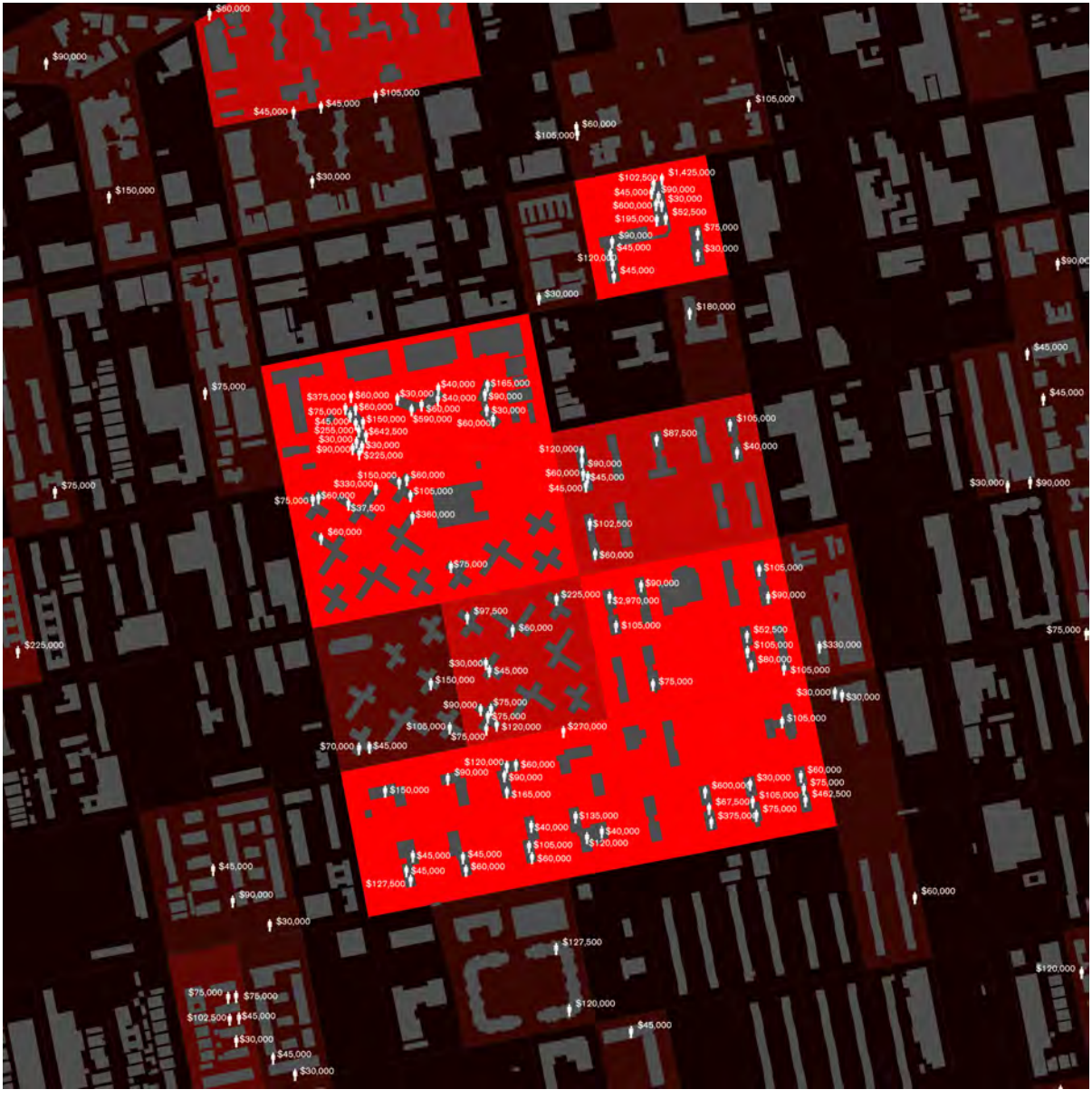


It cost 17 million dollars to imprison 109 people from these seventeen blocks of Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York, in 2003.

9 Million-Dollar Blocks

The "most phenomenal" fact of all

New York, 2012—Eddie Ellis spent twenty years in prison in New York State. In 1992, just after he had been released and returned to his home in Harlem, he told *New York Times* reporter Francis X. Clines about research that he and other prisoners had done while incarcerated, research in what the story called "a prisoner's 'think tank' at Green Haven prison in Stormville, N.Y."[62] Of all that they had learned, a pair of "hard facts" stood out, he said: "the fact that more than 85 percent of prisoners in the state are black or Latino and—most phenomenal of all—that 75 percent of the state's entire prison population comes from just seven neighborhoods in New York City." The article, which ran on the front page of the paper two days before Christmas that year, went on to explain that this second fact, "that three out of four prisoners come from, prey upon and return to seven neighborhoods encompassed by just 18 of the state's 150 Assembly districts, or 12 percent of the population, is at the heart of Mr. Ellis's new mission as an unaccredited street penologist without portfolio." The story was accompanied by a map, the caption of which read: "Map of New York City, indicating seven neighborhoods where three out of four New York State prisoners come from."

Ellis's home-grown research mission—and in particular, the map—caught the eye of other scholars and advocates for criminal justice reform. A year later, Lola Odubekun published the *Vera Institute Atlas of Crime and Criminal Justice in New York City*, which, in addition to its rather predictable crime maps, also included two maps of incarceration: one titled "Rikers Island Inmates by Home Residence, March 1993" and another titled "Distribution of Persons Arrested by Neighborhood of Residence, 1989."[63] Although the report noted that "69 percent of the 64,501 inmates in the state prisons were from New York City,"[64] and although the maps clearly showed that the vast number of those inmates came from very few neighborhoods in the city, no conclusions were drawn noting the unusual statistical concentration.

Five years later, Eric Cadora of the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services made the decisive move to begin acquiring data about incarceration from state criminal justice records themselves in order at once to test these early cartographic projects at a larger scale and to draw some conclusions: to show that incarceration is a problem of the city and to demonstrate that policy needed to address the issue directly. He called the project "justice mapping." Cadora, working with Charles Schwarz, produced a different sort of map, one that, as he told Jennifer Gonnerman in the *Village Voice*, "would help people envision solutions rather than just critiques."[65] As Gonnerman reported, "they made a series of maps illustrating where inmates come from and how much money is spent to imprison them," and there they discovered what came to be called "million-dollar blocks."

In 2005, a study of million-dollar blocks became the first project of the Spatial Information Design Lab (SIDL), which I had started the year before at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University. Over a number of years and in a variety of different ways, with dozens of maps of neighborhoods across the United States, the research built on Cadora's project and took up the challenge of making visible a decidedly spatial phenomenon, but one that still remained difficult to see.

One reason for the difficulty is that the geography of incarceration is both a micro and a macro feature of contemporary urbanism. Looking at the block is essential, but it fails to make much sense unless it's seen within the context of a larger metropolitan infrastructure of criminal justice and social services…and vice versa.

To show this, *Million-Dollar Blocks* borrows and inverts the language of crime "hot spot" maps. Introduced by New York City police commissioner William Bratton in 1994 with the enthusiastic endorsement of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the COMPSTAT ("computerized statistics") program used GIS software to map the locations and times of crimes across New York City.

Million-Dollar Blocks shifts the frame ever so slightly and makes use of otherwise rarely accessible data, also collected by the criminal justice system, to corroborate Ellis's early research. Simply by mapping the home addresses of people as they are admitted to prison, which are also the addresses to which they will most likely return upon release, and by correlating that with the amount of time they spend in prison (and hence the cost to the state), "phenomenal facts" indeed emerge.

The maps show the disproportionate concentrations of incarceration in poor and isolated city blocks across the United States. The project aggregates data and then zooms in to the microgeographies of those communities, mining existing data and repurposing it to produce new visual and quantitative meanings. In so doing, the maps direct viewers to look more closely at certain places, for instance, the Brooklyn neighborhood of Brownsville, and ask: "What's behind the red polygon?"

