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"We'll make it work": Navigating surveilled living arrangements after romantic partner incarceration

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Abstract

Objective: We use the case of housing insecurity to examine how romantic partner incarceration results in increased and prolonged surveillance of women at home.

Background: Romantic partner incarceration prompts surveillance from the criminal legal system while simultaneously eroding women's finances, health, and family relationships. Less is known about how these symbiotic harms of romantic partner incarceration enable surveillance beyond the criminal legal system.

Method: We use longitudinal interviews with 35 (previously coresident) romantic partners of incarcerated men, showing how incarceration prompts unwanted moves for partners, how women manage housing insecurity following partner incarceration, and how they become embedded into living arrangements where they are monitored, evaluated, and controlled.

Results: We identify three primary findings. First, women experiencing housing insecurity after romantic partner incarceration relied heavily on their social ties (and, to a lesser extent, institutional housing providers) while enduring stressful and prolonged housing searches. Second, the homes that women move into expose them to increased surveillance. Women encounter domestic, caregiving, romantic, and financial surveillance. Romantic partner incarceration prompts large changes in surveillance among women who left independent homes, moderate changes in surveillance among women who left comparatively desirable doubled-up homes, and prolonged surveillance among nonmovers. Finally, women respond to surveillance by monitoring burdens on hosts and reframing stays in shared homes as temporary.

Conclusion: Taken together, these findings extend prior research on the symbiotic harms of romantic partner incarceration, how women attached to incarcerated men experience surveillance, and how doubled-up families sustain shared homes.

KEYWORDS
family, housing insecurity, incarceration, surveillance

INTRODUCTION

An estimated one in five U.S. women have had a romantic partner or co-parent endure jail or prison incarceration (Enns et al., 2019). Romantic partner incarceration substantially impairs women's life trajectories, with research documenting how partner incarceration fractures romantic relationships, facilitates economic hardship, and undermines mental health (Schwartz-Soicher et al., 2011; Turney, 2015; Wildeman et al., 2012). Romantic partner incarceration simultaneously facilitates spillover surveillance from the criminal legal system (Comfort, 2008; Goffman, 2009), limiting women's autonomy and increasing their suffering. Structural racism inherent in the criminal legal system means that women of color disproportionately endure romantic partner incarceration (Enns et al., 2019). The inequality in exposure to partner incarceration, coupled with its associated symbiotic harms (Condry & Minson, 2021), suggests partner incarceration contributes to social stratification.

Though romantic partner incarceration facilitates symbiotic harms across many domains, including surveillance from the criminal legal system, less is known about how romantic partner incarceration leads to surveillance of women beyond the surveillance endured by carceral institutions. Surveillance refers to "focused, systematic, and routine attention to personal details for the purposes of influence, management, protection, or direction" (Lyon, 2007, p. 14). Indeed, the destabilizing consequences of romantic partner incarceration may prompt women to seek support from family members, friends, and institutions who have the capacity to scrutinize and evaluate them as mothers, romantic partners, and deserving support recipients. To understand the surveillance endured by women with romantic partners entangled in the criminal legal system, we examine how women navigate housing insecurity, a particularly understudied yet considerable consequence of romantic partner incarceration, in ways that prompt them to lean on sources of support that can also restrict their autonomy and monitor them.

Housing security, and corresponding household living arrangements, are important for both adult and child wellbeing (e.g., Harvey, 2020; Swope & Hernández, 2019). Most research on the housing repercussions of incarceration examines how formerly incarcerated people find homes during the reentry period (Harding et al., 2013; Miller, 2021; Purser & Hamlin, 2022) yet does not consider housing challenges endured by family members of incarcerated people. Co-resident romantic partners are more likely to endure housing insecurity after partner incarceration (Geller & Franklin, 2014; Western, 2018), but this work largely does not examine how women manage housing insecurity or the consequences of these management strategies. Examining housing insecurity following partner incarceration can illustrate how incarceration shapes women's surveillance experiences beyond the criminal legal system. For some women, incarceration may catalyze sudden and unplanned moves, prompting them to seek out immediately available housing opportunities, including shared living arrangements where surveillance is common (DeLuca & Jang-Trettien, 2020; Harvey, 2022). For other women, key features of incarceration—including uncertainty, stigma, and eroded finances—may complicate their housing plans or delay exits from surveilled shared homes.

In this article, we use in-depth interview data from the Jail and Family Life Study, a qualitative study of the consequences of incarceration for incarcerated people and their families, to understand how women seek out and manage their living situations following romantic partner incarceration

and how these strategies embed women in living arrangements where they experience considerable surveillance. We analyze interviews from 35 coresident romantic partners (i.e., women who lived with their partner immediately before his most recent incarceration), most of whom were interviewed twice. We show how incarceration exacerbates previous instabilities and destabilizes women in new ways that expand or prolong their surveillance. In doing so, we position housing insecurity and surveillance as central to the experience of enduring family member incarceration.

Importance of housing for wellbeing

Housing insecurity, or "limited access to stable, safe, adequate, and affordable housing" (Cox et al., 2019, p. 99), can be detrimental to wellbeing (Swope & Hernández, 2019). Unstable housing—or moving more than twice during the past 2 years—is associated with depression and anxiety (Suglia et al., 2011). Families with high housing costs may reduce spending in other critical areas, including food and healthcare (Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2011). Household composition and housing quality also have consequences for wellbeing. Some forms of doubled-up living arrangements—when "a nuclear family coresides with other adults, such as grandparents, extended family, or friends" (Harvey, 2020, p. 502)—are associated with negative physical health outcomes among children (Harvey, 2020) and can strain women's identities as caregivers (Harvey, 2022). Living in a crowded home is associated with lower sleep quality (Chambers et al., 2016) and lower academic achievement among children (Solari & Mare, 2012). Therefore, understanding how individuals experience and navigate housing insecurity is critical to understanding the reproduction of inequality.

