

# INCOGNITA

ABJECT POVERTY IN MAJOR CITIES

Ethelia Lung | Interactive IV 2017

# brief

Problem Statement

Goal

Questions

Portrayal

## MOTIVATION

Growing up in the affluent society that Hong Kong is, I was always very aware of the ridiculous wealth gap in the city; when talking about Hong Kong, however, most people associate it with being solely a vibrant international hub.

**I wanted to not only highlight some of the underlying social issues of my city, but also bring awareness to the issues prevalent in all major cities around the globe.**

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The invisible poor are referred to as invisible for a reason - most of us are unaware of the portion of civilisation that lives below the poverty line, and much less so in many major cities because of our perceptions of the affluence of said cities.

## GOAL

I want to bring awareness to **the extent of invisible abject poverty in global major cities** by allowing users to think about this issue through objective and emotional lenses.

## QUESTIONS

- 1 Is it more impactful to present users with story-based data for emotional impact?
- 2 Do major metropolitan areas affect the areas around it? Why?
- 3 What will the stories consist of?
- 4 How can I incentivise people to care about the issue at hand?

## PORTRAYAL

The focus of the infographic is on the narrative told.

I want users to have is a sense of urgency to contribute to the conversation, by showing the resources and programmes that exist to address such problems.

I also want to attract and engage user interest through the use of strategic and pleasing microanimations.

I will use **two ways** to portray these poverty case studies –

- 1 Objective indicators and comparisons  
*Providing users with quantitative data on indicators of poverty*
- 2 A specific story about the manifestations of poverty  
*Telling a narrative of abject poverty in context*

### Context

In order to have a wider and more flexible reach, I want this experience to live on the web, accessible on desktop, tablet, (possibly) phone, and any larger interactive screens.

# understanding

Definitions & Indicators

Major Cities in Contention

Audience

User Stories & Journeys

Infographic Inspiration



## DEFINITIONS

### **The Invisible Poor**

People in poverty whose plight is not fully realised; this may include those in abject poverty, as well as the suburban / working poor.

### **Major Cities**

The major cities dealt with in this infographic are determined by the Global Power City Index to showcase how even leading cities are not exempt from the phenomenon of the invisible poor.

### **Income Inequality**

The extent to which a population's income is distributed unevenly.

## INDICATORS

### **Global Power City Index (GPCI)**

Evaluates the comprehensive power of leading cities according to economy, research and development, cultural interaction, livability, environment, and accessibility.

### **Poverty Rate**

The number of people in a given group whose income falls below the poverty line.

### **Poverty Line**

The estimated minimum level of income required for basic life necessities. Not to be equated with the basic cost of living.

### **Gini Coefficient**

A statistical measure of the degree of variation or inequality represented in a set of values, used to measure income inequality. A number in between 0 and 1, the higher the coefficient, the higher the income inequality.

## MAJOR CITIES IN CONTENTION

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1 London    | 11 Frankfurt   |
| 2 New York  | 12 Shanghai    |
| 3 Tokyo     | 13 Los Angeles |
| 4 Paris     | 14 Sydney      |
| 5 Singapore | 15 Stockholm   |
| 6 Seoul     | 16 Zurich      |
| 7 Hong Kong | 17 Beijing     |
| 8 Amsterdam | 18 Toronto     |
| 9 Berlin    | 19 Copenhagen  |
| 10 Vienna   | 20 Barcelona   |

## AUDIENCE

I hope for the user to come into the experience *either indifferent or curious or both*, and leave with a baseline understanding that there's more to poverty in major cities than the eye can see. The biggest impact I would like to make is to ignite a sense of concern and urgency for the cause(s), and to wish to learn more and contribute to betterment efforts.

## Demographic

People above the age of 18, who are beginning to develop or already have significant understanding and control over the consequences of their actions.

## Narrative

- 1 Introduction to the cities, affirmation of user's location
- 2 User selection of a top major global city
- 3 Peruse basic city statistics and graphs
- 4 Read the city-specific story of an instance of poverty



## USER STORIES & JOURNEYS

### Hannah Lambert, 17

A high school senior interested in global studies, Hannah is the type to go down Wikipedia article rabbit holes and dig through them to pull out information. She's currently doing research for a class project, the prompt being to find relatively less known features of cities and present a comparative analysis to the class.

“As a student interested in a global studies degree, I like being able to **see different perspectives** of how globalisation is impacting the world we currently live in, so that I can **better inform myself and my peers.**”





## USER STORIES & JOURNEYS

### Wayne Meyer, 21

An applied mathematics student, Wayne is studying abroad in the United States of America. He enjoys documentaries and learning about different countries, and his goal is to one day step foot in every single country. When it comes to analysing data, he likes to let the numbers speak for themselves.

“As someone who enjoys learning about different cultures and their histories, I like **learning the small details** about people who are different to me, so that **I can gain a better world view.**”





## USER STORIES & JOURNEYS

### Cameron Soto, 37

Currently a manager at a law firm, Cameron likes to use Twitter and social media to keep up to date on general world news, but at the same time is concerned that social media obscures a lot of important but smaller stories. In his down time, Cameron will dedicate a chunk of time to seeking out news case studies on publications ranging from the Outline to the Economist.

“As a father of two pre-teens in an era where social media frenzy means that important news is often fleeting, I’m interested in reading publications that dedicate time and effort into **exploring all aspects of particular stories**, so that I can get a more in-depth understanding of what’s happening around the world, and **pass that information on** to my children.”





## INFOGRAPHIC INSPIRATION

There are various infographics that handle interaction artfully.

### 1 “A Bear’s-Eye View of Yellowstone” | National Geographic

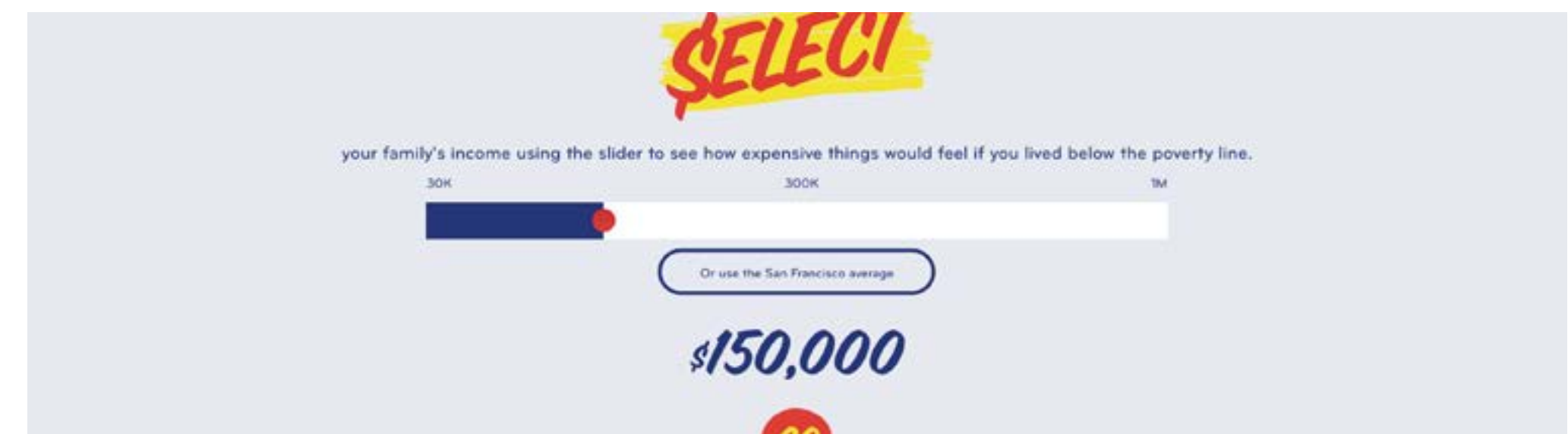
A narrative presented by way of a trail on a map, intercut with a story, videos, and illustrations that add to the immersiveness.

### 2 “Poverty Line Prices” | Tipping Point Community

A particularly resonating lesson on relativity and the realistic costs of regular goods and services.

### 3 “Digital City Portraits” | Brendan Dawes

A simple but effective and visually pleasing representation of a large bank of data.





## INFOGRAPHIC INSPIRATION

There are various infographics that handle interaction artfully.

### 4 “The Refugee Project” | Hyperakt & Ekene Ijeoma

Containing a large amount of data in a clean and sharp interface, *The Refugee Project* offers meaningful, real-timed data and the user walks away understanding the impact of the factors of the refugee crisis.



### 5 “Out-of-School Children” | UNESCO

Out-of-School Children presents data in a very friendly way, without a dark and morbid tone, and matching the theme of the social issue. I particularly like how it presents city data in the side, and how the infographics are illustrative and creative.





