



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

# Global Criminal Justice Practices and Public Safety

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## Research Question

**How does incarceration affect public safety in developed countries?**

## Motivation

- **George Floyd's death (2020)** highlighted racial injustices in US criminal justice system
- **Police brutality** and **incarceration** rates increase yearly despite protests
- **Police legitimacy** and overall public trust in US institutions are at an all-time low
- 2022 midterm elections emphasized **increasing funding for law enforcement**
- Increased funding and higher incarceration rates are **assumed to make civilians safer**
- Scholars focus on policing and crime rates

The impact of incarceration (the result of procedural justice) on the community (for whom procedural justice exists) is less known.

## Hypotheses

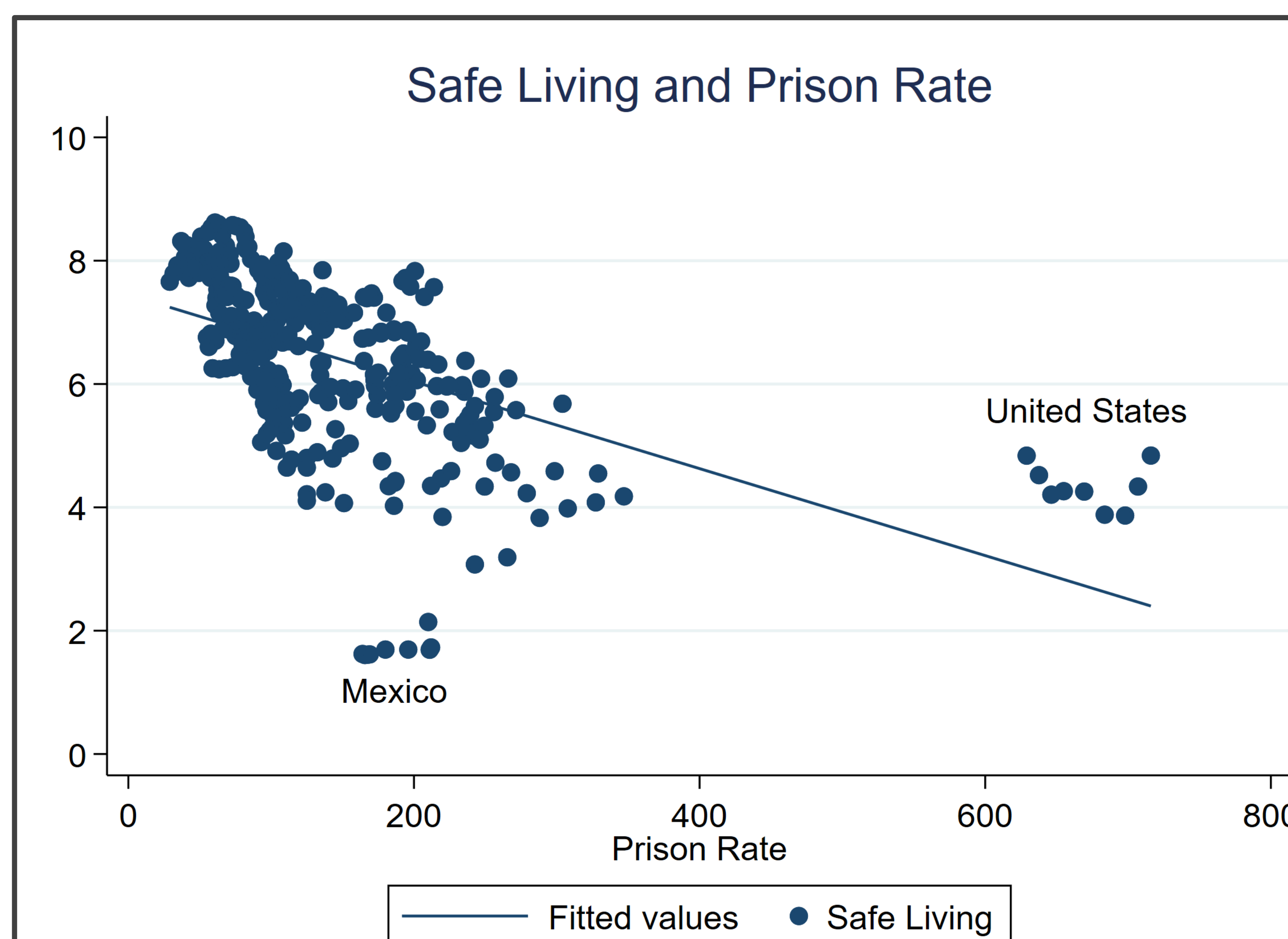
- More formal social control mechanisms** (i.e., arrests and incarceration)
- greatly **disrupt community structures**
  - higher perception of **disorder**
  - undermines **collective efficacy**
  - lowered **public safety**

I hypothesize that as incarceration rates in a country increase, public safety will decrease

