


# Punishment and Inequality

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<sup>1</sup>This research was supported by NSF, NIH, Pew Research Center, and the Russell Sage Foundation. 

# Outline

- Mass incarceration
- The Reentry Study
- Conclusions and Implications

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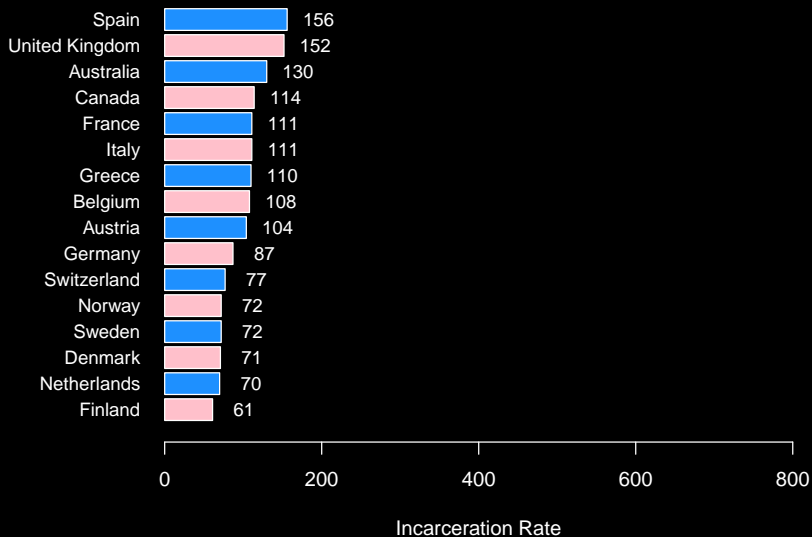
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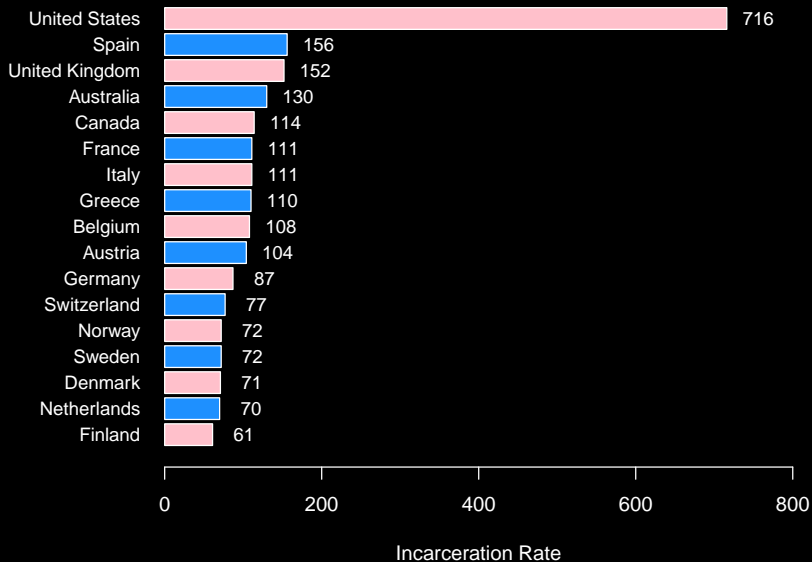
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# I. Mass Incarceration

