

Apologies for the Following Quantitative Data Success and Failure in Data-Driven Projects

Dillon Mahmoudi

PhD Candidate, Urban Studies

Portland State University

dillonm@pdx.edu @dillonm

“... authors of a paper presented at an IBG meeting in the early 1990s began by apologizing to their audience for presenting some quantitative data in table form as part of their paper.”

Gentrification

Bring on the hipsters

Gentrification is good for the poor

Feb 21st 2015 | WASHINGTON, DC | From the print edition



Dave Simonds

Takeaways

1. Socially constructed data is social!
2. Power (institutional, media) can compromise / sacrifice / undermine what we publish -- and our ideology.
3. What is the role of the researcher?
4. As cartographers / geographers / GISers, we can be positively radical, but it requires active engagement with, not of, communities.

Positively Radical

Toward a rebuilding of spatial sciences:

“One consequence has been a shift away from the now-familiar effort to expose how scientific facts are constructed, toward more judicious strategies to ...

Positively Radical

Toward a rebuilding of spatial sciences:

“One consequence has been a shift away from the now-familiar effort to expose how scientific facts are constructed, toward more judicious strategies to ...

1. distinguish constructions that are useful from those that are irrelevant or dangerous, and
2. imagine and create more emancipatory constructions of economy, society, or space.”

-- Wyly 2011, *Positively Radical*

Portland, Oregon: A Tale of Two Cities



It's the Portlandia we all know, where the dream of the 80's is still alive.

- Known for sustainability
- Largest share of bike commuters
- Breweries!
- Best place to live in every list
- Foodie city
- Maker city
- Tech and entrepreneurial city

Portland, Oregon: A Tale of Two Cities

“It's poor, it's dangerous, it's growing like crazy—and it's more important than ever.” -- WWeek

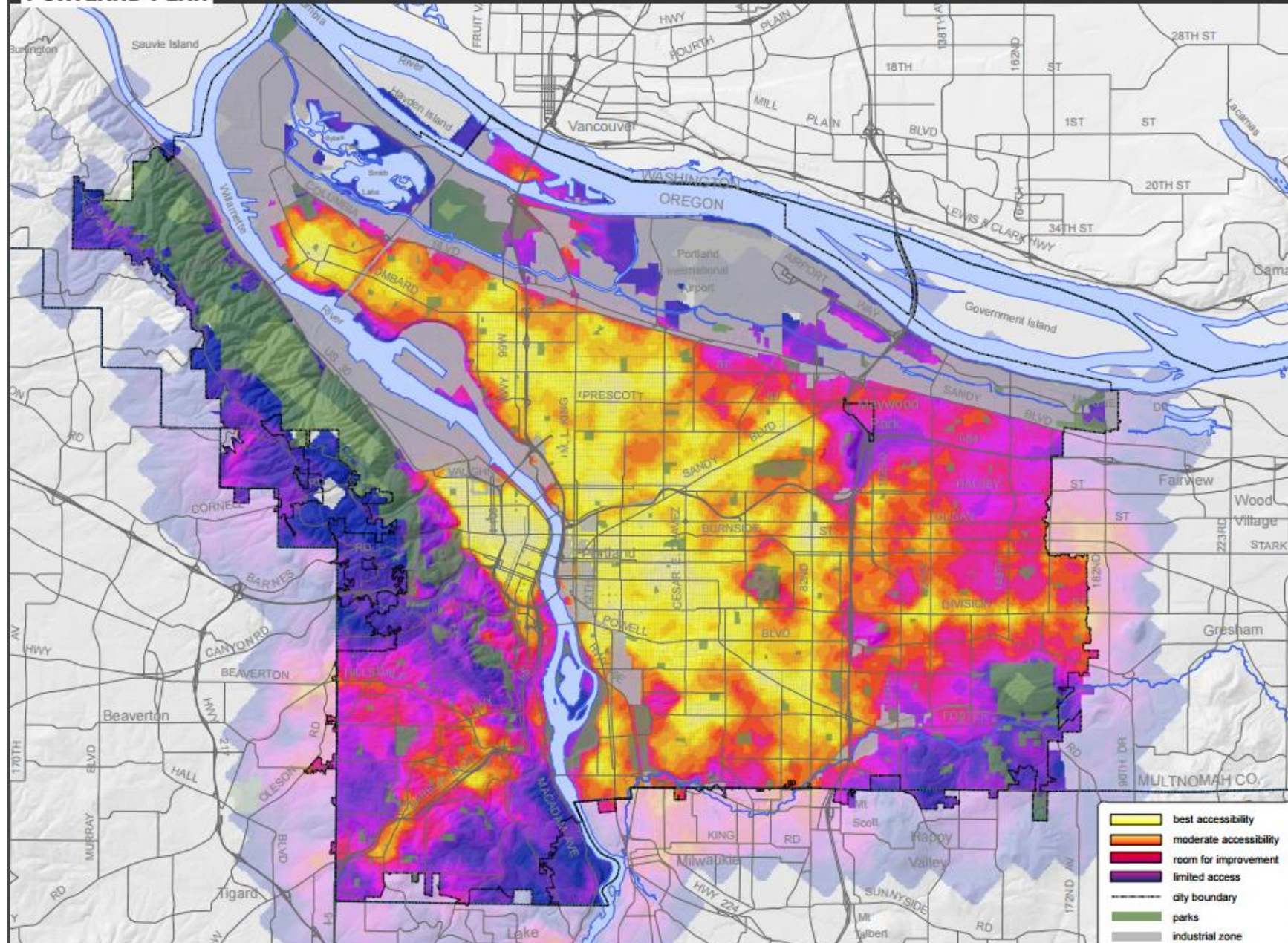
- History of institutional racism
- Lack of sidewalks, infrastructure