## Methods

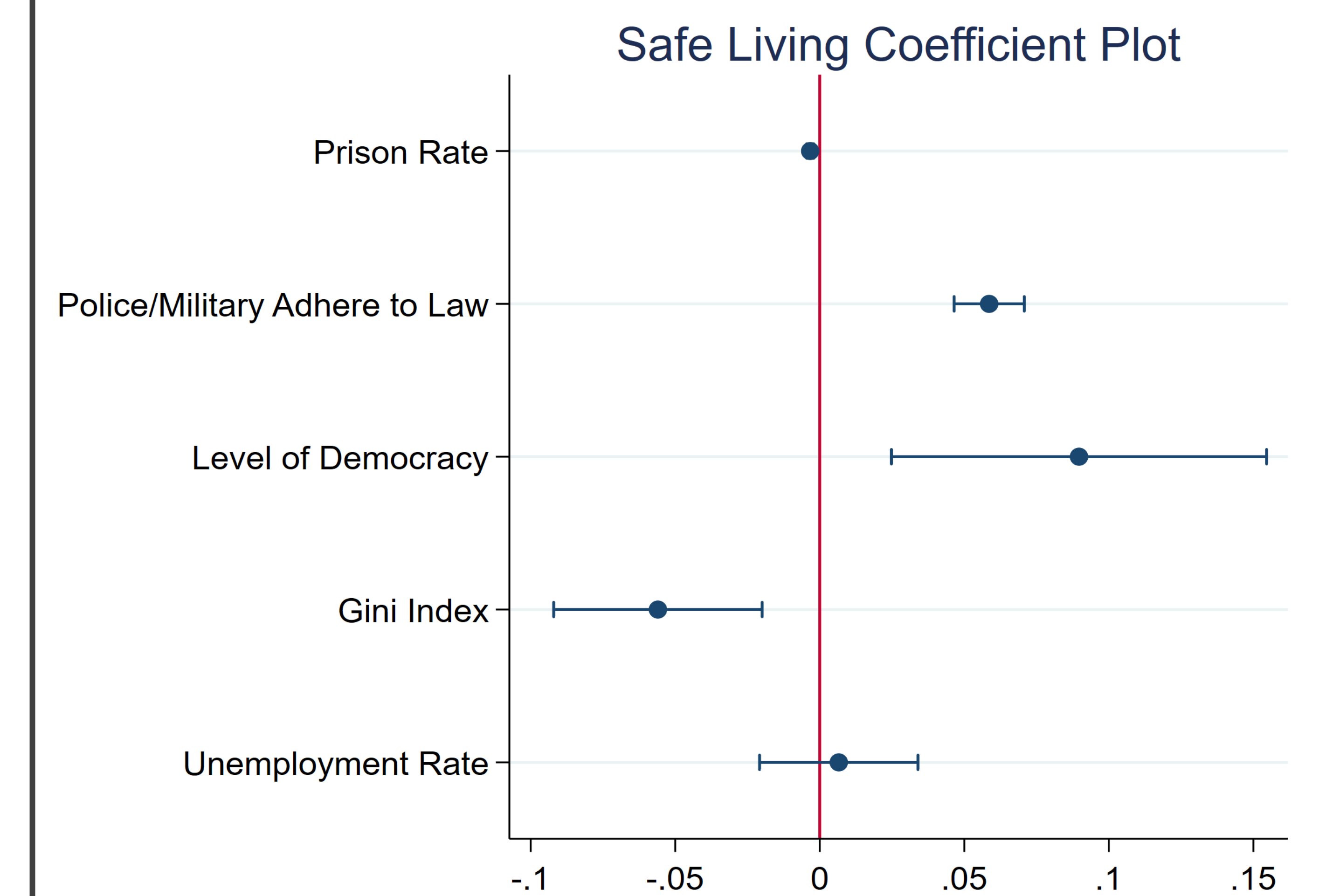
- DV: **public safety**, measured by "Safe Living" (Sustainable Governance Indicators)
  - Internal security policy (50%)
  - Homicide rates (16.67%)
  - How safe people feel (16.67%)
  - Confidence in police (16.67%)
- IV: **prison rates** (World Prison Population)
- Control: police adherence to law, level of democracy, Gini index, unemployment rate
- OLS Multivariate Regression
- Country-year data
  - 2014 – 2022, missing 2021
  - 41 countries, all OCED and EU

## Results/Discussion



- **As incarceration increases, public safety decreases**

## Results/Discussion (cont.)



- Holding all other variables constant, there is a **statistically significant** relationship between all but unemployment rate

## Future Directions

- More countries and years, include 2021
- The US should decrease reliance on incarceration and invest in communities
- By understanding how externally induced social disorders affect the public, future scholars can reduce adverse community reactions to social change to keep civilians safe.

## Acknowledgments

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## Further Information

<https://tinyurl.com/HWANG-Report>