

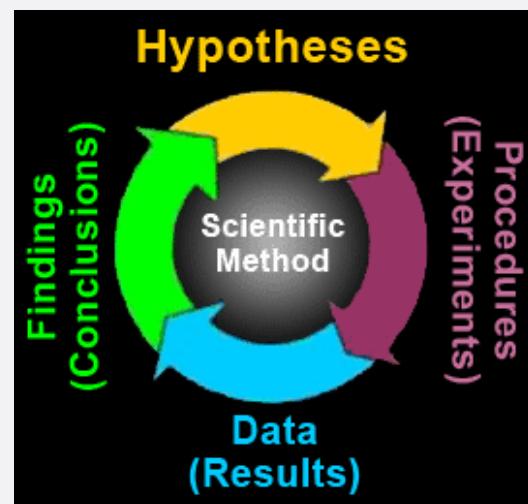
PSC 202

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

# INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ANALYSIS QUALITATIVE ANALYSES

# WHERE WE ARE

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



# HURDLES TO CAUSALITY

- Is there a credible causal mechanism that connects X to Y?
- Can we rule out the possibility that Y could cause X?
- Is there covariation between X and Y?
- Have we controlled for all confounding variables (Z) that might make the association between X and Y spurious?

# EMPIRICAL STUDIES

- Two ways to do observational studies:
  - Qualitative, small n
  - Quantitative, large n
  - n=number of observations

# QUANT AND QUAL

- Chance of rising in income distribution
  - “Intergenerational mobility”
  - How much intergenerational mobility is there?
  - What factors prevent people born into the bottom of the income distribution to rise up?

# LARGE-N (QUANTITATIVE)

 Popular Latest

*The Atlantic*



A portrait photograph of Raj Chetty, an Indian-American economist. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He has dark hair and is looking slightly downwards and to his left with a thoughtful expression. The background is a plain, light color. The image is framed by a white border, which is itself set against a dark gray background.

The Economist Who Would Fix the American Dream

No one has done more to dispel the myth of social mobility than Raj Chetty. But he has a plan to make equality of opportunity a reality.

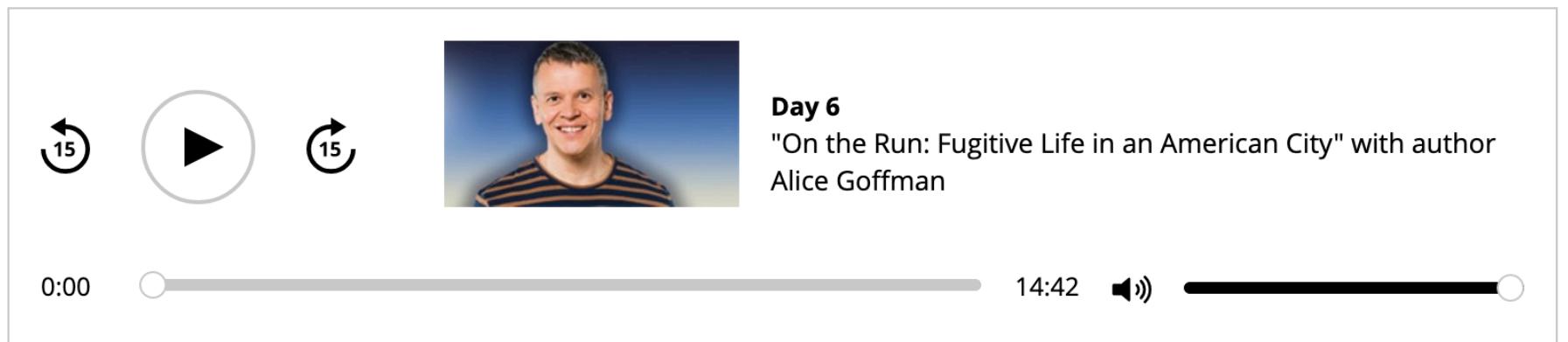
# SMALL-N (QUALITATIVE)

