

Jack Schroeder

Ec 1152

Prof. Raj Chetty

TF: Mike Droste

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Empirical Project 1

My hometown, Summit, is located in Union County, New Jersey. It has a reputation of being a fairly well-off town with strong links to Wall Street, as 20% of its residents work in finance and real estate (Patterson 2008). Its train station is a part of NJ Transit's Midtown Direct service, which operates express trains to Penn Station (Carter 2018). The Regional Plan Association found in 2010 that this service boosted property values in Summit by \$23,000 for houses within walking distance of the train station (Carter 2018). The town has a top-25 public school system in the state and is located close to many secular/religious private schools (U.S. News 2018). Summit's downtown suffered a downturn in the recession (Patterson 2008), but as of early 2019, its retail vacancy rate had decreased to 1.3% (Radest 2019). On the surface, Summit is resurgent and thriving.

In many outcomes, Summit is ahead of the rest of Union County. Of the 108 Census tracts within the county, Summit's tracts rank 2nd, 31st, 45th, and 53rd in the pooled household incomes of low-income children (`kfr_pooled_p25`). When displayed cartographically, Summit's outcomes for low-income children appear better than those of many other towns in the county (which are located to the southeast of Summit).

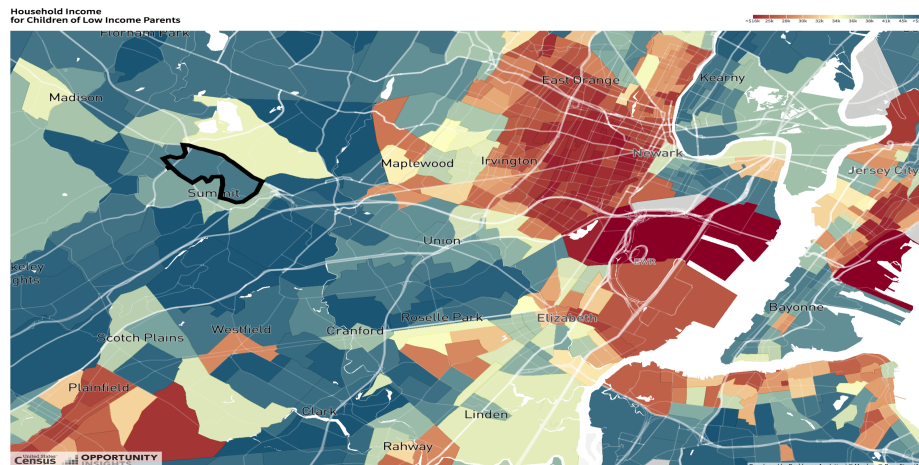


Figure 1: Household Income among Low-Income Children in North Jersey

When looked at through another metric, such as incarceration rates among low-income children, Summit still appears ahead of the pack. Within Union County, Municipalities like Cranford and Elizabeth have considerably worse outcomes than Summit. Stretching outward, the area around Newark, while located outside Union County, has strikingly worse outcomes in both household income and incarceration rates for low-income children.

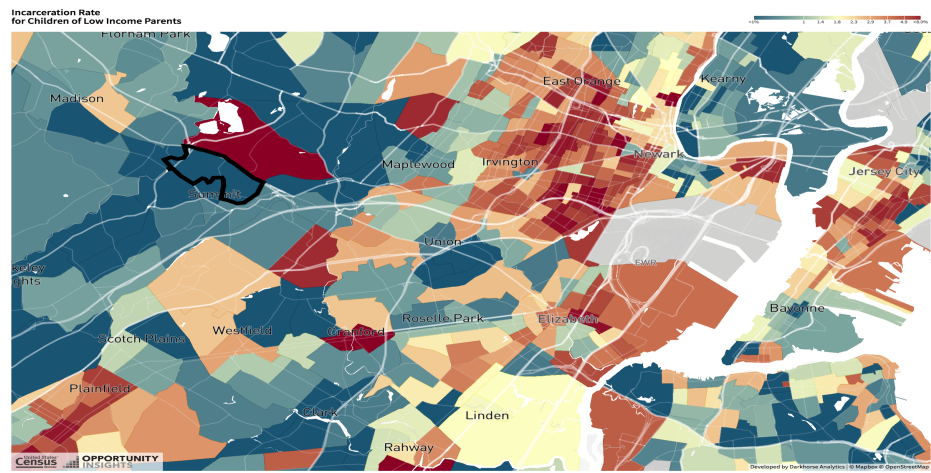


Figure 2: Incarceration Rates among Low-Income Children in North Jersey

The Opportunity Atlas data looks at children born between 1978 and 1983 and provides insights on their outcomes through adulthood. Using this data to look at Summit’s outcomes may be misleading, since Summit itself has changed since the 1980s. After a population boom in the 1950s, the population began to precipitously decline in the 1970s. This decline continued until the late 1990s, but the city’s population has yet to reach its high of 23,677 in 1960 (Census Data). Many in Summit believe that the city’s population recovery was accompanied by fundamental changes in the town’s identity, completing a transition into an upper-class Wall Street exclave in Union County.