WHAT ARE MILLION-DOLLAR BLOCKS? OR, JUSTICE AND THE CITY

New York, 2006—The United States currently has more than two million people locked up in jails and prisons. A disproportionate number of them come from a very few neighborhoods in the country's biggest cities. In many places, the concentration is so dense that states are spending in excess of a million dollars per year to incarcerate the residents of single city blocks. When these people are released and reenter their communities, roughly 40 percent do not stay more than three years before they are reincarcerated.

Using rarely accessible data from the criminal justice system, the Spatial Information Design Lab and the Justice Mapping Center have created maps of these "million-dollar blocks" and the city-prison-city-prison migration flow for five of the nation's cities. The maps suggest that the criminal justice system has become the predominant government institution in these communities and that public investment in this system has resulted in significant costs to other elements of our civic infrastructure: education, housing, health, and family. Prisons and jails form the distant exostructure of many American cities today.

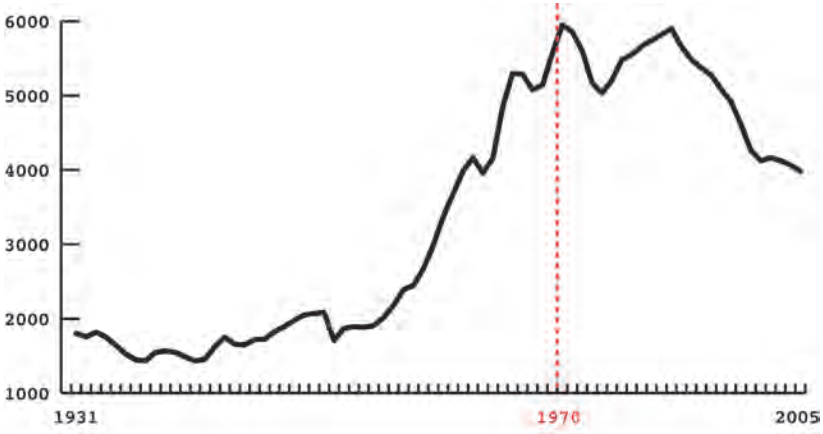
Have prisons and jails become the mass housing of our time? How has the War on Drugs affected incarceration rates? What are the differences between crime maps and prison admission maps? What are the relationships between prison populations and poor communities? Has incarceration become a response to poverty, rather than to crime? What are the relationships between jailed populations and homeless ones?

The relationships implied by these questions become evident when criminal justice data is aggregated geographically and visualized in maps. The focus shifts away from a case-by-case analysis of the crime and punishment of an individual, away from the geographic notation of crime events, and toward a geography of incarceration and return.

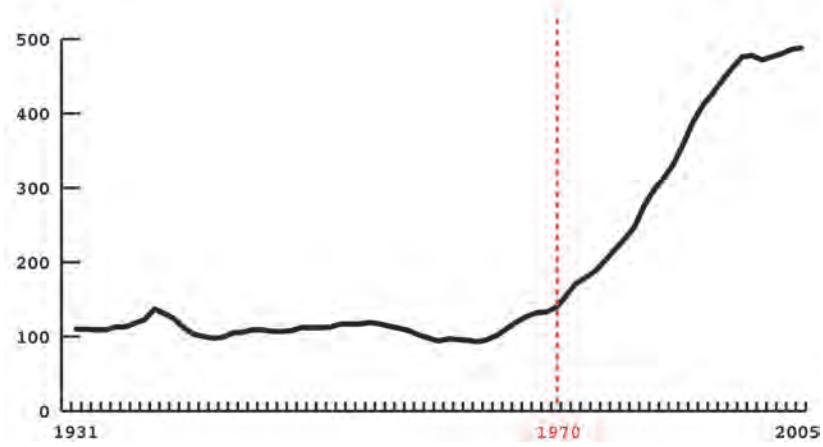
The maps pose difficult ethical and political questions for policy makers and policy designers. When they are linked to other urban, social, and economic indicators of incarceration, they also suggest new strategies for approaching urban design and criminal justice reform together.

WHY ARE SO MANY AMERICANS IN JAIL AND PRISON?

Since 1970, Americans have been living in an era of what some have called mass incarceration, one of the "greatest social experiments of our time."[66] The crime rate in America over the course of the last century has moved up and down in a periodic wave. The corresponding rates at which Americans have been incarcerated look very different. In contrast to the periodic undulations of the crime rate, the incarceration rate remained constant for most of the century.

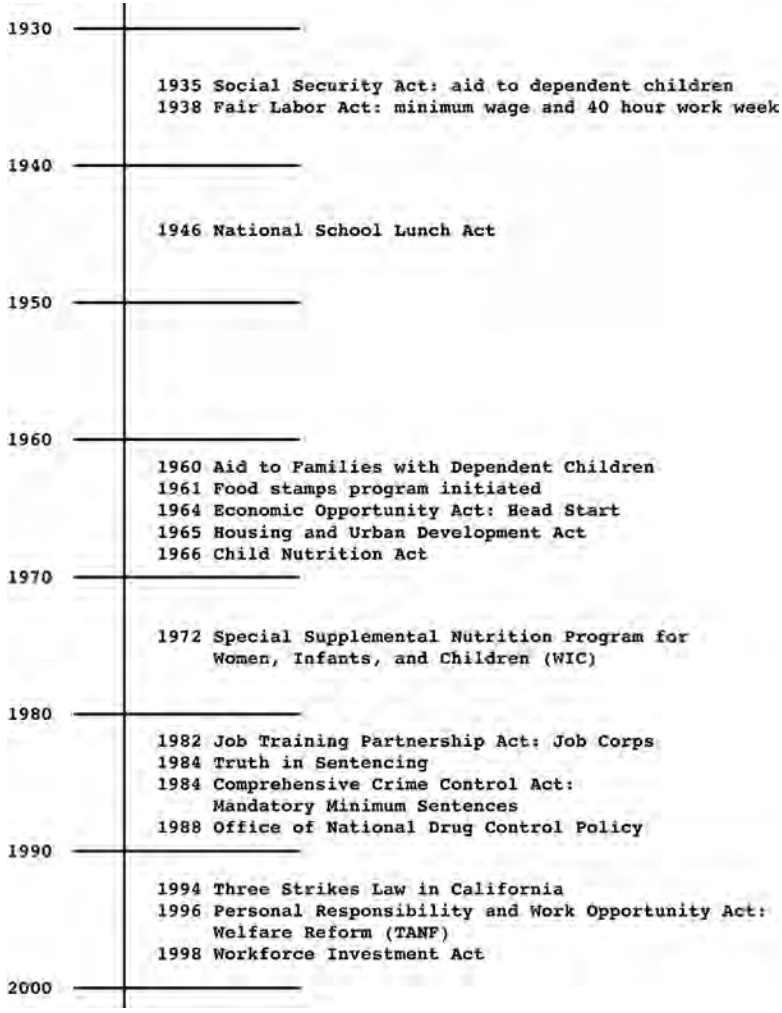


Crime rates form a relatively self-consistent wave of activity.



Incarceration rates remain relatively constant until 1970, when a radical upward trend is driven by policy.

From the late 1970s, however, it has been climbing rapidly. The result has been a tenfold increase in the standing prison population, from two hundred thousand in 1970 to two million in 2000.[67] How we respond to crime is a matter of values, decisions, and policy, all the way down to the basic questions defining what counts as a crime. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, efforts to fight poverty were systematically replaced by the War on Drugs, including the criminalization of most drug offenses. Crime became the surrogate for poverty and incarceration the primary response.



Poverty policy in the United States since 1900.

FROM DATA TO MAPS

A criminal justice data set is most commonly maintained and presented as a list. It is designed to track people as individual cases. As individuals make their way through the system, information is entered into a database and accumulates: name, crime, length of sentence, home address, and so on. Individually, the information forms a portrait of a case. Aggregated, the cases create a statistical portrait of a society.