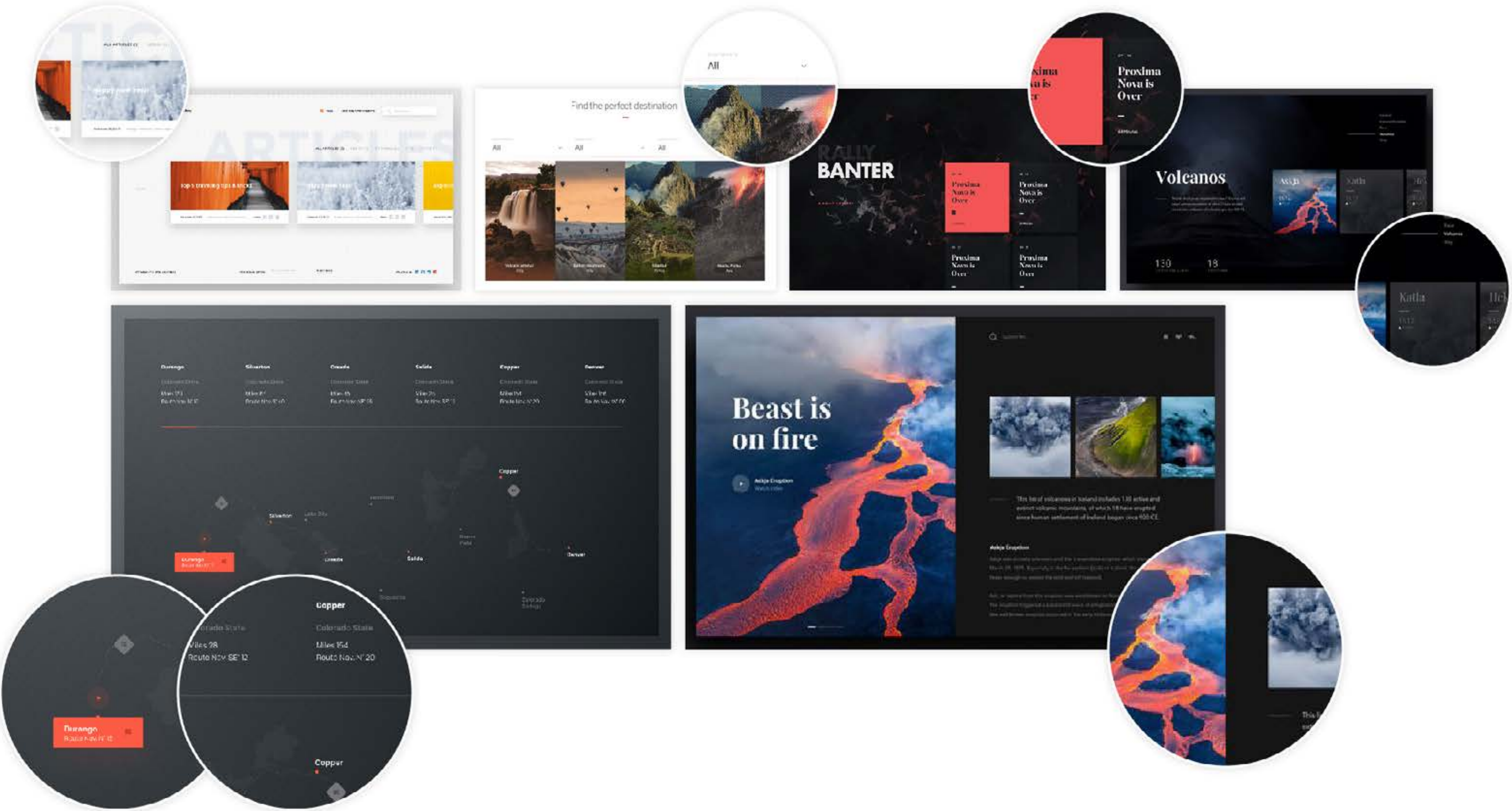
# approach

Style Inspiration

Mood & Style

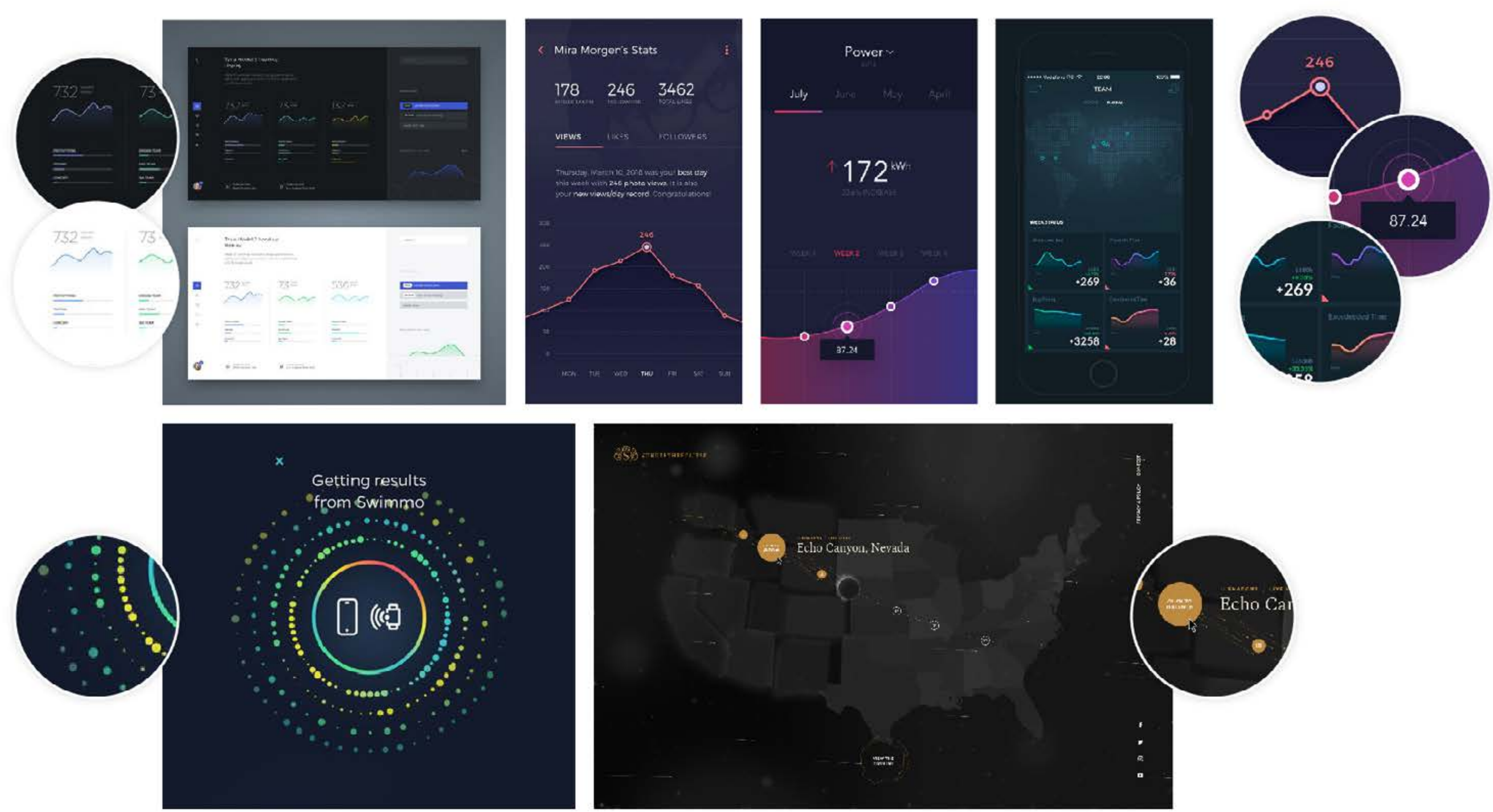
Information Architecture

INTERFACE INSPIRATION



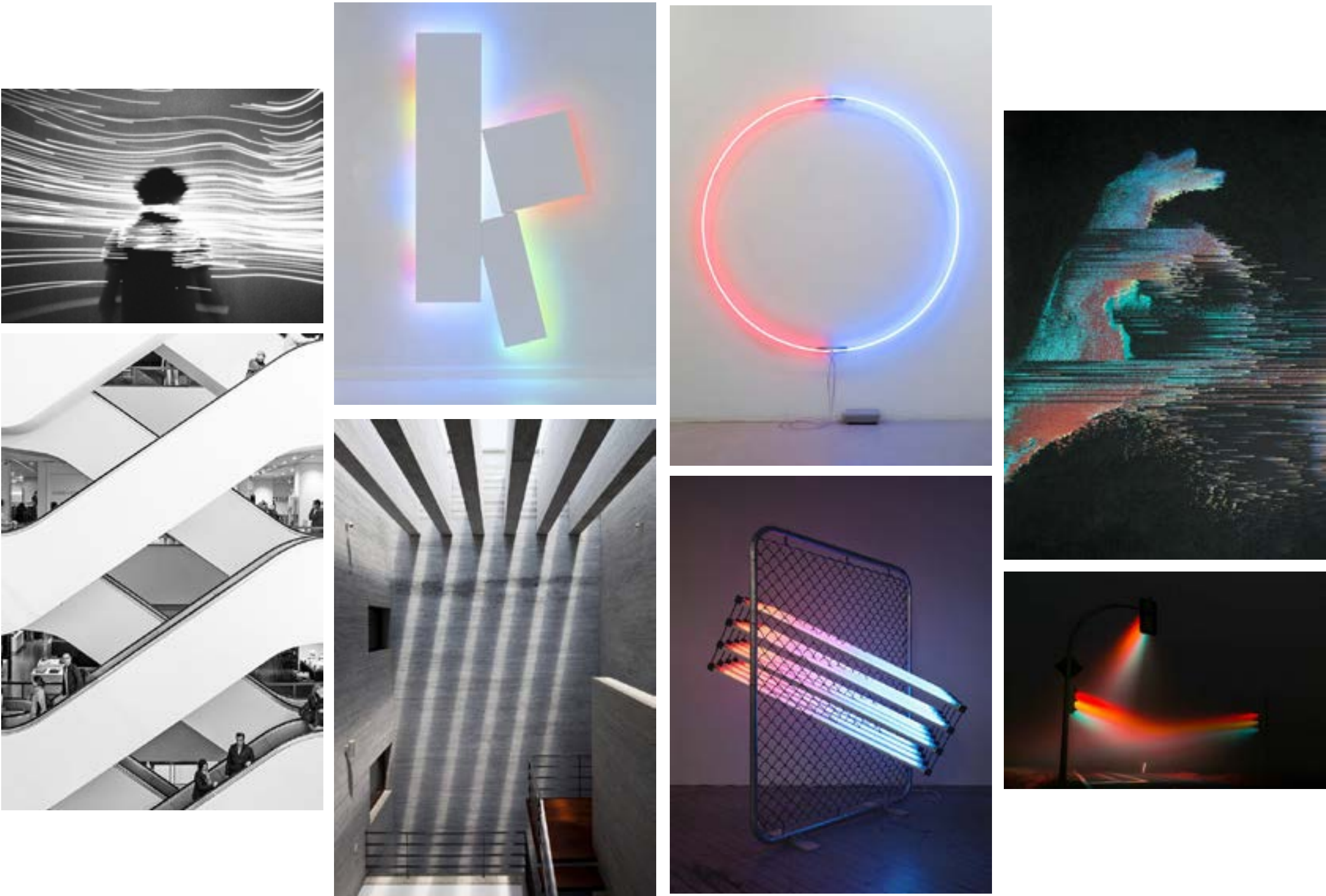


GRAPHICAL INSPIRATION





MOOD & STYLE



Keywords

Sharp  
Edgy

Illuminating  
Impactful

Emotional

Typography

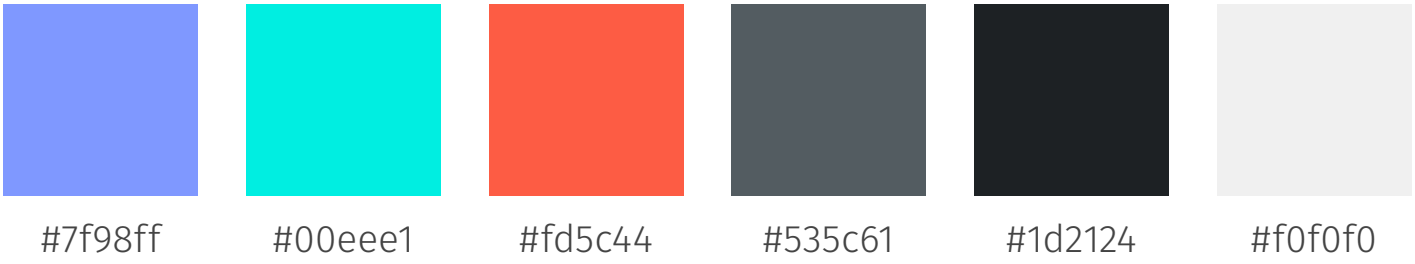
Overpass Mono Regular

**Overpass Mono Bold**

Fira Sans Light

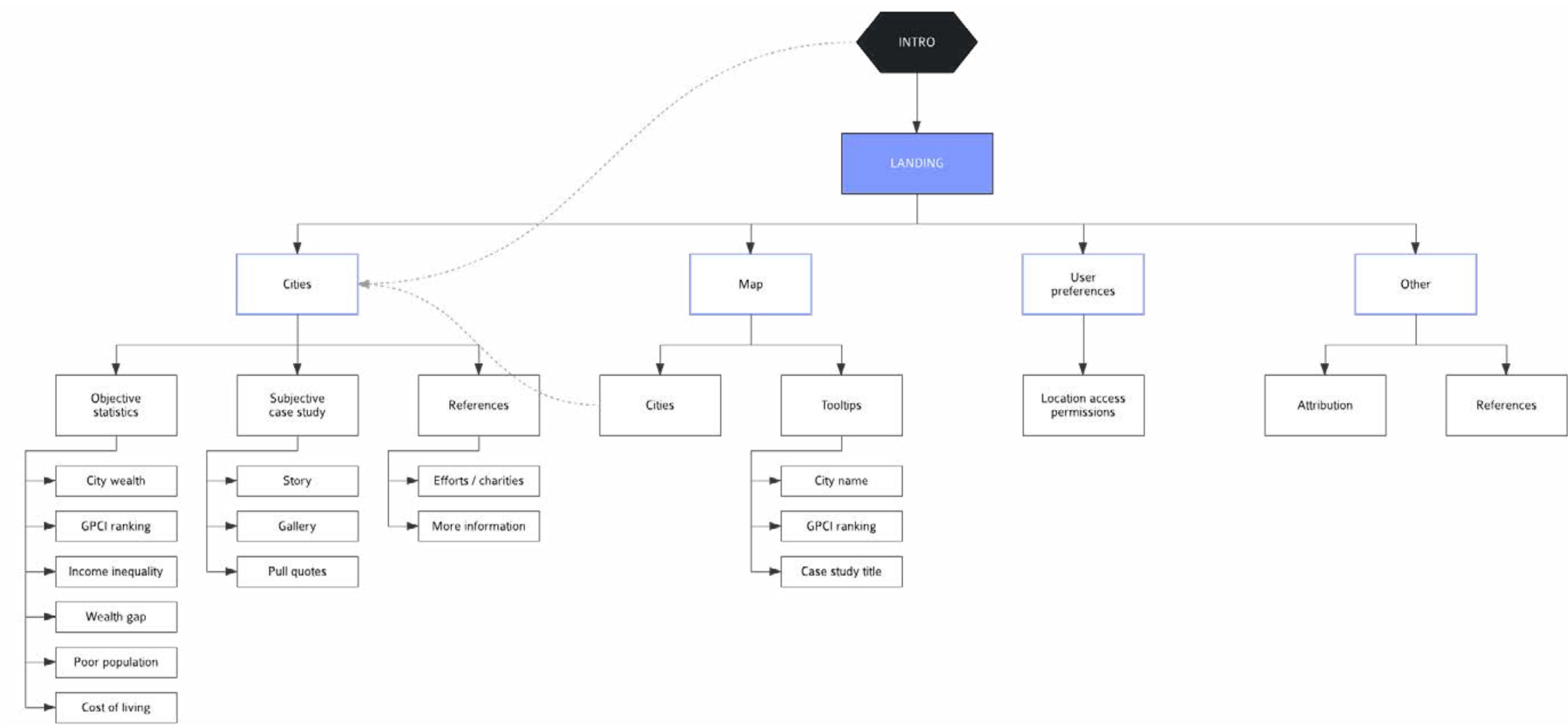
**Fira Sans Medium**

Colours



INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

The key journey I am taking users on is the recognition of which cities are ranked highly based on parameters outlined in the GPCI, and then explore the case study associated with those cities.



# design

Sketches

Storyboard

Wireframes

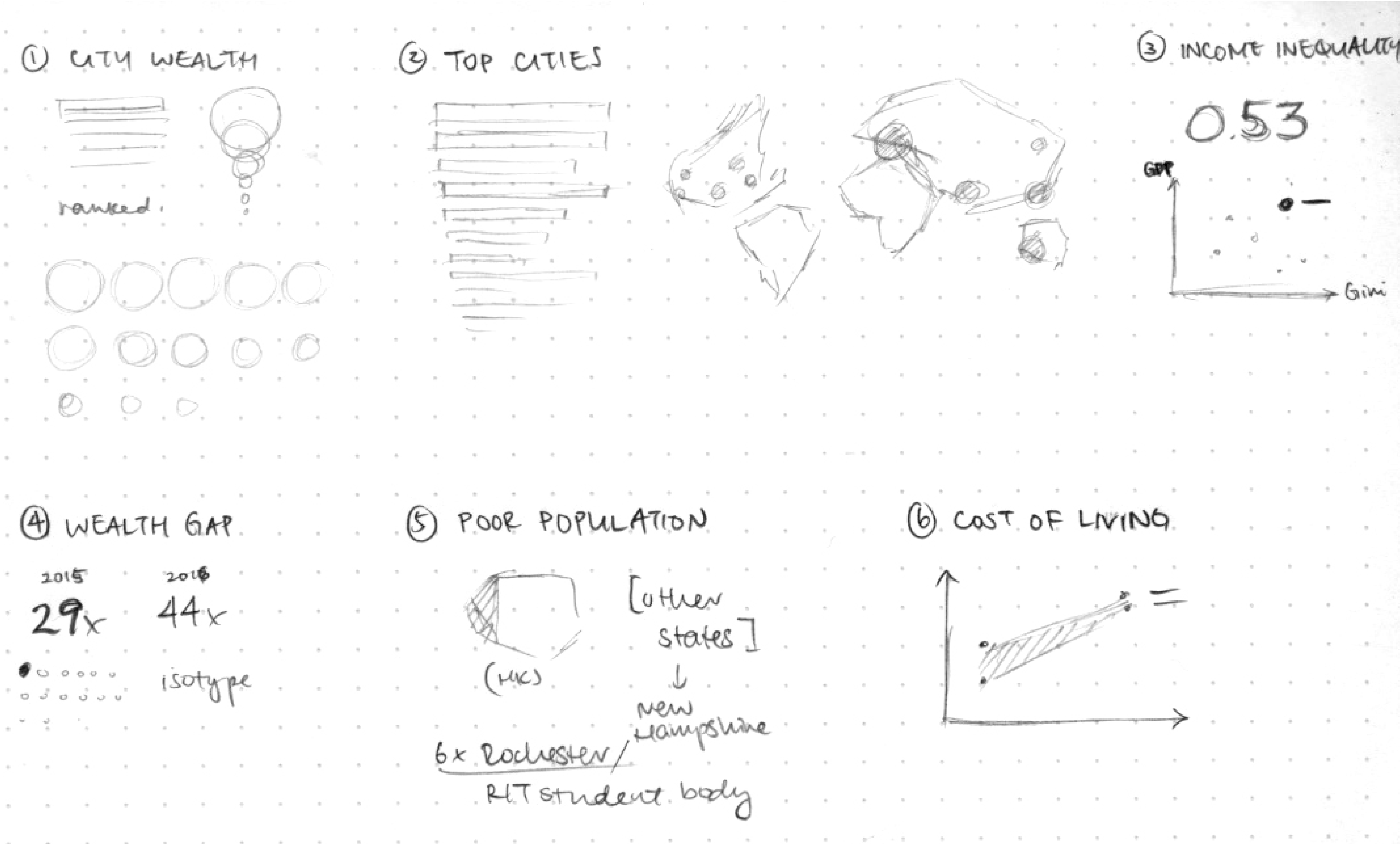
Visual design

## FOREWORD

Keeping the narrative in mind, I designed the experience with two key aspects in mind: the objective, and the subjective.

This includes considering how **statistical data** should be represented (the infographic portion), how **the stories** should be represented (the case study portion), and how both these aspects should be **accessed**.

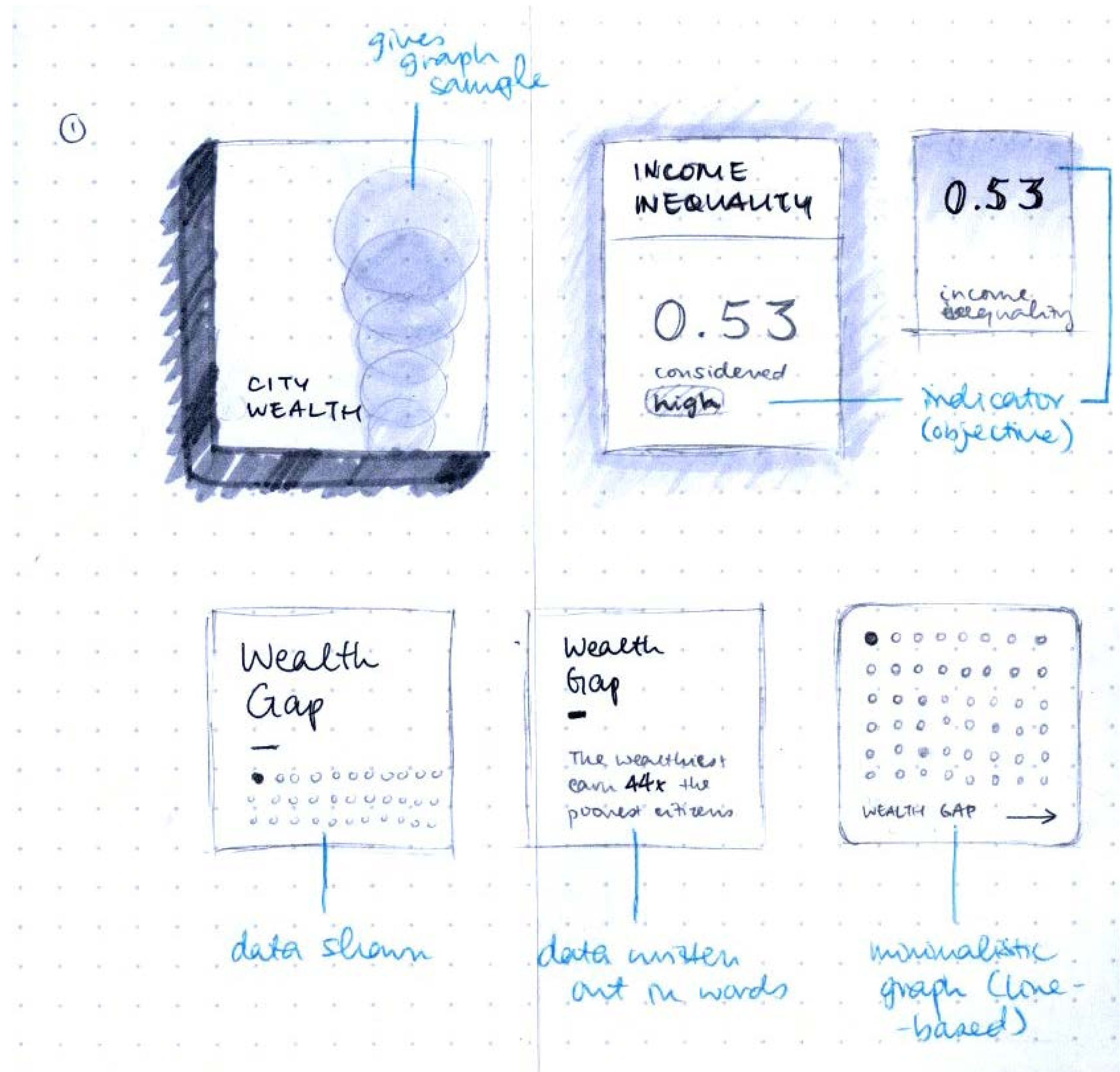
I separated out all these considerations into sections accordingly.