The New York Times

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



Alice Goffman Ricardo Barros



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

— ADVERTISEMENT —

6 years ago | Radio | 14:42

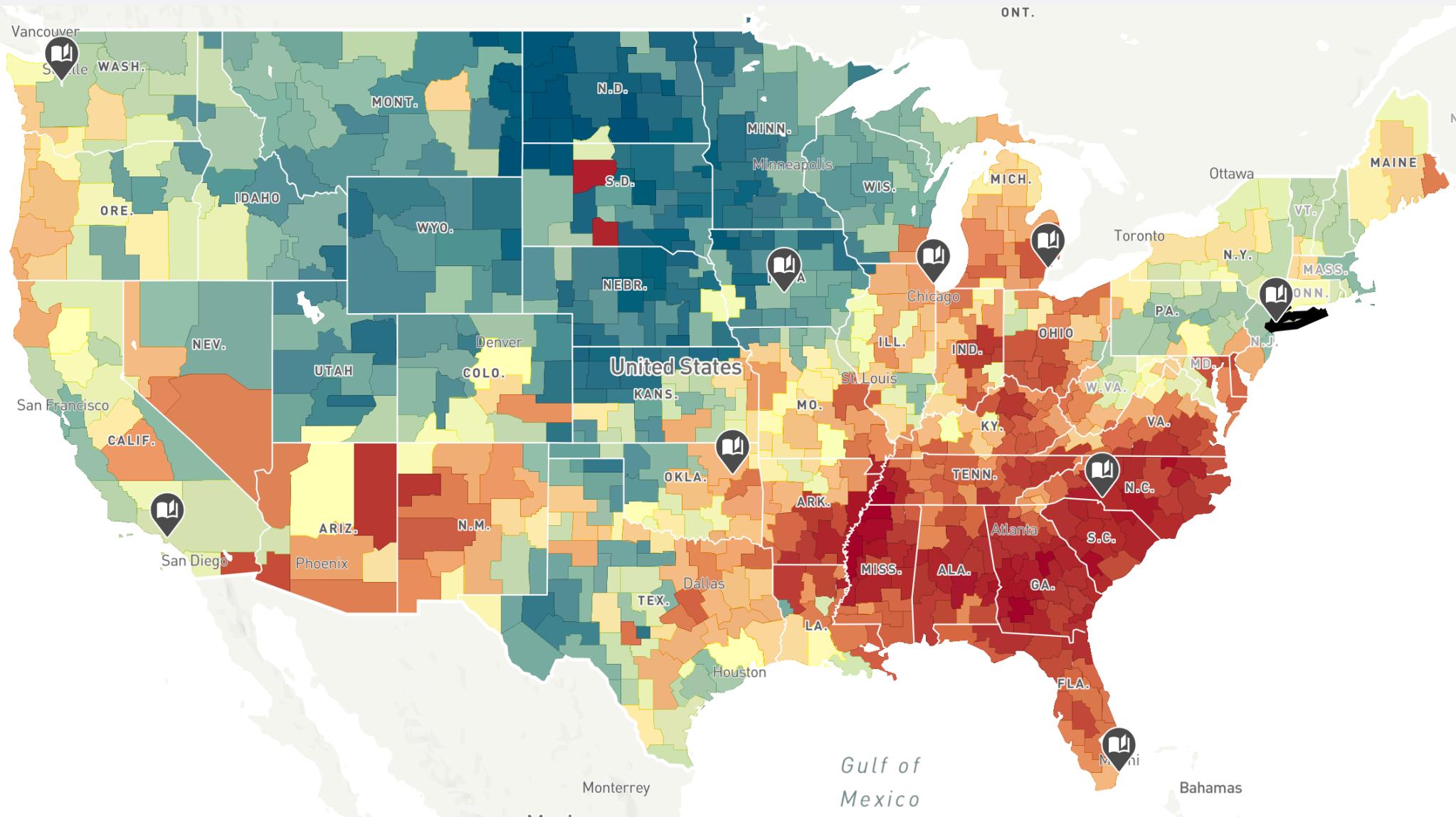
Immersive sociologist Alice Goffman on her time in a disadvantaged Philadelphia neighbourhood, the War on Drugs, and her new book "On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City."

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

# TWO CULTURES

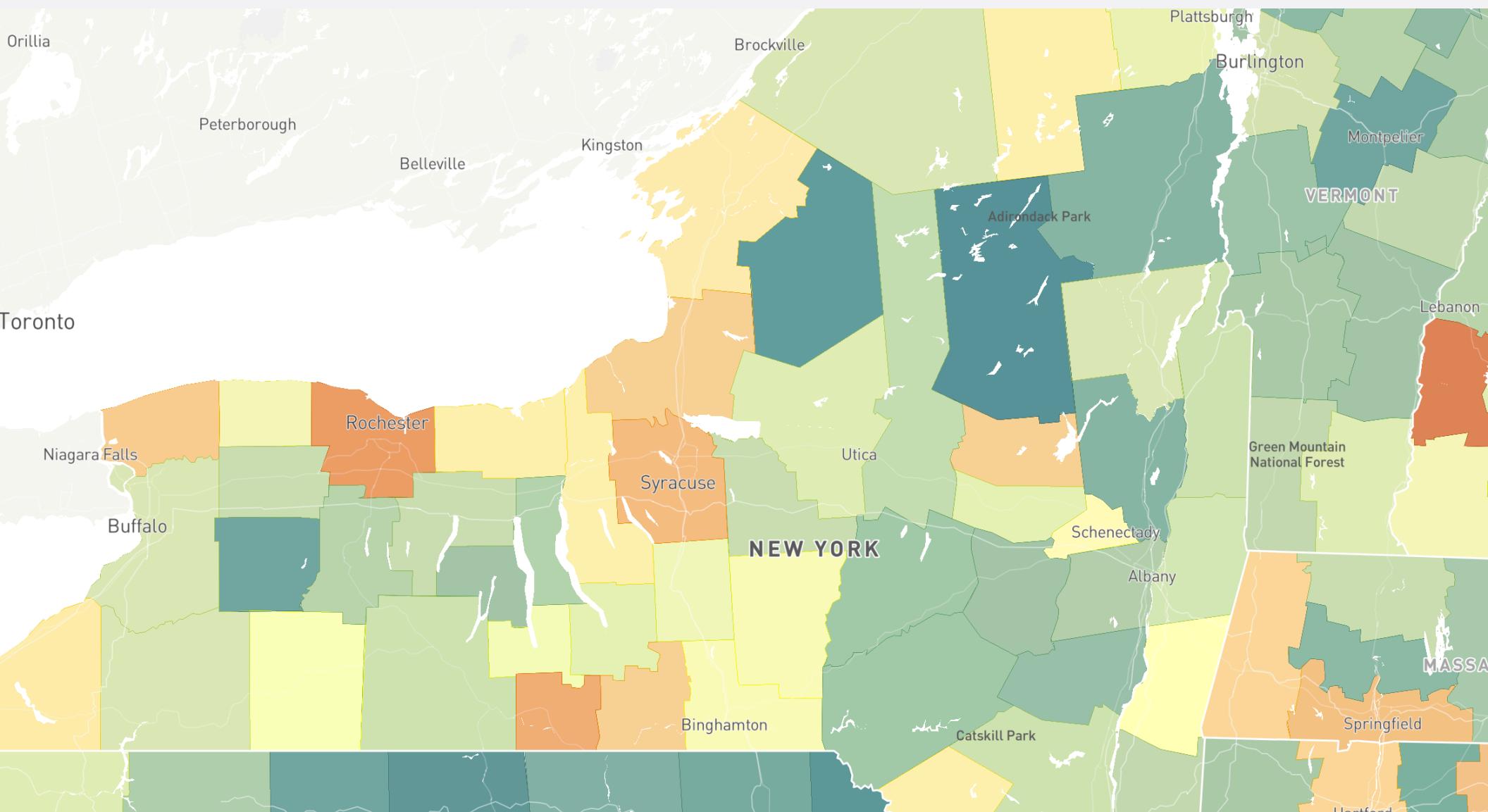
- Quantitative/qualitative, large/small-n studies
- Different approaches to making inferences about *causal relationships*

