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The Santa Fe Institute (SFI) Santa Fe, New  
Mexico and Oxford University

The theory of scale – application on the realities  
and current challenges of the listed real estate



# ***DEVELOPING A SCIENCE OF CITIES***

***GROWTH, INNOVATION, AND THE  
ACCELERATING PACE OF LIFE***

***GEOFFREY WEST***

***SANTA FE INSTITUTE***

***OXFORD UNIVERSITY***





# ***WE LIVE IN AN EXPONENTIALLY EXPANDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC UNIVERSE!!***

***1800 < 4% THE US POPULATION WAS URBAN***

***2014 > 80% URBANISED***

***2006 > 50% WORLD'S POPULATION  
URBANISED***

***2050 > 75% URBANISED***

***EQUIVALENT TO URBANISING  
OVER ONE MILLION PEOPLE  
EVERY WEEK FROM NOW TILL  
2050***

***EQUIVALENT TO URBANISING  
OVER ONE MILLION PEOPLE  
EVERY WEEK FROM NOW TILL  
2050***

***OR.....TO ADDING A NEW YORK  
METROPOLITAN AREA EVERY TWO MONTHS  
FROM NOW TO 2050***

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***OR..... A BERLIN EVERY TWO WEEKS***



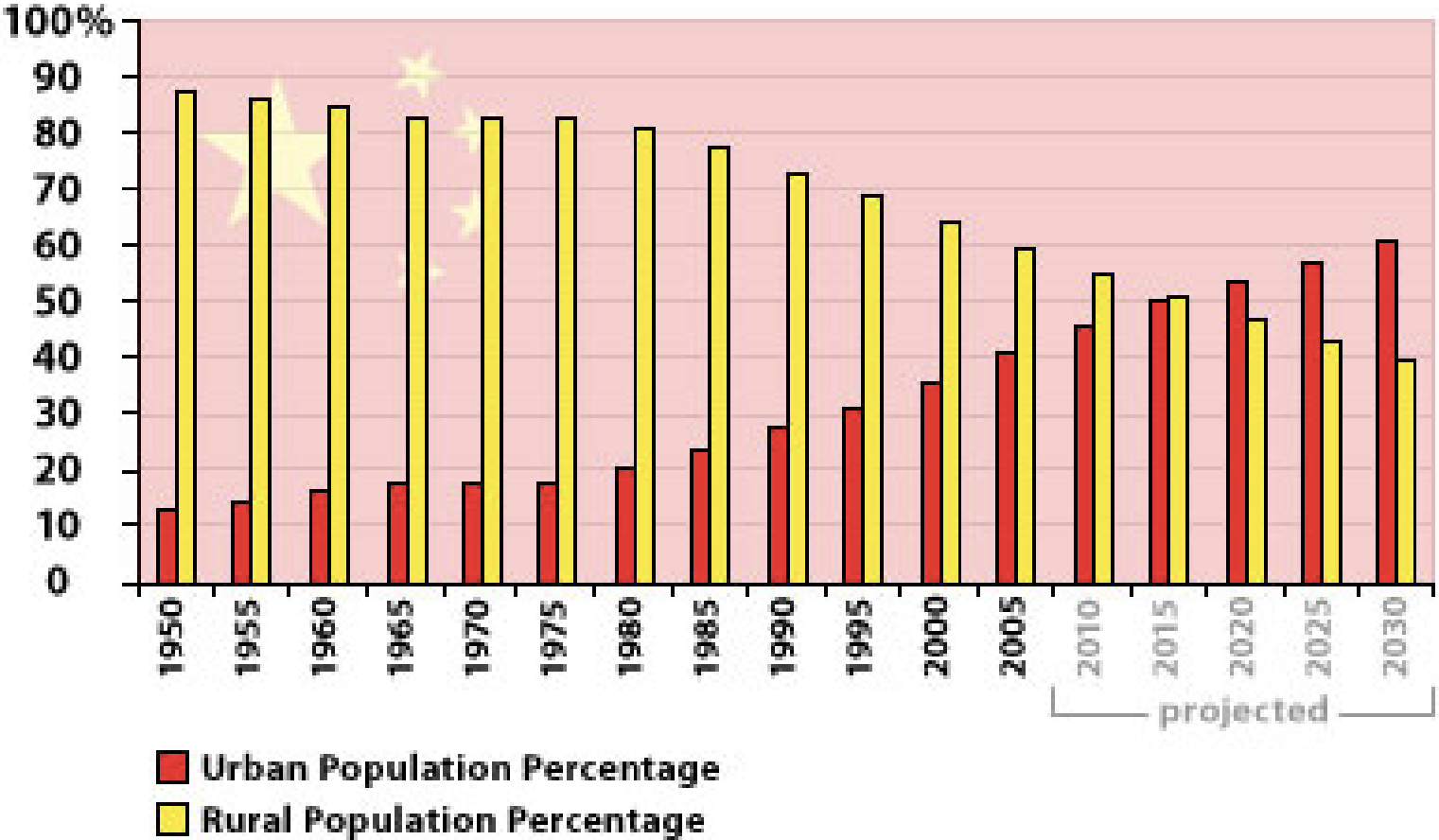
***EQUIVALENT TO URBANISING  
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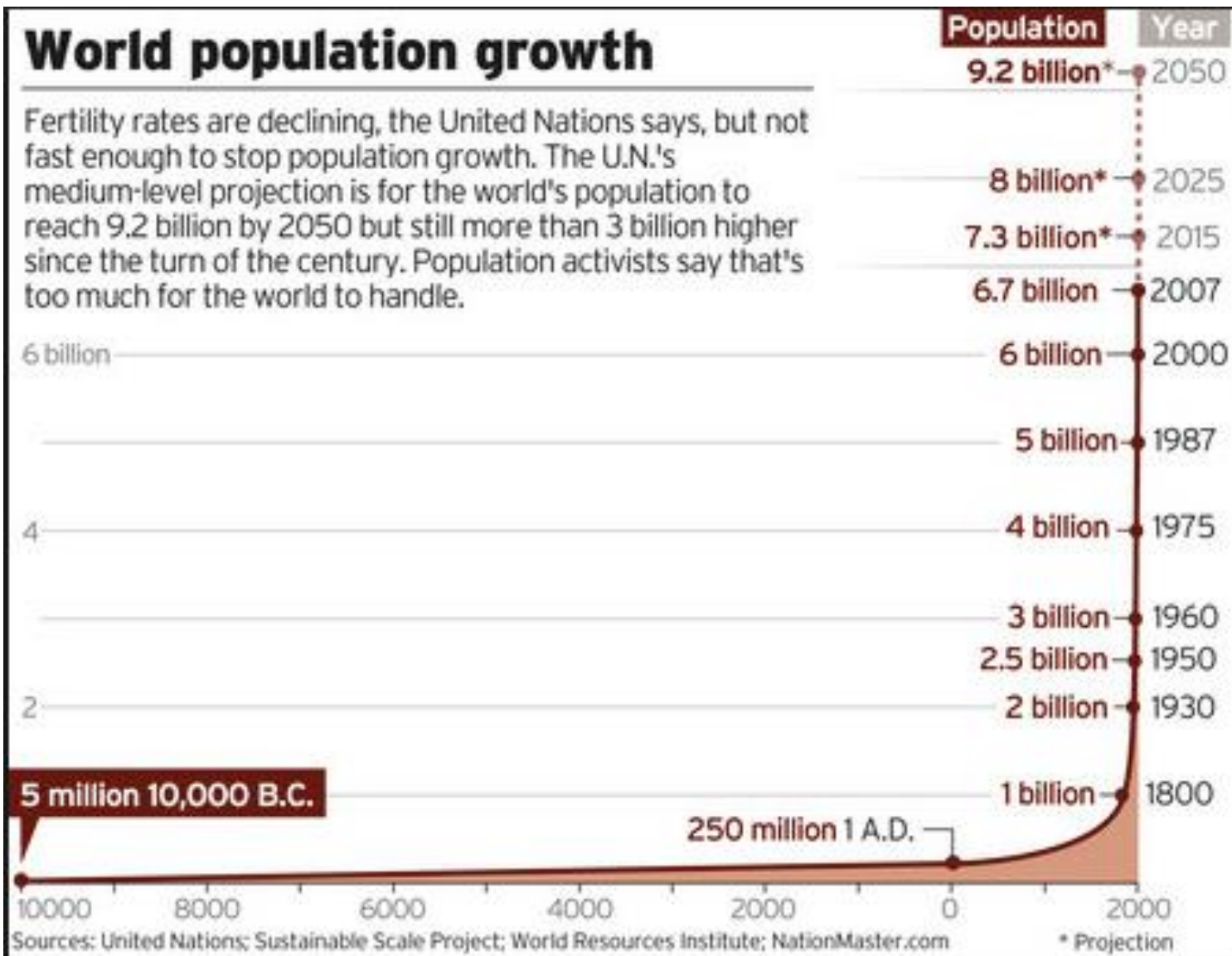
***OR.....A DENMARK EVERY MONTH!***

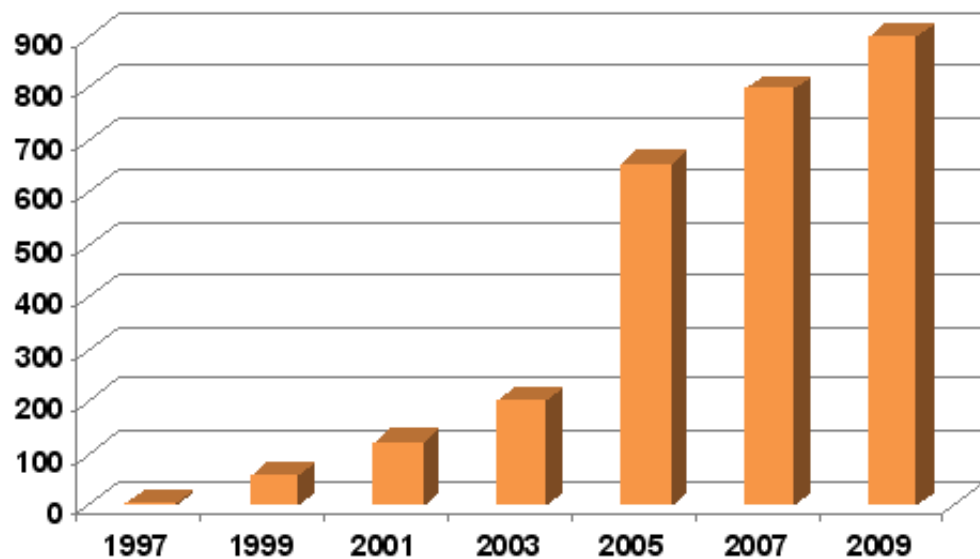
# CHINA URBAN/RURAL POPULATION GROWTH 1950-2030



## World population growth

Fertility rates are declining, the United Nations says, but not fast enough to stop population growth. The U.N.'s medium-level projection is for the world's population to reach 9.2 billion by 2050 but still more than 3 billion higher since the turn of the century. Population activists say that's too much for the world to handle.

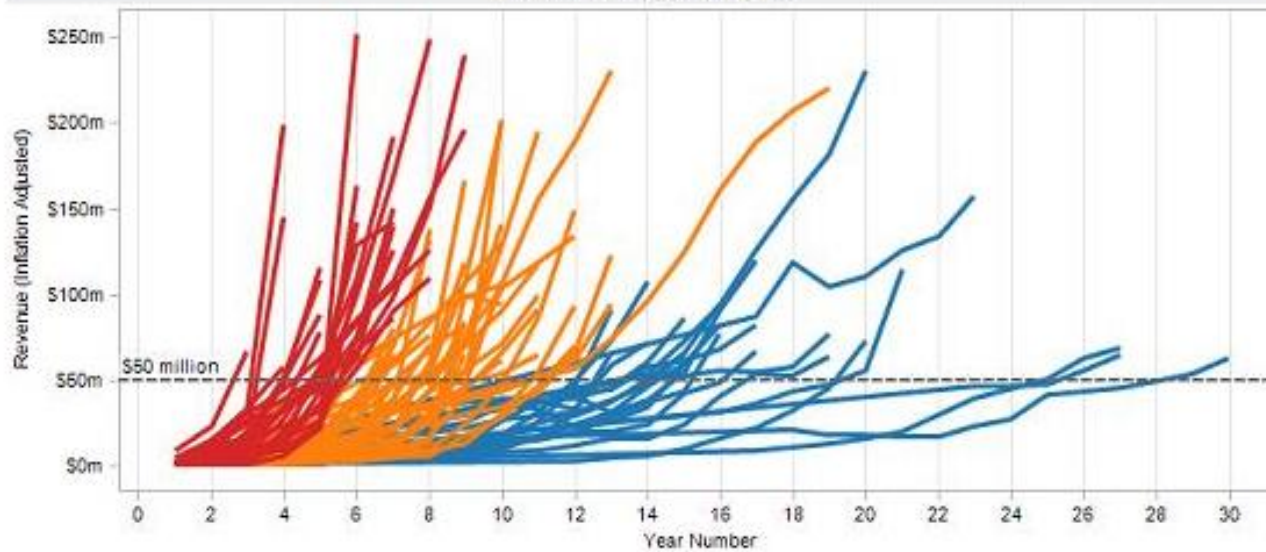




Click to interact

■ Rocket Ship   
 ■ Hot Company   
 ■ Slow Burner

Growth History by Company



Growth rates of 100 software companies from IPO Dashboard

### BRIDGE CAPITAL

Bridge funding, as its name implies, bridges the gap between your current financing and the next level of financing.



### MEZZANINE CAPITAL

Mezzanine capital is also known as expansion capital, and is funding to help your company grow to the next level, purchase bigger and better equipment, or move to a larger facility.

### STARTUP CAPITAL

Start-up, or working capital is the funding that will help you pay for equipment, rent, supplies, etc. for the first year or so of operation.

### SEED CAPITAL

Seed capital is the money you need to do your initial research and planning for your business.





**FATE OF OUR PLANET IS**  
*the fate of our cities*





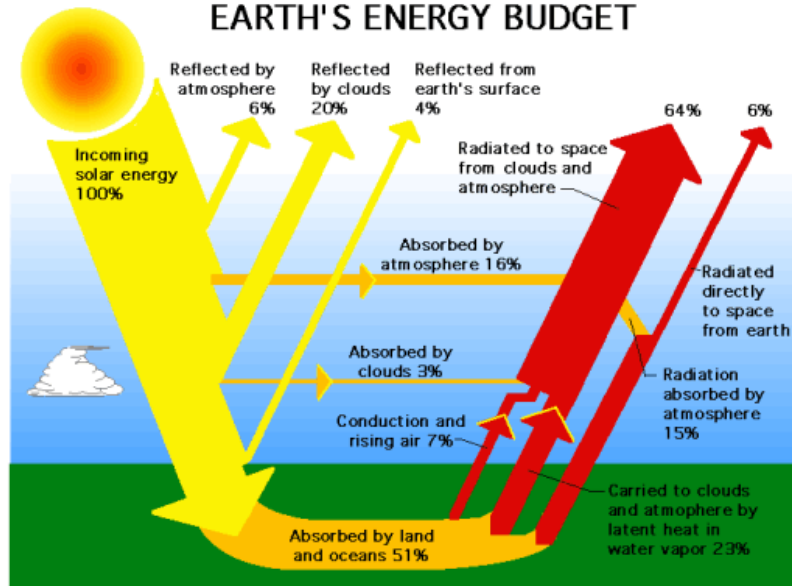






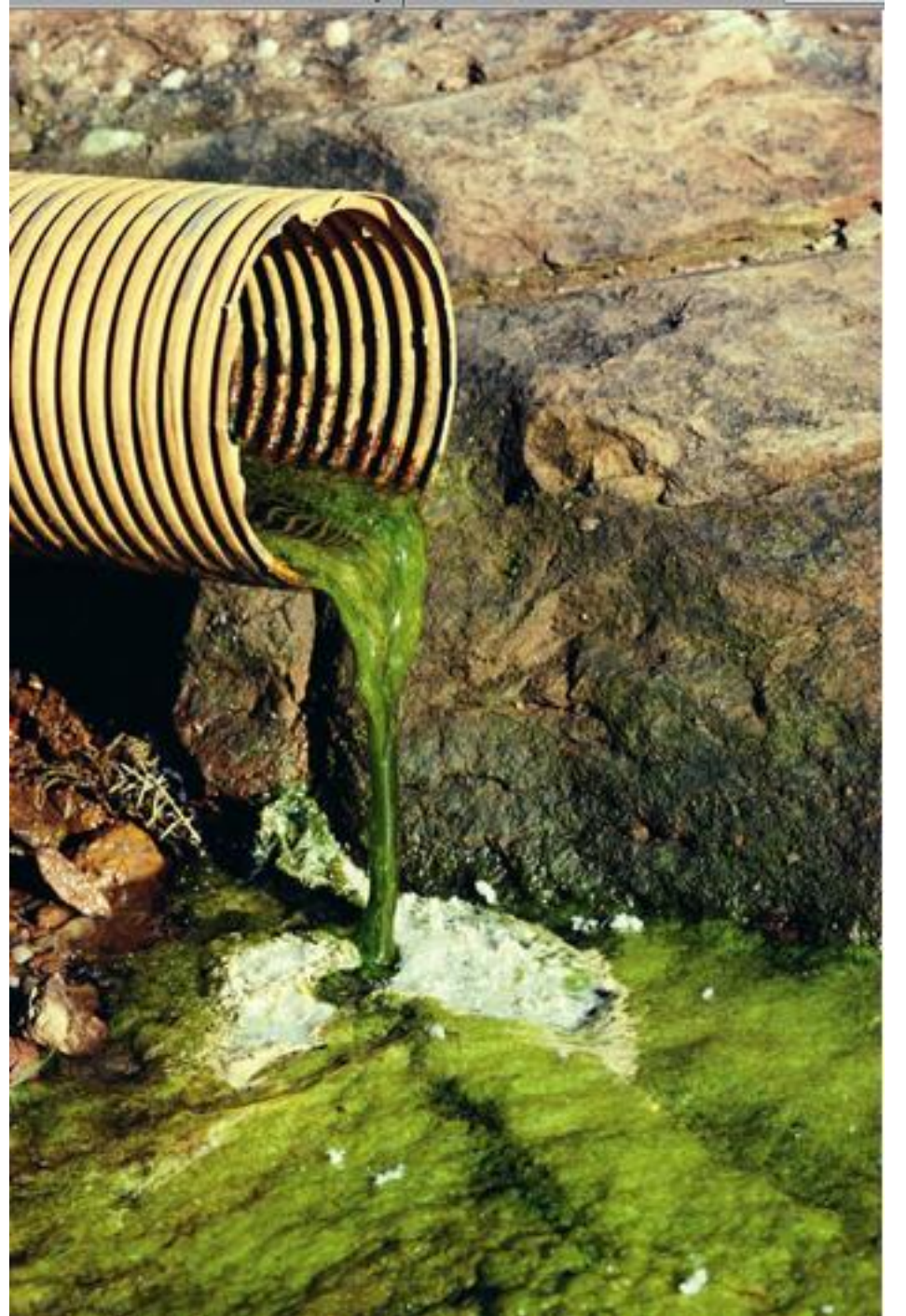


### EARTH'S ENERGY BUDGET











Evening Standard

Classified



FRIDAY

**MASSIVE  
INCREASE  
IN KNIFE  
CRIME  
SURVEYS**

Evening Standard  
www.standard.co.uk









# London After Climate Change?









***ENERGY & RESOURCES***  
***(METABOLISM, INFRASTRUCTURE)***

***VS.***

***INFORMATION***  
***(GENOMICS, INNOVATION)***

***URGENTLY NEED A QUANTITATIVE,  
PREDICTIVE SCIENCE OF CITIES***

***RESILIENCE***

***EVOLVABILITY***

***GROWTH***

***SCALABILITY***



Population, health,  
well-being,...

Energy,  
resources, food, ...  
*Thermodynamics*  
*, metabolics, ...*

Social,  
political, cultural, ...  
*Organization,*  
*structure, ...*

Economy, finance,  
development, ...  
*Risk, information,*  
*innovation, ...*

Ecology,  
environment,  
climate, ...



THESE ARE NOT INDEPENDENT

They are all highly coupled, inter-related,  
multi-scale *complex adaptive systems*.





***WHY DO WE STOP GROWING?***

***WHY DO WE AGE?***

***WHY DO WE LIVE ~100 YEARS AND NOT 1000,  
OR 2-3 YEARS LIKE A MOUSE?***

***WHERE DOES A TIME-SCALE OF 100 YEARS  
COME FROM?***

***HOW IS IT GENERATED FROM FUNDAMENTAL  
MICROSCOPIC MOLECULAR TIME-SCALES OF  
GENES AND RESPIRATORY ENZYMES?***





***WHY DO WE SLEEP ~8 HOURS A DAY AND NOT 15 LIKE MICE AND BABIES OR JUST 3 LIKE ELEPHANTS?***

***WHY DO ALL COMPANIES EVENTUALLY DISAPPEAR, LIKE WE DO, WHEREAS (ALMOST) ALL CITIES SURVIVE?***

***WHY DO CITIES (AND ECONOMIES) KEEP GROWING WHEREAS ALL COMPANIES STOP?***





***ARE CITIES AND COMPANIES JUST VERY  
LARGE ORGANISMS SATISFYING THE LAWS  
OF BIOLOGY?***

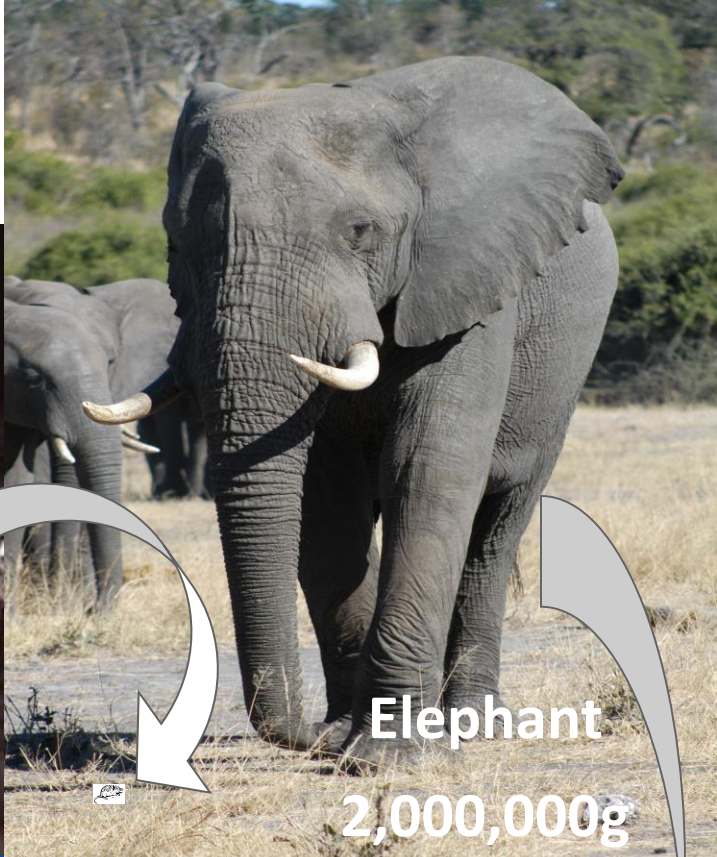
***WHY DOES THE PACE OF LIFE CONTINUE TO  
ACCELERATE?***