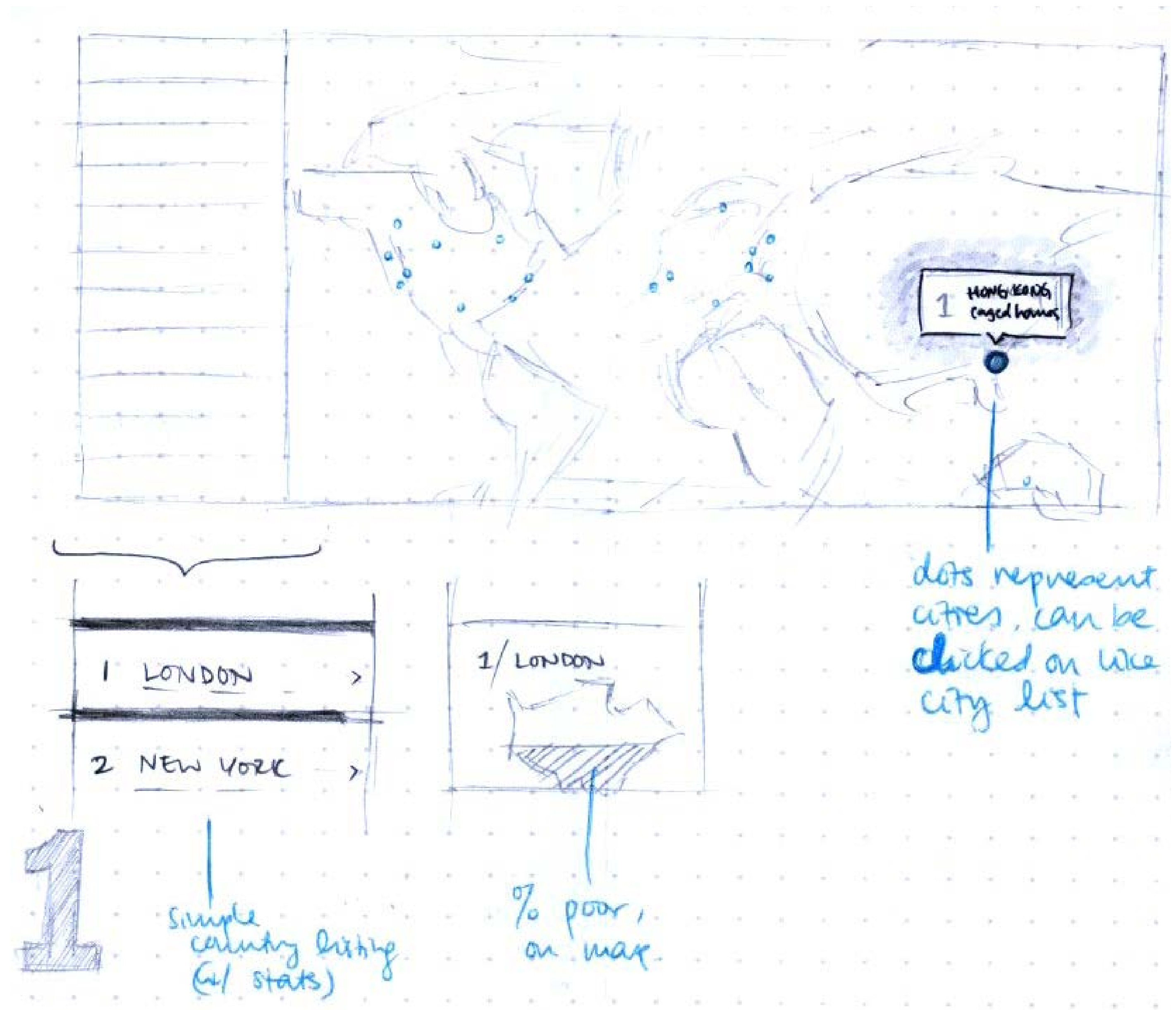
## SKETCHES | COMPONENTS

- 1 Data cards
- 2 Map of cities
- 3 City list
- 4 Modal



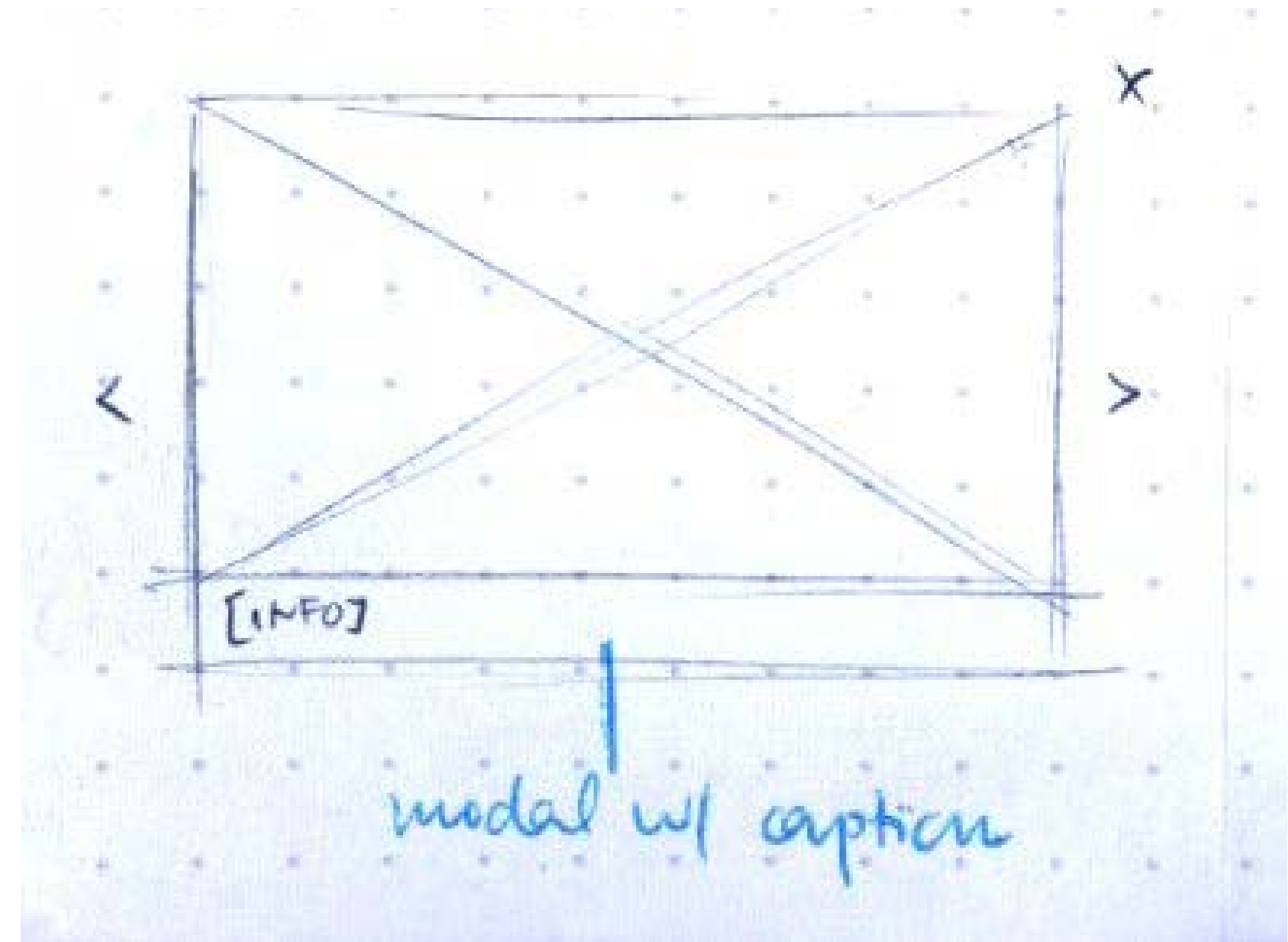
## SKETCHES | COMPONENTS

- 1 Data cards
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## SKETCHES | COMPONENTS

- 1 Data cards
- 2 Map of cities
- 3 City list
- 4 **Modal**

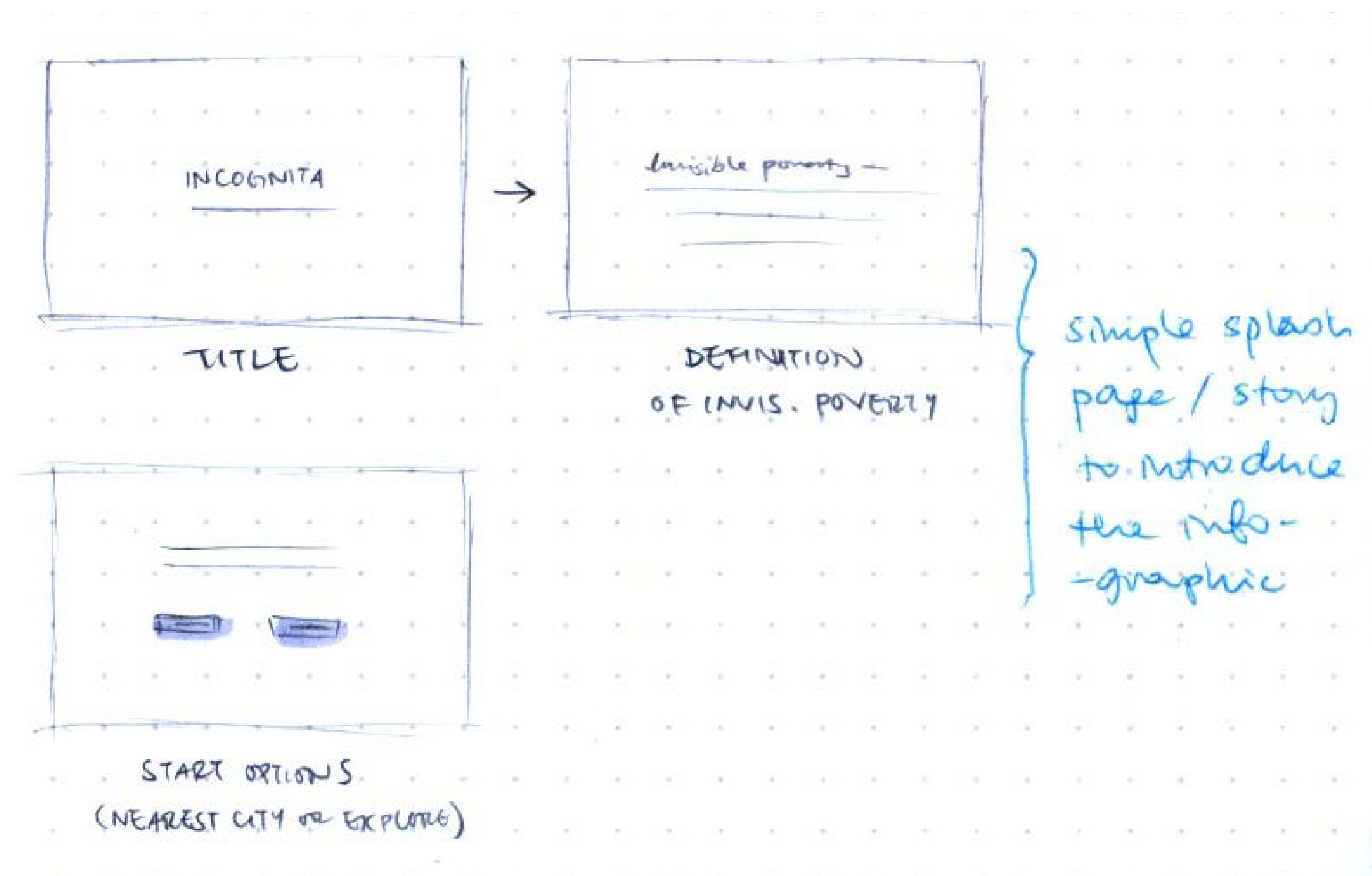


## SKETCHES | SCREENS

### 1 Introduction

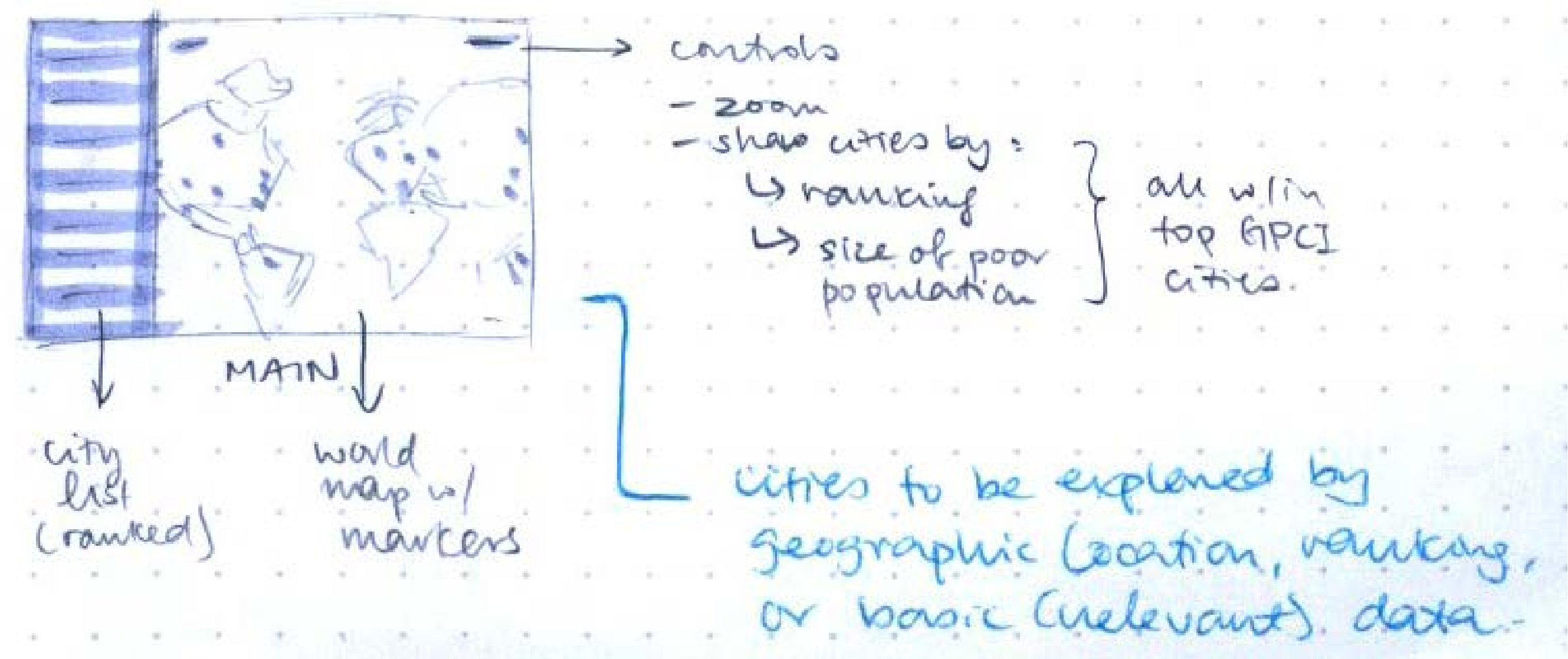
2 Main landing page

3 City pages



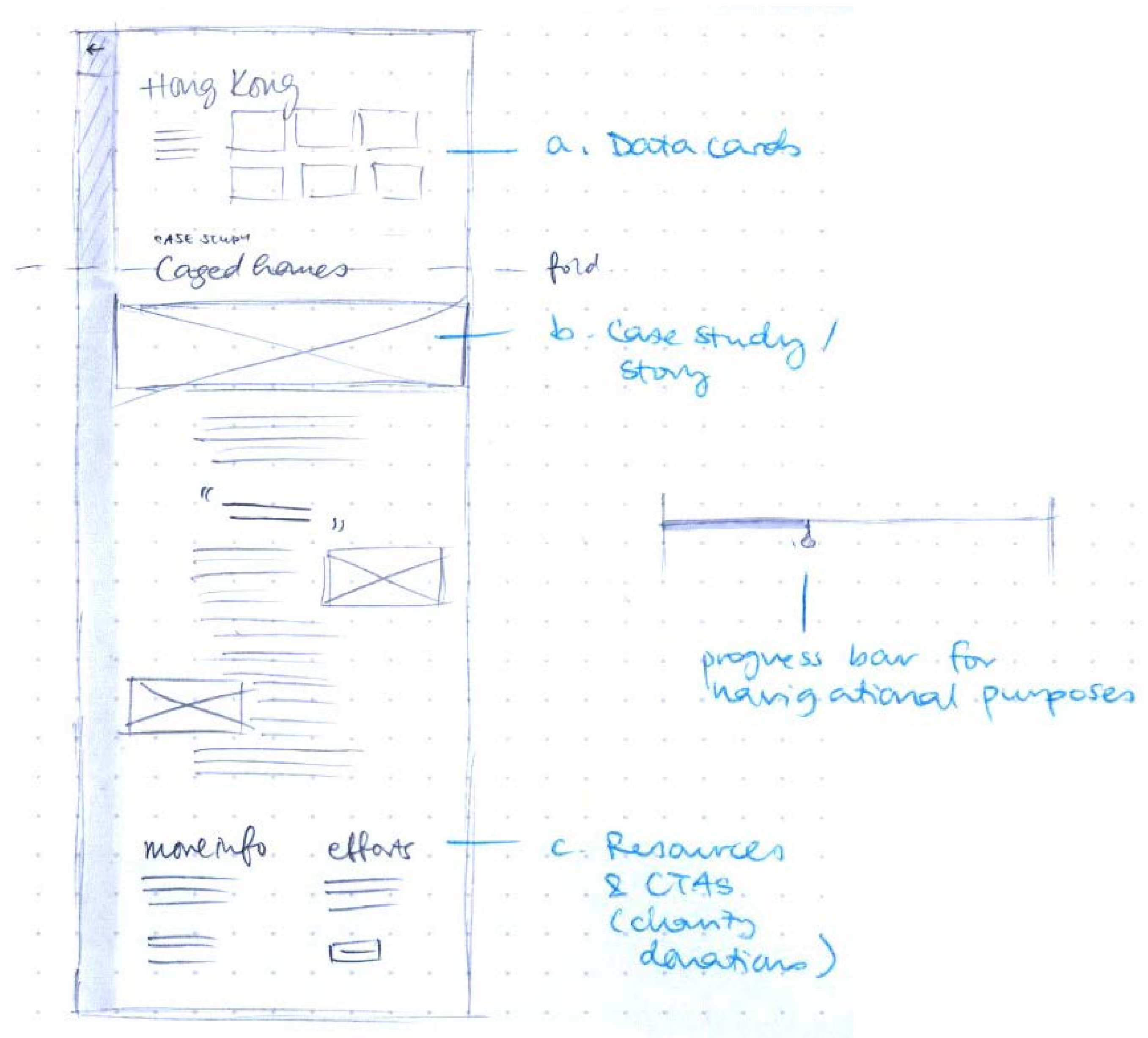
## SKETCHES | SCREENS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 **Main landing page**
- 3 City pages