## International Incarceration Rates, 2011

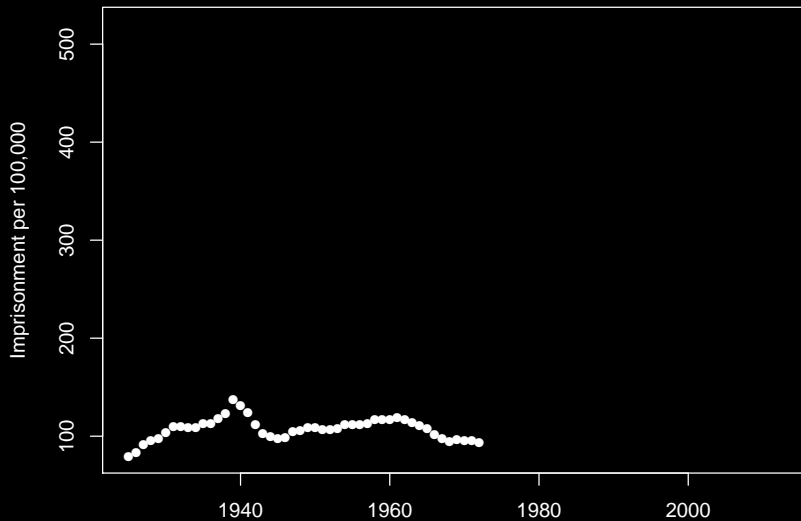


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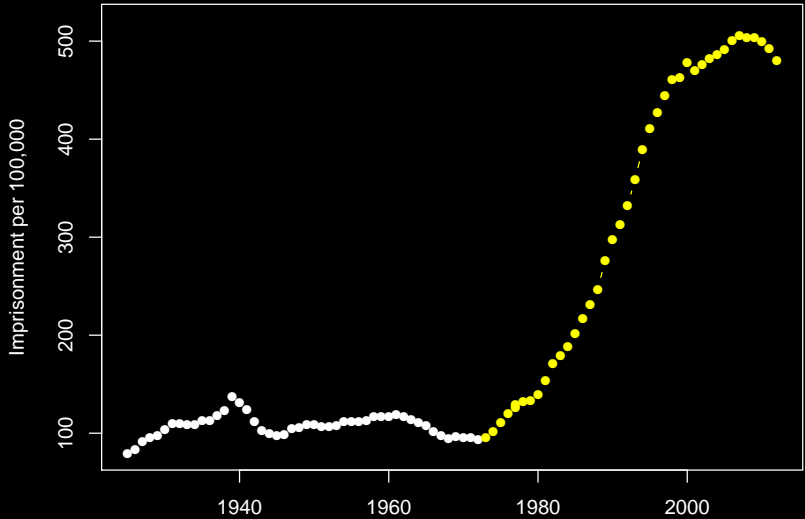




