

PSC 202

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

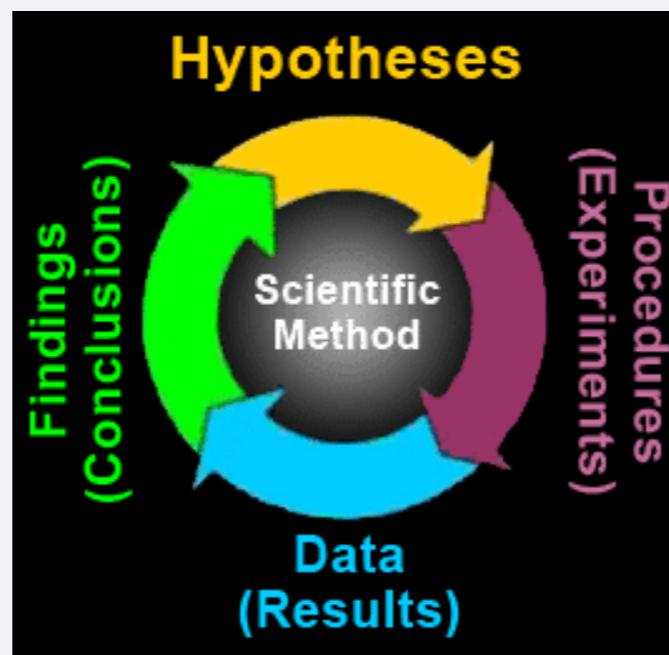
**INTRODUCTION  
TO POLITICAL  
ANALYSIS  
QUALITATIVE ANALYSES**

# HOUSEKEEPING

- **Exam 1**
  - Will be returned on Friday in sections
- **Problem Set 4**
  - Due Friday at 6 PM
- **Problem Set 5**
  - Posted tonight, due next week Friday

# WHERE WE ARE

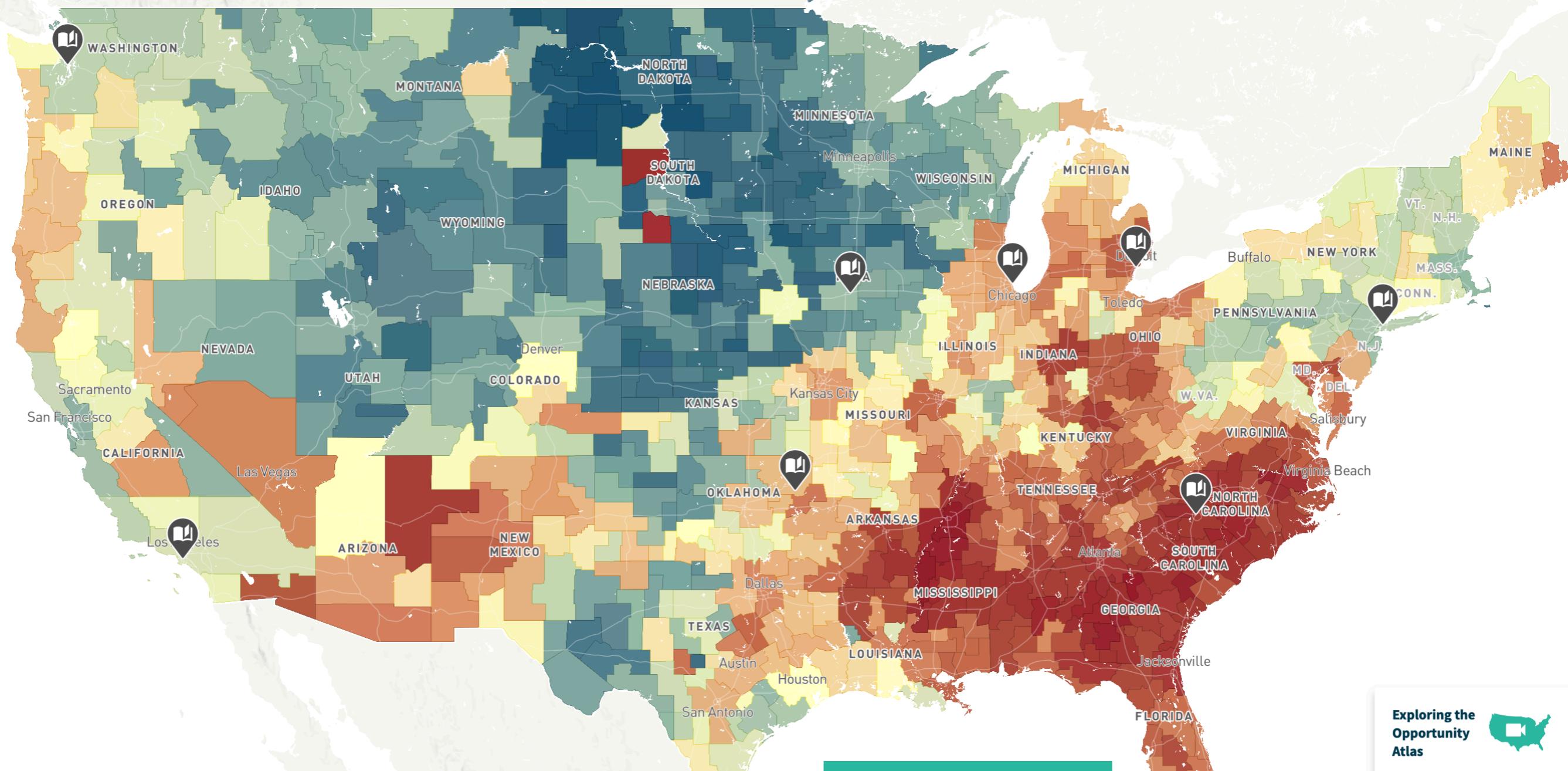
- Formulate research question
- Propose explanation/theory, hypotheses
- Data collection process
- Use data to evaluate hypotheses
- Reassess explanation