***IS ANY OF THIS SUSTAINABLE?***



**Shrew**

**2g**



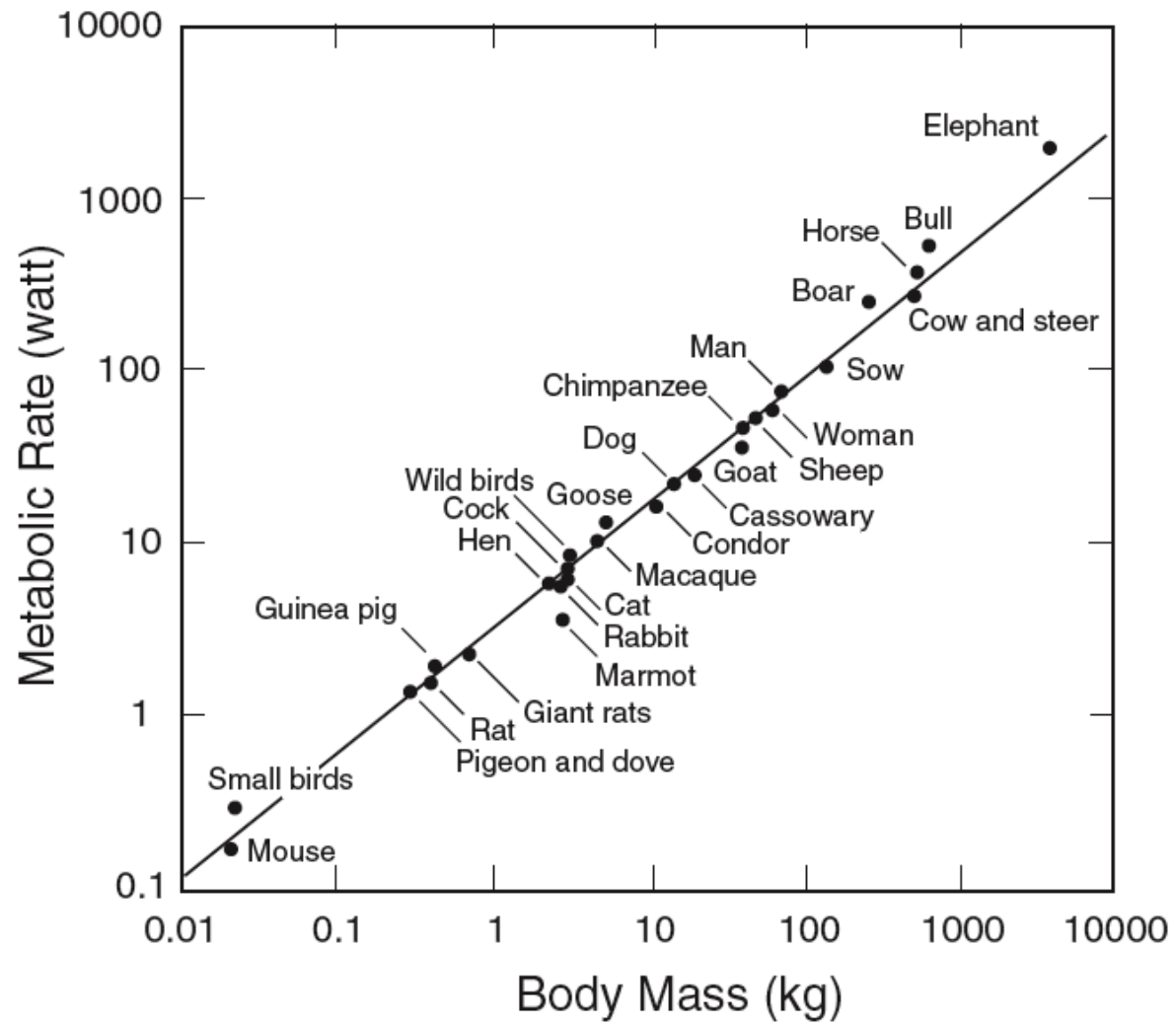
**Elephant**

**2,000,000g**



**Blue Whale**

**200,000,000g**

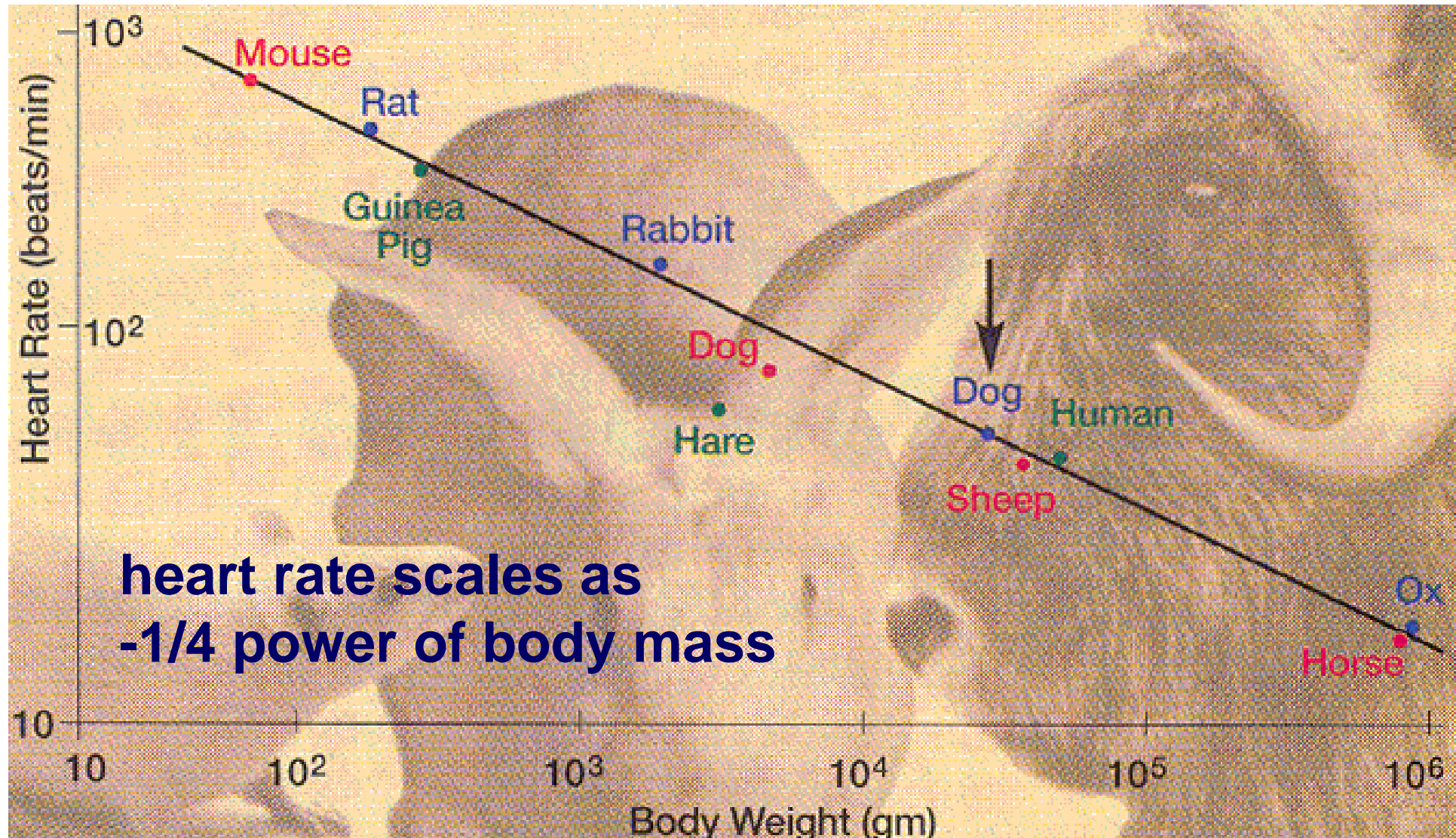


**EXTRAORDINARY SYSTEMATIC *ECONOMY OF SCALE* (THE BIGGER YOU ARE, THE LESS NEEDED PER "CAPITA")**

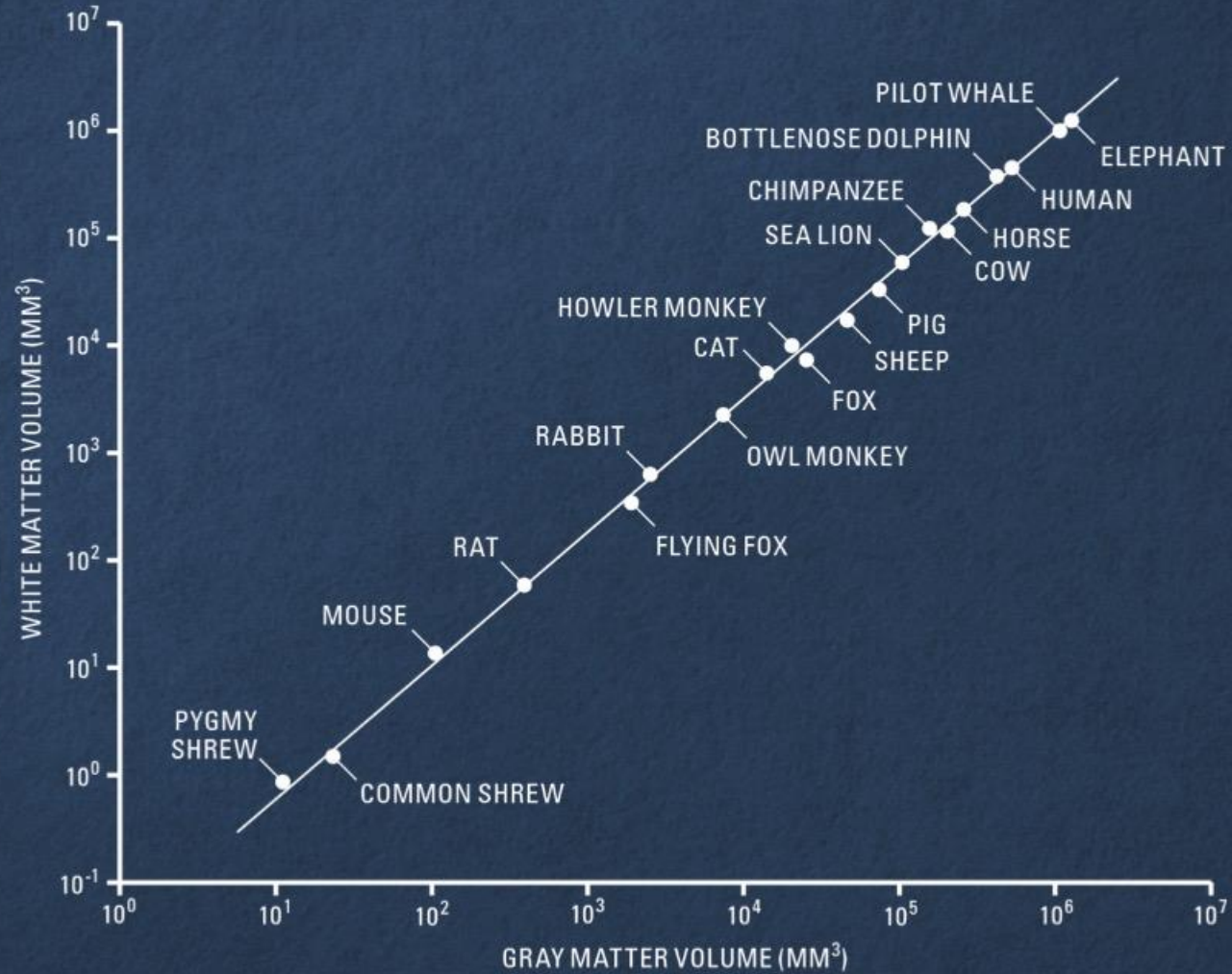
***SIMILAR SCALING HOLDS TRUE FOR ALL PHYSIOLOGICAL PROCESSES AND LIFE HISTORY EVENTS OVER THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF LIFE***

# Metabolic rate sets the pace of life

## Small animals live fast and die young



# WHITE AND GRAY MATTER OF BRAINS



Slopes (exponents) are typically  
sub-linear and simple multiples of  $\frac{1}{4}$

*“quarter-power scaling”*



## LIFESPAN

$$T \sim M^{1/4}$$

IF HEART-RATE (NUMBER OF BEATS PER SEC.)

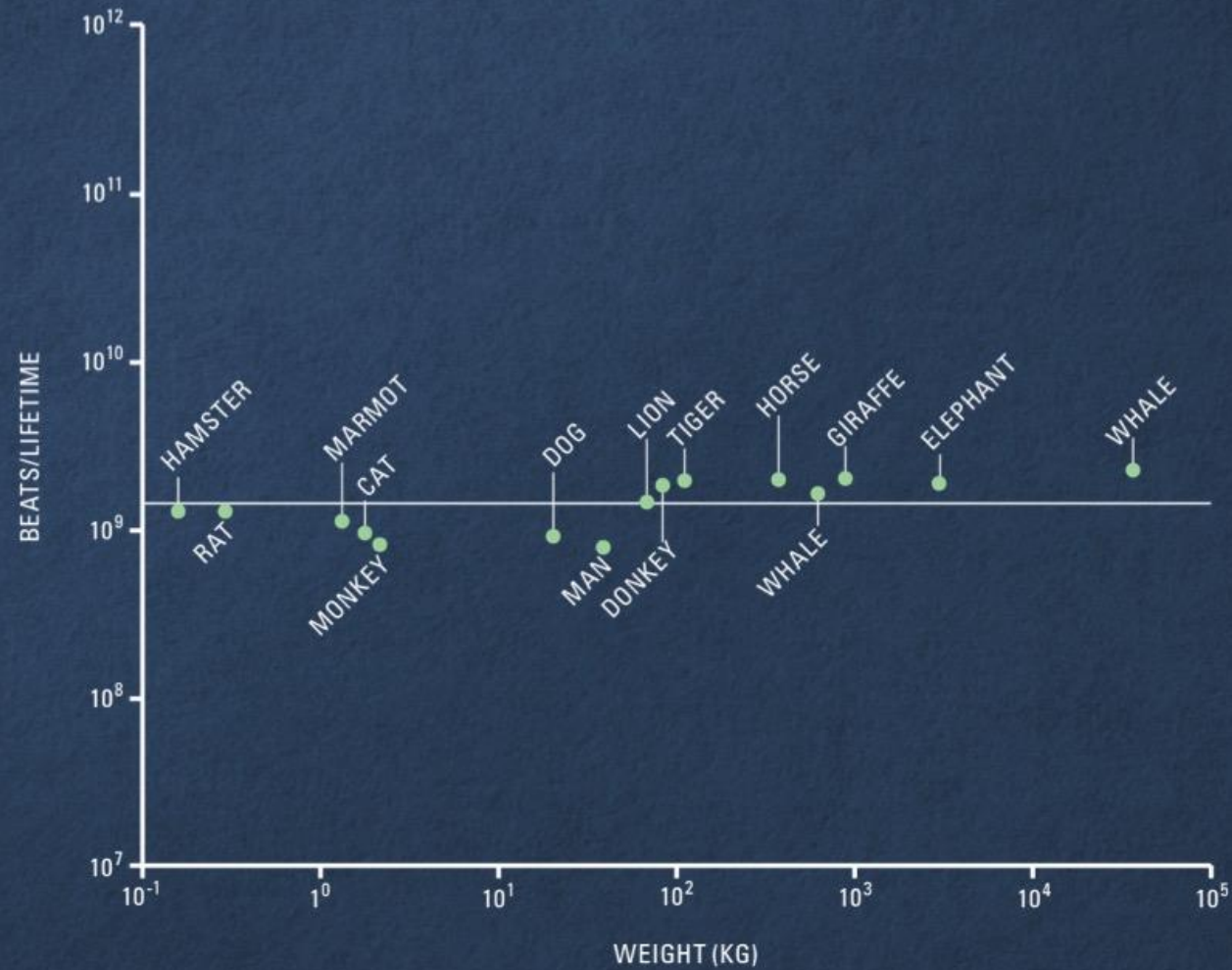
$$\sim M^{-1/4}$$

⇒ TOTAL NUMBER OF HEART-BEATS IN A  
TYPICAL LIFE-TIME IS INDEPENDENT OF SIZE!

$$\approx 1.5 \times 10^9$$

EACH ANIMAL SPECIES REGARDLESS OF SIZE  
HAS APPROXIMATELY THE SAME NUMBER OF HEART-  
BEATS IN ITS LIFE-TIME (ROUGHLY 1 BILLION)

# NUMBER OF HEARTBEATS PER LIFETIME OF ANIMALS



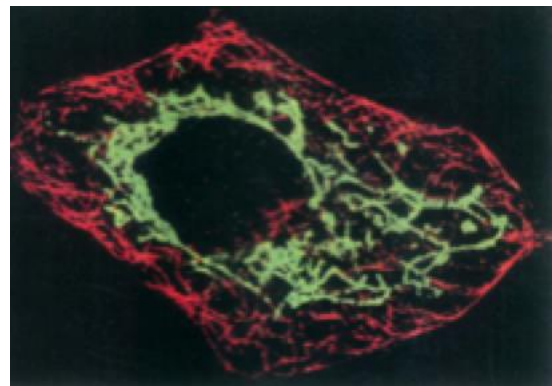
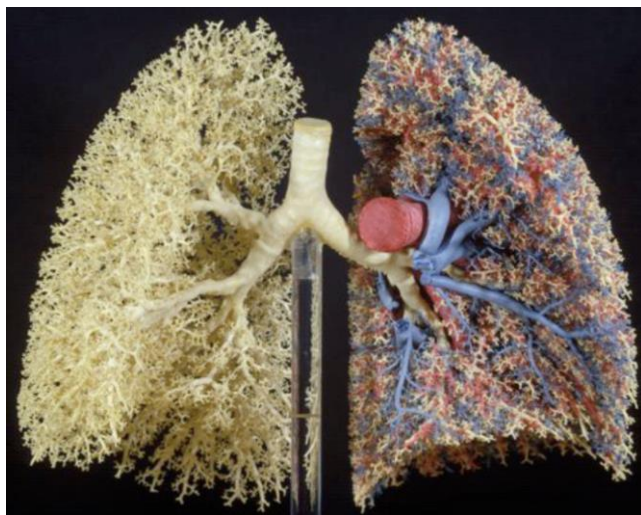
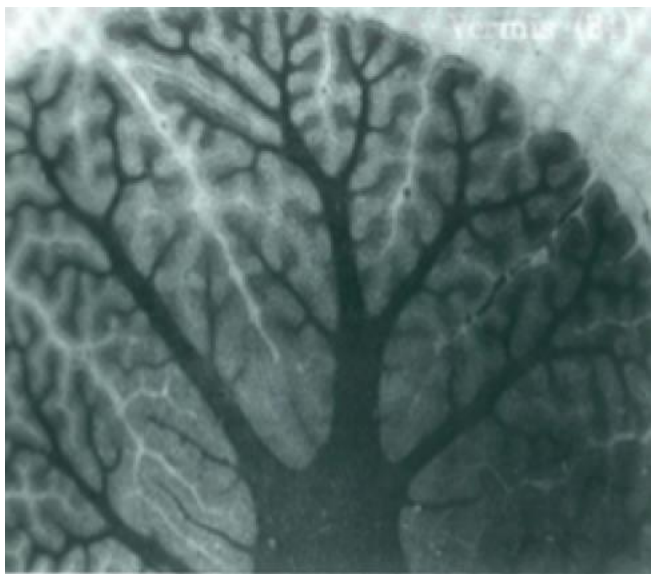
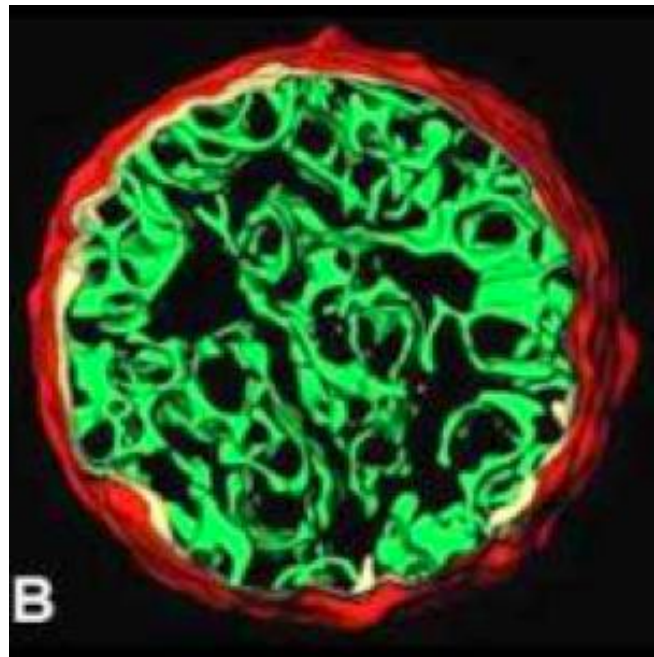
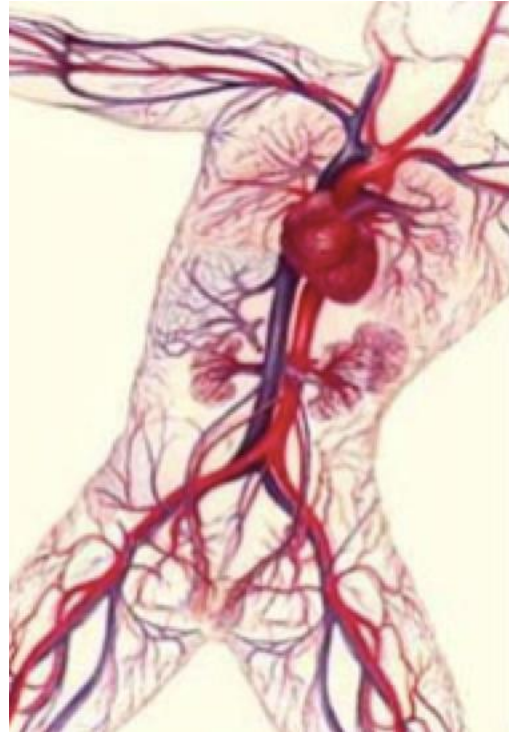
Slopes (exponents) are typically  
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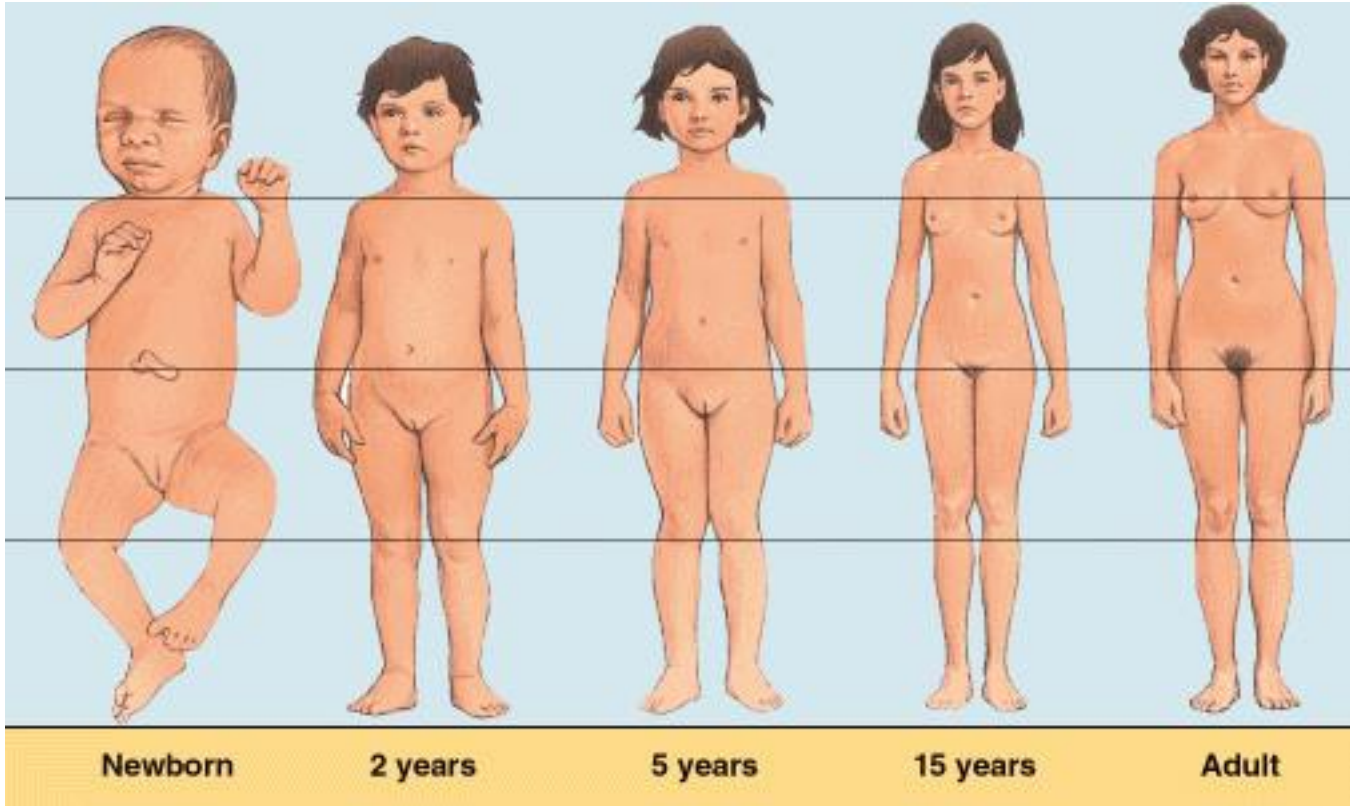
*“quarter-power scaling”*





