

**Family Cost in the Modern American Carceral State:  
A Descriptive Study from a North Carolina Jail**

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### ABSTRACT

The shadow of mass incarceration in the United States casts over the lives of the justice-involved, but also, at twilight, over the lives of their families. Drawing on family demography and carceral studies, I study the financial effects of incarceration on survivor (nonincarcerated) families in the ambit of a local North Carolina jail. Often born of necessity, a domain of costs threaten the family economy when a member is incarcerated, with the potential to worsen or create economic disadvantage. This vulnerability, I contend, is particularly manifest for families that must interact with jail systems, understudied locales that nevertheless contribute to the calculus of inequality as much as prisons. Here, previous work on the financial costs of imprisonment become emblematic of the issues at hand, but also inaugurate new analysis. Using a descriptive survey strategy, I examine the demographics, relationships, and expenditures of an exploratory sample of individuals supporting a jail-incarcerated family member in Durham, North Carolina. Study results magnified a narrative of incarceration as an engine for gender and racial stratification—specifically of Black mothers at odds with costs of keeping their incarcerated sons fed, safe, and dignified. Comparison of jail-related expenditure across a spectrum of income groups also revealed class disparity—whereby low-income families were furnishing the most to support the incarcerated. Subsequent consideration is then given to the apparatus of jail in a system of financial extraction, and how families find intelligibility in its imposed paradigm of costs and burdens.

Keywords: family, mass incarceration, jail, finances, collateral consequences of incarceration

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### INTRODUCTION

Over the last 50 years, the savvy of American exceptionalism has produced yet another patent: mass incarceration. It is exceptionalist in at least three regards. First, mass incarceration in the United States “implies a rate of imprisonment. . . that is markedly above the historical and comparative norm for societies of this type” (Garland 2001:1). Between an unprecedented growth period from 1972 to the peak year of 2009, the national U.S. prison and jail<sup>1</sup> incarceration rate increased more than fourfold, from 161 to 707 per 100,000 people (National Research Council 2014). It now ranks near the top of the world (Walmsley 2016; Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research 2021; Widra and Herring 2021), vying not with other sovereign countries but with other U.S. states. Indeed, the state of North Carolina incarcerates more people in prison or jail per capita than any other wealthy, Western democracy with an institutionalized penal system (Widra and Herring 2021).

Second, American incarceration is concentrated on a demographic scale, so much so that is not enough to speak of incarceration as the imprisonment of the few but as the “systematic imprisonment of whole groups of the population” (Garland 2001:2). Since 2005, the number of people in custody in prison and jail has hovered around 2 million (Sawyer and Wagner 2023). Accounting then for the contemporary population under probation or parole, the aggregate population under correctional supervision has totaled to be more than 7 million people, or 1 in

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<sup>1</sup> Both prisons and jails incarcerate. However, divergent from prisons, jails typically incarcerate the pre-convicted, are regionally rather than federally operated, and accommodate shorter-term criminal sentences. While this paper is topically focused on jail incarceration, and considers jails as elemental to “mass incarceration” or “mass imprisonment”, much of its forthcoming discussion relies on a far more sizeable prison literature to stimulate theoretical and substantive thrust.

every 32 adult Americans (Glaze and Bonczar 2007) touched by the criminal justice system: the right hand of the state (Bourdieu 1998).

Third, mass incarceration creates or at least intensates social inequality and marginality (see for review Western [2006]). Loïc Wacquant argues the institutionalization of incarceration has spawned a hyperactive, hypertrophic, and hyperincarcerative American penal state that stratifies groups “first by class, second by race, and third by place” (2010a:74). That is no more evident in the particular biographies of (poor, young, uneducated) African American men born into areas of urban poverty (Pettit and Western 2004; Western and Wildeman 2009; Lee and Wildeman 2021) whose lifetime encounters with incarceration remain starkly high and unequal (Roehrkasse and Wildeman 2022), and which incubate further racial and class inequalities, as research portends, across social and economic domains (e.g., Wakefield and Uggen 2010; Harris, Evans, and Beckett 2010; Wakefield and Wildeman 2013).

Yet, to imbibe the full ontological weight of what is meant by “mass” incarceration, it is necessary to think of incarceration as not only the deracination of the individual, but as the fissuring of a whole social geography. It is to ask: Who exactly is subject to the American incarceration experiment? No longer just the incarcerated, for 50 years it has become the spouses, parents, and children “doing time” in tandem (Comfort 2008; Braman 2004; Lee et al. 2015). Today, member incarceration is now common for the American family (Lee and Wildeman 2021), with 45 percent of Americans having experienced the incarceration of an immediate kin<sup>2</sup> (Enns et al. 2019). These figures are even higher for particular groups of families because of the concentrated rates of imprisonment among African American men; 1 in 4 African

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<sup>2</sup> The Family History of Incarceration Survey (FamHIS) data analyzed by Enns et al. (2019) categorizes immediate kin as (step, foster, adoptive, or biological) parents, children, and siblings, as well as spouses, romantic partners, or anyone an individual shares a child with.

American children born in 1990 is estimated to experience parental incarceration by the age of 14 (Wildeman 2009). Family member incarceration, too, remains stratified along class, race, and neighborhood divides (Muller and Roehrkasse 2022; Pattillo-McCoy 1999).

While research has focused largely on the (lifetime) effects of incarceration for justice-involved men (e.g., Pager 2003; Lewis, Garfinkel, and Gao 2007; Massoglia and Pridemore 2015), their families vis-à-vis are described historically as the “hidden” or “invisible” victims of the criminal justice process (Bakker, Morris, and Janus 1978; Travis, McBride, and Solomon 2005; Martin 2017). Assessing the effect of mass incarceration on the family, however, is vital in measuring its true collaterality—its, hidden, invisible, or interstitial repercussions. This collateral consequences perspective (Comfort 2008) should be important on several ideological grounds. Lee and Wildeman (2021) claim three: first, morally, that the family members of the incarcerated are rarely (if not ever) involved in the crimes that their family members have committed; second, agentically, that many of these families did not choose to have a criminally active or justice-involved family member; and third, categorically, that the collateral consequences of family member incarceration are likely greater than those of the men who experience incarceration themselves.

This last point mires the trajectory of family inequality studies, as a body of research corroborates (e.g., Schwartz-Soicher, Geller, and Garfinkel 2011; Wildeman, Schnittker, and Turney 2012; Wildeman 2014), contact with family member incarceration foments inequality above and beyond existing family disadvantage prior to incarceration (Lee and Wildeman 2021:2). It is an archetype of hardship spawned by one social problem (mass incarceration) deviated into its own (mass *family member* incarceration), and staked in a most fundamental unit of society. When “families undergo some of the worst stresses in attempting to maintain that

unit,” thus writes Lori Girshick, “sociologists need to be concerned about the impact of these hardships” (1996:13).

This study joins one instinctive attempt to quantify the collateral consequences of family member incarceration through spillover effects on the family economy. Incarceration can naturally jeopardize the economic stability of a household when, for example, a parent (oft the father) who is the sole earner of a family is imprisoned for an extended period of time (Johnson 2008; Glaze and Maruschak 2010; Schwartz-Soicher et al. 2011), although economic losses may be negligible for families weakly tied to members prior to their incarceration.<sup>3</sup> Recent work by Harris (2016) has already begun to contour the political economy of legal-financial obligations among the poor justice-involved, where the levying of legal fees and fines, frequently born by their families, transfer the costs of punishment from courts and correctional agencies to the punished (Western 2017).

Then there is the experience of incarceration itself. For families who retain social ties to the incarcerated, it is during this crucible when the criminal justice system asks moral society a terrible question: What is the cost of keeping a fragile family intact? The costs of embodied family support, of visiting correctional facilities, of footing phone calls, of funding commissary accounts and preparing packages, over weeks, months, years, and lifetimes—they come to define the financial price families must pay to maintain the family display (Finch 2007), yet despite their institutional embeddedness (most if not all correctional facilities charge or permit families to spend money), they are largely unknown. Calculating these forms of financial costs and their extent as a measure of collaterality is thus a fundamental empirical question (Western and

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<sup>3</sup> This may include single-parent families which represent 23 percent of households in the United States (Kramer 2019).

Wildeman 2009:240) to answer. It is also more urgent. As the prison-and-jail-for-profit complex booms, the costs of affording basic goods and services for the incarcerated have mounted, and now total in the billions for families (see McLaughlin et al. [2016] and Wagner and Rabuy [2017]). In short, the potential for this financial collateral effect of incarceration on contemporary American families to strain is high.

The present study therefore explores family activity and economy under the shadow of American mass incarceration. Principally, I extend and update seminal descriptive work by Grinstead et al. (2001) accounting for family costs in prisons, to examine the direct financial costs of family member incarceration in a county jail context. In doing so, I employ an adapted survey strategy to describe the demographics, social relationships, mechanisms of financial support (as in how much a family member has spent, and on what), and interpersonal attitudes reported by a sample of individuals “doing time together” with the incarcerated. My findings subsequently establish empirical support and a further theoretical discussion of family exchange, stratification, and burden in the maw of the American carceral state marketplace.

## BACKGROUND

### *Collateral Effects of Incarceration on Family Life: An Analysis of Cost*

The proliferation of the American penal system has iterated a volume of research on the collateral consequences of incarceration. To its family effect, Comfort (2007:271) states in her review of the literature, “People who commit or are suspected of committing crimes are generally embedded in kinship webs and social networks that draw others into the ambit of the state’s punishment apparatus.” Though, the magnitude of this embroilment is amorphous. As summarized by Turney and Wildeman (2013:950), incarceration sometimes undermines,



sometimes improves, and sometimes is inconsequential to family life.<sup>4</sup> This review, analytically, focuses on the first interactional condition: the reckoning of those collaterals between incarceration and the family that I consider disintegrative across a triple (1: structural, 2: nonmaterial, and finally, 3: material) axis,<sup>5</sup> a conceptual estimation that is perhaps most poignant for distilling what precisely a “cost” really engenders, in the punishment matrix, for the families in this kind of debt.

*Axis One: Atomization of Family Structure*

On a structural level, incarceration contributes to family disintegration (1) via the dissolution of romantic unions<sup>6</sup> among current and formerly incarcerated men and their partners<sup>7</sup> (Apel 2016; Lopoo and Western 2005; Massoglia, Remster, and King 2011; Western and McLanahan 2000), and (2) to the erosion of social capital (Holt and Miller 1972; Hagan and Dinovitzer 1999; Braman 2004; Christian, Mellow, and Thomas 2006). As an example found in qualitative work by Edin (2000), poor urban women were unlikely to marry formerly incarcerated men given the low-status connotations they attributed to their criminal records. Comparative rates of female and maternal incarceration have also seen relative increases over the last decade (Glaze and Maruschak 2008; Kruttschnitt 2010; Wildeman and Turney 2014), which

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<sup>4</sup> In research on incarceration and the family, there is as Garland (1990:280) remarks a plurality of functional or nonfunctional causes, effects, and meanings for the actors involved. There is a level of variation that countervails the generalization of any family effects as totalizing or negative. For example, various ethnographic works describes how the incarceration of romantic partners affords some women the opportunity to pursue ameliorative relationships (Nurse 2002); creates relief or curtails abuse when a difficult partner is incarcerated (Comfort 2008); or is a turning point that initiates a newfound sense of independence and purpose (Edin, Nelson, and Paranal 2001).

<sup>5</sup> I use the term “axis” in a conceptual way, to organize types of family collateral effects that fall under similar (structural, nonmaterial, material) lines.

<sup>6</sup> Romantic unions (e.g., marriage or cohabitation) dissolve through divorce or separation.

<sup>7</sup> Among couples on that conversely stay together, incarceration decreases relationship quality (Turney 2015).

together with longstanding paternal incarceration (Mumola 2000), has meant the incarceration of a parent is an increasingly common life event for their spouses, and for their children<sup>8</sup> (see especially Finlay, Mueller-Smith, and Street [2023]). What results are family systems that must cope with the dramatic-to-chronic absences of men and women who fulfill vital parental, economic, and emotional roles—upsetting in the family unit (Comfort 2008) daily routine, internal relationships, and the diffusion of care (Geller, Garfinkel, and Western 2011; Turanovic, Rodriguez, and Pratt 2012; Beck et al. 2010; Roberts 2012; Swann and Sylvester 2006; Turney and Wildeman 2013). The reentry of family members to domestic life, further, does not necessarily mend family structure *ex post facto*. Recent paternal incarceration, for example, diminishes prosocial family engagement among men involved in family life prior to incarceration, and increases the probability of maternal repartnering (Turney and Wildeman 2013) or harsher maternal parenting (Turney 2014b).

*Axis Two: Nonmaterial Harm*

Incarceration as it induces liminality within the family structure continues to take a heavy toll on psychosocial and physical (formalized here as *nonmaterial*) wellbeing. A handful of qualitative work suggests a father's incarceration is indemnified, among mothers, by anxiety, uncertainty, and loneliness (Comfort 2008; Daniel and Barrett 1981; Fishman 1990; Nurse 2002), stigma (Braman 2004; Edin 2000), and on the causal end, robust associations with depression and life dissatisfaction (Wildeman et al. 2012). Health outcomes for mothers with incarcerated children (almost always sons) compared to peers are also debilitating (Goldman 2019; Sirois 2020), introducing a collateral life course effect of incarceration that unfolds

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<sup>8</sup> Children with incarcerated parents face structural changes such as increased life chances of foster care placement or homelessness (Swann and Sylvester 2006; Glaze and Maruschak 2008; Wildeman 2014).

generationally (1) from child-to-parent and (2) from parent-to-child. Indeed on this end, research across a host of datasets links paternal incarceration to externalizing behavioral, mental, and physical health problems in children (e.g., Geller et al. 2012; Wakefield and Wildeman 2011; Roettger and Boardman 2012; Turney 2014a), including inter alia, educational adversity (Haskins 2014) and delinquency (Roettger and Swisher 2011), which can persist into adulthood (see for review Murray and Farrington [2008]).

*Rejoinder to Understand the Material Collateral: A Phenomenological Perspective*

The discussion on the structural and nonmaterial effects of family member incarceration, to this point, has begun a panoramic development of how a corpus of research designates collaterality in some of its most deleterious forms. On this effect, it also functions as a source of initialization for the remaining collateral I address along the collateral chain: the material struggle about family incarceration, which completes, suggestively, a phenomenological experience of having a family member concurrently incarcerated.

The phenomenology I refer to is best elucidated in the lives of women described in detailed ethnographic and observational work (see especially Condry [2007] and Comfort [2008]), who, in highly gendered roles supporting incarcerated men, face great personal costs as their romantic expectations and relationships adapt to a carceral reality (Comfort 2008:13). Comfort, writing on the basis of in-depth interviews with 50 women linked to male partners in San Quentin State Prison, specifically uses the term *secondary prisonization* to describe how the penitentiary infiltrates social life. Take here, for example, Alice, a 22-year-old, unemployed African American mother from Comfort's (2008) interviews, whose husband at the time was serving three years in San Quentin for the first time:

ALICE: Well yesterday I just mailed him his first box. [very quiet voice, for dramatic effect] That box cost me lots of money.

MC [Comfort]: How much?

ALICE: I had to buy him tennis shoes, which they can't be over a certain amount but it was hard to find them cuz he wears size eleven and a half so it was hard to find him something for cheap. Which I found him some, maybe for like sixty dollars. . . He wanted a watch but I didn't send him a watch [laughs].

MC: Why not?