When maps are made from data such as these, they often stop at the very first element: what crimes were committed and where. Crime maps have played a significant role in the public discourse on cities over the last thirty years. These maps have, in fact, become one of the most prominent instruments through which we understand and interpret our cities.

30-Jun	3:09 A.M.	HM445540	3300 BLOCK W. 23RD ST.	SIDEWALK
26-May	1:10 A.M.	HM373655	2600 BLOCK S. TRUMBULL AVE.	STREET
11-May	11:30 P.M	HM345311	1000 BLOCK N. MONTICELLO AVE.	SIDEWALK
4-Jul	11:48 P.M.	HM455004	5400 BLOCK W. WRIGHTWOOD AVE.	APARTMENT
1-Jul	4:45 P.M.	HM448717	1500 BLOCK W. 77TH ST.	APARTMENT
24-Jun	12:54 A.M.	HM433672	13400 BLOCK S. BALTIMORE AVE.	RESIDENCE
23-Jun	9:23 A.M.	HM431903	4900 BLOCK W. WALTON ST.	GROCERY FOOD STORE
22-Jun	9:47 A.M.	HM429882	8000 BLOCK S. INDIANA AVE.	RESIDENCE
18-Jun	2:40 A.M.	HM421205	6200 BLOCK S. KIMBARK AVE.	RESIDENCE
16-Jun	10:08 A.M.	HM417358	4700 BLOCK N. SPAULDING AVE.	APARTMENT
11-Jun	8:30 P.M.	HM408837	1100 BLOCK W. JACKSON BLVD.	RESIDENCE
2-Jun	3:28 A.M.	HM388296	11600 BLOCK S. ASHLAND AVE.	RESIDENCE
31-May	1:37 A.M.	HM383920	2900 BLOCK N. SHERIDAN RD.	RESIDENCE
30-May	2:30 P.M.	HM382758	3100 BLOCK W. BYRON ST.	SCHOOL BUILDING (PUBLIC)
29-May	2:48 A.M.	HM379750	2100 BLOCK S. HARDING AVE.	RESIDENCE: PORCH/HALLWAY
29-May	12:30 A.M.	HM379786	3900 BLOCK W. MADISON ST.	SMALL RETAIL STORE
23-May	6:45 A.M.	HM367460	6600 BLOCK S. RHODES AVE.	RESIDENCE: PORCH/HALLWAY
20-May	4:14 A.M.	HM361811	900 BLOCK W. 52ND ST.	APARTMENT
19-May	9:37 A.M.	HM359905	1100 BLOCK W. 110TH ST.	RESIDENCE
16-May	8:43 P.M.	HM355107	3900 BLOCK W. DIVERSEY AVE.	APARTMENT
14-May	5:10 A.M.	HM349864	3800 BLOCK W. NORTH AVE.	RESIDENCE
11-May	2:07 A.M.	HM343234	4300 BLOCK W. WILCOX ST.	RESIDENCE: PORCH/HALLWAY
8-May	5:41 A.M.	HM337007	6200 BLOCK N. SHERIDAN RD.	RESIDENCE
4-Jul	10:13 P.M.	HM454861	5400 BLOCK W. GRACE ST.	SIDEWALK
4-Jul	6:34 P.M.	HM454560	3900 BLOCK W. MADISON ST.	RESIDENCE
1-Jul	1 P.M.	HM454078	5600 BLOCK S. NASHVILLE AVE.	RESIDENCE
11-Mar	3:50 A.M.	HM225590	6300 BLOCK S. MORGAN ST.	VEHICLE: NON-COMMERCIAL
4-Jul	10:40 P.M.	HM454929	2100 BLOCK W. CULLERTON ST.	RESIDENCE: GARAGE
3-Jul	8:02 A.M.	HM451516	2900 BLOCK N. SHERIDAN RD.	RESIDENCE: PORCH/HALLWAY
3-Jul	12:35 A.M.	HM451157	1800 BLOCK W. 51ST ST.	RESIDENCE
2-Jul	11:45 P.M.	HM451279	6300 BLOCK S. MORGAN ST.	COMMERCIAL / BUSINESS OFFICE
2-Jul	10:59 P.M.	HM451096	9200 BLOCK S. DAUPHIN AVE.	STREET
2-Jul	8:30 A.M.	HM449799	3200 BLOCK W. WARNER AVE.	VEHICLE: NON-COMMERCIAL
1-Jul	3:13 P.M.	HM448484	1200 BLOCK N. SPRINGFIELD AVE.	STREET
1-Jul	4:20 A.M.	HM447631	7300 BLOCK N. HONORE ST.	VEHICLE: NON-COMMERCIAL
30-Jun	7:41 A.M.	HM445573	1700 BLOCK W. 47TH ST.	RESTAURANT
29-Jun	1:47 A.M.	HM443456	6600 BLOCK S. CARPENTER ST.	STREET
28-Jun	10:05 P.M.	HM443218	11100 BLOCK S. WENTWORTH AVE.	VEHICLE: NON-COMMERCIAL
28-Jun	11:07 A.M.	HM441966	1800 BLOCK S. DRAKE AVE.	VEHICLE: NON-COMMERCIAL
28-Jun	1:57 A.M.	HM441411	3000 BLOCK W. CULLERTON ST.	VEHICLE: NON-COMMERCIAL
27-Jun	5:05 A.M.	HM439509	5900 BLOCK S. ALBANY AVE.	VEHICLE: NON-COMMERCIAL
27-Jun	12:54 A.M.	HM439410	3500 BLOCK N. KEATING AVE.	VEHICLE: NON-COMMERCIAL
26-Jun	1:30 P.M.	HM438209	6300 BLOCK S. MORGAN ST.	STREET
26-Jun	11:30 A.M.	HM437995	4700 BLOCK W. MONROE ST.	SIDEWALK
25-Jun	8:12 P.M.	HM436972	1300 BLOCK S. AVERS AVE.	GOVERNMENT BUILDING/PROPERTY
25-Jun	9:51 A.M.	HM436022	1500 BLOCK N. LAWNDALE AVE.	STREET
25-Jun	3:49 A.M.	HM435694	4500 BLOCK S. SPRINGFIELD AVE.	VEHICLE: NON-COMMERCIAL

Excerpt from database, www.chicagocrime.org.

According to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), "mapping crime can help law enforcement protect citizens more effectively in the areas they serve. Simple maps that display the locations where crimes or concentrations of crimes have occurred can be used to help direct patrols to places they are most needed. Policymakers in police departments might use more complex maps to observe trends in criminal activity."[68]