## SKETCHES | SCREENS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Main landing page
- 3 City pages



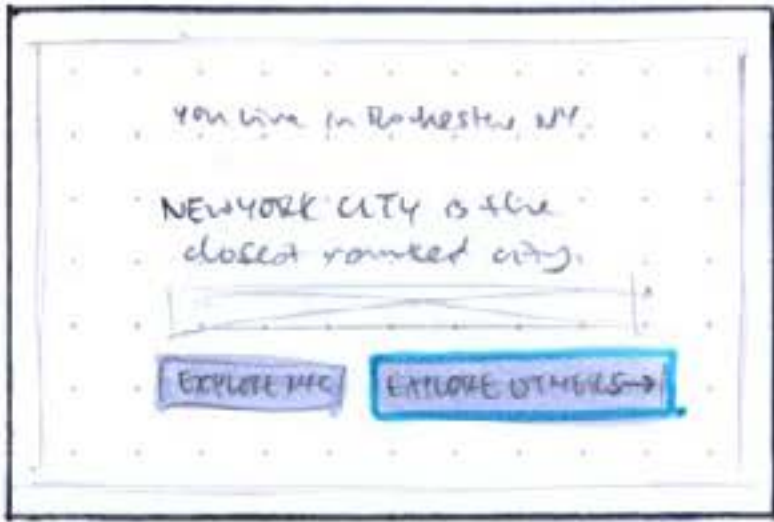


STORYBOARD

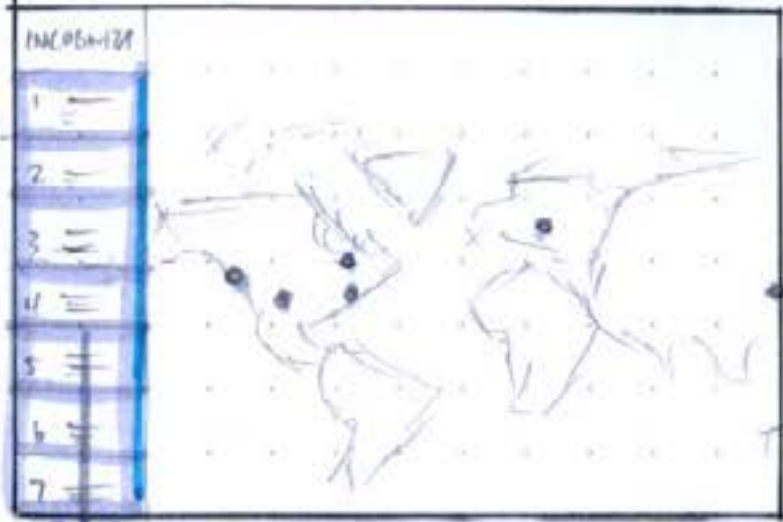


FADES

1. Play intro animation

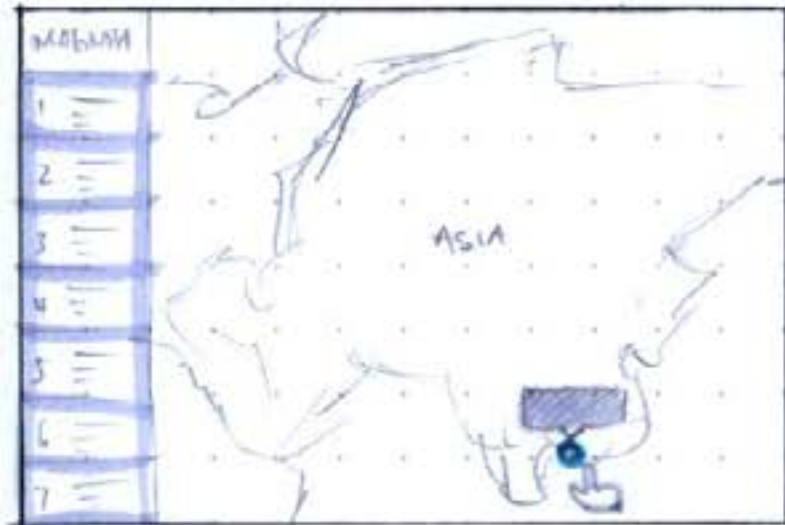


2. Ask user whether they want to explore the nearest top ranked city



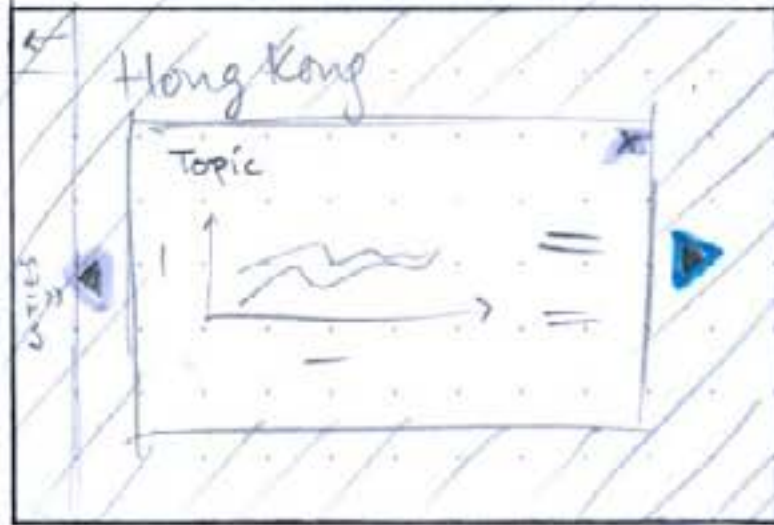
SCROLL

3. User scrolls through top cities list



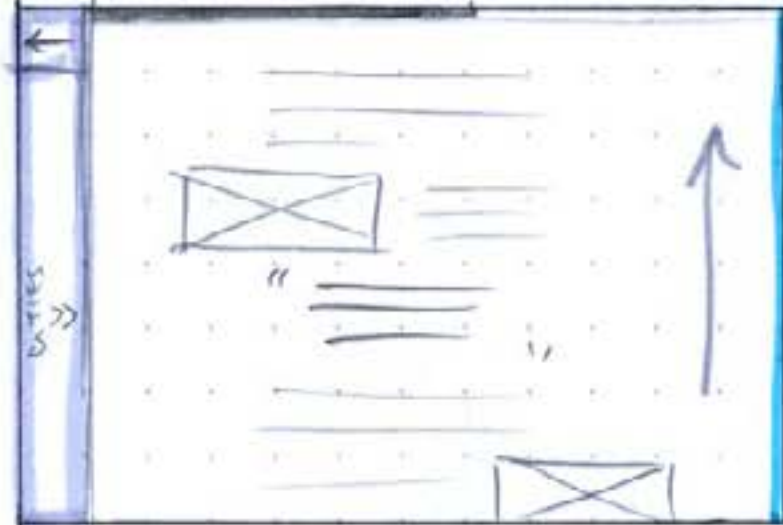
HOVER

4. User hovers over and clicks on Hong Kong on the map



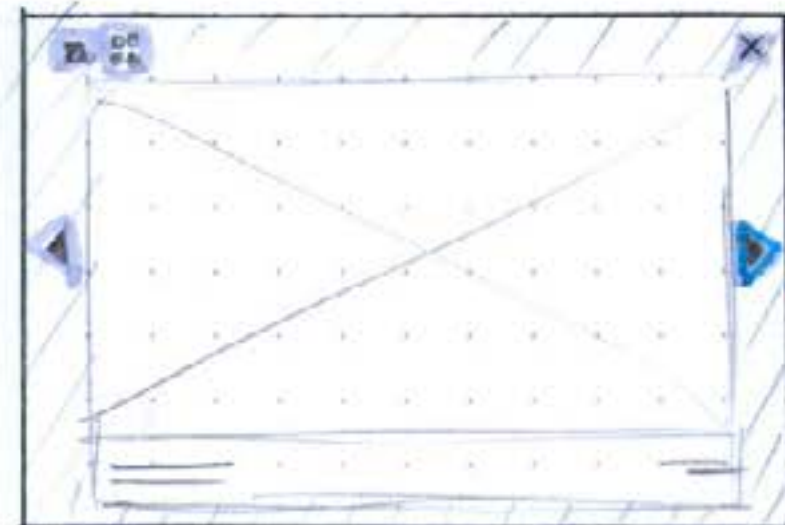
SLIDE HORIZONTALLY

5. User explores all statistics cards



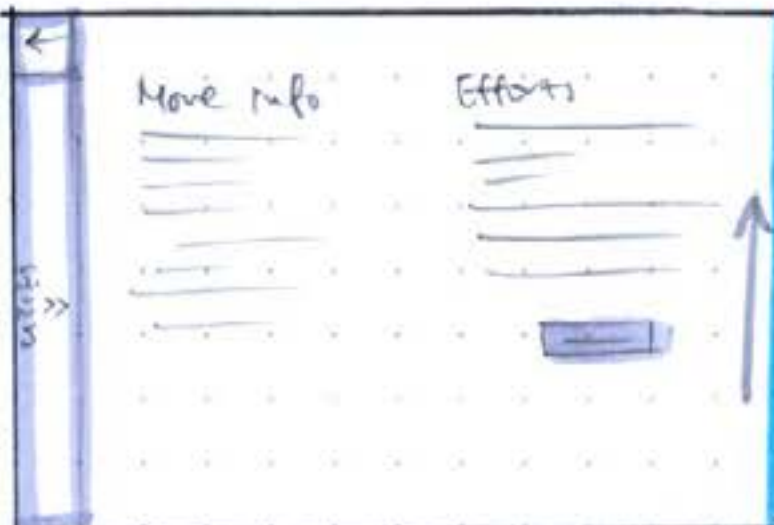
SCROLL

6. User scrolls down and to the case study article



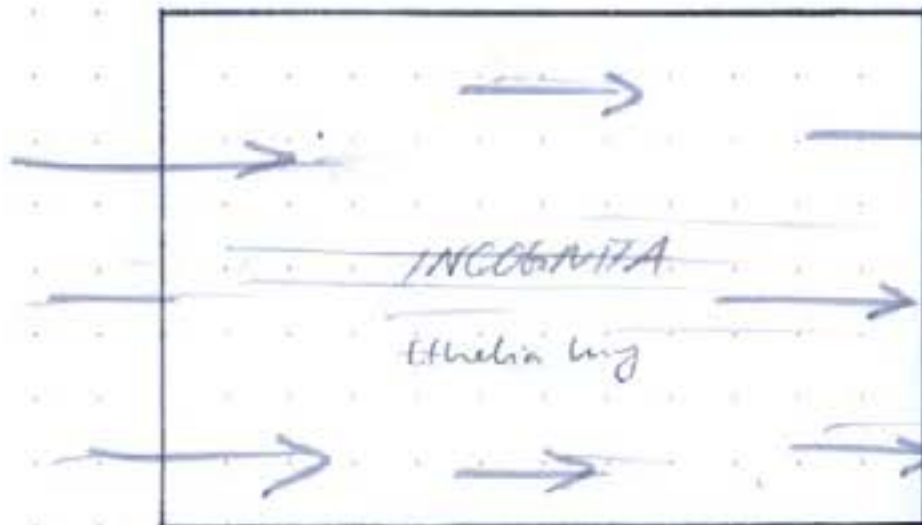
SLIDE HORIZONTALLY

7. User explores image gallery



SCROLL

8. User peruses references and CTAs



TRANSITION IN FROM LEFT

9. User exits out of city case study



Introducing the concept of the invisible poor

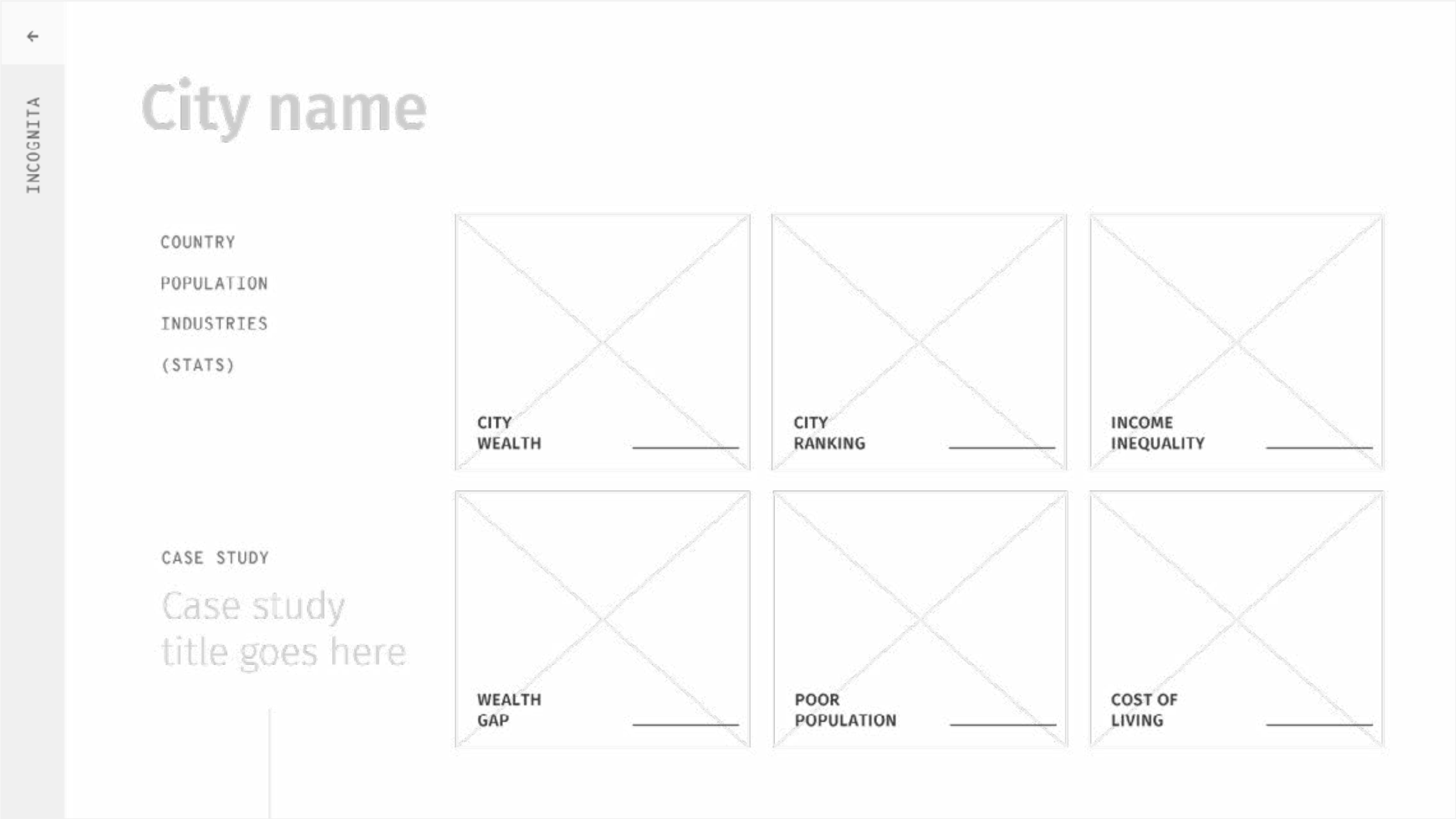


Detecting the user's location to give them options for exploring the infographic

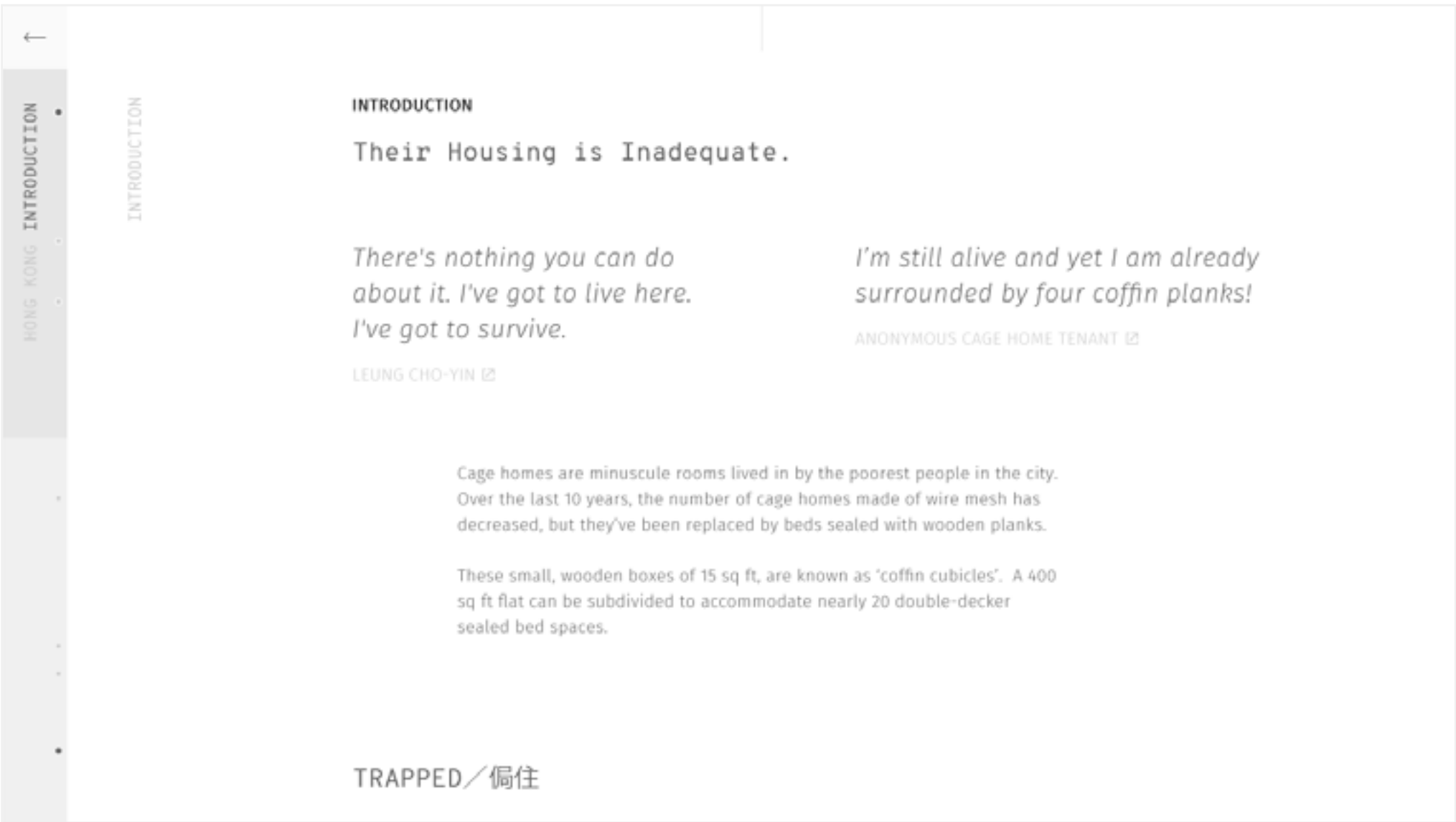




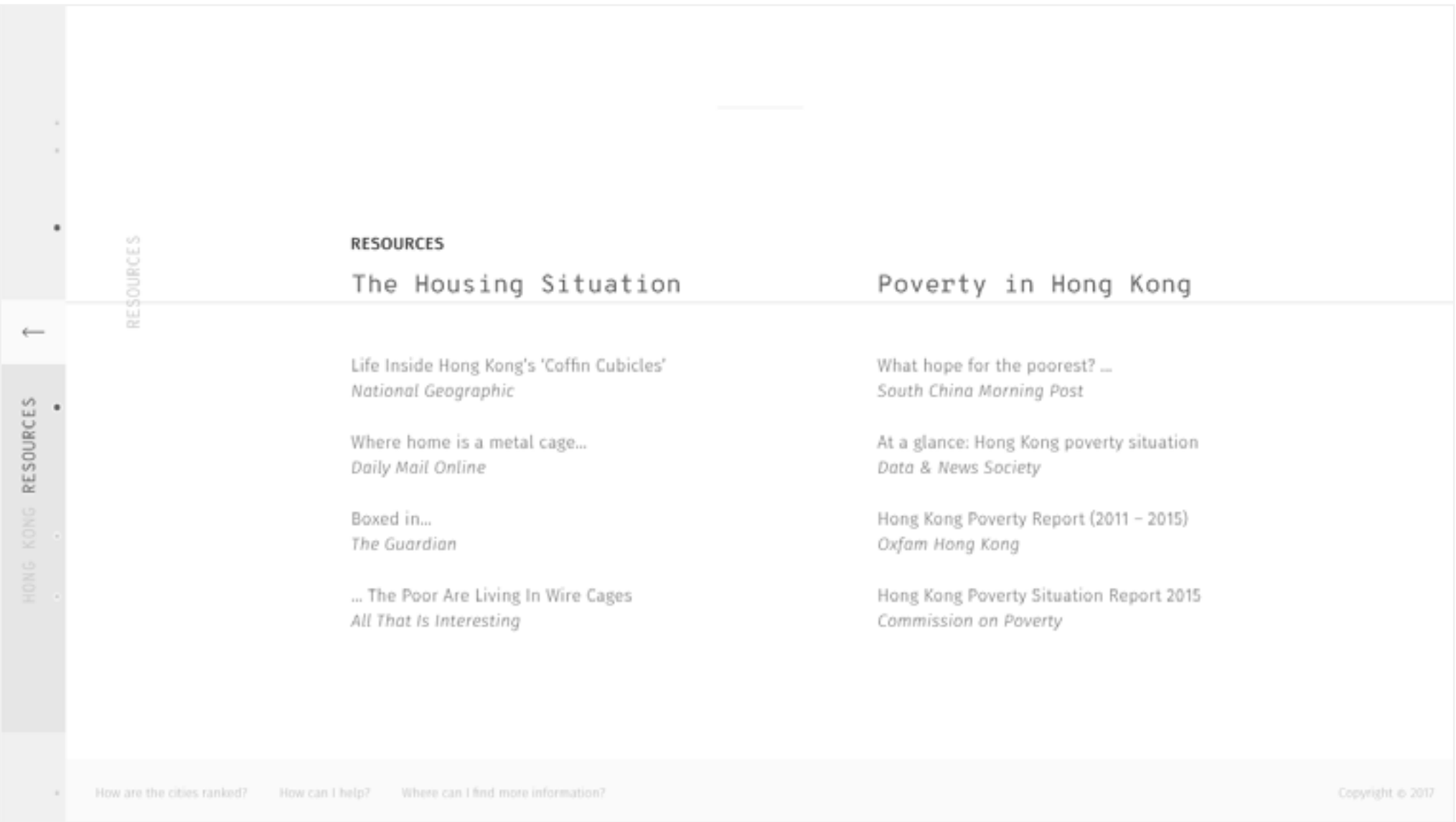
The landing page, where users can visualise the top cities by location, by the ranking of the city (bubbles arranged by colour or size), and size of poor population (bubbles arranged by colour or size)



The first part of the city data: objective data cards



Setting context for the case study (start)



Providing resources for the user to follow up on concepts and contributions (end)



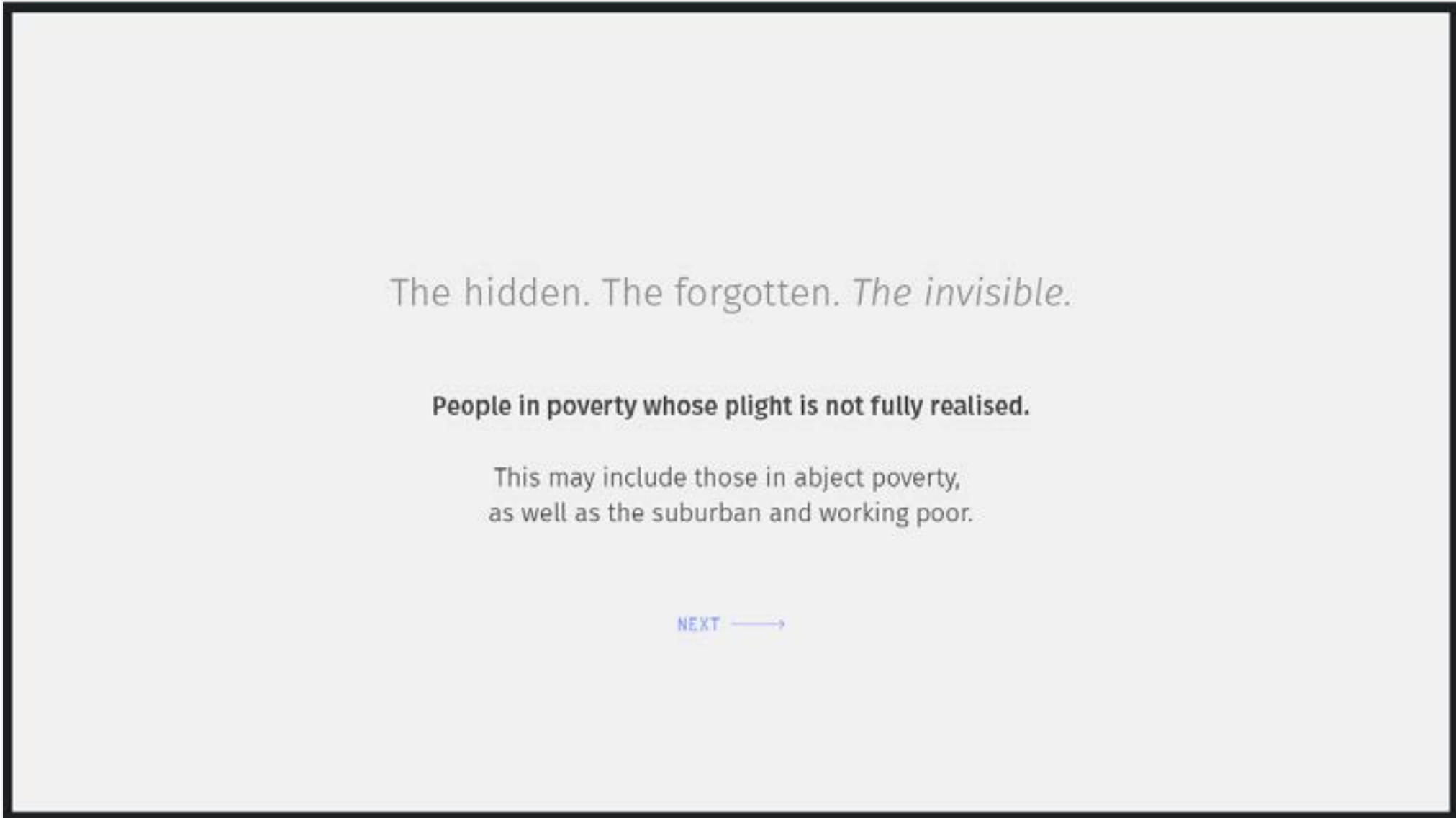
Displacement effect on the title hints at the concepts of invisibility, desperation, and volatility