ALICE: I said [sarcastically, alluding to the heavy regimentation of his days], "What do you need to know the time for?" [we both burst out laughing] I said, "You don't need to know the time!" I said. "You just worry about getting out!" I said, "Maybe in the next three months I'll send you a watch. But you don't need no watch!" But I did send him the shoes cuz he said the boots hurt his feet. But when he first got here, he didn't have no shoes, he had like some thong-slippers that they give 'em, and somebody he knew was here and left, so they gave him some boots and I feel really bad because the boots he had, the shoestrings were ripped sheets. I was like, "I got to send you some shoes!" That made me feel really, really bad. So, that's why I got him some shoes. (P. 83)

Comfort argues prisonized women reconcile the "ostensible segregation and isolation of imprisonment" (2008:13) between themselves and their partners (which I exemplify as a form of structural collateral in a romantic relationship or family) by "doing time together" (p. 13)—by mitigating the material deprivations of the prison environment through acts like sending a package of goods, as Alice does to her husband. These tangible, yet expensive commodifications of symbolic, emotional support and care allow women to feel connected to the men of San Quentin and, as remarked in Alice's admission, further function as a mechanism of informal social control: Alice uses the promise of a good (the watch) to remind her husband that his objective, above all else, is to amend the prisonization and de facto separation between them both—to come back home.

I borrow another excerpt from Comfort (2008) involving Celina, an unemployed mother awaiting, like Alice, the return of her partner:

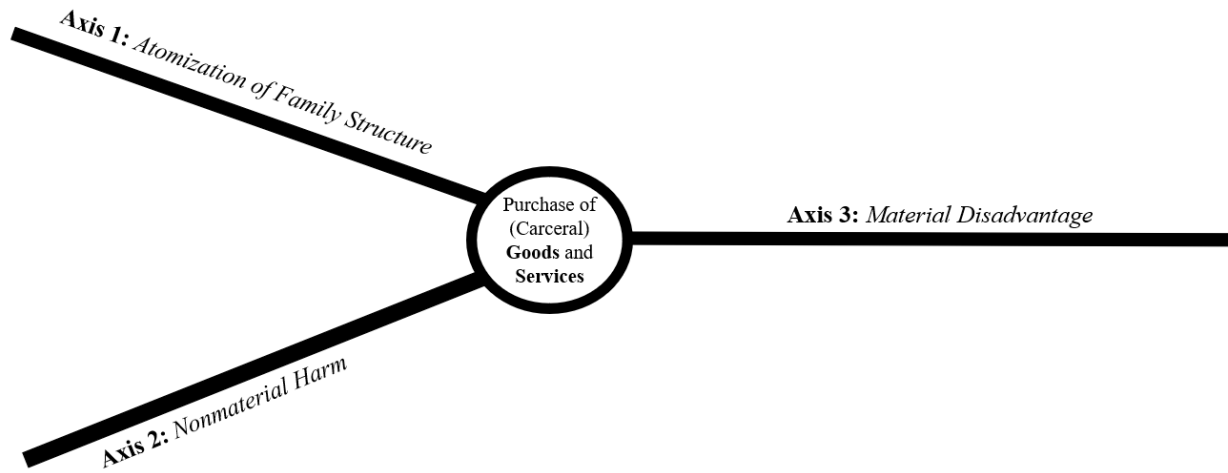
[CELINA] My whole day would be planned around getting home to [giggles] rush in to the door and stuff like that [to be there for his call]! And then, sometimes, like, I know when it's him, cuz like on the caller ID it'll say—cuz I don't really have that many people, you know, other than him and family that call me, so I know what calls are which, so it's like, I see the little "unavailable" thing on the ID, I was like [breathless with anticipation] "I know that's him! I can talk to—Hi, baby! It's me!" Or hear that old lady, the recording you know, "We have a collect call from—" and then he'll say something funny or sexy or something on the little, that five-second blip of stuff [when the person states his name for acceptance of the call], so I'll be, like, all excited. (P. 90)

Despite being described by Comfort as juggling debt, including a “\$500-and-growing phone bill” on government disability checks (2008:90), Celina still opts to answer costly collect phone calls from her partner. In fact, it is a high point in her “otherwise markedly isolated and ‘very boring life’” (p. 90). For Celina, the effect of isolation psychologized-as-loneliness (this is the nonmaterial collateral) is remedied by subsidizing the collect call. Here rational market logic fails: Celina, Comfort notes, would be depressed if she had to economize by denying her partner’s calls.

Though Comfort’s (2008) theoretical arguments about the phenomenological experiences of women prisonized by San Quentin are far more granular than I portray, my use of two cases intends to exemplify the processual cascade innervating the family collaterals I have introduced thus far. Figure 1 abstracts these collaterals and their relationships to one another. For both Alice and Celina, their attempts to mollify structural isolation (Axis 1 in Figure 1) and psychosocial deprivation (Axis 2) for their partners and self-reflexively for themselves cascade into the instrumentalization of goods and services to regain solace in the penitentiary. In this way, seemingly quotidian transactions—buying tennis shoes, collecting a call—represent one of the few ways the family can prevail in the penal system. That renders such acts locally significant within the carceral ordinary. But in mending those structural or symbolic holes left ajar by the same ordinary (see the “Purchase of Goods and Services” as *filling* such holes in Figure 1), these transactional acts (in)advertently extend the collateral cascade, to Axis 3 (“Material Disadvantage”), as Alice concedes:

*“That box cost me lots of money.”*

**Figure 1.** Integrating the Structural, Nonmaterial, and Material Cascade of Family Collaterals



*Axis Three: Material Disadvantage*

*Loss of economic capital and hardship.*

I turn now to the family economy, wherein incarceration makes its most material landfall. It would be a layer girding the family system, under Bourdieusian thought, that lies in the thick of and perhaps at the center of all forms of capital exchange (Bourdieu 1986). To inflict damage on the family economy as incarceration can do, then, laterally interferes with the accumulation of resources that predicated a family's social position (Tilly 1998). Wildeman and Western (2010) and others clarify why: The incarceration of a financial standard bearer<sup>9</sup> prototypically removes their household income, child support, and in-kind resource contributions (such as childcare or domestic help) as they do prison or jail time (Travis et al. 2005; Geller et al. 2011; Braman 2004; Fishman 1990),<sup>10</sup> putting the finances, budgets, and earnings potential (which can diminish as tasks previously performed by an incarcerated member need to be redistributed) of their partners

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<sup>9</sup> Standard bearers are usually men. Per Glaze and Maruschak (2010), over half a fathers (54 percent) in state prisons provided primary financial support for their families prior to incarceration.

<sup>10</sup> This economic loss extends after incarceration as well.

and children under duress (Hairston 1998; Lynch and Sabol 2004; Geller et al. 2011). In research on paternal incarceration, the net result is significant, increased family material hardship<sup>11</sup> and deep poverty (Schwartz-Soicher et al. 2011). This finding reverberates as other measurable accounts of economic instability are compared: for example Bruns' (2017) finding that women with incarcerated partners are more likely to work multiple jobs than women without; Sugie (2012) and Geller and Franklin's (2014) findings that recent paternal incarceration is associated, respectively, with families' increased reliance on public assistance<sup>12</sup> (see also Edin and Lein [1997]; Halpern-Meekin et al. [2015]; Bruns [2020]) and increased odds of maternal housing insecurity,<sup>13</sup> and finally in the wealth dimension, Turney and Schneider's (2016) findings that incarceration is negatively associated with family asset ownership.<sup>14</sup>

*Financial costs of family member incarceration.*

A central mechanism by which family member incarceration precipitates hardship is by the deluge of new expenses that accrue as families work "second jobs" (e.g., Comfort 2008; Comfort 2016) tending to the incarcerated. It is a form of labor, as observed earlier by Alice, that families pay to do. National data is rarely collected on how much, and on what, families are paying into prisons or jails as their members are incarcerated. A select body of literature,

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<sup>11</sup> Since there is no preexisting standard, Schwartz-Soicher et al. (2011) operationalized material hardship as an index that examines the extent to which families face difficulties in meeting basic needs (e.g., rent, mortgage, utilities, healthcare, or food).

<sup>12</sup> Sugie (2012) measured public assistance as receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), food stamps, Medicaid, or SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program).

<sup>13</sup> Mothers with recently incarcerated partners, "on average, faced approximately 50 percent greater odds of housing insecurity" (Geller and Franklin 2014:13), which is consistent with prior research (e.g., Geller et al. 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Asset ownership is a measure of wealth that is a "a distinct and important measure of economic well-being" (Keister and Moller 2000 as cited in Turney and Schneider 2016:2076). Specifically, incarceration significantly reduces vehicle, bank account, and homeownership for formerly incarcerated men and their families, as well as makes their acquisition more difficult.

however, of qualitative, advocacy, and descriptive work suggests the most frequent sources of expenditure derive from the costs of visitation, affording phone calls, sending packages, and subsidizing commissary accounts (Girshick 1996; Hairston 1998, 2002; Grinstead et al. 2001; Leblanc 2003; Travis 2005; Comfort 2008; Wagner and Rabuy 2017; Lockwood and Lewis 2019). These new expenditures subsequently compound with preexisting expenses, such as legal debts and administrative fees (Kirk, Fernandes, and Friedman 2020; Friedman et al. 2022) that eat into family budgets (Harris et al. 2010; Harris 2016; Comfort 2008) to make family financial encounters with the criminal justice system anywhere from a drop in the bucket, to profoundly disenchanting or soon to be (see these characterizations in the discussion of Fishman [1988:58]).

*Costs of communication: visitation, phone calls, and electronic communication.*

The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights determined from its quasi-survey of formerly imprisoned or jailed individuals and their family members across the urban U.S. that 58 percent of those it defined as poor families (making less than \$15,000 per year) were unable to afford the costs of incarceration; specifically, 34 percent of surveyed families reported going into debt to pay for visits and phone calls (deVuono-powell et al. 2015). On the costs of contact, Girshick's (1996) ethnography of 25 wives visiting husbands in Soledad State Prison provides some illustration:

[BETTY] So, financially, to come up here because it is so far, it's just really very, very hard with the money. Before I started coming up with my friend, it was running me \$103 for a bus ticket, \$40 for a hotel room, and then food in the visiting room, which usually runs \$30-\$40 for a hotel room. So it was a good \$200 just to come up for a weekend. Which, needless to say, I could not afford. (P. 62)

Her experiences match similar ethnographic observations provided by Braman (2004) and Comfort (2008) on the costs of traveling to far-reaching prisons, in which transportation, accommodations, visitation schedules, and waiting times are prohibitive. So too does Isabel's account from Girshick (1996) on the costs of phone calls:



[ISABEL] I spend money on nothing other than necessities. Things that I used to do, I no longer do so that I will have the money to pay the phone bill and come up here. Last month [the phone bill] was \$129. (P. 63)

Phone call expenses, for which the receiver pays, originating from penal institutions are unusually high (Hairston 1998; Grinstead et al. 2001; Braman 2004; Wagner and Bertram 2022), as it has become standard practice for third-party telecom companies,<sup>15</sup> who enter revenue-sharing agreements with state correctional departments to levy, even extrajudicially, hefty ancillary fees and rates (see Wagner and Bertram [2022] and Lara-Millan [2021]) on all phone transactions.

Since the early 2000s, the trickle of technological change into correctional environments has meant other traditional and once affordable forms of communication (e.g., letters or postcards) have become largely displaced by electronic mail and digital messaging services (see for review Raheer [2016]). These technologies, which help liberate information on the outside world, are instead retooled as revenue streams in prisons and jails, creating new money sinks. For example, The Marshall Project, after asking 200 family members to document their prison-related spending, describes individuals paying for digital “stamps” to send emails, pictures and attachments, with one woman spending approximately 7 percent on her yearly budget, to that point, on emails to her ex-husband (Lockwood and Lewis 2019). The flat rates of emails and messaging, as secondary costs of communication, are further problematized by character-limits,

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<sup>15</sup> The private phone industry is estimated by Wagner and Rabuy (2017) to generate 1.3 billion dollars in annual profits. In North Carolina, close to 8 million dollars in phone kickbacks were paid to state prisons by phone service vendors from 2017 to 2018 (Human Rights Defense Center 2018).

poor data retention, and the need to pay for access to specialized kiosks<sup>16</sup> for the incarcerated to use.

*Costs of comforts: packages and commissary accounts.*

Lastly, external packages and items from the commissary establish the supply of goods in the penal economy. Packages, which contain creature comforts from books, to clothing, to food and hygienic products, are often in high demand. Ethnographic accounts describe family members so compelled to deliver requested items to their partners in prison that the rest of the family had to survive without everyday essentials (Fishman 1990; LeBlanc 2004), while participants from Comfort's (2008) sample could consume 6 percent or more of their yearly incomes<sup>17</sup> sending them. Girshick (1996) further notes packages would frequently get lost in the mazes of penal administration, a double-penalty for the family member that must replace them and the prisoner who may only be eligible to receive goods a few times a year. Today, packages are often only sent through pre-approved vendors and item catalogs that are marked-up from normal retail prices<sup>18</sup> (see for review Eldridge [2017]).

The financialization of prison or jail goods further extends to commissaries (or canteens), which are increasingly operated by private vendors.<sup>19</sup> Funding commissary accounts (i.e., “putting money on the books”) allows families to address the everyday deprivations of penal life

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<sup>16</sup> These technologies offer “pay-to-play” digital services such as e-messaging, video conferencing, web browsing, and entertainment, and have displaced essential carceral services like libraries or educational programming (see for review Finkel and Bertram [2019] and Wessler [2023]).

<sup>17</sup> Among the 27 participants from Comfort's (2008) sample who sent regular packages, 8 had annual pretax incomes under \$10,000, 9 made \$10,000 to \$20,000, 4 made \$20,000 to \$30,000, and 4 had incomes in excess of \$40,000.

<sup>18</sup> In *Ahlgrim v. Keefe Group LLC*, for example, a private commissary vendor was sued over price differences for identical products sold through county and state prisons.

<sup>19</sup> The private commissary industry is estimated by Wagner and Rabuy (2017) to generate 1.6 billion dollars in annual profits.

that packages cannot reach, and are subsidized as either lump sums, monthly, or weekly allowances (Comfort 2008). Commissary storefronts, contrary to myth, are not places where luxury purchases are made: The Prison Policy Initiative sampled three state prison systems<sup>20</sup> and found individuals spent an average of \$947 a year on commissary, buying goods like extra food, toilet paper, soap, or medication unobtainable anywhere else (see Raheer [2018]).

As states slash funding for essential (and state-issued) resources (Gottschalk 2010; Lynch 2009; Smoyer 2019) like proper nutrition<sup>21</sup> or basic living supplies for the incarcerated, it is their families that now must safeguard their wellbeing via direct aid (see case analyses by Eldridge [2017] and Lockwood and Lewis [2019]). But to do so, families are forced to enter unfair dealings with the private package and commissary market in lieu of the state. As a result of the overall privatization and financialization of goods and services in the neoliberalized penal institution (Wacquant 2010b), families not only incur more expense but come to participate in a system of financial extraction, another aspect of punishment, that becomes most severe for the already impoverished (see especially Bardelli, Gillespie, and Tu [2023]).

*Grinstead et al.'s (2001) elucidation of financial costs.*

The generalization of the expenditures new and old to American mass incarceration take an empirical basis in the key sociological work of Grinstead et al. (2001), who can be considered among the first to have quantitatively assessed the financial costs of supporting the incarcerated. The authors administered a verbal survey to a representative sample<sup>22</sup> of 153 women visiting men at a large state prison in California, collecting information across four main buckets: (1)

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<sup>20</sup> The state prison systems were in Illinois, Michigan, and Washington.