# HURDLES TO CAUSALITY

- Two major ways to address hurdles to causality using *observational* research:
  - small-n (qualitative)
  - large-n (quantitative)

# SOCIAL MOBILITY, QUANTITATIVE



<\$20k 27k 29k 30k 32k 33k 35k 37k 39k 44k >\$55k

HOUSEHOLD INCOME AT AGE 35 ▾

PARENT INCOME	CHILD RACE	CHILD GENDER
ALL	ALL	ALL
HIGH	BLACK	FEMALE
MIDDLE	WHITE	MALE
LOW	HISPANIC	
	ASIAN	
	AMER. INDIAN	

Exploring the  
Opportunity  
Atlas



ATLAS IN  
ACTION

Hear from Atlas Users

The Bahamas

# SMALL-N (QUALITATIVE)

The New York Times

## Deep Cover: Alice Goffman's 'On the Run'



Alice Goffman Ricardo Barros

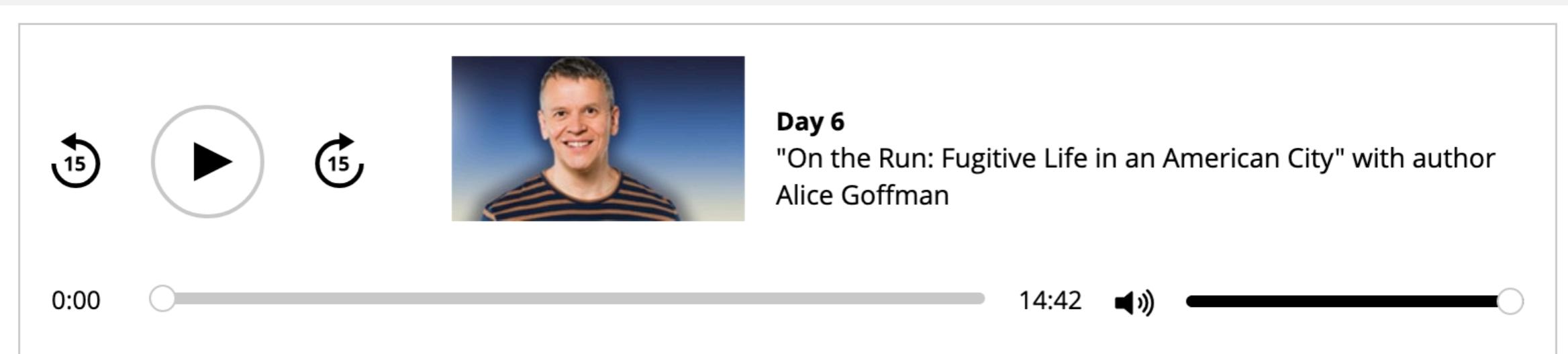
## SMALL-N (QUALITATIVE)

# The Ethics of Ethnography

Alice Goffman's heralded book about inner-city life has come under fire for inconsistencies and inaccuracies. Is the author to blame—or does the fault lie with her field?

## The Trials of Alice Goffman

Her first book, 'On the Run' — about the lives of young black men in West Philadelphia — has fueled a fight within sociology over who gets to speak for whom.