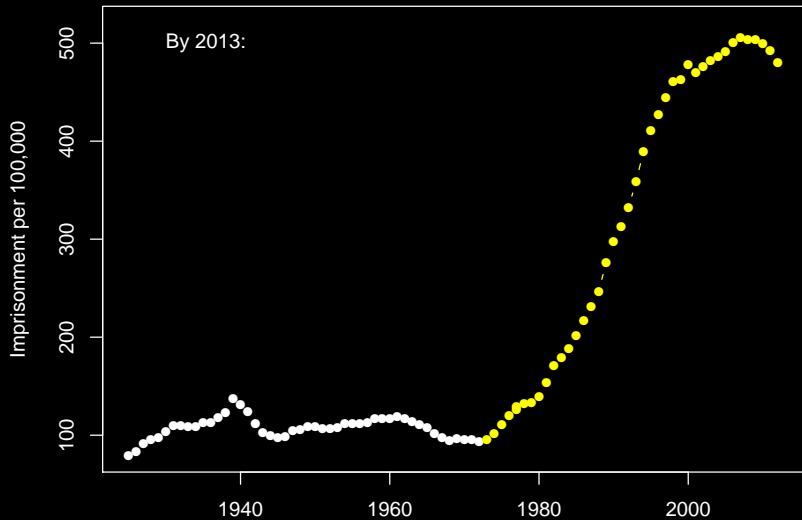
## Imprisonment Rate, 1925 to 1972



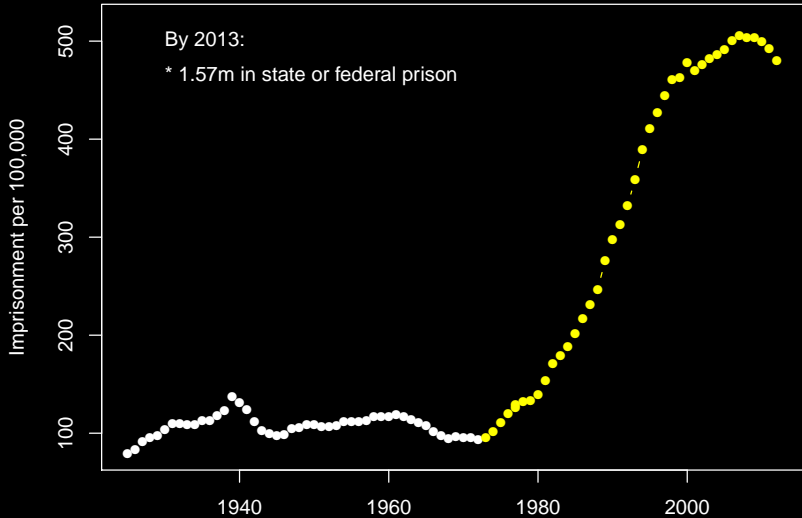
# Imprisonment Rate, 1925 to 2012



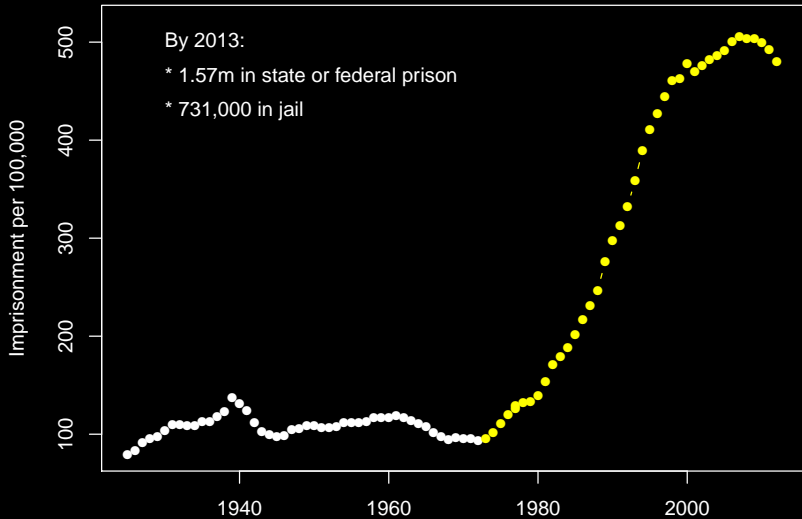
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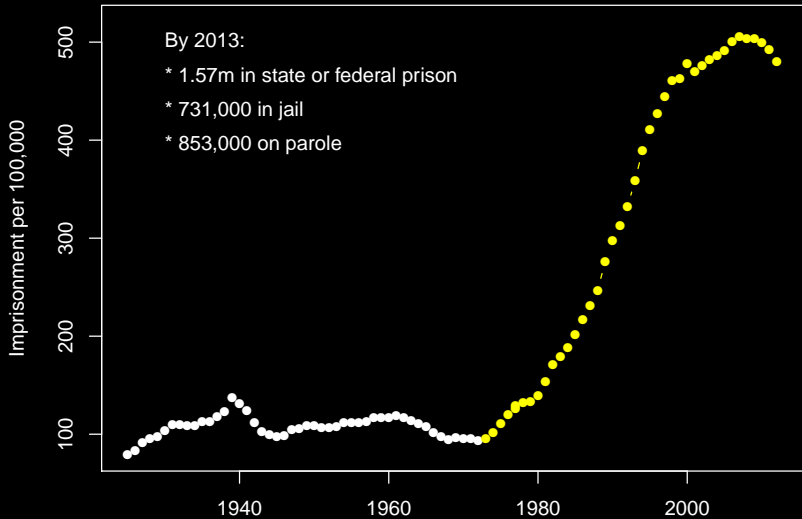
