
Cannabis City

LA's Medical Marijuana Landscape

Steve Graves

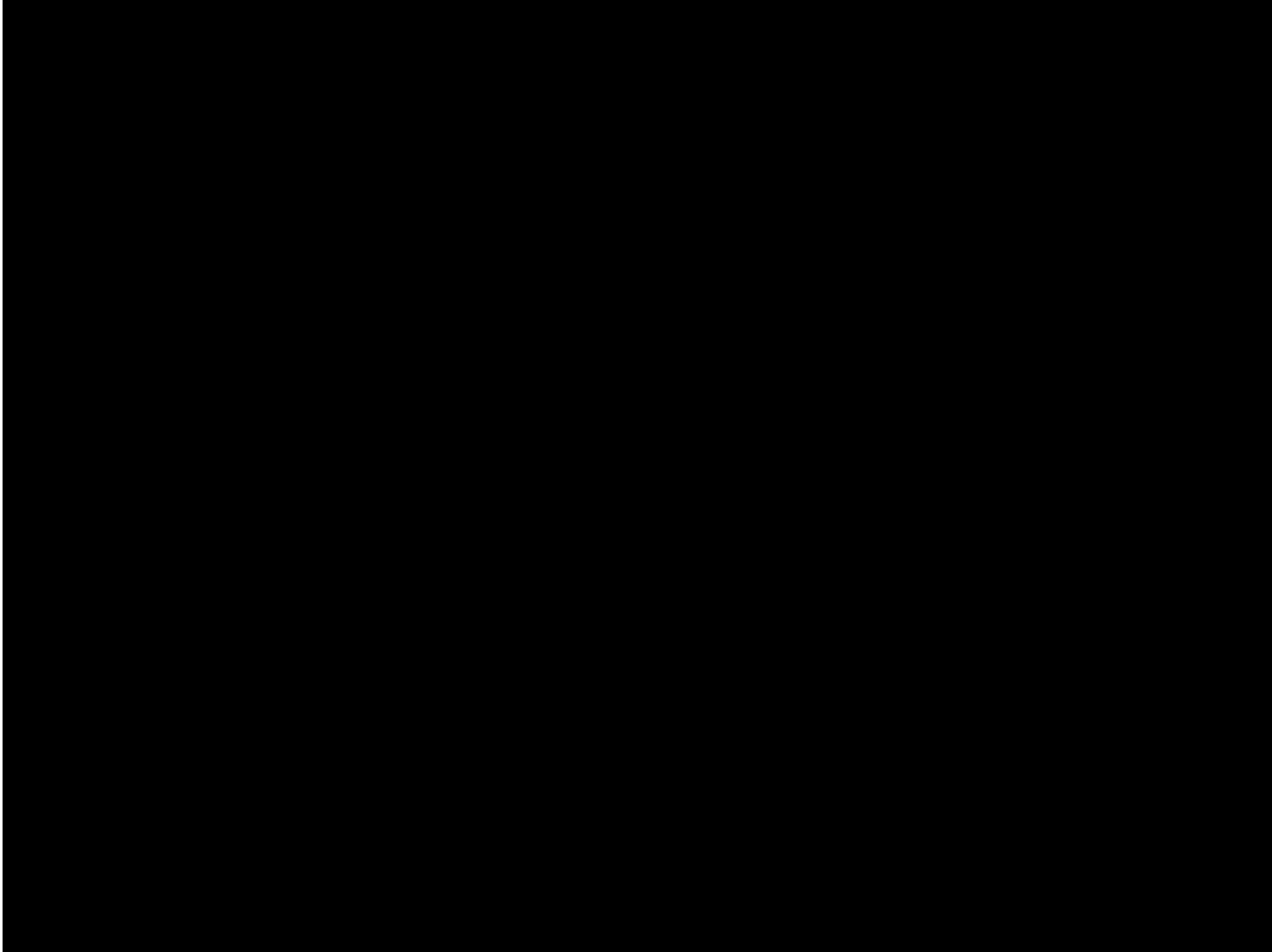
California State University, Northridge



Background

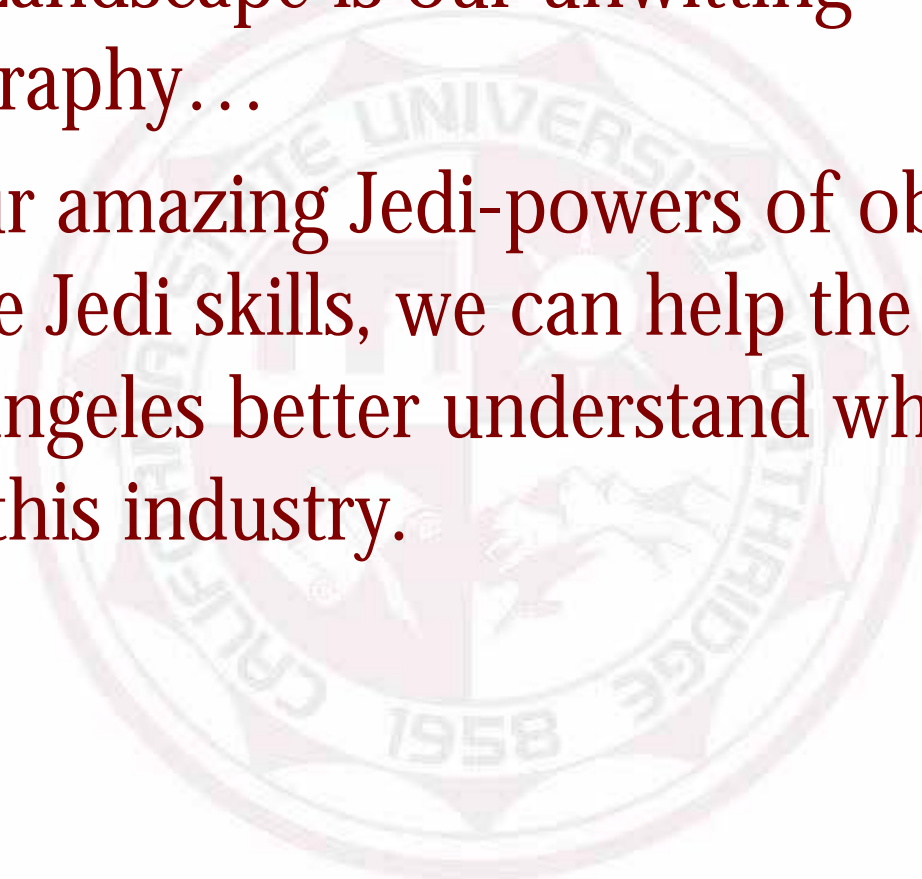
- Four hundred plus medical marijuana dispensaries in Los Angeles....perhaps 1,000?
- Rapid expansion, followed by several waves of closures and re-openings.
- Significant controversy over the “true” purpose of MMD’s (no single answer).

Leno



Geography to the Rescue!

- Lewis: Landscape is our unwitting autobiography...
- Using our amazing Jedi-powers of observation and some Jedi skills, we can help the fine folks of Los Angeles better understand what's going on with this industry.

