

Concentrated incarceration and the public-housing-to-prison pipeline in NYC neighborhoods

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Public-housing-to-prison pipeline in NYC

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Concentrated incarceration and the public-housing-to-prison pipeline in New York City neighborhoods

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Using public housing developments as a strategic site, our research documents a distinct pathway linking disadvantaged context to incarceration—the public-housing-to-prison pipeline. Focusing on New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) housing developments as a case study, we find that incarceration rates in NYCHA tracts are 4.6 times higher than those in non-NYCHA tracts. More strikingly, 94% of NYCHA tracts report rates above the median value for non-NYCHA tracts. Moreover, 17% of New York State’s incarcerated population originated from just 3/2 NYCHA tracts. Compared with non-NYCHA tracts, NYCHA tracts had higher shares of Black residents and were significantly more disadvantaged. This NYCHA disadvantage in concentrated incarceration is also robust at different spatial scales. Our findings have implications for policies and programs to disrupt community-based pipelines to prison.

concentrated incarceration | public-housing-to-prison pipeline | hypersurveillance

Compared with all other countries, the United States reports the highest incarceration rate, accounting for one in five of the 11 million people incarcerated worldwide in 2019 (1). From 1980 to 2019, the incarceration rate per 100,000 US residents more than tripled from 131 to 419, reaching a peak at 506 in 2008 (2). This drastic surge in incarceration has disproportionately impacted young Black and Hispanic males with devastating consequences for their families and communities (3, 4). In particular, Black males ages 18 to 19 y were 12.4 times more likely to be incarcerated than their White male counterparts in 2019 (2).

The US carceral system is the largest in the world (5). In 2019, before the pandemic, 6.5 million adults lived under correctional control (6). Among them, 2.1 million were incarcerated and 4.4 million were on probation and parole (7, 8). If the incarcerated were to populate a city, it would be the fifth-largest in the United States, behind New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston. In 2019, 31 million youths were under the jurisdiction of juvenile courts in 2019 (8). Moreover, jail incarceration is rather common, with an estimated annual admission of 10.3 million (9, 10).

Significance

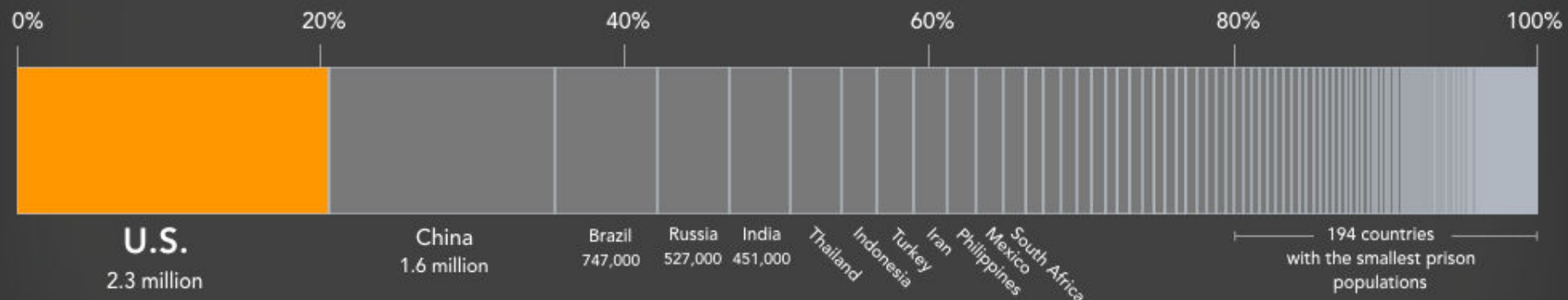
Research on mass incarceration has documented its devastating consequences on incarcerated individuals, their families, and minority communities. This study examines the increased risk of incarceration in New York City Housing Authority neighborhoods. That incarceration is disproportionately concentrated in disadvantaged and segregated Black neighborhoods is well documented. This analysis examines public housing developments as a primary site of spatially clustered incarceration or concentrated incarceration. This study contributes to research on punishment and inequality by highlighting the public-housing-to-prison pipeline as a missing link in the carceral system.