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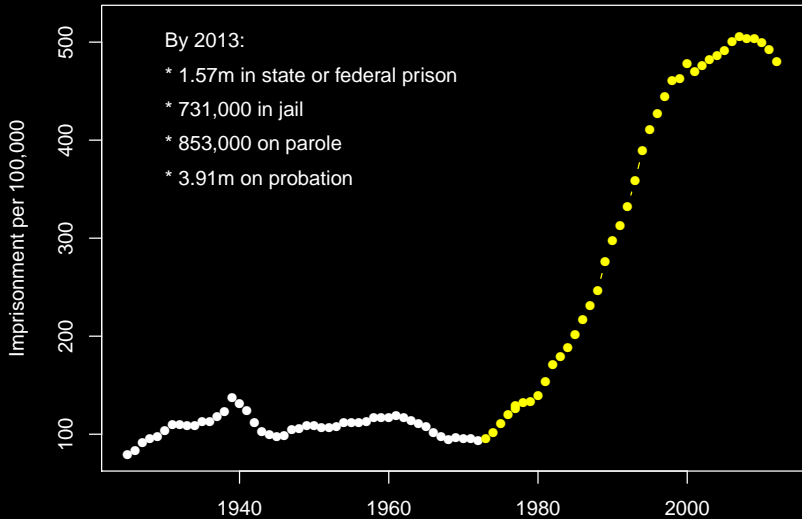
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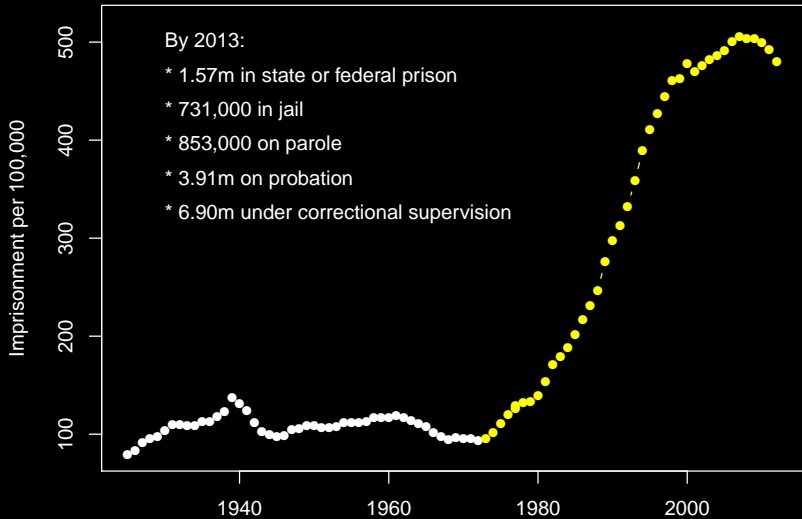
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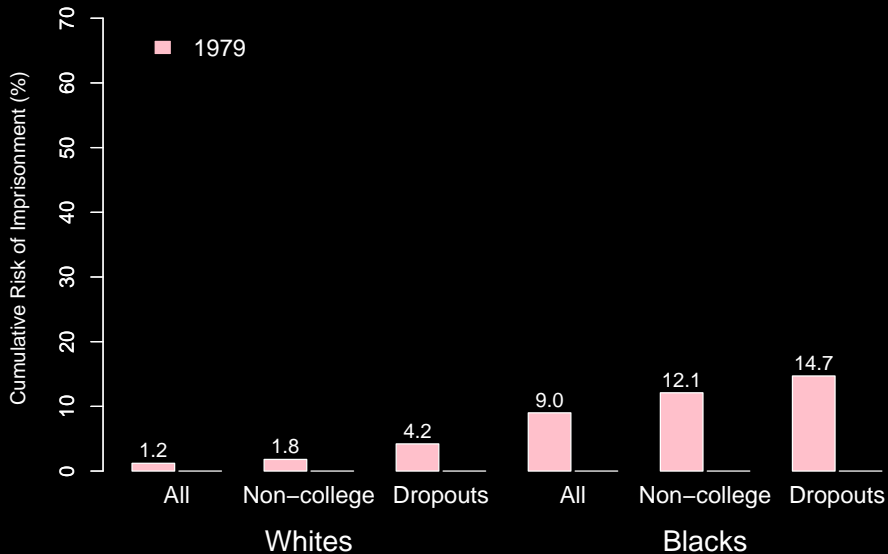