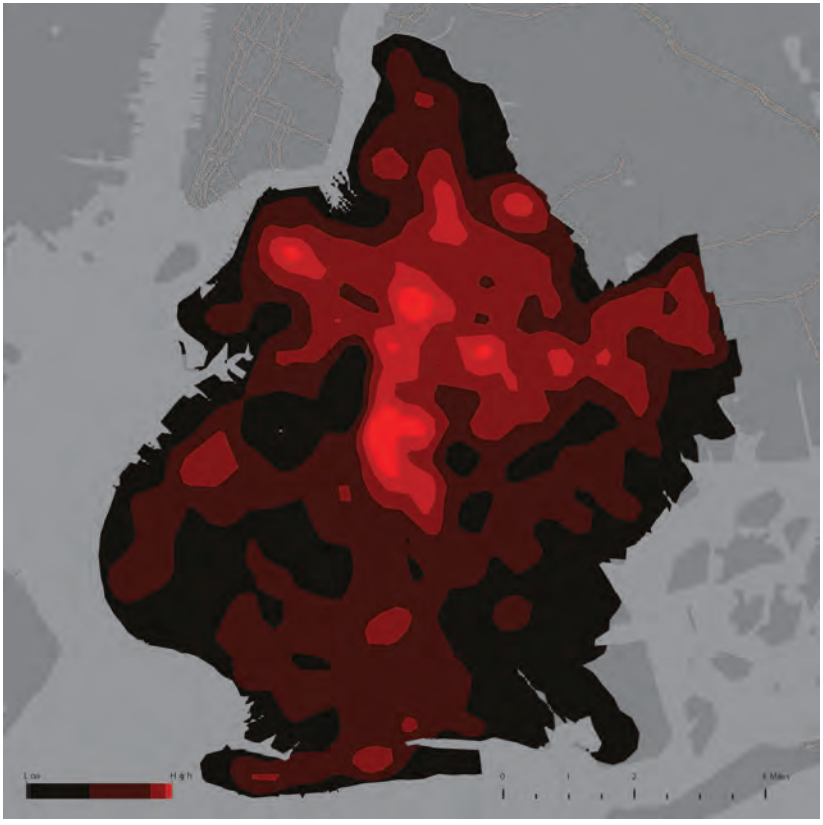
Mapping the data about the location of crimes has prompted successful campaigns to transform urban policing from a reactive, calls-for-service approach to an active community policing strategy focused on so-called high-crime locations. Crime maps collect individual incidents over time to identify "hot spots," places that can become the focus of intense police—and political—attention. As the NIJ report puts it (candidly, if rather casually): "using maps that help people visualize the geographic aspects of crime, however, is not limited to law enforcement. Mapping can provide specific information on crime and criminal behavior to politicians, the press, and the general public."[69]

Typical crime map, from www.chicagocrime.org.

Criminal events, not people, are mapped to the city.

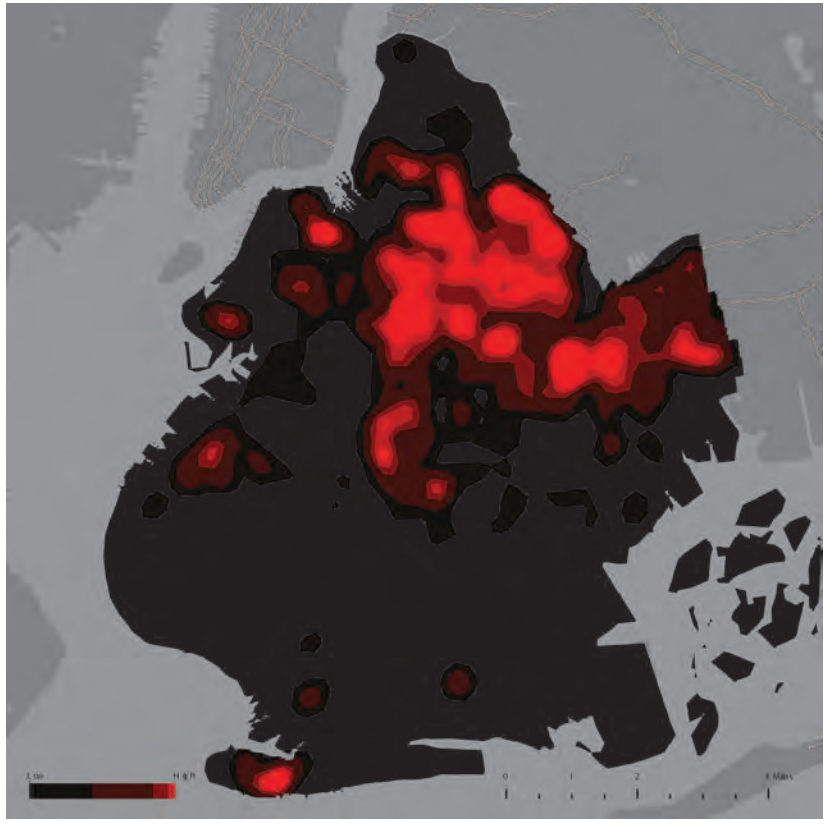
FROM CRIME MAPS TO ADMISSIONS MAPS

If crime maps succeeded dramatically in mobilizing public opinion—redefining the city as a mosaic of safe and unsafe spaces and forcing the reallocation and targeting of police resources on specific neighborhoods—the gains were short-lived. The resulting crime prevention techniques and the community policing movement in general soon reached the inevitable limits of any purely tactical approach. The city spaces that were targeted became safer, but too often, crime incidents were simply displaced to other locations.



Crime density map, Brooklyn, New York, 1998.

By focusing solely on events, the human underpinnings of crime were left largely unaffected. When we shift the maps' focus from crime events to incarceration events, strikingly different patterns become visible. The geography of prison differs in important ways from the geography of crime. Diffused and dispersed across the city, crime happens in many different places. But the people who are convicted and imprisoned for urban crimes are often quite densely concentrated geographically.

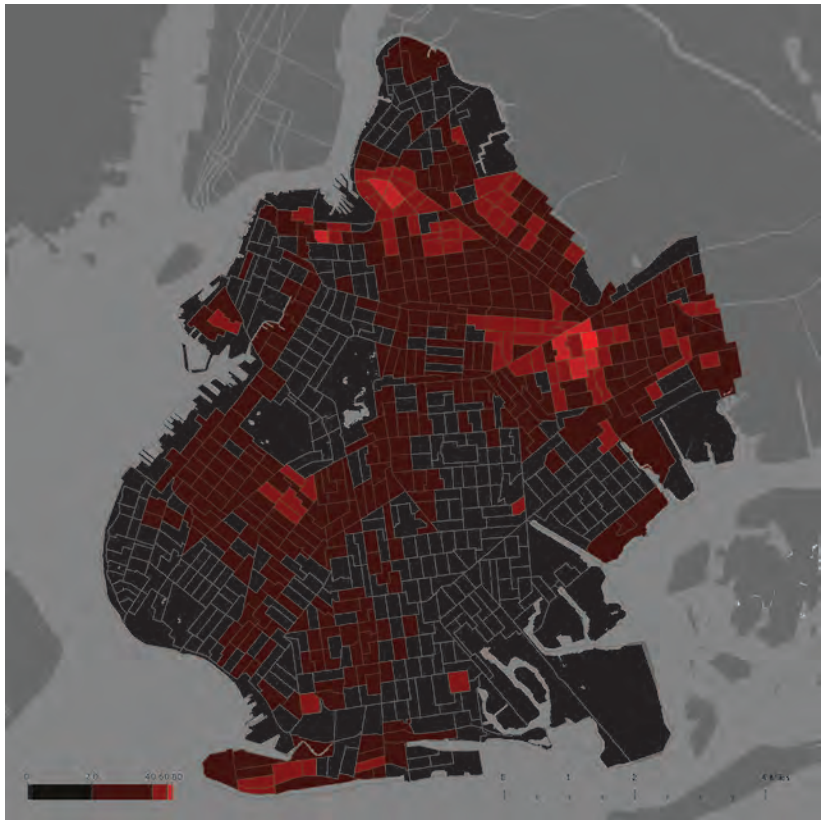


Prison admissions density map, Brooklyn, New York, 2003.

The crime rates in the most affected precincts are typically four times higher than the lowest. But the highest-incarceration-rate precincts show activity upward of ten times higher than those of the lowest-incarceration-rate precincts. Like poverty, incarceration is spatially concentrated, and much more so than crime. It is as if by imprisoning the residents of these neighborhoods—making them disappear from their city—we were simply mirroring the disappearance of the disappearance of the conversation on poverty.

Prison admissions by census tract, Brooklyn, New York, 2003.

Just as the incarceration rate tracks the eclipse of that debate, the geographical inquiry into criminal justice in the city uncovers the territory of the juxtaposition between crime and poverty. Focusing on where incarcerated people live when they are not in prison and comparing that with poverty suggests this conjunction rather starkly. Is incarceration policy the new solution to poverty, or a new structural component?



