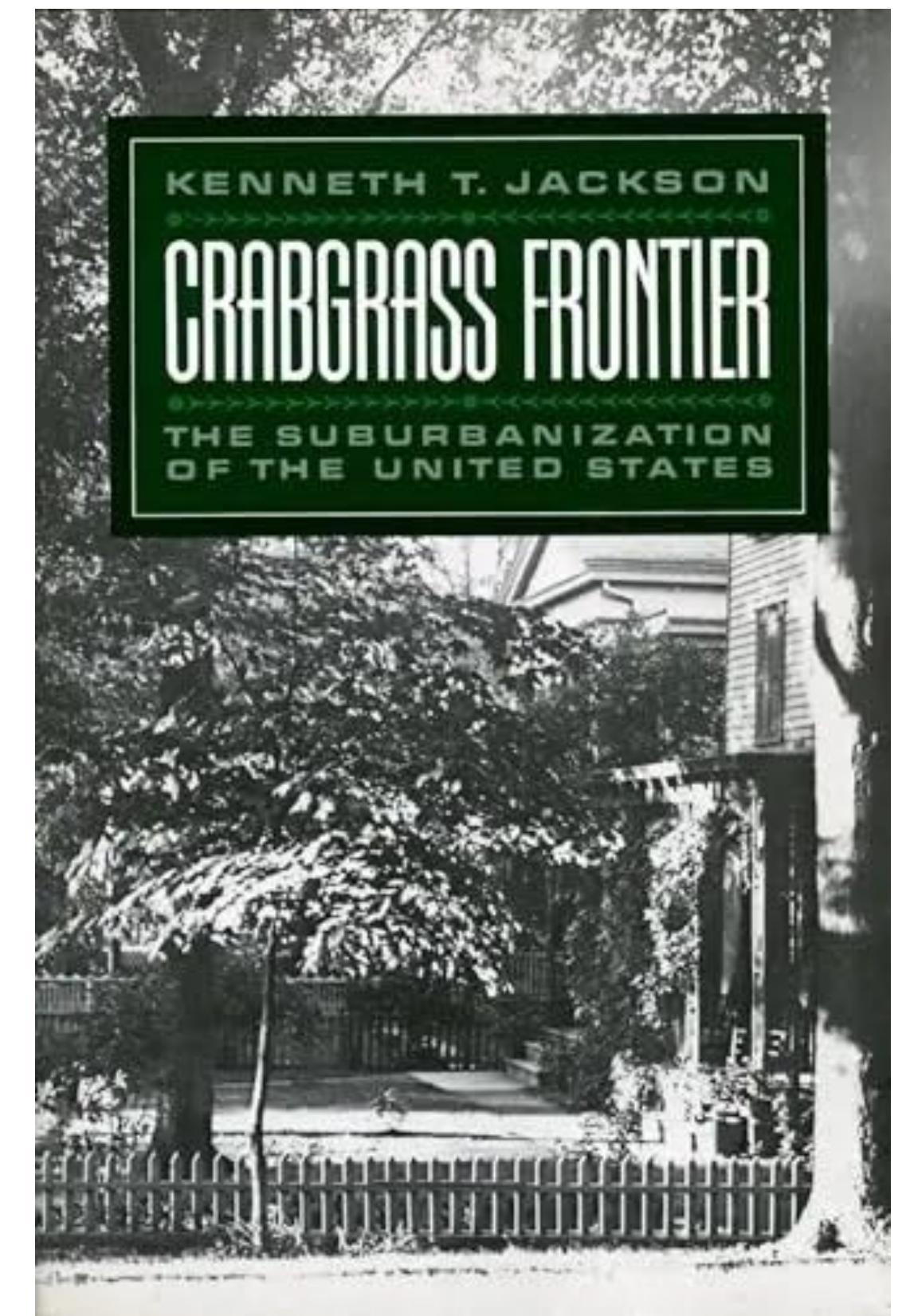
Lecture 21, Thursday Apr 17

# Announcements

- Have you met with your project team? Narrowing down topics? We'll collect your project plans tomorrow in lab, so please be sure you've touched base by then.
- This coming Tuesday (April 22) I will be in Portland OR to present on their new election system. **Instead of regular class that day, we will have in-person group work for labs.** You can come at the beginning of class and **sign in**, then work here or elsewhere.
- Tanya and Jennah will both be here for project support / brainstorming