# WHY DO A CASE STUDY?



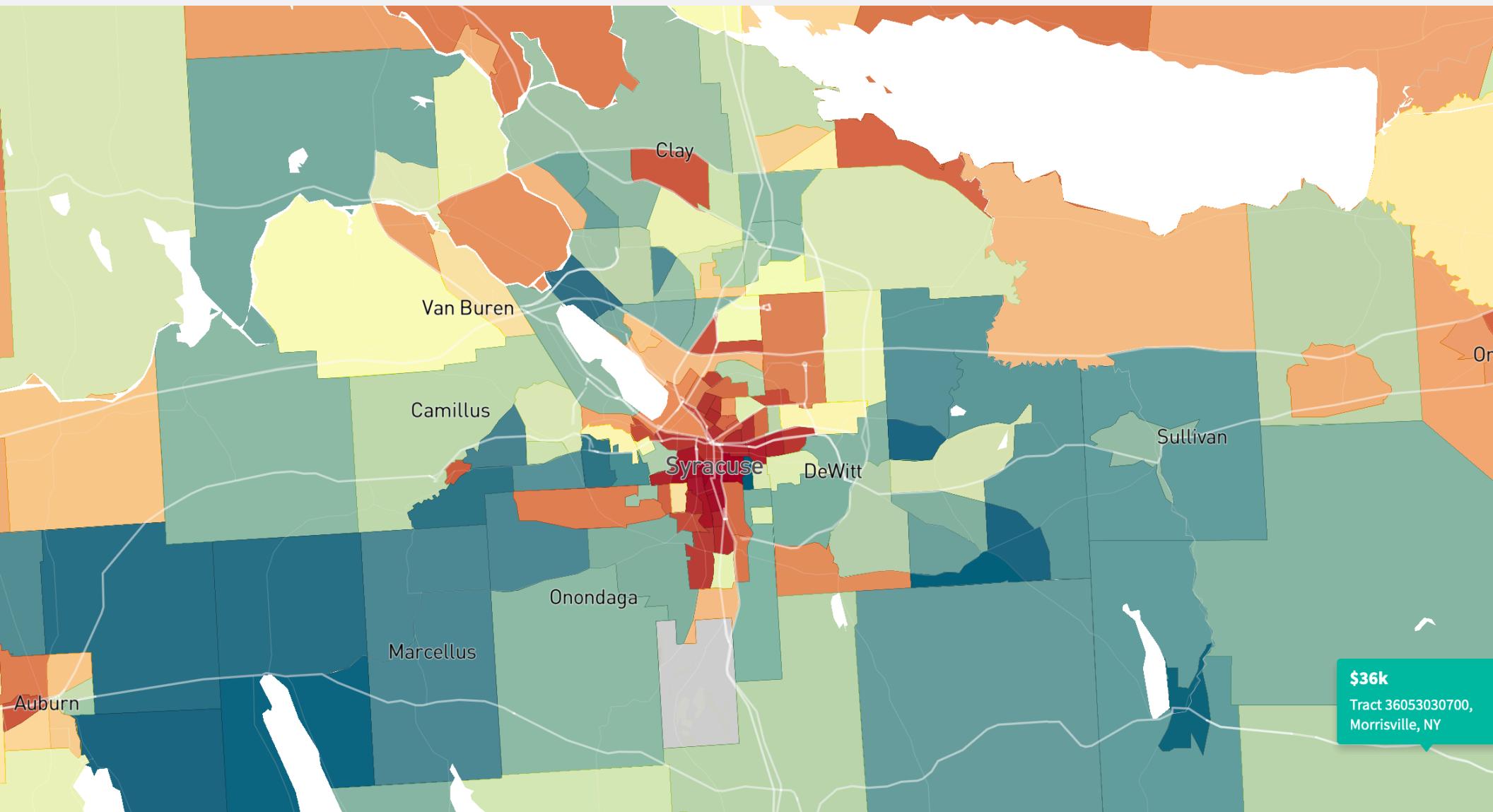
- [www.opportunityatlas.org](http://www.opportunityatlas.org)