Source: <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2123201119>

Incarcerated population in 2019: U.S. carceral system is the largest in the world

1 out of 5 prisoners in the world is incarcerated in the U.S.

Eleven million people around the world are in prisons and jails. The U.S. locks up a larger share of these people than any other country, with as many prisoners as the 194 countries with the smallest incarcerated populations combined.



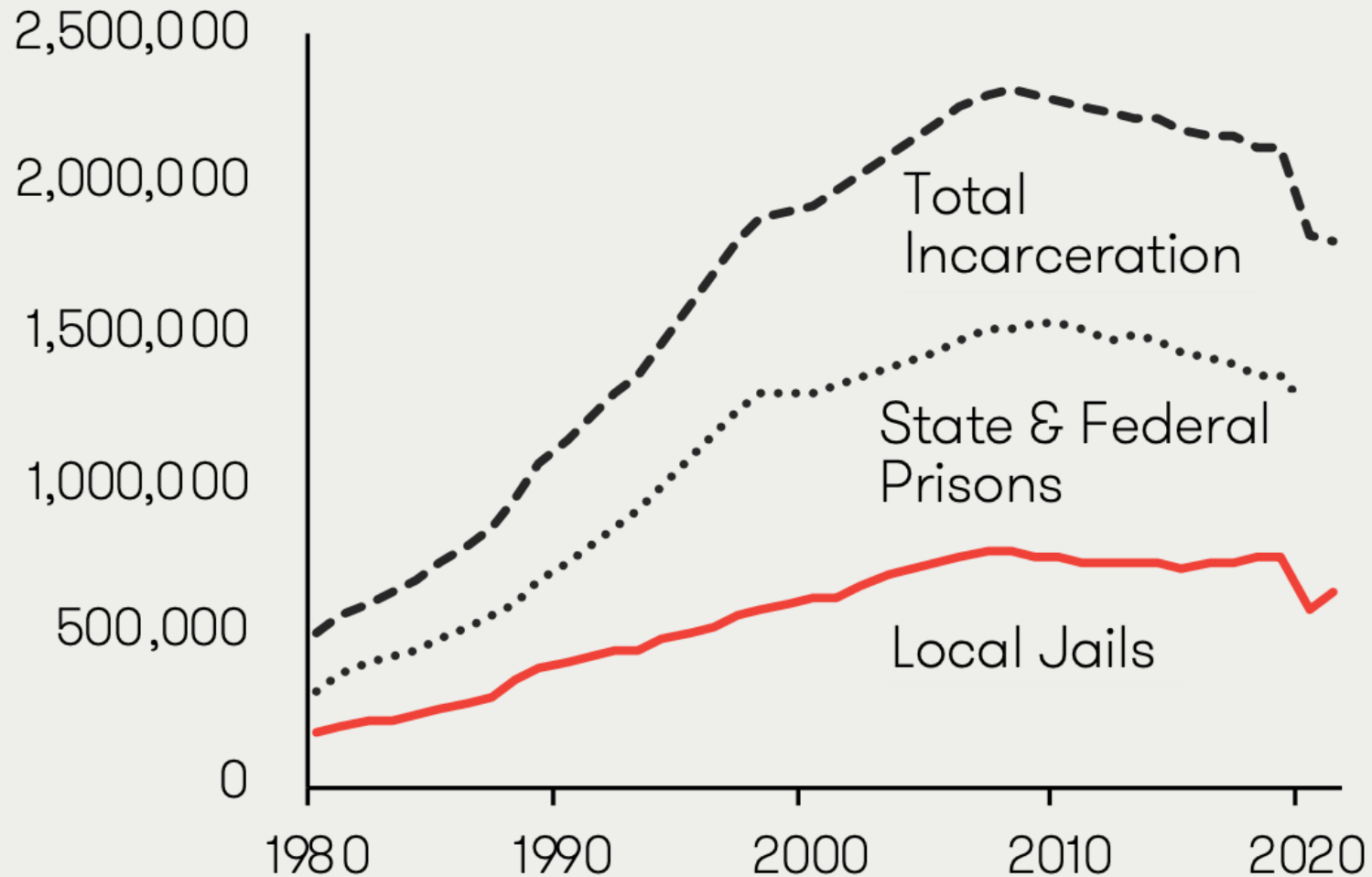
Sources: U.S. incarcerated population from Prison Policy Initiative, *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2019*, and all other data from Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research, *World Prison Brief* downloaded January 2020.