# Jackson

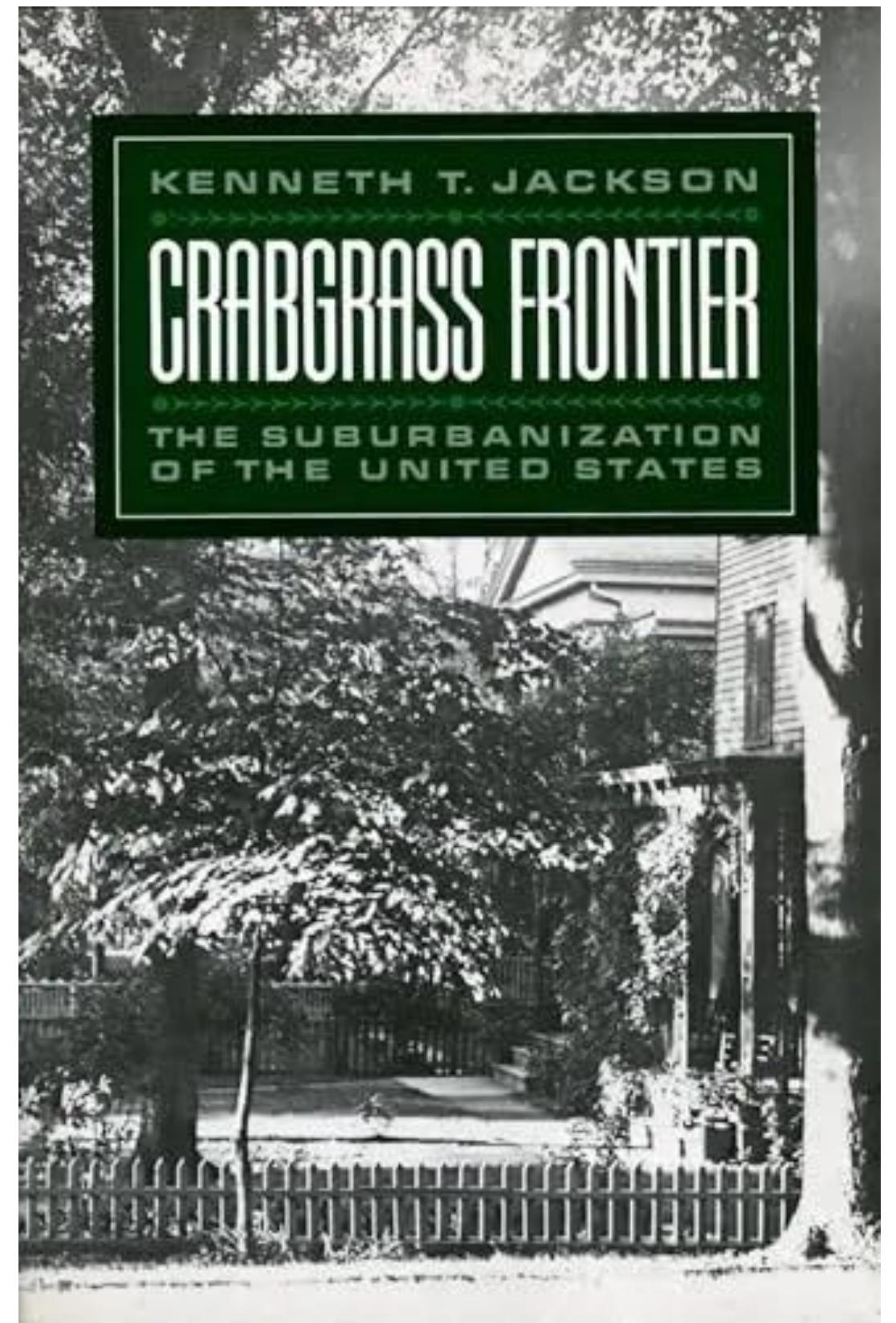
- Kenneth Jackson is an urban historian, retired from Columbia
- “Americans live in suburban areas that are far from their work places, in homes that they own, and in the center of yards that by urban standards elsewhere are enormous. This uniqueness thus involves population density, home-ownership, residential status, and journey-to-work.”
- “The first distinguishing element of metropolitan areas in this nation is their low residential density and the absence of sharp divisions between town and country. In all cultures, the price of land falls with greater and greater distance from city centers. Thus, the amount of space devoted to a single dwelling will always logically be greater on the periphery than at the center. In international terms, however, the structure of American settlement is loose, the decline in density (the density curve) is gradual, and land-use planning is weak.”



1985

# International comparison

- Urbanization is global – UN Population Division says 1950 share of world pop in cities was **29%**. Up to **49%** by 2010, now a majority.
- But form varies: “More crowded urban conditions, sharply differentiated from the countryside, are more frequently found in other nations. The outer boundaries of Copenhagen, Moscow, Cologne, and Vienna abruptly terminate with apartment buildings, and a twenty-minute train ride will take one well into the countryside. Similarly, open fields surround the narrow streets and crowded houses of Siena and Florence. Metropolitan Tokyo has swallowed up tens of thousands of tiny farms since World War II, but private building plots rarely exceed one-twentieth of an acre. Unlike Western cities, Shanghai legally includes thousands of acres of productive farmland, but its population is concentrated at the center, where the average density reaches almost one hundred thousand people per square kilometer.”



