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

$$y_t^k = f(I_{t-1}^k; X_t^k)$$

Effects of incarceration on the Incarcerated

$$y_t^k = f(I_{t-1}^j; X_t^k)$$

Effects of incarceration others

$$I_t^k = f(y_{t-1}^k, X_{t-1}^k)$$

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