# /ɛg/-raising is straightforward? I BEG to differ!
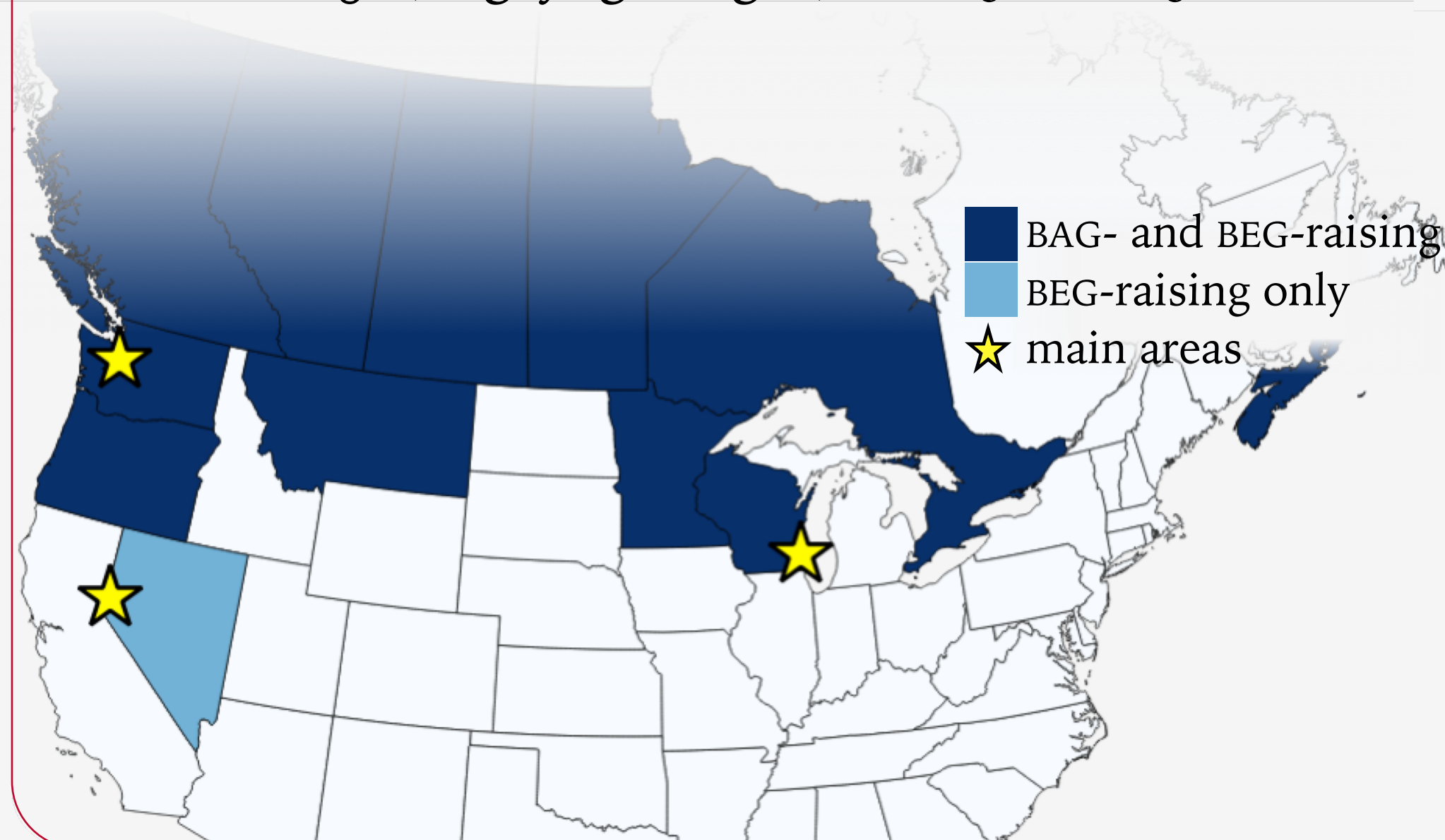## Joey Stanley

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## Pre-velar raising

- Some varieties of North American English raise certain front vowels before voiced velars. (Zeller 1997; Labov *et al* 2006, Wassink 2015, Stanley 2017, Swan 2016, Bar-El *et al* 2017, McLarty *et al* 2016, Gunter *et al.* 2017, etc.)

### Vowel classes
- VAGUE: /eg/ (*bagel, flagrant*) → [eg]
- BEG: /ɛg/ (*egg, legs, regular*) → [eg]
- BAG: /æg/ (*snag, flag, dragon*) → [ɛg] or [eg]



BAG- and BEG-raising
BEG-raising only
★ main areas

## This Study
### Remaining questions
- BEG is only studied in areas with BAG-raising.
  - What about other places?
- Short, common words have only been studied.
  - What about other words?