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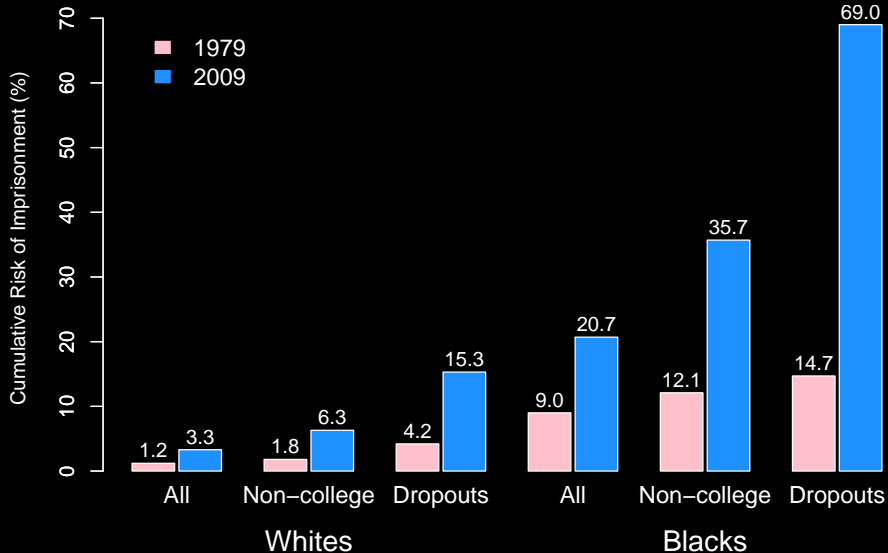




## Men's Risk of Imprisonment by 30–34



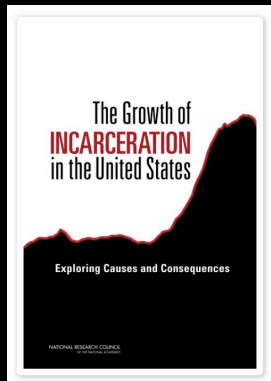
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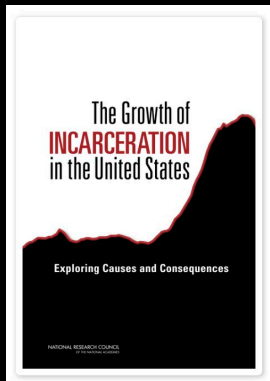
# Key Finding

Mass incarceration criminalized social problems related to racial inequality and poverty on a historically unprecedented scale, contributing to the reproduction of poverty and racial inequality.

# National Academy of Sciences Report

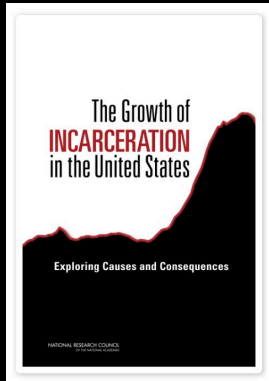


# National Academy of Sciences Report



Given the small crime prevention effects of long prison sentences and the possibly high financial, social, and human costs of incarceration, federal and state policy makers should revise current criminal justice policies to significantly reduce the rate of incarceration in the United States.