Housing insecurity as a symbiotic harm of incarceration

Incarceration enables symbiotic harms for families (Condry & Minson, 2021). A family systems perspective, which highlights the interdependency of family members, demonstrates how the consequences of an event, like incarceration, can proliferate to restructure the lives of romantic partners, parents, and children connected to incarcerated individuals (Wildeman & Western, 2010). These consequences are particularly pronounced for coresident romantic partners, as partner incarceration is associated with increased material hardship (Schwartz-Soicher et al., 2011), increased household expenses (Comfort, 2008), and the necessity of taking on additional employment (Bruns, 2020).

Though romantic partner incarceration may alter living arrangements, given the economic difficulties stemming from removing a person from the home, little research examines how partner incarceration shapes women's housing arrangements. One study finds that partner incarceration is associated with a greater likelihood of experiencing housing insecurity—measured by experiencing an eviction, missing a rent payment, or doubling up, net of socioeconomic status prior to incarceration—in part due to incarcerated men's reduced financial contributions (Geller & Franklin, 2014). Another study finds partner incarceration is negatively associated with homeownership (Turney & Schneider, 2016). These two studies suggest partner incarceration creates substantial housing difficulties, aligned with research on barriers formerly incarcerated people face during the re-entry period (Harding et al., 2013; Miller, 2021; Purser & Hamlin, 2022), but stop short of considering how women manage housing insecurity after partner incarceration and the trade-offs they encounter at home.

Housing insecurity as a catalyst of surveillance

Housing insecurity following romantic partner incarceration may catalyze the surveillance of women, another symbiotic harm endured by those enmeshed in the criminal legal system. The

expansion of incarceration has been accompanied by a surveillance dragnet that hyper-polices marginalized communities and punishes formerly incarcerated people and their family members (Goffman, 2009; Phelps, 2020). Surveillance occurs through the criminal legal system and an assemblage of adjacent poverty governance institutions, including Child Protective Services (Fong, 2020), "third-party" policing from government agencies (Herring, 2019), welfare agencies (Headworth, 2019), and front-line workers (Lara-Millán, 2014). These surveilling institutions also disproportionately target minoritized caregivers, who anticipate and endure institutional scrutiny over their parenting practices (Elliott & Reid, 2019).

Women connected to incarcerated partners commonly encounter surveillance from carceral institutions. Romantic partners of currently incarcerated men experience "secondary prisonization," as they are forced to adopt the rules, norms, and schedules of the institutions where their loved ones are incarcerated (Comfort, 2008). Similarly, women in relationships with recently released men can become entangled with surveillance from criminal legal systems such as probation and parole (Goffman, 2009). Probation and parole officers commonly interview family members, evaluating their living environments and family relationships and forcing them to manage surprise home inspections, phone calls, and raids (Miller, 2021). For mothers in particular, these forms of carceral surveillance may lead to spillover punishment from other state agencies (Fong, 2020) and require protective mothering strategies to shield children from punitive state contact (Collins, 1994). Therefore, carceral surveillance extends beyond surveilling people in carceral facilities and extends to family members of those confined.

Less is known about how women with incarcerated partners experience or manage surveillance beyond the criminal legal system. Past research on surveillance more generally suggests that family member incarceration can exacerbate previous instability while also generating new forms of surveillance beyond contact with jails, prisons, and police. For some women, romantic partner incarceration may prompt sudden and unplanned moves, leading them to move into immediately available shared homes (DeLuca & Jang-Trettien, 2020). Research on private social support suggests that support providers monitor and evaluate support recipients (Smith, 2007; Stack, 1974). Mothers, in particular, endure surveillance from their social support networks and other institutions over their caregiving practices (Fong, 2019; Gurusami, 2018). Therefore, women negotiating living arrangements with friends and family in doubled-up homes likely encounter monitoring and reduced autonomy, which can threaten their identities as independent adults and destabilize some doubled-up living arrangements (Gurusami, 2018; Harvey, 2022). Women who seek out subsidized housing support after partner incarceration may also encounter surveillance from institutional housing providers, who can monitor residents' everyday lives at home (Hughes, 2021). Women who share children with incarcerated men may be particularly susceptible to institutional scrutiny, as their interactions across organizations—including schools, medical providers, and social services—can prompt home surveillance (Fong, 2019, 2020), and research suggests that minoritized mothers' parenting practices are particularly scrutinized by state institutions (Elliott & Reid, 2019; Gurusami, 2018).

In addition to prompting reactive moves toward surveilled homes, incarceration may also prolong surveillance by *delaying* moves away from shared living arrangements. Several key characteristics of incarceration may complicate women's housing plans and impede moves away from surveilled homes. First, incarceration arrives with substantial uncertainty around sentencing, release, and the future of romantic relationships (Turney et al., 2023). Women are unsure if and when their partner will be released and economically contribute to family life, which can complicate women's housing plans. Incarceration can further erode women's finances, as expenses like bail and legal fees are often concentrated during the pretrial period, delaying women's financial goals and placing independent living arrangements out of reach (Schwartz-Soicher et al., 2011). Finally, women may experience stigma around their partners' incarceration, limiting their future housing opportunities or complicating existing arrangements (Comfort, 2008). These features specific to incarceration may impede women's housing goals

and extend their stays in shared living arrangements where they experience surveillance. Taken together, this research suggests incarceration prompts women to lean on their ties for housing support in ways that allow social networks to monitor them, evaluate their fitness as support recipients, and guide their behavior. Institutional assistance arrives with similar trade-offs. For these reasons, surveillance experienced by partners of incarcerated men likely exceeds surveillance identified in past research.