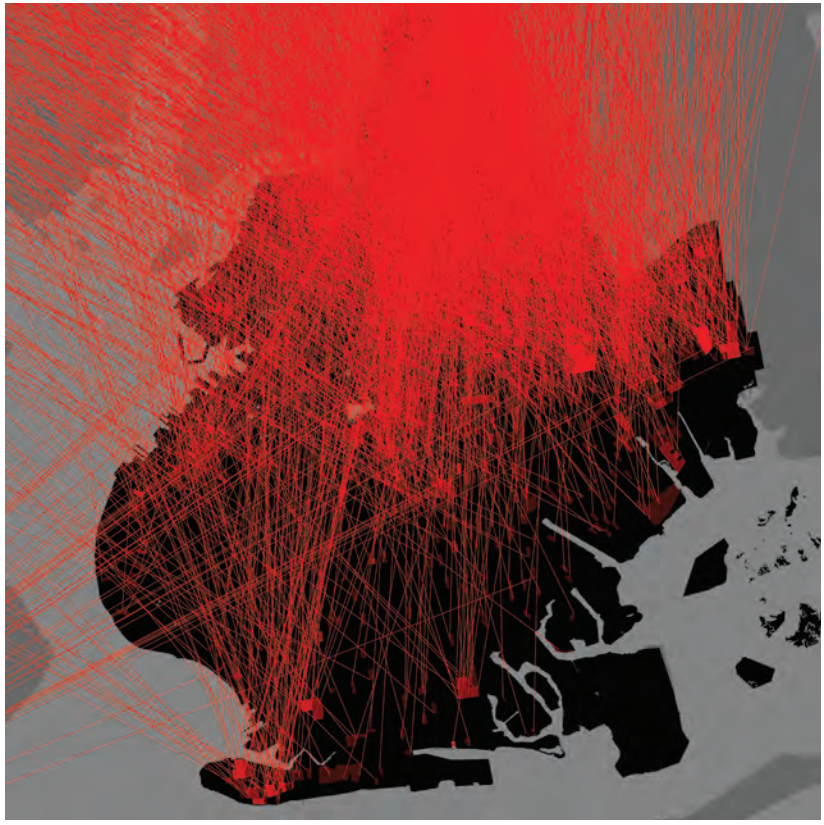
Population living in poverty by census tract, Brooklyn, New York, 2000.

REDEFINING THE PROBLEM: MASS MIGRATION AND REENTRY

Six hundred thousand people return from prison each year in the United States, and millions more come home from jails.[70] About two hundred and forty thousand of the released prisoners—roughly 40 percent—will return to prison within three years.[71] In and out, they come and go, all too often simply cycling back and forth between the same places. New maps can help us grasp this extraordinary phenomenon: prison migration, and with it, high-resettlement communities. When crime maps are replaced by incarceration maps, we can finally visualize the geography of

Prisoner migration patterns, Brooklyn to New York State, 2003.

a massive migration: the flow of people in and out of the city. We can ask whether this quiet but pervasive migration crisis isn't creating a growing class of non-citizens, concentrated in very few places in all of our major cities. The new visualizations reveal what was previously difficult to see—the mass disappearance and reappearance of people in the city. They focus on the systematic phenomenon of ex-prisoners' reentry and examine new institutions that respond to this structural feature of urban life. What happens to these people when they come home? We often know where they are going and what will happen. What is our responsibility to resettle them effectively, given all that we know?



Prisoner migration patterns, Brooklyn, New York, 2003.