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- ▶ Analysis lacked realism, thin statistical portrait of those at risk of incarceration
- ▶ Under-coverage, little detailed analysis of social process of community return
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## II. The Reentry Study

# The Boston Reentry Study

- ▶ Data collection over three years in collaboration with Anthony Braga (Northeastern) and Rhiana Kohl (DOC)
- ▶ A longitudinal interview study with 122 men and women released from Massachusetts prisons and returning to Boston
- ▶ Collected data on employment, housing, health, family, drug use, crime and justice system contact

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# Three Findings

- ▶ Exposure to violence and other trauma in childhood
- ▶ Poor physical and mental health in adulthood
- ▶ Associated with poverty and material hardship after prison

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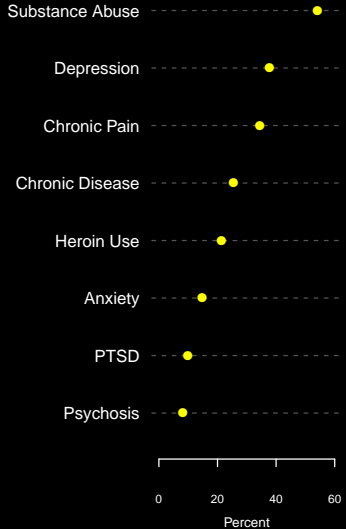
# Childhood Trauma



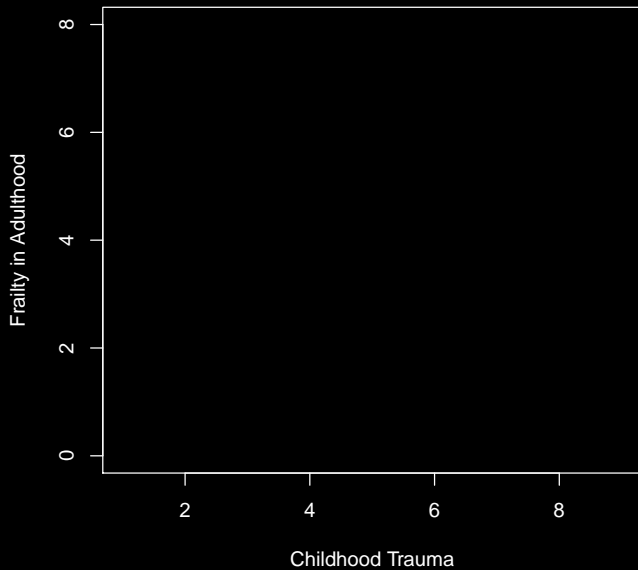
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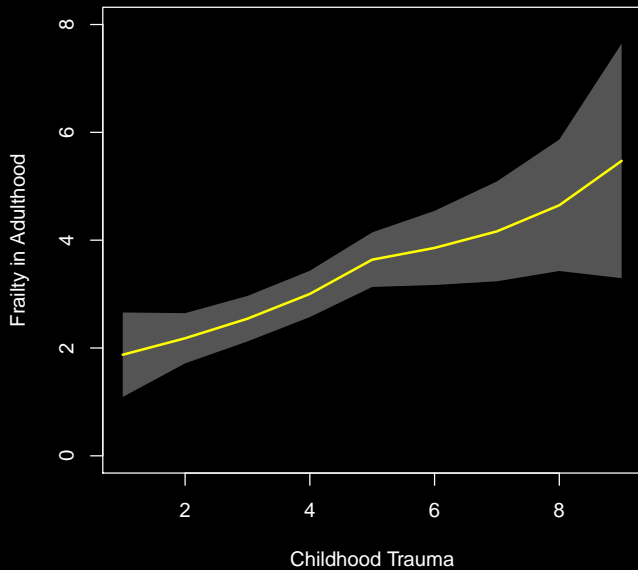
## Adult Frailty