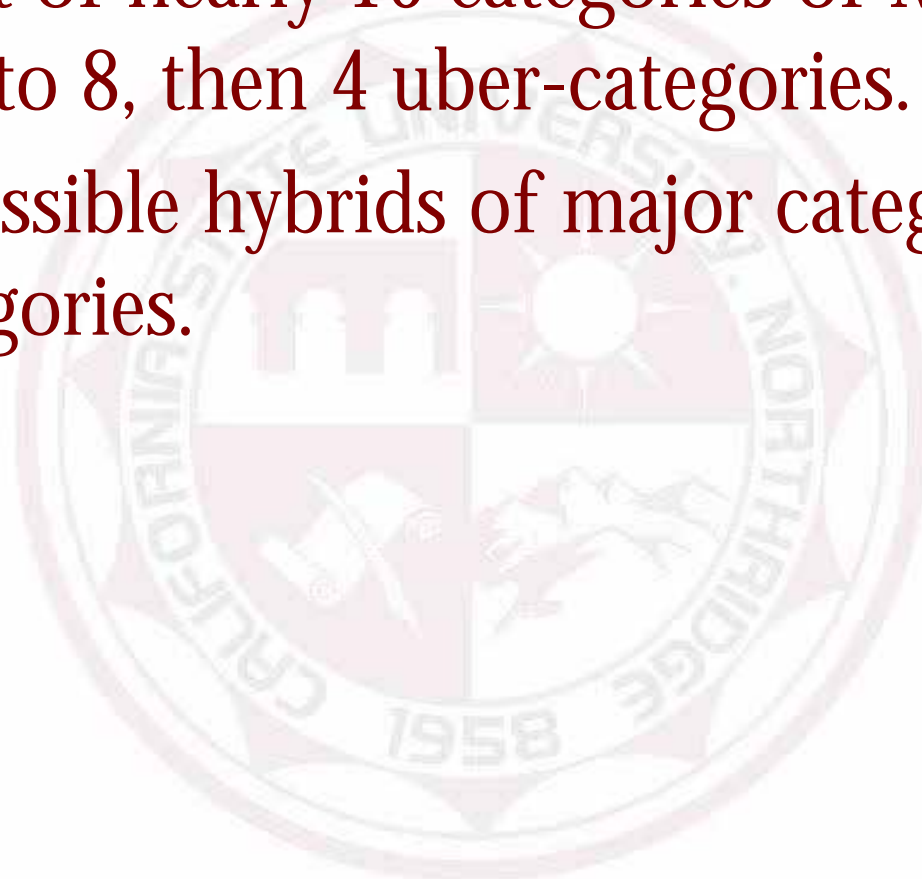


Data and Methodology

- Two data sets:
 - Los Angeles Times
 - Photographic Database
- Content analysis of business names
 - Deconstruct each name, categorize, reconstruct, categorize.
- Landscape analysis of photo inventory.

Results

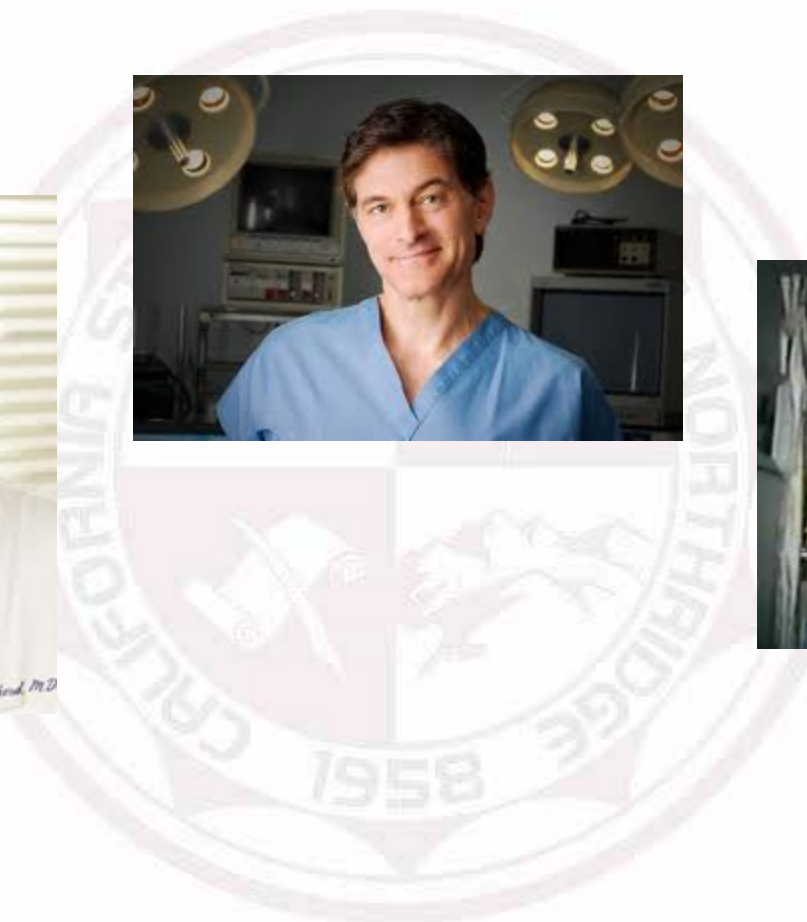
- Initial set of nearly 16 categories of MMDs reduced to 8, then 4 uber-categories.
- Many possible hybrids of major categories and sub-categories.