See: *Uneven Development of the Sustainable City: Shifting Capital in Portland, Oregon* in *Urban Geography* by Goodling, et al.



PORTLAND PLAN

20-minute neighborhood concept analysis



October 1, 2010

City of Portland | Bureau of Planning & Sustainability | Geographic Information System

The information on the map was derived from digital data-bases on the City of Portland, Bureau of Planning & Sustainability GIS. Care was taken in the creation of this map and it is provided "as is". The City of Portland cannot accept any responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional accuracy, and therefore, there are no warranties which accompany this product. However, notification of any errors will be appreciated.

data sources:
City of Portland, Planning & Sustainability;
equal weighted inputs, Version 6.
Detailed documentation available.

Dangerous Constructions

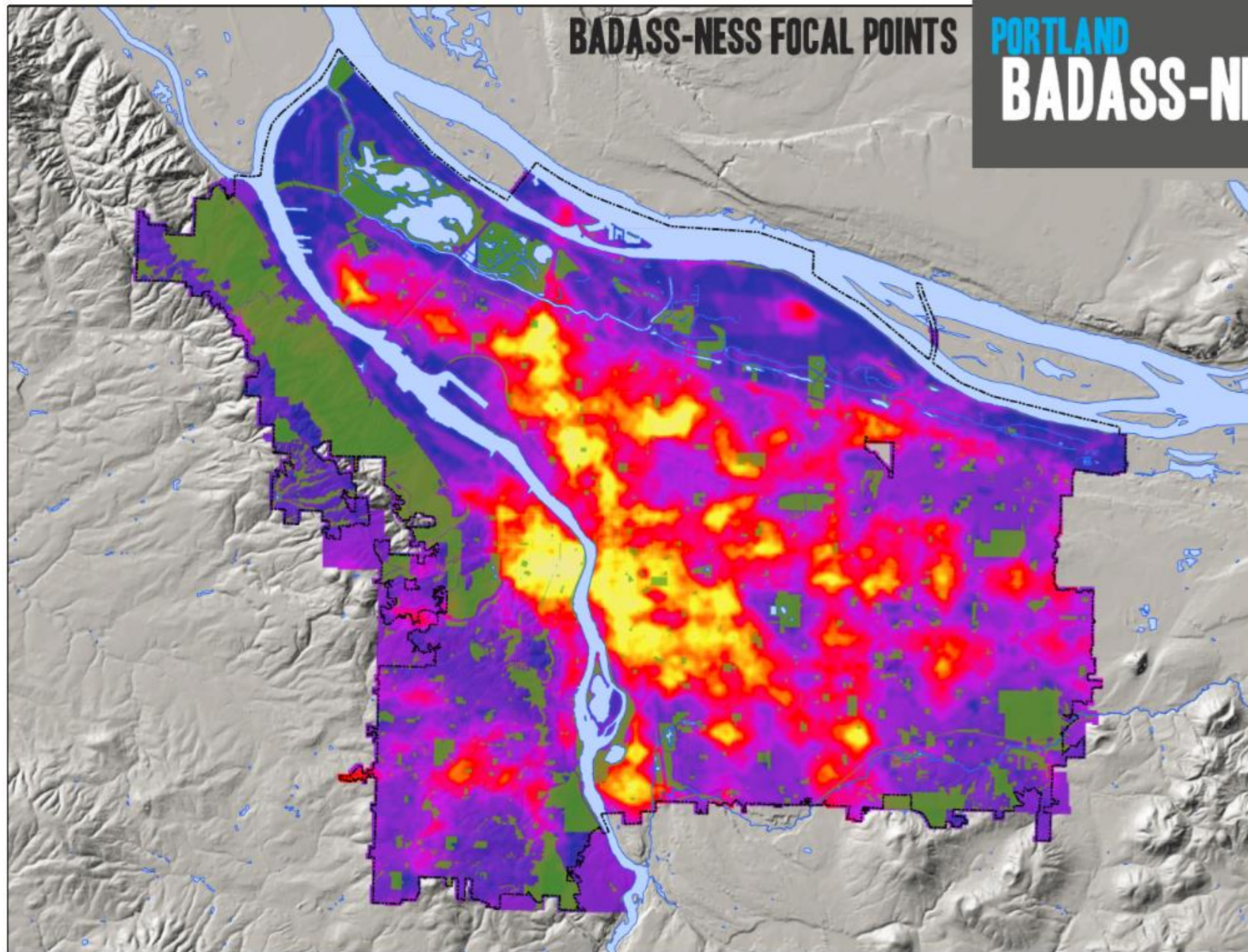
- Problematic data sources
- Problematic legend scale
- Problematic conception of “20 minutes”
- White middle class conception of what should be nearby
- Ignored institutional racism

Note: other 20 minute neighborhood initiatives were different.

BADASS-NESS FOCAL POINTS

PORTLAND

BADASS-NESS MAP



Factors:

- Supportland Merchants
- Pinball Houses
- MAX Stops
- Food Cart Pods
- Coffee
- Beer, Breweries & Strip Clubs
- Bike Network (Network Analysis)
- Land Values (Detracted)

Data Sources:

- Supportland data from supportland.com
- Pinball data graciously provided by portlandpinballmap.com
- Food Cart data from foodcartsporeland.com
- Coffee data from yellowpages.com
- Breweries provided by Kevin Martin, Portland State University
- Beer locations and Strip Club data from NAICS database