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Source: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/01/16/percent-incarcerated/>

The rise of mass incarceration, 1980 to 2020

The number of people incarcerated in jails and prisons from 1980 to late 2020



The long reach of incarceration

- 2.3 million currently incarcerated
- 19 million with a felony conviction
- 77 million with a criminal record
- 113 million with an immediate family member currently or previously incarcerated
 - 63% among Blacks
 - 48% among Hispanics
 - 42% among Whites

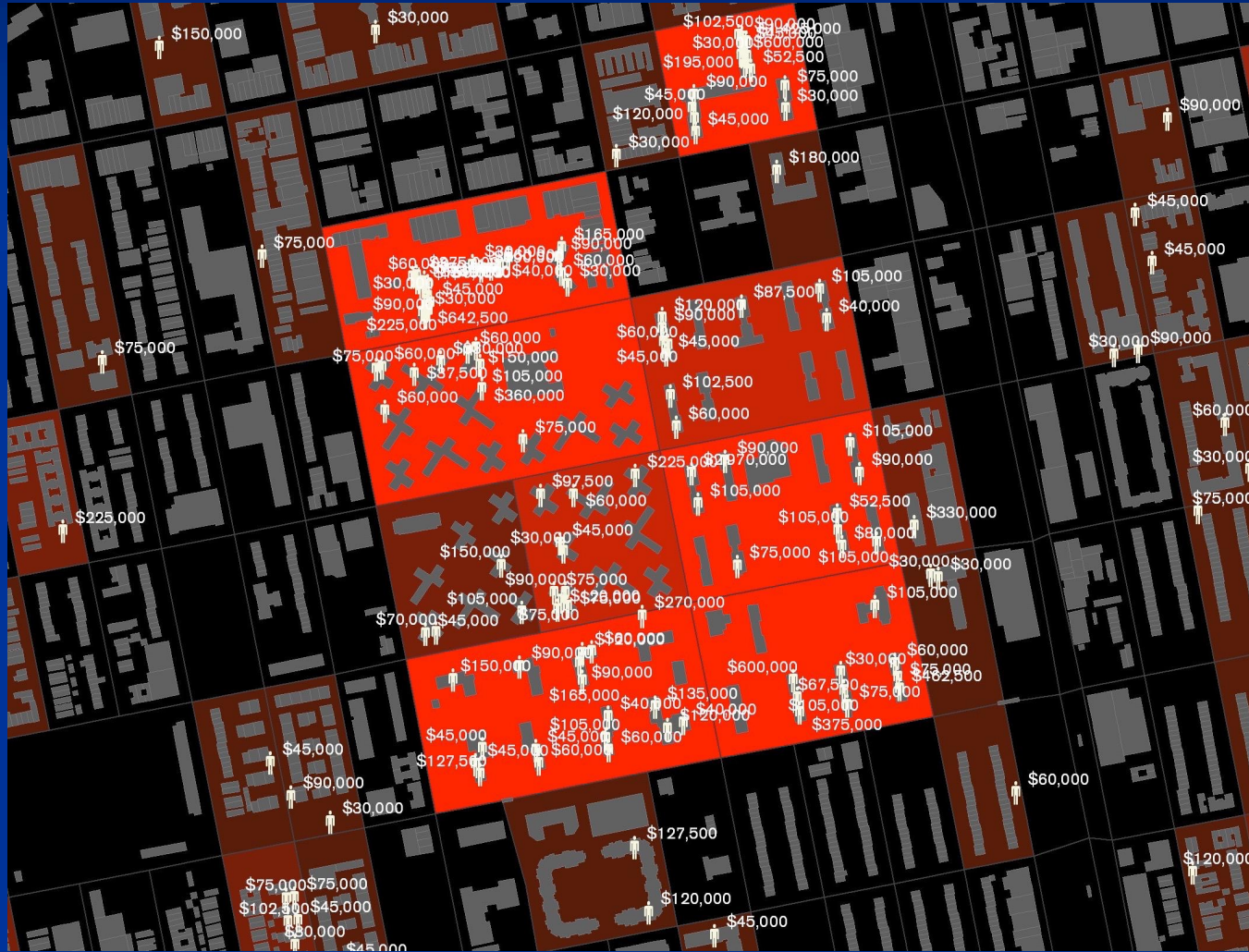
Sources: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/factsheets/pie2020_allimages.pdf
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2378023119829332>