04/19/1849	53RD ST	BROOKLYN	NY	49	253	900	300PL	160.15		1F	B	0	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	101	145	06/28/79	23	1	New York	BK	349	750000
11/28/8306	MARTENS ST	BROOKLYN	NY	253	1502	300	150PL	160.15		1F	H	0	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	100	140	11/28/83	23	1	New York	BK	106	375000
07/11/0816	7 A VENUE	BROOKLYN	NY	153	902	180	90PL	155.42		1F	B	0	8H	GR LARC 1-VALUE > $1 MILLION	100	100	09/19/03	23	1	New York	BE	4016	925000
04/23/0377	WILSON AVENU	BROOKLYN	NY	42	23	48	24PL	140.20		3F	D	0	7H	BURGLARY-3RD	100	140	02/25/00	0	1	New York	BK	377	60000
01/31/0590	NANC OCK STRE	BROOKLYN	NY	49	33	900	36PL	115.08		1F	B	0	43H	CRIMINAL FACILITATION-1ST	100	140	03/10/77	40	1	New York	BK	590	90000
05/30/081	WILSON AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12VTL	0511	03A2	1F	E	0	99H	AGG UNLIC OPER 1- 10/MOR SUSP	100	100	05/30/03	0	1	New York	BK	41	30000
10/02/0293	QUIN CY STREE	BROOKLYN	NY	42	23	48	24PL	140.20		3F	D	0	7H	BURGLARY-3RD	101	140	05/03/85	30	1	New York	BE	793	60000
08/12/02960	W 24TH ST	BROOKLYN	NY	33	0	36	0PL	265.02	08	3F	E	1	20V	CRIM POSS WEAP 3RD-AMMO CLIP	100	130	07/07/00	23	1	New York	BK	2960	45000
07/13/0135	HEGA MAN ST	BKLYN	NY	153	53	180	60PL	160.15		1F	C	1	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	100	140	02/10/88	0	1	New York	BK	135	150000
09/16/9315	LIVONIA AVE	BKLYN	NY	93	542	108	54PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	140	06/22/94	0	1	New York	BE	315	135000
01/07/0773	ATLANTIC AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	49	203	900	240PL	125.25		0F	A	0	1L	MURDER	100	140	06/20/75	0	1	New York	BE	1773	600000
08/28/085	GRANI TE ST.	BKLYN	NY	123	43	144	48PL	105.15		2F	B	0	43H	CONSPIRACY -2ND	100	100	06/19/03	23	1	New York	BK	65	120000
04/18/0482	ATKI NS AVENU	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	265.02		3F	D	0	20H	CRIM POSS WEAP-3RD DEG	101	140	12/20/94	0	1	New York	BK	482	30000
10/19/0166	TEN EYCKM WK	BKLYN	NY	123	63	144	72PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	101	101	04/07/03	23	1	New York	BK	166	180000
10/20/9297	1 ST	BROOKLYN	NY	63	33	72	36PL	190.00		1F	D	0	31H	IDENTITY THEFT 1ST DEGREE	100	100	04/07/03	23	1	New York	BE	297	90000
08/09/0808	ROCHESTER AV	BROOKLYN	NY	42	23	48	24PL	220.06		5F	D	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-5TH	101	140	02/14/94	23	1	New York	BK	208	60000
05/22/0286	ALABAMA AVEN	BROOKLYN	NY	103	0	120	0PL	265.03		2F	C	0	20V	CRIM POSS WEAPON- 2ND DEGREE	100	100	07/03/03	23	1	New York	BE	586	150000
05/28/0805	MALCOLM X BL	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	220		0	Y	0	0	YO Adm Law Detail Not Known	100	100	08/05/03	62	1	New York	BK	105	30000
04/02/0270	GLENMORE AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	83	0	96	0PL	120.10		1F	B	0	6V	ASSAULT 1ST DEGREE	100	100	09/26/03	23	1	New York	BE	270	120000
09/21/0235	LINDEN BOULE	BROOKLYN	NY	93	33	108	36PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	100	08/07/03	0	1	New York	BK	2535	90000
08/04/0320	SCHERMERHORN	BROOKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	140.25		2F	C	0	7V	BURGLARY-2ND	100	100	11/07/03	23	1	New York	BK	120	52500
04/07/0437	PARK PLACE	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	220.39		3F	C	1	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	100	10/06/03	23	1	New York	BE	437	30000
06/05/098	MACON ST	BKLYN	NY	63	33	72	36PL	140.20		3F	D	0	7H	BURGLARY-3RD	101	140	06/28/89	35	1	New York	BE	98	90000
02/15/9334	STERLING PL	BROOKLYN	NY	542	182	54	18PL	160.15		1F	C	1	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	100	100	07/30/03	30	1	New York	BE	934	45000
04/20/0872	RIVERDALE AV	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	160		0	Y	1	0	YO Adm Law Detail Not Known	100	100	11/06/03	0	1	New York	BE	672	30000
07/03/0396B	LEXINGTON AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	23	0	24	0PL	265.02		3F	D	0	20H	CRIM POSS WEAP-3RD DEG	100	100	11/13/03	23	1	New York	BE	296	30000
12/08/02026	OCEAN AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	23	0	24	0PL	265.02		3F	D	0	20H	CRIM POSS WEAP-3RD DEG	100	100	04/17/03	23	1	New York	BK	2026	30000
01/28/02057	80TH ST	BROOKLYN	NY	542	182	54	18PL	460.20		0F	B	0	43H	ENTERPRISE CORRUPTIO N	100	100	10/28/03	23	1	New York	BK	2057	45000
04/29/0422	BLAKE AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	49	33	900	36PL	220.41		2F	A	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-2ND	100	100	11/04/03	23	1	New York	BK	422	90000
05/02/0215	CLARKSON AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	63	23	72	24PL	220.16		3F	B	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-3RD	100	100	07/18/03	0	1	New York	BK	215	60000
08/22/0289	N 1 ST	BKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	100	08/01/03	0	1	New York	BE	289	30000
03/06/0273	GATES AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	93	33	108	36PL	220.16		3F	B	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-3RD	100	100	03/31/03	23	1	New York	BE	373	90000
05/20/0843	MYRTLE AV	BROOKLYN	NY	63	23	72	24PL	220.31		5F	D	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-5TH	100	100	08/15/03	23	1	New York	BK	1043	60000
11/26/0218	FORBELL STRE	BROOKLYN	NY	63	33	72	36PL	140.20		3F	D	0	7H	BURGLARY-3RD	100	140	12/19/98	0	1	New York	BE	338	90000
04/24/0347	DEWITT AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	63	23	72	24PL	220.06		5F	D	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-5TH	100	100	09/08/03	37	1	New York	BK	347	60000
11/27/0282	SUNNYSIDE AV	BROOKLYN	NY	23	0	24	0PL	120.05		2F	D	0	6V	ASSAULT -2ND	100	100	10/30/03	23	1	New York	BK	182	30000
07/13/091	EAGEL ST	BROOKLYN	NY	153	53	180	60PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	100	01/16/03	0	1	New York	BE	91	150000
04/19/9802	BAY 28TH ST	BKLYN	NY	93	542	108	54PL	140.25		2F	C	0	7V	BURGLARY-2ND	101	140	07/05/94	23	1	New York	BE	202	135000
05/28/0315	WEST 5TH ST	BROOKLYN	NY	49	43	900	48PL	220.18		2F	A	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-2ND	100	100	12/01/03	0	1	New York	BE	2157	120000
03/20/7357O	E NEW YORK AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	49	153	900	180PL	125.25		0F	A	0	1L	MURDER	100	140	03/20/73	0	1	New York	BE	1570	450000
11/25/084	BRIGHTON I P	BROOKLYN	NY	63	23	72	24PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	100	01/24/03	23	1	New York	BK	64	60000
01/30/0315	MARCY AVENUE	BROOKLYN	NY	43	0	48	0PL	120.10		1F	C	1	6V	ASSAULT 1ST DEGREE	100	100	05/05/03	23	1	New York	BE	115	60000
03/17/0965	JEFFERSON AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	73	422	84	42PL	140.20		3F	D	0	7H	BURGLARY-3RD	100	141	12/29/98	62	1	New York	BE	665	105000
02/03/9040	55ST	BKLYN	NY	302	0	30	0PL	160.10		2F	D	1	5V	ROBBERY-2ND	100	100	06/02/03	23	1	New York	BK	1040	37500
08/26/0298	WEST 28 STRE	BROOKLYN	NY	43	162	48	16PL	220.41		2F	A	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-2ND	100	100	09/23/03	23	1	New York	BE	298	60000
04/30/0380	LENOX RD	BROOKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	160.10		2F	C	0	5V	ROBBERY-2ND	100	100	08/26/01	0	1	New York	BE	180	52500
12/17/0259	LORING AVENU	BROOKLYN	NY	43	23	48	24PL	220.06		5F	D	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-5TH	100	100	08/03/03	0	1	New York	BK	1259	60000
03/21/020	BERGEN ST	BKLYN	NY	33	182	36	18PL	155.30		4F	E	0	8H	GRAND LARCENY-4TH	101	101	02/25/03	0	1	New York	BK	30	45000
06/07/028	DODWORTH STR	BROOKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	160.15		1F	C	1	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	100	100	03/26/03	23	1	New York	BE	18	52500
07/15/01237	DEKALB AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	73	0	84	0PL	160.15		1F	B	0	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	100	100	07/02/03	23	1	New York	BE	1237	105000
04/23/029	AVENU E U	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	36PL	220.34		4F	C	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-4TH	100	100	07/15/03	62	1	New York	BE	29	90000