# INCOGNITA

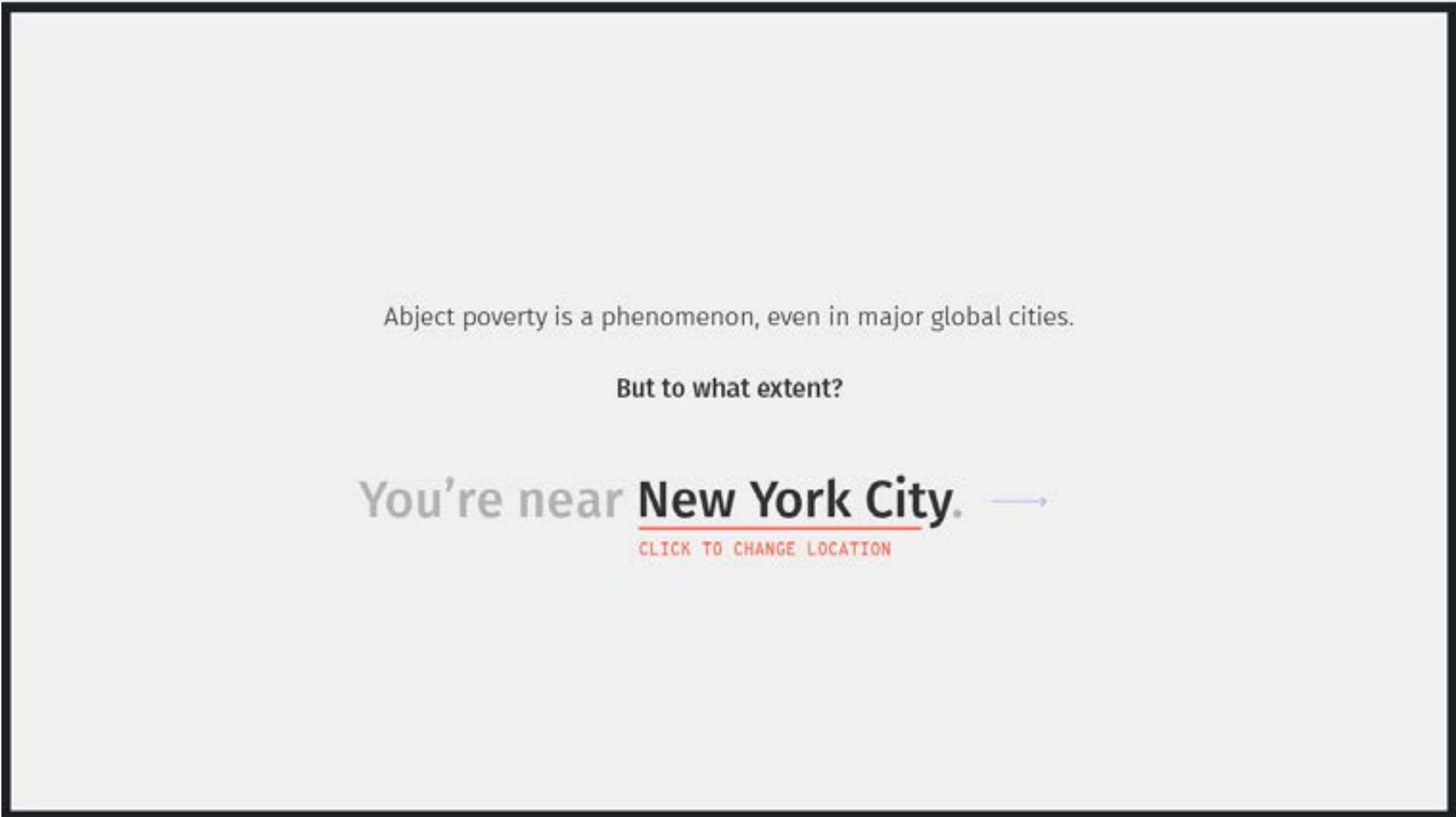
ABJECT POVERTY IN MAJOR CITIES

EXPLORE →→→

**Interaction** – once the title animates in, the user hits "explore" to begin the experience



Introducing the concept of the invisible poor



Detecting the user's location to give them options for exploring the infographic



Offering two options for perusal: the closest major city, or the globe

EXPLORE →

**New York City**

OR EXPLORE →

**The Globe**

**Animation** – the two options (city and globe) animate in seamlessly from the previous prompt



EXPLORE →

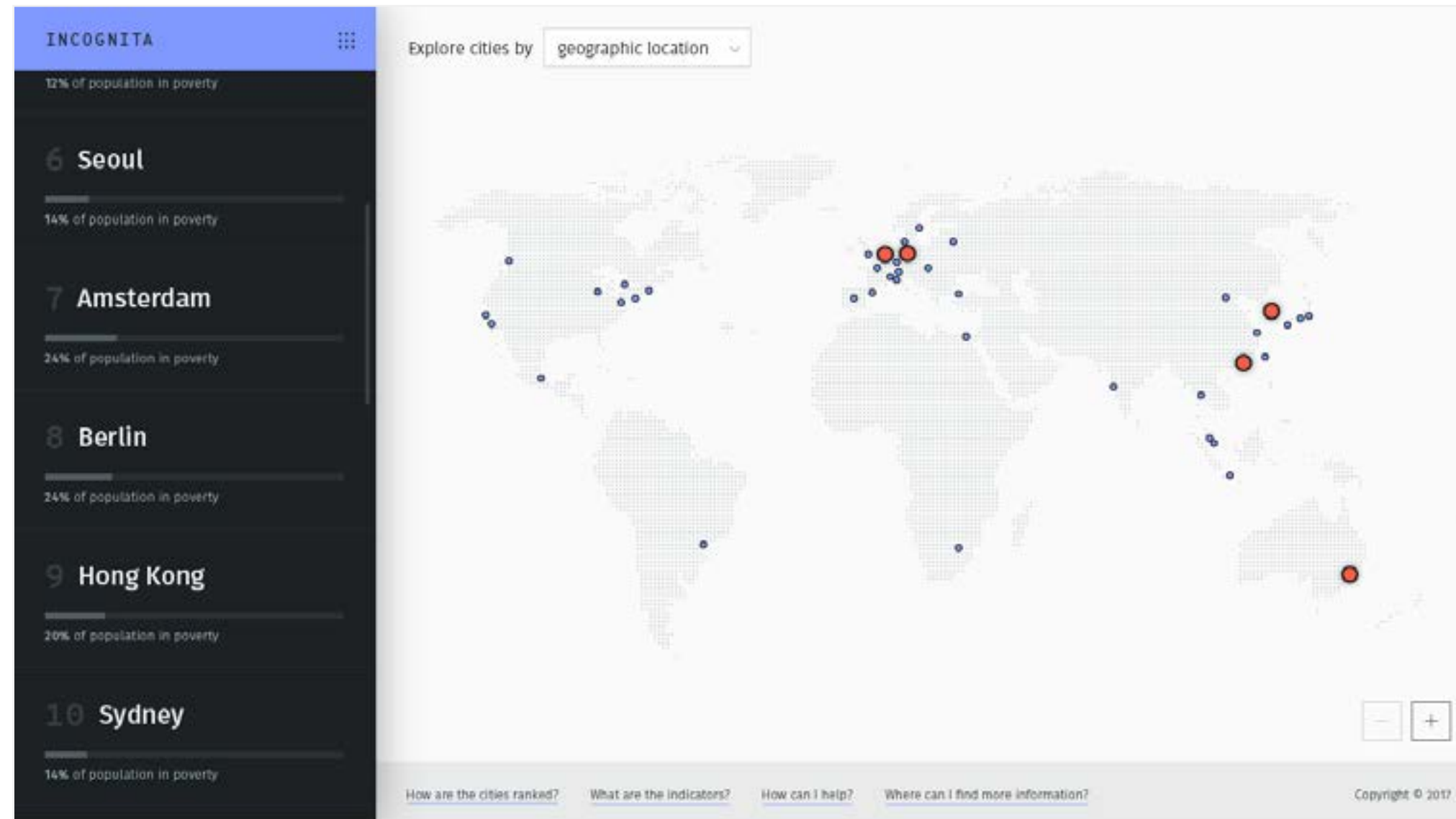
**New York City**

OR EXPLORE →

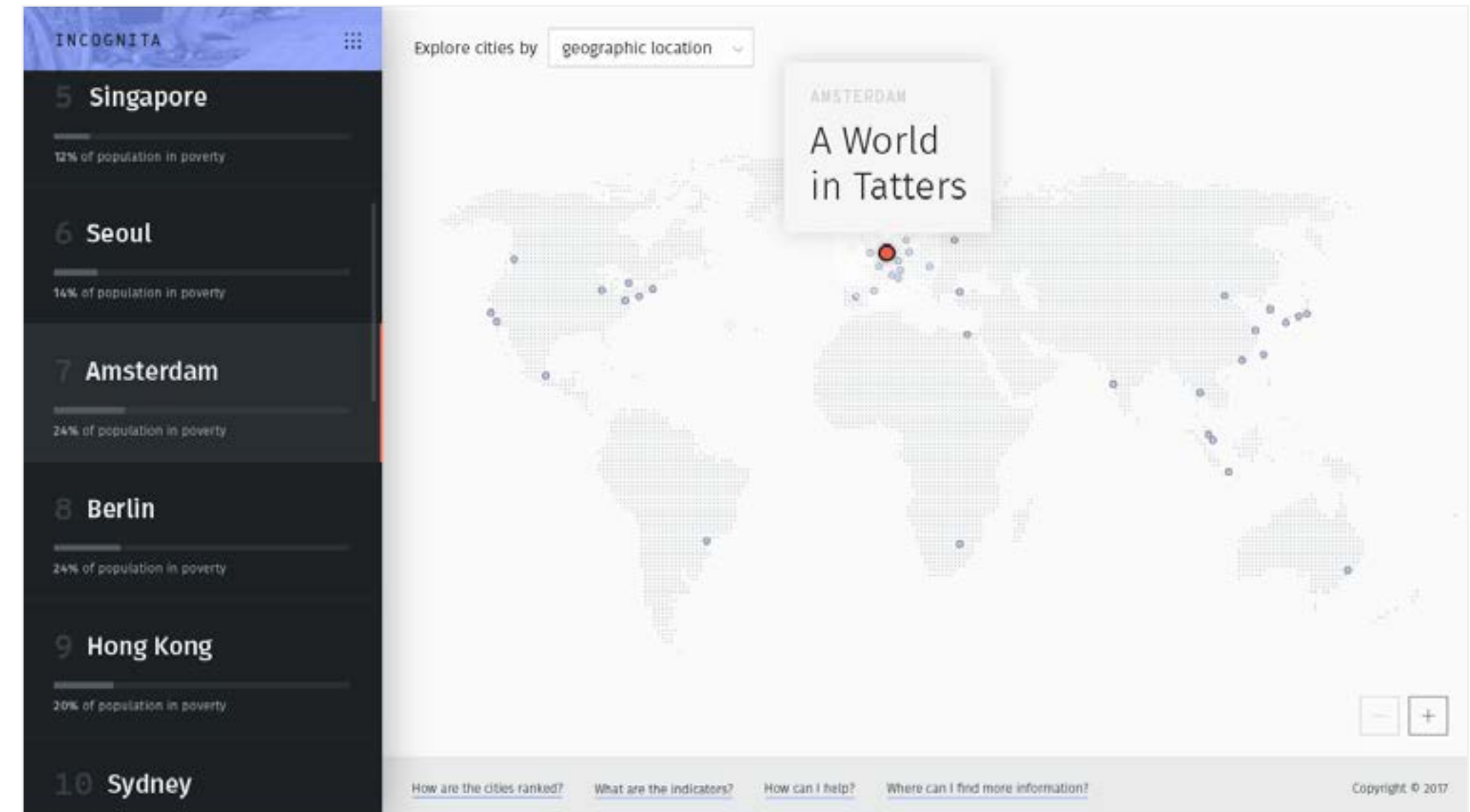
**The Globe**



## VISUAL DESIGN | LANDING: MAP VIEW (1)



The idle state of the landing page:  
cities visible in the sidebar are highlighted on the map