Spatially concentrated incarceration

- “Million-dollar blocks”: urban census blocks for which the cost of imprisoning their residents was upward of \$1 million
- 31 men from four blocks in Brownsville, Brooklyn accounted for \$4.4 million in imprisonment cost in 2003
- \$359 million to imprison people from Brooklyn in 2003

Source: <https://www.zonebooks.org/books/28-close-up-at-a-distance-mapping-technology-and-politics>

\$11,839,665 to incarcerate people from these 11 blocks in 2003



Source: <https://c4sr.columbia.edu/projects/million-dollar-blocks>

Our contributions

- Pipelines to prison from poor neighborhoods
 - “School-to-prison”
 - “Poverty-to-prison”
 - “Cradle-to-prison”
 - “Community-to-prison”
 - “Public-housing-to-prison” pipeline
- Possible mechanisms:
 - Hypersurveillance of NYCHA developments
 - Hyperpolicing of NYCHA developments
 - Increasing reliance on surveillance technology

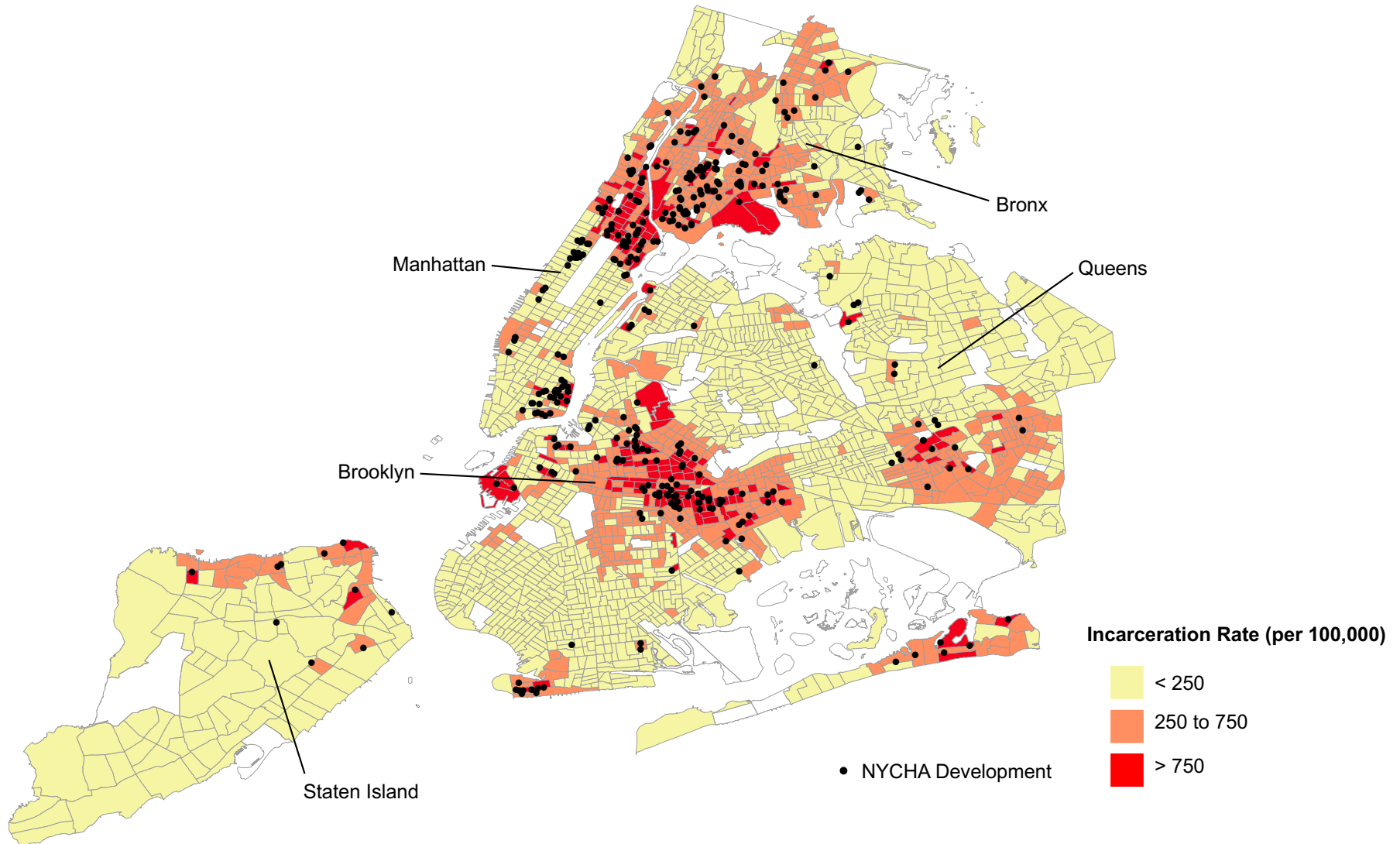
Public-housing-to-prison pipeline

- Key measures for this study (in 2010):
 - Incarceration rate for the census tract
 - Presence of NYCHA development in a census tract
 - In NYC: 2095 census tracts
- Geocoded data sources
 - 2010 Decennial Census (US Census Bureau)
 - 2010 incarceration data (Prison Policy Institute)
 - 2010 NYCHA developments (NYCHA)
 - 2007-2009 crime rates (NYPD)
 - 2007-2009 SQF rates (NYPD)

Key findings

- Incarceration rates in NYCHA tracts are 4.6 times higher than those in non-NYCHA tracts.