Corporate Clinic

- Uses the landscape vocabulary of mainstream medical professions to evoke scientific and business legitimacy.
- About 30% of the medical marijuana dispensaries could pass for mainstream medical facilities.
- This kind of look is particularly popular in middle-class neighborhoods, where potential opposition to marijuana distribution might be expected.

Mascots



Corporate Clinic



Corporate Clinic



Strip Mall Dispensary



Compassionate Clinic

- A large number of MMD's made an appeal to compassionate care.
- Many of these fell into the corporate category.
- This one used initials and a name, plus the green-cross.
- *Compassionate clinics accounted for about 17% of all dispensaries*



Corporate Clinic



Corporate Clinic



Compassionate Clinic



Compassionate Clinic (with camo?)



Compassionate Clinic (with camo?)



Bunker Clinic

- These clinics attempt to camouflage themselves by blending into the urban landscape fabric.
- Frequent uses of initials in business name which serve to conceal, rather than reveal the nature of the business conducted within.
- Use of code terminology to mask nature of business to un-initiated.
- Similar strategies used in vice-licit landscapes.
- About 15% of the dispensaries we tracked were labeled "bunker" dispensaries

Mascots



Classic Bunker Dispensary



Bunker – Initials Only



Bunker – Initials Only



Bunker – only sign is on the door



Bunker – Hiding in Plain Sight

- Is it a pot shop or a chic furniture store?
- Some dispensaries blend in by camouflaging themselves as a “normal” store.



Granola Clinic

- Common strategy to equate marijuana with naturalistic, holistic or organic foods/medicine.
- It's all natural!
- Just like Whole Foods!
- Nature's remedy!
- About 30% of dispensaries were categorized as "granola" clinics

The Mascots



Granola

- Herbal, alternative, healthy, green, holistic, and organic are the key terms.
- Lots of earth tones in the signs and motifs.



Granola - Compassionate Clinic

- This sign hybridizes the Granola/eco/organic theme with the “compassionate care” theme.
- Eco-care
- It also has a highly professional design vocabulary....like an I-phone or Toyota Prius.



Granola / Bunker



Corporate Granola?



El' Granola-Bunker



Recreational Use Dispensaries

- About 25% of the dispensaries used a recreational appeal to market themselves.
- Several sub-categories were evident as well.
- Granola-Stoner
- Stoner-Fantasy
- Stoner-Recreation
- Stoner-Care, etc.
- Most visually interesting.

Recreational Clinic – Venice Beach



Stoner - Care

- 6%
- Ample use of color, but an appeal to both “global” and the slangy “meds”.
- Curious because under the law, the pot must be grown locally.



Granola – Stoner Mascot



Respect the classics man.

Granola – Stoner/Fantasy



Respect the classics man.

Pot or not?



Pot or not?



Pot or not?



Pot or not?



Stoner Fantasy

- Overt and/or coded references to recreational uses of marijuana and/or its hallucinogenic effects.
- Frequent use of psychedelic exterior colors, especially purple, but also references to magic or other fantasy items.
- Hendrix man!