# "On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City" with author Alice Goffman

—ADVERTISEMENT—

6 years ago | Radio | 14:42

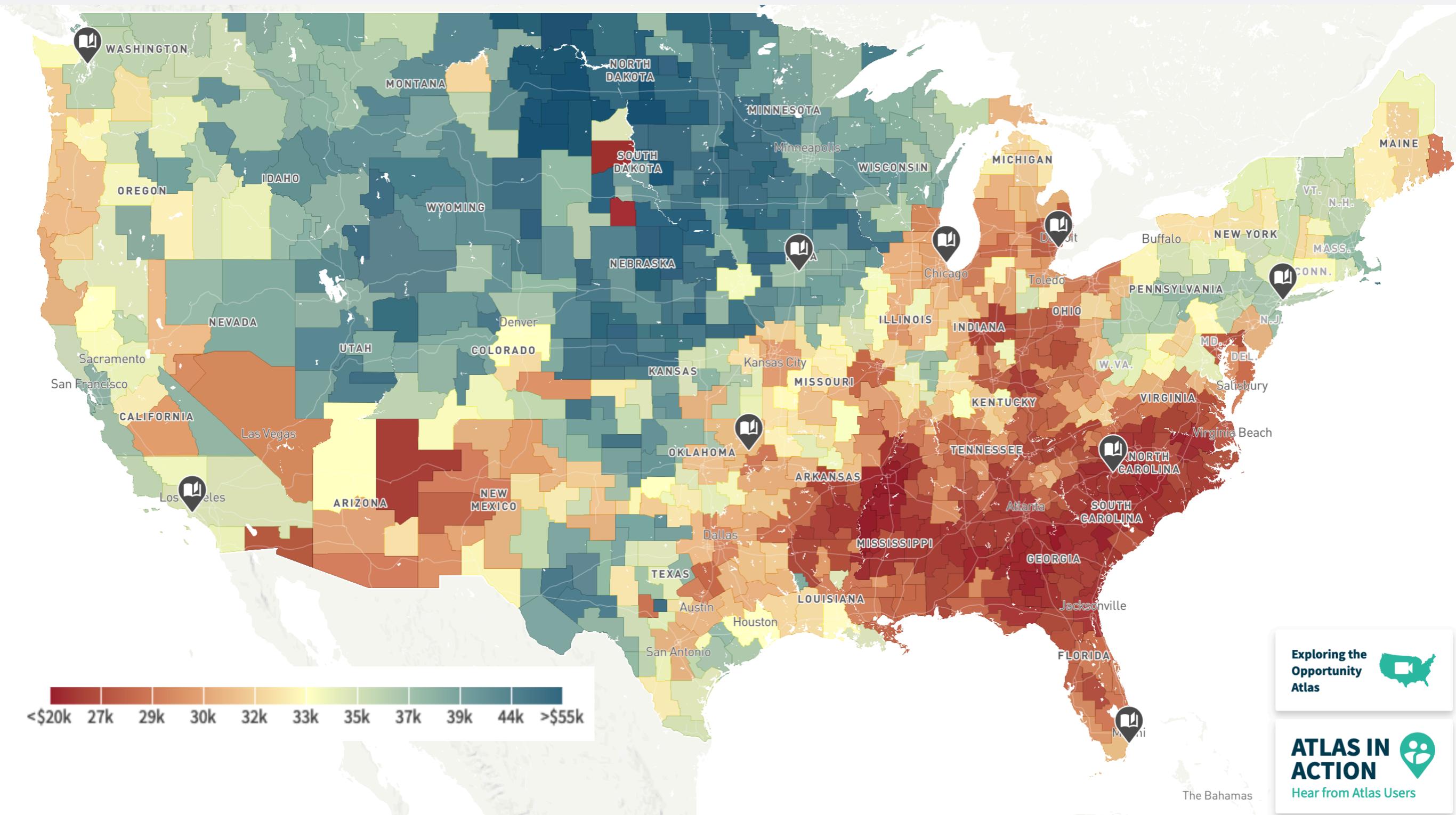
Immersive sociologist Alice Goffman on her time in a disadvantaged Philadelphia neighbourhood, the War on Drugs, and her new book "On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City."

- Source: <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2473057250>

# EMPIRICAL STUDIES

- **Quantitative, large n**
  - Chetty: study of millions of people in the entire US
- **Qualitative, small n**
  - Goffman: study of a few people in a single neighborhood
  - *Case study*

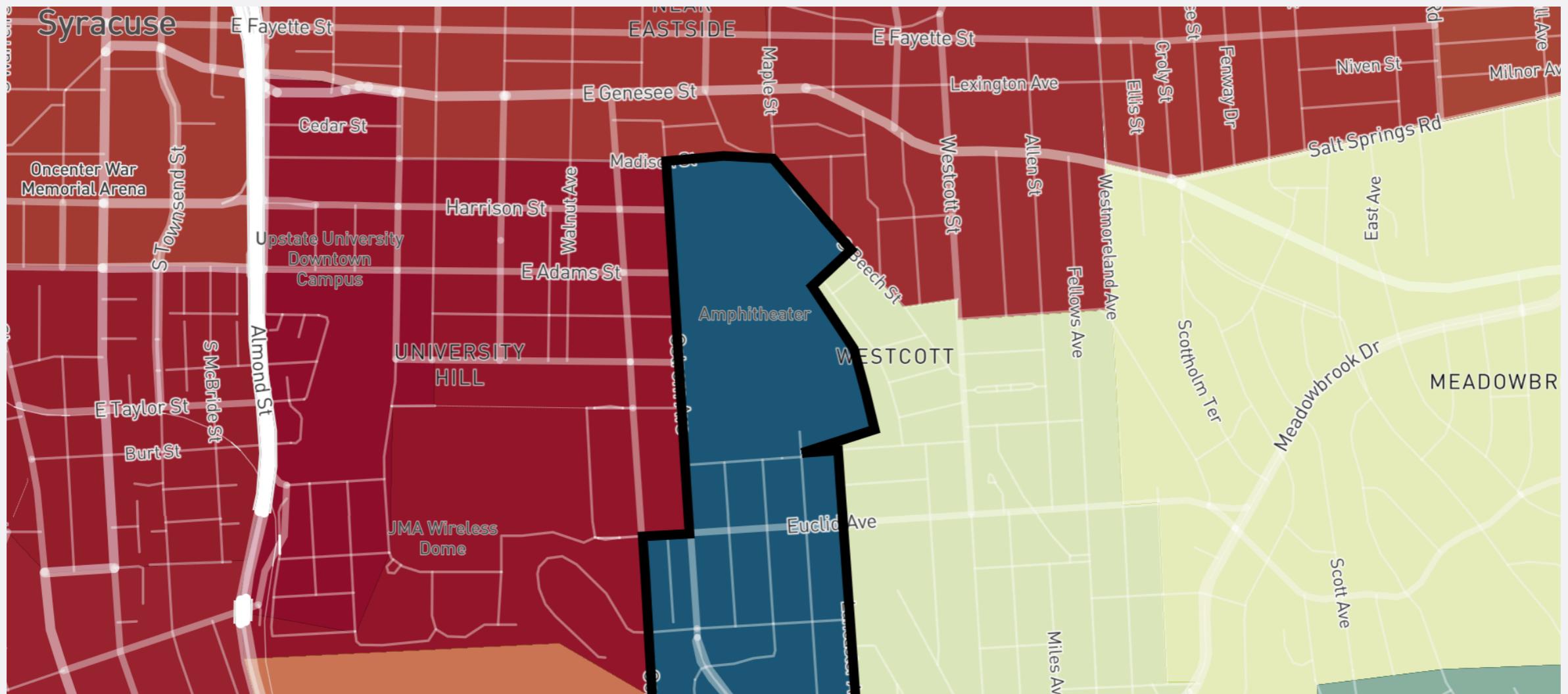
# WHY DO A CASE STUDY?