 - 5.9 times higher in Manhattan and 6.5 times higher in Brooklyn.
- In 2010, half of all incarcerated people in New York State prisons were residents of New York City prior to incarceration. Among them, 35% resided in census tracts with public housing developments, even though such tracts accounted for only 15% of NYC's population.
- 17% of the incarcerated population in NYS originated from only 372 tracts in NYC with public housing developments, even though these tracts accounted for only 6.3% of NYS's population.
- 94% of NYCHA tracts report rates above the median value for non-NYCHA tracts.

NYCHA developments are often located in neighborhoods with the highest incarceration rates



NYCHA vs. non-NYCHA neighborhoods

Table 1. Neighborhood characteristics for NYCHA and non-NYCHA neighborhoods in 2010

Selected neighborhood characteristics	New York City tracts	NYCHA tracts	Non-NYCHA tracts	NYCHA/non-NYCHA ratio
Incarceration rate (per 100,000)	149.00	541.00	117.00	4.62
Total population	3,527.00	4,016.50	3,430.00	1.17
% Population aged 18–35 y	22.46	23.35	22.21	1.05
% Black	7.84	40.32	4.65	8.67
% Hispanic	17.93	27.42	16.47	1.66
Concentrated disadvantaged index	0.22	0.44	0.20	2.20
Concentrated immigration index	0.31	0.27	0.33	0.81
3-y average crime rate (per 100,000)	492.33	502.89	490.92	1.02
3-y average SQF rate (per 100,000)	3,905.65	9,332.82	3,333.88	2.80
No. of census tracts	2,095	372	1,723	N/A

N/A, not applicable.