1985

# Urban sprawl

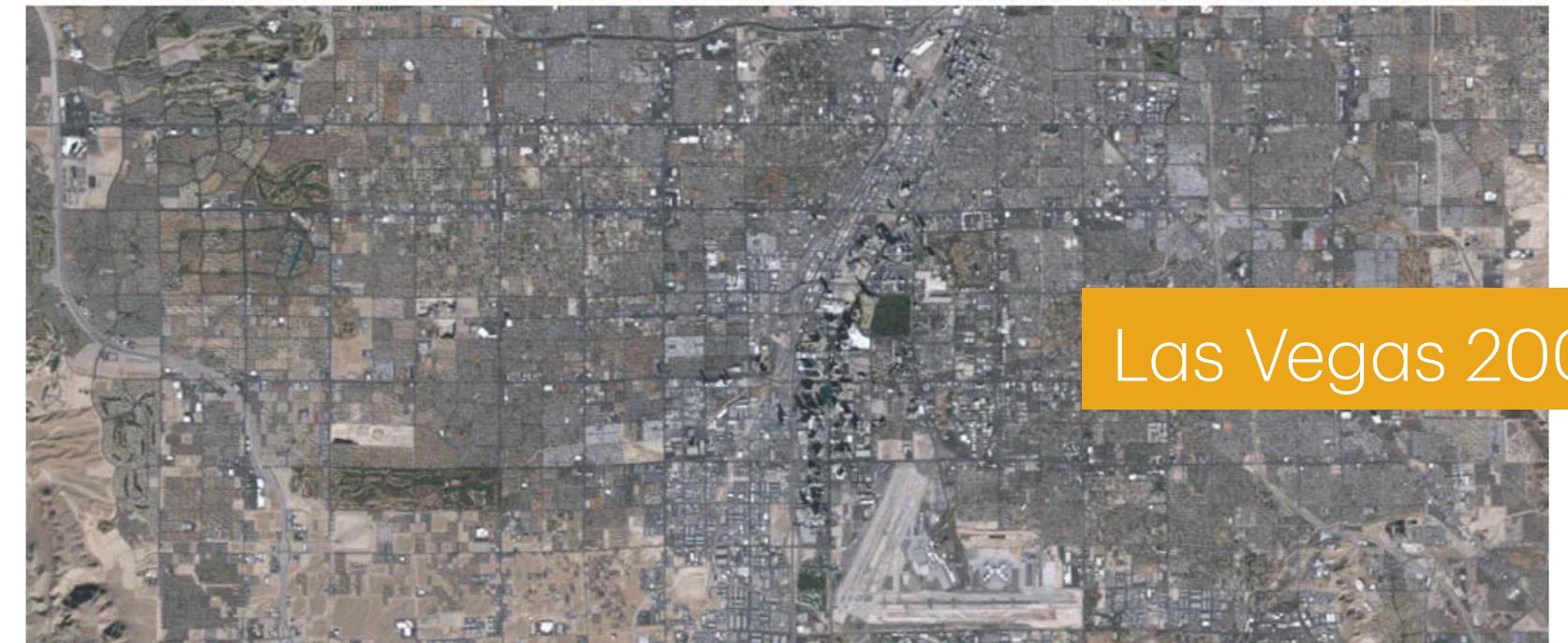
- “[T]he population of the metropolitan areas of Chicago, Illinois, Kansas City, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland, grew by 1 percent, 16 percent and 20 percent, respectively, between 1970 and 1990, but each area’s geographic extent grew by 24 percent, 55 percent, and 91 percent, respectively. The **spatial footprints** of major cities in the Midwest and the Northeast, such as Detroit, Michigan, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, grew approximately 30 percent even as the cities experienced declines in population over the same period.”
- Countermovement: “smart growth” / New Urbanism