01/02/081	CORNE LIA STR	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	140	12/03/01	0	1	New York	BK	81	15000
11/22/0160	FULTON STREE	BROOKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	160.15		1F	C	1	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	100	100	05/28/03	0	1	New York	BK	3160	52500
10/27/0298	HIMROD STREET	BROOKLYN	NY	33	182	36	18PL	140.20		3F	E	1	7H	BURGLARY-3RD	100	141	12/01/00	40	1	New York	BE	198	45000
05/04/0312	MANHATTAN AV	BROOKLYN	NY	33	182	36	18PL	220.06		5F	E	1	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-5TH	101	140	09/19/97	0	1	New York	BK	112	45000
04/08/0360	LOTT AVENUE	BROOKLYN	NY	33	302	36	30PL	215.51	BV1	1F	E	0	37H	CRIM CONTEMPT-1ST:PRT MEM ANCE	100	130	12/07/99	0	1	New York	BK	160	75000
08/28/0708	BED FORD AVEN	BROOKLYN	NY	33	182	36	18PL	130.65		1F	B	1	22H	RAPE 1-VICTIM <11	100	100	10/01/03	30	1	New York	BE	208	90000
11/05/068	CUMBERLAND W	BROOKLYN	NY	33	182	36	18PL	155.30		4F	E	0	8H	GRAND LARCENY-4TH	100	100	12/29/03	23	1	New York	BK	68	45000
02/21/0351	CARROLL ST	BROOKLYN	NY	43	162	48	16PL	160		0	Y	0	0	YO Adm Law Detail Not Known	100	100	02/21/03	23	1	New York	BE	1514	40000
01/08/0370	SUSHWICK	BROOKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	130.80	81B	2F	B	0	22V	COURSE SEX CONDUCT-2: CHILD<13	100	100	01/08/03	23	1	New York	BK	370	52500
08/22/0209	MARCUS GARVE	BROOKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	265.03		2F	C	0	20V	CRIM POSS WEAPON- 2ND DEGREE	100	100	08/29/03	23	1	New York	BE	109	52500
12/11/023	WESTM INISTER	BROOKLYN	NY	103	422	130	42PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	100	12/03/03	0	1	New York	BK	33	105000
12/18/0919	MYRT LE AVENU	BROOKLYN	NY	53	302	60	30PL	220.31		5F	D	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-5TH	101	140	01/12/96	0	1	New York	BK	919	15000
03/09/0257	GRAHAM AV	BKLYN	NY	43	23	48	24PL	220.31		5F	D	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-5TH	100	100	10/01/03	0	1	New York	BK	157	60000
05/31/0851	ST H AVE	BKLYN	NY	93	542	108	54PL	220.16		3F	B	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-3RD	100	100	01/16/03	23	1	New York	BE	351	135000
10/15/0956	PARK PL	BKLYN	NY	43	6211	48	20PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	100	03/19/03	0	1	New York	BK	956	60000
06/06/0119	DEKA LB AVE	BKLYN	NY	33	9341	36	31PL	140.25		2F	D	1	7V	BURGLARY-2ND	101	101	05/08/03	0	1	New York	BK	119	77500
07/06/0414	BERGEN STREE	BROOKLYN	NY	53	0	60	0PL	265.03		2F	C	0	20V	CRIM POSS WEAPON- 2ND DEGREE	100	100	11/19/03	23	1	New York	BK	1414	75000
10/25/0429	DUMONT AVE BD	BROOKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	160.10		2F	C	0	5V	ROBBERY-2ND	100	100	03/31/03	23	1	New York	BK	429	52500
10/15/0896	PARK AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	33	182	36	18PL	170.25		2F	E	1	24H	POSSESS FORGED INSTRUMENT -2ND	100	100	03/14/03	23	1	New York	BK	896	45000
06/17/9844	RA LPH AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	93	542	108	54PL	220.39		3F	B	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	100	140	10/14/03	0	1	New York	BK	844	135000
05/10/0494	MILF ORD STREET	BROOKLYN	NY	33	182	36	18PL	220.06		5F	E	1	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-5TH	100	100	12/17/03	30	1	New York	BK	494	45000
09/24/9801	WOODRUFF AVE	BKLYN	NY	63	33	72	36PL	165.50		3F	D	0	28H	CPSP-3RD-VALUE OF PROP > $10K	100	141	01/29/99	0	1	New York	BE	101	90000
01/12/01283	PAC IFIC ST	BKLYN	NY	103	53	120	60PL	160.15		1F	C	1	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	101	140	07/06/93	23	1	New York	BE	1283	150000
09/25/0560	PROS PECT PLA	BROOKLYN	NY	33	0	36	0PL	140.25		2F	D	1	7V	BURGLARY-2ND	100	100	04/11/03	23	1	New York	BE	560	45000
01/22/0870	WYLCOFF AVE	BROKLYN	NY	63	162	48	16PL	220		0	Y	0	0	YO Adm Law Detail Not Known	100	100	09/15/03	23	1	New York	BE	170	60000
03/27/024	ROCKAWAY AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	155.30		4F	E	0	8H	GRAND LARCENT-4TH	100	100	01/07/03	23	1	New York	BK	24	30000
10/22/92676	LINDEN BLVD	BROOKLYN	NY	49	103	900	120PL	160.10		2F	C	0	5V	ROBBERY-2ND	101	140	04/08/81	23	1	New York	BE	2676	3000000
07/10/0870	JAMAICA AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	63	33	72	36PL	220.39		3F	C	1	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-3RD	101	140	11/20/95	0	1	New York	BE	270	90000
08/28/0301	HINS DALE STR	BROOKLYN	NY	33	182	36	18PL	140.20		3F	E	1	7H	BURGLARY-3RD	100	100	02/27/03	23	1	New York	BE	301	45000
03/06/0321	NOSTRAND AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	43	23	48	24PL	165.45		4F	E	0	28H	CRIM POSSESSION STOLE PROP-4TH	101	140	09/01/99	23	1	New York	BE	121	60000
01/07/03258	ALBANY AVENU	BROOKLYN	NY	83	43	96	48PL	220.34		4F	C	0	15H	CRIM SALE CONTRL SUBST-4TH	101	101	10/24/01	0	1	New York	BE	1258	120000
11/26/0682	MACDONOUGH S	BROOKLYN	NY	83	0	96	0PL	160.15		1F	B	0	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	100	100	07/08/03	23	1	New York	BE	682	120000
02/11/0369-06	POCH BOULEVA	BROOKLYN	NY	73	422	84	42PL	140.20		3F	D	0	7H	BURGLARY-3RD	100	140	03/06/97	0	1	New York	BE	169-06	105000
08/01/0348G	HERKIMER STR	BROOKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	130.50		1F	C	1	22V	SODOMY-1ST	100	100	10/29/03	0	1	New York	BE	1480	52500
06/06/0350	POWERS ST	BROOKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	130.50		1F	C	1	22V	SODOMY-1ST	100	100	12/12/03	23	1	New York	BK	150	52500
08/26/089	PILLING STRE	BROOKLYN	NY	43	0	48	0PL	160.10		2F	D	1	5V	ROBBERY-2ND	100	100	12/17/03	0	1	New York	BE	99	60000
10/14/0230	EUCLID AVENU	BROOKLYN	NY	153	53	180	60PL	105.15		2F	B	0	43H	CONSPIRACY -2ND	100	100	08/12/03	23	1	New York	BE	730	150000
05/18/0258	JEFFERSON AV	BROOKLYN	NY	43	0	48	0PL	120.05		2F	D	0	6V	ASSAULT -2ND	100	100	03/04/03	23	1	New York	BE	258	60000
06/02/0610	SHEFFIELD AV	BROOKLYN	NY	23	0	24	0PL	140.25		2F	D	1	7V	BURGLARY-2ND	100	100	09/15/03	0	1	New York	BK	610	30000
02/12/02805	W20TH ST	BROOKLYN	NY	53	0	60	0PL	160.15		1F	B	0	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	100	100	01/30/03	0	1	New York	BE	2805	75000
02/18/0901	JEFFERSON AV	BKLYN	NY	302	0	30	0PL	160.10		2F	D	1	5V	ROBBERY-2ND	100	100	01/17/03	0	1	New York	BK	901	37500
10/13/0317	4 AVENUE	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	220.18		2F	A	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTRL SUBST-2ND	100	100	07/22/03	23	1	New York	BK	317	90000
07/29/0328	FLATBUSH AVE W	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	160		0	Y	0	0	YO Adm Law Detail Not Known	100	100	07/29/03	23	1	New York	BK	328	30000
02/12/02805	W 20TH ST	BROOKLYN	NY	53	0	60	0PL	160.15		1F	B	0	5V	ROBBERY-1ST	100	100	01/24/03	0	1	New York	BE	2805	75000
08/26/0115	AVE.I	BROOKLYN	NY	49	203	900	240PL	125.25		2F	A	0	1L	MURDER-2ND DEG	100	100	01/08/03	23	1	New York	BE	115	600000
01/26/0936	STERLING PL	BROOKLYN	NY	53	0	60	0PL	120.10		1F	B	0	6V	ASSAULT 1ST DEGREE	100	100	07/17/03	23	1	New York	BK	635	75000
01/06/0811	SOUTH 2 STRE	BROOKLYN	NY	103	1022	120	102PL	125.25		2F	B	1	1V	MURDER-2ND DEG	100	100	07/15/03	23	1	New York	BE	111	255000
10/27/0233	LAFAYETTE AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	33	182	36	18PL	155.30		4F	E	0	8H	GRAND LARCENT-4TH	100	100	07/31/03	23	1	New York	BK	433	45000
01/14/0354	ELTON STREET	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	265		0	Y	1	0	YO Adm Law Detail Not Known	100	100	09/25/03	23	1	New York	BE	354	30000
04/25/0912	OCEANVIEW AV	BROOKLYN	NY	49	43	900	48PL	220.18		2F	A	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTRL SUBST-2ND	100	100	03/06/03	23	1	New York	BK	512	120000
06/30/0310	3RD AVE	BROOKLYN	NY	33	13	36	12PL	160		0	Y	0	0	YO Adm Law Detail Not Known	100	100	06/30/03	23	1	New York	BK	130	30000
09/07/0556	FLUSHING AV	BKLYN	NY	93	33	108	36PL	220.16		3F	B	0	19H	CRIM POSS CONTR SUBST-3RD	100	100	04/28/03	23	1	New York	BK	554	90000
12/21/013	SCAFFER ST	BKLYN	NY	422	0	42	0PL	160.10		2F	C	0	5V	ROBBERY-2ND	100	100	01/31/03	0	1	New York	BE	13	52500
07/13/0808	KINGSBOROUGH	BROOKLYN	NY	63	0	72	0PL	125.25		2F	B	1	1V	MURDER-2ND DEG	100	100	05/28/03	0	1	New York	BE	408	900000