# NETWORKS



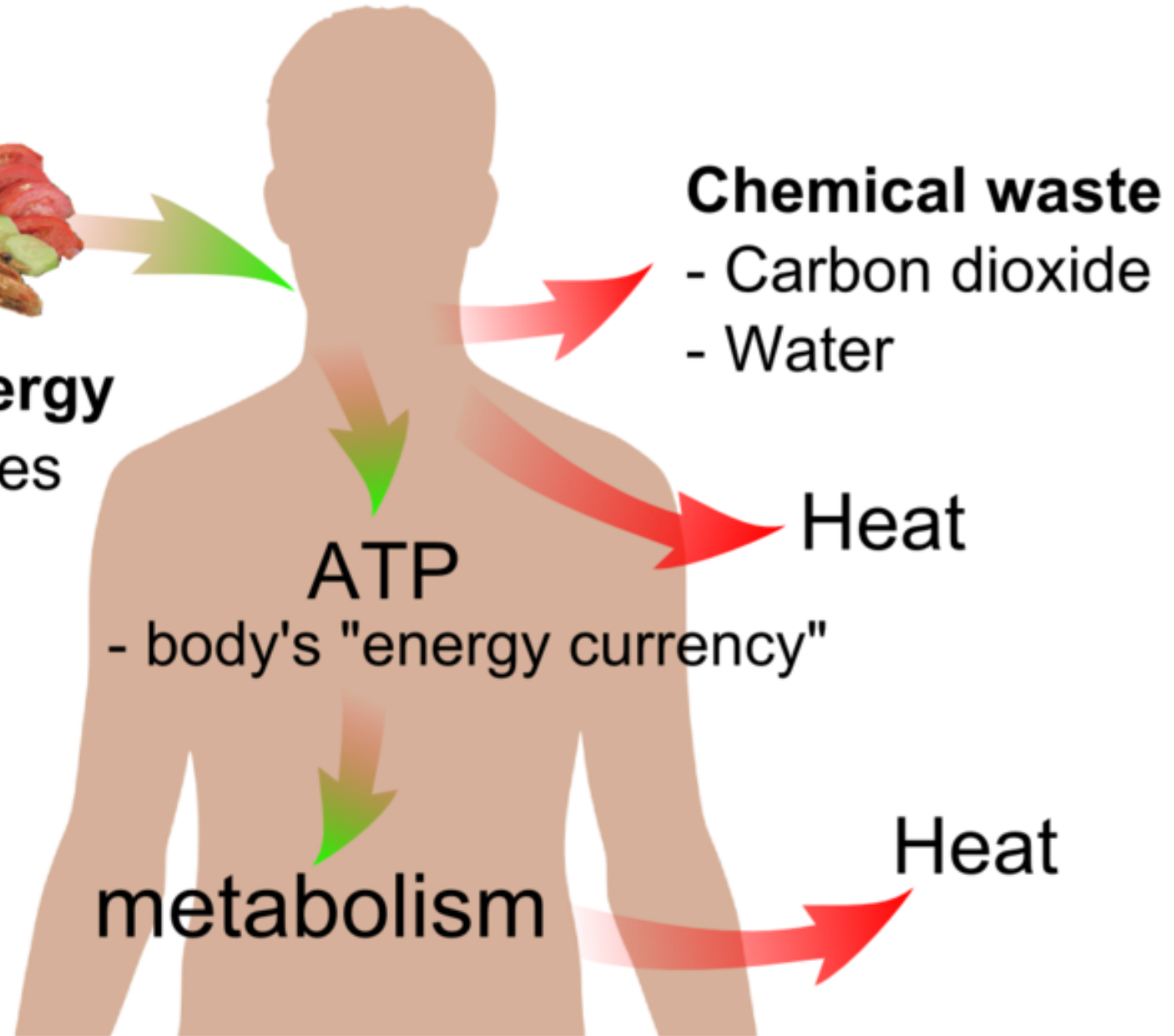


# Energy and human life

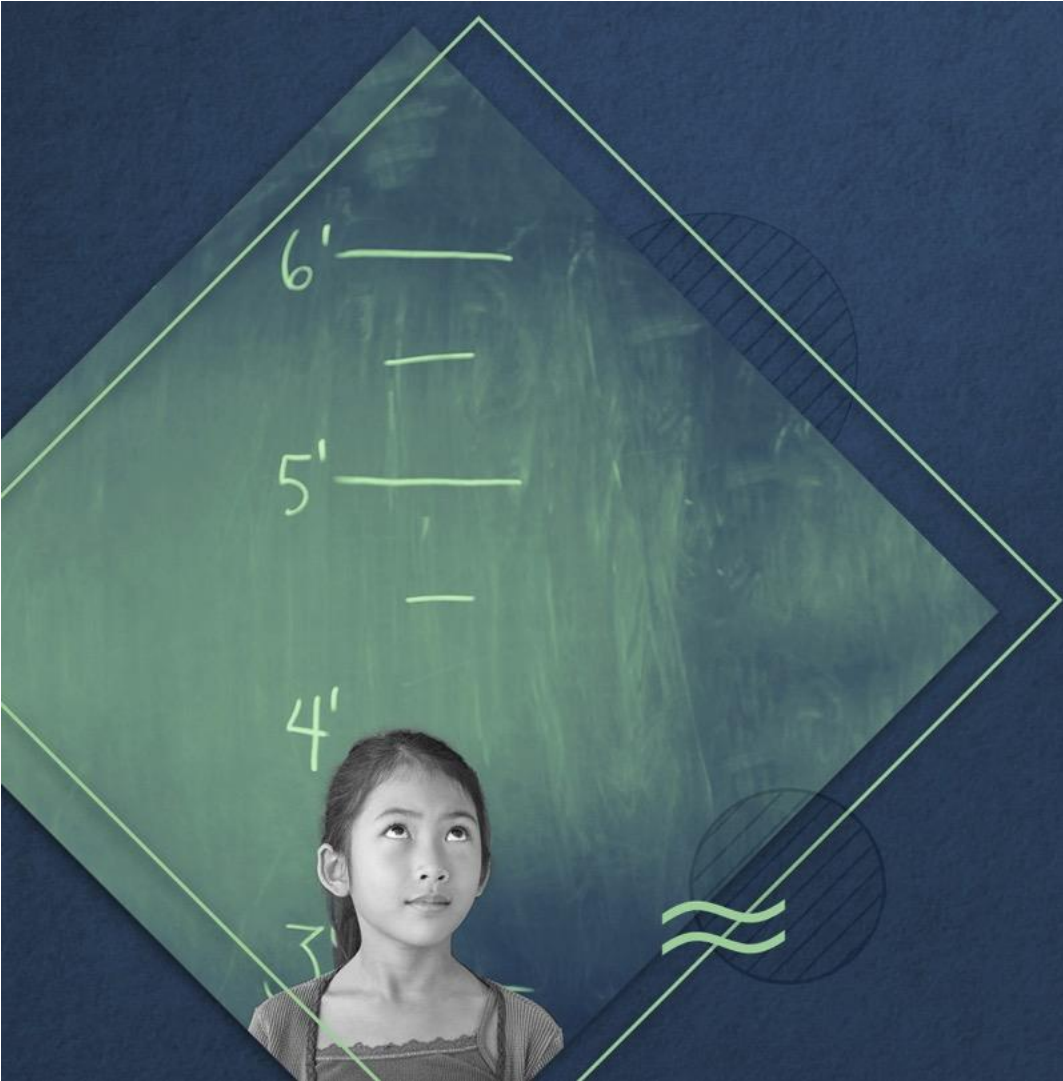


## Chemical energy

- Carbohydrates
- Fats
- Others







# *Growth*

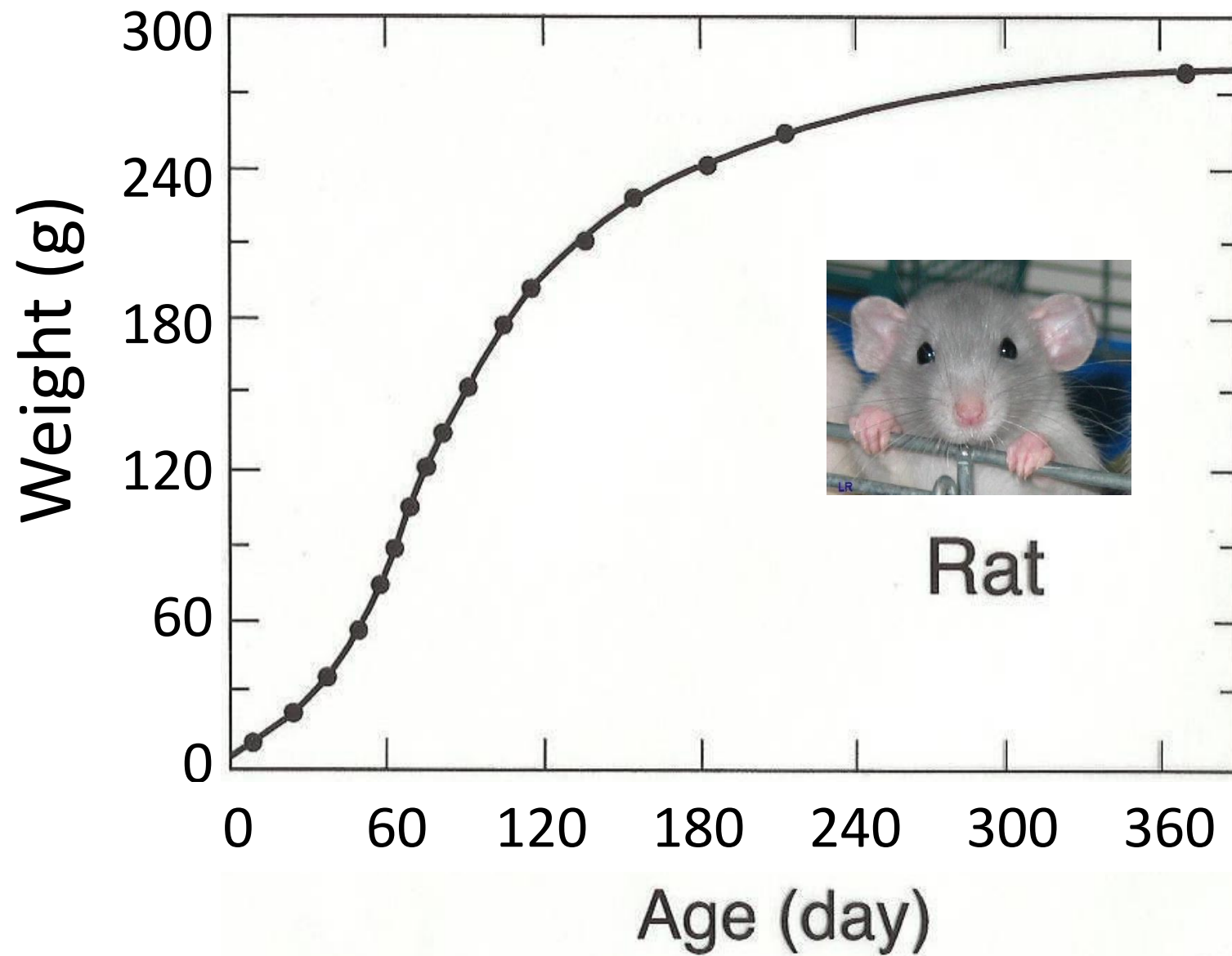
Incoming  
Metabolized Energy



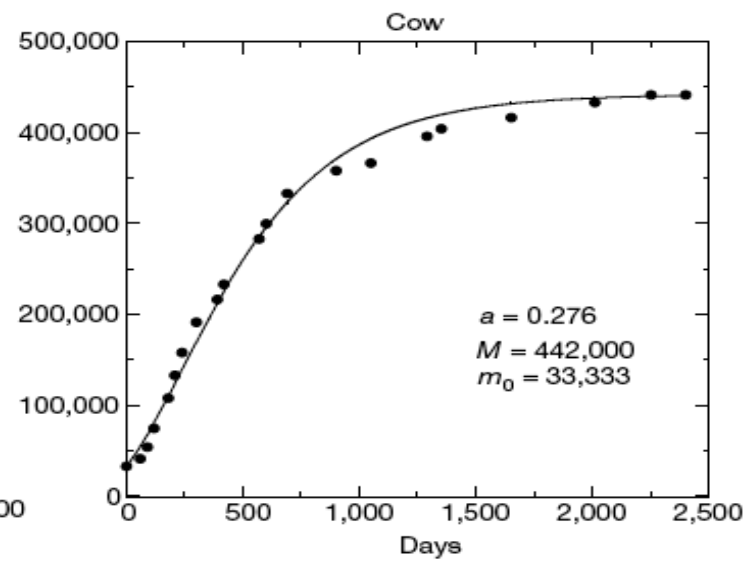
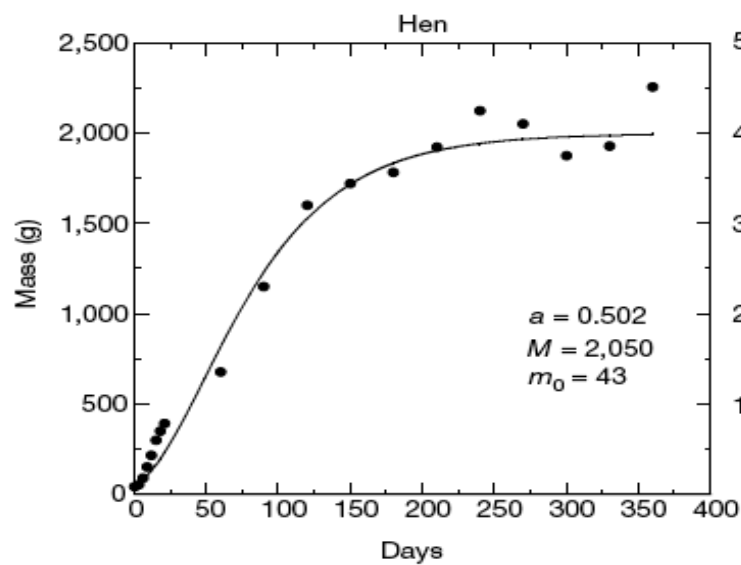
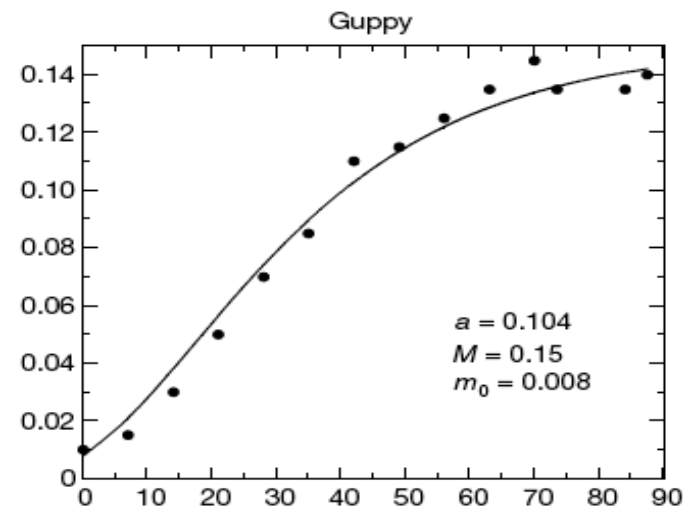
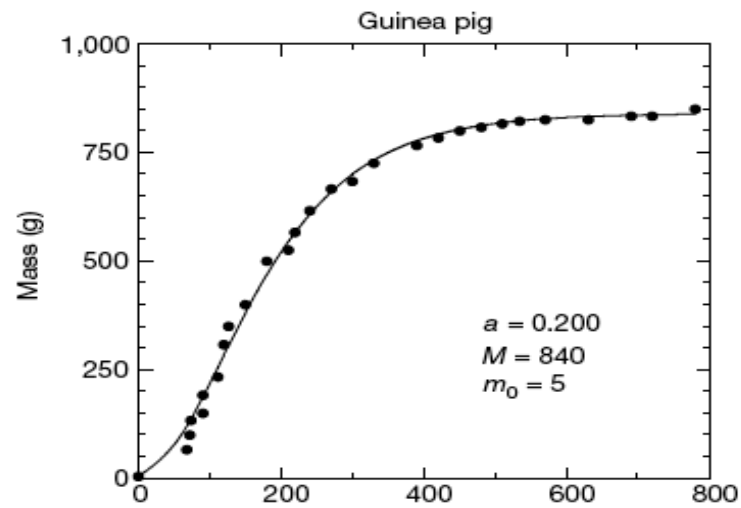
Maintenance  
(of Existing Cells)

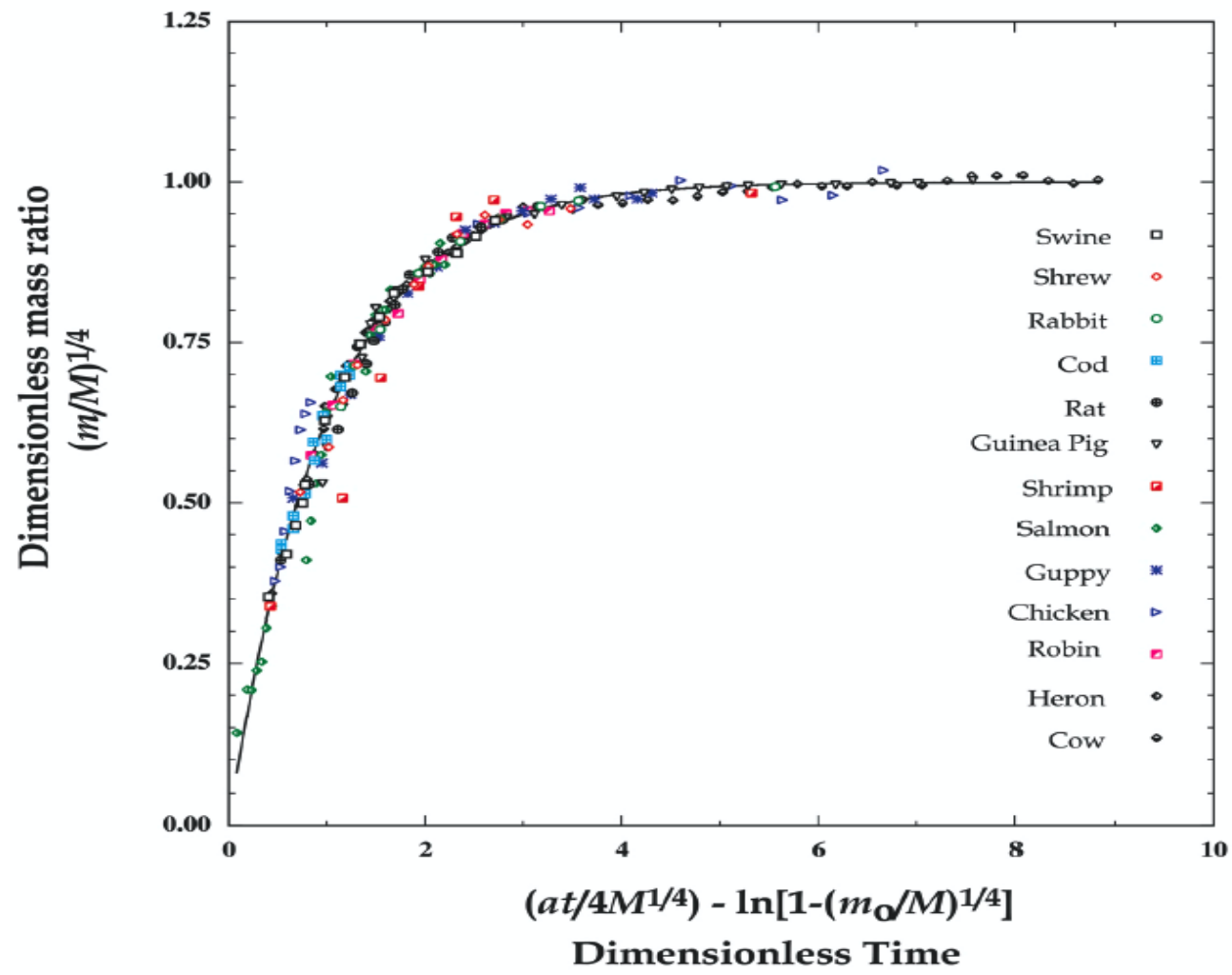


New Growth  
(of New Cells)



**SUB-LINEAR SCALING  
LEADS TO BOUNDED GROWTH**

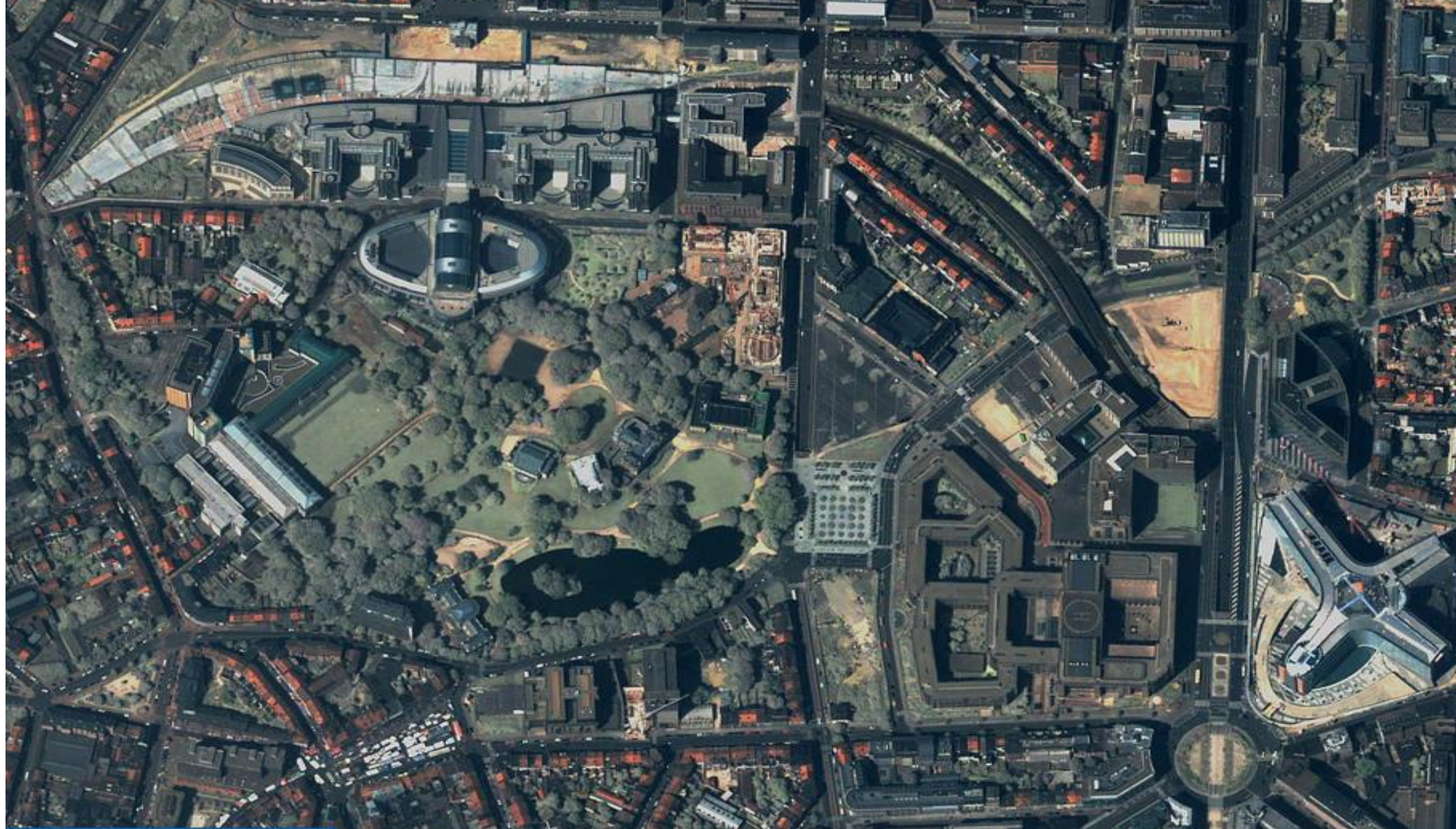





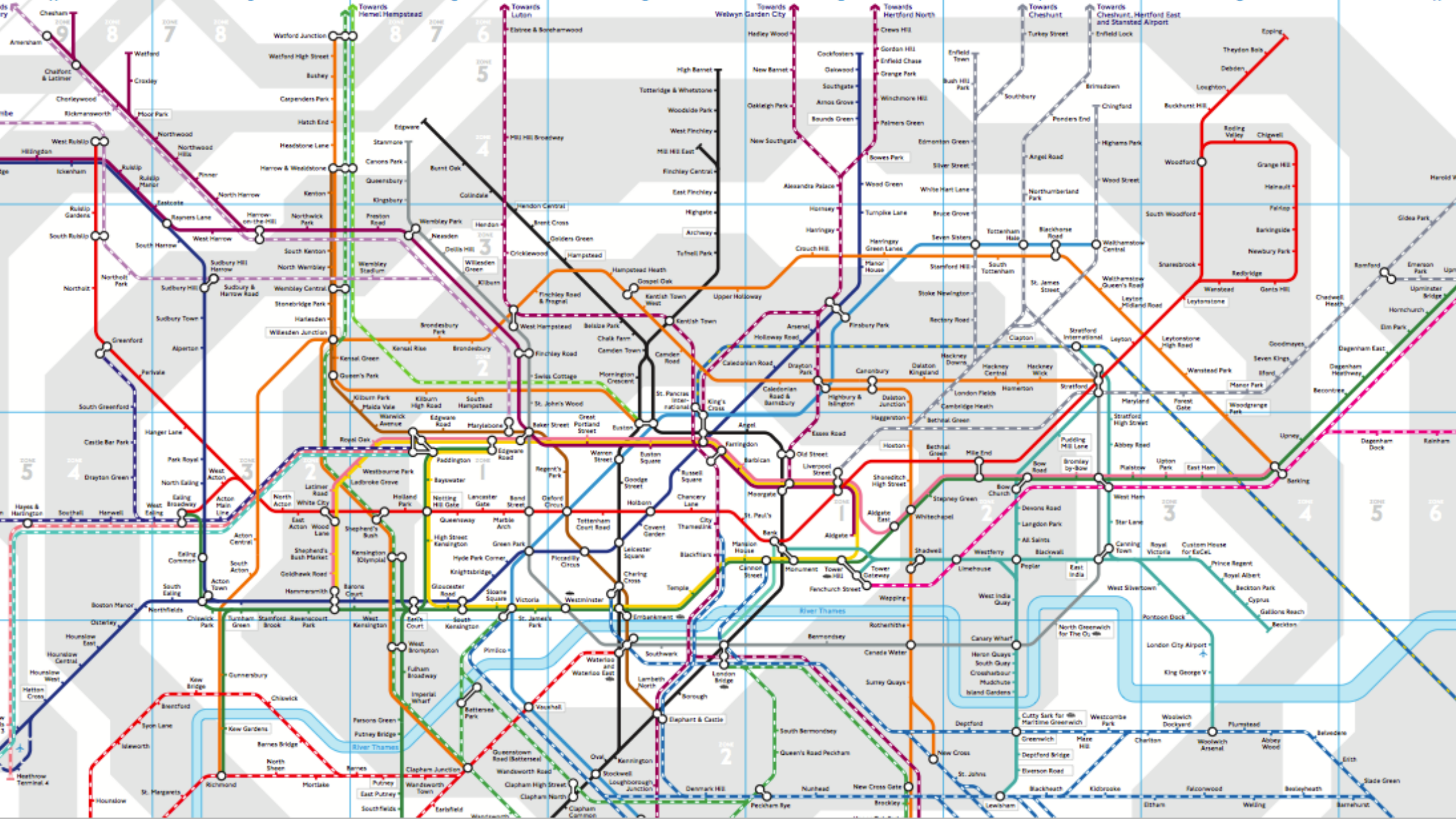
## **BIOLOGY (LIFE)**

- a) **DOMINATED BY SYSTEMATIC, PREDICTABLE, *NON-LINEAR (UNIVERSAL) SCALING LAWS***
- b) ***ECONOMIES OF SCALE* (THE BIGGER YOU ARE, THE LESS YOU NEED PER “CAPITA”) - *SUBLINEAR***
- c) ***PACE OF LIFE* SYSTEMATICALLY SLOWS WITH INCREASING SIZE**
- d) ***GROWTH* IS SIGMOIDAL REACHING A STABLE SIZE AT MATURITY**
- e) ***FINITE LIFESPAN***
- e) **EXPLAINED BY DYNAMICS OF *NETWORKS***



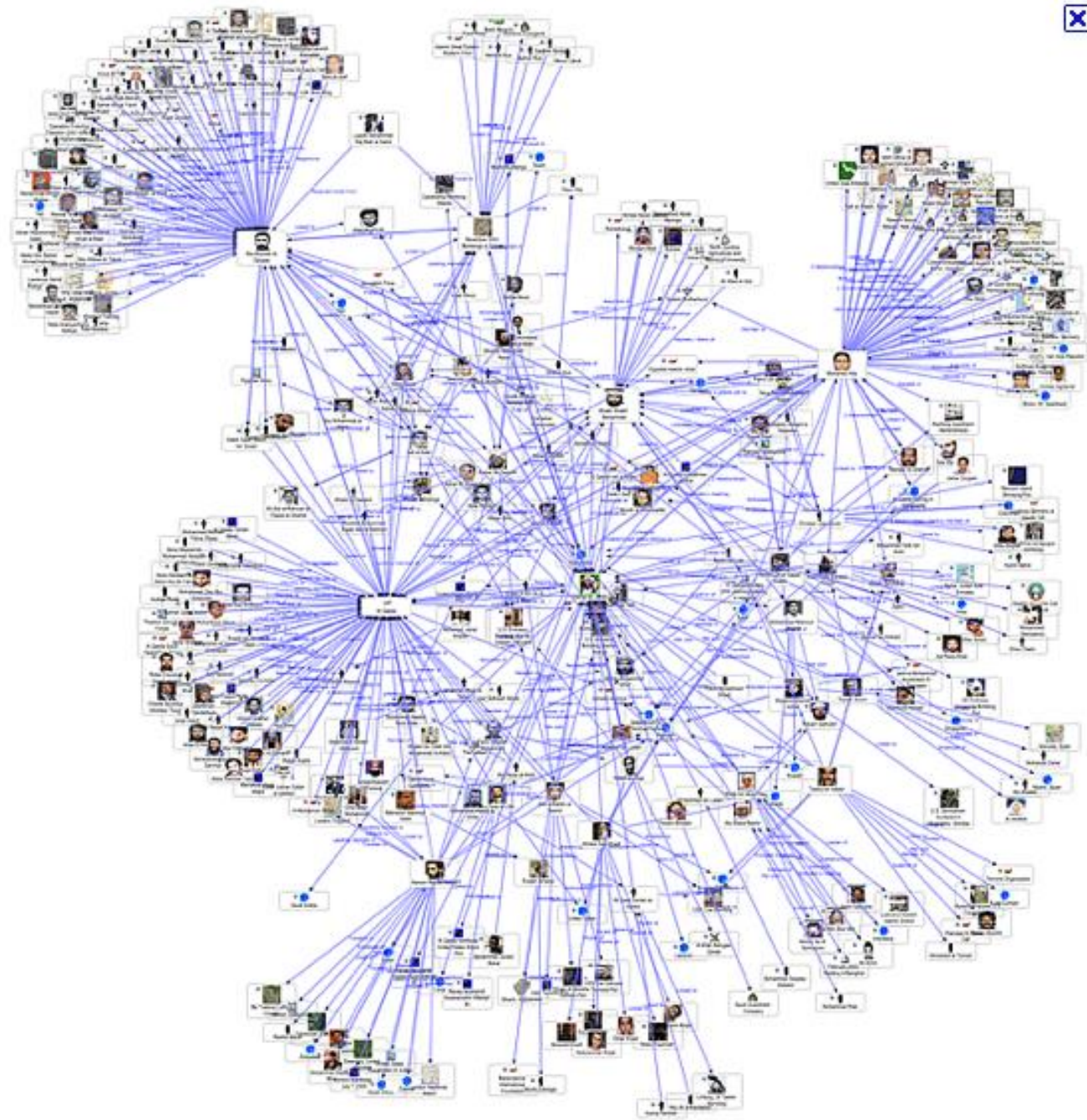


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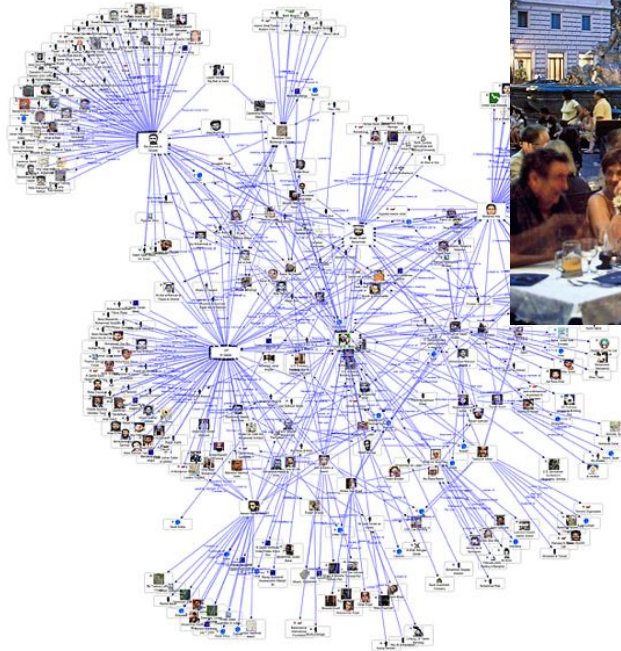
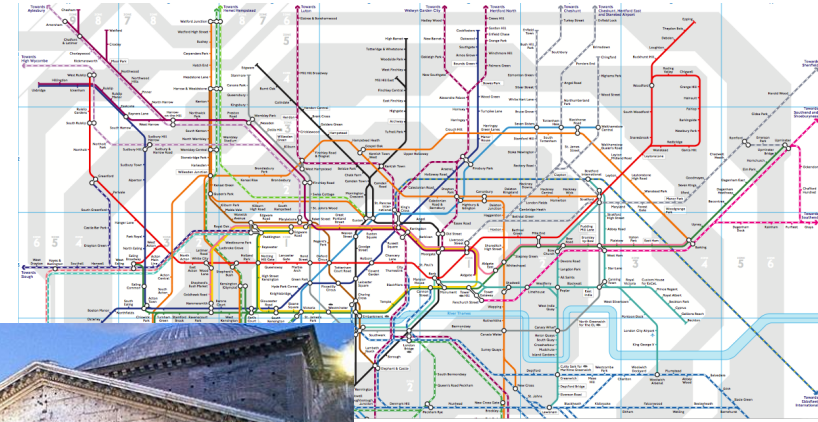
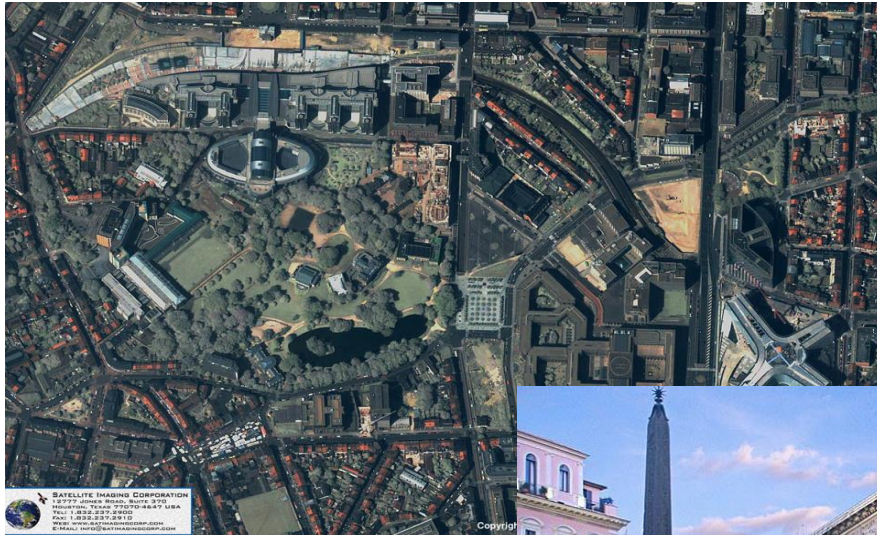