<sup>21</sup> The majority of state prisons spend less than \$3 per day to feed one incarcerated person (Soble, Stroud, and Weinstein 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Grinstead et al. (2001) argue a representative sample was achieved after the ethnic representation of their survey respondents matched the overall population of women visiting prison counted during their five days of data collection.

demographical data (i.e., age, income, education, ethnicity, ethnicity of person being visited, and household size); (2) visitation patterns; (3) relational data to the person being visited; and (4) descriptive statistics on money spent on (a) visiting, (b) telephone calls, and (c) packages. From their initial sample of women, Grinstead et al. (2001) then reported their data based on a sub-sample of women (n = 73) who were African American, visiting African American men, or both. For the sub-sample, which generally consisted of low-income, high-school educated women with children, the average monthly cost of visitation, calling, and sending packages was \$292. Most importantly, Grinstead et al. (2001) found the amount spent on these three variables was *not proportional* to annual income: Women of the sub-sample in the lowest income bracket spent a larger proportion of their annual income (26 percent on visits, calls, and packages) than did women of the highest income (9 percent on the same expenses). This disparity was furthermore replicated for the remainder of women in the original sample (Grinstead et al. 2001).

### *Jails as Institutions of Study*

Lastly, in summary reference to the condition of incarceration made through this review, the bulk of considered literature has either (1) classified family collateral effects in terms of prison incarceration (e.g., Comfort 2008; Girshick 1996; Grinstead et al. 2001), or (2) reported results based on non-disaggregated incarceration data, such as cited work (e.g., Bruns 2017; Geller et al. 2011; Sugie 2012; Geller and Franklin 2014; Turney and Schneider 2016) using the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Survey (FFCWS),<sup>23</sup> which may oversample families with members formerly in prison, rather than in jail. However, a normative focus on prison incarceration dramatically underestimates the salience of jails as structuring institutions for mass incarceration and inequality. Of the 1.9 million people incarcerated in 2022 per the Bureau of

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<sup>23</sup> For survey design, see Reichman et al. 2001.

Justice Statistics (BJS), 663,100 (or 1 in 3) were confined in one of 2,850 local jails<sup>24</sup> on any given day (Carson and Kluckow 2023; Zeng 2023). For the state of North Carolina, the Vera Institute of Justice reports an over 600 percent increase in the total jail population since the birth of mass incarceration in the 1970s, setting the jail incarceration rate as of 2015 at 280 per 100,000 residents,<sup>25</sup> one of the highest in the country, and one, like national trends (see Zeng [2023]), disproportionately targeting African Americans<sup>26</sup> (Amin et al. 2019).

Of the total number of those held in jail, BJS reports around 70 percent are unconvicted<sup>27</sup> (Zeng 2023). That is, the majority of the jail incarcerated are legally innocent, there awaiting resolutions to their cases, or detained pretrial often because they are too poor to afford money bail, fines, or fees (see for review Rabuy and Kopf [2016]). Moreover, national data from the most recent (2002) Survey of Inmates in Local Jails indicates over half of people detained in jail, because they could not make money bail, were parents (66 percent mothers and 53 percent fathers) of minor children (Sawyer 2018)—an indication for this research that there is a proportion of families interacting with the jail ecosystem that are economically vulnerable (see the affirmative results of Arditti, Lambert-Shute, and Joest [2003:198]). The potential for family financial strain is subsequently confounded by three theoretical lines of evidence inhered with jails. First, some financial costs associated with jail incarceration are more expensive compared to prisons; the Prison Policy Initiative, for example, reports jails in North Carolina charge up to \$3.15 for a 15-minute phone call, while prisons charge \$1.50 for an equal rate (Wagner and

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<sup>24</sup> Local jails are those operated by cities or counties, and are meant to be short-term correctional facilities.

<sup>25</sup> For ages 15 to 64.

<sup>26</sup> In 2015, African Americans constituted 23 percent of North Carolina state residents, yet 48 percent of people in jail (Amin et al. 2019).

<sup>27</sup> This number reflects estimates given by the Vera Institute of Justice (2023), which puts 77 percent of the North Carolina jail population as held pretrial.

Betram 2022). Second, the average length of a jail stay has historically increased since the 1980s (Cunniff 2002; Subramanian et al. 2015), meaning families may be spending more time and more resources, particularly on unconvicted members anticipating case decisions. Third, nearly 75 percent of the population of both sentenced and (pretrial) detained individuals are incarcerated in jail for nonviolent traffic, property, drug, or public order offenses (James 2004 as cited in Subramanian et al. 2015).

The nature of these criminal offenses leveraged on jail populations can be properly characterized as “low-level criminal justice involvement” (Comfort 2016:63), which carries its own socioeconomic hazards. Comfort’s (2016) ethnographic study of poor adults cycling out and in of short-term jail custody describes how the frequent “preincarceration” and “reincarceration” (p. 67) of individuals for low-level crime draws a Sisyphean social reality for their families. The constant re-release of high-need, at-risk individuals<sup>28</sup> back to home means their families have no time to build financial resources under “incessant crisis management” (p. 68), while the constant re-arrest of these same individuals back to jail means their families experience an iterative financial burden of supporting-from-the-outside, as well as the demoralization of their reentry efforts laying to potential waste. This type of patterning, if it is then conditionally paired with the belief that jail incarceration is criminogenic (Lowenkamp, VanNostrand, and Holsinger 2013b; Loeffler and Nagin 2022) or predictive of future imprisonment (Lowenkamp, VanNostrand, and Holsinger 2013a), suggests a family’s incursion with the American jail may be the gateway not only to the criminal justice system, but also to a lifetime of expenditure it so often exacts.

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<sup>28</sup> Jail stays of several weeks create both need and risk. They are long enough to cause evictions for nonpayment of rent, suspensions of government assistance such as food stamps and social security, and the loss of possessions, but not enough time for people to receive educational programs, drug treatment services, or comprehensive medical care while in the correctional facility (Comfort 2016).

## *Gaps and Motivation*

In their original synopsis, Tonry and Petersilia (1999:5–7) formulated six collateral effects of incarceration to be studied for the dawning century. I have chosen their “thinnest” kind,<sup>29</sup> the family collateral, which I have nutrified first panoramically and now specifically by locating it in a material context, as a form of financial cost. In some ways, the literature belonging to this category of collateral already abridges preexisting limitations of research. The few studies enumerating expense figures (e.g., as Grinstead et al. [2001] or Arditti et al. [2003] do by example) help quantify what exactly “hardship”, “burden”, or “inequality” can mean for families as they continue to be reported, and further, classify the need to study families as they “do time together” with the incarcerated as its *own* interaction when research refers to family collateral effects ex-ante or ex-post to incarceration. Lastly, this sub-body of research (e.g., Girshick 1996; Grinstead et al. 2001; Comfort 2008) indicates, that if we are to systematize our understanding of what families *pay* for incarceration as patrons, to complement (or perhaps contest) what we know about what and how much correctional institutions *charge* them as business, it should begin from localized data collection, given how much costs can vary across county and state lines. Through these circumstances, the empirical strategy of Grinstead et al. (2001) provisions what is possible to be found, while forecasting a future question in passing: What is the state of family financial costs two decades later—for jail incarceration that has evaded scrutiny? This research, in brief, takes on that mantle.

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<sup>29</sup> In their paper “American Prisons at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century”, Tonry and Petersilia (1999) identify six collateral consequences of mass incarceration on: prisoners’ later lives; on their physical and mental wellbeing; on their families, on later crime involvement; on the larger community; and on their responses to confinement. When describing family collaterals, the authors state: “On this subject, the literature is especially thin and fragmented” (Tonry and Petersilia 1999:6).

## METHODOLOGY

### *Data Collection Site*

Fieldwork was conducted at the Durham County Jail (referred officially as the “Durham County Detention Facility” in all study documents), a local county jail facility in the urban center of Durham, North Carolina. The jail operates at a full standing of 736 beds, which as of February 2024, held a daily incarcerated population of around 400.<sup>30</sup> In the 2019 calendar year (for when latest data is publicly available), the Durham County Jail recorded slightly over 9,000 (79 percent men; 21 percent women) jail admissions (Vera Institute of Justice 2023; Taylor et al. 2021). Pretrial admissions accounted for 54 percent, and more than 70 percent of admissions for low-level crime.<sup>31</sup> The mean length of a jail stay for an admitted individual was 18.4 days—an increase of 24 percent from 14.8 days in 2014 (Taylor et al. 2021). However, it is not uncommon for upper range detainments to last magnitudes of years, even for pretrial detention. Finally, though comprising only 37 percent of the Durham population, Black individuals accounted for 69 percent of jail admissions in 2019 (compared to White individuals at 43 percent of the population and 16 percent of jail admissions) and 78 percent of bed days used (Taylor et al. 2021).

While these figures remain modest, given the volume of jail churn by the same reported populations that go *uncaptured* by any point-in-time measures, their general presentation renders the institutional profile of Durham County Jail as fairly reflective of national jail stay length and

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<sup>30</sup> I interpret the true number as much larger. The Durham County Jail updates its incarceration statistics only as a function of the number of its formally convicted, whereas I employ a much broader definition of “incarceration” to include all individuals detained by the jail in some form.

<sup>31</sup> In 2019, 40 percent of admissions were for misdemeanors, while 31 percent were for non-violent felonies (Taylor et al. 2021). Warrants and traffic/other violations made up 11 percent and 10 percent of admissions, respectively. Admissions for violent felonies was the least frequent admission type and remained below 8 percent across all years analyzed.



demographic trends (see Zeng [2023] for comparative estimates of gender, race, and offending characteristics). The Durham County Jail, at a glimpse then, is a potential microcosm for a study of American carcerality.

*Site visitation and amenities.*

Public access to Durham County Jail at the time of this research was ahistorical, as both in-person and onsite video inmate<sup>32</sup> visitation had been paused.<sup>33</sup> Despite this, families retained at least three incentives to visit the jail. The first was coming to post (bonds as) bail. The second was coming to wait for a pending release. The third was coming to perform a fiduciary act.

To contextualize, the Durham County Jail, as a visitor amenity, houses a 24-hour financial services kiosk (colloquially referred to as the “Money Kiosk” by jail staff) in the left elbow of its main lobby (see Figures 2 and 3), administered by the private correctional technology conglomerate GTL.<sup>34</sup> By inputting specific inmate identification numbers, families used the “Money Kiosk” to wire once-per-time installments of \$5 (minimum) to \$200 (maximum) towards inmate commissary funds. The main benefit of personally doing so was one of economization.<sup>35</sup> Families who deposited cash via the “Money Kiosk” were supposed to avoid the extra fees charged to credit, online, or phone transactions. The “Money Kiosk” received selective usage by visitors, preserving in lieu of bottlenecked jail visitor intake, a potential point of interception for data collection.

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<sup>32</sup> Here and later instances of “inmate”, I use official language from the Durham County Jail.

<sup>33</sup> The decision for this cessation was due to health concerns lingering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitation was only permitted on special occasions, namely Christmas, Mother’s, or Father’s Day.

<sup>34</sup> GTL is short for Global Tel Link Corporation, which also does business as ViaPath Technologies.

<sup>35</sup> A secondary benefit was that the “Money Kiosk” could be set to Spanish, which some users configured.

**Figure 2.** The “Money Kiosk”: Users input an inmate ID on the screen, deposit money by cash or credit by the slots underneath, and then receive a receipt. The advantages of cash deposits are conspicuously advertised.

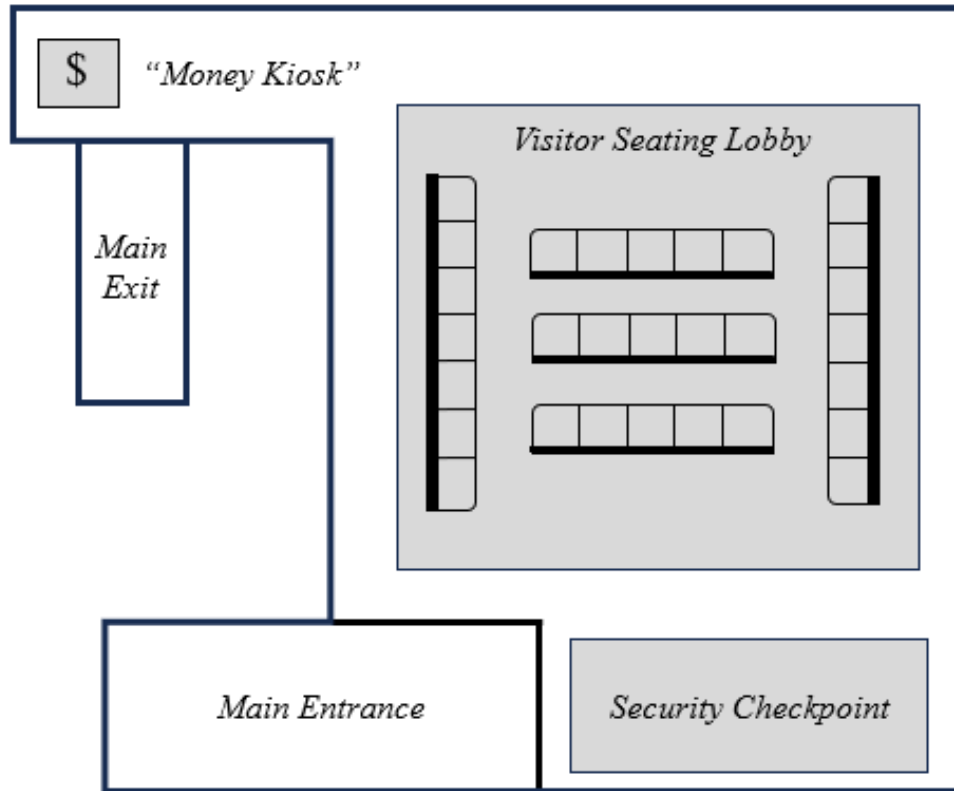


Figure 3 provides a basic architecture of the main visiting area of the Durham County Jail, whose greater vicinity acted as the fieldsite. After trickling through a security checkpoint, announcing their order of business at the jail, signing in, and masking, families and visitors would congregate in a spacious, but unvarnished seated lobby (“Visiting Seating Lobby” in Figure 3). Those interested in using the kiosk (“Money Kiosk” in Figure 3) would maneuver past the seating into the leftmost elbow of the public area to access it,<sup>36</sup> before departing, with everyone else, through an adjacent walkway.

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<sup>36</sup> Very rarely, a small queue would form to use the kiosk, so access was not always immediate.

**Figure 3.** Mockup of the Durham County Jail Visitor Area: The Fieldsite



*Sample Selection and Survey Methods*

Survey data was collected over nine days between Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> to Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. A total of approximately 30 field hours were spent on data collection, which were mostly distributed across weekday morning and afternoon time frames (e.g., 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., or 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.),<sup>37</sup> with some scheduling variation in between. These time windows (particularly weekday afternoon times) were recommended by Durham County Jail staff, based on their observations of “hotbed” visitor activity, and designed further to coincide with the other probabilistic traveling windows. It was to be reasonably expected, for example, that some families would have greater capacity to conduct affairs with the jail over weekends or

<sup>37</sup> During fieldwork, the latest I stayed at the jail was until 5:00 p.m. I was discouraged from staying any later at the jail due to safety reasons.

at the ends and beginnings of the month (when income streams are typically refreshed). Hence, data collection was deliberately fitted around these possibilities, and extended over a working week, to maximize interactions with irregular, semi-regular, and regular visitors to the jail.