The present study

We contribute to research on the symbiotic harms of incarceration by showing how romantic partner incarceration shapes surveillance beyond the criminal legal system by destabilizing women's living arrangements or by further embedding women into surveilled homes. We draw on insights from research on poverty and surveillance, more generally, to show how past work on romantic partner incarceration does not fully account for all surveillance endured by the partners of incarcerated men. To do so, we examine the housing trajectories of women following romantic partner incarceration, focusing on where women go (or do not go), the trade-offs they encounter in their homes, and how they manage these arrangements. We advance three contributions, all of which position surveillance as central to women's housing challenges after partner incarceration. First, we show women manage prolonged and stressful housing searches following romantic partner incarceration by mobilizing their social ties and, to a lesser extent, seeking assistance from institutional housing providers. Second, we show how housing insecurity catalyzes the surveillance of women with incarcerated partners, above and beyond surveillance endured by carceral institutions. Women receiving housing assistance from friends, family members, and institutions become further embedded in living arrangements where they are monitored, evaluated, and managed. Third, we highlight the cognitive labor and emotion work women mobilize to help stabilize and manage surveilled living arrangements. These findings show how housing insecurity is central to women's experiences navigating romantic partner incarceration.

DATA AND METHODS

Jail and family life study

We use data from the Jail and Family Life Study, a longitudinal, in-depth interview study that investigates how incarceration creates inequalities among families with children. The study includes 123 incarcerated men (and their family members) who were recruited from three jail facilities in Southern California between 2015 and 2017. The study team recruited men from educational programs at each facility. Men were eligible for participation if they had been incarcerated for at least 2 months, had at least one minor child, and interacted with the child a month before his incarceration. We asked men to provide the names and contact information of their family members, and then invited family members to participate in baseline (while the person was incarcerated) and follow-up (after the person was released or, if not released within 1 year, 1 year after baseline) interviews.

Our analytic sample includes 35 women who lived with their partner immediately prior to his most recent incarceration, as these women are particularly vulnerable to experiencing housing insecurity during partner incarceration (Geller & Franklin, 2014). We interviewed 35 of the 43 total coresident romantic partners who were eligible to participate. Respondents' partners had been incarcerated for an average of 10 months at their baseline interview, ranging from 2 months to 5 years. All respondents lived in Southern California, a highly unaffordable

housing context, except for one respondent who lived in Northern California. Most resided in the same county where their partner was incarcerated. In 2015, about half of very low-income households in this county were rent burdened, or paying more than one-third of their monthly income in housing expenses (California Housing Partnership, 2022).

The research team interviewed romantic partners at their preferred location, usually in their home or a public setting. We adopted a semi-structured interview approach, allowing for broad discussions around topics while also enabling interviewers to probe about circumstances particular to each respondent. At baseline, we asked women to describe their lives prior to their partner's incarceration and how his incarceration affected different spheres of daily life (e.g., housing and health). We asked similar questions at follow-up (which occurred, for the women in the analytic sample who could be reached, about 8 months after the baseline interview), focusing on changes since the baseline interview. Interviewing women twice allowed us to track changes and continuities in their lives over time, permitted follow-up questions from their baseline interview, and generally helped build rapport. Five women in the analytic sample could not be reached or declined to participate in a follow-up interview. We conducted most interviews in English (and interviewed five women in the analytic sample in Spanish). We audio-recorded interviews (except for one baseline interview conducted in jail, where recording was not allowed), and we transcribed recordings verbatim. We wrote detailed field notes after each interview. We provided respondents with a $50 Visa gift card for each interview.

Analytic plan

We adopted an abductive approach to analyzing the interview data (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012), which allowed us to test for the presence or absence of themes derived from theory while also allowing us to inductively identify insights from the data. This process occurred in four stages. First, trained graduate students conducted deductive coding of the transcripts, using a detailed project codebook to organize the interviews into 71 (often overlapping) themes from the interview guide (Deterding & Waters, 2021). These themes included information about each respondent's residence, wellbeing, and the effects of partner incarceration. The "residence" code captured any discussion of respondents' current living arrangements, housing searches, future housing plans, motivations for moves, and past residential histories. We coded transcripts together until reaching consensus on code application, ensuring consistency, and then two people coded each transcript, meeting to resolve any coding discrepancies. Second, we used the "residence" code from the first round of deductive coding, in conjunction with interview field notes and verbatim transcripts, to write analytic memos for each respondent that summarized how their living arrangements did or did not change after their partner's incarceration. Third, we tracked each respondent's housing arrangements across the study period—from the beginning of the participant's most recent incarceration stay through the follow-up interview (1.4 years, on average, including the five respondents who did not participate in a follow-up)—and wrote memos that looked *across* respondents to identify commonalities and divergences in housing. This inductive memo-writing process identified three groups: (1) those receiving housing support from their social ties following romantic partner incarceration, (2) those receiving institutional housing support following incarceration, and (3) those who did not move following incarceration. The theme of surveillance in shared (institutional and noninstitutional) living arrangements emerged during this stage of our analytic process. Fourth, we wrote analytic memos for each respondent that inductively identified the types of surveillance they experienced at home.