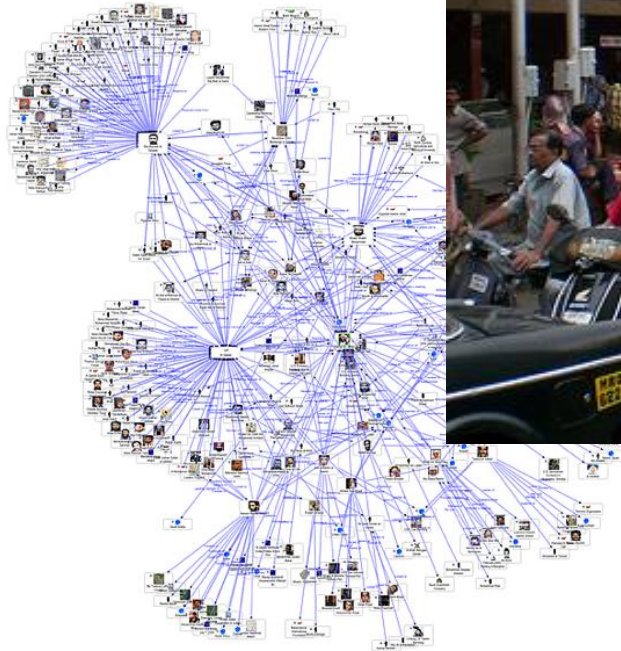
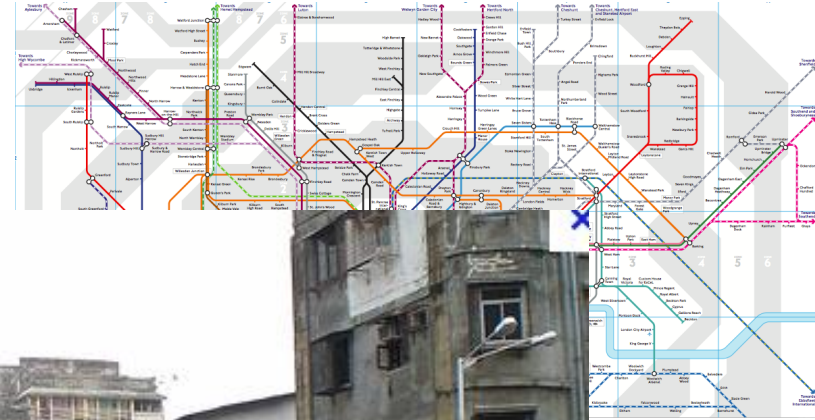




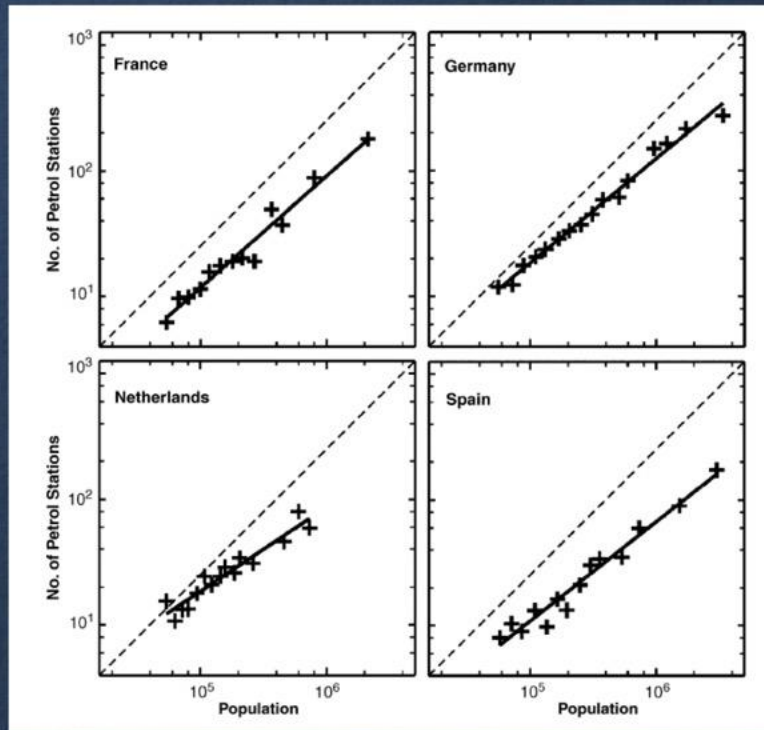








## NUMBER OF PETROL STATIONS VS. POPULATION

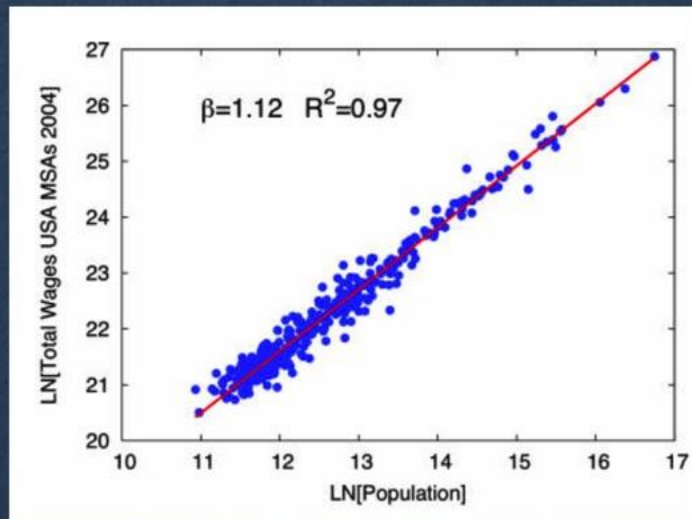


***INFRASTRUCTURE***

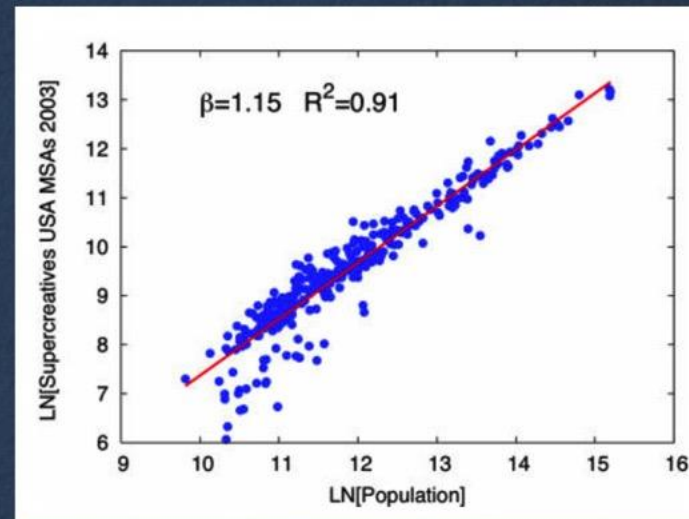
***SUB-LINEAR SCALING***

***ECONOMY OF SCALE***

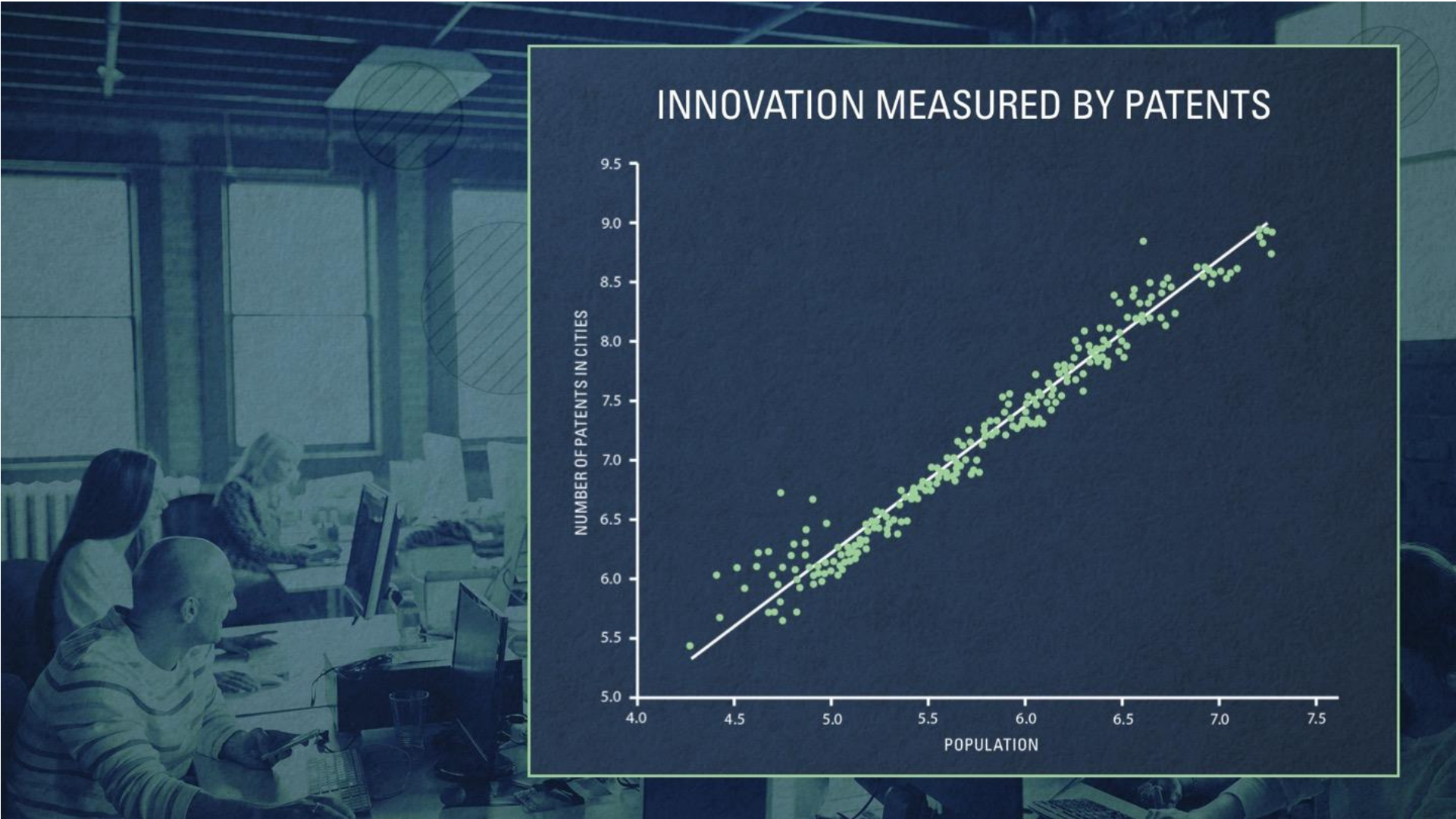
# SUPER-LINEAR SCALING



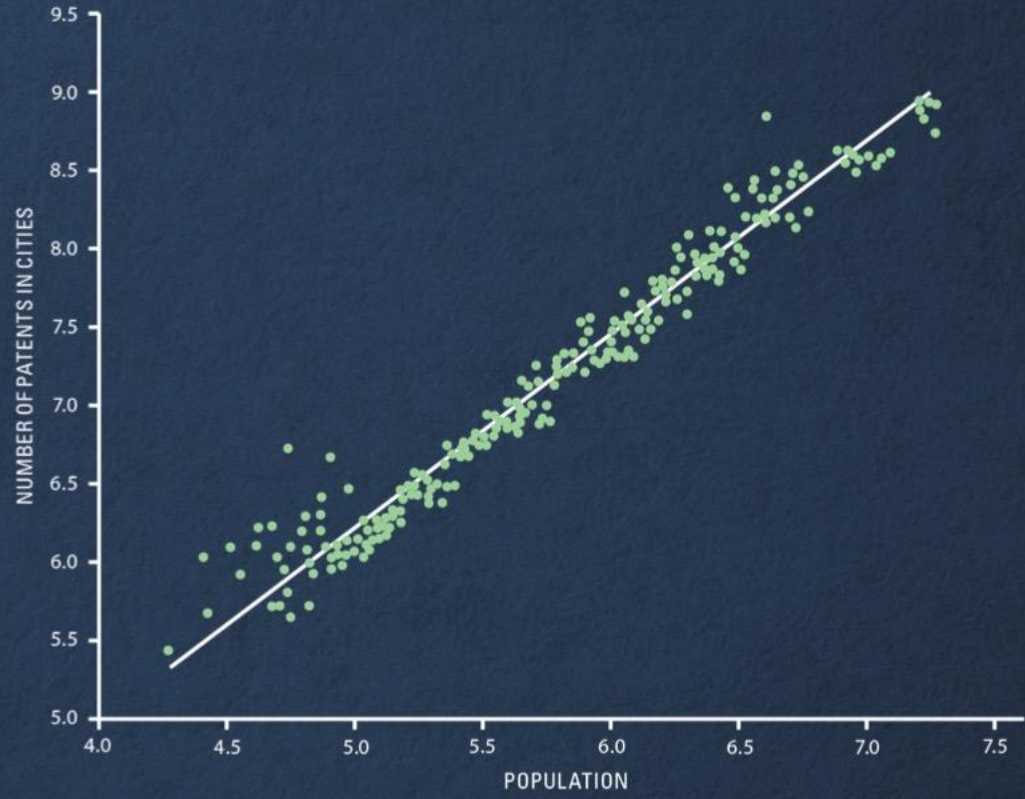
Total **wages** per MSA in 2004 for the USA vs. metropolitan population.



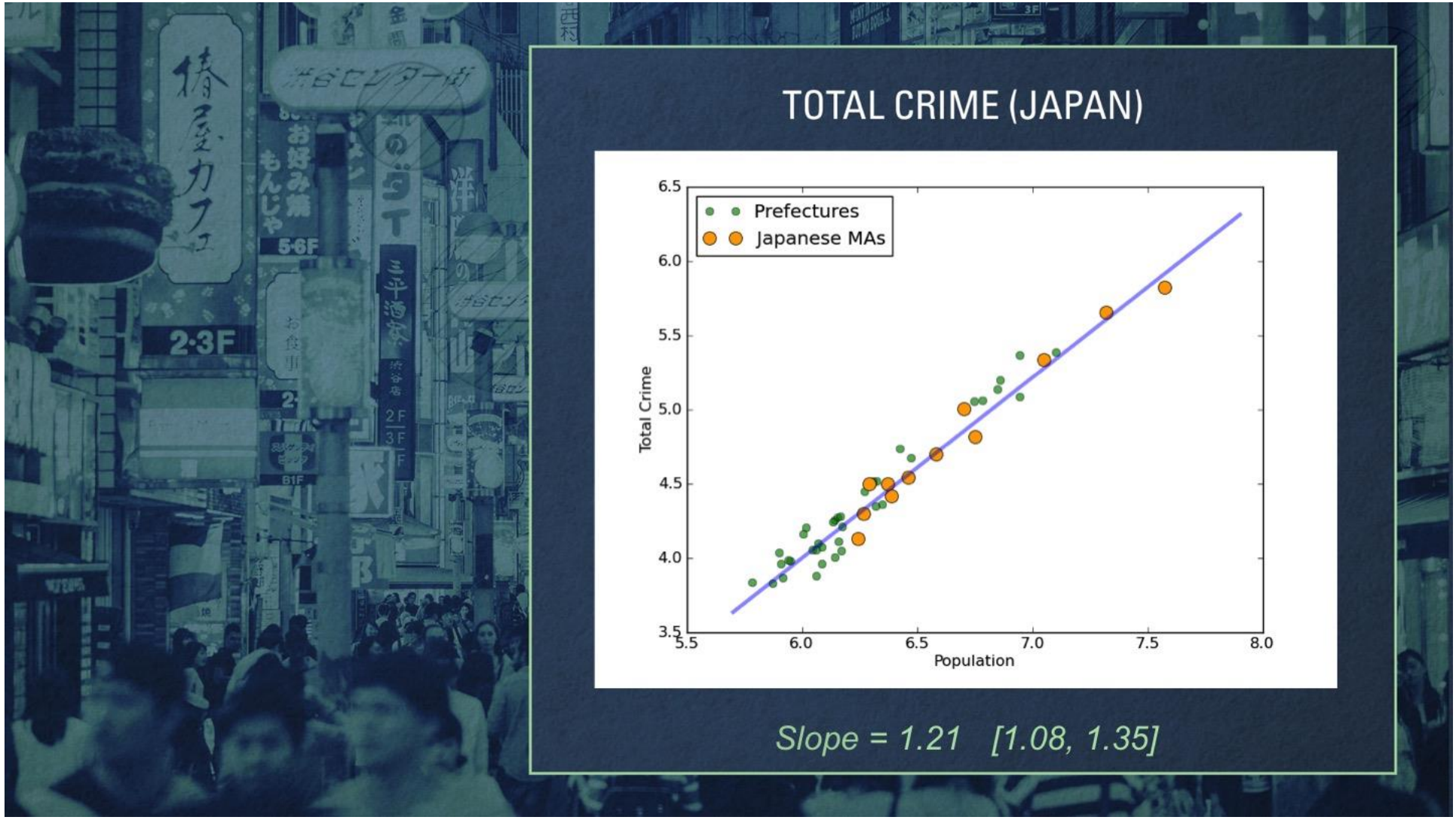
**Supercreative employment** per MSA in 2003, for the USA vs. metropolitan population.

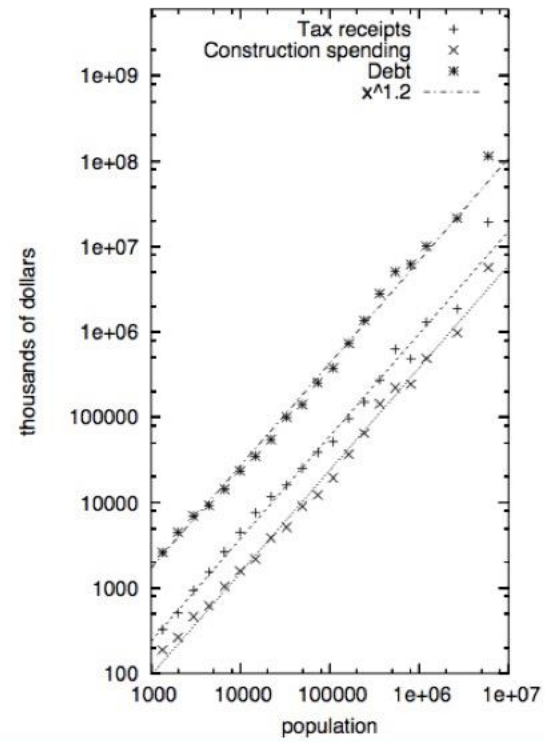
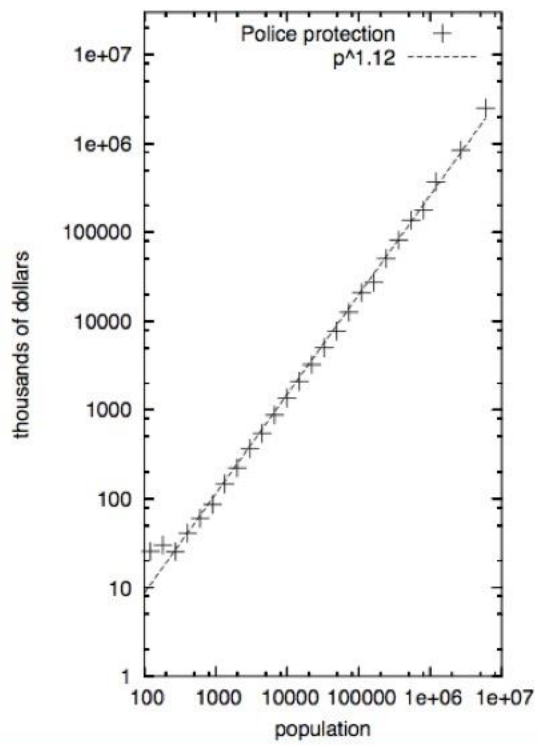


# INNOVATION MEASURED BY PATENTS

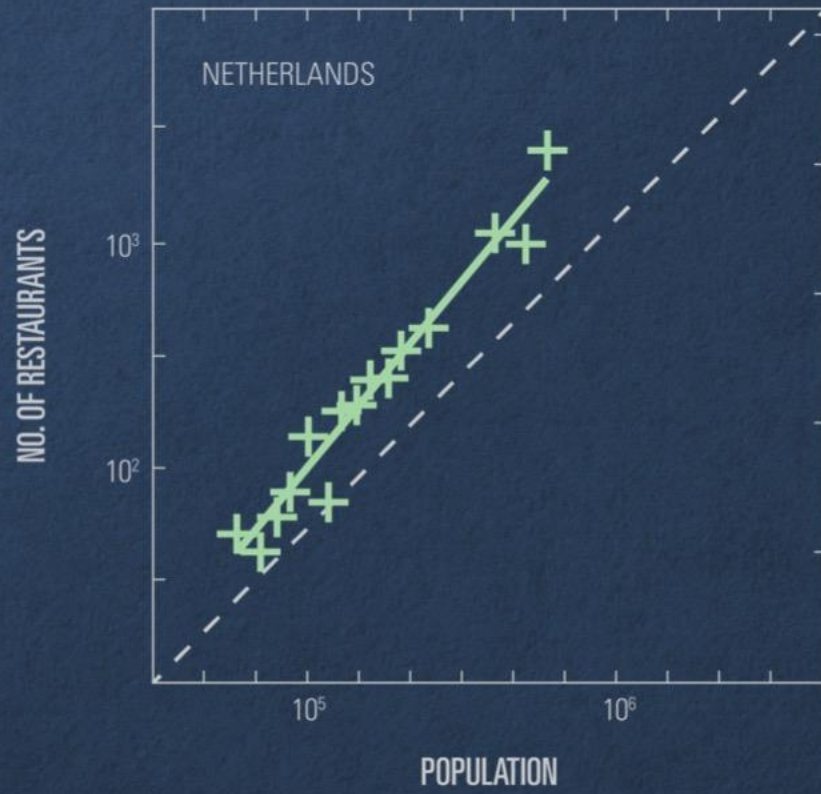




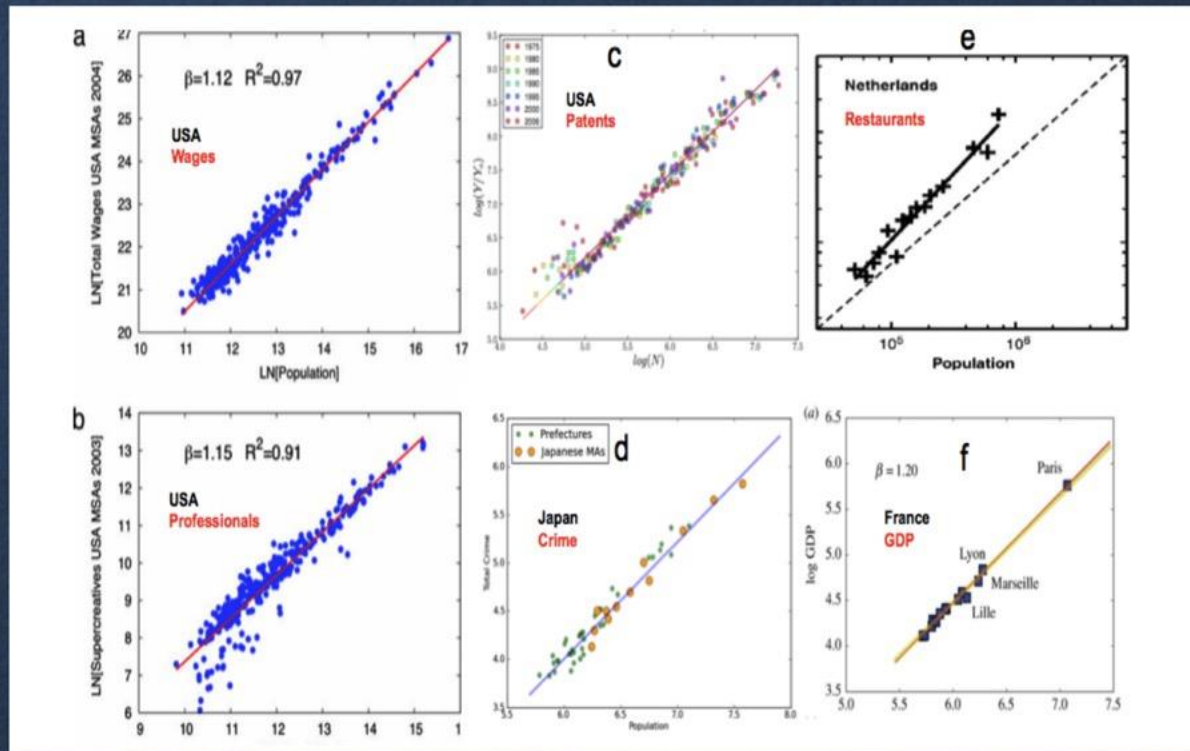


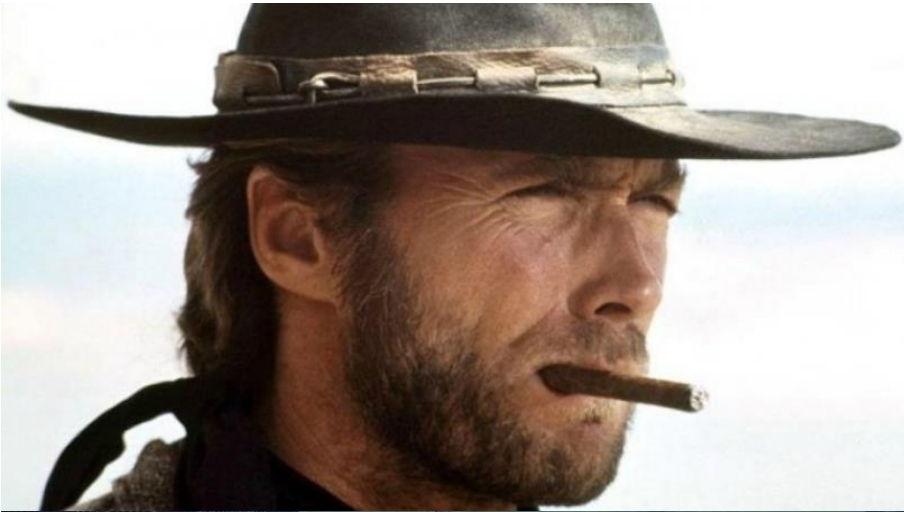


# RESTAURANTS IN THE NETHERLANDS



# UNIVERSALITY OF URBAN SCALING





**THE GOOD,  
THE BAD,  
THE UGLY**

**ON AVERAGE DOUBLING THE SIZE OF A CITY  
SYSTEMATICALLY INCREASES**

**ON AVERAGE DOUBLING THE SIZE OF A CITY  
SYSTEMATICALLY INCREASES  
INCOME, WEALTH, PATENTS, COLLEGES,  
CREATIVE PEOPLE, POLICE, AIDS & FLU, CRIME,  
SOCIAL INTERACTIONS,.....**