The sample selection was anchored on a non-random, purposeful, and availability sample of respondents (the unit of analysis) actively supporting the incarcerated from the Durham County Jail. This sampling strategy was chosen given the necessity for the identification and selection of those undersampled individuals “doing time together” with the incarcerated—who are knowledgeable and or embedded within (Creswell and Plano Clark 2017) the Durham County criminal justice system, and are moreover open to communicate experience and opinion (Bernard 2002).

Following this strategy, paper surveys (questionnaires)<sup>38</sup> were fielded outside the main exit (refer to Figure 3) of the jail. Specifically, surveys were fielded to respondents leaving the jail, after *being observed* using the “Money Kiosk”. In lieu of in-person visitation, the perimeter of the kiosk was chosen as a strategic sampling location, as individuals using its services were thought to be best advantaged when asked survey questions about the finances of incarceration (Patton 2014).<sup>39</sup> Overall, use of the kiosk was scarce. A total of 29 users (meaning unique individuals or individuals who had come with a group) were observed using the kiosk over the entirety of data collection. As these parties exited the jail, the primary kiosk user was approached and asked to participate in a self-reported, one-time survey conducted anonymously in English (see Appendix A for recruitment information). Of the total 29 observed parties using the kiosk, 2 were ineligible (due to language requirements), while 17 were successfully recruited and

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<sup>38</sup> I refer to “survey” here and throughout interchangeably as the data collection tool.

<sup>39</sup> Logistically, I ended up being actively discouraged by jail staff from recruiting inside the visitor area. This was to avoid any potential public complaints, although there were none.

administered the survey. All 17 survey respondents had come alone to the jail, or in a few cases, had young children in tow. Additionally, a stray survey was administered in the visitor lobby of the jail to a respondent waiting for their son to be released. This brought the recruitment pool to a total of 30 parties, and resulted, at a survey response rate of 64 percent,<sup>40</sup> in a final sample of 18 unique respondents (n = 18). Table 1 summarizes the aforementioned information.

All participants were told the survey would take no more than 15 minutes<sup>41</sup> and that after survey completion they would receive \$20 in cash. Recruited respondents who agreed to answer the survey were read a summary of information for research participants (see Appendix B for survey informed consent). After, respondents completed the survey independently; however, it was necessary for me to stay local, either to answer procedural questions or in some instances, to fill answers on behalf of respondents.<sup>42</sup> This research was approved by the Campus Institutional Review Board at Duke University (Protocol #2024-0269), administration and legal counsel of the Durham County Jail, and by the Durham County Sheriff’s Office.<sup>43</sup>

**Table 1.** Survey Recruitment, Ineligibility, Response Rate, and Sample Size

<i>Recruitment Pool</i>	<i>Ineligible Recruits</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>
30*	2/30	18/28 = 64%	n = 18

\*Adult kiosk users or jail visitors

<sup>40</sup> 10 out of 28 individuals (36 percent) who qualified for the survey were unsuccessfully recruited. The universal reason was a lack of adequate time.

<sup>41</sup> Though survey times were not officially recorded, most surveys took three to five minutes to complete.

<sup>42</sup> Because of inclement weather and suboptimal conditions for writing-while-standing outside the jail, I answered surveys on behalf of two respondents.

<sup>43</sup> All inquiries about the approval of my fieldwork should be directed to Captain Alishia Harris-Moore at asharris@durhamsheriff.org.

### *Survey Instrument*

The survey in use was a descriptive instrument of a closed and open-ended question design modeled on methods from Grinstead et al. (2001) and the national Family Costs of Incarceration 2023 Survey (FCIS)<sup>44</sup> developed by Duke University researchers (Wildeman, Baker, and Jobe) that was administered in Summer 2023 as part of the AmeriSpeak Probability-Based Panel of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). In adapting these sources to the present survey, the objective was to provide respondents with limited availability or stamina (Fanning 2005) access to a simplified, readable, and short instrument without sacrificing its (face and internal) validity or increasing measurement error. To manage these considerations, the design of the survey, including its pagination; directions; ordering of questions;<sup>45</sup> and question layouts conform generally to best-practices for paper-based survey instruments summarized by Fanning (2005) and Dillman (2007). The survey, before it was fielded, underwent three rounds of pretesting within a group of 10 adults who mainly identified issues of ambiguity or respondent apprehension.

Overall, the survey performed well for exploratory purposes. Though respondents were told they could voluntarily skip questions, all questions, save for the last two open-ended, qualitative prompts had a full completion rate. All survey questions and their metrics (answer options) are presented in Appendix C.

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<sup>44</sup> The survey was originally administered by web and by phone, and targeted a population of individuals who have had a family member incarcerated in the last seven years either in prison or in jail. Results are forthcoming.

<sup>45</sup> Though Fanning (2005) recommends against starting with demographics, the survey does because they are generally applicable to all respondents and are easily completable. Further, in ordering questions, I tried to take advantage of anchoring effects, particularly as respondents began to think about the costs of incarceration.

## *Measures*

Appendix D presents the survey codebook, including all survey variables and any applicable recoding procedures.

### *Demographic Variables*

General demographic variables, following those initially set forth by Grinstead et al. (2001) included respondent gender, age, education level, race or ethnicity, household size, and household income.

#### *Gender.*

Gender of respondents was measured by the closed-ended question, “How do you describe yourself?”<sup>46</sup> The design of the question was derived from the 2023 AmeriSpeak Profile Data Codebook. All responses were then recoded into a dichotomous (nominal) categorical variable with the bins [Male; Female].

#### *Age.*

Age of respondents was measured from the quantitative open-ended question, “What is your age in years?”, and based on a similar measure from the 2021 Pew Research Center Codebook for the American Trends Panel. All responses, which were a spread of respondent ages, were then recoded into a distribution of age categories, producing a (ordinal) categorical variable with the bins [18–26; 35–50; 55–63; 70]. The distribution of days was also preserved as a numeric variable for additional analysis.

#### *Education level.*

Education level of respondents was measured by the closed-ended question, “What is the highest level of school you have completed?” Question metrics were adopted from the FCIS

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<sup>46</sup> See Appendix C for all original answer options in general.

codebook. All responses were then recoded to produce a categorical variable with the bins [Less than high school; High school graduate; Some college/associates degree; Bachelor's degree; Postgraduate study and/or professional degree].

*Race or ethnicity.*

Race or ethnicity of respondents were combined as one variable measured by the closed-ended question, “Which race or ethnicity do you identify with most closely?”, adopted from the 2021 Pew Research Center Codebook for the American Trends Panel.<sup>47</sup> All responses were then recoded to produce a (nominal) categorical variable with bins [White; Black or African-American; Latino or Hispanic Origin; American Indian or Alaska Native].

*Household size.*

Household size of respondents was measured by the closed-ended question, “Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household?”. All responses were then recoded to produce a (ordinal) categorical variable with bins [Living alone; 2; 3; 4; 5].

*Household income.*

Household income of respondents was measured by the closed-ended question, “What was your total household income in 2023?” The measurement was designed to be an estimation at best, as some respondents were not the earners of their households.<sup>48</sup> The metrics for the question were adopted from the FCIS codebook, with minor adjustments to account for respondents who either did not know their household income, or preferred not to answer. All responses were then recoded to produce a (ordinal) categorical variable with bins [Less than

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<sup>47</sup> The Pew Research Center codebook separates the question and metrics for race and ethnicity; in the present survey, they were combined.

<sup>48</sup> Calculations of income tax or deductions were avoided to manage survey complexity, although the wording of the question implied pre-taxed, pre-deducted incomes.



\$10,000; \$10,000 to \$19,999; \$20,000 to \$29,999; \$30,000 to \$39,999; \$40,000 to \$49,999; \$50,000 to \$74,999; \$75,000 to \$99,999; \$100,000 to \$149,999; \$150,000 or more; Do not know].

### *Relationship Variables*

Relationship variables included respondent-identified relationships to the supported individual incarcerated in Durham County Jail and the length of the latter's current jail incarceration. The variables were motivated based on data collected by Grinstead et al. (2001) for their original and sub-sample.

#### *Relationships to the incarcerated.*

Respondent relationships to the incarcerated of Durham County Jail were measured by the closed-ended question, "What is this person's [the individual the respondent was there that day at the jail to support] relationship to you?" The metrics for defining typologies of relationships were adopted from the FCIS codebook, and adjusted to account for kith relations (i.e., friends or acquaintances) or any unspecified kin relations (e.g., niece; nephew; aunt; uncle; great-grandmother; great-grandfather and the like) to account for larger support networks (see Stack [1997] for a discussion of Black kinship). All responses were then recoded to produce a (nominal) categorical variable with bins [Father; Son; Brother; Child's other parent; Partner or spouse; Friend or acquaintance; Cousin; Nephew].

#### *Length of incarceration.*

The respective lengths of incarceration of the respondent-supported individuals were measured by the quantitative open-ended question, "How many days would you estimate this person stayed at Durham County Detention Facility to today's date?" Alternatively, respondents were asked to estimate the length of incarceration by a number of weeks. A few respondents

would also write the running incarceration period in months or years (on the margins of the question) if days or weeks were difficult to estimate. The running incarceration period was measured instead of *sentence* lengths, as reported by Grinstead et al. (2001), which is more applicable to individuals incarcerated in prisons.

Because responses varied in units of time (i.e., days, weeks, months, or years), all responses were standardized into approximate *days*<sup>49</sup> (the standard of time used by the Durham County Jail and also the most frequently reported in the sample) and then recoded into a distribution of said days, producing a (ordinal) categorical variable with the bins [2–4 days; 14 days; 60–70 days; 92–100 days; 160–180 days; 290–400 days; 1460 days]. The distribution of days was also preserved as a numeric variable for additional analysis.

#### *Financial Cost Variables*

##### *Total financial support.*

Financial cost variables were drawn from respondent open-ended estimates of total (direct) financial support given to the incarcerated, in response to the question, “Roughly, how much money have you spent directly on the individual in Durham County Detention Facility over this time [the length of incarceration]?” While the question was devised to illicit estimates of direct forms of financial support (e.g., spending to cover the costs of commissary as modeled by FCIS), and no separate question was deployed to measure indirect costs out of need for survey uncomplexity, respondents were free to interpret “direct support” subjectively. This meant traditionally defined indirect costs, such as visitation expenses or legal fees teased out empirically by Grinstead et al. (2001) and others, were nevertheless factored into respondent

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<sup>49</sup> Weeks were multiplied by a time value of 7; months by a time value of approximately 30.147; and years by a time value of 365.

estimates of their expenditures. In cases where respondents wrote expenditure rates (e.g., \$450 per month), a total number was obtained by multiplying the rate against the current incarceration length (and standardized to days).

*Types of expenses.*

Pursuant to their total financial support, respondents were asked to gauge, in no formal order, their three largest sources of incarceration expense. This was based on the qualitative open-ended question, “What were the three biggest expenses you spent this money [respondent total expenditure] on?” Respondents normally listed between one to three types of expenses, with some listing up to four. All types of expenses cited by respondents were then grouped into five typologies, which appeared consistent with the literature: (1) expenses related to the jail commissary; (2) phone calls; (3) sending packages; (4) legal fees; and (5) visitation costs. For commissary-related expenses, respondents either mentioned “commissary” generally as a significant expense, or mentioned a specific form (e.g., “food” or “clothing”) of a commissary item. These item mentions were subsequently categorized together as “commissary” for data analysis.

*Financial burden and elucidation.*

Lastly, the survey design incorporated a measure of respondent perceived financial burden, based on the question, “Do you think the money you have spent directly on the individual in Durham County Detention Facility is an extra burden or challenge for you and/or your family?”, and a supplemental measure of respondent experiences, based on the question, “Is there anything important you would like to share that you were not asked about today?” Both (open-ended and qualitative) questions were amended to the end of the survey to enable participants to share a depth of insight, experience, or attitude, obscured or untouched by earlier

closed-ended questions (addressing the value of complementarity data as noted by Small [2011]). Alternatively, they were included as ways to verify (triangulate), or perhaps contest, the effects captured by quantitative measures (see Kadushin et al. [2008]; Anderson [2010]), such as the included measures of household income or total financial expenditure.

### *Analytic Plan*

#### *Descriptive quantification of data.*

All demographic categorical variables were summarized in terms of absolute counts and relative proportions<sup>50</sup> of the sample, while descriptive statistics were summarized for relevant numeric variables (e.g., incarceration length or total financial expenditure).

#### *Mid-range income estimates and proportionalized expenditure.*

Additionally, to compare respondent financial support across the sample, their total expenditure was quantified as a relative proportion (percentage) of their household income. This entailed two separate calculations. First, because respondents originally reported their household incomes as a range, it was necessary to estimate a rough discrete income by taking the middle-range (mean) of the lower- and upper-bounds of the reported income category. For example, a respondent who answered that their household income in 2023 was between \$40,000 and \$49,999 had their income approximated to be \$45,000. Those respondents reporting incomes less than \$10,000 or more than \$150,000 were approximated with \$10,000 and \$150,000, respectively. This calculation procedure was applied across the sample, with the exception of one respondent who had circled their household income exactly on their survey form, and another who did not know their household's income (and was thereby removed from this particular analysis). Second, after middle-range or actualized incomes were generated, the equation

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<sup>50</sup> Proportions, reported as percents, were rounded to the nearest whole number or tenth decimal.

$\left(\frac{\text{Respondent total financial support}}{\text{Respondent estimated income}} \times 100\right)$  was used to calculate an income-adjusted measure of respondent expenditure. This new variable thus enabled a quantitative description of cross-sample expenditure patterns.

*Analysis of qualitative data from open-ended survey questions.*

Of 18 survey responses, 15 (83 percent) contained answers to the open-ended qualitative question on financial burden, while 10 (56 percent) contained answers to the elucidation question. Answers to both open-ended questions ranged from short (e.g., “Yes”, “No”, or “N/A”)<sup>51</sup> to a few sentences and could carry a diversity of meanings (e.g., one respondent wrote, in response to the elucidation question, “Thank the Lord”). Additional transcription was not necessary, although answers were cleaned for clarity and subsequently assembled into a comparative array (Griswold 2005), along a grounded theory (inductive) approach. Basic emergent themes and concepts (open codes) from respondent answers were identified (Anderson 2010; Gordon 2020), and further organized along frequency, magnitude, and type. The most poignant or representative quotes of these emergent ideas, and of respondent experiences, were selected for presentation (Anderson 2010).

*Ethnographic posture.*

The Durham County Jail was an unfamiliar world. As data collection went on, I would become immersed in it. “Camping out” (Comfort 2008:201) by the jail, I became privy to the phenomenological and built environment of my fieldsite, its meaning systems (Griswold 2005). In the theory of Michael Burawoy’s (1998) “extended case method” or Mitchell Duneier’s (1999) “extended place ethnography”, I adopted an informal “extended *person* ethnography”.

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<sup>51</sup> The brevity of responses, together with a lack of completion of the last two questions of the survey compared to a full completion rate of earlier questions, could be some indication that the survey, overall, had reached a point of information saturation for respondents.

I conversed with and watched the dynamics among visitors (families) as they entered and left the “Money Kiosk” and the visitor lobby. I struck up semi-structured conversations with state actors: correctional officers, sergeants, and lieutenants; court magistrates and public defenders; and social workers and counselors as they passed. I was sometimes the first person someone saw or talked to as they were released from jail, free.