The hover state over a particular city



**Microanimations** – on scroll, the cities visible in the sidebar bring up corresponding pins on the map

## 5 Singapore

12% of population in poverty

## 6 Seoul

14% of population in poverty

## 7 Amsterdam

24% of population in poverty

Explore cities by

geographic location



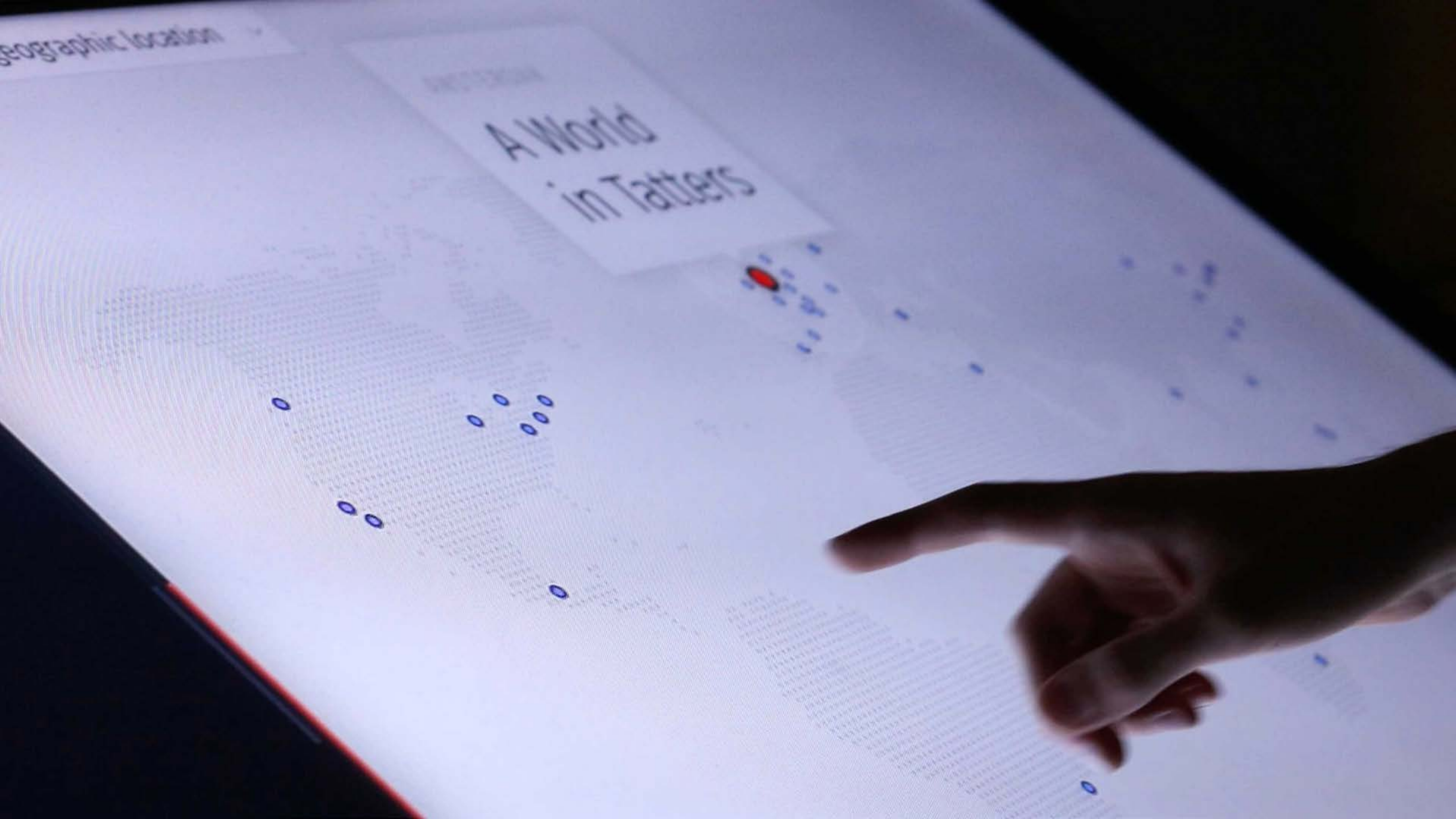
AMSTERDAM

A World  
in Tatters



**Interaction** – on hover, an image from the case study appears behind the title





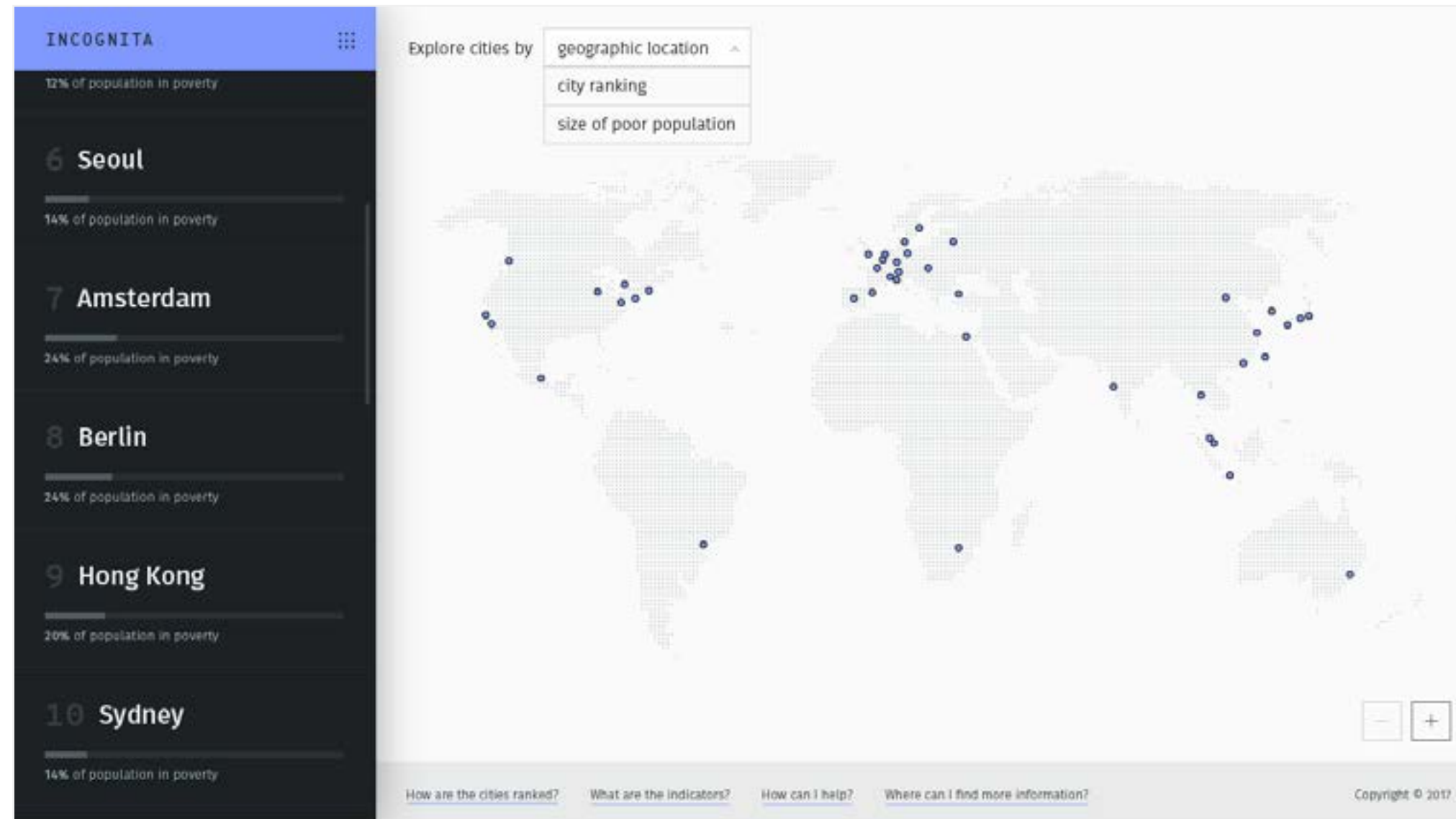
geographic location

# A World in Tatters

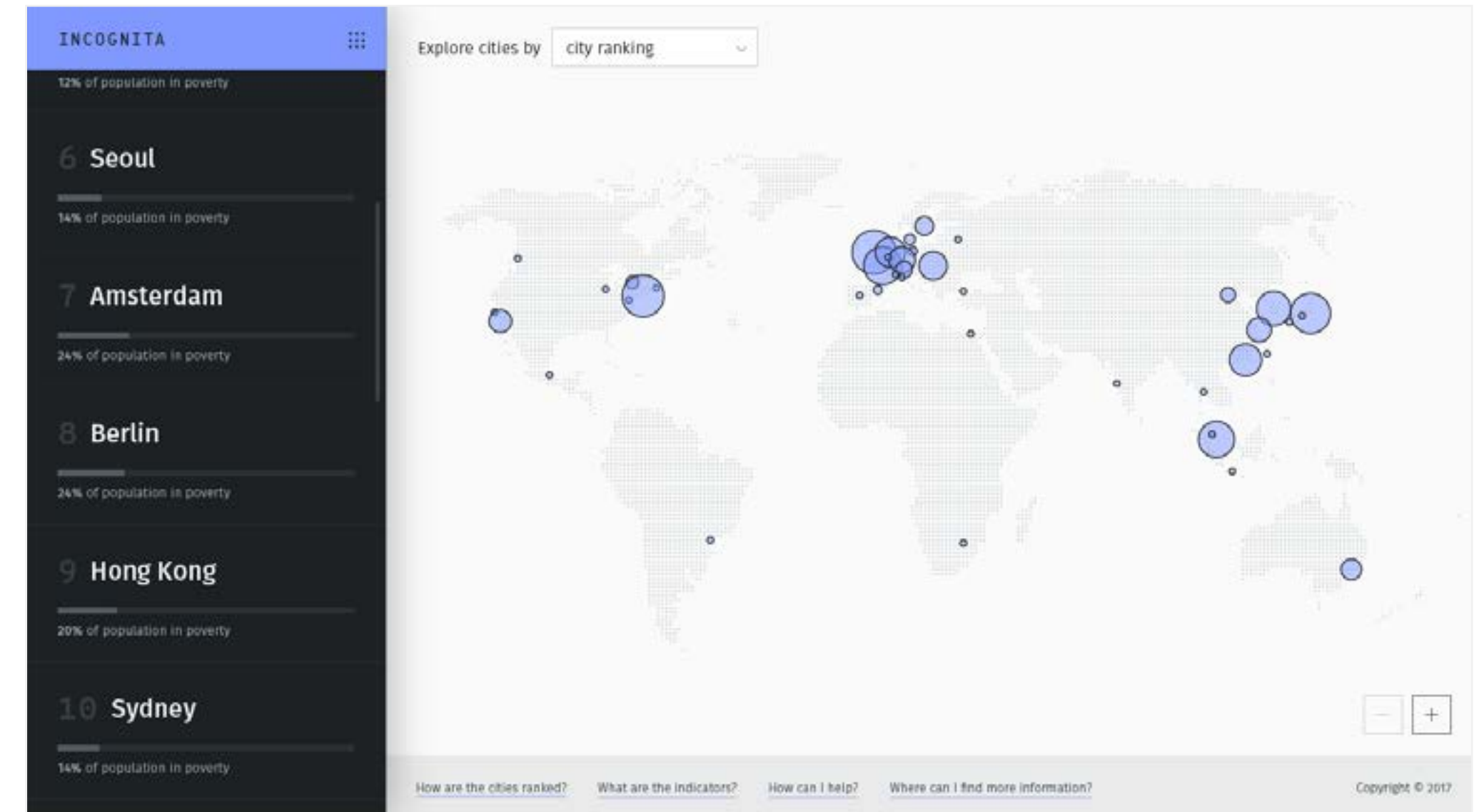




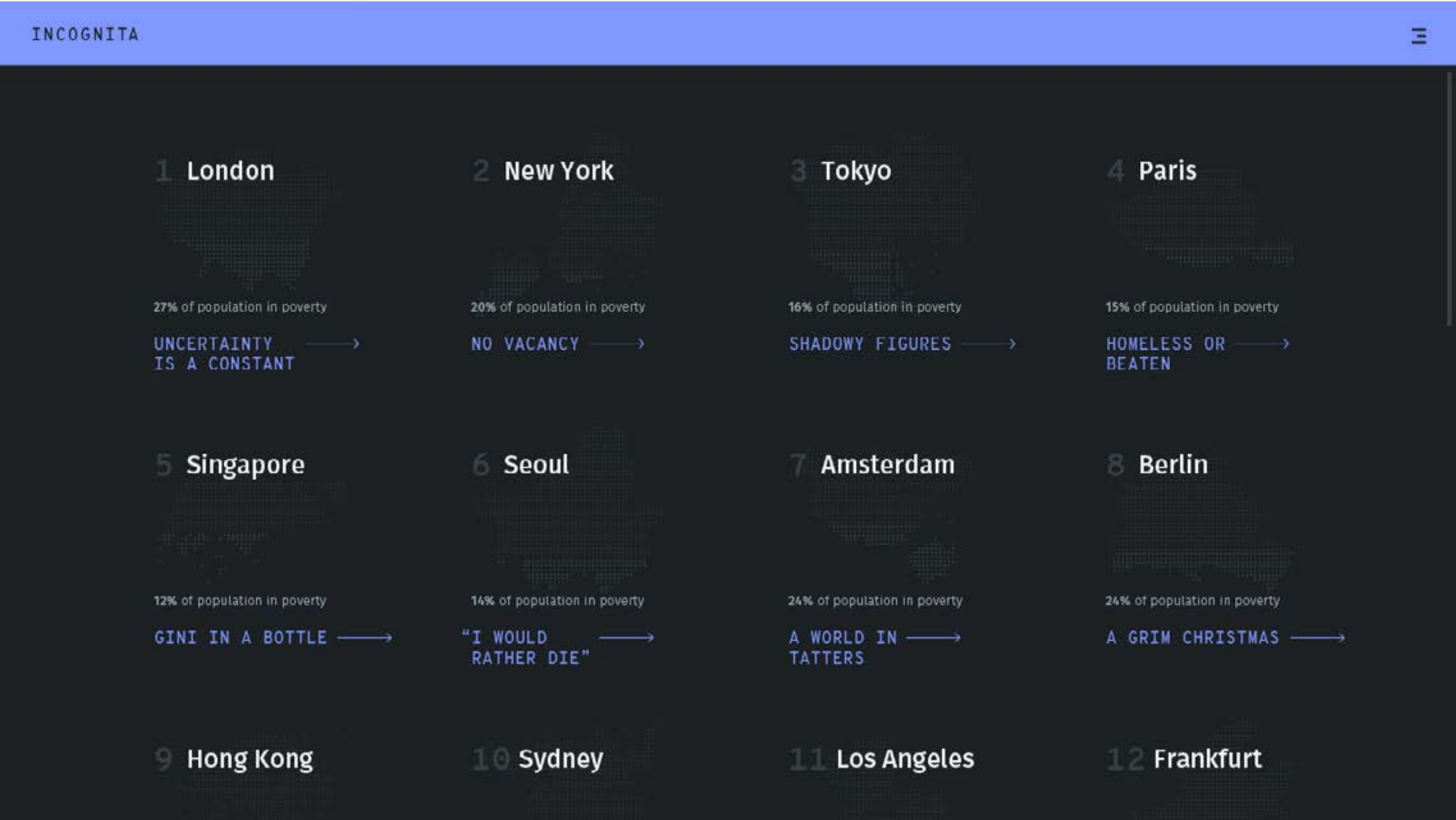
## VISUAL DESIGN | LANDING: MAP VIEW (2)



The dropdown where users can select their desired view



For example, seeing the cities based on city ranking  
(the larger, the higher in ranking)