Las Vegas 1984



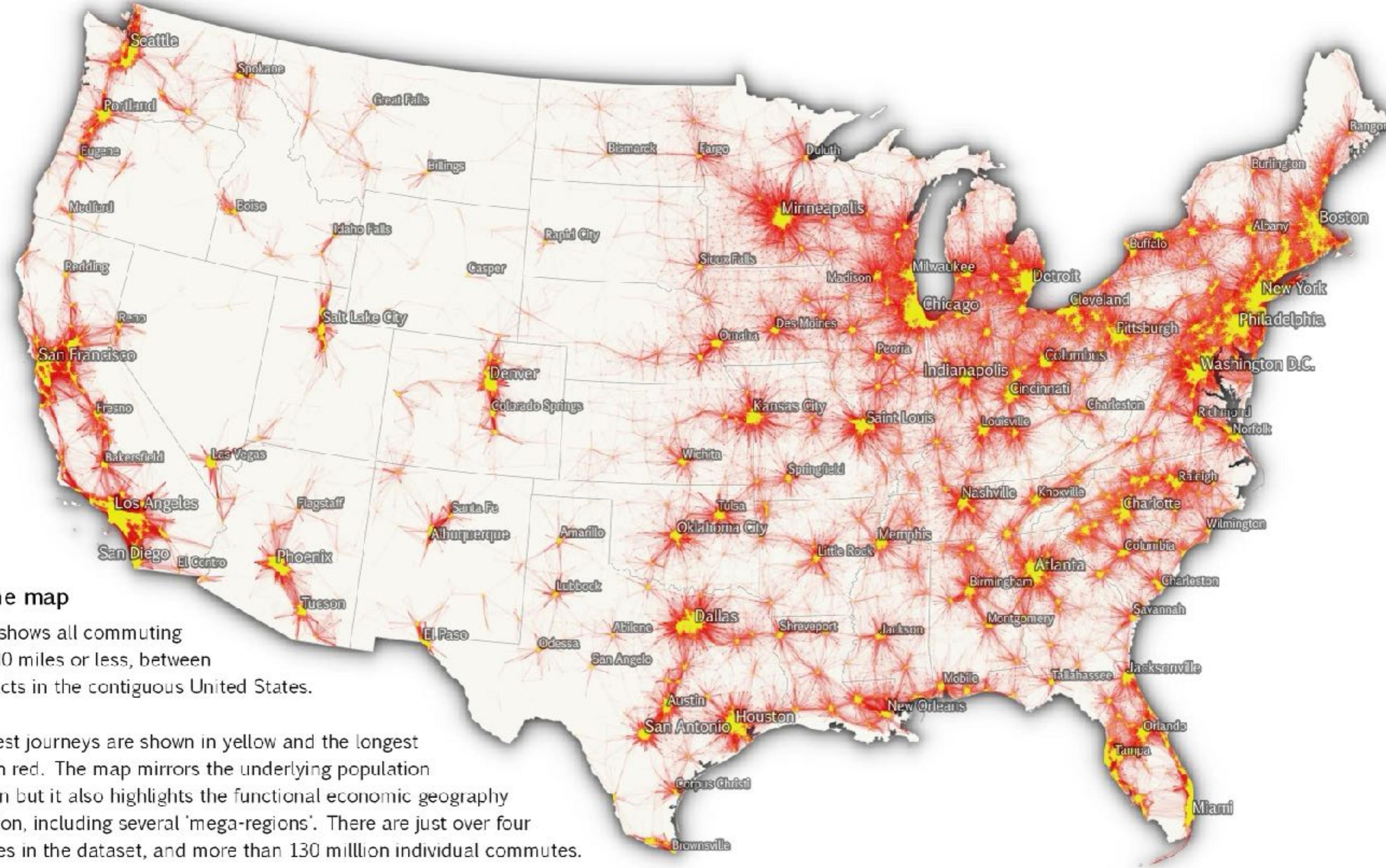
Las Vegas 1999



Las Vegas 2009

# The American Commute

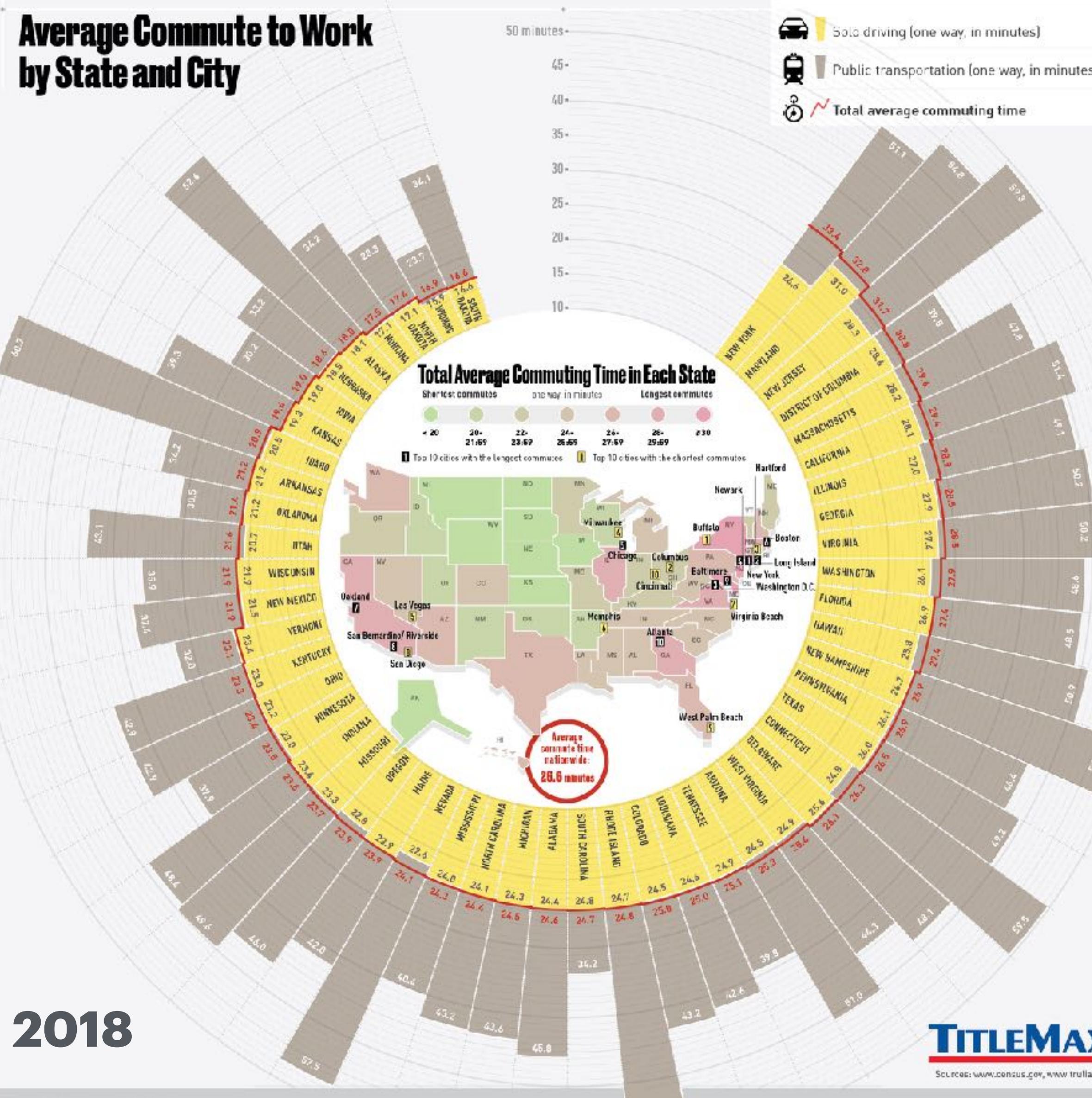
A functional economic geography of the United States