In collecting these ethnographic crumbs, I began to connect these micro-interactions to a macroscopic understanding of the jail system, and moreover, to the structure of family-criminal justice in Durham. This was bolstered by my increasing immersion as an observer participant. As hints from my respondents amplified, I fell into a habit of “checking stuff out” (Duneier 1999:347) as it related to my fieldwork. I would ask jail staff and community organizers about how the “Money Kiosk” worked, before venturing to use it myself. And at some shift in my personal reactivity to my research, somewhere along the transference of my positionality from stranger, to bondsman, drug dealer, or delinquent,<sup>52</sup> to researcher, I had become regular enough at the jail—enough to tell newcomers to the jail how to sign-in, where the “Money Kiosk” was tucked away, or where the closest bus stop was. To preserve the light ethnographic dimension of my fieldwork, I maintained a variety of descriptive, interpretive, personal, and methodological fieldnotes (Corsaro 1985 as cited in Gordon 2020:86) that detailed observations, interactions, dialogue, and communicated information as they made themselves relevant during the fielding of the survey, and during my fieldwork writ large. I selectively incorporate some of these (patterned, or standalone) fieldnotes in my discussion, primarily to convey added description or interpretation (e.g., of the fieldsite and respondents), as well as an empirical sense of saturation

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<sup>52</sup> These characterizations of my identity were real. I was mistaken for all three at points during data collection.

(Griswold 2005; Young 2005) of what it may be like to see families spend a Saturday morning at the jail (Arditti 2003:195).

## RESULTS

### *Sample Demographics*

Overall, demographic trends established an exploratory sample (n = 18) of predominantly female, older, less-educated, Black,<sup>53</sup> and lower-income adults (see Table 2 for complete summarization). The total sample consisted 28 percent of men and 72 percent of women, while 78 percent of the sample was aged 35 or older (with the mean age of the sample at 48.4 years). Only 33 percent of the sample had more than a high-school education; few respondents had any college-equivalent education, whereas 67 percent of the sample had a high-school education or less. The sample was heterogeneous with respects to ethnoracial composition, representing White, Black, Latine, and American Indian respondents. However, a majority of the sample identified as Black (61 percent) or Latine (22 percent). The proportion of Black respondents consequently mirrored the outsized estimate of Black individuals admitted into jail at 69 percent—despite accounting for only 37 percent of the Durham population (Taylor et al. 2021).

Sample households varied in size, although respondents tended to either live alone (28 percent), or were parts of larger households. Indeed, 44 percent of the sample came from four-person or five-person households. The annual household incomes of the sample exhibited the greatest variation, as respondents were dispersed across the economic spectrum. However, the sample was generally lower-income: 39 percent reported incomes less than \$40,000, while 61 percent reported incomes less than \$50,000. The generalized economic positions of the sample

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<sup>53</sup> Though the survey did not separate race and ethnicity, for the purposes of my results and figures, I refer to “Black or African-American” as “Black”; “Latino or Hispanic Origin” as “Latine” or “Latina”; and “American Indian or Alaska Native” as “American Indian”.

may also interact with previously stated household sizes, as respondents reporting lower incomes could have contended with larger household sizes or more dependents at the same time.

Following the general demographics of the sample, the data can be further tabulated along an avenue of granularity, beginning with gender, the most unevenly distributed demographic category (i.e., 28 percent men versus 72 percent women).

**Table 2.** Sample Demographic Characteristics

<b>n = 18</b>		
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	5	28%
Female	13	72%
<i>Age</i>		
18–26	4	22%
35–50	5	28%
55–63	7	39%
70	2	11%
<i>Education Level</i>		
Less than high school	3	17%
High school graduate	9	50%
Some college and/or associates degree	2	11%
Bachelor’s degree	2	11%
Postgraduate study and/or professional degree	2	11%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White	2	11%
Black or African-American	11	61%
Latino or Hispanic Origin	4	22%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	6%
<i>Household Size</i>		
Living Alone	5	28%
2	2	11%
3	3	17%
4	6	33%
5	2	11%
<i>Household Income</i>		
Less than \$10,000	2	11%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	1	6%



\$20,000 to \$29,999	2	11%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	2	11%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	4	22%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2	11%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1	6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2	11%
\$150,000 or more	1	6%
Do not know	1	6%

Of the two sub-samples of men (n = 5; see Table 3) and women (n = 13; see Table 4), the most notable granulation was a clustering effect of race and ethnicity. Black men made up 60 percent of the male sub-sample (17 percent of the total sample), while this was similarly observed for women.

**Table 3.** Sub-Sample Demographic Characteristics by Gender (Men)

	<b>n = 5</b>	
<i>Age</i>		
18–26	2	40%
35–50	2	40%
55–63	-----	-----
70	1	20%
<i>Education Level</i>		
Less than high school	1	20%
High school graduate	2	40%
Some college and/or associates degree	1	20%
Bachelor’s degree	-----	-----
Postgraduate study and/or professional degree	1	20%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White	1	20%
Black or African-American	3	60%
Latino or Hispanic Origin	1	20%
American Indian or Alaska Native	-----	-----
<i>Household Size</i>		
Living Alone	2	40%
2	-----	-----
3	1	20%
4	1	20%
5	1	20%

<i>Household Income</i>		
Less than \$10,000	1	20%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	-----	-----
\$20,000 to \$29,999	-----	-----
\$30,000 to \$39,999	-----	-----
\$40,000 to \$49,999	3	60%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1	20%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	-----	-----
\$100,000 to \$149,999	-----	-----
\$150,000 or more	-----	-----
Do not know	-----	-----

**Table 4.** Sub-Sample Demographic Characteristics by Gender (Women)

<b>n = 13</b>		
<i>Age (years)</i>		
18–26	2	15%
35–50	3	23%
55–63	7	54%
70	1	8%
<i>Education Level</i>		
Less than high school	2	15%
High school graduate	7	54%
Some college and/or associates degree	1	8%
Bachelor’s degree	2	15%
Postgraduate study and/or professional degree	1	8%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White	1	8%
Black or African-American	8	62%
Latino or Hispanic Origin	3	23%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	8%
<i>Household Size</i>		
Living Alone	3	23%
2	2	15%
3	2	15%
4	5	39%
5	1	8%
<i>Household Income</i>		
Less than \$10,000	1	8%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	1	8%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	2	15%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	2	15%

\$40,000 to \$49,999	1	8%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1	8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1	8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2	15%
\$150,000 or more	1	8%
Do not know	1	8%

Of the larger (and perhaps more empirically persuasive) sub-sample of women, 85 percent were Black or Latina. Latina women comprised 23 percent of the sub-sample (17 percent of the total sample), while Black women, overwhelmingly, accounted for 62 percent of the sub-sample, and 44 percent of the total sample alone.

Taking, then, a final demographic sub-sample of Black women ( $n = 8$ ), Table 5 presents the most pertinent subcutaneous layer of the initial aggregated sample.

**Table 5.** Sub-Sample Demographic Characteristics of Black Women

	<b>n = 8</b>	
<i>Age</i>		
18–26	-----	-----
35–50	2	25%
55–63	6	75%
70	-----	-----
<i>Education Level</i>		
Less than high school	2	25%
High school graduate	4	50%
Some college and/or associates degree	-----	-----
Bachelor’s degree	2	25%
Postgraduate study and/or professional degree	-----	-----
<i>Household Size</i>		
Living Alone	2	25%
2	1	12.5%
3	1	12.5%
4	3	37.5%
5	1	12.5%
<i>Household Income</i>		
Less than \$10,000	1	12.5%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	1	12.5%

\$20,000 to \$29,999	1	12.5%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	2	25%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	1	12.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	-----	-----
\$75,000 to \$99,999	-----	-----
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1	12.5%
\$150,000 or more	1	12.5%
Do not know	-----	-----

All sub-sampled Black women were older adults, in particular as 75 percent of Black women were between the ages of 55 and 63, representing 33 percent or a third of the total sample. Likewise, for educational attainment, 75 percent of Black women (and one-third of the total sample) had a high-school education or less.<sup>54</sup> At the household level, the main observation was that 75 percent of the sub-sampled Black women could be *prima facie* described as those who lived independently and those who came from the largest of reported households. To this finding, 50 percent of the sub-sampled Black women came from four- or five-member households. Lastly, 75 percent of the sub-sampled Black women reported household incomes under \$50,000 (with 62.5 percent under \$40,000), representing another third of the total sample. Every aforementioned demographic share of Black women was the largest relative to the total sample. In other words, when parsing through the demographic description of the sample, it was not just that the sample was *independently* female, older, less-educated, Black, and lower-income. Rather, and more fundamentally, it was that the sample comprised most frequently of older, less-educated, lower-income Black women, piloting at the intersection of these identities.

#### *Relational Observations of the Jail-Incarcerated*

Data from the sample established a basic portraiture of the (dyadic) relationships between the sampled respondents and the incarcerated of Durham County Jail whom they were there to

<sup>54</sup> Latina women were the other share of all high-school graduates in the total sample.

support. The initial finding was that most respondents (56 percent of the total sample) were supporting, generally, an immediate male family member: either a son, father, or brother (see Table 6). Of these, incarcerated sons were the most commonly supported. Notably, several respondents (22 percent of the sample) were supporting incarcerated friends or acquaintances. This was followed by the support of a co-parent, a partner or spouse, and extended family members (i.e., cousins or nephews).

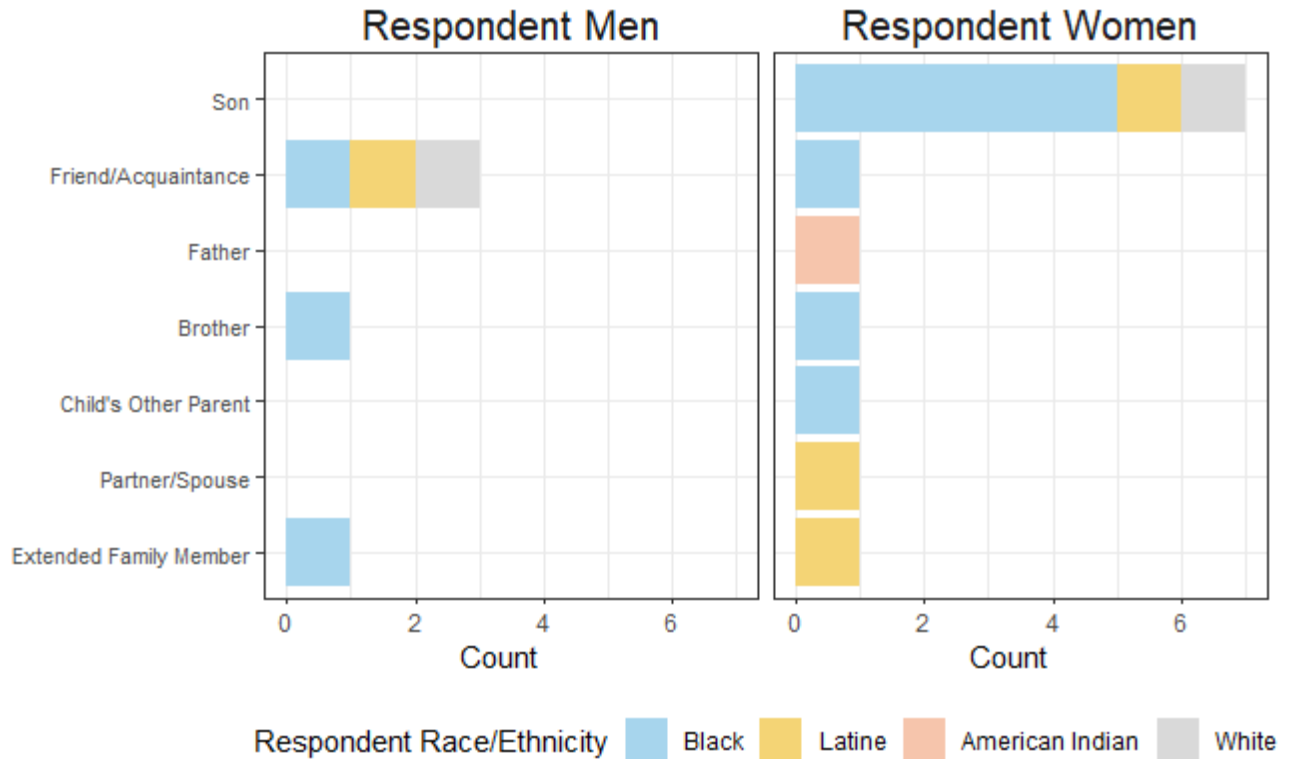
**Table 6.** Relationships of the Incarcerated to Respondents

	<b>n = 18</b>	
<i>Relationship Type</i>		
Father	1	6%
Son	7	39%
Brother	2	11%
Child's other parent	1	6%
Partner or spouse	1	6%
Friend or acquaintance	4	22%
Cousin	1	6%
Nephew	1	6%

Isolating this distribution of relationships by respondent gender, race, and ethnicity (refer to Figure 4) completes the other side of the dyadic coin in these relationships, but also stratifies the data. From Figure 4, we observe from respondent gender that the sample consisted only of *mothers* supporting sons incarcerated in Durham County Jail, and that of these mothers (39 percent of the sample), 71 percent were Black women. Likewise, only women supported partners or co-parents in jail. Other gender-relevant dyads that can be formally discerned include daughters-supporting-fathers; sisters-supporting-brothers; and mothers supporting biological fathers.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Another ostensible dyad is a female partner supporting a male partner, although partner gender was not specified by the survey, nor was the gender of friends or acquaintances.

**Figure 4.** Isolating Relationships to the Incarcerated by Gender and Race/Ethnicity Shows Disparity in Individuals Supported



\*Note: "Cousin" and "Nephew" were collapsed into "Extended Family Member" in Figure 4.

That is to say, Figure 4 depicts, in the *kin* paradigm, mostly women supporting men (56 percent of the sample). After incarcerated sons, the figure indicates respondents most likely supported friends or acquaintances, although most respondents who did so happened to be men (75 percent), as opposed to women. That is to say, conversely, in the *kith* paradigm, it was mostly men contributing financial support to friends.

With regards to how long the incarcerated had spent in jail, the distribution of days was fairly even across shorter, mid-length, and longer jail stays (see Table 7).

**Table 7.** Time Spent by the Incarcerated in Jail

	<b>n = 18</b>	
<i>Length of incarceration</i>		
2–4 days	2	11%
14 days	3	17%
60–70 days	3	17%
92-100 days	2	11%
160-180 days	3	17%
290–400 days	4	22%
1460 days	1	6%

Descriptive summary (see Table 8) of the days incarcerated in jail as a numeric value resulted in a median incarceration length of 96 days for respondent familiars, and a mean length of 211.1 days (both statistics are relevant, although the mean is less so given one value, 1460 days, was a sample outlier).<sup>56</sup> Though lengths fall expectedly under the jail-prison demarcation heuristic of a year-long (365 days) incarceration period, they still express a sense of temporal heaviness. While the shortest reported incarceration period had only been 2 days, and 56 percent of the data fell under 100 days (approximately 3 months), those tallies were considered to be running. This meant the sample contained respondents who were perhaps beginning a period of financial support into a not-so-certain future, together with respondents who had ridden this supportive circuit for a while (the other 44 percent of the days fell over 160 days, or 5 months).

**Table 8.** Descriptive Statistics of Numeric Days Spent by the Incarcerated in Jail

<b>Statistic</b>				
<i>Count</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mean</i>
18	2 days	1460 days	96 days	211.1 days

<sup>56</sup> The mean length of 211.1 days was significantly higher than Taylor et al.’s (2021) report of 18.4 days, most likely because the survey sampled respondents tied to individuals with formal convictions, as opposed to only pretrial detention.

*Financial Costs of Supporting the Incarcerated*

Respondent totals of their jail-related expenditure (see Table 9) fell along a range of \$25 (over 2 days) to \$7200 (over 92 days), with a mean expenditure amount of \$1237.77. The total dollar amounts spent by respondents appeared to scale with the time they had spent supporting the incarcerated in jail (see Appendix E). When converted to per day spending patterns, respondents ranged from spending \$0.17 to \$78.26 per day of incarceration in jail, with a mean daily expenditure amount of \$11.39 (see Appendix F).