Sample description

Table 1 presents descriptive characteristics of the analytic sample. On average, women were 31 years old. Most of our sample identified as Latina ($n = 22$, 63%), with a substantial minority of white women ($n = 7$, 20%). "Latino" is a pan-ethnic category that encompasses multiple racial identities, but none of the Latina respondents in this sample self-identified as an Afro-Latina or a white Latina. Nearly half ($n = 17$, 49%) of women had education beyond high school, and three-fifths ($n = 20$, 60%) were employed at baseline. Moves precipitated by romantic partner incarceration were also common, with 80% of respondents moving at least once after partner incarceration, and 60% moving at least twice during the study period.

RESULTS

Managing stressful and protracted housing insecurity

First, we find that most women who endured housing insecurity during their romantic partner's incarceration managed this stressor by turning to their social support networks and institutional assistance. Table S1 traces women's housing trajectories, beginning with their living arrangements immediately before their partner's incarceration and through their follow-up interview. About half of the respondents who moved after partner incarceration left apartments where they lived alone with their partner and their children, and most women relied on social support networks to move into the homes of family members, friends, and acquaintances. Women also moved into shelters, leveraged state assistance such as housing vouchers, and entered sober living facilities. Couples with only one working partner were particularly vulnerable to moves, as all unemployed women moved after partner incarceration. Importantly, living doubled-up with their family of origin before partner incarceration shields against reactive moves, as almost all nonmovers lived with their family of origin (and their partner) before his incarceration. Though some nonmovers were in an on-again/off-again romantic relationship with their partner and did not rely on him to cover housing costs, other nonmovers relied on their partners' income but already paid reduced rent or negotiated lower payments with their family hosts, allowing them to avoid moves. Among movers, women described unanticipated housing searches, multiple moves, and housing quality trade-offs as central sources of stress caused by their partner's incarceration. For both movers and nonmovers, uncertainty related to their partner's sentencing and the future of their relationship, eroded finances caused by incarceration, and stigma from housing providers further complicated their housing plans.

Finding a new home following partner incarceration, a process experienced by nearly all women in our sample, is stressful, uncertain, and often occurs on short notice. Respondents commonly identified their housing search as a central source of stress after partner incarceration. Edith, a 32-year-old woman with two children, exemplifies this stress and uncertainty. At baseline, Edith was living doubled-up with the boss from her sales job at a flooring company. This was her husband's first incarceration, and she was forced to leave their home after she could no longer afford the rent without his financial support. Edith moved from a private rented bedroom with her sister-in-law to her family's living room with her two young children until her boss agreed to rent her another bedroom temporarily. Edith told us that her ongoing housing search was her largest overall stressor: "Not having a fixed place that I can call home, for me, for [my children], it's the most stressful." Edith's case also illustrates how incarceration may introduce additional uncertainties for women with noncitizen romantic partners that complicate their housing plans. Her husband was a lawful permanent resident, and his incarceration threatened his application to renew his green card, adding to Edith's uncertainty over where her family would live in the future: "If he has a bad record, they won't renew it. So we don't know

TABLE 1 Descriptive characteristics of participants.

	Mean (%)	*N*
Race/ethnicity		
Latina	62.9%	22
White	20.0%	7
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.6%	3
Black	2.9%	1
Mixed race	5.7%	2
Age	31.3	–
Number of children <18	2.1	–
Educational attainment		
Less than high school	11.4%	4
High school or GED	31.4%	11
More than high school	48.6%	17
Unknown	8.6%	3
Employment status		
Employed	60.0%	21
Unemployed	34.2%	12
Unknown	5.7%	2
Partner employed (formally or informally)	97.1%	34
Social class[a]		
Poor	31.4%	11
Working poor	48.6%	17
Working class	11.4%	4
Middle class	8.6%	3
Relationship status with incarcerated partner[b]		
No relationship	22.9%	8
Nonmarital romantic relationship	51.4%	18
Married	25.7%	9
Moved at least once after partner incarceration	80.0%	28
Moved more than once after partner incarceration	60.0%	21
Lived doubled-up before partner incarceration	51.4%	18
Lived in independent home before partner incarceration	40.0%	14
Unhoused before partner incarceration	8.6%	3
Living doubled-up at baseline	71.4%	25
Living in independent home at baseline[c]	11.4%	4
Living in institutional housing at baseline	14.2%	5
N		35

Note: The sample includes women living with their romantic partner prior to his most recent incarceration. Age, number of children, educational attainment, employment status (of self and partner), social class, and relationship status reflect respondents' status at their baseline interview (which occurred after their partners' incarceration).

[a]Poor respondents were unemployed; working poor respondents were employed but reported erratic hours, low pay, and few benefits; working-class respondents worked full-time in positions with some benefits; middle-class respondents worked full-time in professional or white-collar careers.

[b]Some women lived with their partners before his most recent incarceration but were no longer in a romantic relationship at the time of their baseline interview.

[c]One respondent used a nonprofit sponsored housing voucher to rent an independent home at baseline and is double-counted in the institutional housing and independent home categories. One respondent was in jail and another respondent was unhoused at baseline.

if we're in limbo, or what will happen." More generally, Edith and others described managing an unanticipated move with limited resources as a primary worry after partner incarceration.