Stoner (Granola?) Fantasy - Mascot



Stoner (Granola?) Fantasy



Stoner - Fantasy



Stoner Fantasy



Eco - Stoner Fantasy...man.



Stoner Fantasy

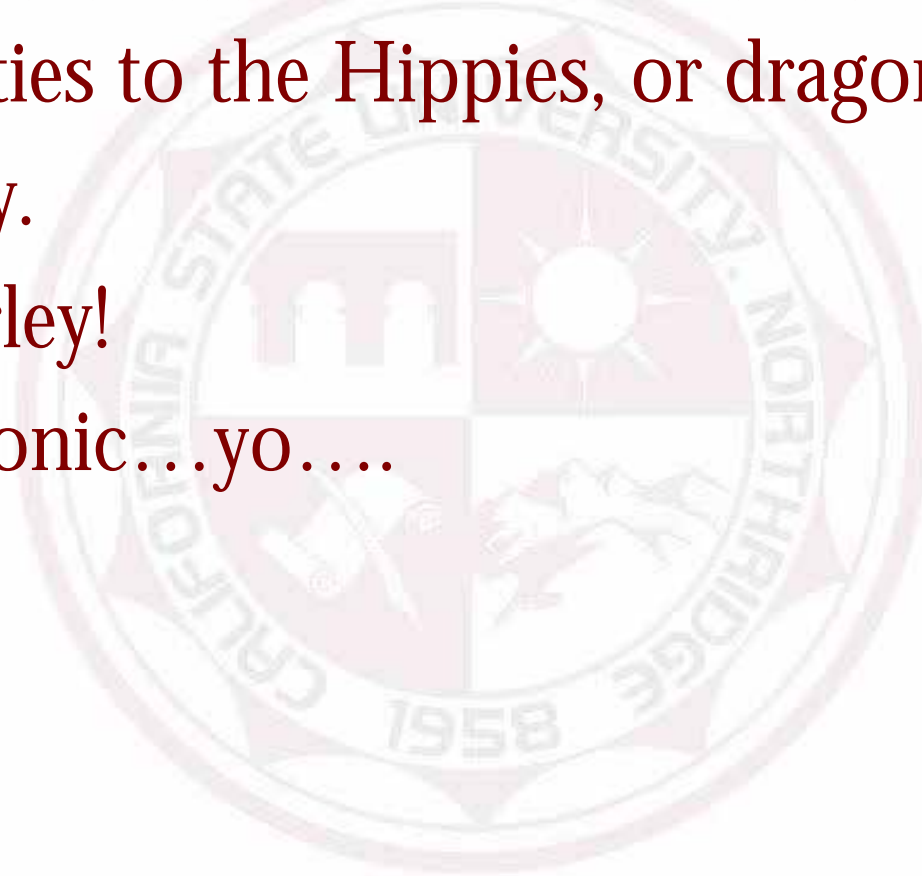


Stoner- Fantasy



Stoner Recreation

- Open references to Pot as recreational, but without ties to the Hippies, or dragons...
- Partaaaay.
- Bob Marley!
- The Chronic...yo.....