A grid view for clarity, based on city ranking order

12% of population in poverty

GINI IN A BOTTLE →

## 9 Hong Kong

20% of population in poverty

COFFINS & CAGES →

14% of population in poverty

“I WOULD  
RATHER DIE” →

## 10 Sydney

14% of population in poverty

STEPHANIE →

24% of population in poverty

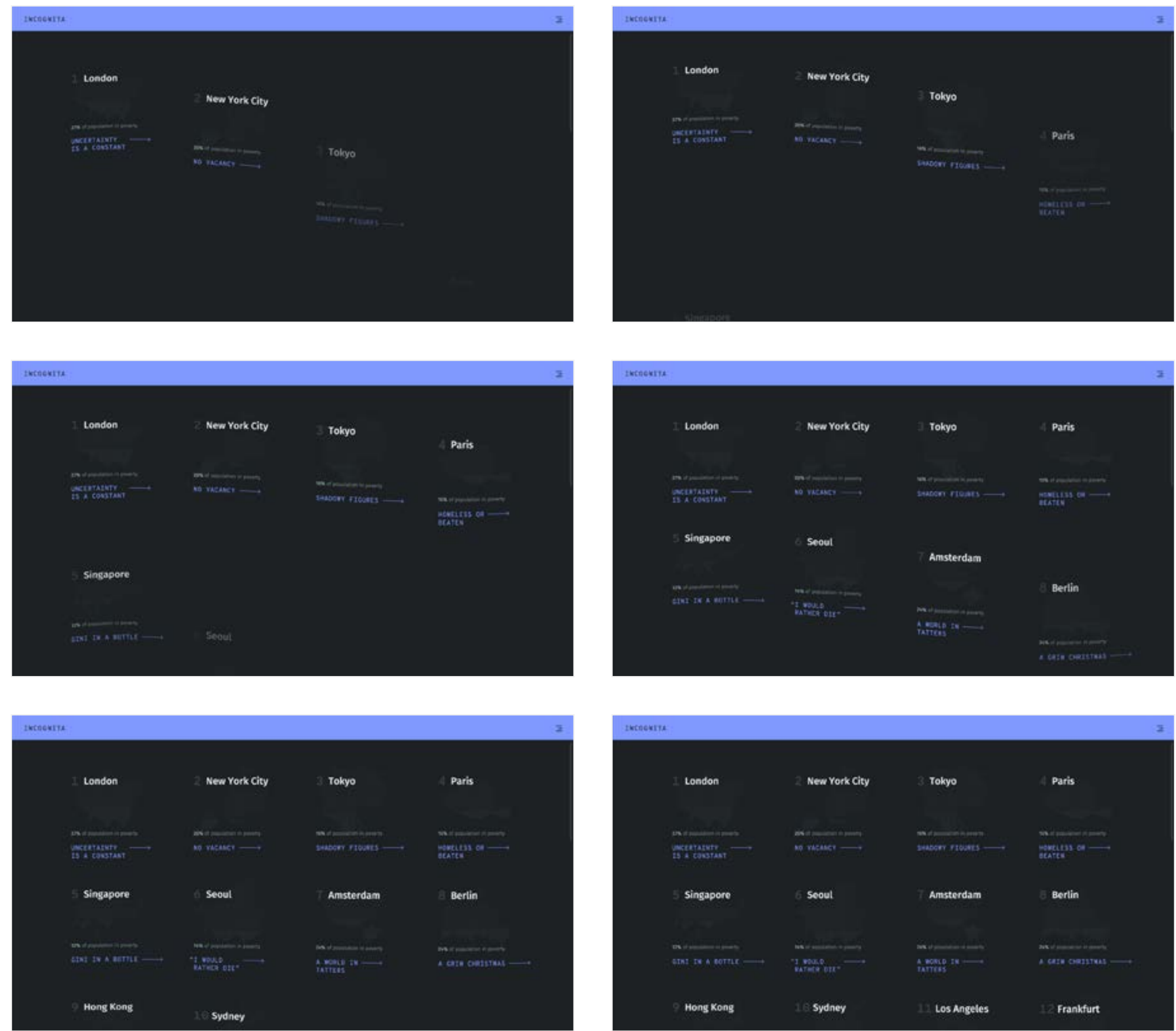
A WORLD IN  
TATTERS →

## 11 Los Angeles

19% of population in poverty

DOWN ON SKID ROW

**Communication** – the bar graph in the sidebar, augmented with maps



**Animation** – designed to animate in fluidly, like a wave



20% of population in poverty

NO VACANCY →

SHADOWNY FIGURES →

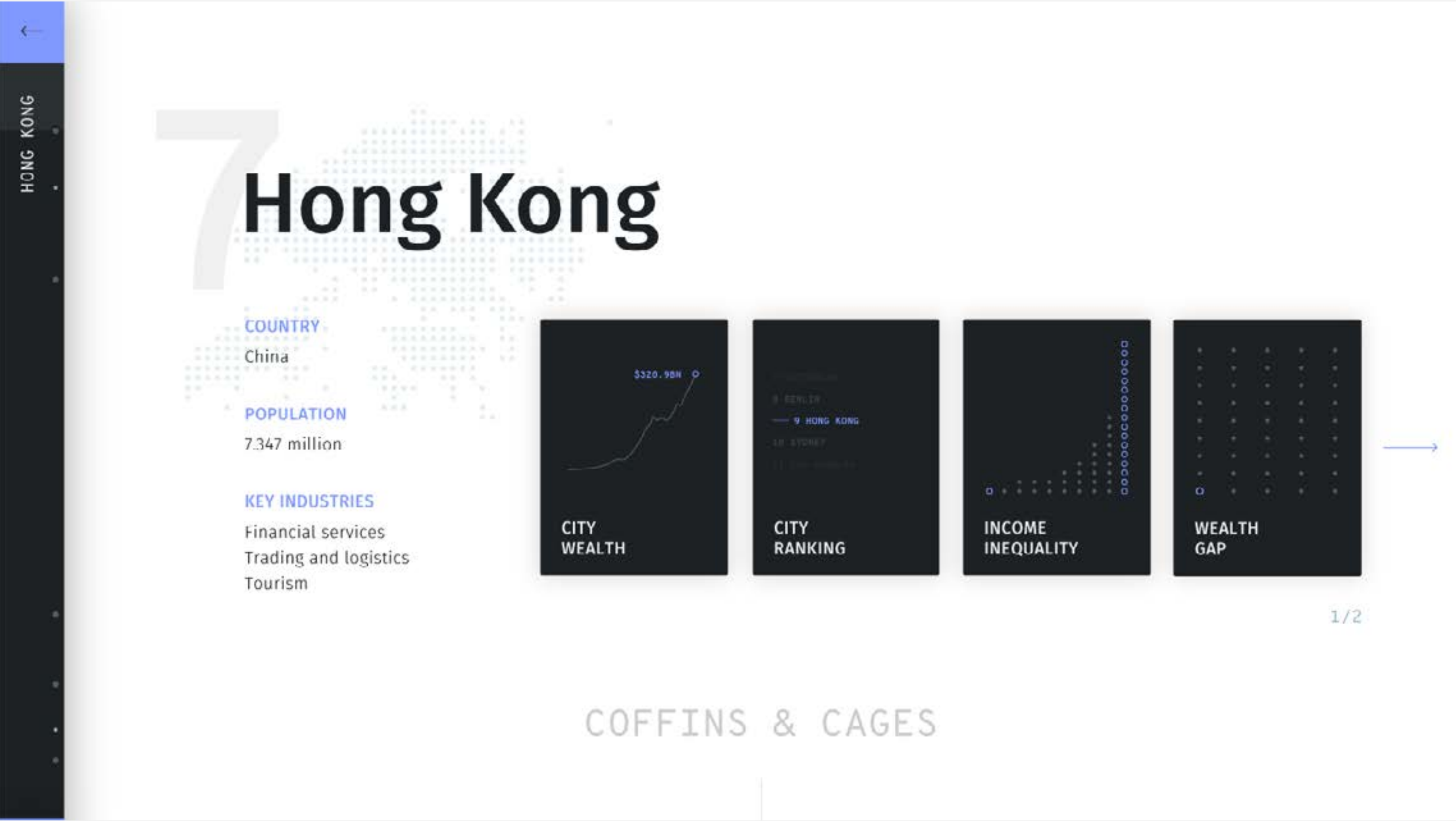
Singapore

6 Seoul

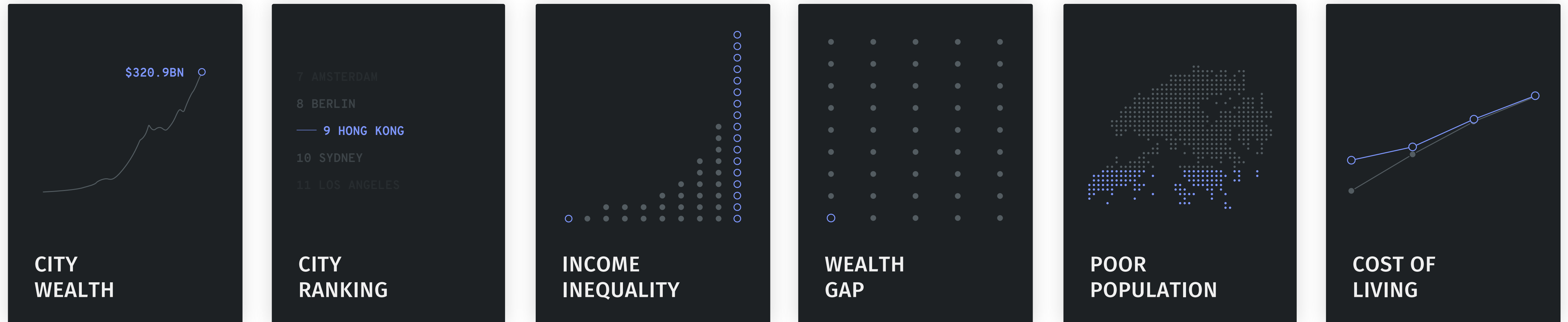
7 Amsterdam

14% of population in poverty

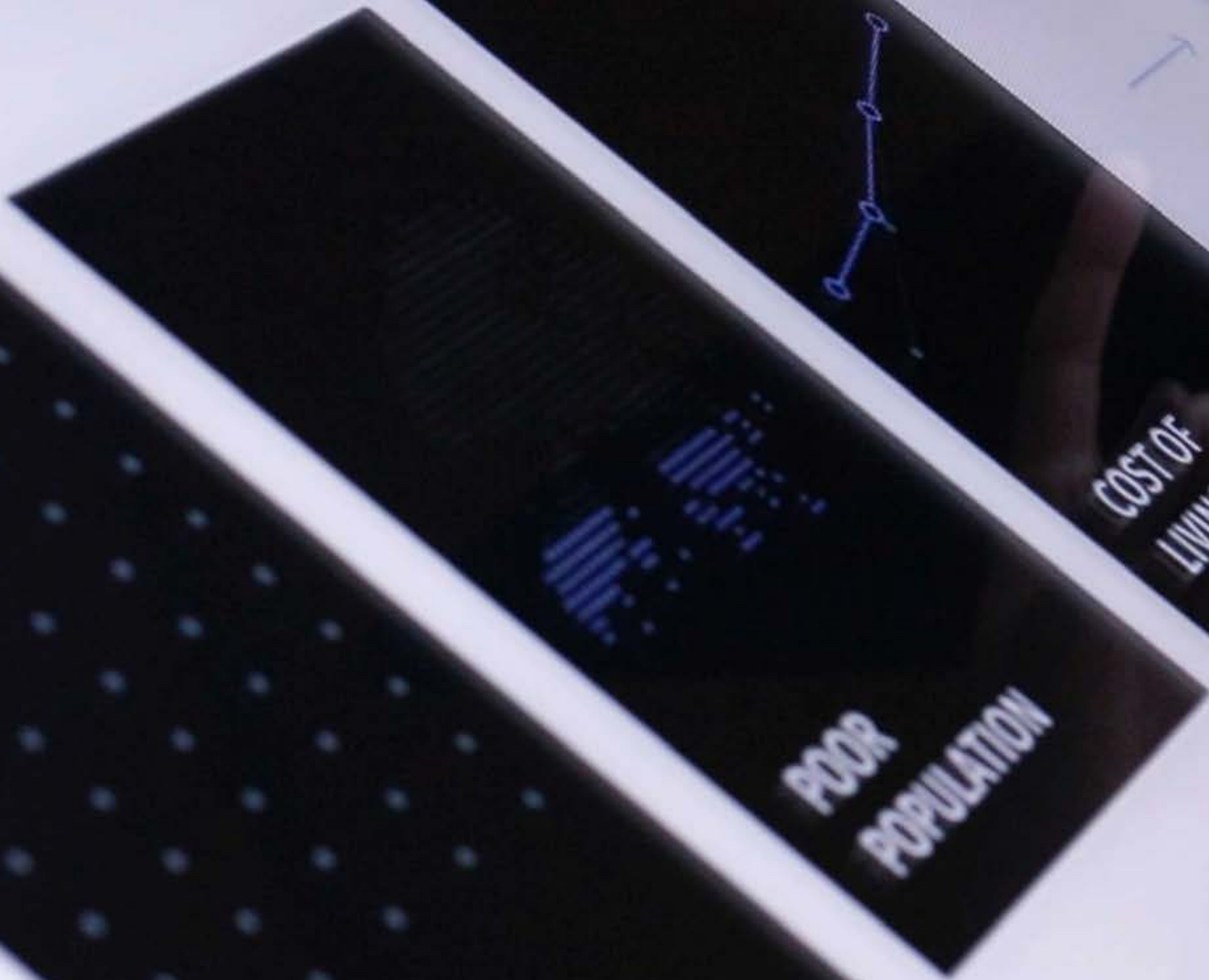
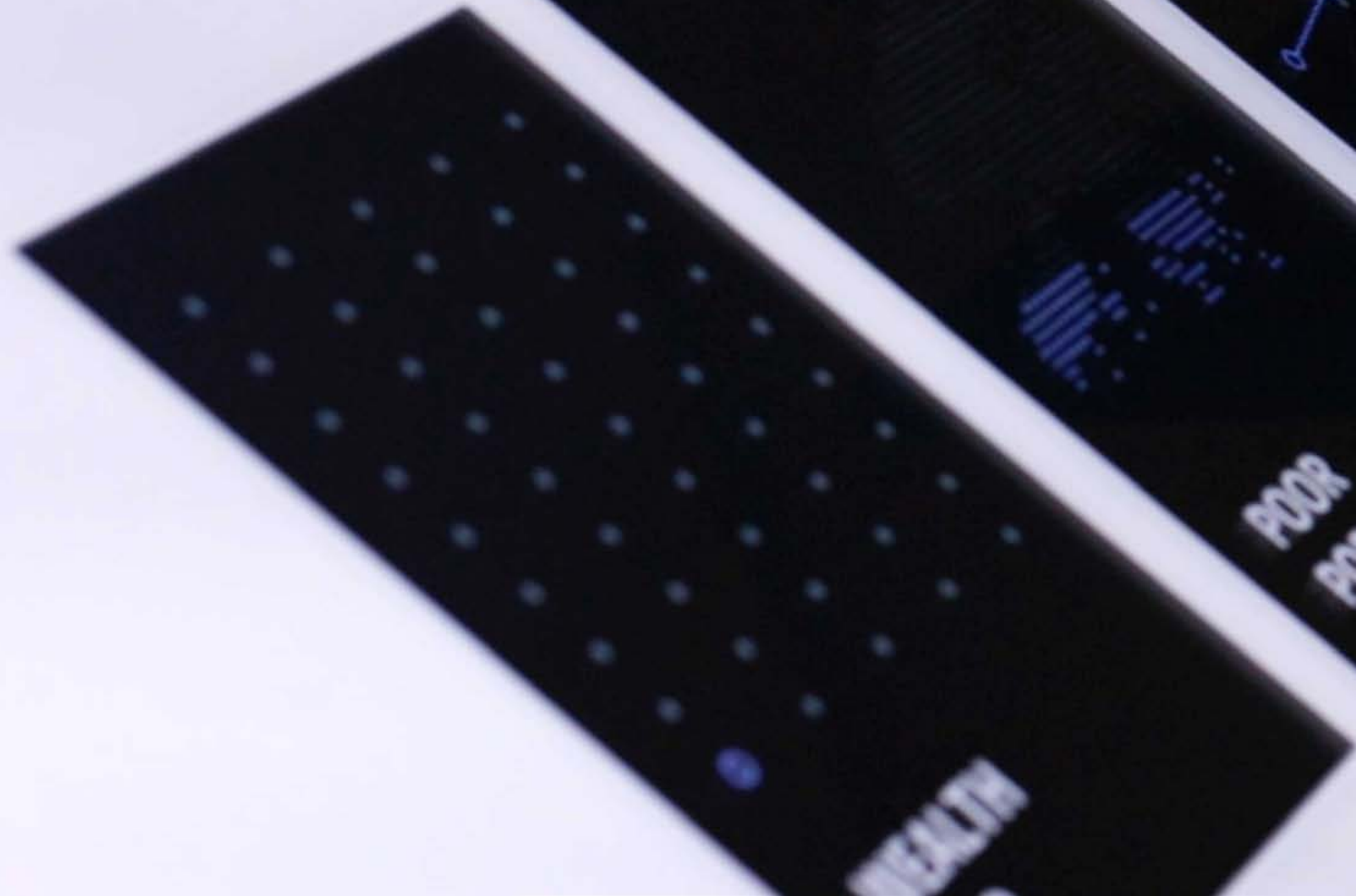




Data cards representing various statistics about the city and its poverty levels



**Design** – each card is designed for its concept to be understood at a quick glance





Contextualising the case study article

HONG KONG INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

**INTRODUCTION**

**Their Housing is Inadequate.**

*There's nothing you can do about it. I've got to live here. I've got to survive.*

LEUNG CHO-YIN


*I'm still alive and yet I am already surrounded by four coffin planks!*

ANONYMOUS CAGE HOME TENANT

Cage homes are minuscule rooms lived in by the poorest people in the city. Over the last 10 years, the number of cage homes made of wire mesh has decreased, but they've been replaced by beds sealed with wooden planks.

These small, wooden boxes of 15 sq ft, are known as 'coffin cubicles'. A 400 sq ft flat can be subdivided to accommodate nearly 20 double-decker sealed bed spaces.

**TRAPPED / 偏住**



*Living Under Constraint.*


BENNY LAM

1/8

HONG KONG ARTICLE

HONG KONG ARTICLE

Hong Kong is brimming with neon-lit shopping strips that sell luxury brands, jewels, and technology to eager consumers; the skyscraper-filled skyline contains businesses that make the city one of the world's major financial hubs. Yet behind the glamorous facade, approximately 200,000 people, including 40,000 children, live in spaces ranging in size from around 15 – 100 square feet.




*People in Hong Kong struggle to acquire even small and simple homes for themselves.*

BENNY LAM

With a population of nearly 7.5 million and almost no developable land remaining, Hong Kong's housing market has risen to the most expensive in the world. Pushed out by soaring rents, tens of thousands of people have no other option than to inhabit squatter huts, sub-divided units where the kitchen and toilet merge, coffin cubicles, and cage homes, which are rooms measuring as small as 6' x 2.5' traditionally made of wire mesh. "From cooking to sleeping, all activities take place in these tiny spaces," says Lam.

To create the coffin cubicles a 400 square flat will be illegally divided by its owner to accommodate 20 double-decker beds, each costing about HK\$2000 (over \$250 USD) per month in rent.

The space is too small to stand up in.



*Close proximity in these sub-divided units makes privacy and sound sleep a luxury.*

BENNY LAM

Diving into the case study



**Interaction** – the navigation down the case study also functions as a progress bar fixed to the side of the page



ARTICLE

## Life Inside Hong Kong's 'Coffin Cubicles'

COLLAPSE ARTICLE ↗

3 minute read

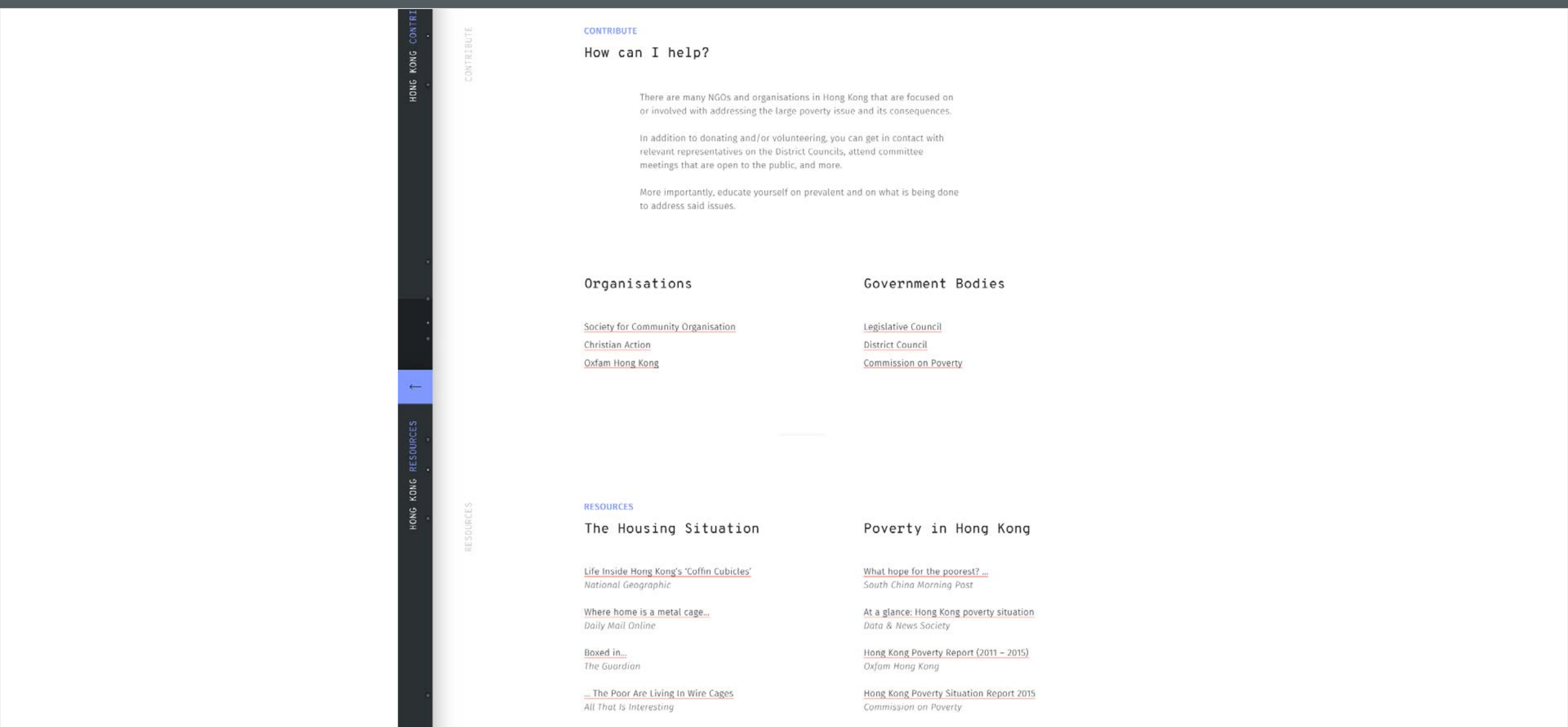