# WHY DO A CASE STUDY?



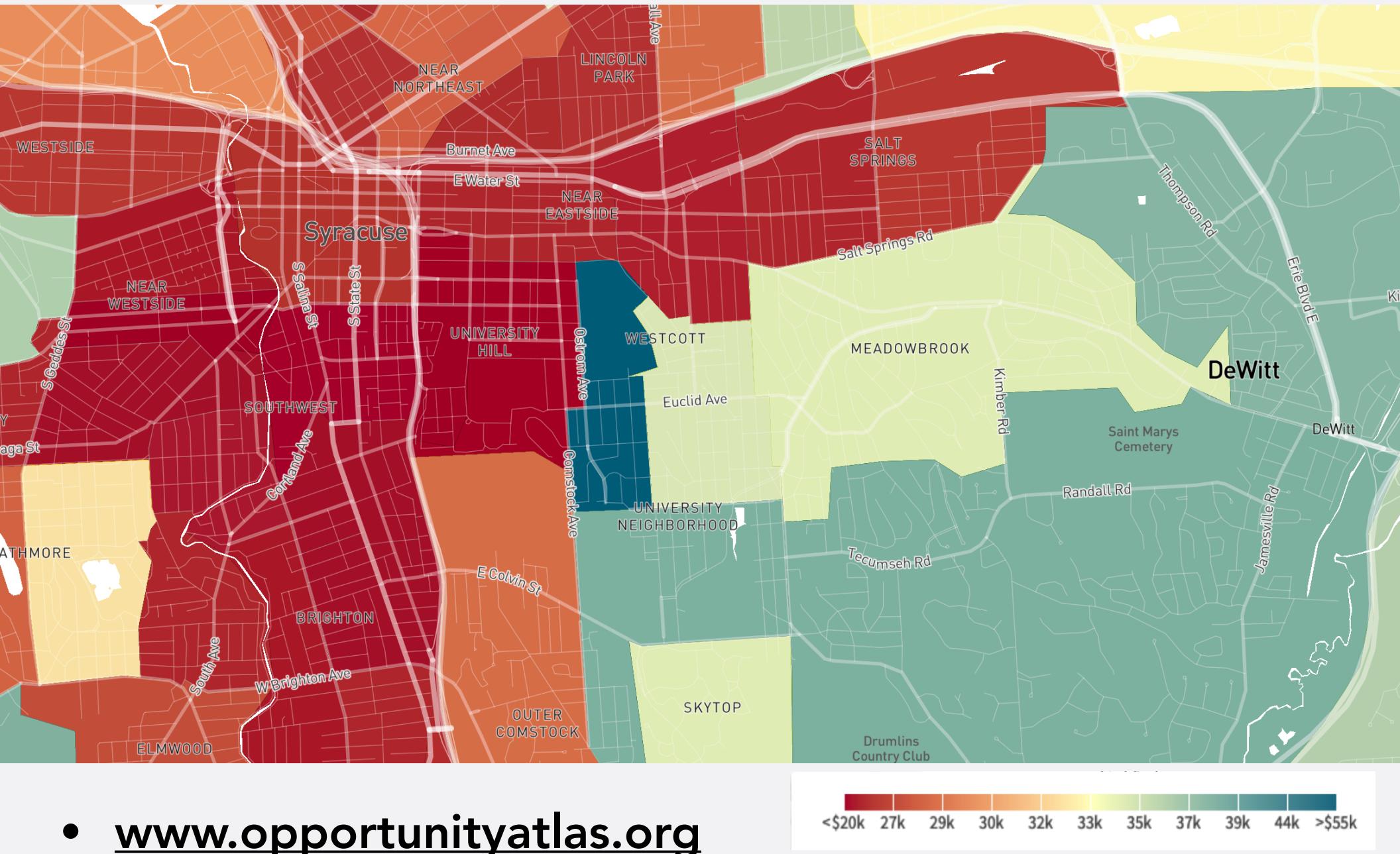
- [www.opportunityatlas.org](http://www.opportunityatlas.org)

# WHY DO A CASE STUDY?



- [www.opportunityatlas.org](http://www.opportunityatlas.org)

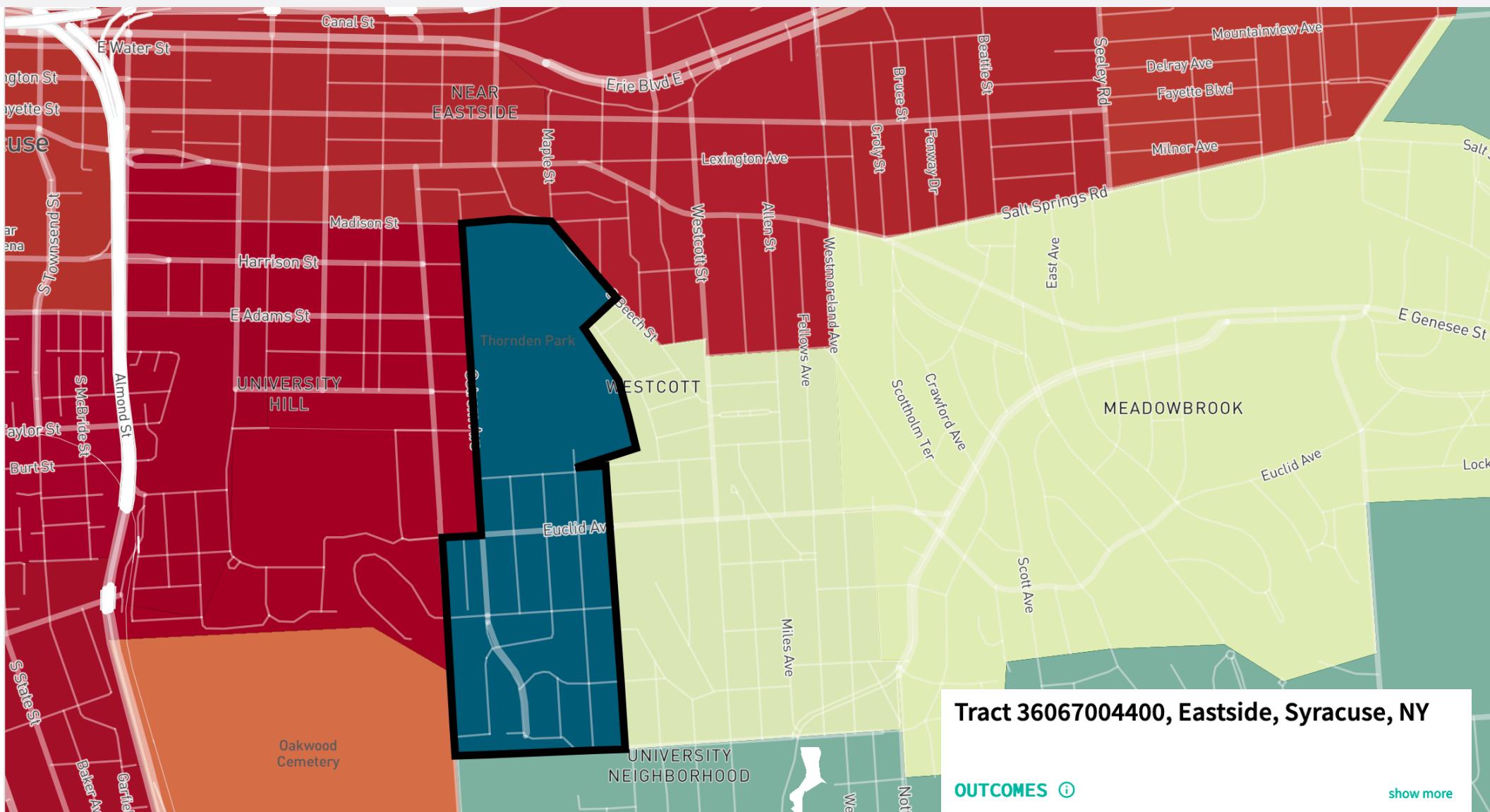
# WHY DO A CASE STUDY?