Mascots



Stoner - Recreation



Stoner - Recreation



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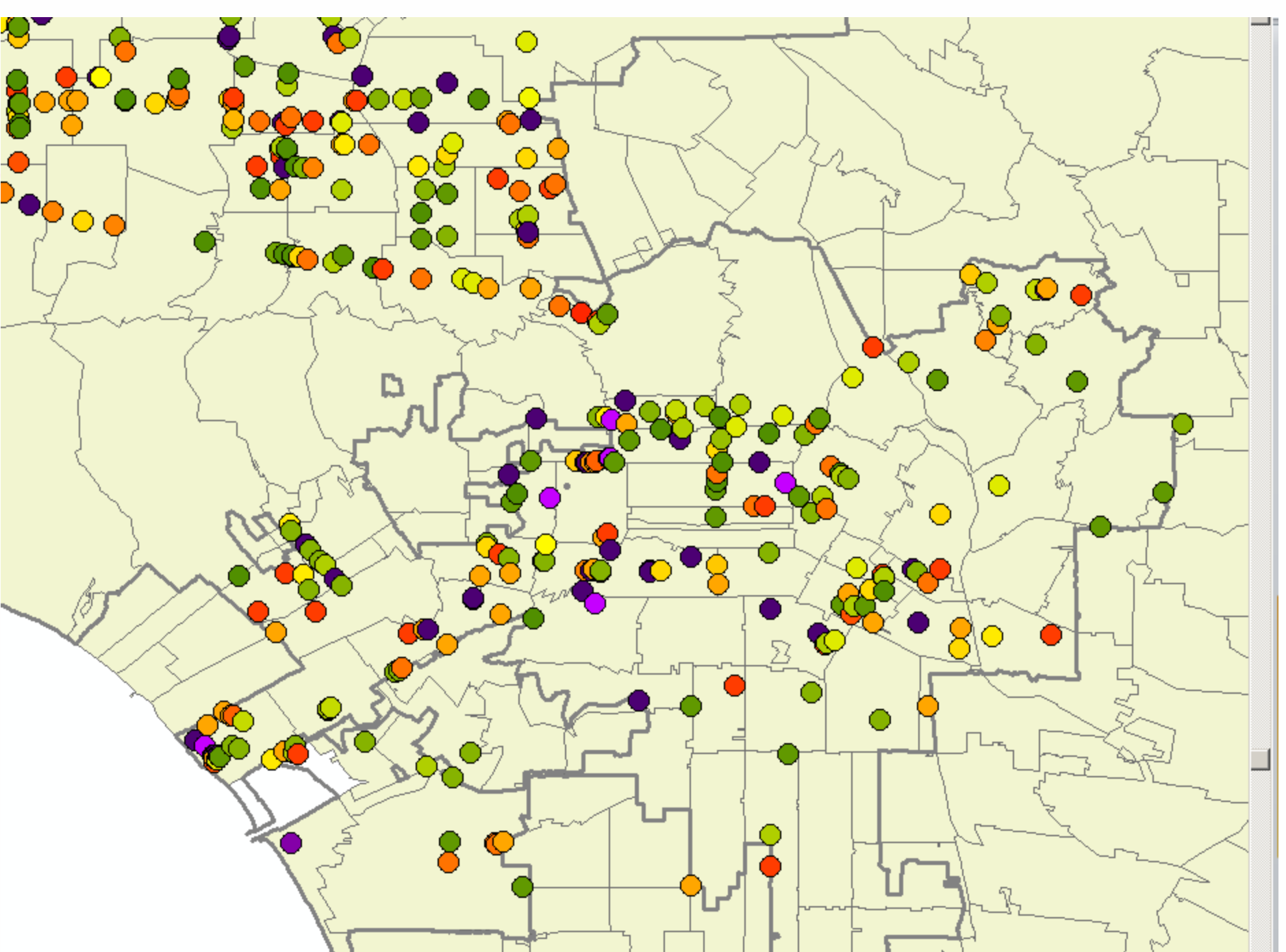
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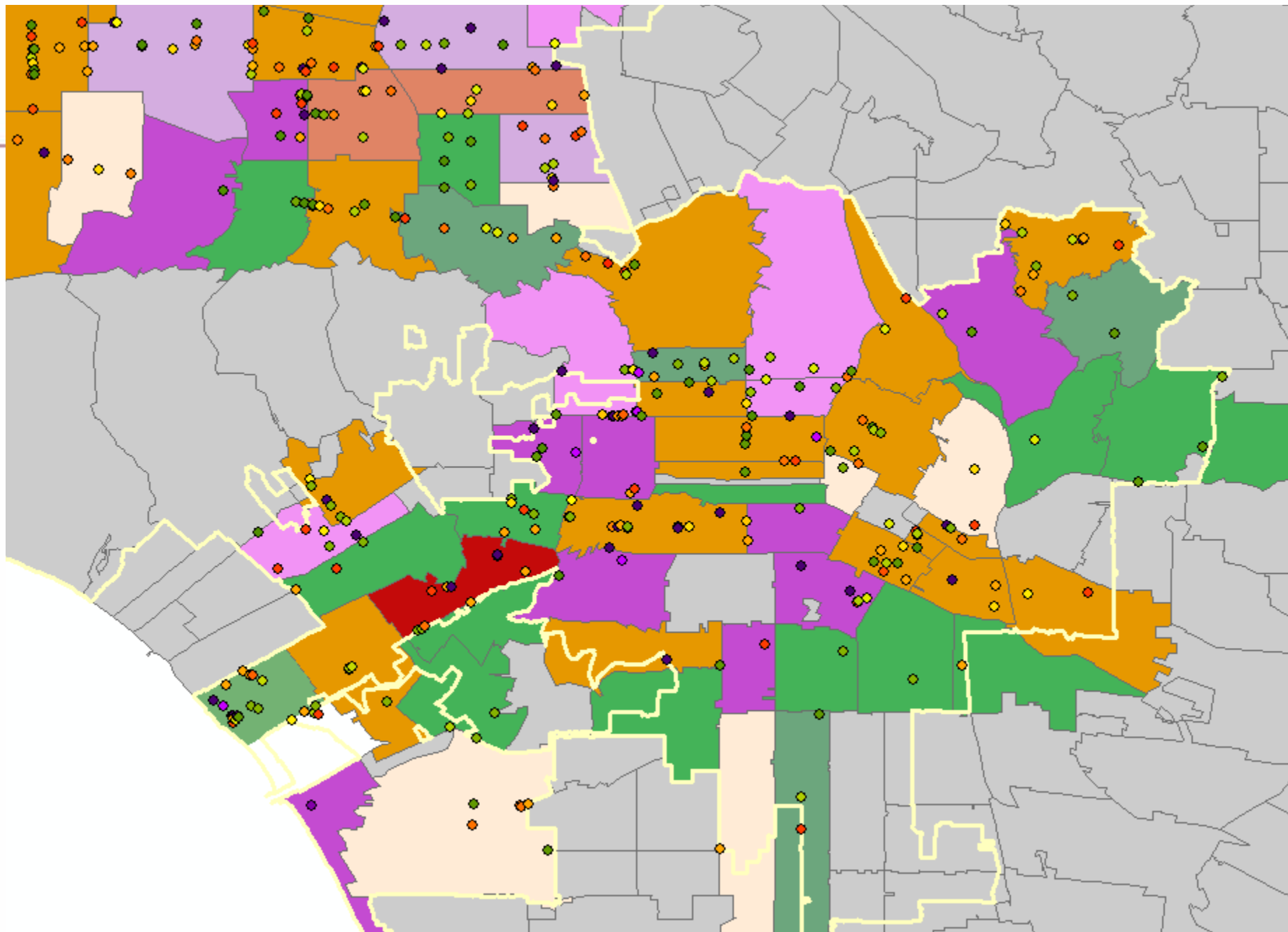
Stoner - Compassion



Spatial Patterns

- By ZIP code, there were only a few clusters by category around Los Angeles.
- Neighborhoods around USC, for example, had a significant cluster of “stoner recreation” dispensaries.
- Middle class neighborhoods tended to have elevated concentrations of “corporate clinics”, particularly the “compassionate” variety.





Implications

- Medical Marijuana's days may be numbered in Los Angeles, and perhaps elsewhere because there will be a poor defense of medical marijuana by the public who will have likely have read the landscape of medical marijuana largely in terms of the most outrageous minority – stoner fantasy and stoner recreation, while the “compassionate” discourse is largely mute on the landscape.