Pushed out by the sky-high prices of rent in glittering Hong Kong, an estimated 100,000 people in Hong Kong live in inadequate housing.



hat day, I came home and cried," said Benny Lam when describing an experience photographing grim living conditions in Hong Kong. After four years of visiting over 100 sub-divided flats in the city's old district, Lam was accustomed to the wood-planked 15-square foot homes known as coffin cubicles. While photographing a cubicle that was slightly larger than usual, Lam blurted to the tenant, "You have a big coffin home!"

"I felt so bad," Lam remembers, "Living like that should never be normal. I had become numb."

**Interaction** – the case study article can be expanded or collapsed - the other content on the page should still provide meaning and clarity



**Interaction** – the end of the page is the takeaway and call-to-action



# conclusion

Solution

Takeaways

## SOLUTION

In order to retain the flexibility to reach as many audiences as possible, *Incognita* is a web experience that can live both on touch surfaces as well as on desktops and laptops.

In addition to mapping out the user journey and microanimations, I mocked up the experience and put together a marketing video.



<https://vimeo.com/246850070>

Read their stories. **Contribute to their cause.**

DO YOUR PART →





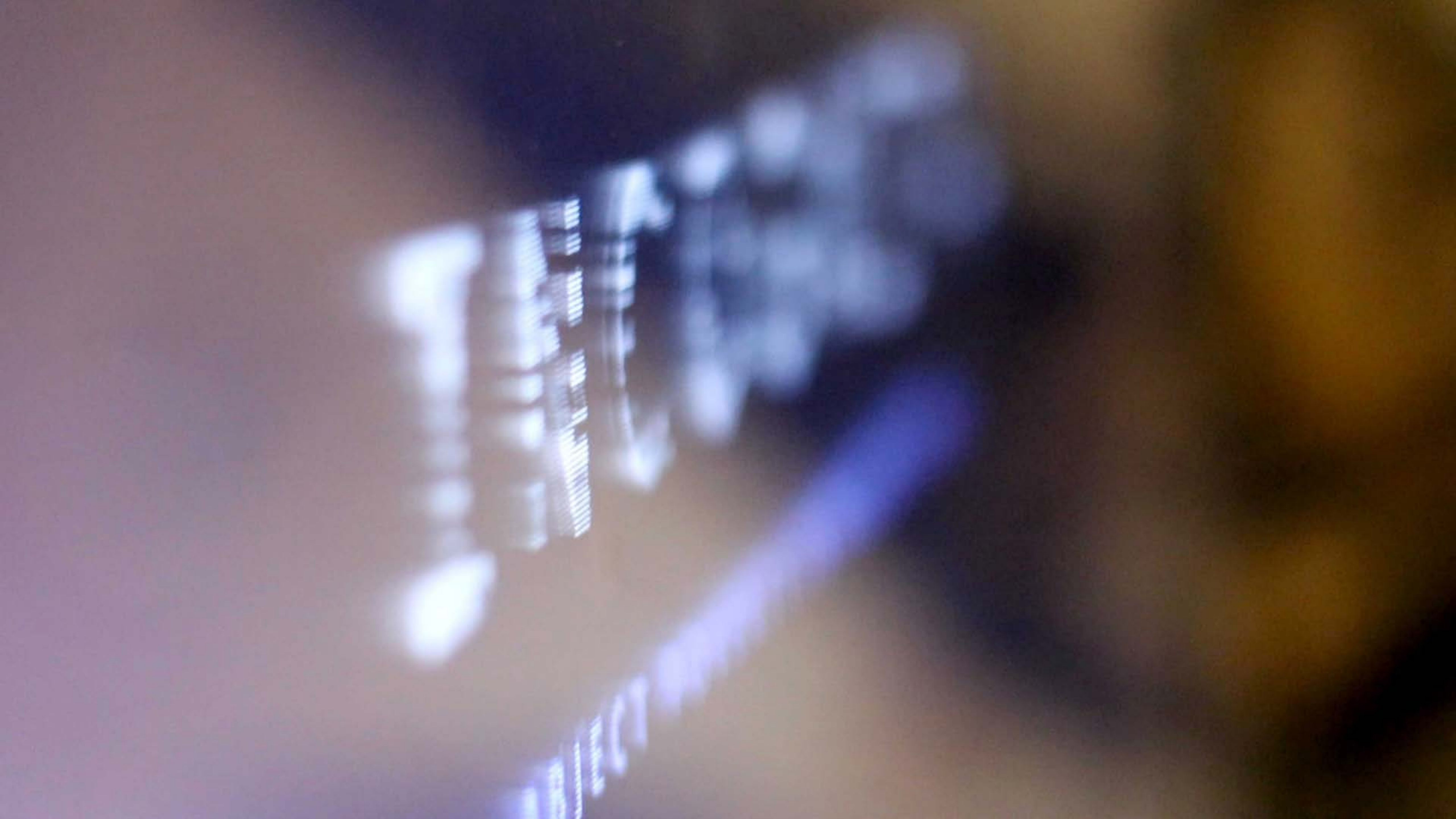
## TAKEAWAYS

*Incognita* brings awareness to **the extent of invisible abject poverty in global major cities.**

Through approaching the case studies through both objective and subjective lenses, the experience should be illuminating and engaging.

The themes presented in this project are dear to my heart, and in creating this experience, I hope I am able to communicate the importance of the devastation of abject poverty that is masked in affluent cities such as Hong Kong, and inspire further charitable action.

Through this project, I explored designing for a tone that is neither too sombre, nor too lighthearted. I was also able to flex my animation muscles and design microanimations that delight and that complement the data shown.



T H A N K   Y O U .

Ethelia Lung | Interactive IV 2017

<https://vimeo.com/247193239>



# appendix

Resources

## RESOURCES

<http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1320690/sizing-poverty-hong-kong>  
<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/economy/article/1866074/more-elderly-people-hong-kong-living-below-poverty-line>  
<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2039087/more-hong-kong-people-fall-within-cracks-official>  
<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/2028422/hong-kong-government-slammed-poverty-figure-hits-six-year>  
<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/economy/article/2027090/hong-kongs-richest-earn-29-times-more-poorest-despite>  
<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/economy/article/2097715/what-hope-poorest-hong-kong-wealth-gap-hits-record-high>  
<https://dnnsociety.org/2016/12/04/at-a-glance-hong-kong-poverty-situation/>  
[http://www.oxfam.org.hk/content/98/content\\_23043en.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.hk/content/98/content_23043en.pdf)  
[http://www.oxfam.org.hk/content/98/content\\_31062en.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.hk/content/98/content_31062en.pdf)  
<http://poverty.org.hk/povertydata?tid=26>  
[https://www.povertyrelief.gov.hk/pdf/poverty\\_report\\_2014\\_e.pdf](https://www.povertyrelief.gov.hk/pdf/poverty_report_2014_e.pdf)  
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