- All other data from Metro RLIS, November 2010

For more information, please contact:
Dillon Mahmoudi - dillonm@pdx.edu
Eric Crum - etcrum@pdx.edu

City Boundary

Water Bodies

Portland Parks

Badassness

- Hella Badass
- Badass
- Legit
- Meh
- Vancouver-ish

0 0.5 1 2 Miles 3 NT

BADASS-NESS FOCAL POINTS

PORTLAND BADASS-NESS MAP



irs:
portland Merchants
all Houses
t Stops
d Cart Pods
ee
t: Breweries & Strip Clubs
Network (Network Analysis)
d Values (Detracted)

Sources:
ortland data from supportportland.com
ill data graciously provided by
landpinballmap.com
Cart data from foodcartsportland.com
e data from yellowpages.com
eries provided by Kevin Martin,
land State University
locations and Strip Club data from
CS database
her data from Metro RLIS,
ember 2010

ore information, please contact:
in Mahmoudi - dillonm@pdx.edu
Crum - etcrum@pdx.edu

----- City Boundary
Water Bodies
Portland Parks

assness

Hella Badass
Badass
Legit
Meh
Vancouver-ish

0 0.5 1 2 Miles 3 NT

Badassness Map Media Coverage

- “Portlanders has posted this video in response to the city’s famed ‘20 Minute Neighborhood’ map with a more nuanced version of why they have chosen to live and work in the “mecca of badassness.” CEOS for Cities
- “And do you have a neighborhood that is most likely to ‘put a bird on it?’” KPAM 890AM First Edition
- “... threw all this data into a formula and the badass-ness scale was born. The top scorers fall into the “hella badass” category and the lowest scorers fall into the “Vancouver-ish” category (sorry, Vancouver).” KATU TV

About

About City Observatory

City Observatory is a website and think tank devoted to data-driven analysis of cities and the policies that shape them.