# WHY DO A CASE STUDY?

- Looking at effect of growing up in poor neighborhood on earnings in adulthood
  - Quantitative analysis of millions of people in entire country
- What can a case study contribute?
  - Why would we study e.g. just a single neighborhood?

# SOCIAL MOBILITY, QUANTITATIVE



Tract 36067004400, Eastside, Syracuse, NY

## CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES IN ADULTHOOD ⓘ

show more

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME AT AGE 35

LOWEST

MEDIAN (\$34k)

HIGHEST

\$57k ⓘ

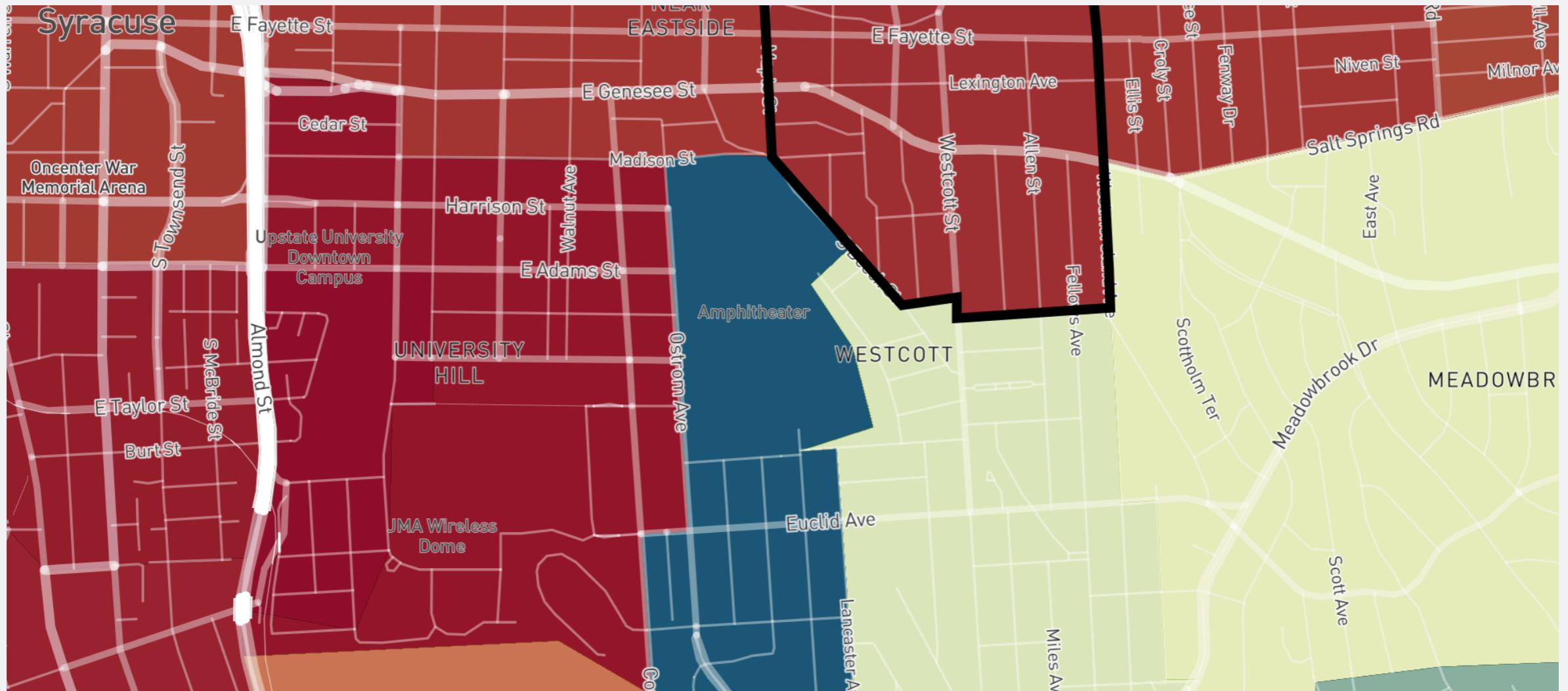
<1% ⓘ

## INCARCERATION RATE

show more outcomes

<\$20k 27k 29k 30k 32k 33k 35k 37k 39k 44k >\$55k

# SOCIAL MOBILITY, QUANTITATIVE



## CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES IN ADULTHOOD ⓘ

show more

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME AT AGE 35

\$21k ⓘ

LOWEST

MEDIAN (\$34k)