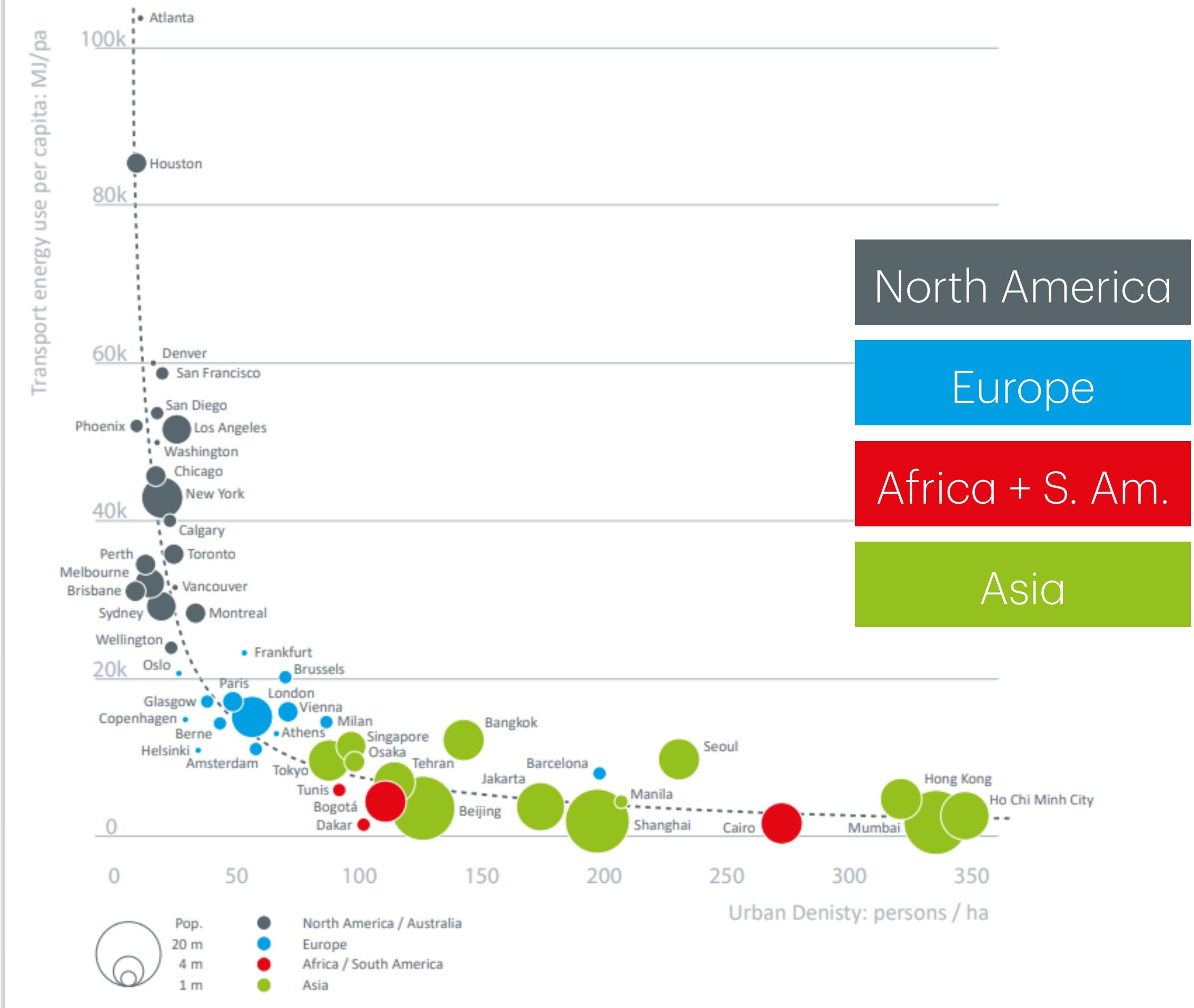
Data Source: American Community Survey 2006-2010