**ON AVERAGE DOUBLING THE SIZE OF A CITY  
SYSTEMATICALLY INCREASES  
INCOME, WEALTH, PATENTS, COLLEGES,  
CREATIVE PEOPLE, POLICE, AIDS & FLU, CRIME,  
SOCIAL INTERACTIONS,.....  
ALL BY APPROXIMATELY 15%  
REGARDLESS OF CITY**



***AND.....***

**AND.....**

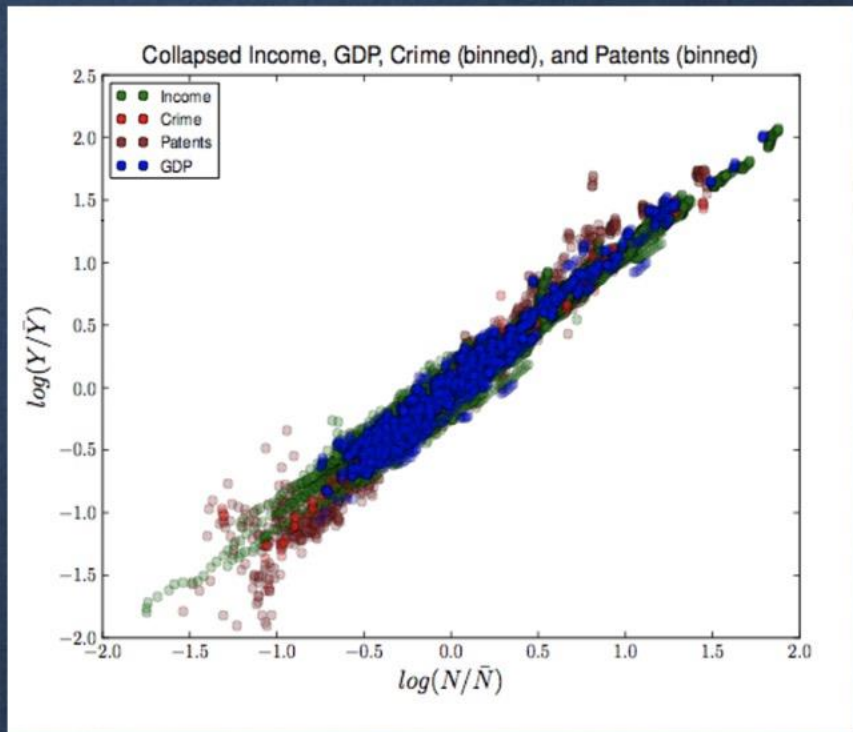
**SAVES APPROXIMATELY 15%  
ON ALL INFRASTRUCTURE  
(ROADS, ELECTRICAL LINES,  
GAS STATIONS,.....)**

# Universality of Social Networks *(clustering hierarchies)*

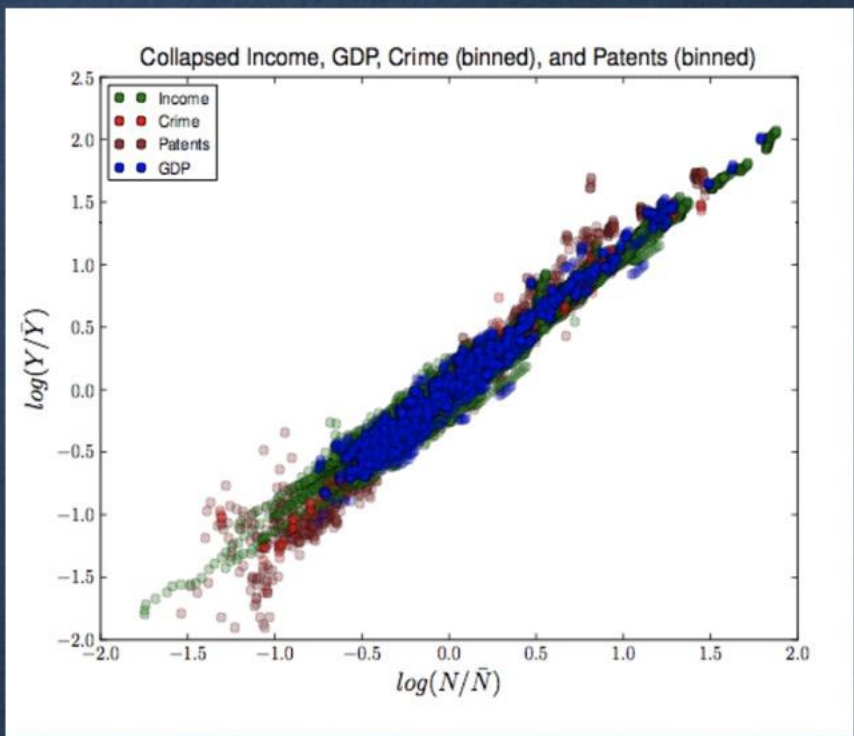




# UNIVERSALITY

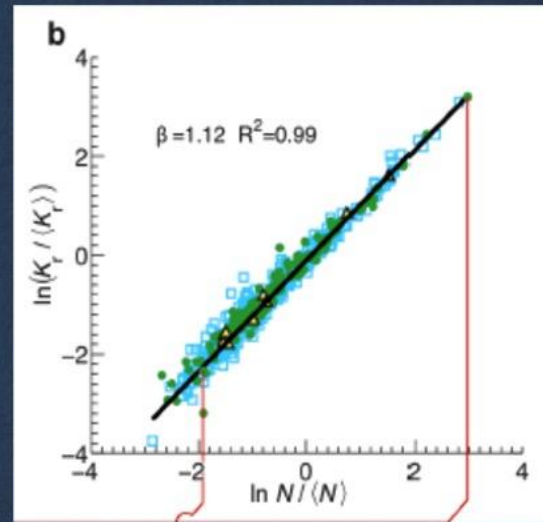


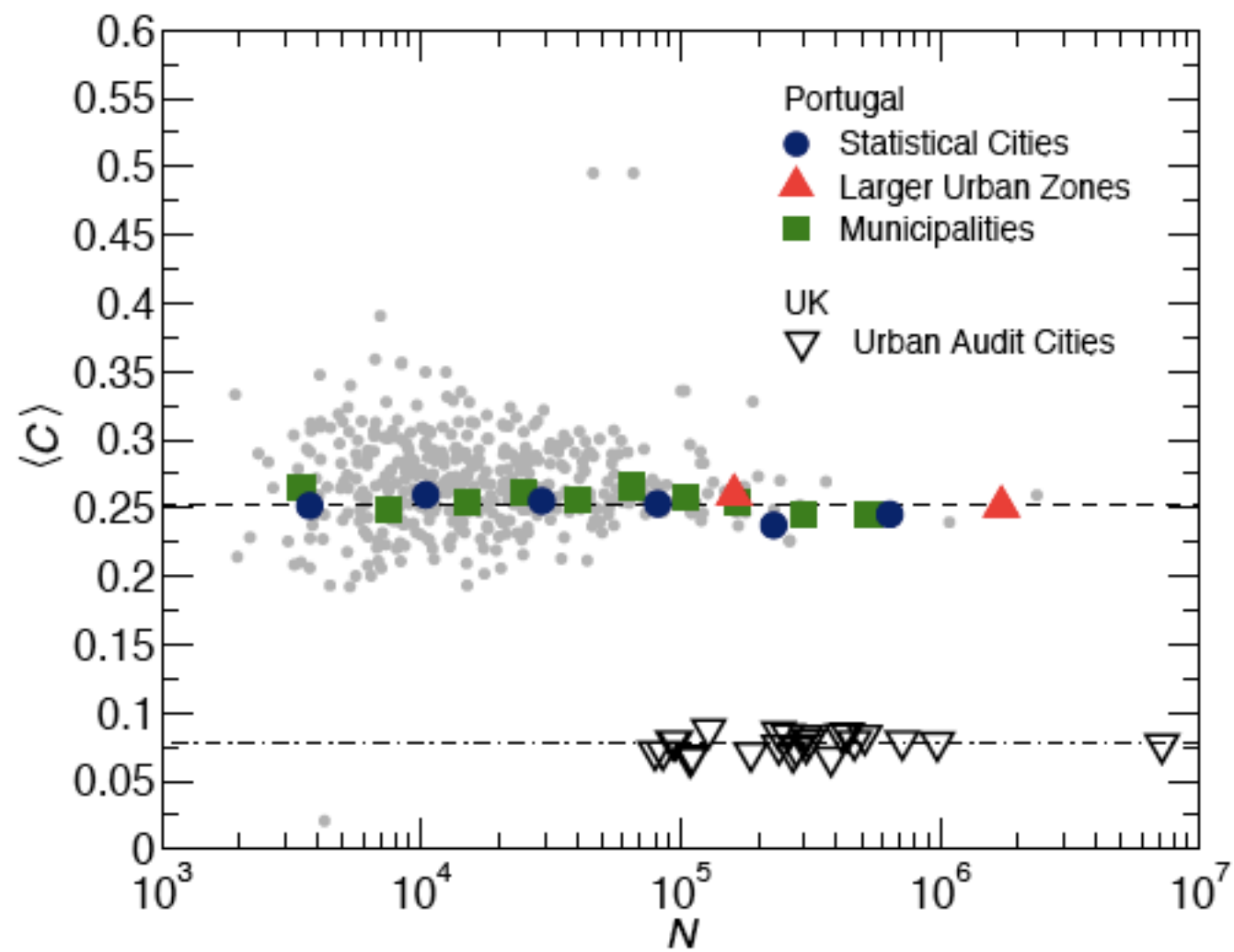
# UNIVERSALITY



# SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

(Cell Phone Data)





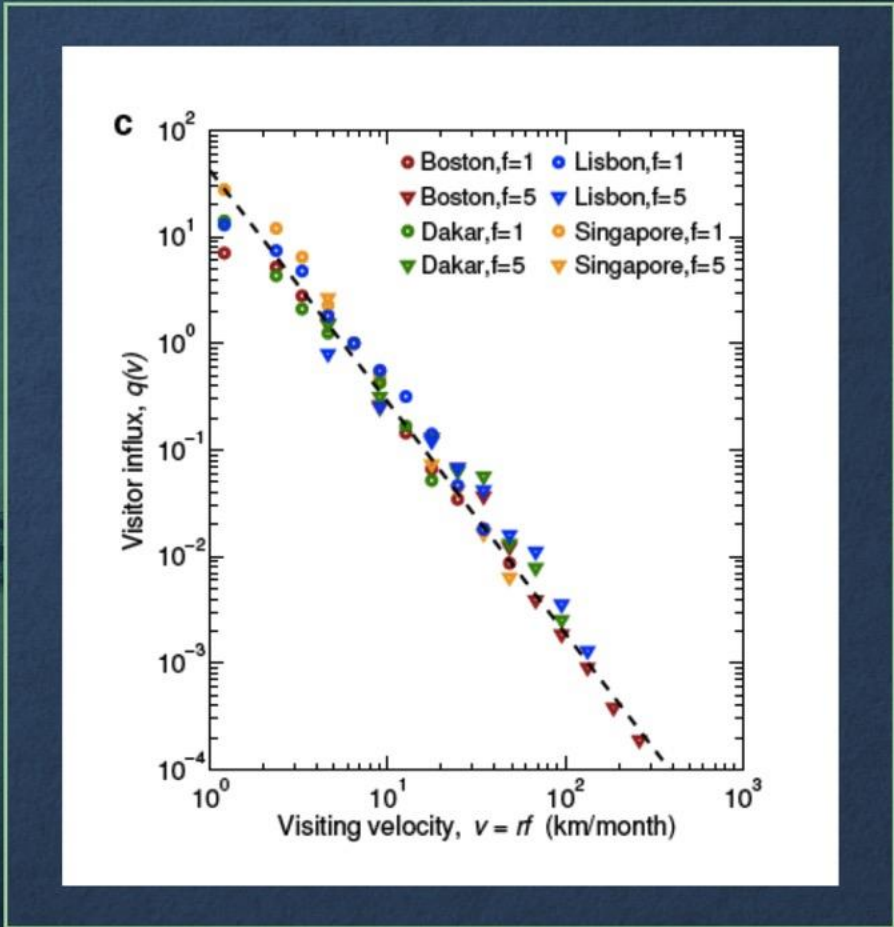
## MOVEMENT IN CITIES

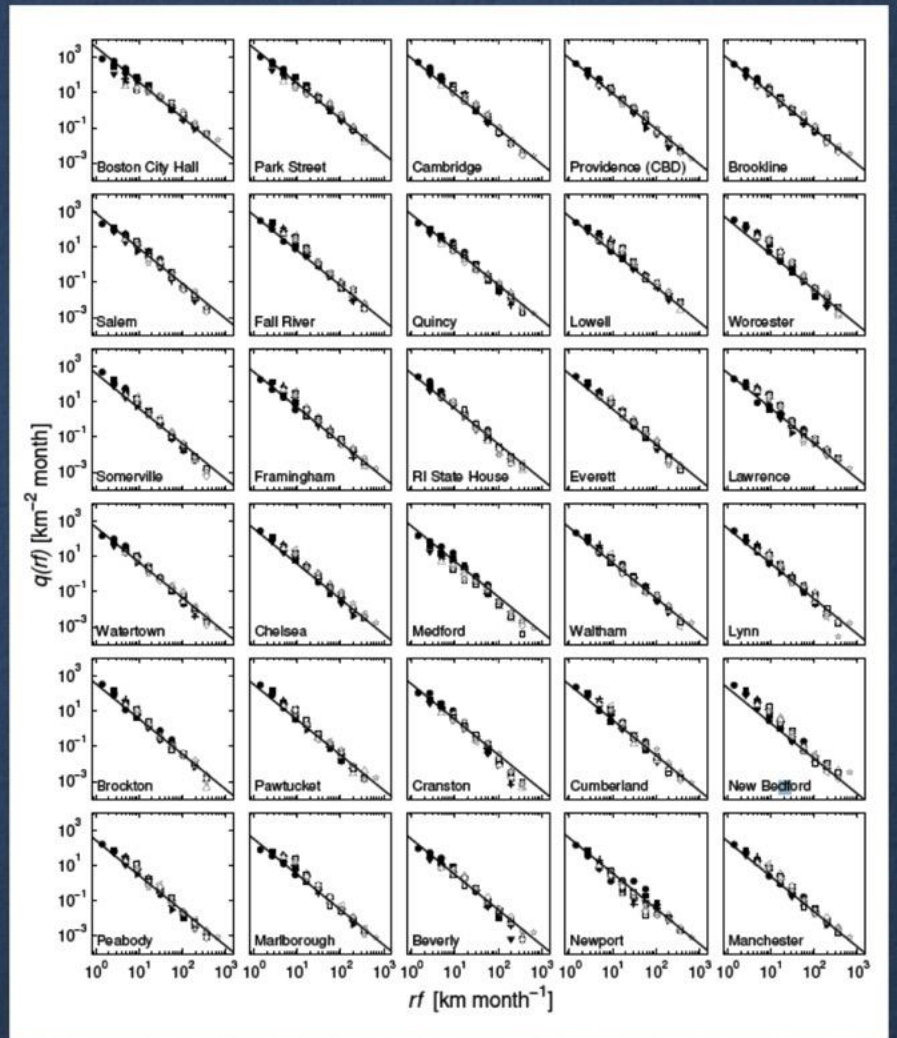
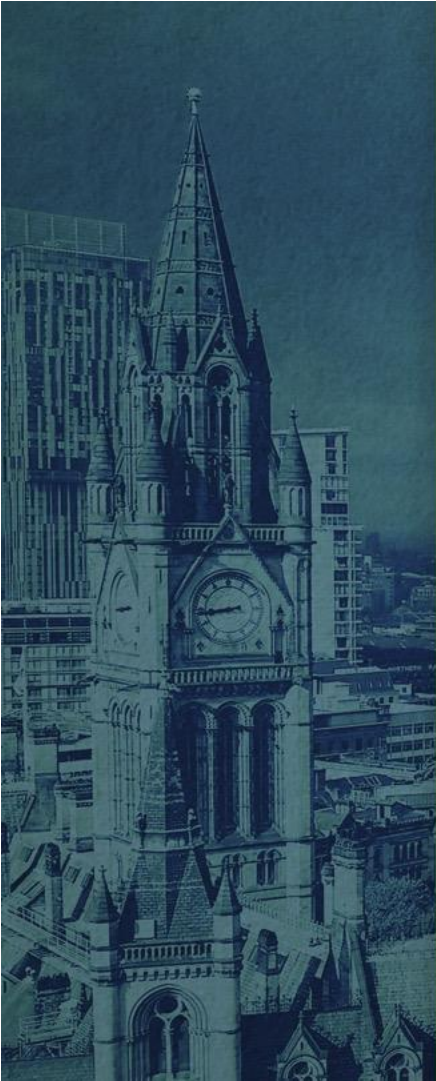
People on average minimize travel time and distance.

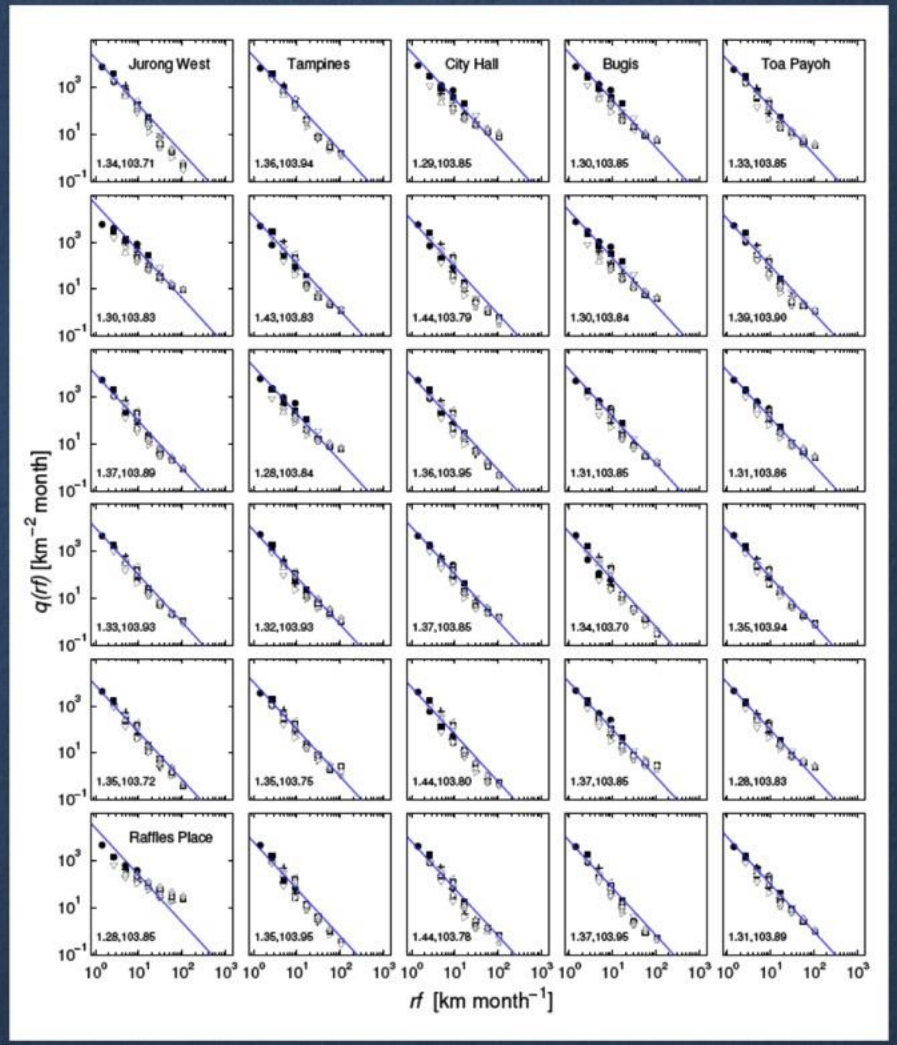
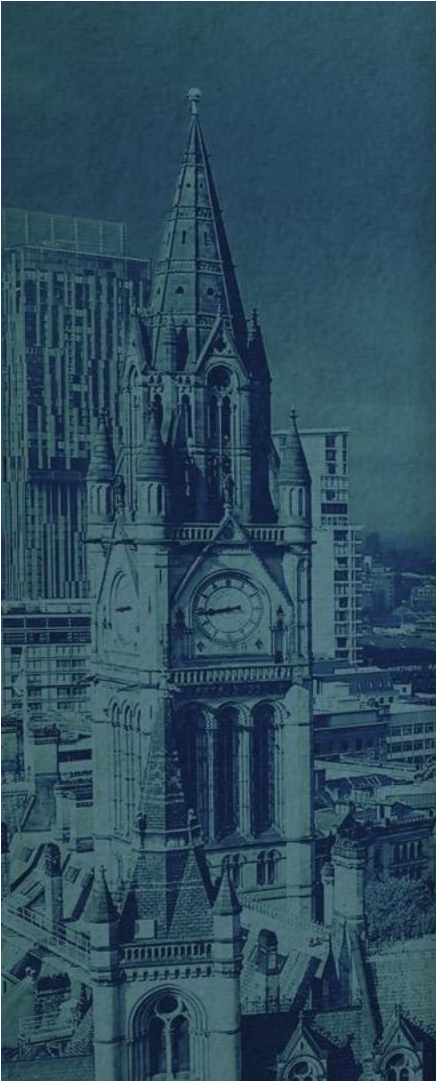
“Theorem”: the number traveling to any location in any city from a distance  $r$  away  $f$  times a month is:

$$q(r, f) = \frac{A}{(rf)^2}$$









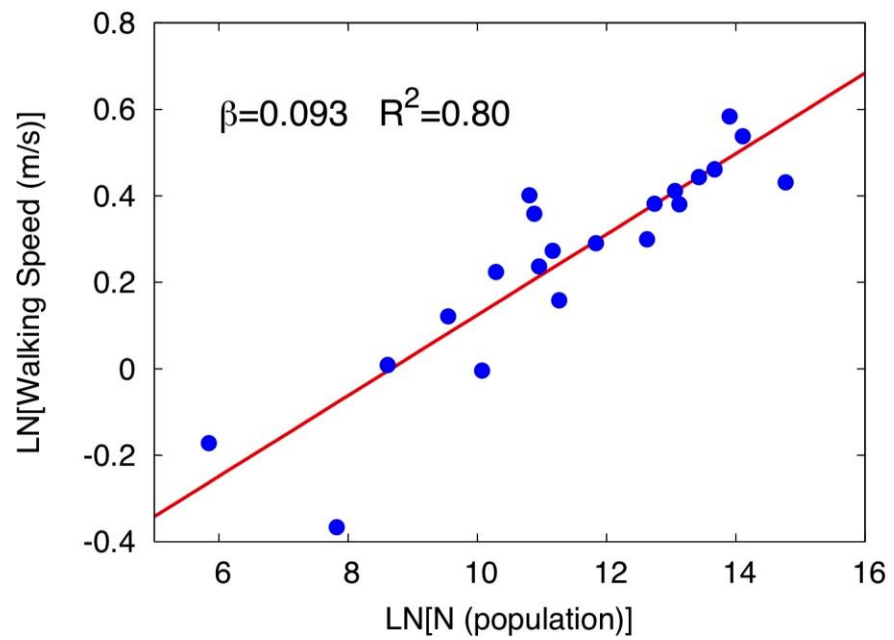
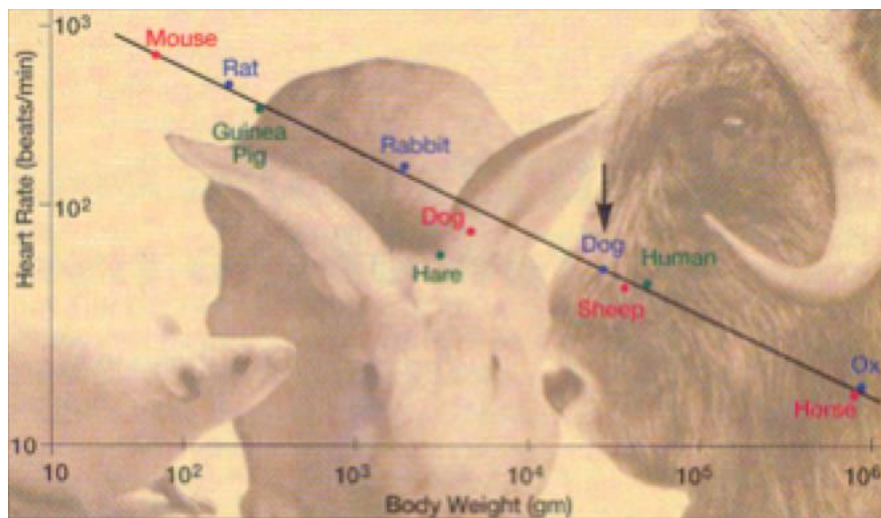
***NETWORK DYNAMICS DETERMINES  
THE PACE OF LIFE***

***IF THE SLOPE IS  $< 1$   
(SUBLINEAR)***

***PACE OF LIFE  
SLOWS DOWN***

***IF THE SLOPE IS  $> 1$   
(SUPERLINEAR)***

***PACE OF LIFE  
SPEEDS UP***





Research revealed almost half the nation found the slow pace of high streets to be their biggest shopping bugbear. Photo: Mercury Press

# Growth Equation

**Incoming “Social Metabolic Rate”**

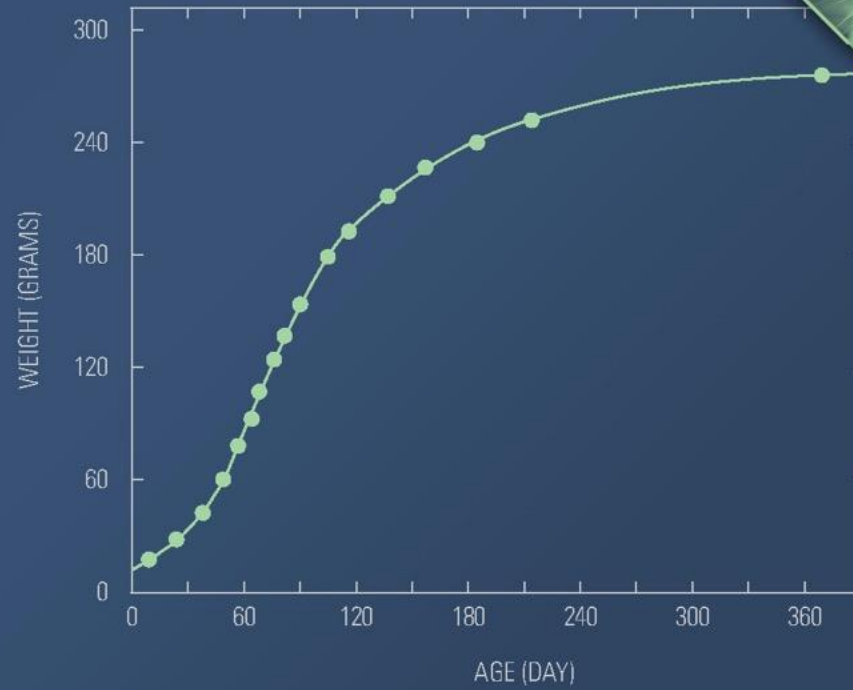
(Resources, Products, Patents,... .. “Energy” or  
“Dollar” equivalent)

≈ **Maintenance** (Repair, Replacement,  
Sustenance, ...)