Table 1: Outcomes for Low-Income Children (Questions 3 and 4)

Table 2: Outcomes for Higher-Income Children (Question 5)

Figure 3: Upward Mobility in Union County, NJ
Percentile Rank Data from Opportunity Atlas

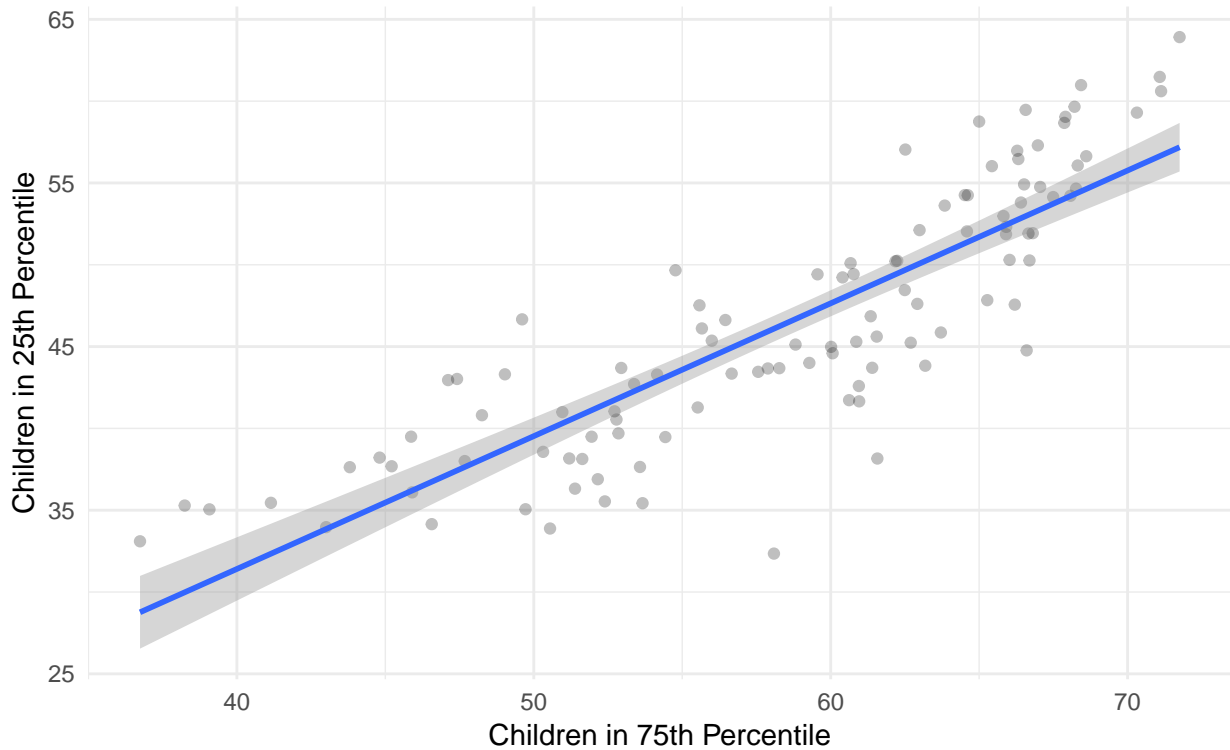


Figure 4: Upward Mobility in Union County, NJ (By Race)
Percentile Rank Data from Opportunity Atlas

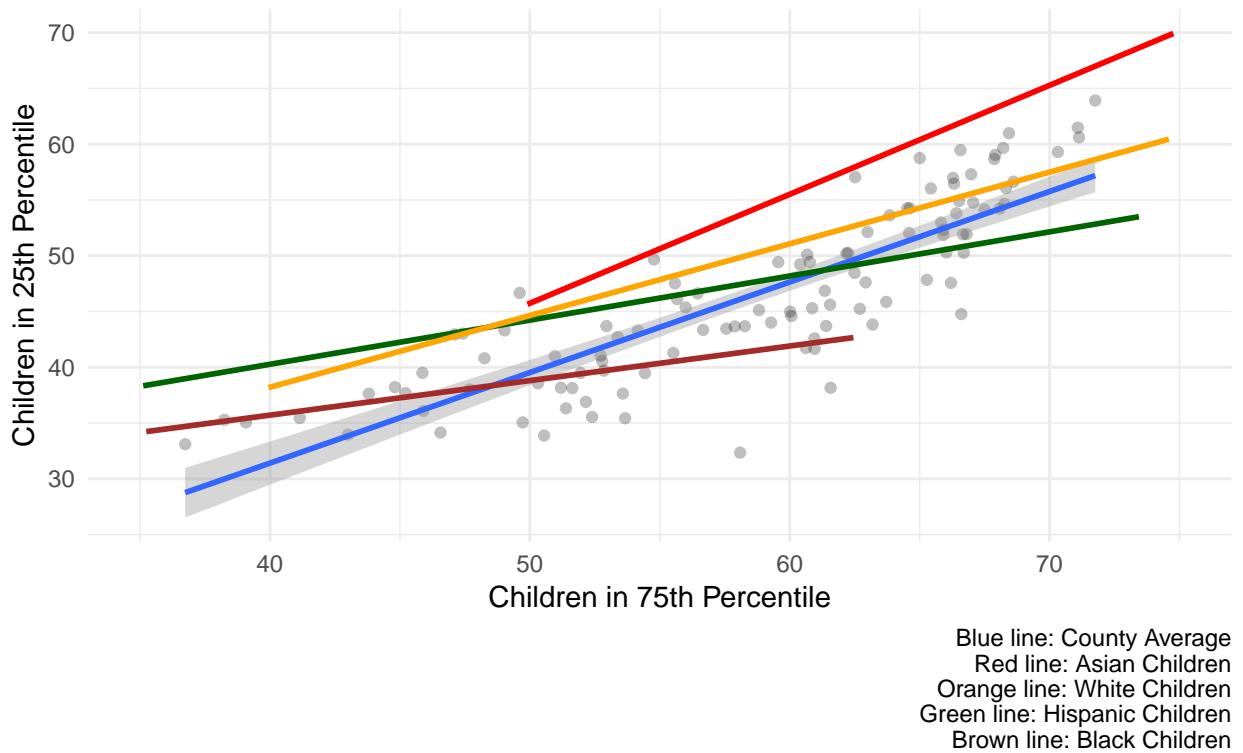


Table 3: Covariates