# WHY DO A CASE STUDY?

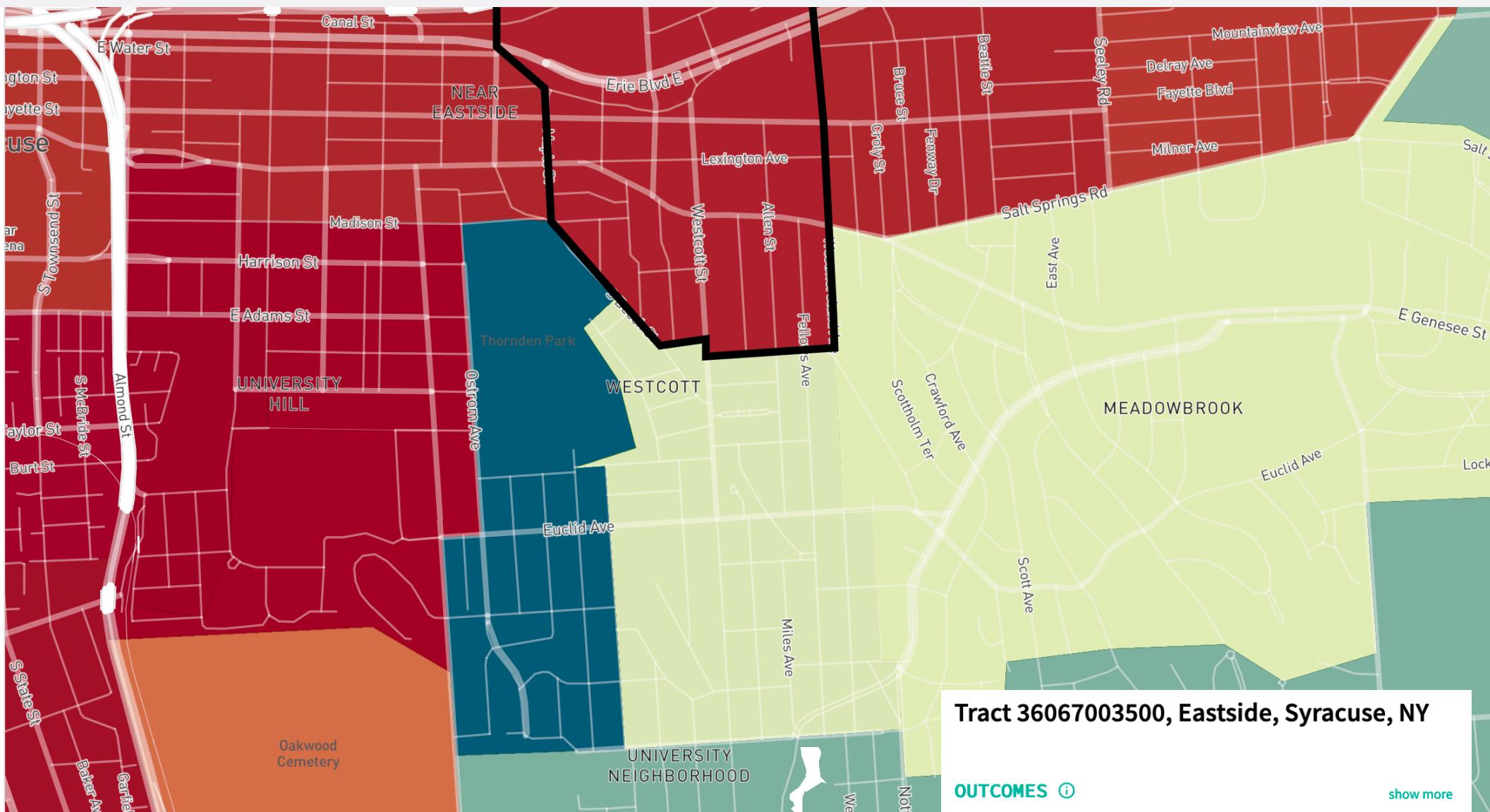
- Looking at effect of growing up in poor neighborhood on earnings in adulthood
  - Quantitative analysis of millions of people in entire country
- What can a case study contribute?
  - Why would we study e.g. just a single neighborhood?

# SOCIAL MOBILITY, QUANTITATIVE



- [www.opportunityatlas.org](http://www.opportunityatlas.org)

# SOCIAL MOBILITY, QUANTITATIVE



- [www.opportunityatlas.org](http://www.opportunityatlas.org)