The website will feature posts that tackle misconceptions about cities, break down the latest urban research, and highlight the innovative ideas that strengthen our communities.

The site will cover topics such as transportation, housing, gentrification, place making, economic opportunity, and industry clusters. Core topics will be addressed in issue “cards” that will be updated on a consistent basis to reflect the latest data and research.

Periodically, the site will feature in-depth research report and papers on urban policy topics like crime in cities, traffic congestion, neighborhood change, and migration. City Observatory is based in Portland, Oregon—a city synonymous with creative urban thinking—but our vision is nationwide in scope, looking at the best ideas for promoting city success, wherever they originate.

City Observatory is supported by [Knight Foundation](#).

About

About City Observatory

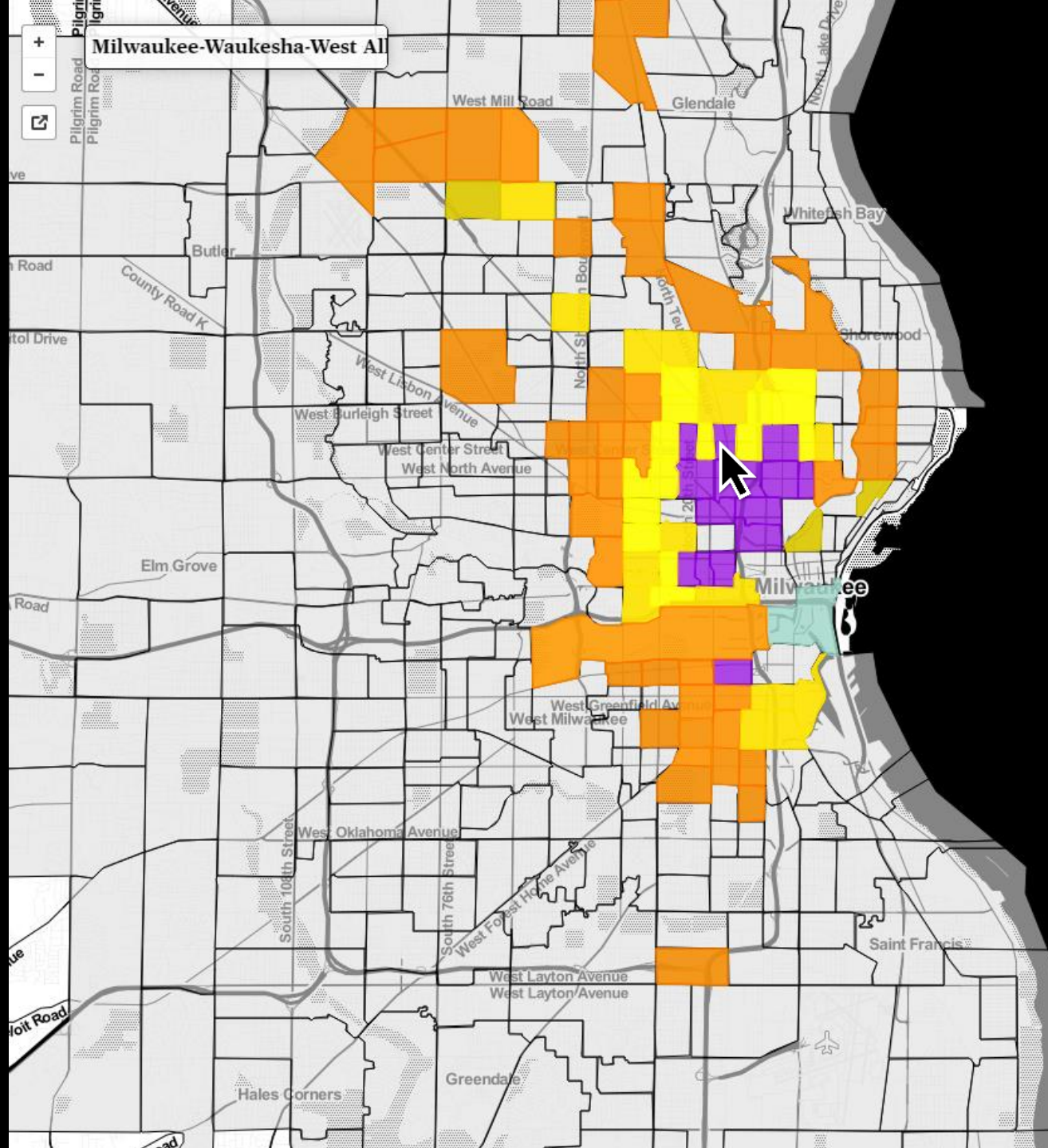
City Observatory is a website and think tank devoted to data-driven analysis of cities and the policies that shape them.