Neighborhood disadvantage and concentrated incarceration

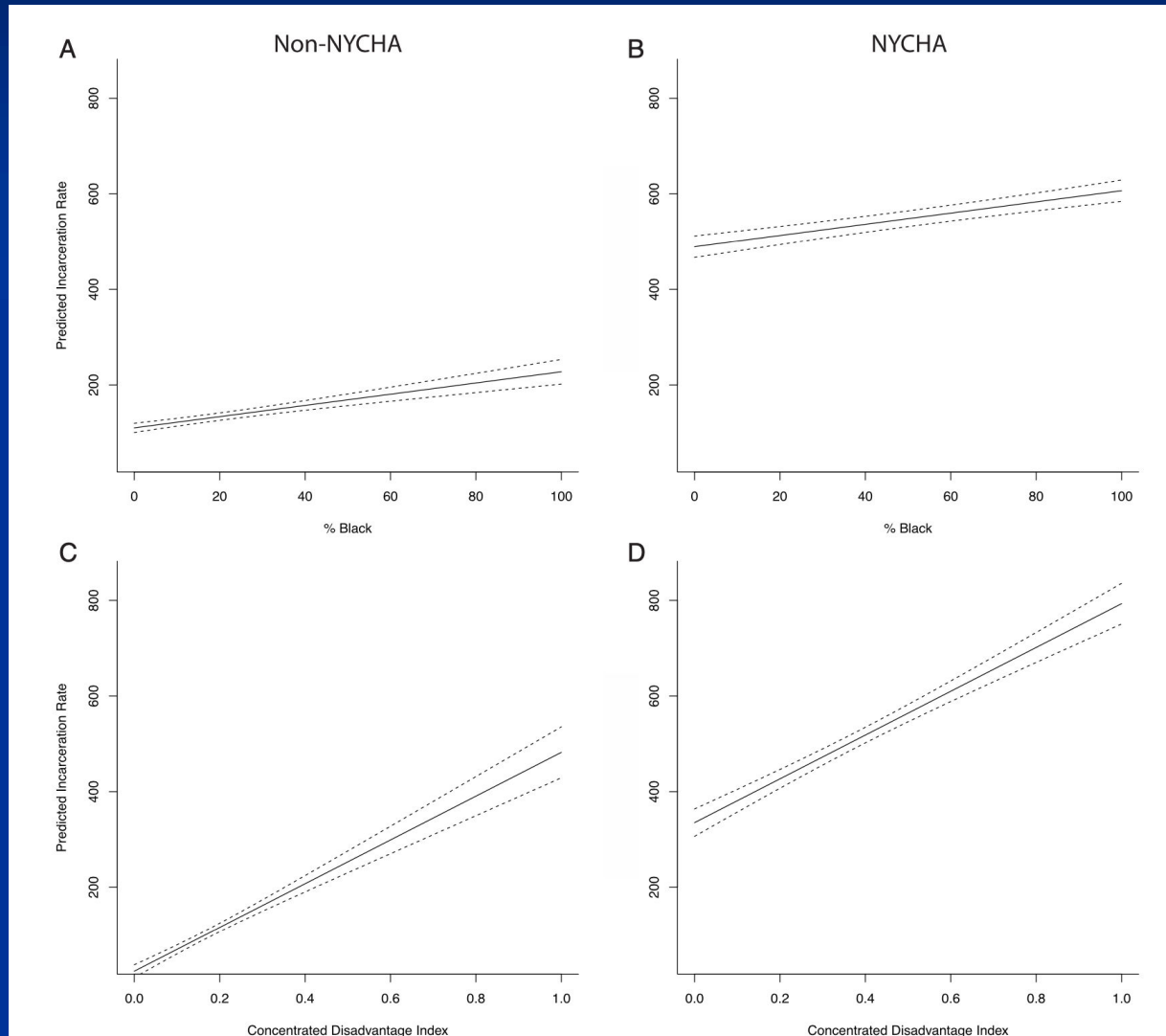


Fig. 2. Predicted incarceration rates by tract-level characteristics for NYCHA and non-NYCHA neighborhoods, holding other observable covariates constant at the median level. Predicted rates are significantly higher in NYCHA neighborhoods than in non-NYCHA neighborhoods at every level of Black share of population (A and B) and of concentrated disadvantage (C and D).