HIGHEST

## INCARCERATION RATE

9.3% ⓘ

show more outcomes

<\$20k 27k 29k 30k 32k 33k 35k 37k 39k 44k >\$55k

# WHY DO A CASE STUDY?

- Problem: Why exactly are children in second neighborhood so disadvantaged compared to children in the first?
  - IRS tax records don't tell us that

# CASE STUDY CHARACTERISTICS

- Detailed examination of a particular phenomenon of scientific interest
- Focus on *one or a few cases, study in detail*

# WHY DO A CASE STUDY?

- Case studies help us to figure out **how** exactly causation happens
  - Why exactly would growing up in a poor neighborhood make it difficult to succeed later in life?

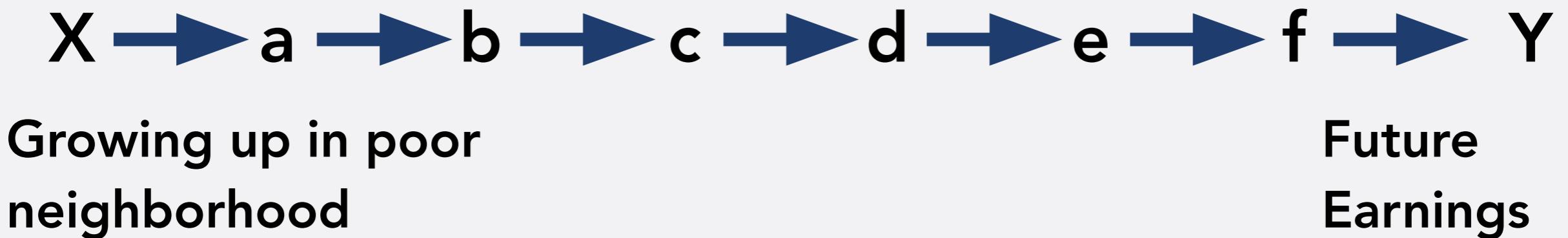
# HOW TO DO A CASE STUDY

- Key technique: “Process tracing”
  - Method to identify the causal relationship in a particular case through detailed examination of each step in the causal chain
  - within-case analysis

# PROCESS TRACING



# PROCESS TRACING



# HOW TO DO THAT

- **Goal: Uncover each step along the way from X to Y**
  - **Observe the entire causal process**
  - **Quantitative research often goes from X to Y, without examining the steps in between**
  - **Simple process-tracing example**

# EXAMPLE

- Presidential election 2000
- Al Gore (D) vs. George W. Bush (R)
- 7:50pm (10 minutes before many polling stations in Florida closed):



# EXAMPLE

- Later that night:



# EXAMPLE

- Official end result:

		
<b>Nominee</b>	<a href="#">George W. Bush</a>	Al Gore
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democratic
<b>Home state</b>	Texas	Tennessee
<b>Running mate</b>	Dick Cheney	Joe Lieberman
<b>Electoral vote</b>	25	0
<b>Popular vote</b>	2,912,790	2,912,253
<b>Percentage</b>	48.847%	48.838%

537 votes!

# EXAMPLE

- How did calling the state prematurely (and incorrectly) change the results?
  - Might have cost Gore: Supporters who thought he'd won did not vote
  - Might have cost Bush: Supporters who thought he'd lost did not vote

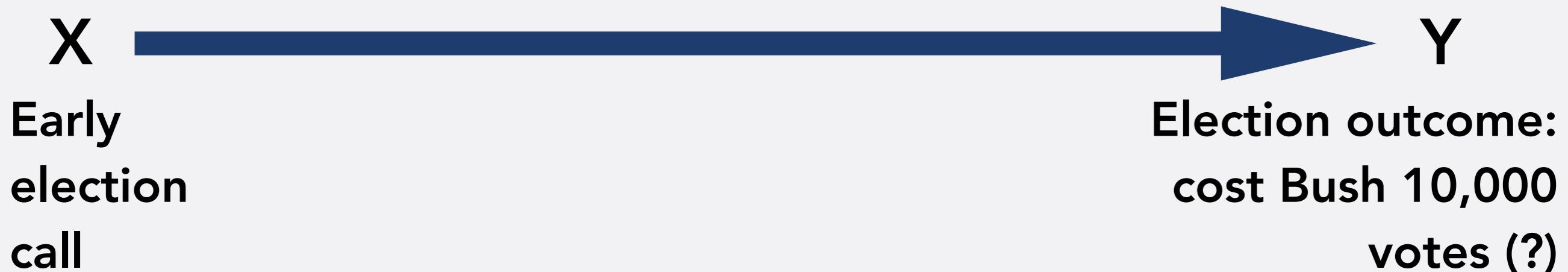
# QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

- John R. Lott (American Enterprise Institute)
- *Large-n* study of voting results in different counties
- Conclusion: Bush lost ~10,000 votes