+

**New Growth**

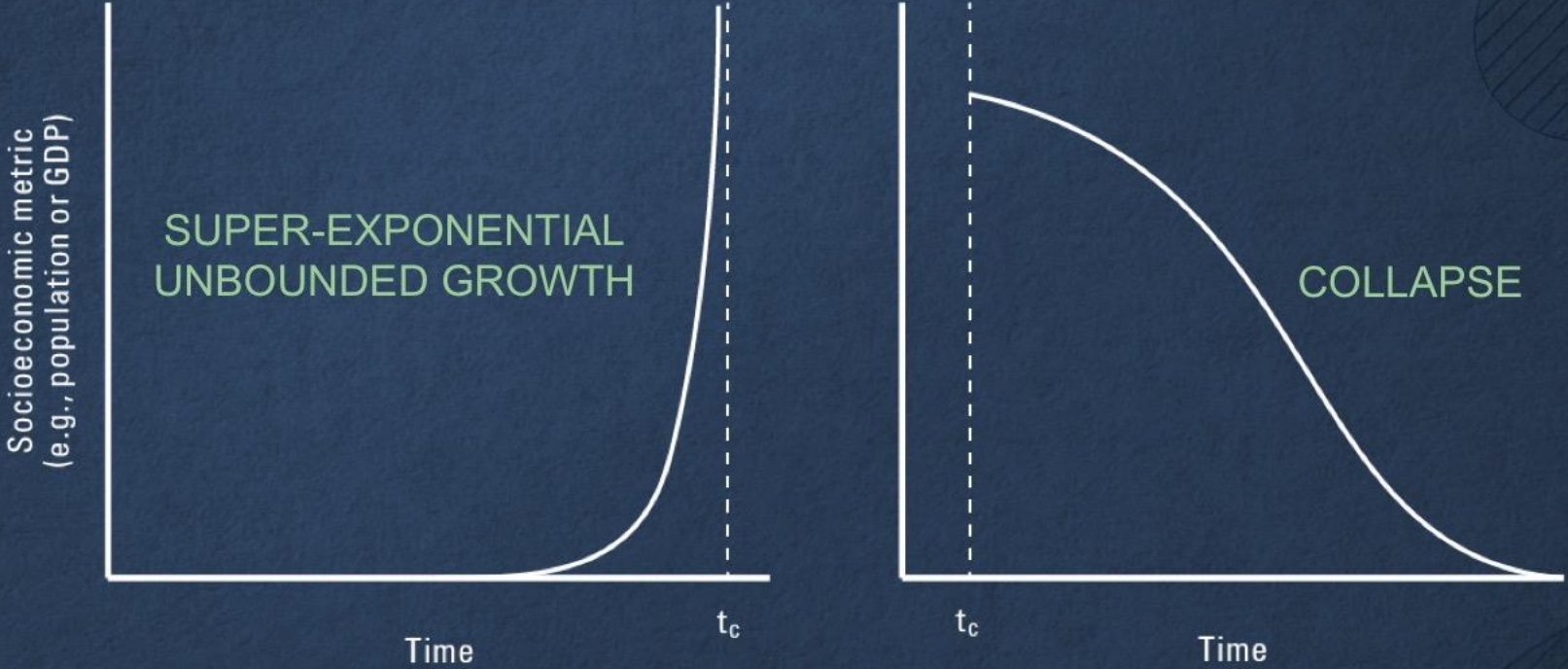
## GROWTH CURVE OF RAT

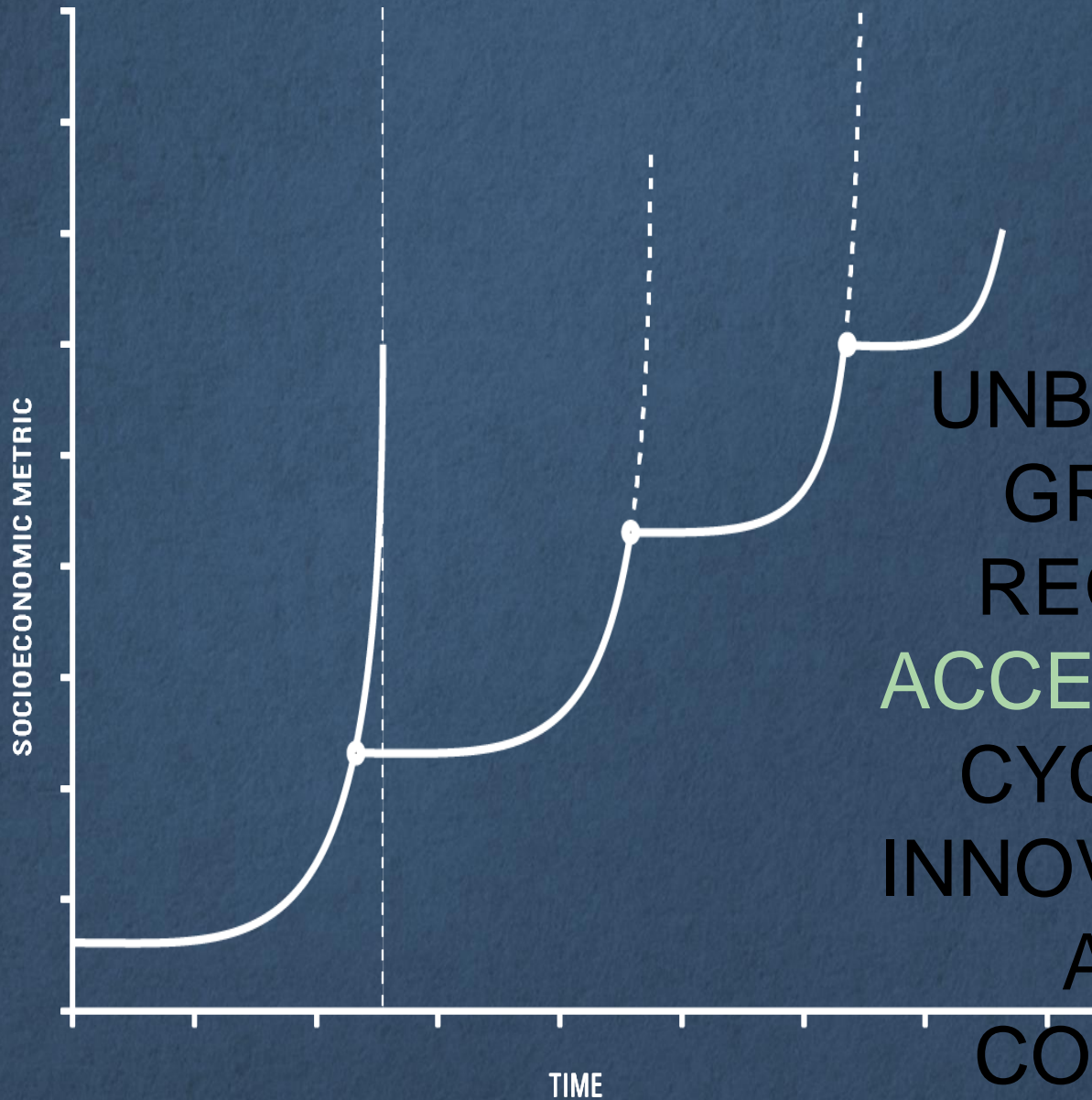


SUB-LINEAR SCALING LEADS  
TO BOUNDED GROWTH

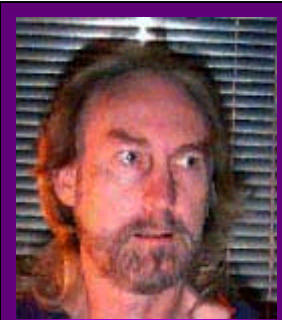


# SUPER-LINEAR



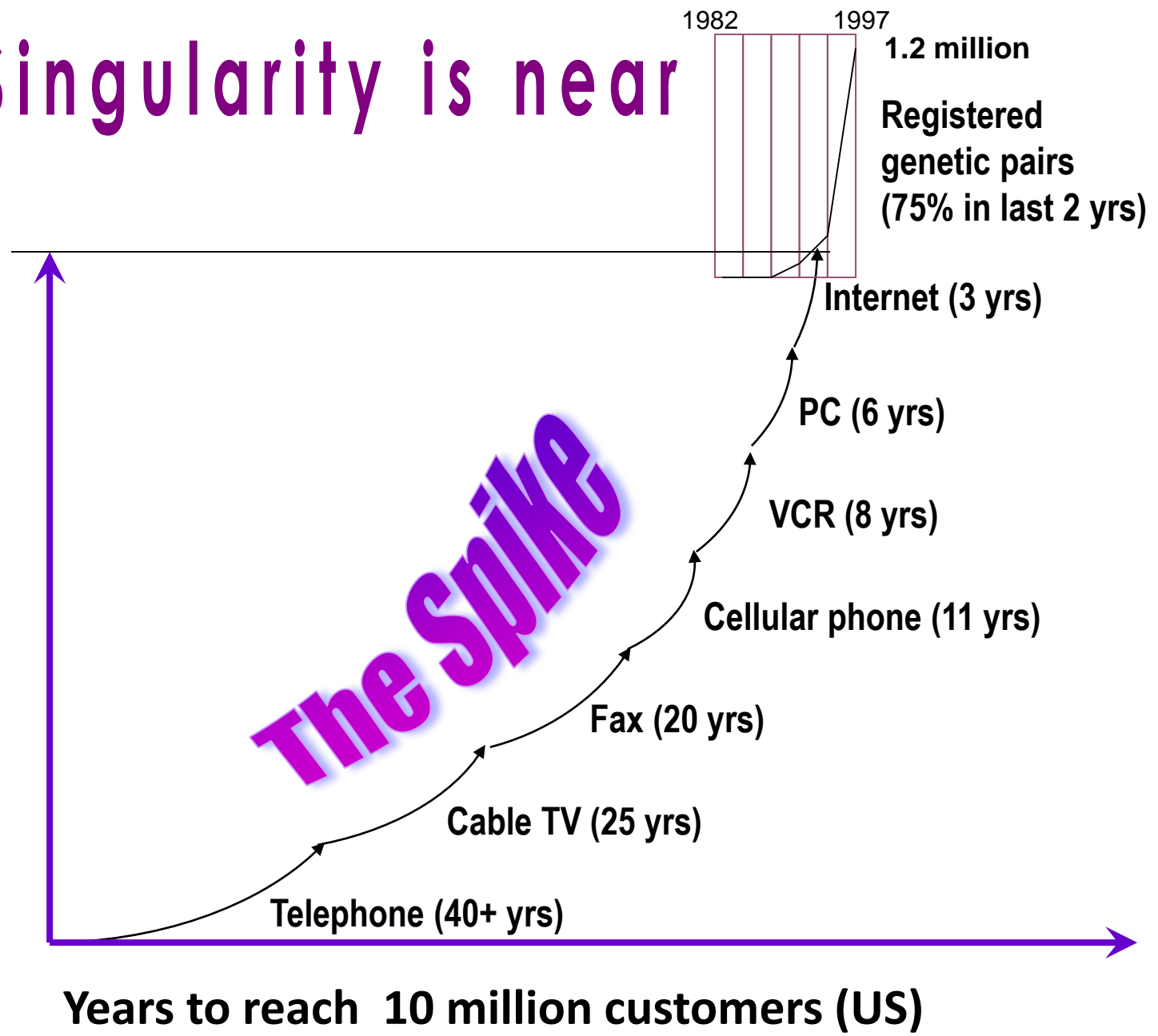


UNBOUNDED  
GROWTH  
REQUIRES  
**ACCELERATING**  
CYCLES OF  
INNOVATION TO  
AVOID  
COLLAPSE



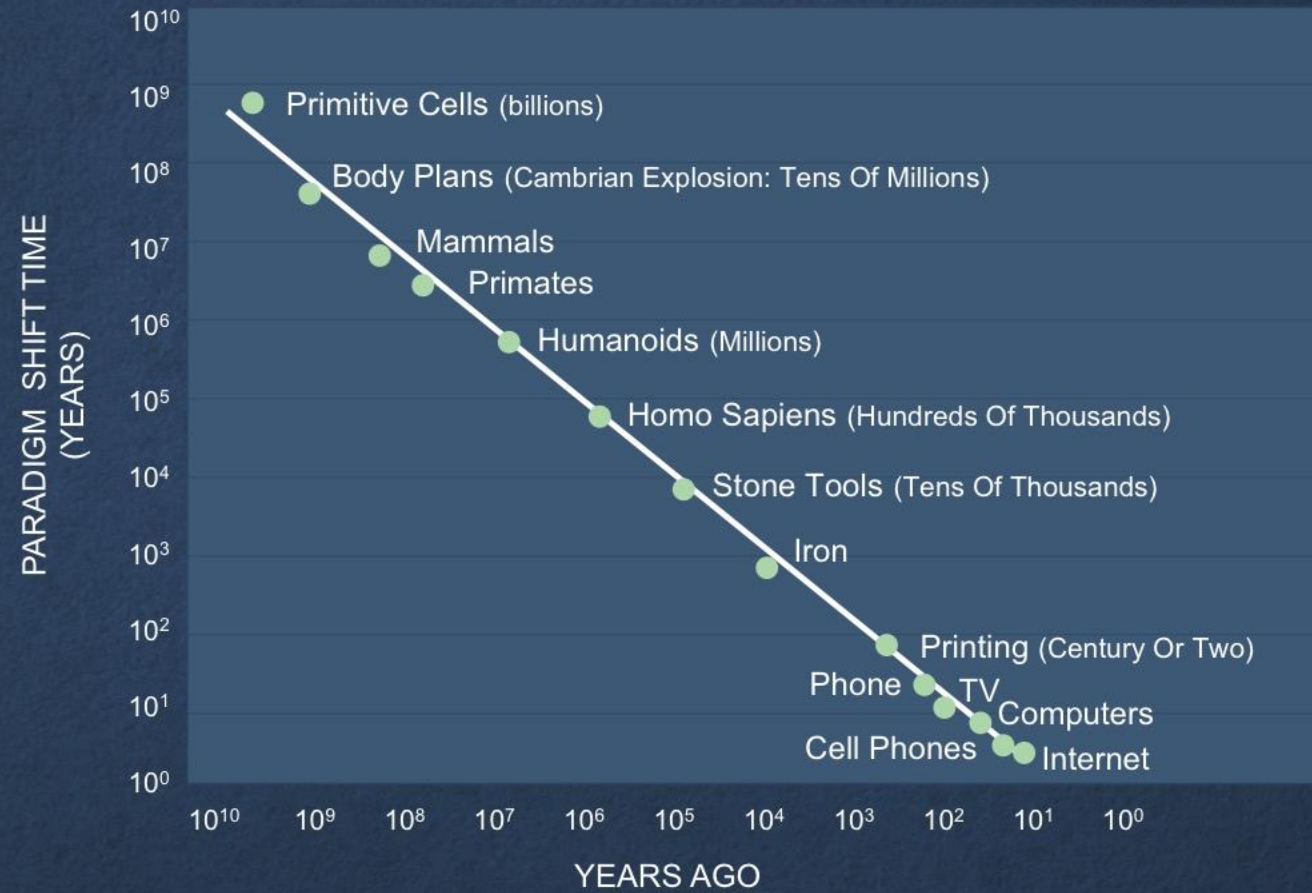
Damien Broderick

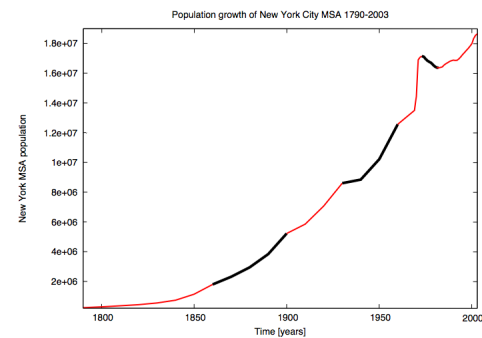
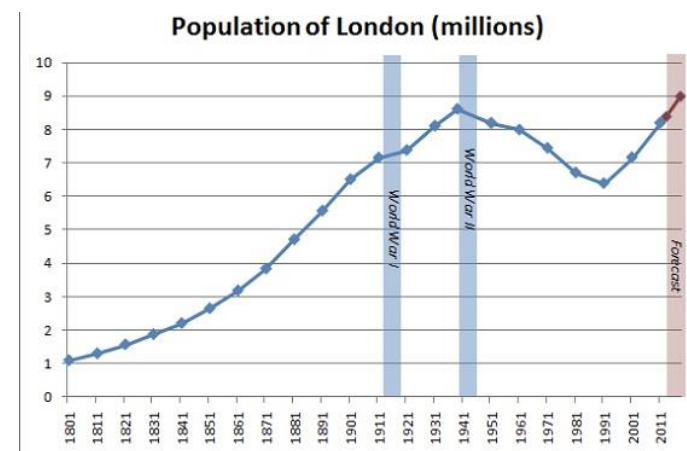
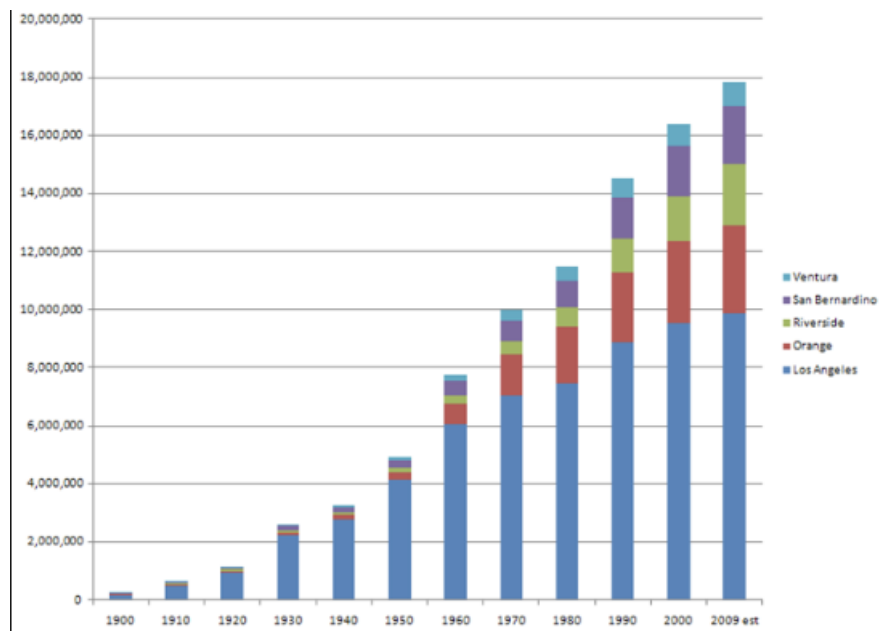
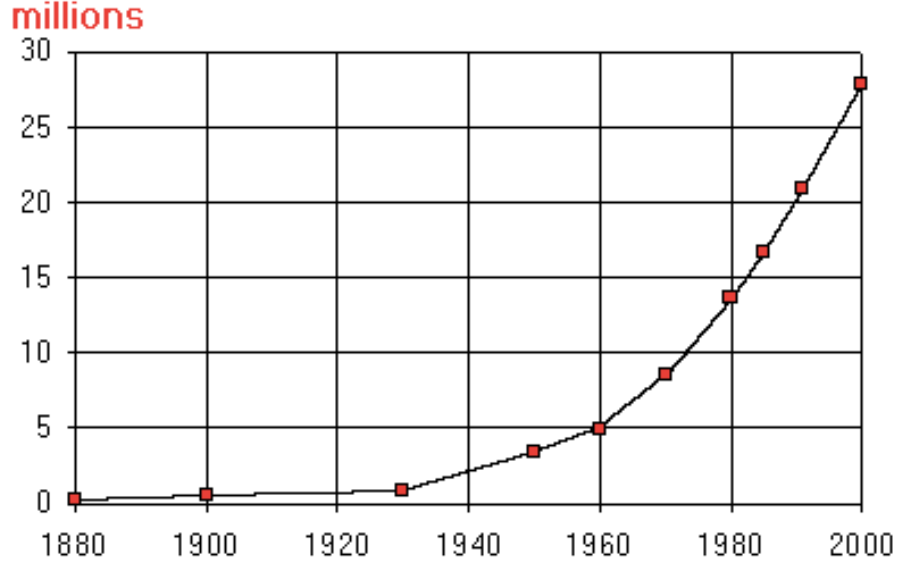
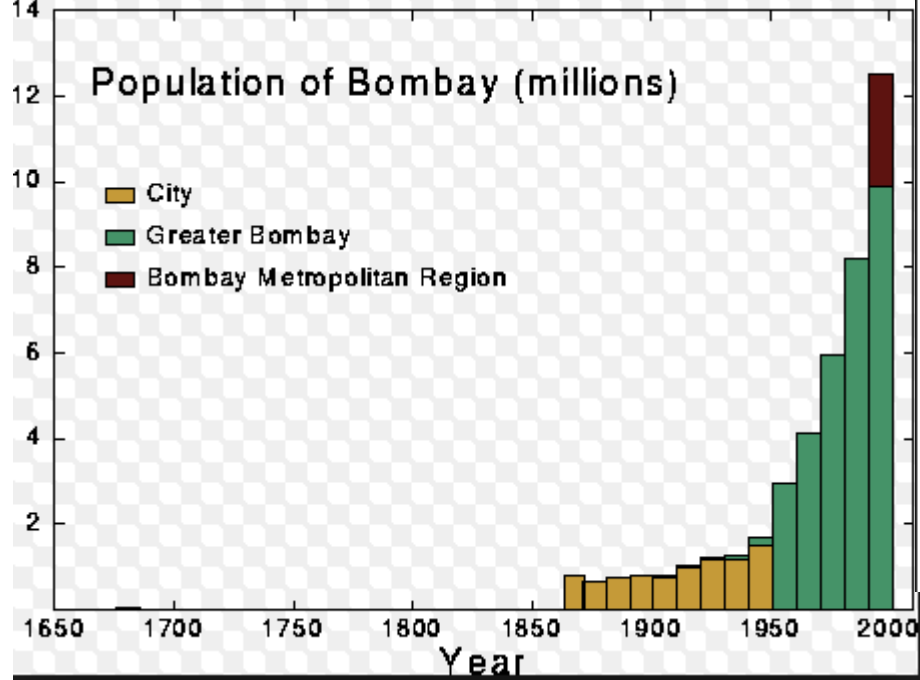
# Singularity is near