### Anecdotal observation
- I'm from St. Louis and I have BEG-raising in most words, except a few like *integrity*, *segregate*, *negligent*, and *regulate*.
- St. Louis is not known to have BEG-raising, and these words have not been included in other studies.

### Hypotheses
1. BEG-raising without BAG-raising is more widespread than Nevada.
2. BEG-raising is less common when it is followed by a sonorant.

## Degree of BEG-raising by word



sonorant | bake | intermediate | deck | back | other

## Degree of BEG-raising by state



### Legend
BEG-raising per person
- <7%
- 7%–20%
- 20%–37%
- 37%–100%

BEG-raising per state
- <7%
- 7%–20%
- 20%–37%
- 37%–100%

## Conclusions
✓ **BEG-raising is more widespread**
- It is clear that BEG-raising does occur in speakers across North America.
  - It may be part of a Western American English generally
  - Also found in the Midwest, particularly in St. Louis (influence from the North?)
  - Less common in the Northeast and South.
- Primarily in or near regions with BAG-raising.
  - Which came first? If BAG-raising then it's a push chain. If BEG-raising then it's a pull chain.

✓ **Following sonorant is relevant**
- When the velar is followed by a sonorant, less BEG-raising occurs.
- A possible hierarchy: glides > nasals > liquids
  - This can be tested empirically! Future work: acoustic data on real and nonce words.
- If BEG is merged with VAGUE, it looks like a merger by phonological transfer (Dinkin 2016).
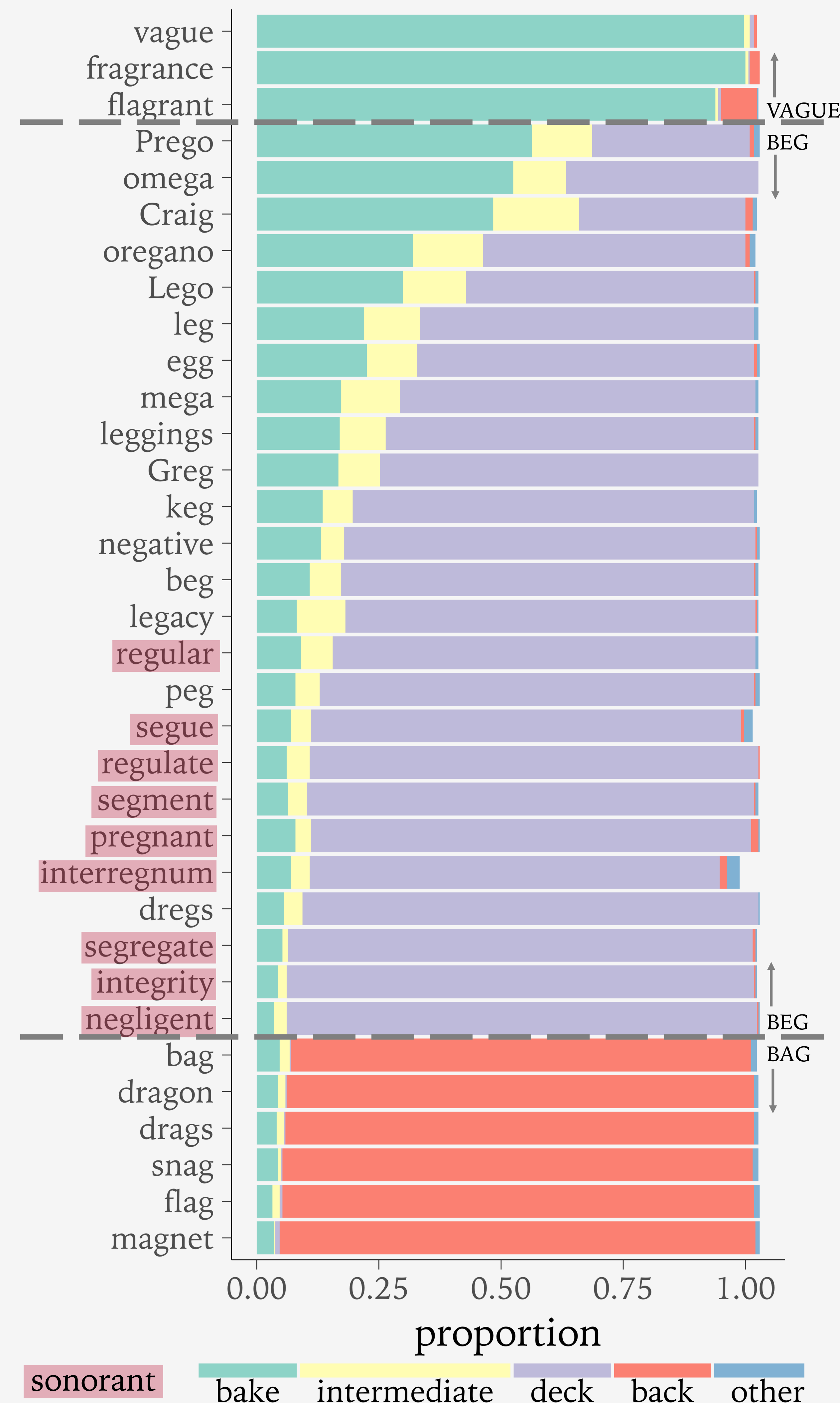
## Data
### Word selection
- 24 BEG words (that's most of them actually)
- 3 VAGUE words and 6 BAG words for controls