# 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?

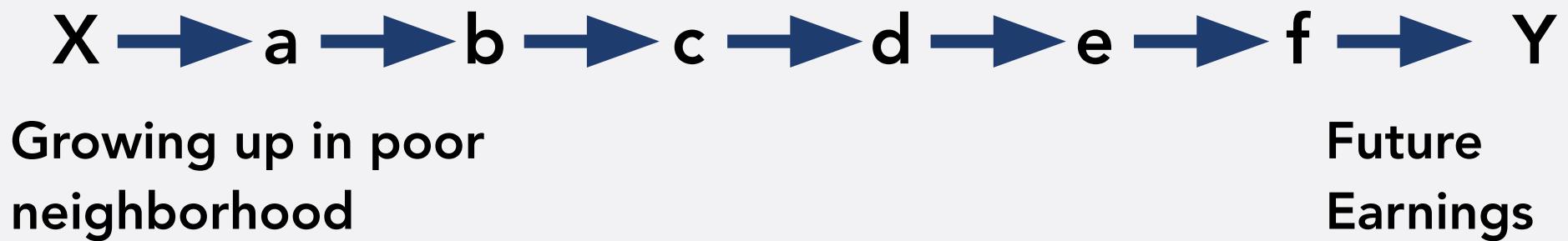
# HOW TO DO A CASE STUDY

- 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**

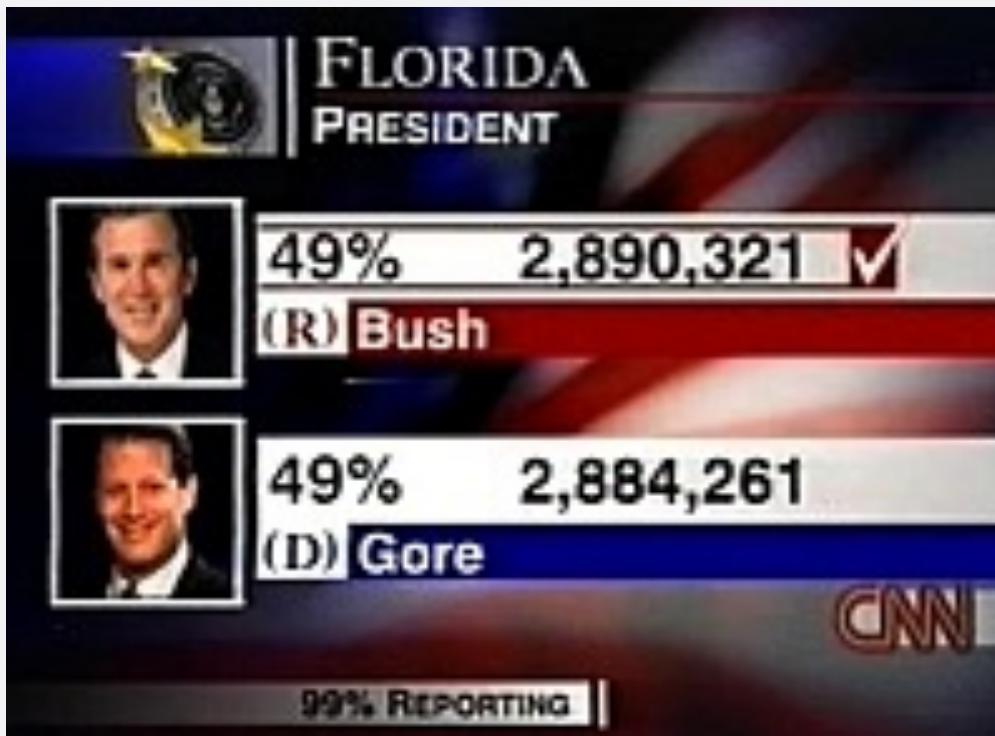
## EXAMPLE

- 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:

 A side-by-side comparison of two men in suits and ties. On the left is George W. Bush, smiling, wearing a dark suit and a red patterned tie. On the right is Al Gore, also smiling, wearing a dark suit and a dark tie. They are positioned in front of a blurred American flag.		
Nominee	George W. Bush	Al Gore
Party	Republican	Democratic
Home state	Texas	Tennessee
Running mate	Dick Cheney	Joe Lieberman
Electoral vote	25	0
Popular vote	2,912,790	2,912,253
Percentage	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

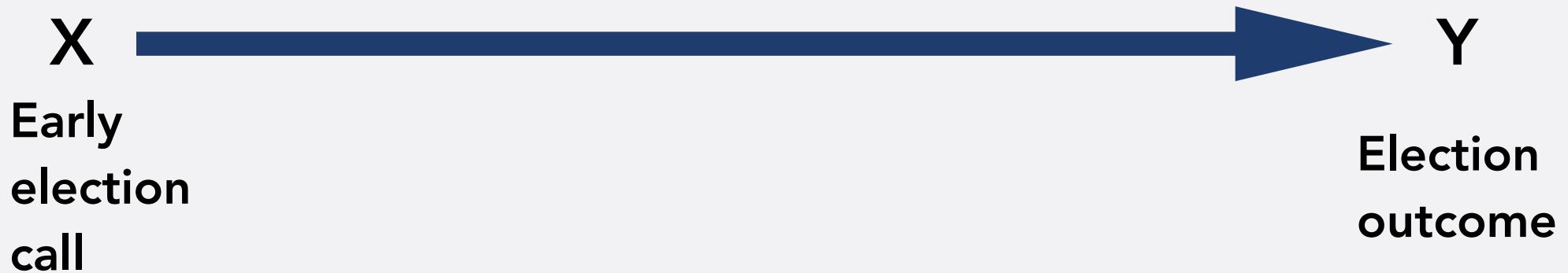
# QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