**Table 9.** Descriptive Statistics of Respondent Total Jail Expenditure

<b>Statistic</b>				
<i>Count</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mean</i>
18	\$25	\$7200	\$350	\$1237.77

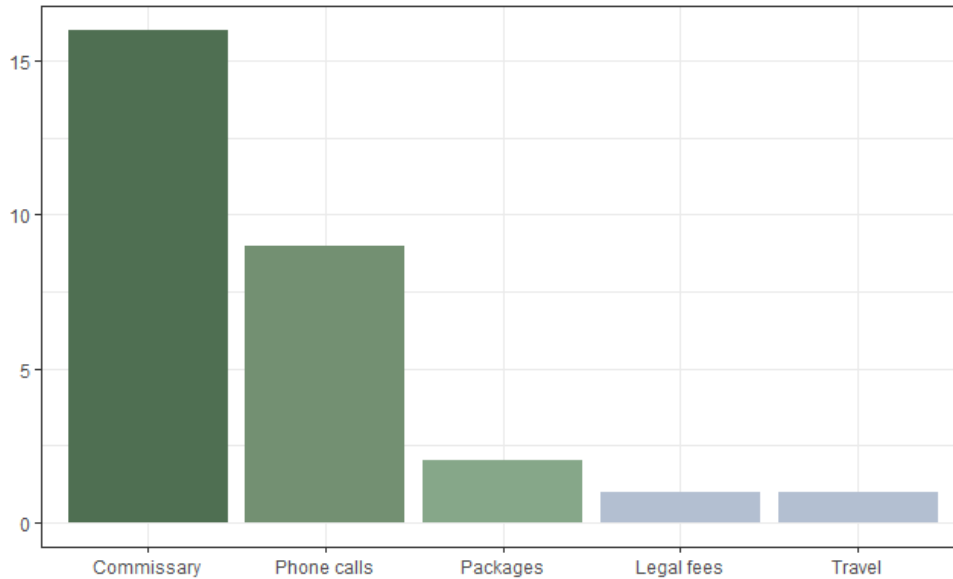
Importantly, how these expenditures were spent was compiled by categorizing expense-types based on their qualitative frequency (results are presented in Figure 5). In all, commissary, phone calls, and packages were the most *common* and *largest*<sup>57</sup> sources of expense. For respondents, by far the most common source of expense, as referenced by 89 percent of surveys, was spending money on commissary-related goods. Of those respondents who specified particular commissary goods, the most frequently cited sources of expense, in order, were food, clothing, hygienic products, and medicine. Following commissary, the second-most common expense was affording phone calls, which was listed as a significant source of expense by 44 percent of surveys, while the third-most common expense was sending care (e.g., Christmas)

<sup>57</sup> Here, frequency implies largeness. While respondents did not specify how much exact money they spent on a particular expense, they were asked to list their “three biggest”. As such, for a respondent to write a form of expense suggested, qualitatively, that a fair sum of money was already being spent on it.



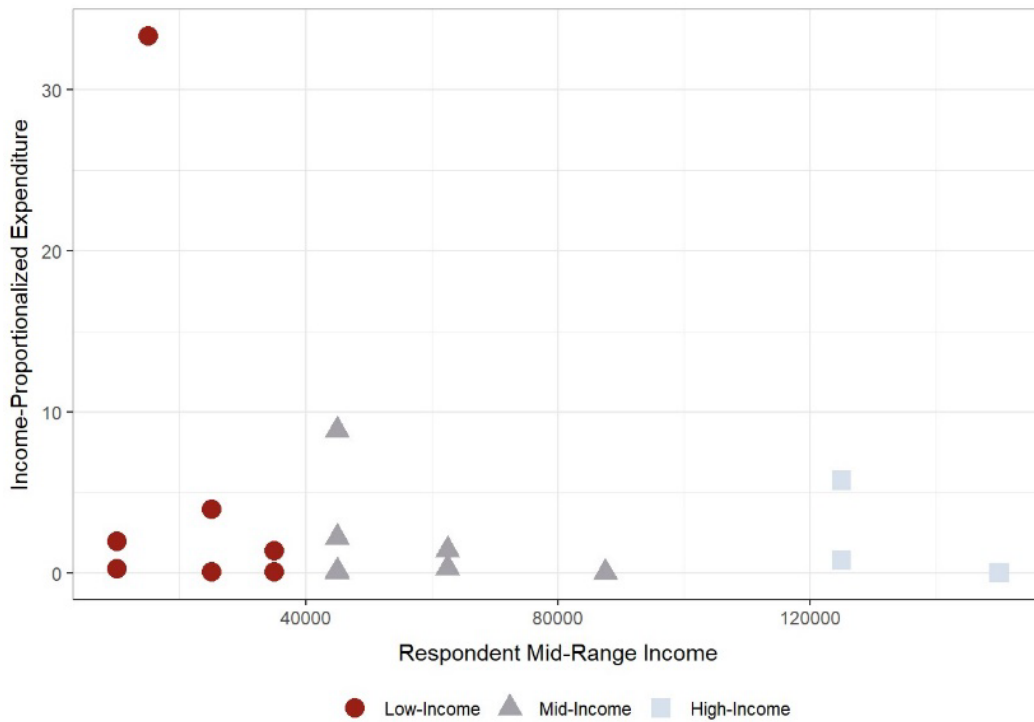
packages to the incarcerated. Other possible sources of expense were indirect, such as legal fees or travel costs.

**Figure 5.** Most Common Sources of Expense, Categorized by Frequency of Survey Mentions Reveals Enduring Types of Expenses

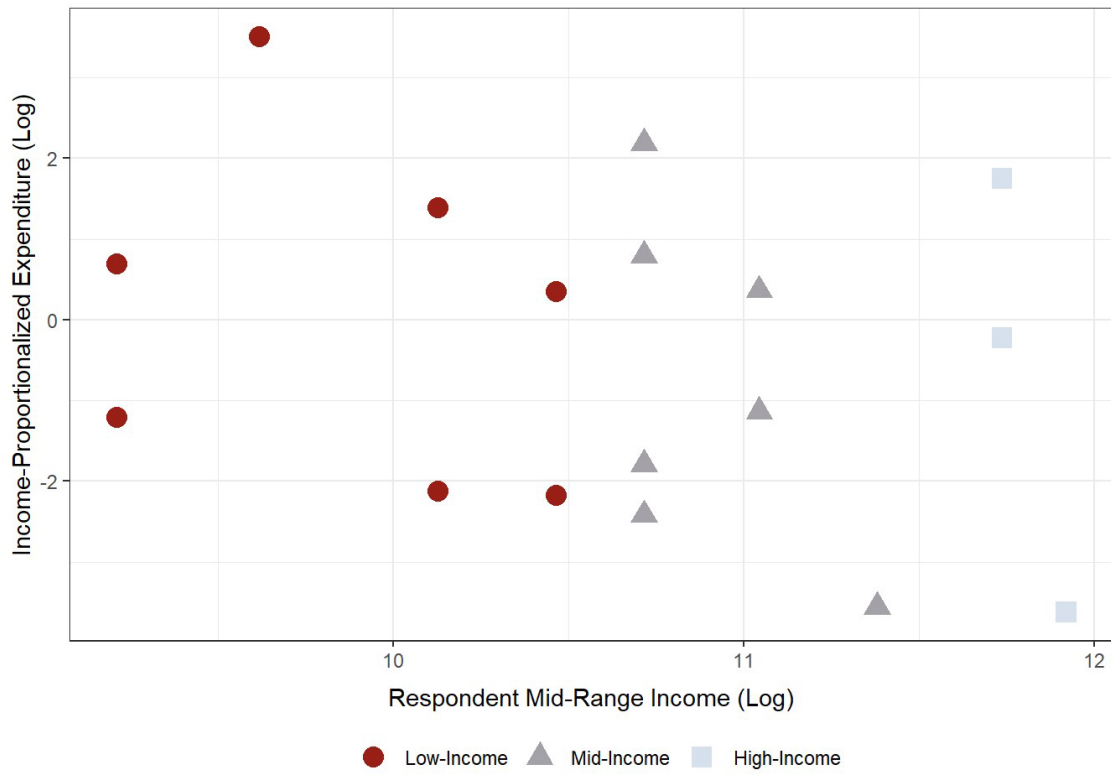


**Figures 6-8.** Plotting Mid-Range Income Against Income-Proportionalized Total Expenditure Reveals Stratified Spending Patterns (n = 17)

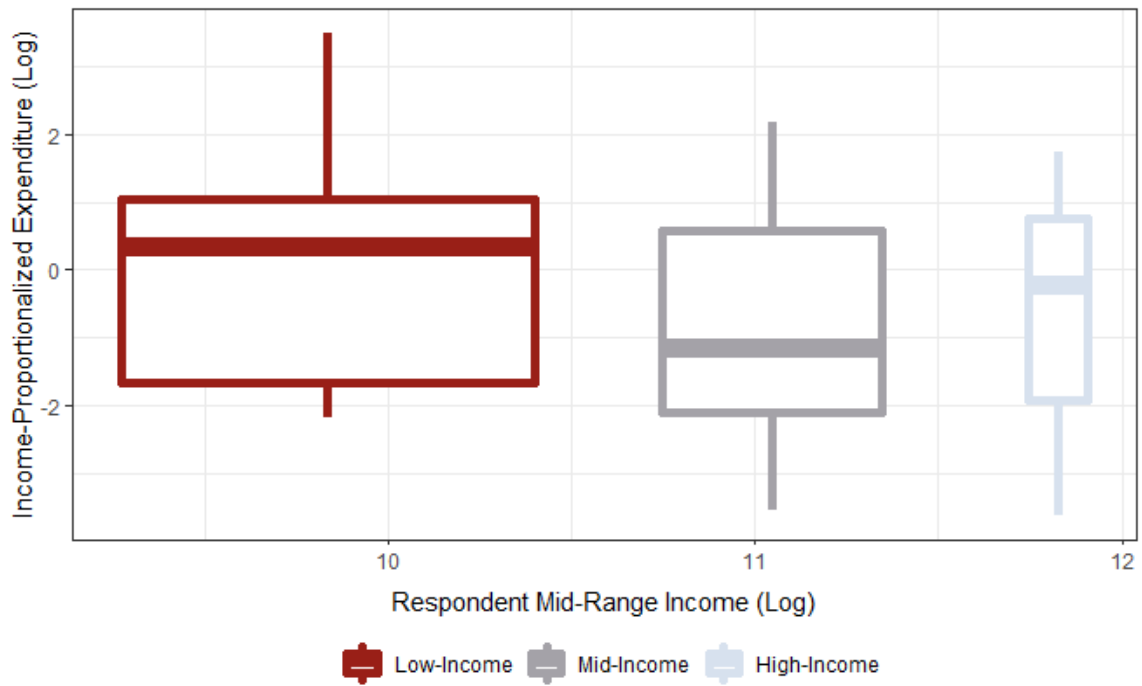
**Figure 6.** Original Distribution of the Data



**Figure 7.** Log-Transformation of the Data



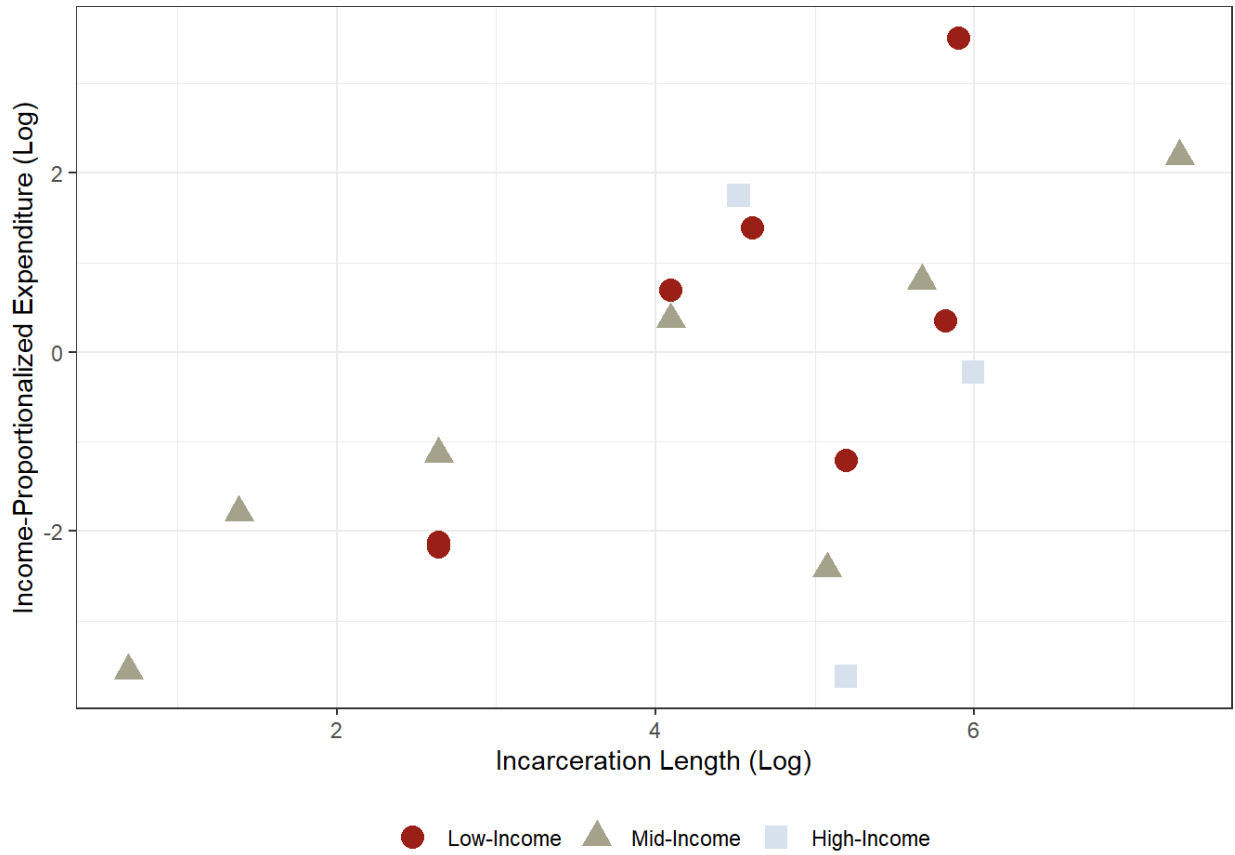
**Figure 8.** Box-Plots of Log-Transformed Data Clarifies Greater Proportionalized Spending by the Low-Income Group



The vital exploration of the financial data is epitomized by Figure 6, where earlier manipulations of respondent expenditure sums, divided by their (estimated) mid-range household incomes—thus creating a proportional spending amount—were compared again to their calculated mid-range household incomes. The resulting plot was then log-transformed to account for the spread of values (slight skewedness) on both plot axes (see Figure 7). In Figure 7, we subsequently observe that those of the sample from households earning less than \$39,999 per year (defined pre-analysis in the sample as low-income) are, on a whole, not spending a *lesser* proportion of their incomes compared those respondents from households earning between \$40,000 to \$99,999 (defined as middle-income), or those from households earning \$100,000 or more (defined as high-income).