Women also reported housing as a source of stress because their housing insecurity was often protracted, with women commonly churning through multiple living arrangements after their partner was incarcerated. For instance, Nicole (27-years-old and working in medical billing) and her 4-year-old son initially moved in with her father after her partner's incarceration prompted them to leave their own apartment, but she moved again soon after. "Me and my dad have a horrible relationship. It was really hectic," she reflected. Nicole briefly lived with her partner's family before moving again into her grandmother's home to save further on housing costs. Nicole aspired to move to Arizona, but her housing plans were contingent on the future of her relationship, which she told us would depend on her partner's sentence: "Let's say he does happen to be in there for life and I end up meeting somebody. You don't know what the future holds." Women who entered institutional living arrangements also reported stressful, protracted housing searches, as it was often difficult to find an institutional housing provider quickly. For instance, Claire (a 33-year-old mother of two working in the medical field) exhausted her savings and took on new debt to cover incarceration-related costs. Claire was living with her partner in his cousin's home, but she told us the living arrangement became uncomfortable without him there: "I felt like such a burden," she explained. After her partner was incarcerated, "it was just me and my kids with his family, and it was just awkward." Claire left his family's home and rented motel rooms and slept in her car while she concurrently searched for a housing nonprofit nearby, applied for assistance, and waited for months to be approved. As she told us, "having a roof over our head and transportation, those are my biggest stressors." Similarly, Gabby (a 30-year-old mother of one working in sales) lived in a motel before her partner's incarceration and left after she could not afford the costs on her own, but it took her several months to find institutional housing support for her and her daughter. Women enduring partner incarceration make multiple moves on constrained budgets, with these housing searches creating considerable stress.

For women moving away from their own apartments or even other doubled-up homes, housing searches often led to substantial housing quality trade-offs, which exacerbated stress stemming from partner incarceration. Paulie's housing trajectory illustrates how partner incarceration prompts moves to lower-quality housing. Paulie, a 26-year-old mother of three young children working as a cashier, moved from her own apartment into her parent's home after her partner was incarcerated: "Once I see how I'm struggling with the apartment, I'm like, I can't live like this…I'm gonna move out." Paulie's family allowed her to move into their home for $350 per month, significant savings from the $1100 she paid living on her own. Paulie rented the living room (sharing the home with her parents and five siblings), and described her home as overcrowded. Space was at such a premium that she and her three children shared one bed: "We all have to sleep together on the couch, and it's not really comfortable." Similarly, some doubled-up movers left comparatively comfortable shared homes (with private rented rooms) to less desirable doubled-up homes to save money. For instance, after her partner was incarcerated, Sally left a doubled-up home with access to more household utilities. In her new doubled-up home, Sally had no access to the apartment's kitchen or laundry, and she had to use a microwave and refrigerator in her room to prepare meals. Though Paulie and Sally, like other women, reduced their housing costs to manage the financial repercussions of partner incarceration, both compromised on housing quality.

Increased and prolonged surveillance at home

Romantic partner incarceration directly prompted unexpected and unwanted moves for most women, who left independent apartments or relatively desirable shared homes (e.g., a rented

private bedroom, rather than living in a communal space like a living room). Although most movers successfully found new housing opportunities after their partner's incarceration, these opportunities came with trade-offs that are common in shared homes. Among movers, romantic partner incarceration prompted moves into homes where women experienced increased surveillance. Among nonmovers, who all lived in shared homes prior to their partners' incarceration, romantic partner incarceration *prolonged* stays in surveilled, shared living arrangements. Both movers and nonmovers experienced domestic, caregiving, romantic, and financial surveillance in their living arrangements after romantic partner incarceration (from both their personal safety nets and from institutional housing providers). For both groups, uncertainties associated with incarceration, eroded finances, and stigma complicated women's living arrangements. Most women living with their family or friends felt supported by these personal safety nets—who opened their homes to them at a reduced cost, helped with childcare, and provided emotional support—but these women also experienced limited privacy, curfews, and scrutiny over their lives. Women who sought institutional housing support after their partner's incarceration experienced similar trade-offs and additional restrictions over how they spent their money. For movers who left independent living arrangements, this surveillance marked a significant change in their everyday lives. Overall, we find that romantic partner incarceration prompts large changes in surveillance among women who left independent homes, moderate changes in surveillance among women who left comparatively desirable doubled-up homes, and prolonged surveillance among nonmovers.

Domestic surveillance

First, women experienced domestic surveillance, which we define as the increased monitoring of everyday life, both in the homes they moved to after their partner's incarceration and, for nonmovers, the shared homes from which they aspired to move away. Domestic surveillance is facilitated by women's status as guests in shared living arrangements. Most respondents moved into (or prolonged their stay in) common areas (e.g., living rooms) or ancillary spaces (e.g., furnished garages). Many felt crowded and told us that their shared homes lacked the privacy and independence they once enjoyed. For instance, Marissa, a 22-year-old woman working as a waitress, used to live in her own apartment she shared with her partner and their 5-year-old daughter. After her partner's incarceration and she could no longer afford rent, she moved into her in-law's home, which she shared with six people, and she told us she missed the autonomy she had in her old apartment. Marissa was waiting for her partner's case to be adjudicated, and uncertainties over his sentencing meant that she was unsure when she would be able to leave her mother-in-law's home: "I'm waiting for them to say what he's going to get…I can't go fish out $1,200 to stay somewhere," she told us. "If he was here, he would pay for the house." Similarly, when Chloe, a 23-year-old working at a fast food restaurant, left her own apartment and moved with her young daughter back into her parents' home after her partner's incarceration, she told us that she felt like "I was back in high school again." Though Chloe paid reduced rent at her parents' home, they also established a curfew, and she needed their permission to come and go. "It was nice at times, but other than that I was just counting down the days to get out," she reflected.