Map created by Alasdair Rae

source:  
Alasdair  
Rae



## Transport Energy and Population Density



source: Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative

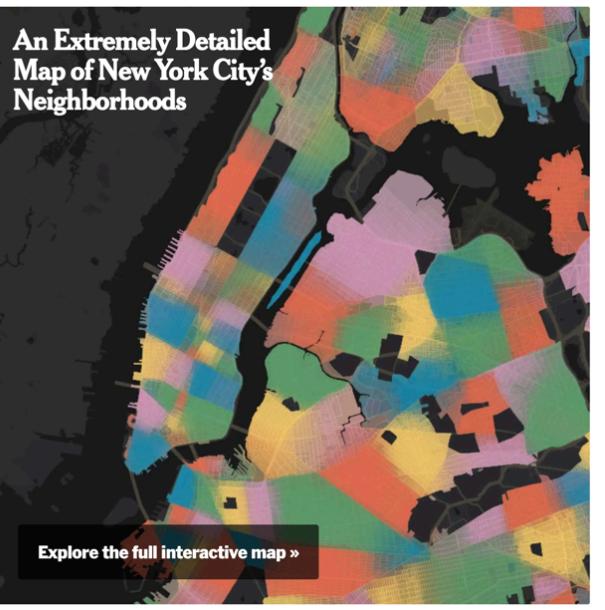


# Neighborhoods

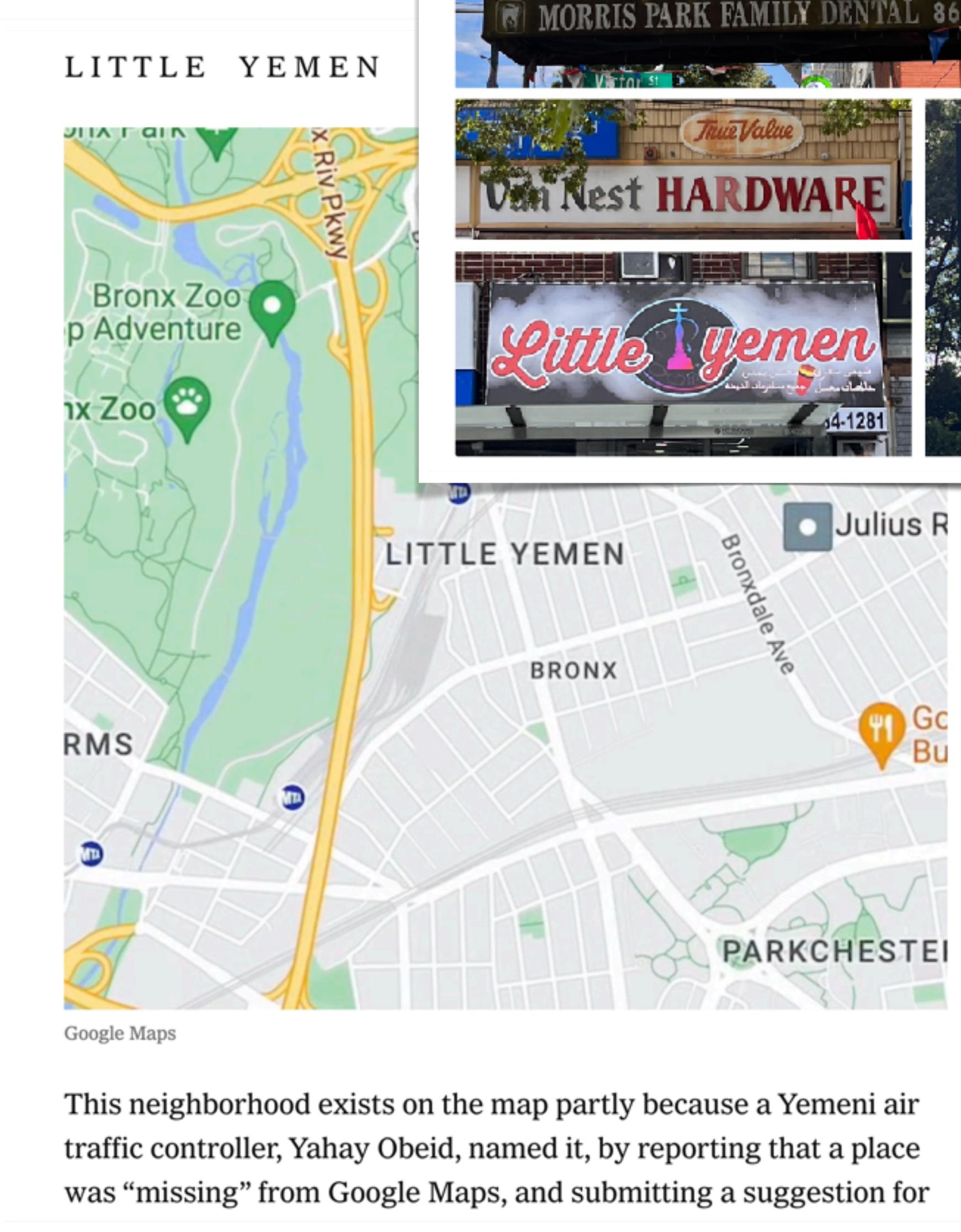
- Jane Jacobs: "In its pure form, the ideal is a neighborhood composed of about 7,000 persons, a unit supposedly of sufficient size to populate an elementary school and to support convenience shopping and a community center. This unit is then further rationalized into smaller groupings of a size scaled to the play and supposed management of children and the chitchat of housewives. Although the "ideal" is seldom literally reproduced, it is the point of departure for nearly all neighborhood renewal plans, for all project building, for much modern zoning, and also for the practice work done by today's architectural-planning students, who will be inflicting their adaptations of it on cities tomorrow."