The website will feature posts that tackle misconceptions about cities, break down the latest urban research, and highlight the innovative ideas that strengthen our communities.

The site will cover topics such as transportation, housing, gentrification, place making, economic opportunity, and industry clusters. Core topics will be addressed in issue “cards” that will be updated on a consistent basis to reflect the latest data and research.

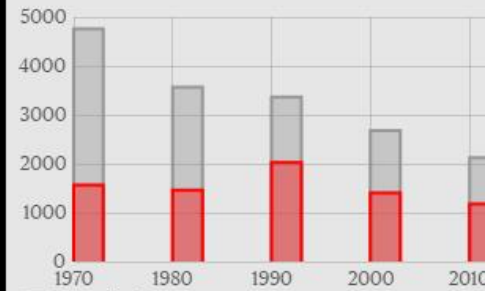
Periodically, the site will feature in-depth research report and papers on urban policy topics like crime in cities, traffic congestion, neighborhood change, and migration. City Observatory is based in Portland, Oregon—a city synonymous with creative urban thinking—but our vision is nationwide in scope, looking at the best ideas for promoting city success, wherever they originate.

City Observatory is supported by [Knight Foundation](#).



CityObservatory Lost in Place

Population & Poverty Change



■ Population
■ Portion in Poverty

2010 Population: 2,124 (55% in poverty),
1970 Population: 4,755 (33% in poverty).
Tract 55079185700 is 1.7mi from central business district.

Tract Types

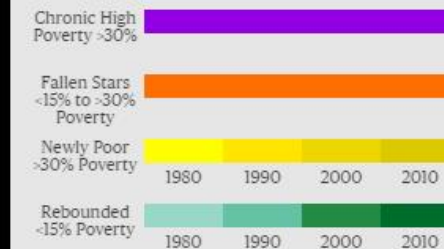


Table 2: Change in 1970 High-Poverty Urban Census Tracts in Large Metropolitan Areas, 1970-2010

	1970	2010	Change	Percent Change
Tracts	1,119	1,119		
Population	4,980,522	3,350,821	(1,629,701)	-32.7%
Poor	1,963,870	1,117,255	(846,615)	-43.1%

Census tracts within 10 miles of CBD in 51 largest metro areas, with 1970 poverty rates of 30% or greater

Table 3: Change in Population in 1970 High-Poverty Census Tracts, 1970 to 2010

Neighborhood Type	2010 Poverty Rate	Number of Tracts/ Share of 1970 Poor Population	Change in Population 1970 to 2010
Chronic High Poverty	30%+	737 Tracts (74% of 1970 poor)	-40% Population
Still Poor	15% to 30%	277 Tracts (21% of 1970 Poor)	-23% Population
Rebounding	<15%	105 Tracts (5% of 1970 poor)	+33% Population

Census tracts within 10 miles of CBD in 51 largest metro areas

Table 2: Change in 1970 High-Poverty Urban Census Tracts in Large Metropolitan Areas, 1970-2010

	1970	2010	Change	Percent Change
Tracts	1,119	1,119		
Population	4,980,522	3,350,821	(1,629,701)	-32.7%
Poor	1,963,870	1,117,255	(846,615)	-43.1%

Census tracts within 10 miles of CBD in 51 largest metro areas, with 1970 poverty rates of 30% or greater

“Didn’t get the traction we wanted,
so we’re going to repackaging it and put it out, again.”