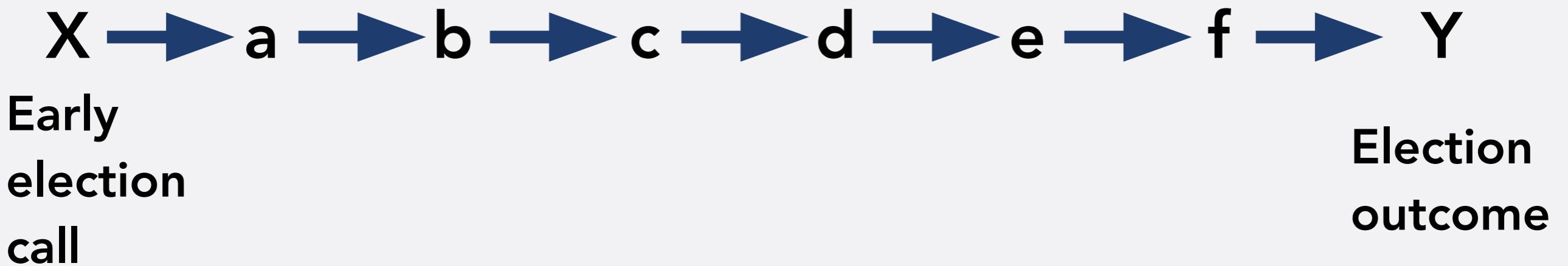
# PROCESS TRACING

- Henry Brady (2004): Process-tracing to estimate the effect of calling election early on lost votes

# PROCESS TRACING

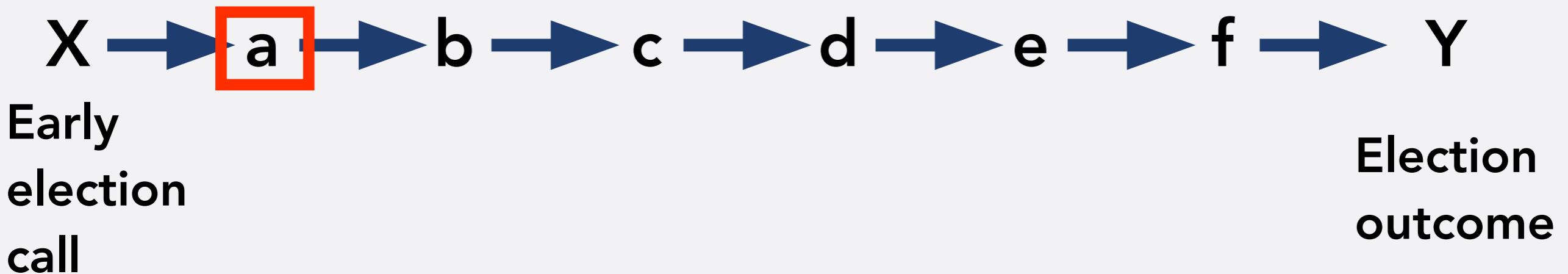


# PROCESS TRACING



# PROCESS TRACING

- When did the networks call the race?

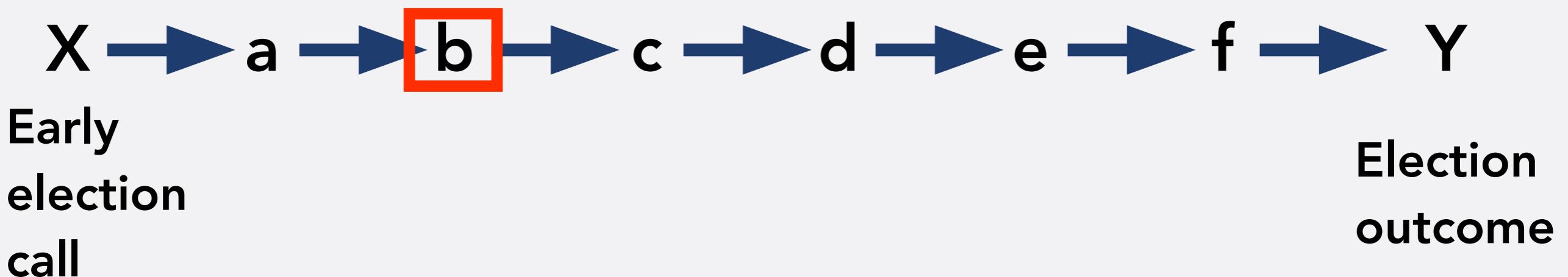


# PROCESS TRACING

- When did the networks call the race?
  - 7.50, 10 minutes before polls closed

# PROCESS TRACING

- How many voters usually vote in those 10 minutes?



