Recommendations for Future Data Collection:

Or, What Economists Have To Say About Causation

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Background

• “Recommendation” is a part of policy process
  – Follows from Problem Structuring, Monitoring, and Evaluation
  – Designed to provide assessment of policy options for problem solving

• What problem are we trying to solve?
  – Destabilization of families through increased incarceration
The Problem of the Problem

- Is there really an adverse impact of incarceration on family structure/stability?
- How do we know the causal relationship?
Causality Tests and Economics

- Impacts of incarceration on incarcerated individuals
- Impacts of incarceration on the families of incarcerated persons
- Impacts of incarceration on non-incarcerated individuals/families
- Impacts of incarceration on rules, laws, processes
- Impacts of X on incarceration
\[
y^k_t = f(I^k_{t-1}; X^k_t)
\]

\[
y^k_t = f(I^j_{t-1}; X^k_t)
\]

\[
I^k_t = f(y^k_{t-1}, X^k_{t-1})
\]

Effects of incarceration on the Incarcerated

Effects of incarceration others

Effects on Incarceration
Methods

• Randomized experiment
  – Very expensive
  – External validity

• Retrospective analysis
  – Establish causality via ordering
  – Matching
  – Test for causality (e.g. Hausmann Test; Granger-Sims Test)
  – Instrumental Variables (IV) (But need strong theory for selection of instruments)
  – Correction for selection

• Prospective Analysis
  – Won’t know impacts for decades
What Data Collection Will Help Improve Ability to Use These Methods?

• Better use of matching
  – Incarcerated vs non-incarcerated at time of sampling
  – Across locations

• Information on policy parameters
  – Local hiring restrictions
  – Overcrowding of jails

• Inclusion of multiple indicators of and timing of involvement with CJS and Child Welfare System and Juvenile Justice System