Table 3: Change in Population in 1970 High-Poverty Census Tracts, 1970 to 2010

Neighborhood Type	2010 Poverty Rate	Number of Tracts/ Share of 1970 Poor Population	Change in Population 1970 to 2010
Chronic High Poverty	30%+	737 Tracts (74% of 1970 poor)	-40% Population
Still Poor	15% to 30%	277 Tracts (21% of 1970 Poor)	-23% Population
Rebounding	<15%	105 Tracts (5% of 1970 poor)	+33% Population

Census tracts within 10 miles of CBD in 51 largest metro areas

CityReport

December 2014

Lost in Place:

Why the persistence and spread of concentrated poverty—not gentrification—is our biggest urban challenge.

Joe Cortright
Dillon Mahmoudi

Gentrification

Bring on the hipsters

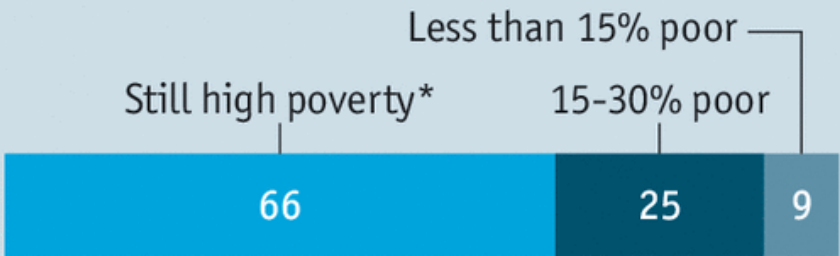
Gentrification is good for the poor

Feb 21st 2015 | WASHINGTON, DC | From the print edition



Gentrification is rare

Of the census tracts that were high-poverty* in 1970, what % of tracts in 2010 were:



Source: City Observatory

*More than 30% of population poor

Economist.com

The Myth of Gentrification

By John Buntin



A summer festival in June 2014 in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

Photo by Jens Karlsson/Getty Images

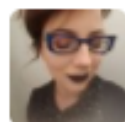
It started in Soho, then moved to Chelsea and the East Village. Riots in
Tompkins Square in 1988 earned it some headlines but didn't stop its creeping

Contradicting Social Constructions

Slate: Gentrification is a myth

Economist: Gentrification is good for the poor.

If gentrification is a myth, it can't be good for the poor, and it can't be bad for the poor. It can't be anything. It's a myth!



jordanciaire

@jordanciaire

Following



Always remember that the vast majority of folks with hot takes on your research topic read an article that summarizes 10% of it.

LIKES

15



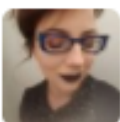
12:45 PM - 11 May 2017



3



15



jordanciaire @jordanciaire · May 11



Replying to @jordanciaire

And, as always, never read the comments.



1



5



Keep It Surly @surlyurbanist · May 11



Replying to @jordanciaire

pushes glasses up nose excuse me i read the reddit summary of the citylab article of the abstract of your paper...i think i'm qualified



1



9

False-Choice Urbanism

“Weigh up the supposed pros and cons of gentrification, throw in a few half-baked worries about threats to ‘diversity’ and housing affordability, and conclude that gentrification is actually ‘good’ on balance because it represents the reinvestment that stops neighbourhoods from dying during a financial crisis.”

Slater 2014

Economist and Slate miss overall contradictions that cause both poverty and gentrification.

Apologies for the Quantitative Data

“My point is simply that postpositivism can be politically co-opted just like positivist spatial science was.”