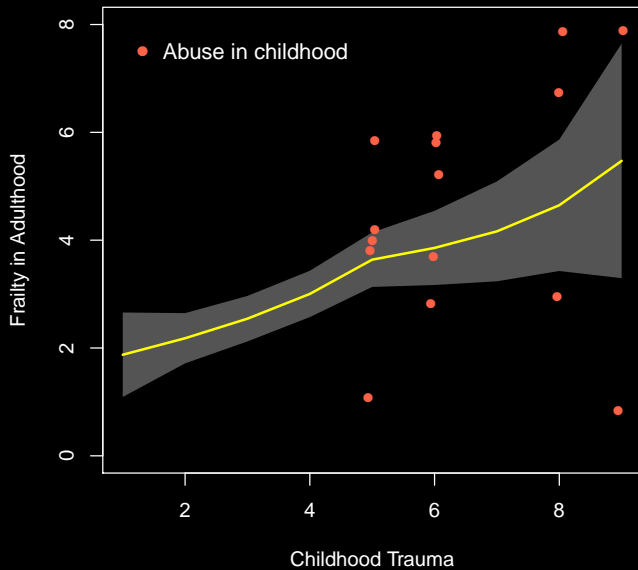
## Childhood Trauma is Related to Frailty in Adulthood



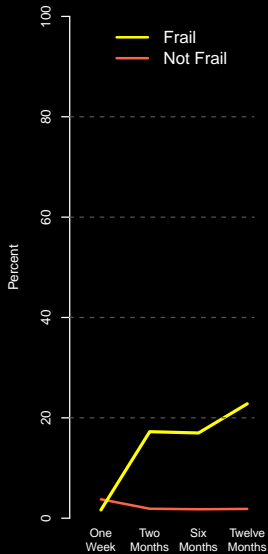
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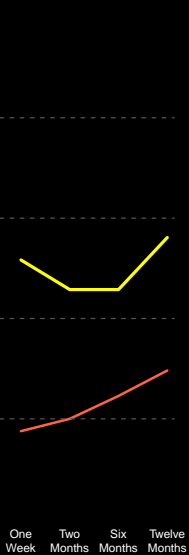
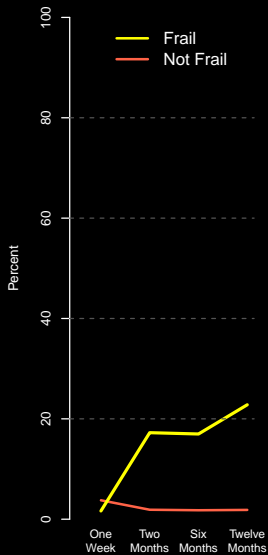


# Hard Drug Use

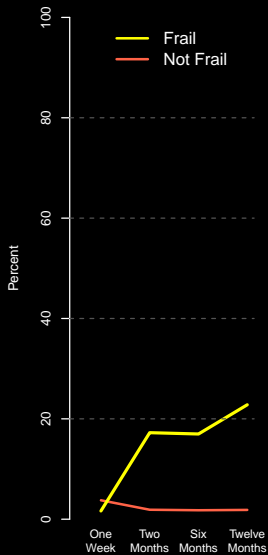


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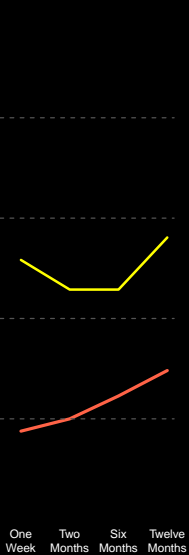
### Unstable Housing



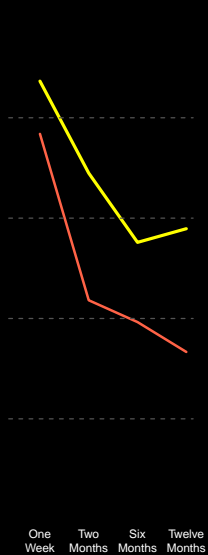
### Hard Drug Use



### Unstable Housing



### Joblessness





### III. Conclusions and Implications

# Conclusions and Implications

- ▶ Incarceration is a function and a cause of poverty and racial inequality
- ▶ Poverty is multidimensional encompassing low income, poor physical and mental health, and exposure to trauma
- ▶ Racial inequality is spatially organized, morally freighted through the stigma of criminality
- ▶ Reversing mass incarceration must address a variety of social needs, not just low-income, and will involve cultural project of humanization

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