# PROCESS TRACING

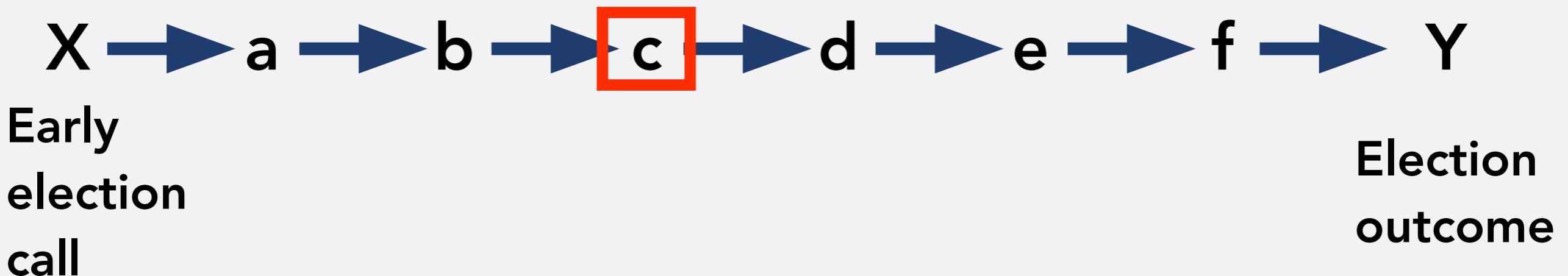
- How many voters usually vote in those 10 minutes?
  - Total: 303,000 voters in the 10 affected counties
  - Past data: about 1/12 of voters vote in last hour
    - $303,000/12=25,250$
    - Only last 10 minutes of last hour affected
      - 1/6 of last hour
      - $25,250/6=4,200$

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# PROCESS TRACING

- Of those 4,200 voters, how many actually heard that election was called?

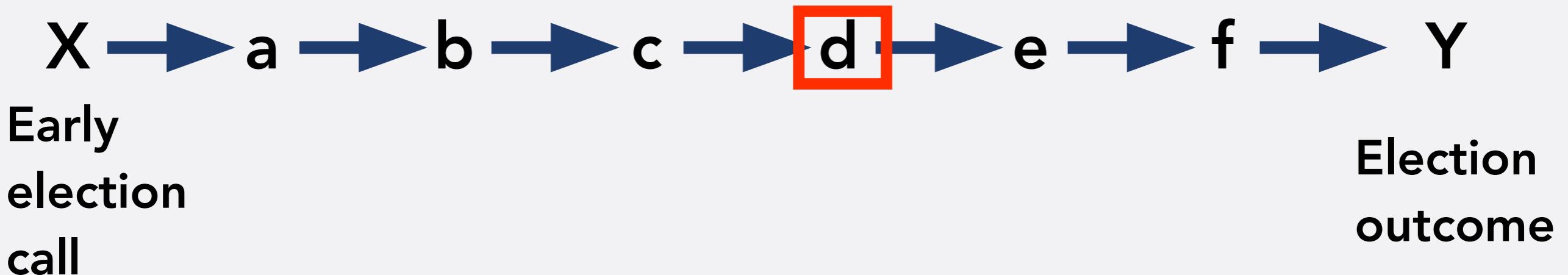


# PROCESS TRACING

- Of those 4,200 voters, how many actually heard that election was called?
  - Based on studies of media exposure, best guess is 20%
  - So about 840 people heard early call

# PROCESS TRACING

- How many of those 840 voters would have voted for Bush?

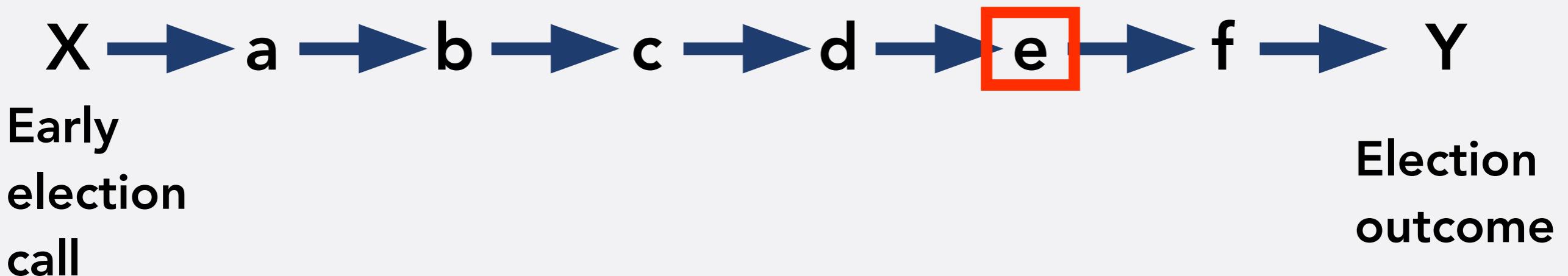


# PROCESS TRACING

- How many of those 840 voters would have voted for Bush?
  - In 10 counties affected, Bush got roughly 2/3 of vote
  - So  $840 * (2/3) = 560$  Bush voters heard early call
  - $840 * (1/3) = 280$  Gore voters heard early call

# PROCESS TRACING

- Out of those who heard it, how many would decide not to vote?