Excerpt from a database of New York City prisoners by home address with expenditures added [data has been scrambled].

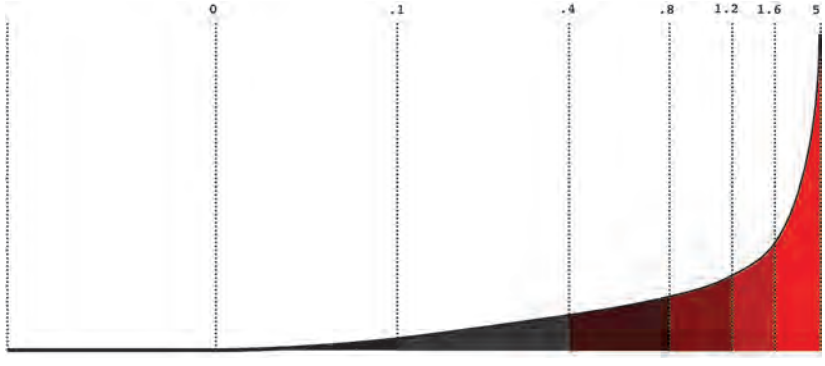
MONEY MAPS

Measured in dollars, the criminal justice network has frequently become the most important public institution in high-resettlement neighborhoods. The stakes and impacts of this unacknowledged investment become clearer when we make the incarceration maps slightly more complex by adding information about the actual costs of imprisonment. How much money does it cost to keep people in prison? The figures are available, and when they are correlated with the addresses of the people on whom the money is being spent, a remarkable pattern emerges.

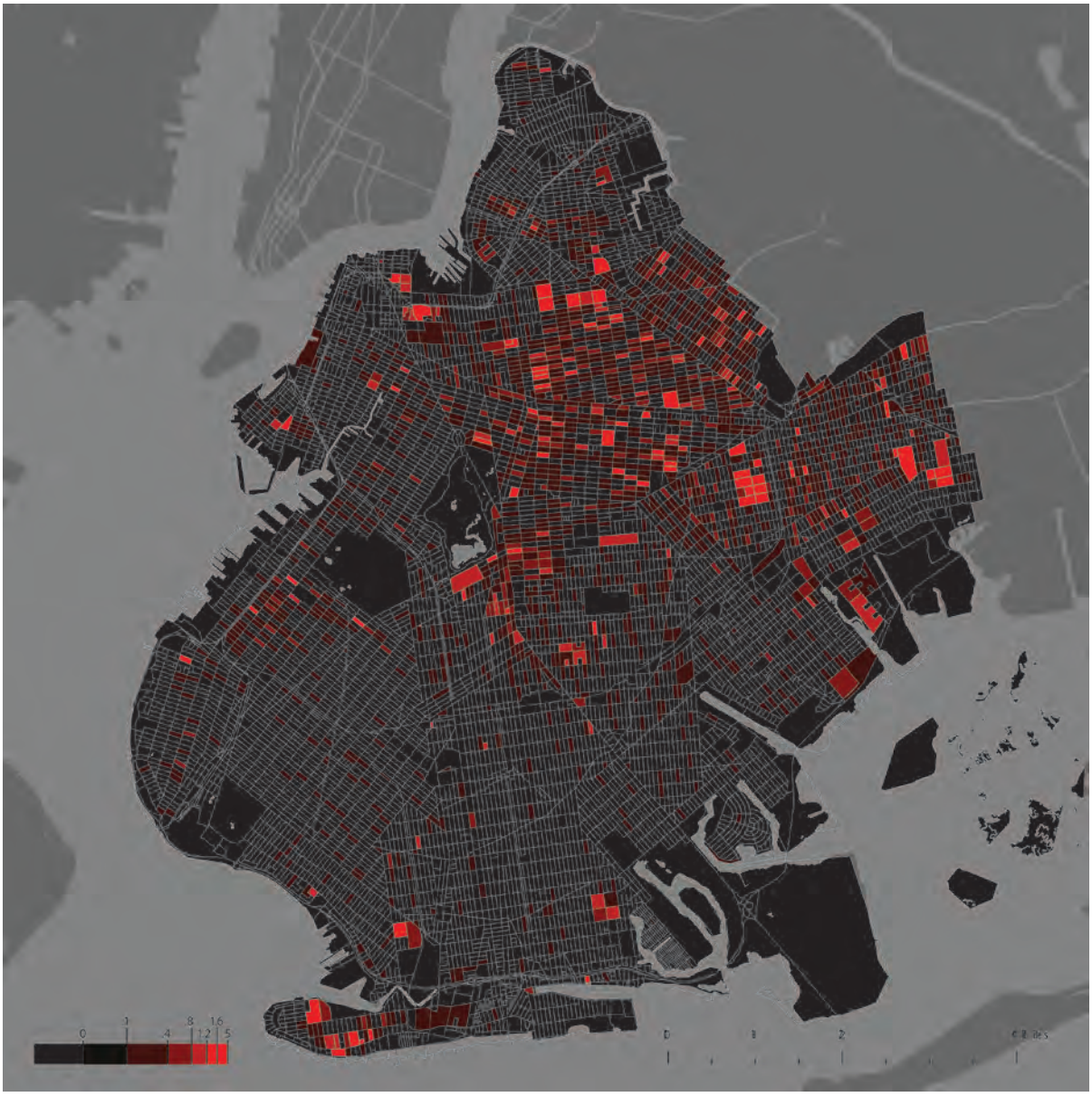
We call them "million-dollar blocks": single blocks in inner-city neighborhoods across the country for which upward of a million dollars is allocated each year to imprison its residents.

The maps now suggest a link between those places and the dollars spent (elsewhere) on their residents. They ask us to weigh the opportunity costs—for each city block, neighborhood, or wider community—of committing those funds to recycle people through jail and prison, back home, and then (for more than a third of them) back inside again. This pattern is visible in all too many major American cities: New Haven, New Orleans, New York City, Phoenix, and Wichita.

Money spent on criminal justice is money not spent on other civic institutions, especially in these communities. Guided by the maps of million-dollar blocks, urban planners, designers, and policy makers can identify those areas in our cities where—without acknowledging it—we have allowed the criminal justice system to replace and displace a whole host of other public institutions and civic infrastructure. Those neglected sectors are the very ones we have already identified as the collateral damage of the incarceration explosion: education, family, housing, health, civic involvement. Now the investment pattern and spending priorities that feed this condition become dramatically evident.



Prison expenditures expressed in millions of dollars: The resulting histogram displays what statisticians call a Power Law distribution, in which the largest share of the total expenditure is represented by a very small share of census blocks.



Prison expenditures by census block in Brooklyn,
New York, 2003.

Thirty-one men, 4.4 million dollars, four blocks of Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York, 2003.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AS INFRASTRUCTURE

No matter how physically removed they are from the neighborhoods of the people they hold, the urban exostructure of prisons and jails remain firmly rooted as institutions of the city, as everyday parts of life for people, affecting their homes, social networks, and movements.

An analysis of any million-dollar block will demonstrate how the overlapping resources of these networks conflate individuals and infrastructure, the local and the global, the close and the far, the piece and the system. Doing anything here—attempting to restructure the way the criminal justice system works—means working with contingent, dynamic, and overlapping systems and collaborations between multiple agencies, tools, and techniques.

What does it mean to design policy, to design multiple policies, around a single place?

The maps are both a picture and a design strategy. The picture is an aggregate situation. The design strategy is "start from the block and build," incrementally, new networks that might inform this crippled urban infrastructure.

In this way, these maps depart radically from the maps and statistical analyses that fueled mid-twentieth-century efficient city, urban renewal, and policing projects. The map is not a top-down view. And neither is it a bottom-up account. It is both.

Identify an area. Zoom in and examine the specific conditions. Zoom out and then consider both scales at the same time. The resulting image is no longer hard data. It is a soft map that is infinitely scalable, absolutely contingent, open to vision and hence revision.