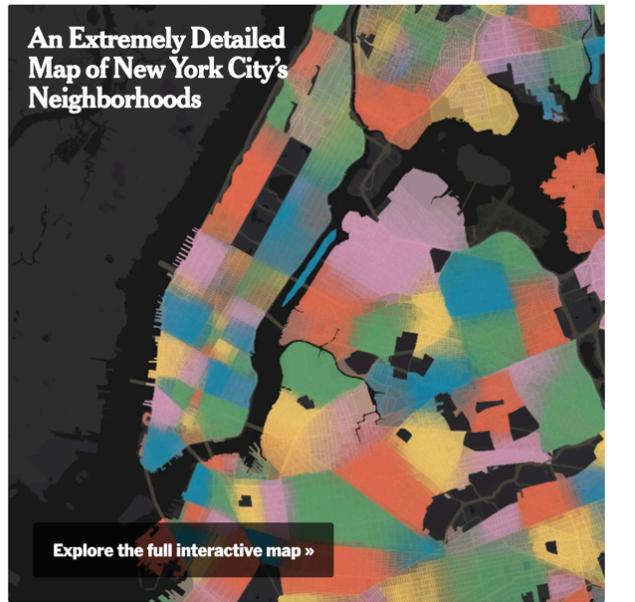
## What's in a neighborhood?





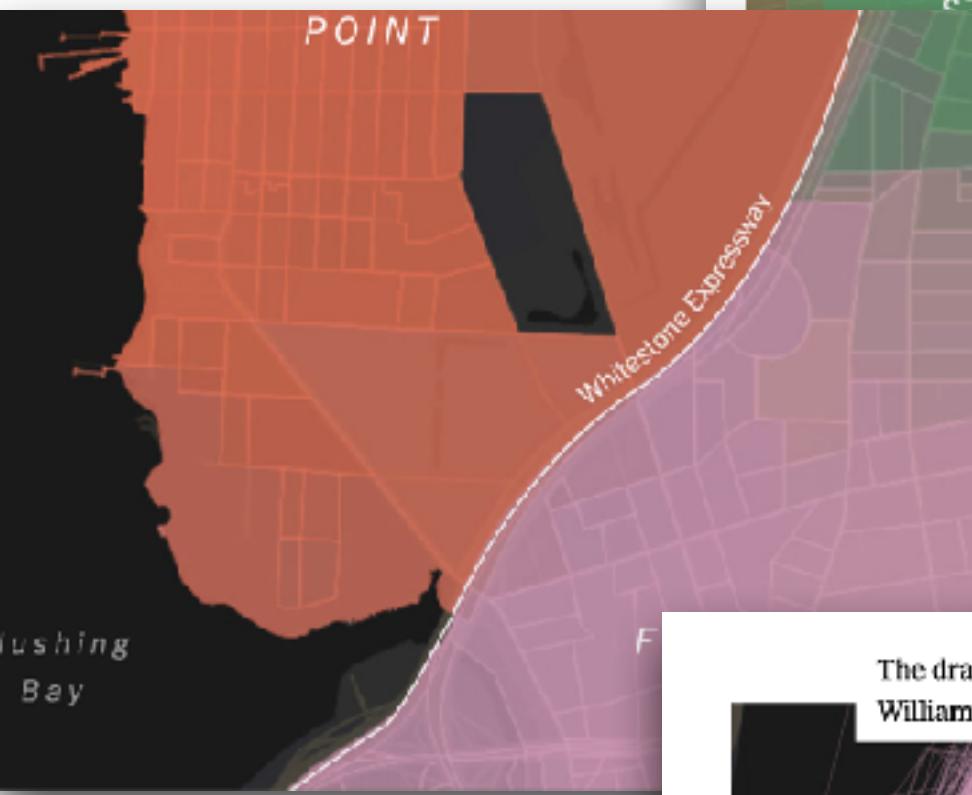
- Neighborhoods are dynamic! Google Maps may feel official, but it allows for crowdsourcing
- Linguists think of languages as “alive” and changing dynamically, geographers think of maps the same way.
- Neighborhood identities can be layered and overlapping, and the physical environment plus the demographic makeup can combine to get a neighborhood to a tipping point of change