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

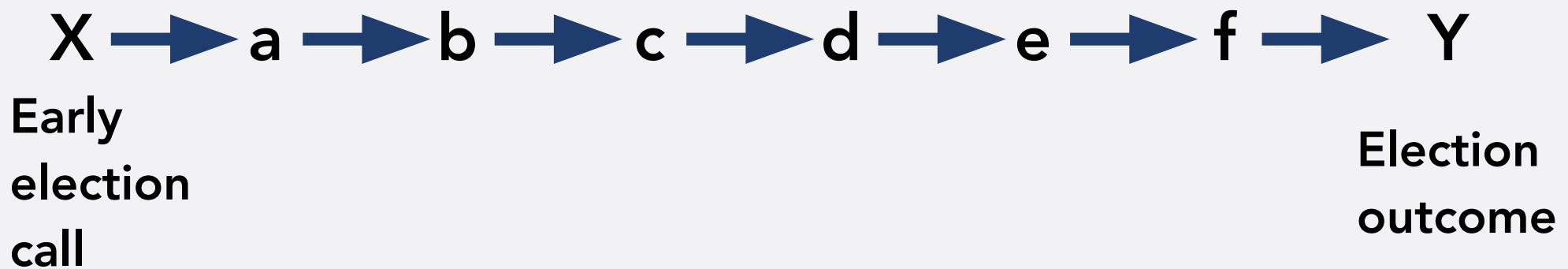
# PROCESS TRACING

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

# PROCESS TRACING

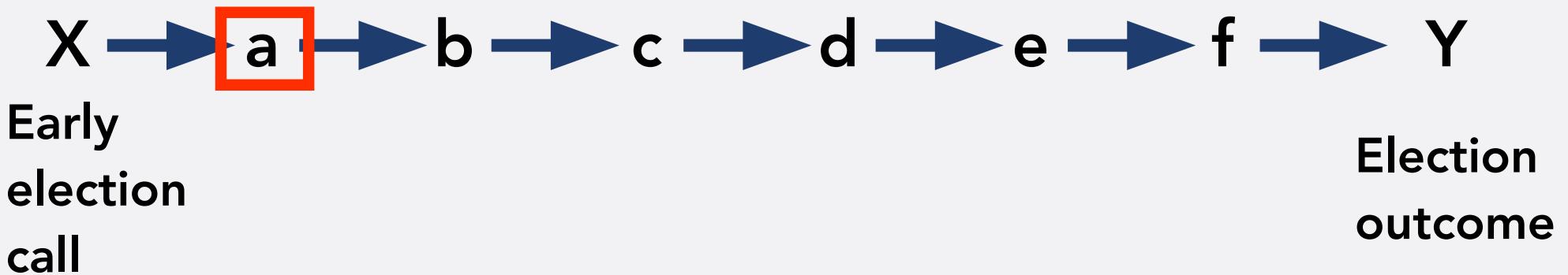


# PROCESS TRACING



# PROCESS TRACING

- When did the networks call the race?

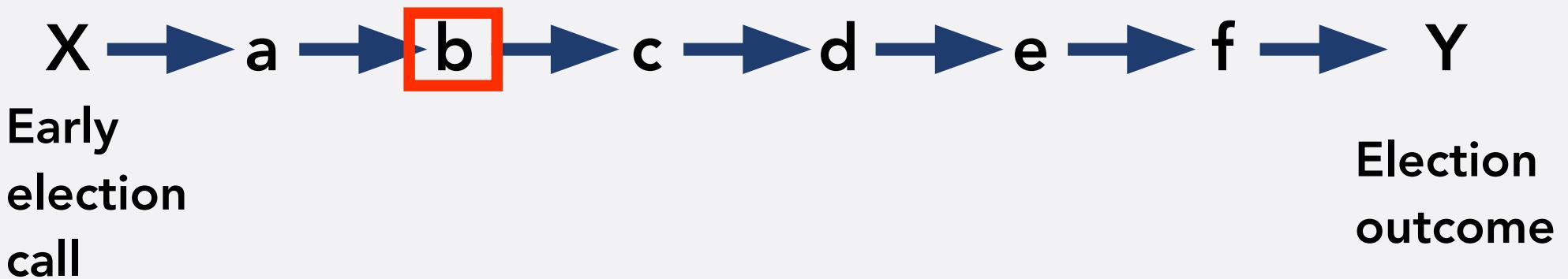


# PROCESS TRACING

- 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

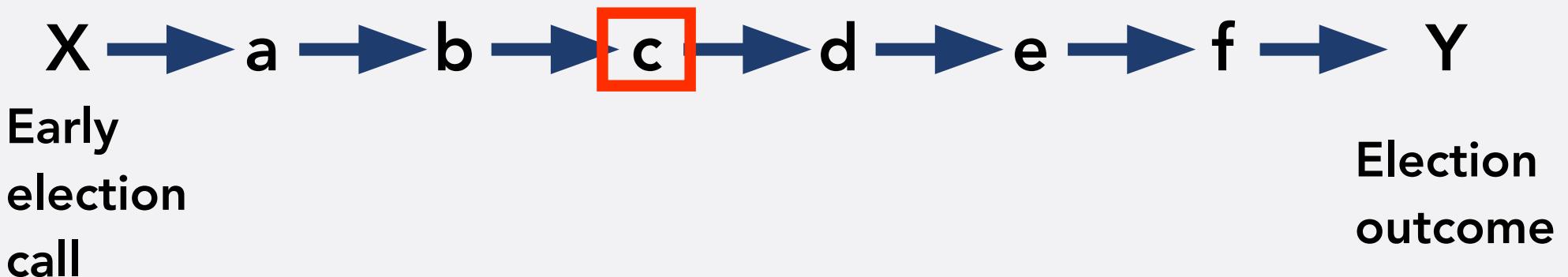
- How many voters usually vote in those 10 minutes?
  - Total: 303,000 voters in the 10 affected counties
  - Past data: about 1/12 of voters vote in last hour
    - $303,000/12=25,250$
  - Only last 10 minutes of last hour affected
    - 1/6 of last hour
    - $25,250/6=4,200$

# 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
    - $25,250/6=4,200$

# PROCESS TRACING

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

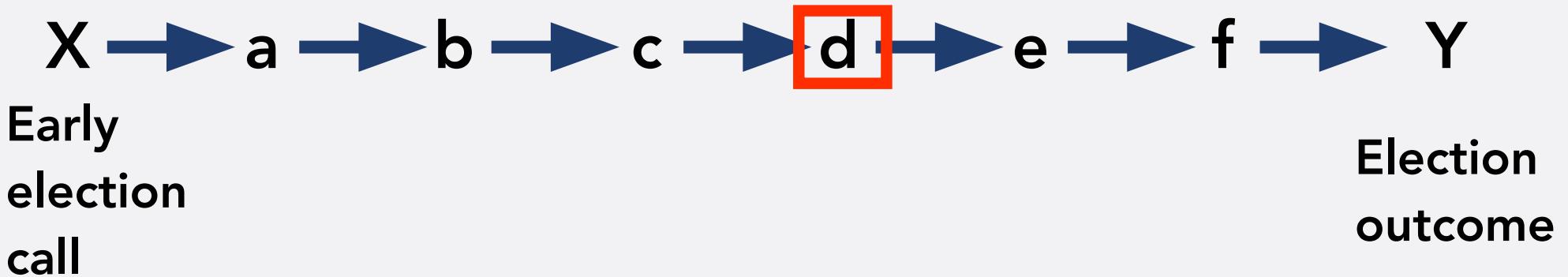


# PROCESS TRACING

- 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?