Even when discounting outliers in the middle-income and high-income group (by comparing the middle-ranges of the data groups in Figure 8) who were likely contributing small, one-time pocket sums to friends, we find that the low-income group was spending in a higher range of proportions compared to the other two income classes, which the box-plots of Figure 8 clarify. In other words, when comparing low-income, mid-income, and high-income groups making significant financial contributions to the incarcerated, there is no observed top-down hierarchy in the data that anticipates those with more money spending more. On the contrary, when comparing income-group proportional spending averages, those in the low-income group were in reality spending 4 percent more of their incomes on the incarcerated than the middle-income group, and 3.7 percent more on average compared to the high-income group. Though these findings are relegated to the parameters of the sample, the observation that low-income respondents were spending at least on par and above the levels of other income groups represents an essential replication of Grinstead et al.'s (2001) long-aged result.

**Figure 9.** Plotting Incarceration Length Against Income-Proportionalized Total Expenditure Preserves Income-Stratified Spending Patterns



Further, accounting for the length of time respondents spent supporting the incarcerated (e.g., how many days the latter had spent in jail), preserves, in principle, earlier trends in income-stratified spending patterns (see Figure 9 for the log-transformed result). For approximately equivalent lengths of time, we observe that low-income respondents, overall, were spending in similar proportional ranges as the middle-income and high-income groups, with some low-income respondents spending a greater proportion of their incomes than middle- or high-income respondents over the same approximate lengths of time. Importantly, the results of Figure 9 suggest that the longer the incarceration period of dependents, the more respondents would need to spend, even for low-income earners as they confronted growing costs on comparatively smaller fixed income streams.

## DISCUSSION

The exploration of the survey data has, with a figurative and empirical meaning, charted familiar territory in a strange land. In dealings with families, in schemes of economic extraction, the Durham County Jail, given a fresh wash of descriptive paint, is nevertheless located in the old American zeitgeist of mass incarceration. This claim is staked in my sample. While exploratory, I believe the array of description I have attempted to divine pokes at a few bedrock themes. I assert this as the main sample findings enjoin a conversation with key literature.

First, that the sample consisted predominantly of the marginalized is a repeated effect across American carcerality; that the sample largely consisted of older, high-school educated or less, lower-income Black women converges on to the results of guiding methodologists, asking similar demographic questions in similar urbanized penal and jail settings. I observe cross-validations of my specified demographic findings to Grinstead et al.'s (2001:62) sub-sample of women; Arditti et al.'s (2003:199–200) descriptive sample; and Comfort's (2008:207–211) ethnographic sample. Further, in probing Lee et al.'s (2015) and Muller and Roehrkasse's (2022) reification of a Black-White disparity, for women (and men) in their connectedness to the currently incarcerated, the sample maintains that racialized gap.

Second, that the sample consisted mainly of women socially positioned to support men (of their families) is a two-fold reflection of empirics: the uneven *gender* distribution of the American incarcerated population, particularly for Durham and other local jails (Taylor et al. 2021; Vera Institute of Justice 2023; Zeng 2023), and moreover to the *gendered* distribution of care in the family-criminal justice system. It was in the sample, and still is, female family members taking the first night watch of support (Western 2006:131–167; Western and Wildeman 2009:228; Comfort 2007:273; Scheyett and Pettus-Davis 2013), although the sample did broaden

suggestively, a normative view of human charity—friends too supported friends with similar intentionality as families supporting families.

To the financial collateral, the sample traced the footprints of privatization and the materialization of support. Durham County Jail, like San Quentin or Soledad, kept a gallery of costs—with the coverage of jail commissary, phone calls, and to an extent packages representing the bulk of sample expenditures in expectation with Girshick (1996); Grinstead et al. (2001); Leblanc (2003); Travis (2005); Comfort (2008); Wagner and Rabuy (2017); and Lockwood and Lewis (2019)—sans visitation costs. I interpret the comparative lack of visitation or package costs (normally attached to prisons) as a partial coincidence of the jail’s locality to its visitors, which may impel the redistribution of these expenses into commissary and communication. Like Alice of Comfort’s (2008) sample, families and friends of the Durham County Jail had wondered if the incarcerated had enough to eat; enough to wear.

And finally, turning to the contest between incarceration and its attendant effects on the American social stratification system (Wakefield and Uggen 2010:400), this study defends the “extravagance”<sup>58</sup> (Western 2006:11) of such a close linkage and instead reiterates Lee and Wildeman (2021:2) when they contend family member incarceration creates new disadvantage. The economically vulnerable (suspected mainly by their household income, but also tangentially by household size),<sup>59</sup> were compounding potential new disadvantage by devoting separate streams of their income towards support of the incarcerated. Yet they did not appear to do so in a

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<sup>58</sup> Even though the incarcerated and their families involve a very small fraction of the U.S. population, Western argues incarceration has become an important part of social stratification (2006:11), hence the idea of extravagance—this claim is easier made than demonstrated.

<sup>59</sup> I suggest household size is a precursor to economic vulnerability as for example, the large share of low-income respondents living alone or in larger households (with likely dependents) could be even more economically vulnerable, considering also that these conditions may also effect the resources they are able to allocate to the incarcerated.

diminished way. That low-income families dove deepest (proportionally) into their funds is symptomatic of how an orchestration of punishment is concentrated at the bottom of the economic theater (Wacquant 2009; Harris 2016). When the costs of incarceration remain desensitized to income inequality, it becomes all but a rigged game for low-income families attempting to match expenditure against limited finances and economic capital. Even at the fringes of reason, how is it expected for these families to survive these costs much longer? Or to usher intergenerational wealth when their children (namely the supported sons of the sample) are both displaced from the economy and themselves subject to the collateral consequences of incarceration? These issues of unsustainability and incongruity are not only classed but also further racialized. That the low-income group comprised of (Black and Latine) minorities reveals the additional persistence of *ethnoracial* family income and expenditure inequality in the Durham jail system. And in the sorting of individuals and their families into this multiplicity of disadvantaged social categories, it reveals the Durham County Jail as a powerful institution of stratification.

### *Situating the Results*

Still, there is one more job for this study to do. It is to probe social veridicality in the inductive way, to describe how family and incarceration interact. Turning now to the remaining ethnographic and qualitative data, it is to give the Durham County Jail and its implicated individuals a degree of life and opinion. Doing so, I hope, too, that the results I have presented so far will awaken with some of this felt vitality.

### *A Hot Meal to Make Them Happy*

On any busy weekday the Durham County Jail becomes a wellspring of the routine and non-routine. For the number of law enforcement officers one spots donning the characteristic

blacks and blues of uniform, toting belt and badge, the jail is all but like a typical workplace—with paperwork and coffee breaks and passing the time, perhaps though with a little more on-the-job rhubarb built into the routine. Like I saw one lieutenant, a 20-year veteran of the jail, going about the start of her workday with a cast over her right arm. “I got into an altercation,” she remarked to me, casually, before strolling off for lunch.

There are also routine visitors: mothers, mostly. A good way to tell was how they parked (there was a handy spot a block away from the jail), or how intrepid they were to skirt the letter of the law ever so slightly (one memorable woman, Carmen,<sup>60</sup> would leave her car blinker on parked prohibitively in front of the jail, and then dodge inside hastily to use the kiosk); or how they brought pocketbooks and envelopes with measured amounts of bills. The excursion through the jail lobby, to the “Money Kiosk”, and back, was procedural, like making the rounds. But for families, their routines had an extra wick of thought—of being close, within meters perhaps, to their loved ones, yet separated by a great divide. This could become fodder for frustration or anger: “Free my brother! Free my brother!” Yelled one young woman towards the jail cells, as she paced down the sidewalk. Another visitor, Wendy, had for more than three months struggled with seeing her father. Every time she tried making a visit, she was denied by the jail. “Treatment for inmates are hard to come by.” She told me. Were it not for his strong heart, Wendy’s father, who had serious substance abuse withdrawal, would have been dead already. I fear this is what could become of routine: the constant etchings in the mind, the hanging Sword of Damocles, that someone close could be starving, suffering, dying. Worse, for someone like

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<sup>60</sup> All names of jail visitors, including those in my ethnographic observations and official sample, are pseudonymous.



Nora, whose husband had died in Durham County Jail the past year, these thoughts felt like they could go nowhere.

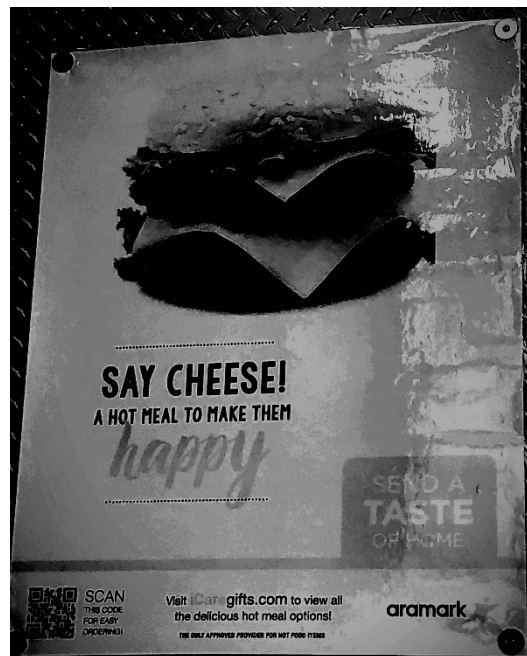
Newcomers appeared at the jail all the time. Incerititude seemed to be the coin of the realm. Despite its brutalist edifice, its tiny cell windows poking out, its grand purpose nested in the obvious, the jail liked to keep families guessing to as whether this place in the middle of the metropolitan Durham sparkle, really was the jail. “Is this where the kiosk is?” I would be asked, nodding. Or I would point often to the entrance (sometimes saying “*Entrada!*”) to provide direction. There was no welcome sign, if only but three sets of steel doors and one reminder: No weapons beyond this point.

Inside, all were greeted by two security guards who worked the front entrance. Though they were sometimes dispossessed of sympathy, (one guard, to illustrate, had a vocal distaste for the incarcerated), they were helpful when the jail itself was not. One spoke Spanish and the other showed newcomers where the “Money Kiosk” was and how to use it. But even then, families needed to retain their own wits about themselves. When the “Money Kiosk” was impossible, families had to figure it out. They had to figure out what to do, when after counting again, that their son’s bail bond was just a few bills short. They had to figure out what to do after their young children stopped coloring, or doing homework, and started to ask the questions that could sow doubts—of how green the pastures of childhood could stay as they sat together in the solemn grey of jail.

For all families and friends who came to the Durham County Jail, however, there was all the reckonings with countenance. The jail and its messaging leaned towards countenance, but of a different perversity—one that had been appropriated by the systems of extraction running along the underbrush of the jail. *Say Cheese! A Hot Meal to Make Them Happy; Send a Taste of*

*Home*, reads an advertisement posted in the main lobby by the private package vendor Aramark (see Figure 10). For those who gave support, ensuring that the incarcerated had enough to eat (this was common); that they were healthy; that they were “happy” or its non-platitudinal equivalent of “not suffering”; and that Mom really was not so far away *were* the teleologic points-of-it-all. But to see the same sentiments baked in saccharine blandishments, when it was known companies like Aramark factored the profit motive, felt not just of corporate myopia, but of an atmospheric wrong. *Say Cheese!* The sign said. No one, I recall, was smiling.

**Figure 10.** An Advertisement by the Company Aramark, Designed to Persuade Visitors to Buy Packaged Goods for the Incarcerated



More perverse was how such commercializing could gamble with affection. Unabashed next to the “Money Kiosk” (see Figure 11) were more honeyed advertisements by Aramark that seemed to pull a profane question out from beneath families and friends who were already spending money at or beyond their means: Could I be doing even more? This tragedy of more, in the end, appeared to be the essential stratagem of the new neoliberal jail. Because it worked. As

vendors like Aramark or GTL monopolized Durham County Jail goods and services, families and friends of the incarcerated had no choice but to pay inflating prices. Their hands were forced in other ways too: The GTL-operated “Money Kiosk” charged a flat \$5.70 surcharge for all credit deposits. This was the spleen of the many I talked to who were limited to their cards and found commissary as their largest expense—as it coerced larger deposits for value. But heaven forbid any modicum of enterprising by someone like Loretta, whose son had been incarcerated for more than a year—GTL had limited all one-time deposits to \$200 for this very reason. In simple terms, as one community organizer told me, it was all just a racket in hiding.

**Figure 11.** More Advertisements by Aramark, Selling Pre-Packaged Snacks and Other Sundries



### *The Hard and Soft Collaterals of Incarceration*

The descriptions I have made of the Durham County Jail and its accomplices, paired with earlier observations about expenditure and income, convey an impression of collateral economic or psychological burden on families entangled with jail incarceration. Returning back to the

sample, respondents provided the final lines of causality, to as if and how their monetized support constituted a *realized* burden.

For a selection of respondents, the financial collateral of jail incarceration had a hard dimension of burden, reflecting a normative understanding that supporting the incarcerated posed a de novo cost that had to be managed with other household expense:

*The following selection of quoted responses were to the open-ended survey question: “Do you think the money you have spent directly on the individual in Durham County Detention Facility is an extra burden or challenge for you and/or your family?”*

**Nick:** Yeah because people have kids and bills.

**Mario:** Yes, I have bills.

**Christina:** Yes sometimes when rent and bills are due on the same days it is hard to deposit money to inmates.

For Nick, Mario, and Christina, who all came from larger households and were supporting incarcerated family members, their understandings of burden were conceived as problems of resource distribution: Pay the bills of home, or the bills of jail? Support my brother or the roof over my children? Evidently, both domestic and jail expenses mattered, but the fact that they were often “due” at the same time, that it was entirely possible for one to be sacrificed for another in a zero-sum game, was what hardened the blow of incarceration. This was especially true for Christina, whose incarcerated husband could no longer supply an income to support her family.

Others pointed to the unfairness of jail commerce as reasons for burden:

**Amy:** Yes. They should not be charging us to put money inside the machine. He need[s] that for food.

**Shirlene:** It get[s] hard. I’m just a retiree [from Durham Public Schools]. [I am] living on a fixed income. He’s my only child. Everything gets more and more expensive. I feel I have to help him. That’s being a mother.

Amy, like Loretta, expressed frustration with the usurious practices of GTL, and that it was stealing away money that should have gone to her brother. Shirlene, like many others, cited the inflation of costs, going further to note (which I take as an indication of my earlier quantitative findings) that her fixed economic position seemed to be at odds with the finances she was spending. But Shirlene, supporting her only son, a mental health patient who often went hungry, had also voiced an affection that seemed to burn inside all who came to the Durham County Jail on those wretched, rainy days I was there: “*I feel I have to help him.*” It was the feeling of obligation.

This virtue of obligated support, for some, changed the orientation of burden:

**Janine:** No challenge. He’s family. He’s my son. Even if he did something wrong, he’s my son.

**Loretta:** Extra cost but no burden. The county jail doesn’t give extra items so they have to purchase some of them. I do this to make sure my son is getting some of what he needs in this place even though it is punishment for wrongdoings. [They are] still human beings.

Though it was objectively plausible that Janine, a mother who resided in a household marginally above the federal poverty line, was de facto burdened by the costs of jail support, her embedded ties to her son enabled her to see past his criminality, and resultingly, past its costs. Loretta provided a similar response: Her son, while self-acknowledged to have done something *wrong*, still had moral desert as a human deprived of necessity. This was unconditional dignification at work in a most improbable place:

**James:** I don’t believe money spent directly on my friend is a challenge due to the fact that he is at a low point in his life. We grew up together and it is a pain seeing his family not being able to talk to him.