Neighborhood incarceration rates at different spatial scales

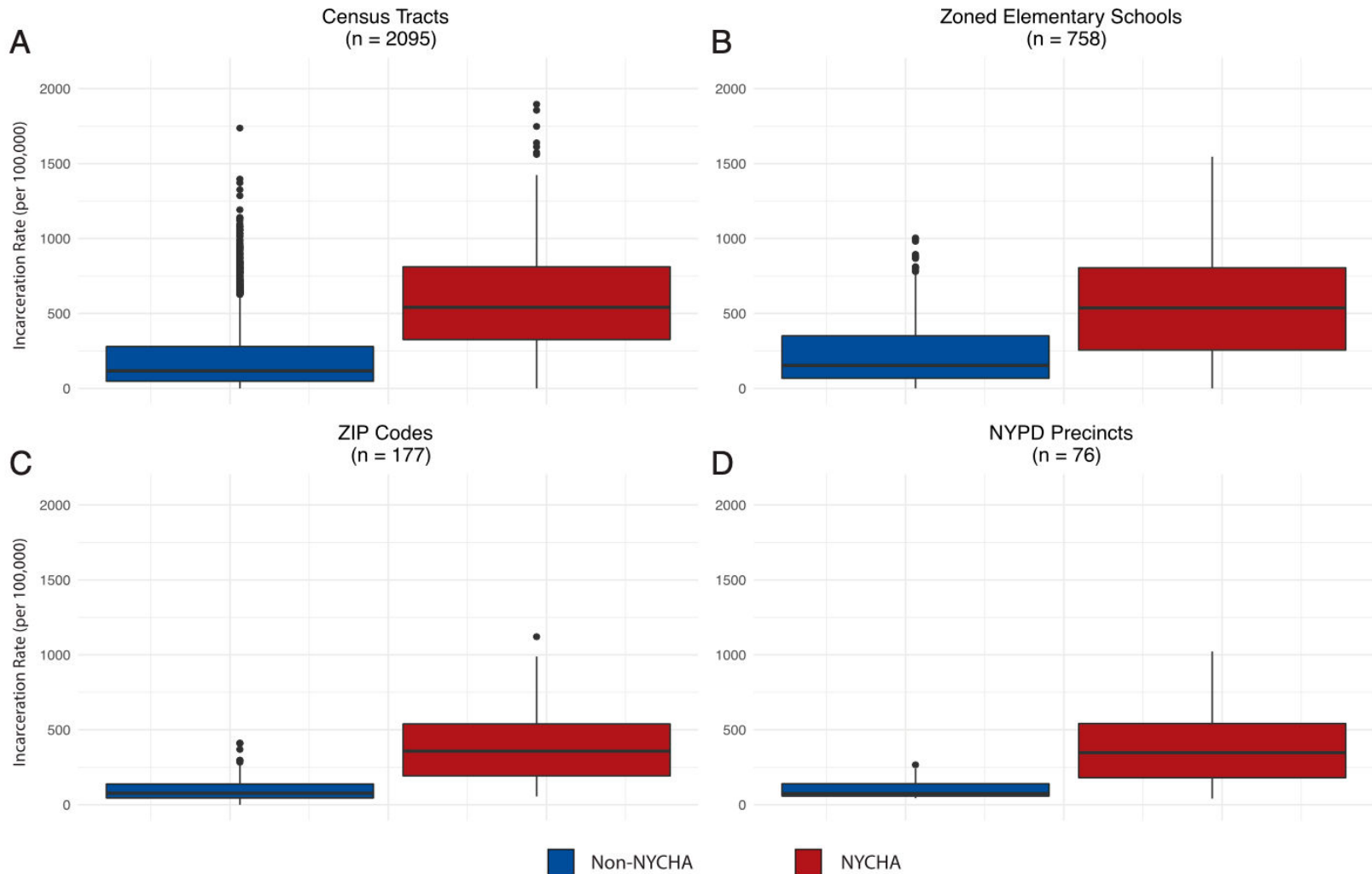


Fig. 3. Incarceration rates for NYCHA and non-NYCHA neighborhoods at different levels of spatial aggregation. The presence of NYCHA housing developments is associated with higher incarceration rates at each level: (A) census tract, (B) zoned elementary school, (C) ZIP Code, and (D) police precinct.

Comments welcomed

- Questions and comments welcomed
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“Million-dollar blocks” in Chicago

Community Areas with the Highest Spending
Millions Committed to Incarceration, 2005-2009



To see how incarceration spending is highly concentrated in a small number of community areas, zoom out on the map.

Millions allocated to incarcerate residents on individual city blocks

In Chicago, over a 5 year period from 2005-2009, there were:

851 blocks

with over \$1 million committed
to prison sentences

121 blocks

with over \$1 million committed
to prison sentences for non-violent
drug offenses