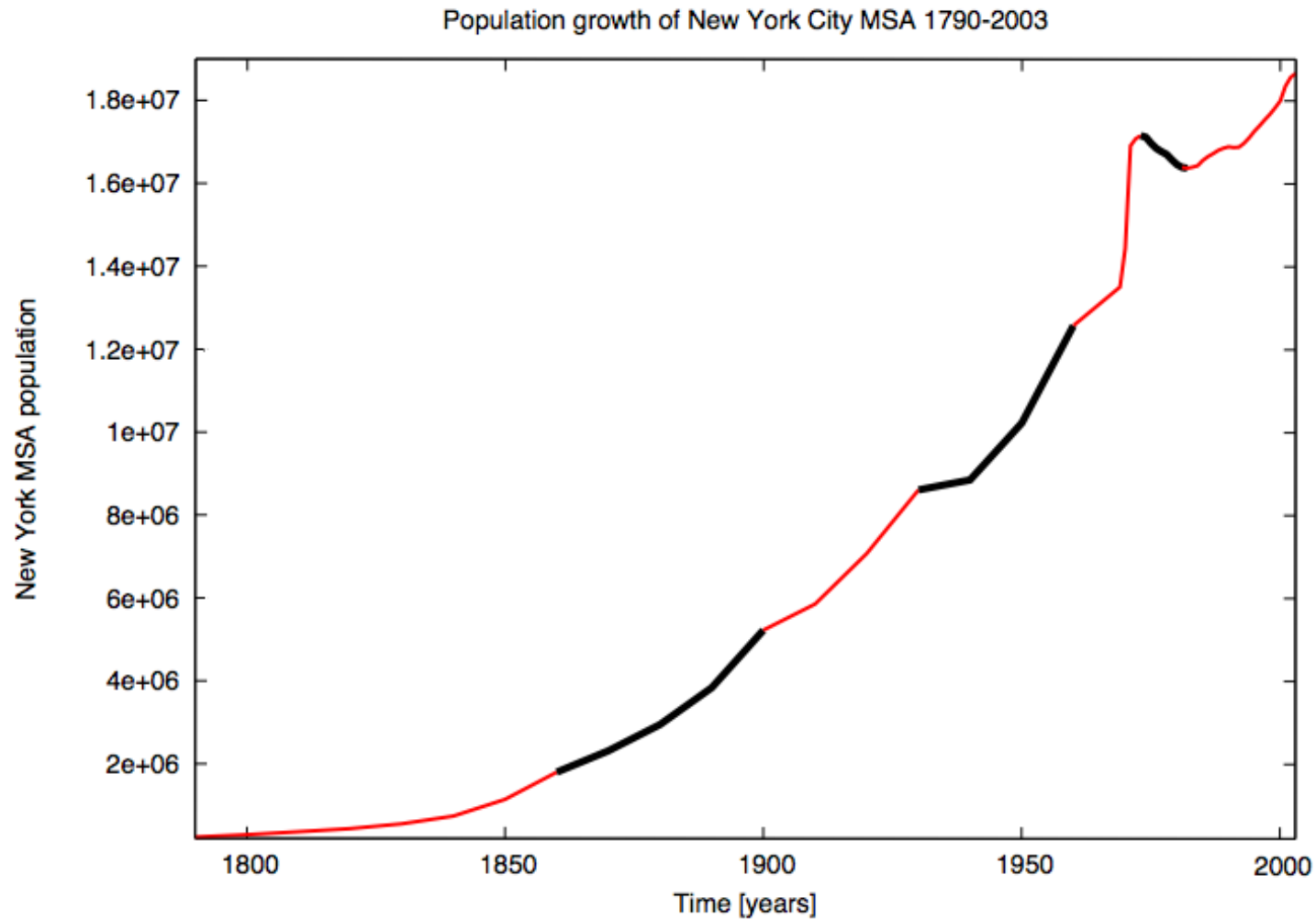
*Time*

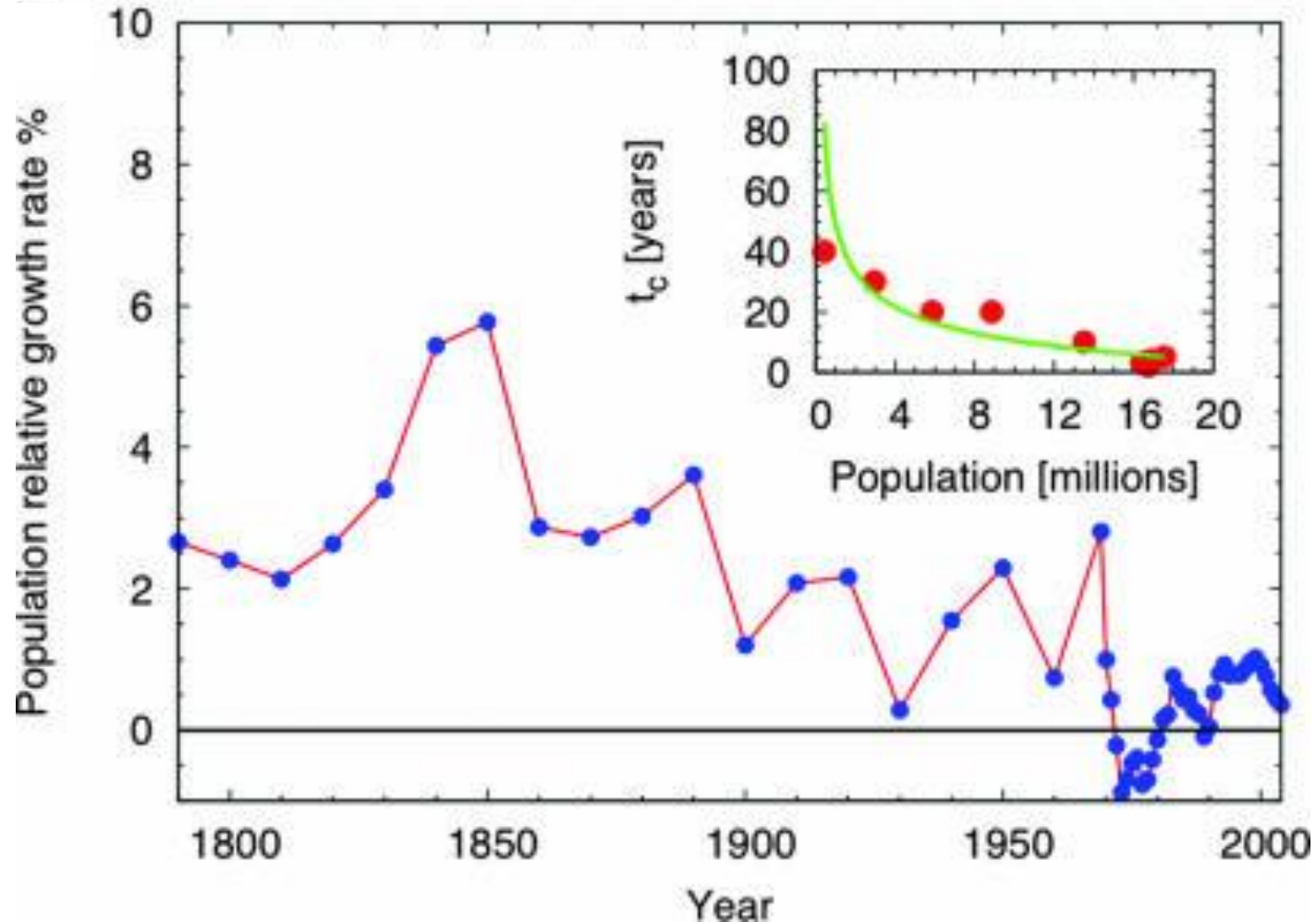
# SEQUENCE OF SINGULARITIES





# Population growth for New York City 1790 - 2003





**Successive cycles of superlinear innovation reset the singularity and postpone instability and subsequent collapse.** The relative population growth rate of New York City over time reveals periods of accelerated (super-exponential) growth. Successive shorter periods of super exponential growth appear, separated by brief periods of deceleration. (Inset)  $t_c$  for each of these periods vs. population at the onset of the cycle. Observations are well fit with  $\beta \equiv 1.09$  (green line)

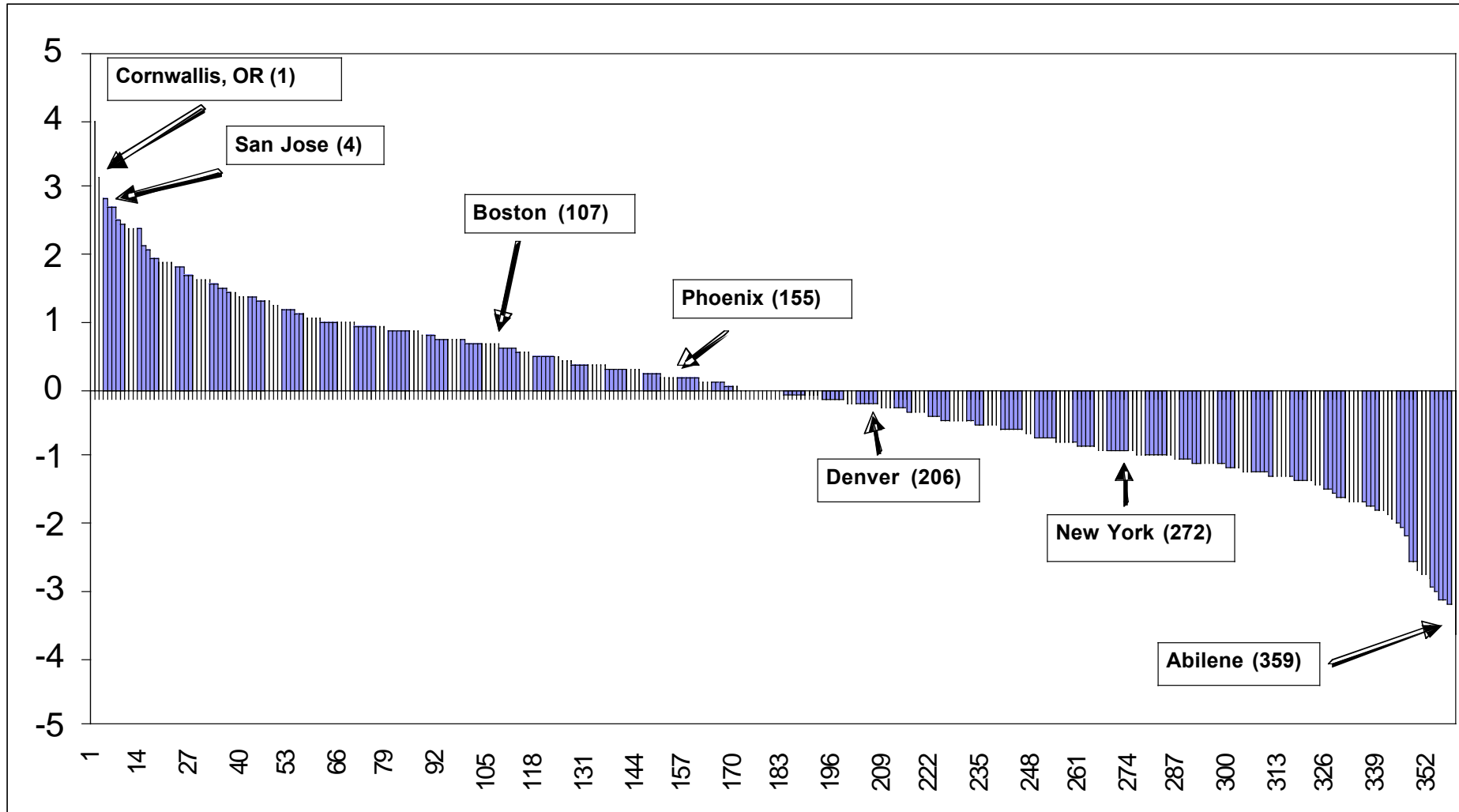
**Average “idealised, universal”  
characteristics of cities of a given size  
(constrained by underlying principles and  
dynamics of network structures -  
manifested in scaling laws)**

**vs.**

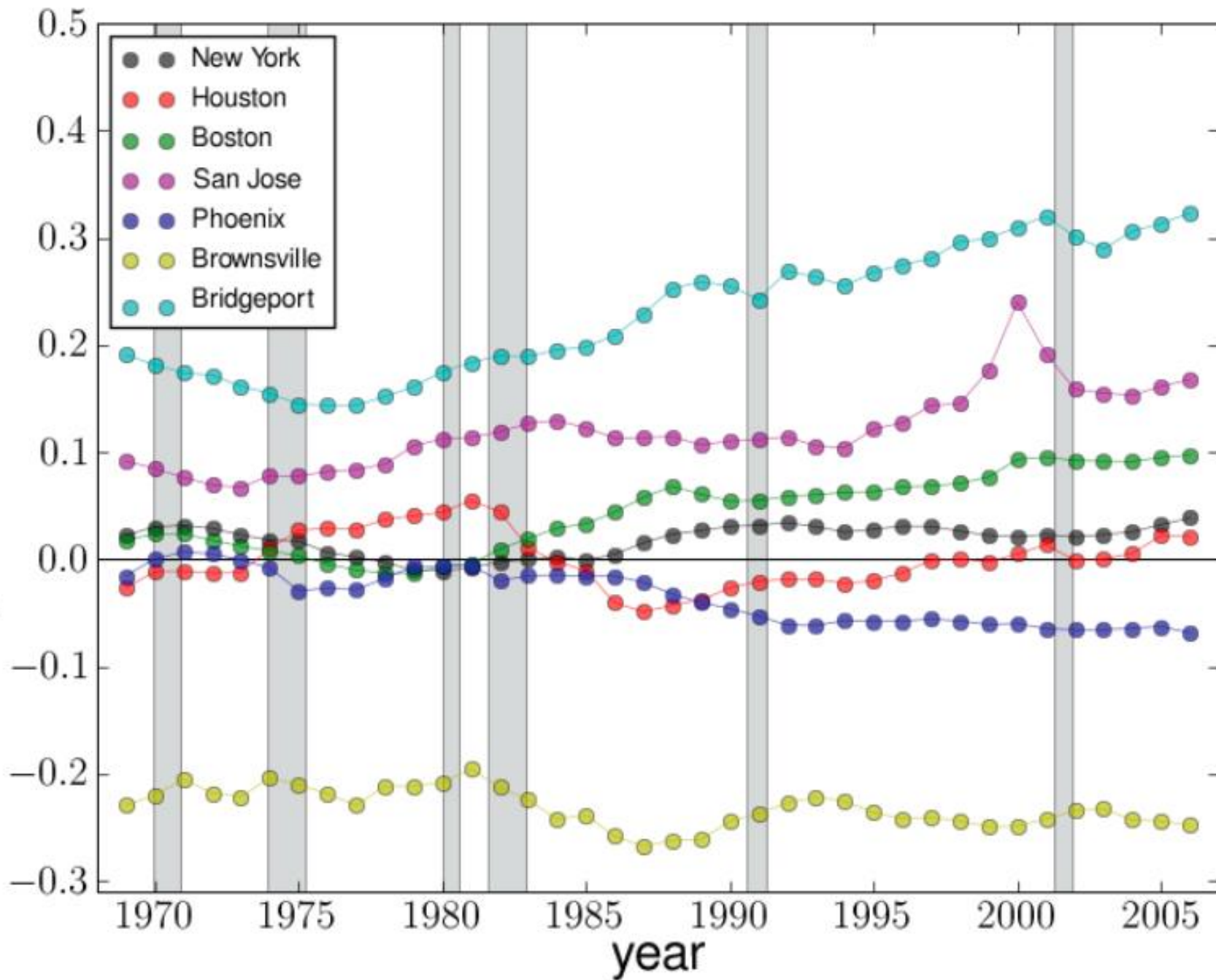
**Characteristics of specific cities as  
measured by deviations from scaling  
laws representing their individuality and  
local environment and conditions**

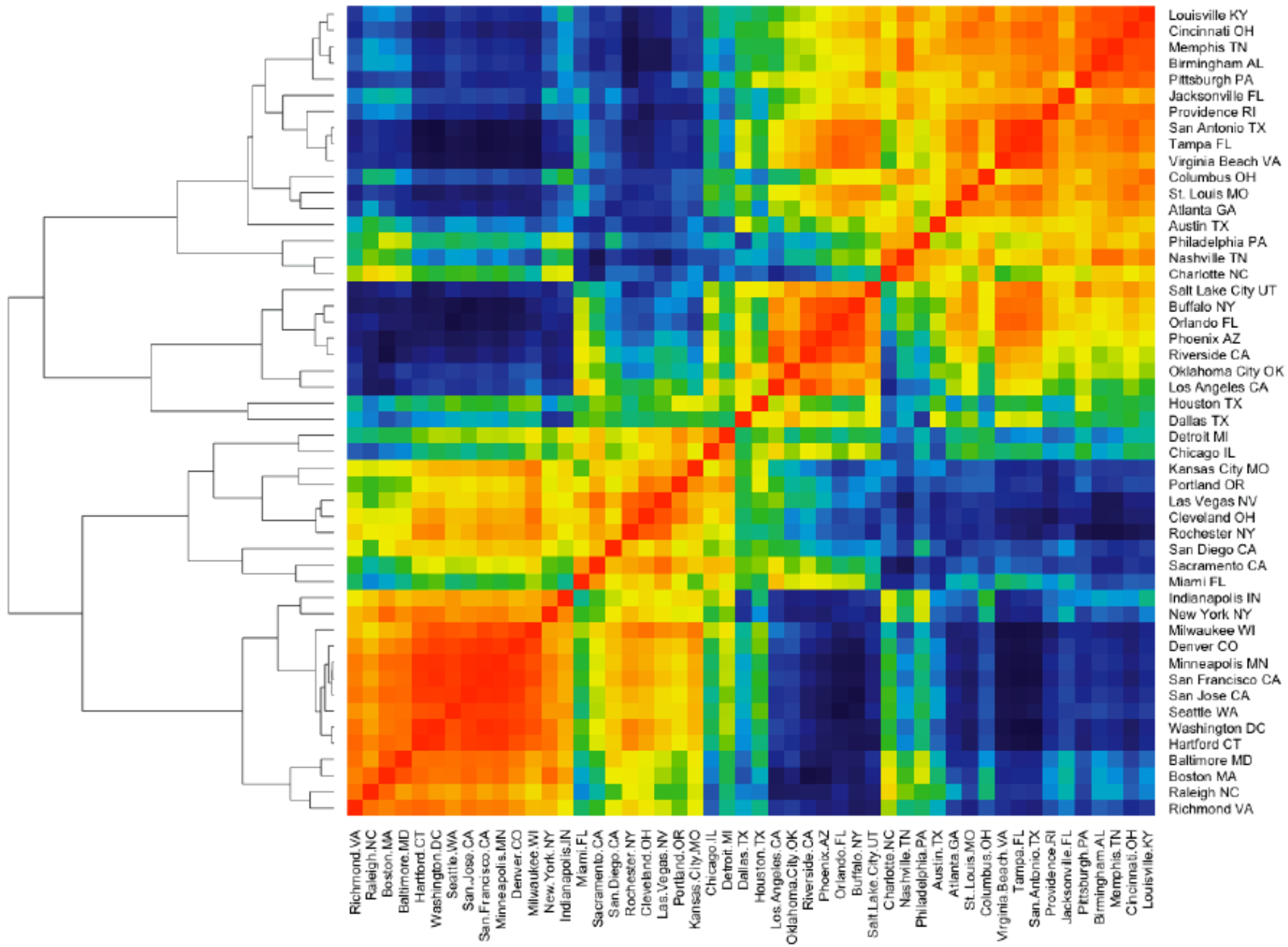


# 2003 Patenting Rankings

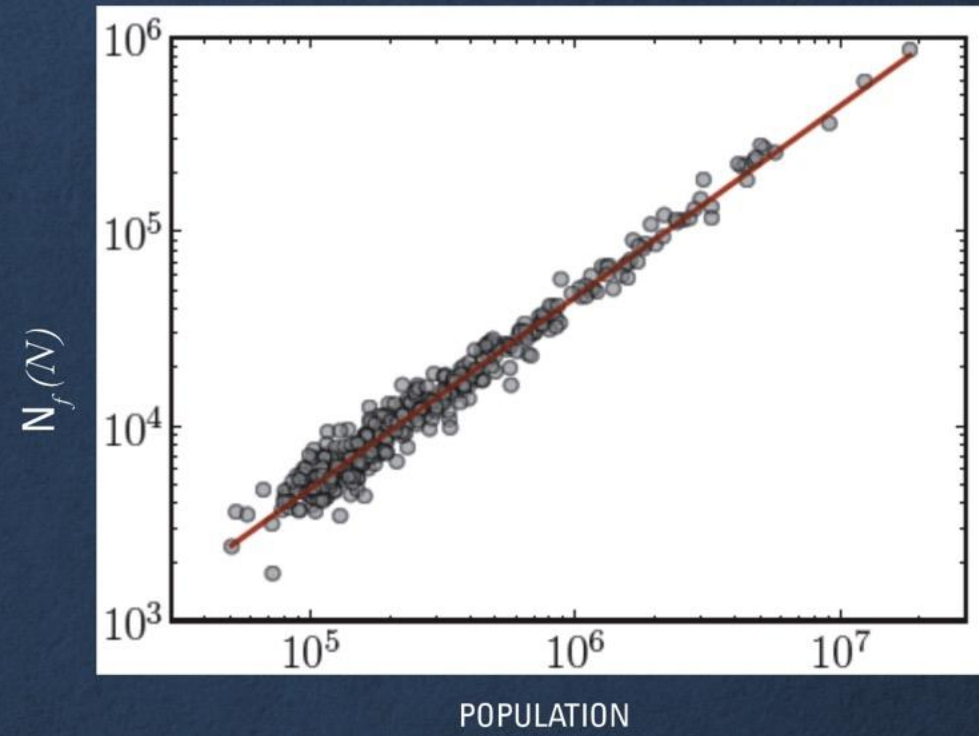


Scale Adjusted Urban Indicators





## NUMBER OF FIRMS



$$N_f \approx \eta N$$

$$\eta \approx 21.6^{-1}$$

$$N_e / N_f \approx 11.9$$

***SO, ON AVERAGE, EACH TIME THE  
POPULATION INCREASES BY  
ABOUT 21 PEOPLE, A NEW  
BUSINESS IS ADDED,  
REGARDLESS OF CITY SIZE!!***

***SO, ON AVERAGE, EACH TIME THE  
POPULATION INCREASES BY  
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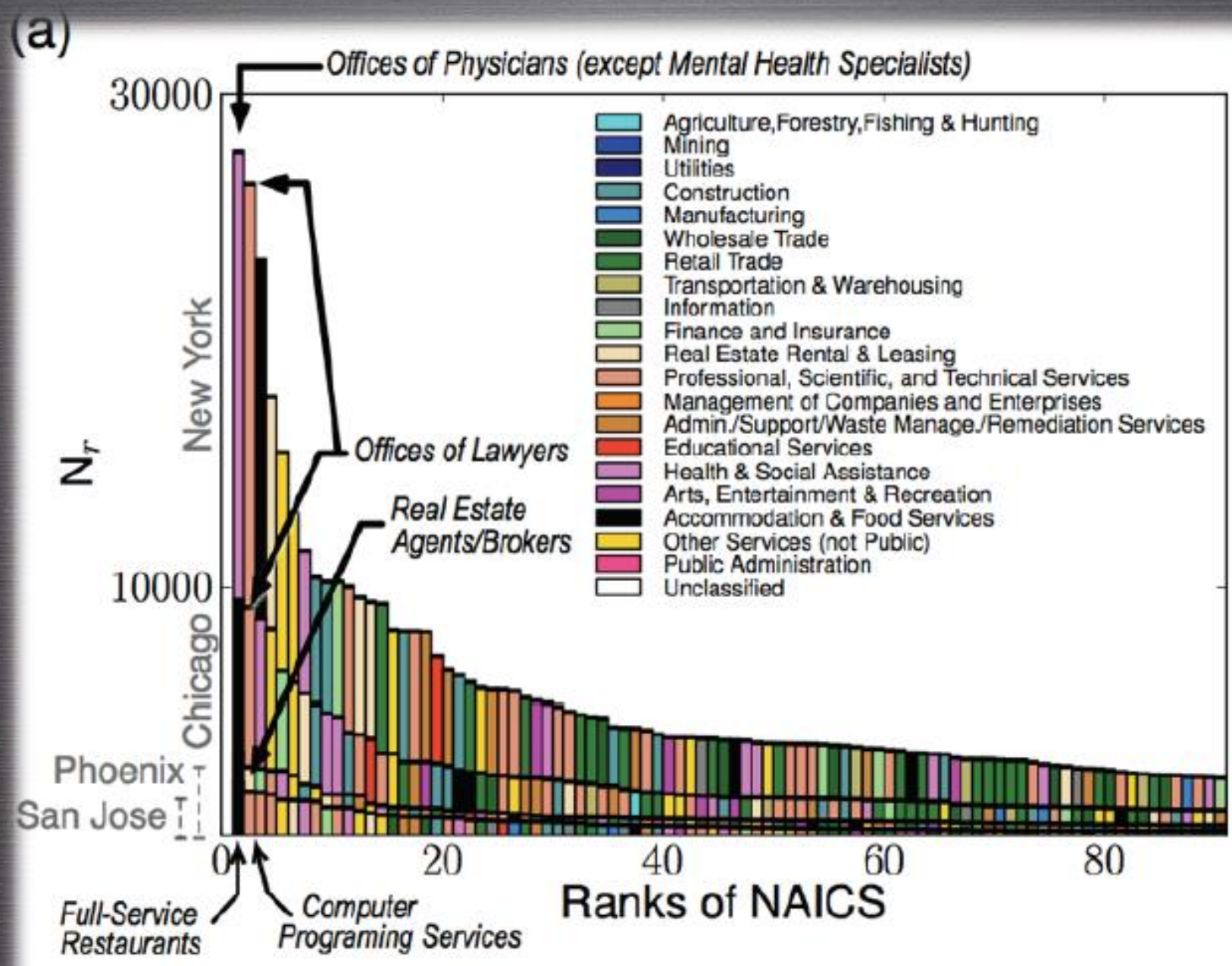
***AND***

***SO, ON AVERAGE, EACH TIME THE  
POPULATION INCREASES BY  
ABOUT 21 PEOPLE, A NEW  
BUSINESS IS ADDED,  
REGARDLESS OF CITY SIZE!!***

***AND***

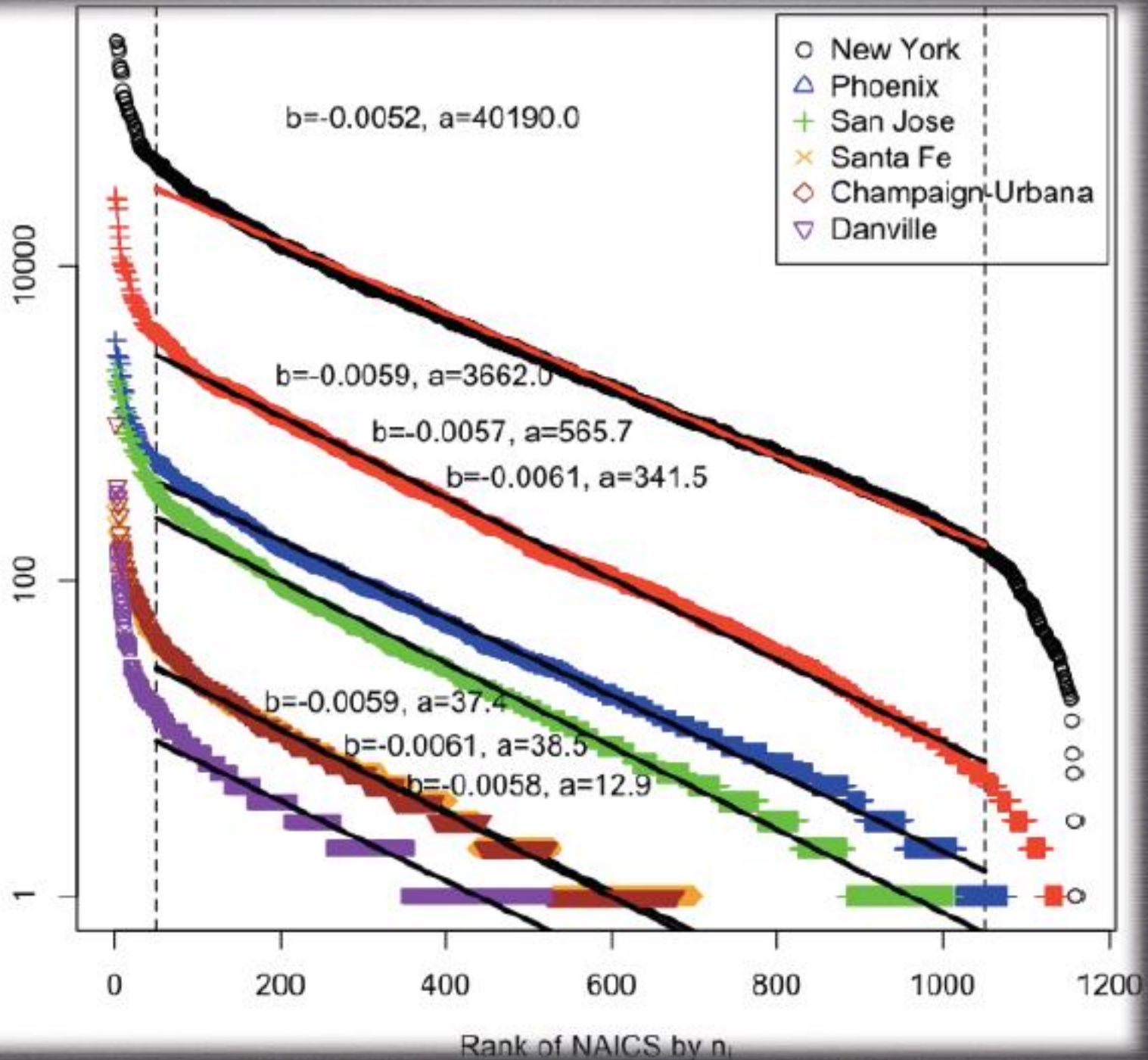
***ON AVERAGE, EACH BUSINESS  
EMPLOYS ABOUT 12 PEOPLE***