– Wyly 2009, *Strategic Positivism*

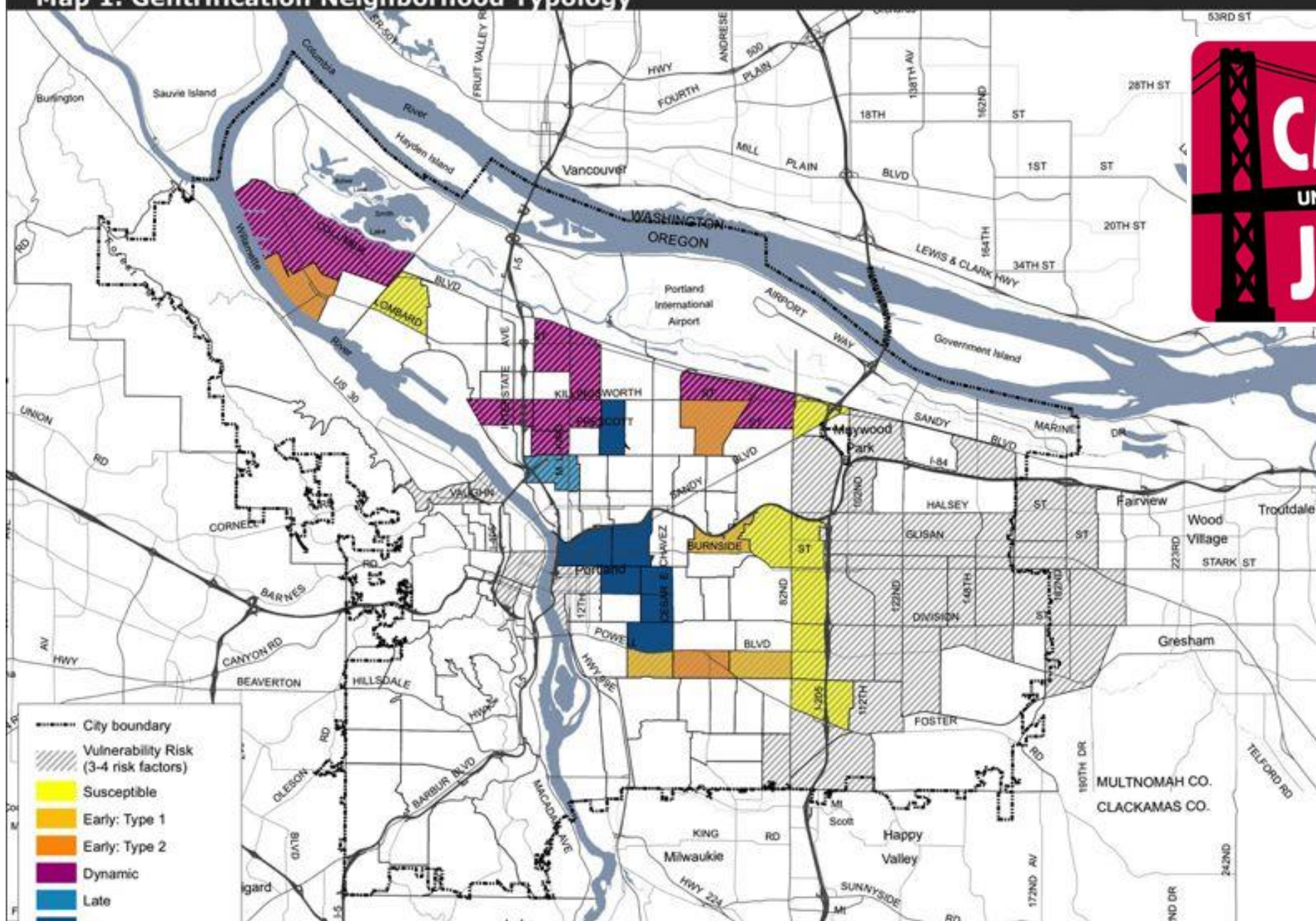
Takeaways

1. Socially constructed data is social!
2. Power (institutional, media) can compromise / sacrifice / undermine what we publish -- and our ideology.
Within non-profits/institutions these two can clash
3. What is the role of the researcher?
4. As cartographers / geographers / GISers, we can be positively radical, but it requires active engagement with, not of, communities.



Imaginary Crisis: Is Gentrification A Myth?