As guests in shared homes, how women used common spaces within the home was also subject to domestic surveillance. For instance, when Shelley, a 26-year-old mother of two working in fast food, learned of her husband's incarceration, she quickly moved out of their apartment and into her mother's garage (which she rented for $200 per month). However, Shelley was conscious of her presence in her mother's home. She did not feel comfortable using shared spaces like the kitchen: "I can't cook here and do what I want," she said. She also did not want to hang up the drawings her husband had sent their daughter from jail: "I can't put holes in the walls of

her garage." Women whose partners' incarceration extended their stays in shared homes experienced prolonged domestic surveillance. For instance, Leslie (a 34-year-old mother of one working in payroll) lived with her father and did not move after her partner's most recent incarceration (though she did move in with her father after her partner's past incarceration several years ago). She told us that her father limits how they use shared space: "My dad says no, and it's his house, so it's his choice." Though most women moved in with family members, shared living arrangements with strangers limit women's privacy and independence in similar ways. For example, after Paulina's husband was incarcerated, she left an apartment that she and her husband had worked toward renting over the course of several years and moved into a rented bedroom. However, her host placed limits on Paulina's use of common spaces within the apartment: "I couldn't [use] the dining room, so I'd cook and we'd go inside the bedroom, and all the time we were locked up." Later, Paulina's host asked for the room back, and Paulina was living in her sister's living room while she searched for another home. Women who moved after the shock of their partner's incarceration and women whose stay in shared homes was extended by their partners' incarceration described limited independence as guests in shared homes.

Women living in institutional housing arrangements—shelters, private market rentals subsidized through housing vouchers, and sober living facilities—reported more formalized instances of domestic surveillance, including strict curfews, limited contact with family, and restrictions on how they interacted with other residents. For instance, when we first spoke with Megan (a 27-year-old mother of two, unemployed) she had moved into her father's home after experiencing an extended period of being unhoused following her partner's incarceration. However, at her follow-up interview 7 months later, she had moved into a sober living facility after her father experienced foreclosure on his home. Megan told us that she had an explicit curfew and was unable to enter or leave her sober living facility after a certain hour. Similarly, Shirley, a 36-year-old woman working as a bus driver, moved into a homeless shelter with her three youngest children after her partner's incarceration. Per the shelter terms, she was not allowed to contact others: "The first three months was the lockdown. I couldn't talk to anybody. No family, nothing." Like women living with family, women living in institutional living arrangements following partner incarceration experience scrutiny from their hosts about the rhythms of daily life.

Caregiving surveillance

Women with young children living in shared homes following partner incarceration also reported surveillance over their child care and parenting practices, which we call caregiving surveillance. For example, Jade (a 22-year-old mother of two working as a document scanner) told us that her in-laws monitored and intervened in her childcare practices. Jade's in-laws do not support the "cry-it-out" method she uses with her youngest toddler: "They don't like to hear them cry, that's why whenever I say no to something, and they start crying, they still give it to them." Her in-laws disagree with how she disciplines her children: "You know, I'll spank them but that's about it…And then I get judged for that." Jade, like many women we interviewed, managed scrutiny over her caregiving practices and discipline while concurrently relying on their hosts for assistance.

Caregiving surveillance often resulted in conflicting child care practices, straining relationships between women and their hosts. Yolanda (a 44-year-old mother of two working in housekeeping) moved into her brother's house with her sons after her husband's incarceration. However, the siblings disagreed over how she parented her active 3-year-old. She explained, "He doesn't have little kids anymore, and he's not used to them, and that was a problem…my brother is older, he has no patience." Elisa (a 22-year-old mother of one working as an in-home

health aide) left a doubled-up home with her partner's family and eventually moved in with her parents and described a similar strain over caregiving surveillance. Recalling a conversation with her mother, she told us, "She puts me down by saying, "When are you going to pay attention to your daughter?"…I don't like my mom rubbing things in my face and telling me, "Oh, you don't do nothing for your daughter." Similarly, Leslie, introduced above, relies on her father for child care help. However, she said she does not like how he speaks to her son: "When he drinks, he'll say things that an adult shouldn't say to a kid." She also describes her father's assistance as unreliable: "Sometimes he'll pay for my son to do things, and then next time he's not in the mood." Reflecting on her relationship with her father, she told us: "It's okay, he's helpful with my son sometimes. It's just kind of hard living together." Leslie was concurrently managing credit card debt, bail bonds payments, and attorney's fees, totaling tens of thousands of dollars' worth of debt, and her precarious financial standing caused by her partner's incarceration extended the surveillance endured in her father's home. Though women, like Leslie, commonly reported appreciation for their family's caregiving assistance during partner incarceration, they negotiated caregiving in conjunction with surveillance. As such, they commonly reported limited independence in household decision-making and new (or prolonged) tensions with family members.

Women who moved to institutional living arrangements after partner incarceration, particularly shelters, and sober living facilities, also experienced scrutiny over their caregiving practices and fitness as mothers. Surveillance of mothers' caregiving practices is particularly common in family homeless shelters, which often supervise child discipline, establish child curfews, and mandate attendance at parenting programs (Reppond & Bullock, 2020). For instance, Gabby (introduced above) told us that her partner's incarceration prompted her to move out of their shared motel room for which he helped pay. However, the housing support program that Gabby moved into required mandatory parenting and life skills courses, and weekly children's programming run by caseworkers and social workers. Gabby's program monitored her caregiving: "At the house, we have surveillance. We have people that tell on each other. You can't spank your kids." Similarly, Pati (introduced above) told us that a central focus of her sober living facility was on the relationship "between mother and child" and that successful completion of the program would bring a housing voucher she could use to move into her own apartment. Such programs often assume that women's caregiving skills are deficient, while also embedding women in surveilling institutions that have the potential to separate them from their children through referrals to the child services system (Fong, 2020).