Number of Firms of given Industry,



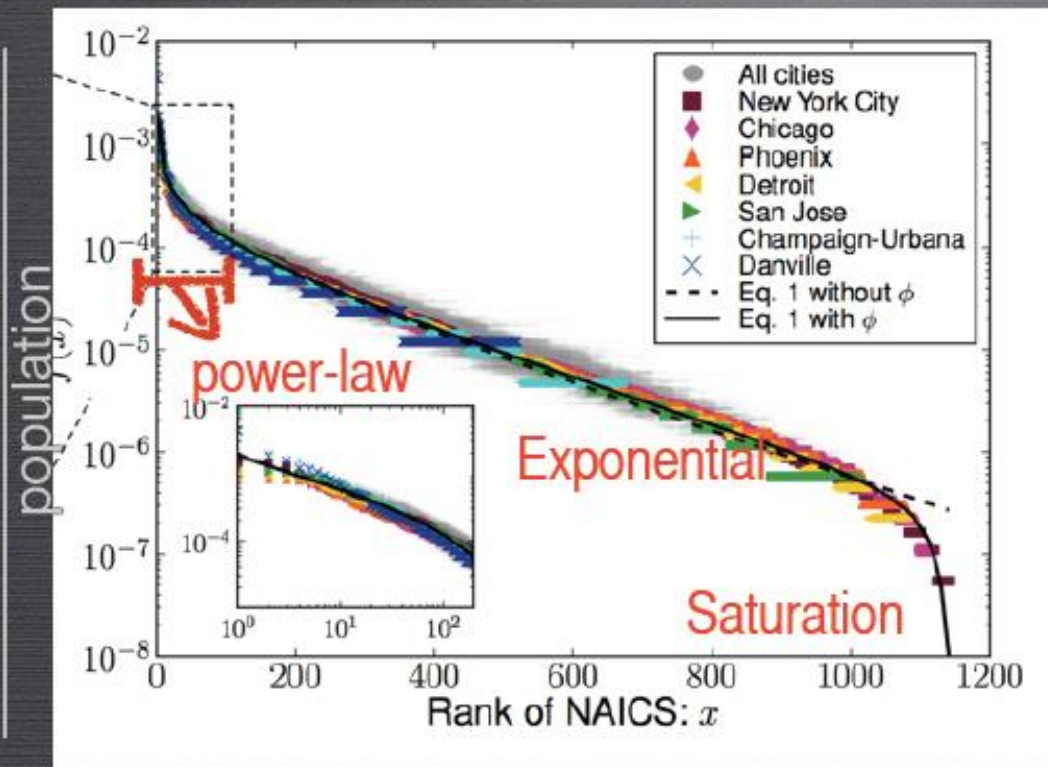


# Number of Firms of given Industry



# UNIVERSAL DISTRIBUTION

Number of Firms of given Industry



- REGARDLESS OF **DENSITY AND WEALTH**
- UNDERLYING DYNAMICS FOR INTERACTIONS OF BUSINESSES
- GENERALIZED SIMON-YULE MODEL:

$$\rho(N) = \frac{N\alpha(N)}{D(N)} \frac{1}{1 - \alpha(N)}$$

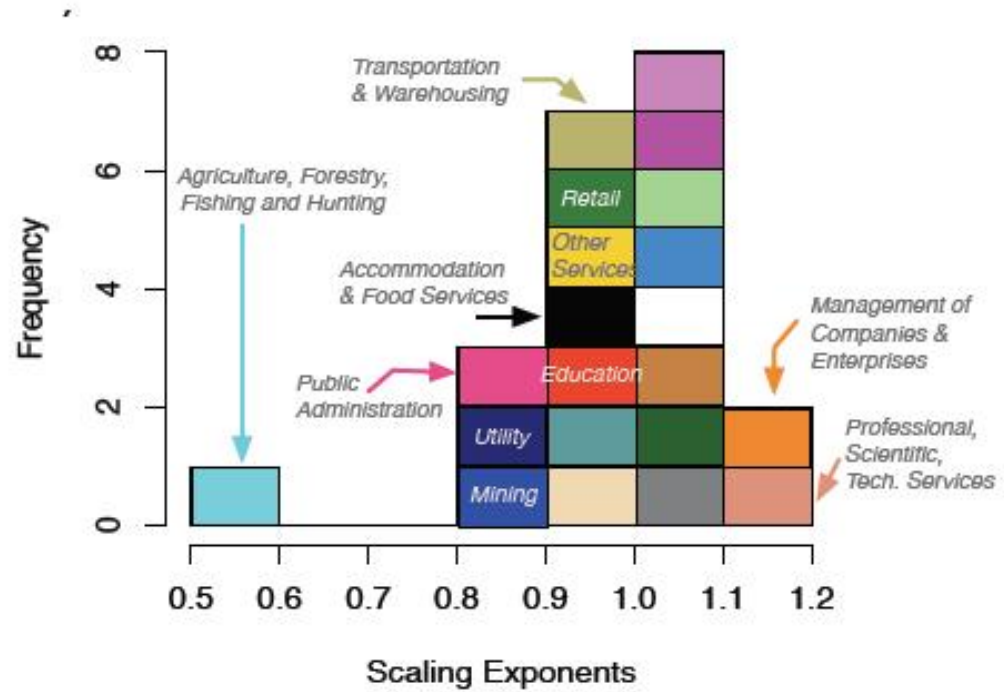
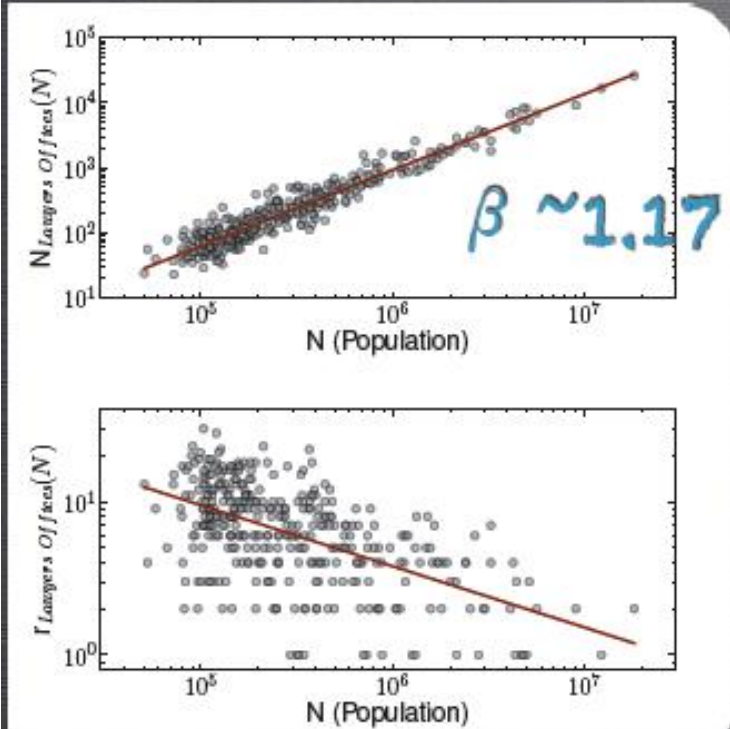
$\alpha \sim 0.5$  when small  $N$

$$\rho = 1/\gamma = 1 - \alpha$$

$$\alpha(N) = dD(N)/dN \approx x_0/N$$

$$p(x) \sim x^{-0.5} e^{-x/170} \phi(x, D_{max})$$

# SYSTEMATIC SHIFT OF SECTORS



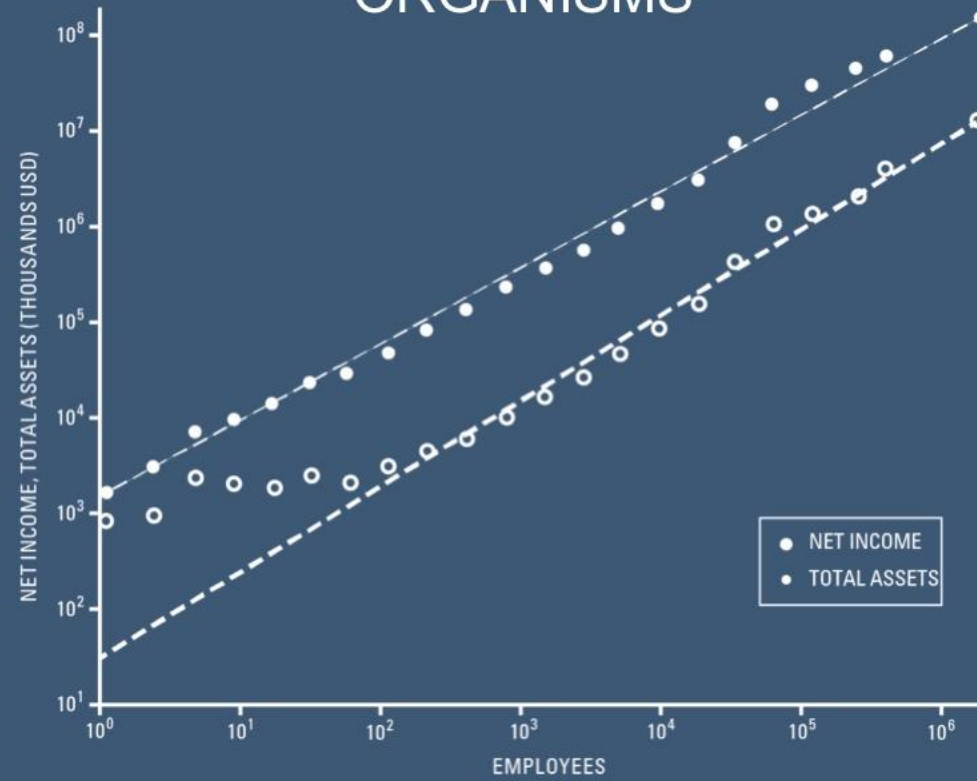
***GDP INCREASES  
EXPONENTIALLY WITH DIVERSITY***

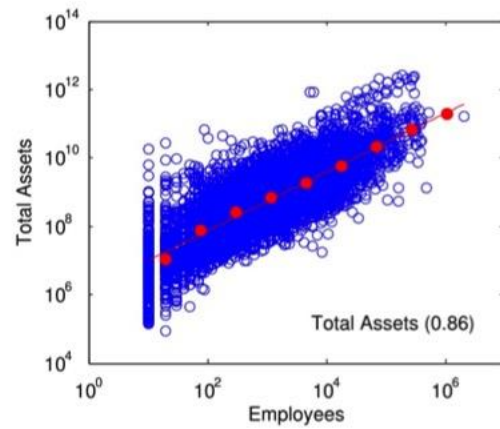
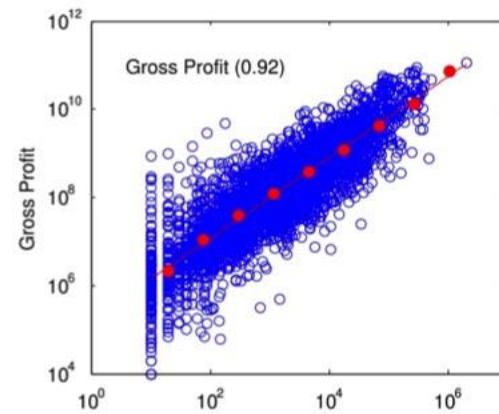
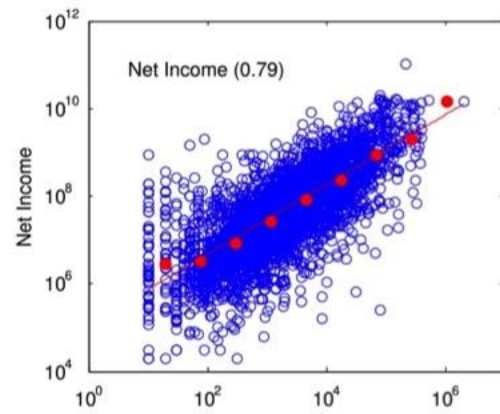
***(AND AS A POWER LAW WITH POPULATION SIZE)***

***GDP INCREASES  
EXPONENTIALLY WITH DIVERSITY***

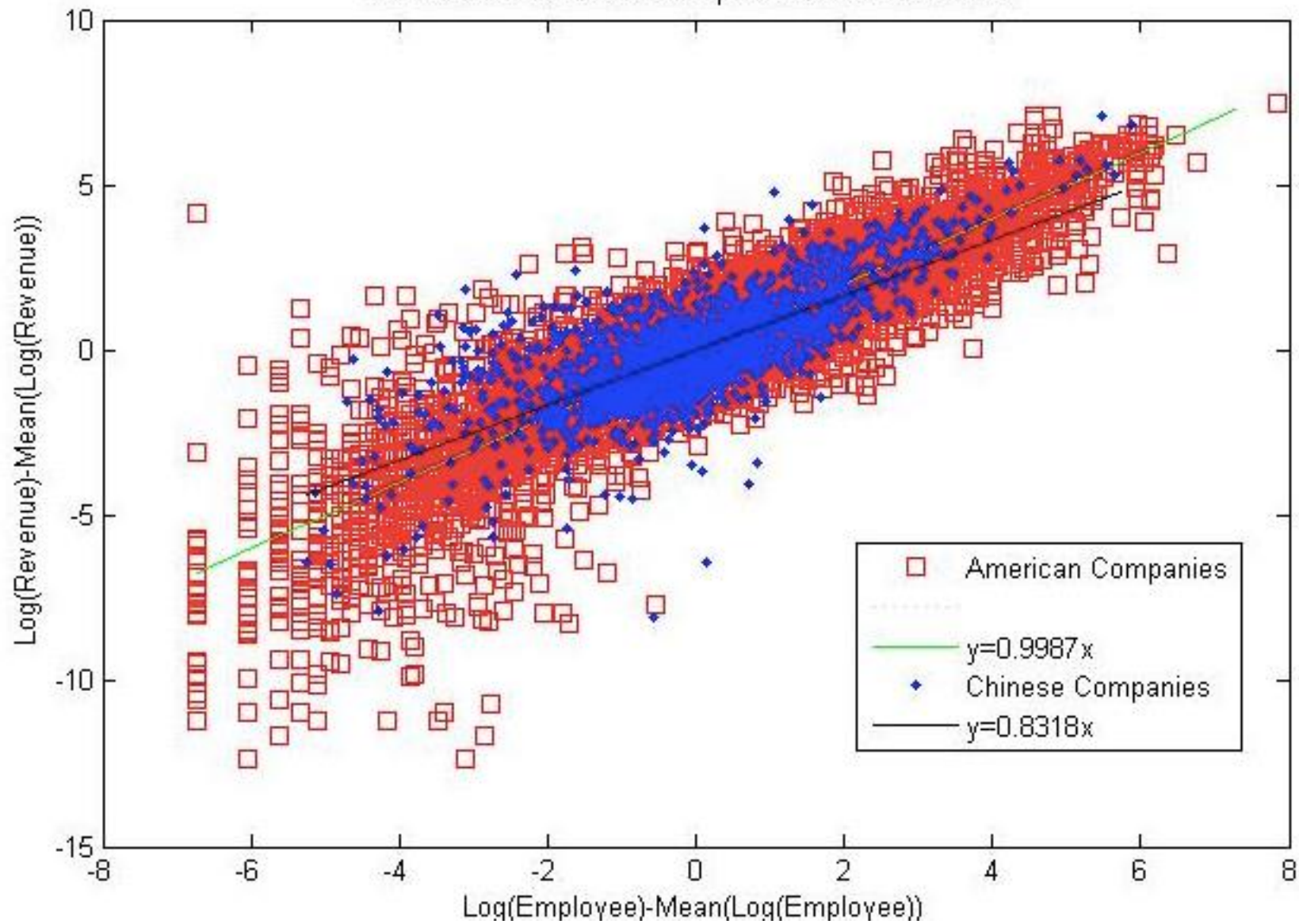
***WITH EACH ADDITIONAL BUSINESS  
CATEGORY, GDP INCREASES BY ~ 0.5%***

# COMPANIES SCALE SUB-LINEARLY ANALOGOUS TO ORGANISMS



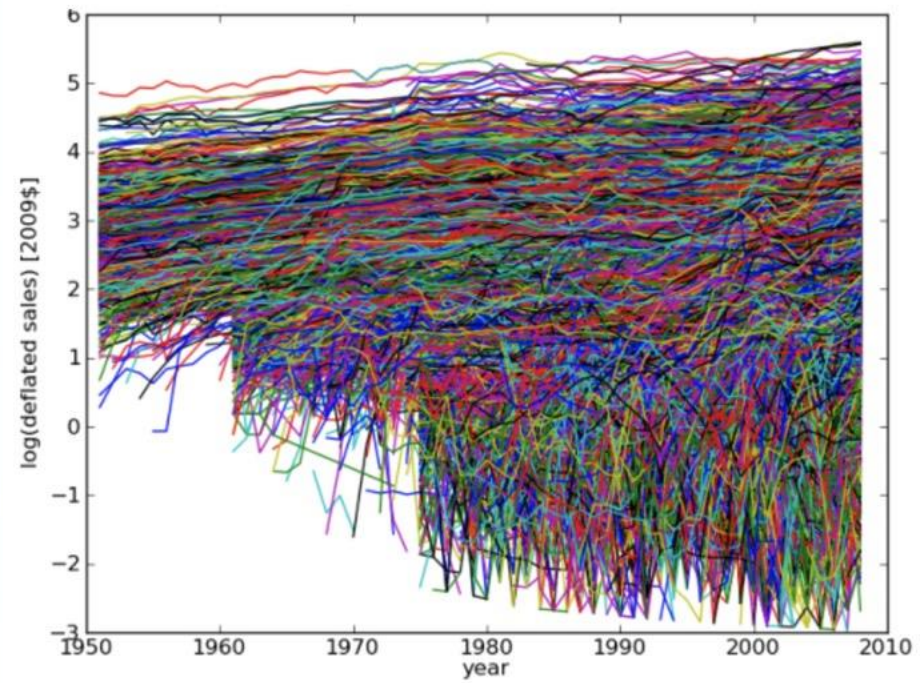


American and Chinese Companies Normalized Data

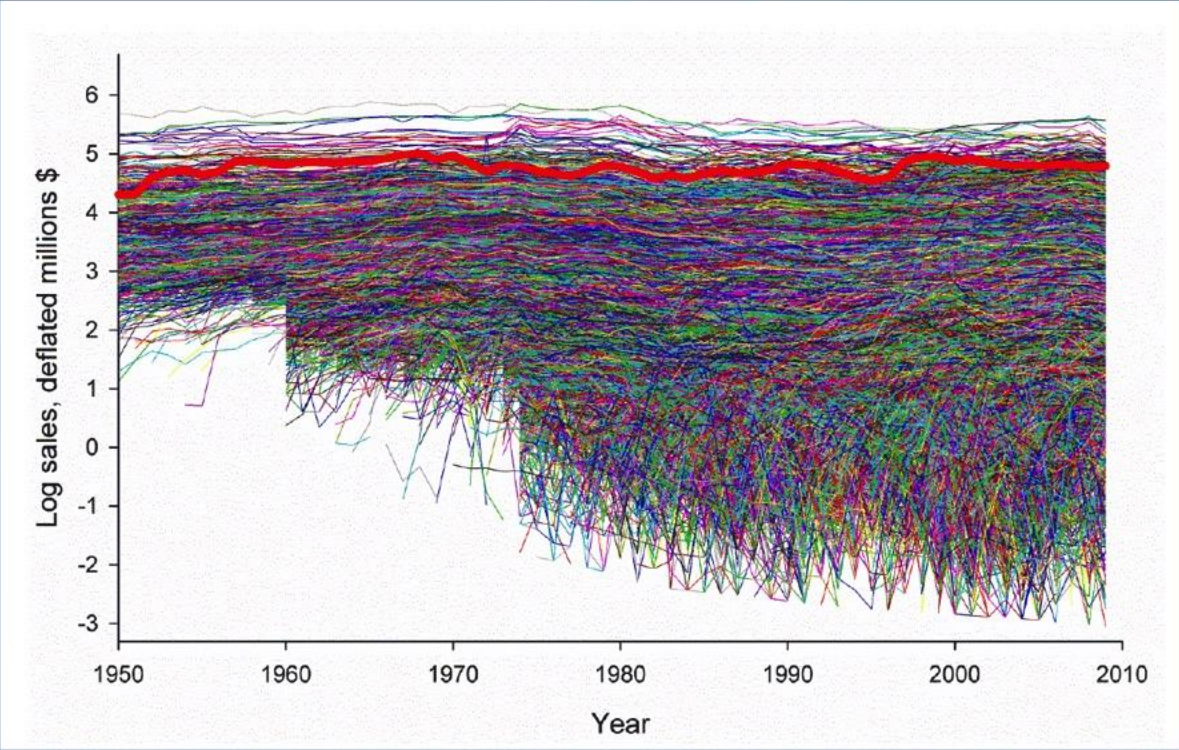




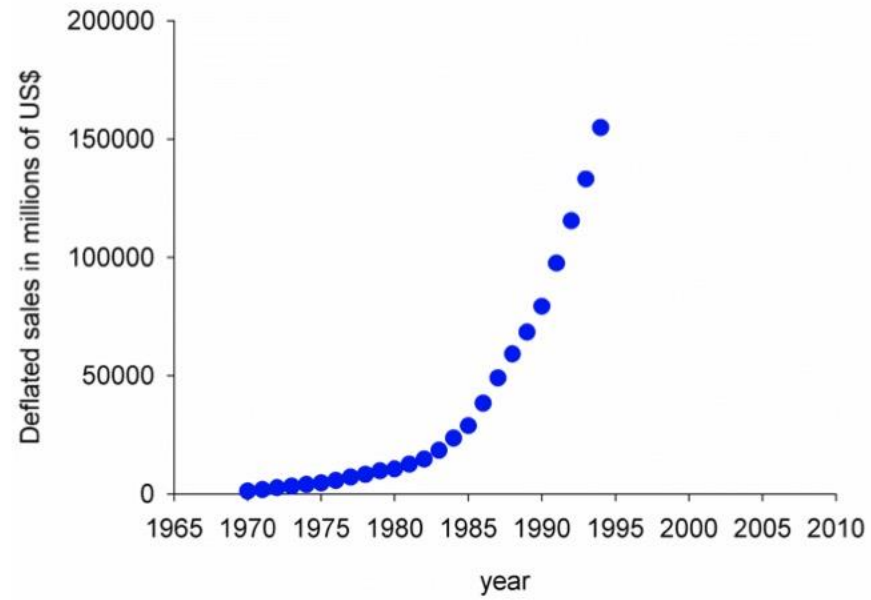
## GROWTH OF FIRMS



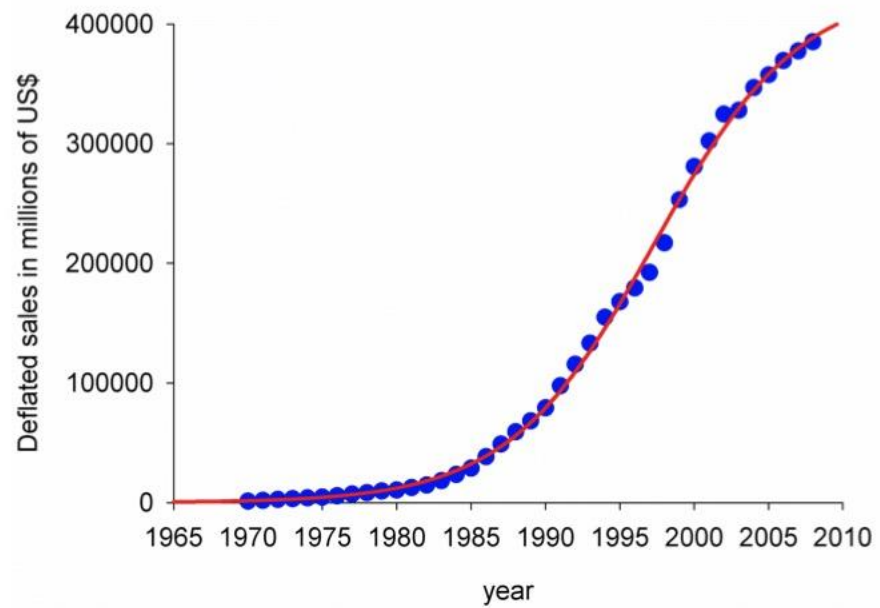
# GROWTH OF FIRMS RELATIVE TO GDP



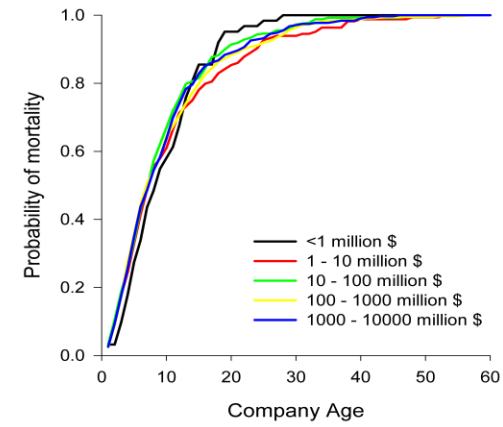
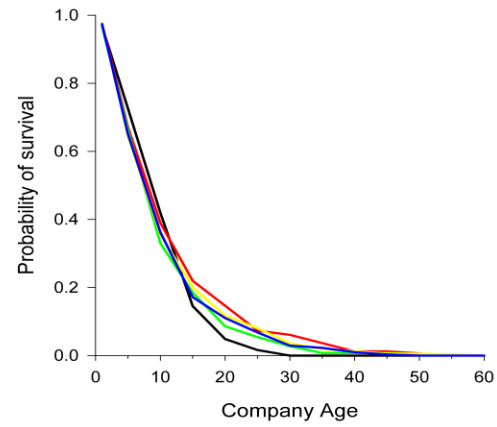
## WALMART, 1970-1994



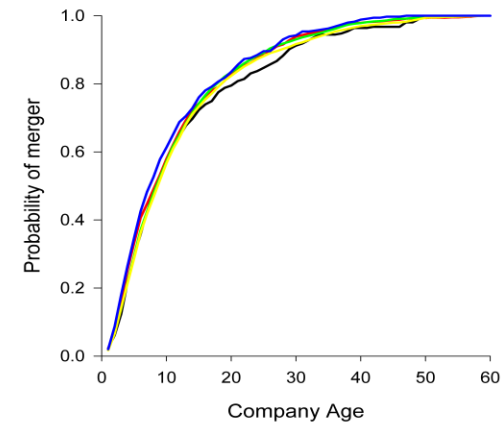
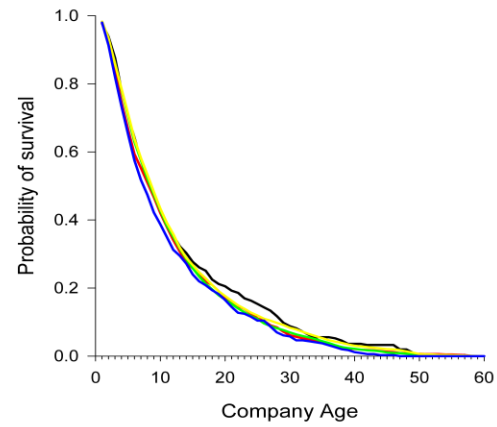
## WALMART, 1970-2008



Bankrupt or liquidation



Acquisition or merger



Our “natural” metabolic rate *~90 watts*

Our social metabolic rate *~11,000  
watts*

We are equivalent to a  
*30,000 kg Gorilla*





# 12 Elephants







THIS TOWN AIN'T  
BIG ENOUGH FER  
THE BOTH OF US.



IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE WE CAN BOTH  
PROCURE OUR DESIRED GOODS 'N  
SERVICES WITHOUT ENCOUNTERIN' ONE  
ANOTHER, I ESTIMATE WE NEED TO  
TRIPLE THE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES.



THANKS TO SCALIN'  
LAWS, WE ONLY NEED  
TO DOUBLE THE  
POPULATION.



I RECKON WE COULD REVITALIZE  
THE DOWNTOWN AREA BY  
FINANCIN' HIGH DENSITY  
RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES  
AND IMPROVIN' PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION.