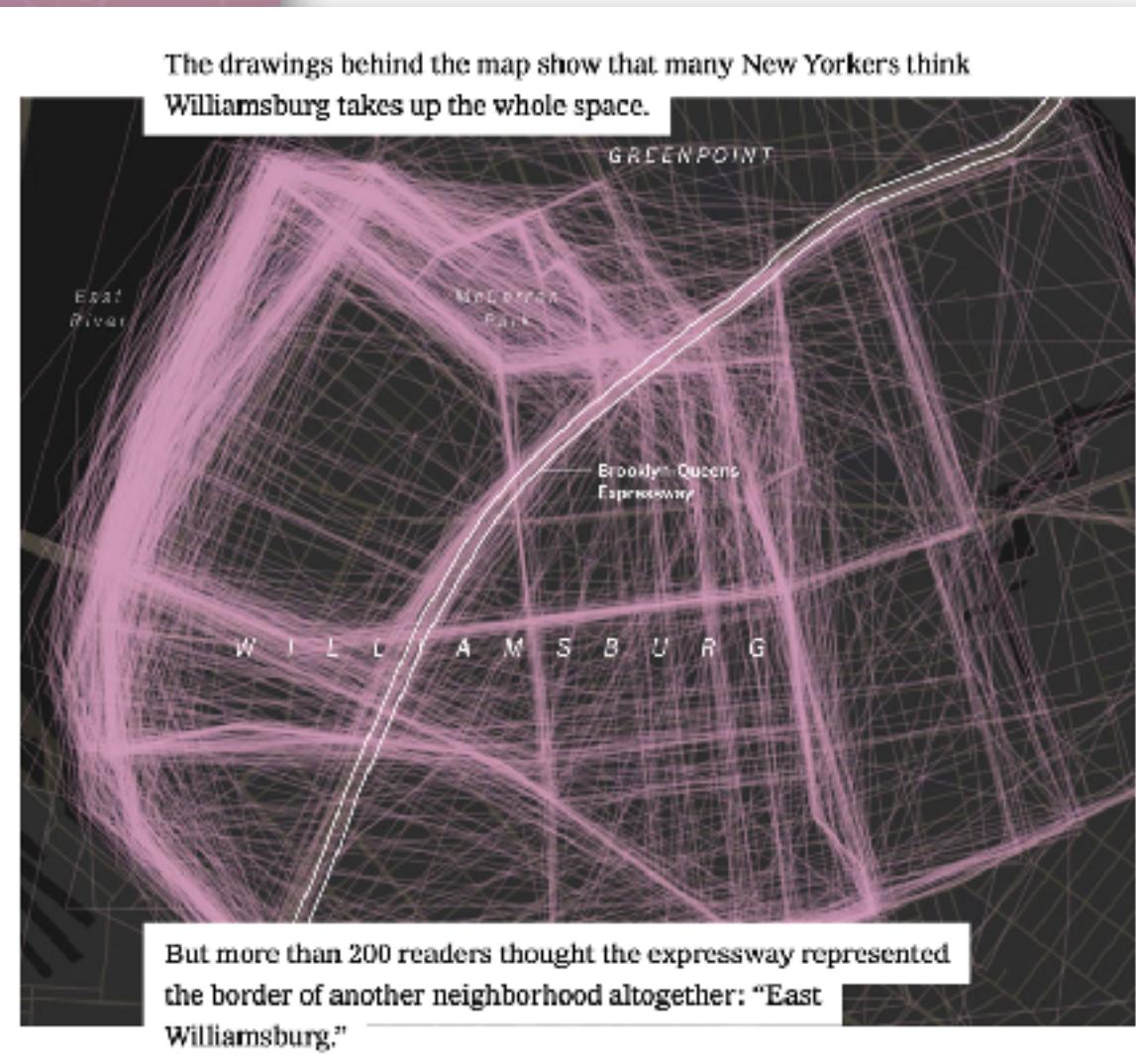


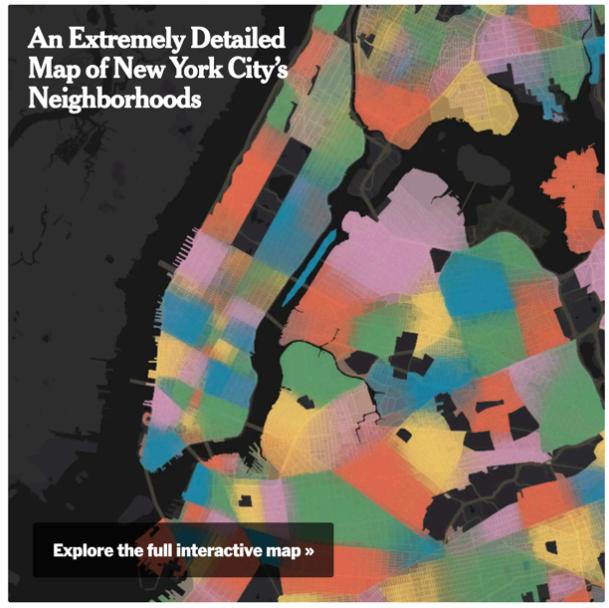
## Sharp borders

or the swamp and the expressway



- As we've been discussing, highways can create physical barriers that get hardened into neighborhood lines
- But Williamsburg is an example where the underlying polygon boundaries show that people don't quite agree about the edge of the neighborhood — does it stop at the BQE highway or continue on?





- Some boundaries are fuzzier! And this creates zones of ambiguity, which are like soft edges.
- If you restrict to just the **core** of a neighborhood, where there's at least 90% consensus on the name, then you get a sharper view of some "established" neighborhoods