Romantic surveillance

New living arrangements or extended stays in shared homes stemming from partner incarceration also facilitated romantic surveillance, wherein family members or institutional housing providers monitor respondents' romantic relationships. For some respondents, their partners' incarceration created uncertainty around their future living arrangements above and beyond financial setbacks, as hosts regulated who could and could not live in their home. For instance, when Leslie's (introduced above) husband was released from jail, her father had to grant him permission to move back into their shared home. "I was nervous at first because he had the expectation that he was gonna come home and live with us. And I rented from my dad so it had to be okay with him for him to come back into the house and stuff. So, that conversation was hard," she said. Though Leslie secured a home for her partner, some respondents' social ties asked them to move again rather than live with someone who could invite invasive criminal legal contact. For instance, at her follow-up interview, Shelley told us that her mother agreed to house her partner only for 1 month before moving out. As she recalled: "You get out of jail, and then the paroles come over…she did not want none of that in her home." This uncertainty

was not limited to women who lived with friends and family. Thinking forward to her partner's release, Sally, who lived doubled-up with strangers, worried her landlord would not allow her husband to move back in with her due to home visits from probation: "We're probably going to have to move out because probation is going to be coming over. My landlords, I don't think they know yet. They're strict." This romantic surveillance was commonly reported by women in shared living arrangements following partner incarceration.

Women who sought out housing assistance from institutional sources after their partner was incarcerated—shelters, sober living facilities, and private market housing subsidies—also experienced romantic surveillance via explicit exclusions about who could live with them in their new home. For instance, Antoinette (a 37-year-old, unemployed mother of four) and her romantic partner experienced periods of being unhoused prior to his incarceration, but his incarceration and her pregnancy made it even more difficult for her to make ends meet, and she felt unsafe in the encampment where she lived after he was incarcerated and her belongings were stolen. She sought out a homeless shelter, but was unable to find one that would allow her husband to live with her after his release. Similarly, Claire (introduced above), who was unhoused for 6 months after her partner's incarceration, experienced romantic surveillance via institutional sources. She and her children cycled between sleeping in her car and local motels as they sought more permanent housing. Claire eventually found a housing assistance program that would cover entry costs of a new apartment (including security deposit and first month's rent). However, the assistance was conditional on her partner not living with her after his release from jail. Here, she recalls this experience and the tensions it led to with her partner:

> He was upset at first, because when I got this new place, he technically couldn't live with me, because he wasn't in the program with me. And he's like, "Well, where am I gonna stay?"… I flat-out asked him, "So, do you want me to be homeless while you're in there, just so when you get out?"… No, I can't do that.

With no other feasible options, Claire accepted the terms of the program and moved into an apartment where her partner could not live after his release. Housing assistance from institutional providers often arrived with exclusions on women's romantic partners, further straining these relationships.

Financial surveillance

Finally, women receiving institutional housing support following partner incarceration reported financial surveillance, or explicit limitations on how they can use their wages. Financial surveillance was unique to women receiving institutional housing assistance, as women who lived with friends, family, and strangers after partner incarceration largely did not report that their financial decisions were monitored by their hosts. For instance, Pati, a woman introduced earlier who moved into a sober living facility after her partner's incarceration, reported that her wages were pooled into a common fund and that she had to request that they purchase basic hygiene products like shampoo: "Our cash helps keep them running, and with the cash…they buy it. If a kid is sick, they'll give you money to go buy them medicine." Her program also took some of her state-provided benefits. She told us: "They have you sign up for benefits, and they take some of your benefits, and give you a certain amount each month." Gabby, also introduced earlier, told us that about 80% of her paycheck goes directly to her shelter program, who keeps it and will give it back to her when she "graduates." She reported that she is allowed to keep about $100 of the $600 that she earns weekly. Women living in institutional living arrangements following partner incarceration—specifically shelters and sober living facilities—commonly reported explicit financial surveillance regarding how they can access or use their own money.

Managing surveillance after romantic partner incarceration

The surveillance women experienced in their housing arrangements after romantic partner incarceration shows how partner incarceration strains living arrangements and how romantic partners experience surveillance beyond the criminal legal system. We show how moving into shared living arrangements after romantic partner incarceration also creates a new household task for women leaving independent homes: managing surveillance. For doubled-up non-movers, incarceration impedes women's plans to leave shared homes and prolongs surveillance. Women managed surveillance in shared living arrangements following romantic partner incarceration in two ways, both of which required considerable cognitive labor and emotion work: (1) by monitoring burdens on hosts and anticipating their hosts' needs and (2) by emphasizing the temporary nature of their stay (to themselves, their children, and their hosts). This cognitive labor and emotion work—work necessitated by romantic partner incarceration—plays a critical role in sustaining women's new living arrangements following partner incarceration.