**Henry:** No because everybody needs somebody. It’s hard in there, I’ve been there.

Here was the powerful countervail. It was not that James or Henry failed to perceive burden because they were either too distally related to the incarcerated (in fact both were supporting friends), nor that their contributions were objectively diminutive, as some

respondents said—their support was not a burden because they, like Janine and Loretta, had softened the financial collateral—with their hearts. And it is with their consciences as induction that we make the findings of the survey intelligible. Paraphrasing Loretta, there are truthful financial costs of incarceration—but not all costs are burdens.

## CONCLUSION

“Hey Dad, do you have a cigarette?” Asks the grizzled young man. Of course, the commissary had none when he was inside. His father digs one out. His mother lights it. They embrace.

...

The best day, if there ever was such a day, to be incarcerated in the Durham County Jail was ostensibly the last day to be incarcerated in the Durham County Jail. This study, in summary, was about a group of people waiting for that day to come. It was about who they were, who they were waiting for, and the costs they weathered to themselves and their families. Taken as an exploratory endeavor, this study subsequently applied a theoretical understanding of how it was possible that family incarceration from a county jail could materialize forms of economic collateral, as did prisons. In terms of how the Durham County Jail may contour the American criminal justice apparatus as socially stratifying and financially extractive, I believe there is a there, there.

But without more substantive, informative data prepared to handle the expectations of causality, I limit my assessment of incarceration and its collateral effects to the exploratory, non-generalizable experiences of my sample, which had to resolve several issues of precision. The size of the sample was not representative of all those who came to the jail to use the “Money Kiosk”, nor of a mutually inclusive population of non-English speaking families; families who

made financial contributions remotely; or families possibly from out-of-state. The survey furthermore isolated financial and family relationships dyadically and contemporaneously, even though it was plausible that some respondents were either supporting multiple incarcerated individuals, or had done so in the past.

More importantly, the categorical nature of the survey methodology and of the data meant that desired measurements of household income could only be approximated. Reports of total expense, and the expenses themselves, moreover, had to be non-intuitively divorced—we know commissary is a large cost for families, but future work at the jail should determine how large, in dollar amounts, as with phone calls, packages, and other forms of expense. In this pursuit of specification, future research should not only pair demographic characteristics of families *and* the incarcerated together, but also better quantify economic vulnerability pre- and post-incarceration, particularly in situations where household incomes *and* assets decrease after a family member is incarcerated. Here, more qualitative, inductive, and equivalently longitudinal research is needed to understand how families fare during the collateral experience of incarceration, and how they reconcile, draw, or abolish the boundaries of florid costs and burdens.

Ultimately, these descriptive endeavors are aimed piecemeal towards a *prescriptive* interpretation of American mass incarceration. In cohesion with local movements<sup>61</sup> for criminal justice reform in the Durham community, as well as the demands from my sample families, we call for the humane treatment of the incarcerated: that they are entitled to adequate nutrition,

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<sup>61</sup> I draw many of my policy suggestions from proposals submitted by the Durham Community Safety and Wellness Task Force to the Durham City Council, the Durham County Commission, and the Durham Board of Education this past September—many of the task force members I met during my research.

clothing, and health subsidized by the state, that the Durham County Jail ends its policy of zero tolerance solitary confinement without due process; and that the Durham Justice Service Center's inpatient mental health and substance use disorder treatment programs be expanded along with pretrial diversion initiatives. We call for greater transparency and community oversight over the jail, and that the Sheriff's Office renegotiate its contracts with GTL for commissary, phone service, and video calls, and ideally that the Durham County Commission finds the courage to divests itself fully from private vendor kickbacks. We call for the preservation of family relationships: that the jail when able returns to full in-person programming and visitation; that it reinstates its policy of accepting *direct* physical mail and donations, and that the incarcerated be allowed more than just one subsidized phone call per week. And we call for legal equity however it may take shape—in ensuring that a growing jail population of non-English speakers and their families are informed of their rights, in properly-funded and properly-staffed public defenders offices prepared to handle indigent defense, and, for low-risk defendants, in the setting of secured bonds that are sensitive to their families' ability to post the necessary collateral.

Lastly, on my recognition, I implore for a jail—for a criminal justice system—that spots in the corner of its oblivion gaze, a little girl in the fray of it all. She had waited all afternoon at the jail to see her father, and when she finally did, he picked her up into his arms. As they walked away from the Durham County Jail, she began to wave.

—*Goodbye.*



## APPENDIX A. SURVEY VERBAL RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

### **Verbal Recruitment Script**

Hello. My name is Michael, a student from the Department of Sociology at Duke University. I am currently doing research project on the costs of jail. May I ask if you are financially supporting someone you know here at Durham County Detention Facility/Jail?

#### **[IF YES]**

I understand. If you are 18 years old or older, I wanted to invite you to participate in a research survey about the economic costs of jail. As a participant, you will be asked to share some personal information, some information about the person you know in jail, and some information about spending money related to jail. The survey is in English and will last no more than 15 minutes. You will receive \$20 in cash for your attempt. All information you provide will be confidential, and your decision to participate in the survey is completely voluntary and may be stopped at any time. Would you like to participate?

#### **[UPON AGREEMENT]**

I understand. If you would like to participate in this research study, [hand over informed consent form and survey], please look over this consent form, which contains more information about my research. Please let me know if you have any questions. If you are ready, you can turn over the consent form and begin the survey. Please also let me know if you would like me to write down your answers to the survey for you.

#### **[IF NO]**

I understand. Thank you for your time.

## APPENDIX B. SURVEY CONSENT INFORMATION

### Consent Form to Participate in Survey for Study of Costs of Jail

#### **Key Information**

##### *Introduction*

This research survey is being done by Michael Cao from the Department of Sociology at Duke University.

##### *Why is this study being done?*

The purpose of the survey is to find out more about the costs of supporting someone in jail.

##### *What will I be asked to do?*

If you agree to take part in this survey, you will be asked to complete the questions on the next page, or have them answered by the researcher on your behalf if you choose to do so. The survey will ask demographic questions about yourself, questions about the person you know in jail, and questions about spending money related to jail.

##### *How long will the survey last?*

The survey will take you no more than 15 minutes to complete.

##### *What are the risks and benefits of this survey?*

Though we have designed this survey to be as easy as possible, taking the survey may be potentially stressful for you. There are no benefits to you for participating in this research study.

##### *Compensation:*

You will receive \$20 in cash, provided that you spend at least 5 minutes taking the survey.

##### *Confidentiality:*

Your answers to the survey will remain confidential. A unique code number will be assigned to your survey response. All data will be stored in Duke University's secure cloud-platform Duke Box. While collected data may be made public in scientific presentations and reports, your identity will always remain confidential. The survey results will be retained for at most 2 months after the study is completed.

##### *Voluntary nature of participation:*

**Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. You are free to skip any question you choose.**

##### *Whom do I call if I have questions or problems?*

If you have questions about this survey or if you have a research-related problem, contact Michael Cao at 908-265-0171. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, contact the Duke Campus IRB at 919-684-3030 or [campusirb@duke.edu](mailto:campusirb@duke.edu) and reference protocol #2024-0269.

*Consent*

**By proceeding to the survey on the next page you are indicating that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this research survey. Please keep this page for your records and return the survey to the researcher. Please DO NOT write your name on the survey.**

APPENDIX C. SURVEY QUESTIONS

**SURVEY START** (Questions are in **bold**)

**How do you describe yourself?**

- A. Male
- B. Female
- C. Non-binary
- D. Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )

**What is your age in years?**

\_\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD

**What is the highest level of school you have COMPLETED?**

- A. Less than high school
- B. High school graduate
- C. Some college and/or associates degree
- D. Bachelor's degree
- E. Post grad study and/or professional degree

**Which race or ethnicity do you identify with most closely?**

- A. White
- B. Black or African-American
- C. Latino or Hispanic Origin
- D. Asian or Asian-American
- E. American Indian or Alaska Native
- F. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- G. Some other race or ethnicity (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )

**Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household?**

- A. 1 (Meaning you live alone)
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4
- E. 5
- F. More than 5

**What was your total household income in 2023?**

- A. Less than \$10,000
- B. \$10,000 to \$19,999
- C. \$20,000 to \$29,999
- D. \$30,000 to \$39,999
- E. \$40,000 to \$49,999
- F. \$50,000 to \$74,999
- G. \$75,000 to \$99,999
- H. \$100,000 to \$149,999
- I. \$150,000 or more
- J. Do not know
- K. Prefer not to answer

**Now, we want you to think about the individual you are here today to support or visit in the Durham County Detention Facility. What is this person's relationship to you? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.**

- A. Mother
- B. Father
- C. Son
- D. Daughter
- E. Grandson
- F. Granddaughter
- G. Brother
- H. Sister
- I. Person you had a child with
- J. Partner or spouse
- K. Friend or acquaintance
- L. Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )

**Roughly, how many DAYS would you estimate this person has stayed at Durham County Detention Facility to today's date? Please only consider this person's current stay.**

\_\_\_\_\_ DAYS

**If the number of days is hard to estimate, how many WEEKS do you estimate this person has stayed at the Durham County Detention Facility to today's date? Please only consider this person's current stay.**

\_\_\_\_\_ WEEKS

**Roughly, how much money have you spent directly ON the individual in Durham County Detention Facility over this time? This number can include things like sending money deposits, paying for phone calls, funding commissary accounts, or buying and sending packages.**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**What were the 3 biggest expenses you spent this money on? Please list them below.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you think the money you have spent directly ON the individual in Durham County Detention Facility is an extra burden or challenge for you and/or your family? Please describe WHY or WHY NOT in a few short sentences below. DISCLAIMER: Please do not include any names or other identifying information in your answer.**

**Is there anything important you would like to share that you were not asked about today? Please do so below. If you need more space, feel free to write on the back of the survey. DISCLAIMER: Please do not include any names or other identifying information in your answer.**

APPENDIX D. SURVEY CODEBOOK

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Original Categories</b>	<b>New Categories from Recoding</b>
<b>GENDER</b>	Male Female Non-binary Other (non-specified)	Male Female
<b>AGE</b>	___ years old  <i>Note: This variable was also analyzed as a numeric variable.</i>	18–26 35–50 55–63 70
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>	Less than high school High school graduate Some college and/or associates degree Bachelor’s degree Post grad study and/or professional degree  <i>Note: The same categories were essentially kept.</i>	Less than high school High school graduate Some college and/or associates degree Bachelor’s degree Postgraduate study and/or professional degree
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>	White Black or African-American Latino or Hispanic Origin Asian or Asian-American American Indian or Alaska Native Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Other (non-specified)	White Black or African-American Latino or Hispanic Origin American Indian or Alaska Native
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>	1 2 3 4 5 More than 5	Living alone 2 3 4 5

<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>	Less than \$10,000	Less than \$10,000
	\$10,000 to \$19,999	\$10,000 to \$19,999
	\$20,000 to \$29,999	\$20,000 to \$29,999
	\$30,000 to \$39,999	\$30,000 to \$39,999
	\$40,000 to \$49,999	\$40,000 to \$49,999
	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999
	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999
	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999
	\$150,000 or more	\$150,000 or more
	Do not know	Do not know
Prefer not to answer		
<b>RELATIONSHIPS TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL</b>	Mother	Father
	Father	Son
	Son	Brother
	Daughter	Child's other parent
	Grandson	Partner or spouse
	Granddaughter	Friend or acquaintance
	Brother	Cousin
	Sister	Nephew
	Person you had a child with	
	Partner or spouse	
	Friend or acquaintance	
	Other (specified: cousin)	
	Other (specified: nephew)	
<b>LENGTH OF INCARCERATION</b>	___ days/weeks/months/years	2–4 days
		14 days
	<i>Note: This variable was also analyzed as a numeric variable.</i>	60–70 days
		92–100 days
		160–180 days
		290–400 days
		1460 days
<b>TOTAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT</b>	___ days/weeks/months/years	N/A
<b>TYPES OF EXPENSES*</b>	<i>*Qualitative, open-ended variables (see main body for descriptions)</i>	



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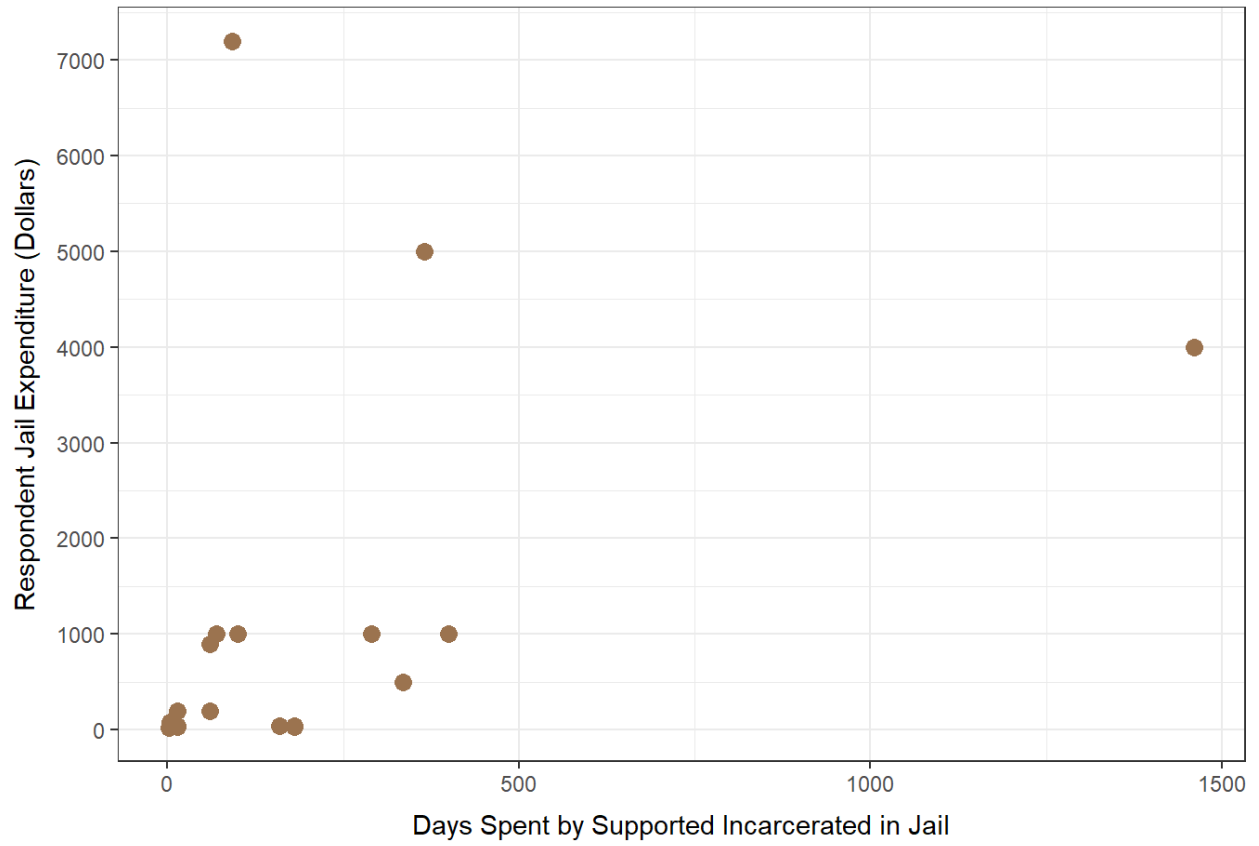
**FINANCIAL  
BURDEN\***

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**ELUCIDATION\***

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APPENDIX E. TOTAL EXPENDITURE ALONG TIME SPENT SUPPORTING THE INCARCERATED (n = 18)



APPENDIX F. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF RESPONDENT DAILY JAIL EXPENDITURE

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<b>Statistic</b>				
<i>Count</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mean</i>
18	\$0.17	\$78.26	\$6.73	\$11.39

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