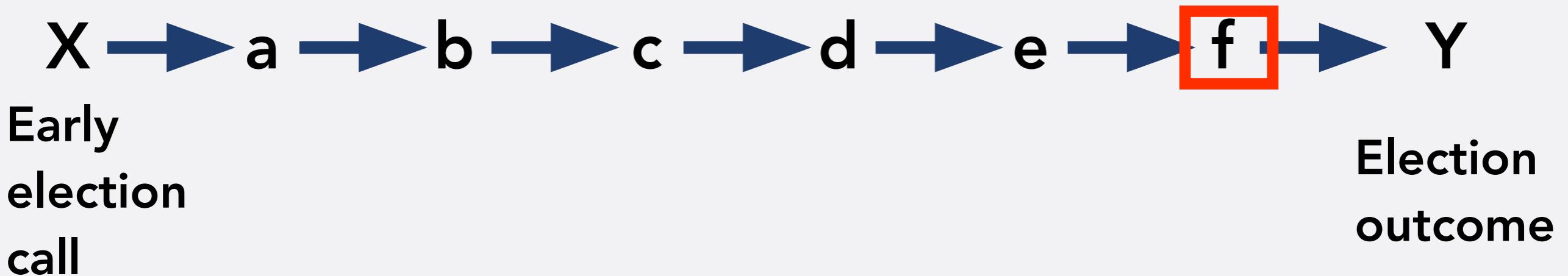


# PROCESS TRACING

- Out of those who heard it, how many would decide not to vote?
  - Based on past research of impact of early calls, best guess is 10%
  - 560 Bush voters heard early call, 10% of those is 56
  - 280 Gore voters heard early call, 10% of those is 28

# PROCESS TRACING

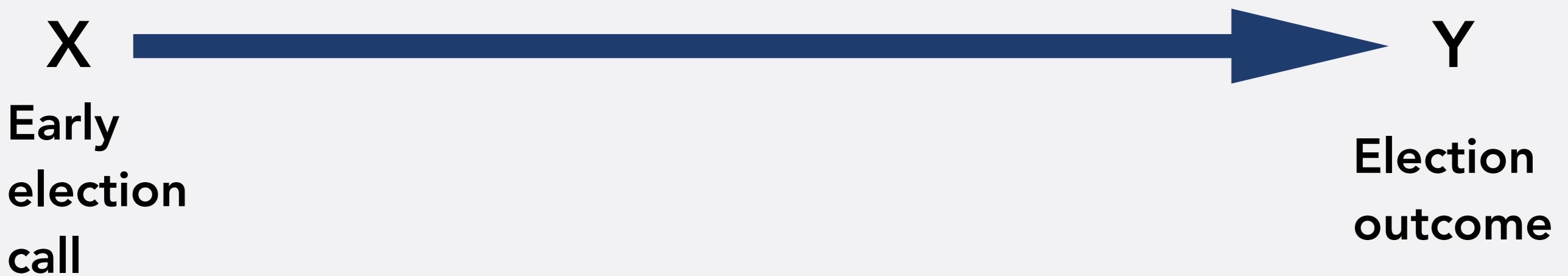
- What is the net effect?



# PROCESS TRACING

- What is the net effect?
  - 56 Bush voters heard early call and decided not to vote
  - 28 Gore voters heard early call and decided not to vote
  - So Bush lost  $56 - 28 = 28$  votes to Gore

# PROCESS TRACING



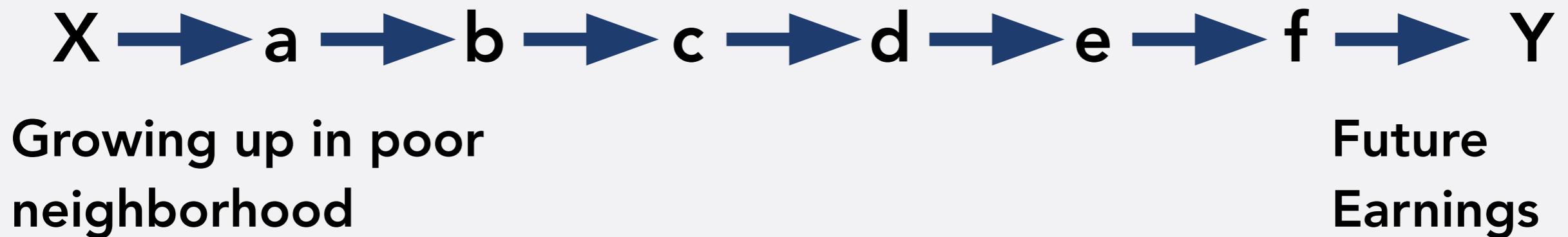
- Results of large-n study (Bush lost ~10,000 votes) not tenable once examining the steps in the causal chain
  - Suggests problems with this large-n study

# HOW TO DO CASE STUDY

- **Key:** Detailed knowledge of case
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Participant observation, ethnographic research
  - Archival research
  - etc.
- **Goal:** Uncover each step along the way from X to Y

# GOFFMAN

- In Goffman's research, what are the steps that prevent her research subjects from having "successful" lives as adults?



# (DIS)ADVANTAGES

- What are the benefits and drawbacks of small-n case studies?

# INTERNAL VALIDITY

- Does the study isolate the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable?
  - If yes: high internal validity
  - If no: low internal validity
- Case studies tend to have *high* internal validity
  - Researcher knows and understands case very well
  - Case study can uncover complex causal processes

# EXTERNAL VALIDITY

- Can we generalize the finding of the study to other settings?
  - If yes: high external validity
  - If no: low external validity
- Case studies often have *low* external validity
  - Not clear if results would be similar if study done in other contexts
  - Limited ability to generalize findings

# MULTIPLE METHODS

- Case studies often performed together with other analyses
  - Comparative case study (next topic)
  - Large-n statistical analysis (later this semester)
- Helps illuminate the causal process behind the findings using these other approaches

## NEXT TIME

- Other qualitative approaches