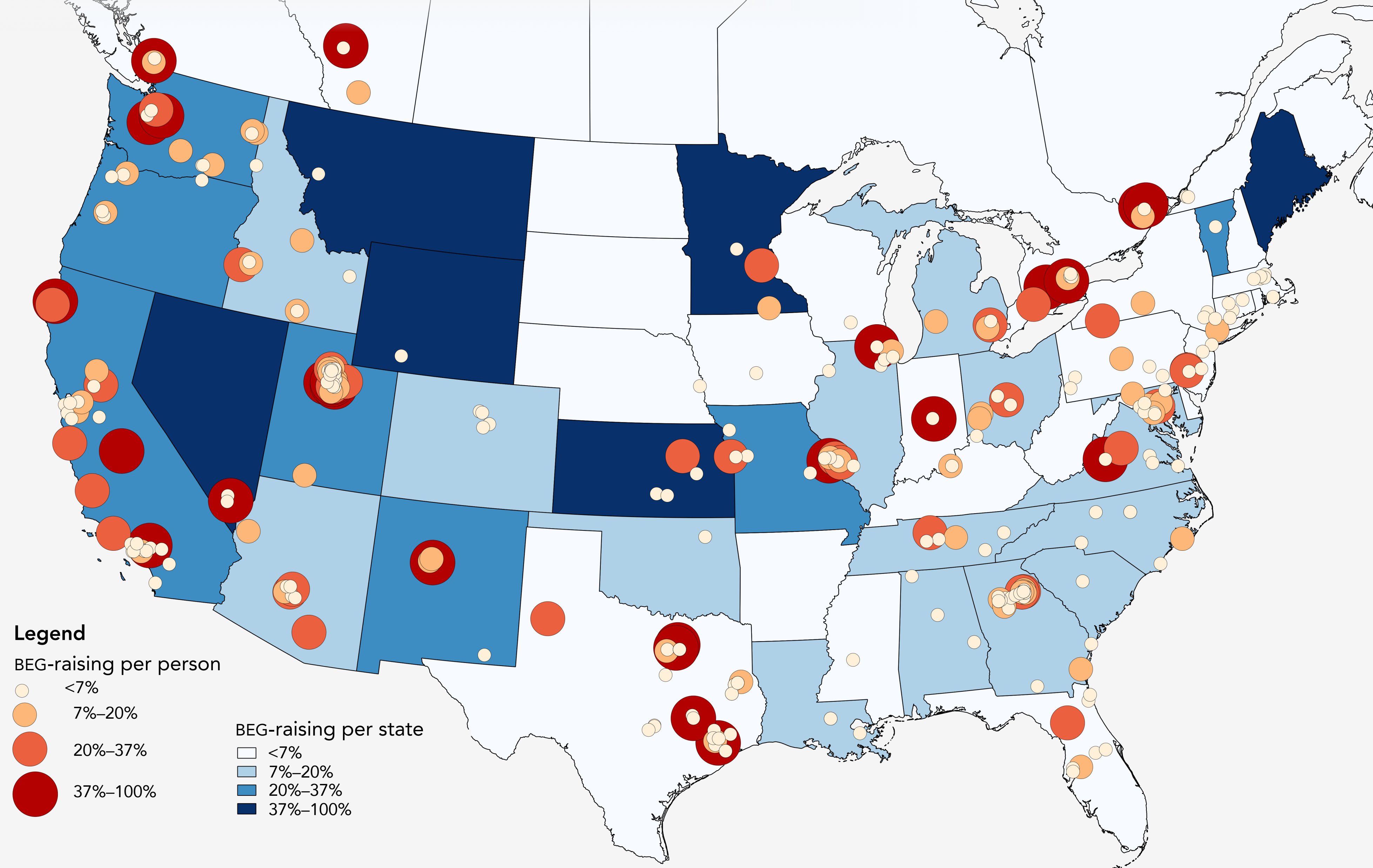### Online survey
- Asked how you would pronounce them.
- Options: like the vowel in *bake/deck/back*, between *bake* and *deck*, or other.

### Metadata
- Fill-in-blank box asked "Where are you from?"
  - Compared this with their current location (IP address)
- Also asked for age; forgot to ask for gender (dang it!)

### Distribution
- Via social media: Twitter, Reddit, and mostly Facebook
- Obvious oversampling in places I've lived.
- 351 North Americans and 12,759 observations

## References

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