Map 1. Gentrification Neighborhood Typology

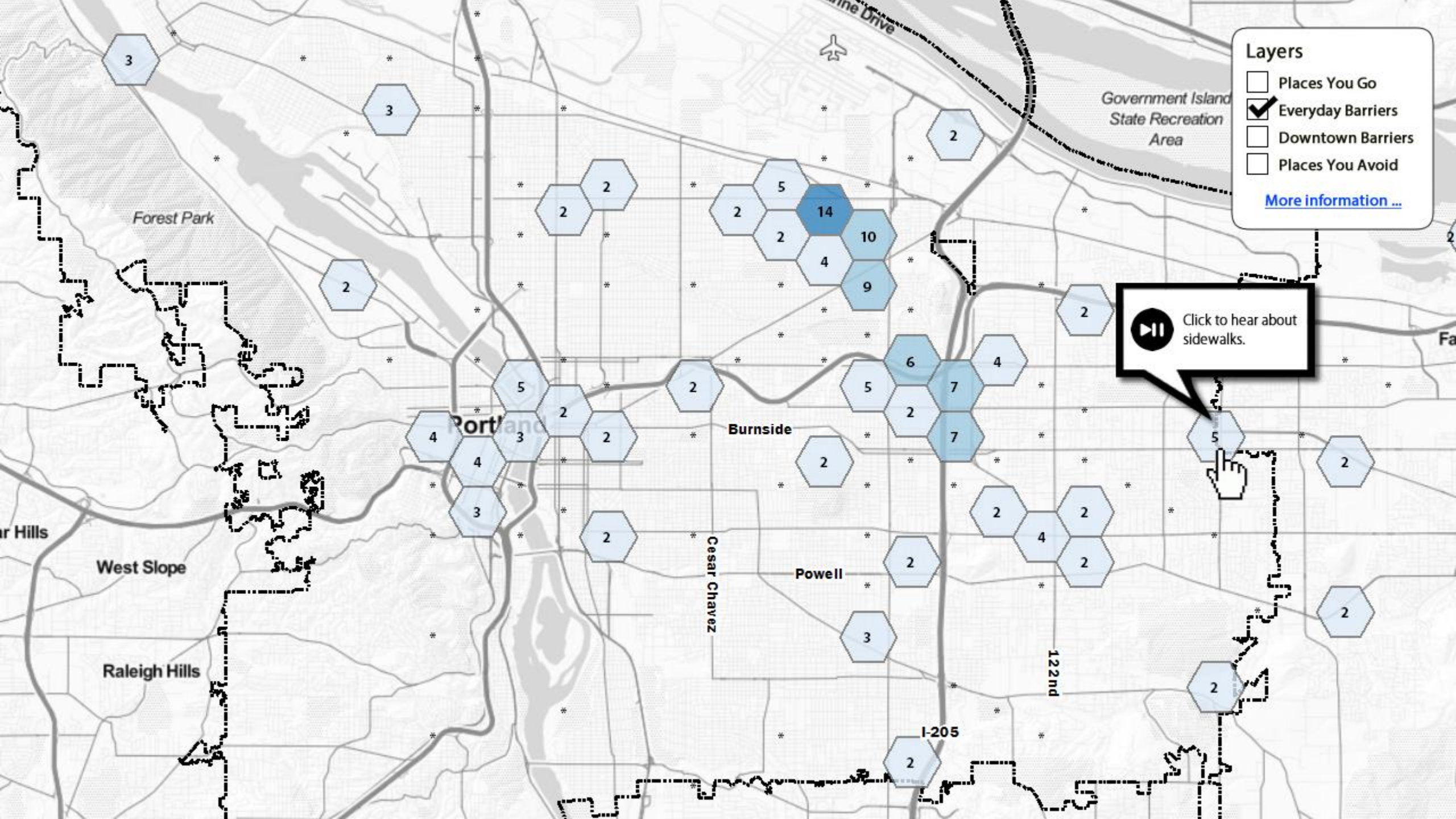


Bates 2013









Layers

- ☐ Places You Go
- ☒ Everyday Barriers
- ☐ Downtown Barriers
- ☐ Places You Avoid

[More information ...](#)

 Click to hear about sidewalks.

Portland

Burnside

Powell

Cesar Chavez

I-205

122nd

Forest Park

West Slope

Raleigh Hills

ar Hills

Fa

Layers

- ☐ Places You Go
- ☒ Everyday Barriers
- ☐ Downtown Barriers
- ☐ Places You Avoid

[More information ...](#)

dillonm@pdx.edu

@dillonm

<http://cityobservatory.org/maps/lostinplace>

Thank you

1. Socially constructed data is social!
2. Power (institutional, media) can compromise / sacrifice / undermine what we publish -- and our ideology.
3. What is the role of the researcher?
4. As cartographers / geographers / GISers, we can be positively radical, but it requires active engagement with, not of, communities.