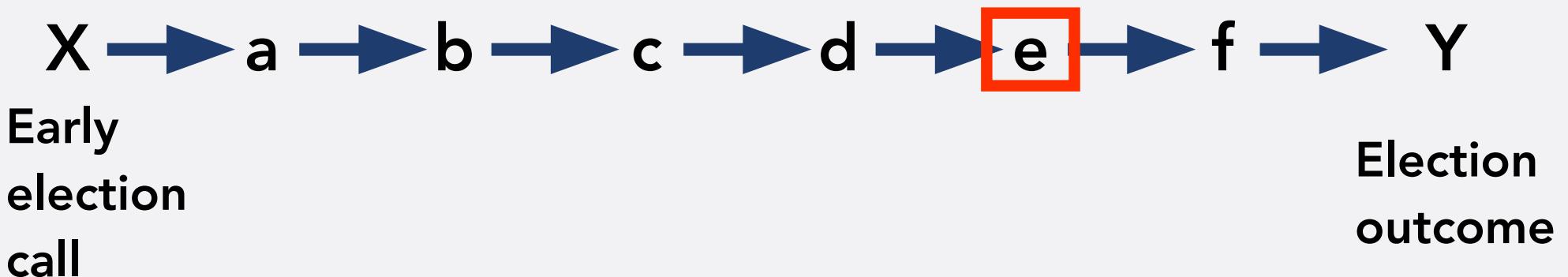


# PROCESS TRACING

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

# PROCESS TRACING

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

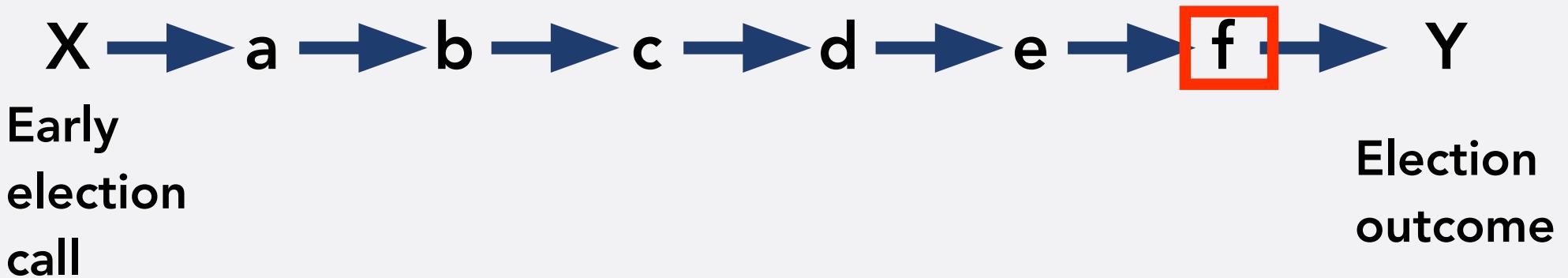


# PROCESS TRACING

- **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

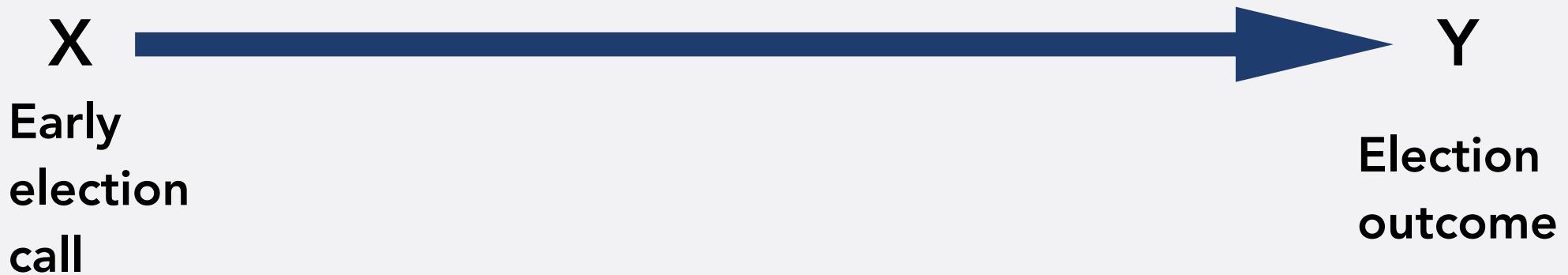
- What is the net effect?



# 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



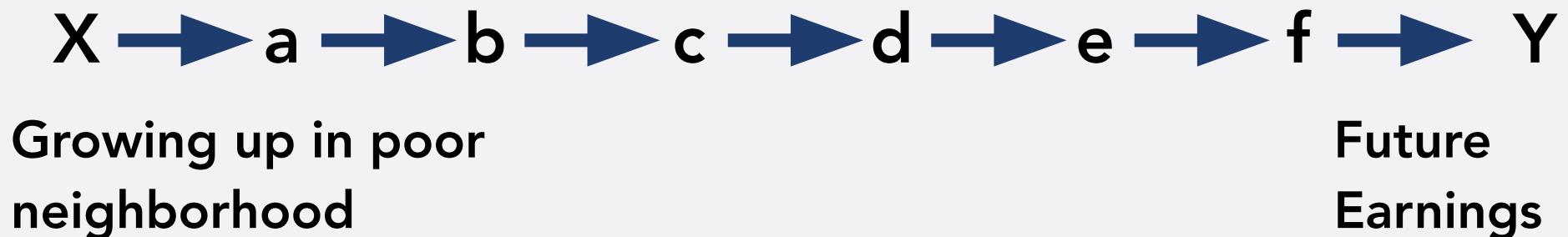
- Results of large-n study (Bush lost ~10,000 votes) not tenable once examining the steps in the causal chain
  - Suggests problems with this large-n study

# 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 validity
  - If no: low 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 week)
  - Large-n statistical analysis (later this semester)
- Helps illuminate the causal process behind the findings using these other approaches