Monitoring burdens and anticipating needs

Women leaving independent homes responded to increased surveillance stemming from partner incarceration by monitoring potential burdens on their host, often around the use of shared spaces. This management, most commonly reported from women living in shared homes with friends and family members, involved substantial cognitive labor around anticipating hosts' needs and monitoring demands on hosts (Daminger, 2019). Women in shared homes reported pressure to minimize their presence in the home and to be vigilant around cleanliness and noise (similar to the narratives of Shelley and Paulina above). When Monica, a 26-year-old mother working as a dental assistant, moved with her 1-year-old daughter into her mother's home after her husband's incarceration, she told us that "being a mom and living at my mom's house, that's stressful…I can't go into the living room and just have her toys all over the floor." She added: "Not having my own spot and having a child, it's hard…That's probably the most stress in my life." Others minimize burdens on hosts by limiting their time at home. After Edith's (introduced earlier) husband was incarcerated, she and her two children first moved to her mother's home, but eventually moved into a room rented from her boss due to crowding. Describing her daily routine after her husband's incarceration, Edith told us that she and her children leave their room by 7:20 am, are out for the morning and afternoon, come home to make dinner, and are asleep by 8:30 pm Similarly, Lisa (a 42-year-old mother of two working in retail) told us that she takes her 5-year-old son to her oldest daughter's home to not disturb the condominium complex where she moved in with her friend after her husband was incarcerated: "They don't play around there," she told us. "Everybody's quiet, so he don't really have—that's why I let him go to his sister's house, to play, to be a boy." The experiences of Monica, Edith, and Lisa highlight the cognitive labor associated with guest living arrangements. That is, women living in shared homes after their partners' incarceration anticipate their hosts' needs while also monitoring and enforcing these boundaries.

Some women lived with ambivalent or even openly hostile family members, who required additional labor to monitor and navigate. Recall that Megan moved into her father's home after her partner's incarceration. Her relationship with her father was strained, and she worried he would kick her out. When we first interviewed her at her father's home, she told us: "I have to be really careful that he doesn't get overwhelmed…like, he'll throw my ass out. So I have to be really careful to mind my Ps and Qs and make myself useful." Fearing eviction, Megan tried to avoid overwhelming him by "making [herself] useful." Her father was being threatened with foreclosure (which eventually came to fruition), and Megan tried to access a $14,500 personal injury settlement to help him keep the home. Another respondent, Gabby, destabilized after her partner's incarceration, struggled with addiction, and had an arms-length relationship with

her own family. As she sought institutional housing support, she negotiated with her family to sleep on the patio outside their home while her child slept indoors. Romantic partner incarceration prompts some women to turn to their ambivalent or estranged social ties for support, prompting additional cognitive labor to manage their stay.

Reinforcing temporary nature of stay

We also find that women engage in a substantial amount of emotion work—or managing feelings and regulating affect (Hochschild, 1979)—to manage discomfort around their surveilled living arrangements, primarily by reinforcing the temporary nature of their stay to themselves and their children. Women often told us that their current living arrangements were only "for now," a framing that helped make challenging living environments more manageable in the present (Harvey et al., 2020). As Monica, introduced earlier as living with her mother, explained to us, "I don't have my own house for me and my daughter yet, but I will in the future." Almost all women aspired to move out and into their own home for their families. Shelley, who moved into her mother's garage after her partner's incarceration, told us she focused on the future when her home life became challenging: "It's not gonna last forever. It's just temporary. So that's what I think about." Respondents also saw reduced cost living arrangements as a stepping stone that could help them achieve their personal goals, mitigating present tensions. Monica, who earlier identified her doubled-up living arrangement with her mom as one of her top stressors, also told us that, "We moved into my mom's house just to get myself, financially, you know, be able to move forward and get a place by myself." Similarly, Chloe (introduced earlier) told us, "I just sacrificed myself…because I knew once he got out, we wanted to be in our own place." Chloe managed her family's surveillance by focusing on the temporary nature of her stay and her goal of living in an apartment with her partner after his release.

Several women also emphasized the temporary nature of their living arrangements to young children who struggled to adapt to limited space and new rules in their shared homes. Lisa told us that her son lost "his happy place" and dislikes their new home, which they share with her best friend and her family: "My son is like, "I want my own place, I want my own room." That bothers me the most." Similarly, Paulie (introduced earlier) and her three children were living in her parents' living room during her baseline interview. Regarding her children, she told us, "Sometimes they're like, Momma, I wanna go back to our old house. You know, have their own room, own kitchen, own bathroom…they get annoyed in here." She comforts them by emphasizing that they will move out soon and back into their own home: "I just tell them, you know what, don't worry, once I go to school I'm gonna get a job and we're gonna get our own apartment." She continued:

> I tell her, you're gonna have your own princess bedroom with a princess bed, and then she gets happy…and the boys, I go, boys, you're gonna share a room and it's gonna be a little boy cave and you guys are gonna have your own bed…and then they get happy, too.

Paulie and others pointed to the temporary nature of their current living arrangements to help make surveilled living arrangements more manageable in the short term, both for themselves and for their children.

DISCUSSION

Romantic partner incarceration facilitates housing insecurity (Geller & Franklin, 2014), but less is known about how women manage housing insecurity after partner incarceration and how

these management strategies generate surveillance beyond the criminal legal system. Longitudinal interviews with 35 romantic partners of incarcerated men advance three key conclusions. First, women manage stressful and prolonged periods of housing insecurity after romantic partner incarceration by mobilizing their social support networks and, to a lesser extent, seeking out housing from institutional sources. Second, the homes available to women after romantic partner incarceration expose them to surveillance outside of surveillance from the criminal legal system. Women encounter domestic, caregiving, romantic, and financial surveillance in these living arrangements. Finally, women respond to surveillance by engaging in cognitive labor and emotional work to monitor burdens on their hosts and reframe their stays in shared homes as temporary. We address these points in turn.

Our first primary finding is that women manage prolonged and stressful periods of housing insecurity after romantic partner incarceration by mobilizing their social support networks and institutional resources. We find that unanticipated moves, protracted housing searches, and housing quality trade-offs are central to how women experience stress related to their partners' incarceration. Among nonmovers, romantic partner incarceration prolongs stays in shared homes by eroding women's finances and generating uncertainties around sentencing and the future of their relationship. This finding extends research on the consequences of incarceration for housing, most of which examines formerly incarcerated individuals themselves (Miller, 2021; Purser & Hamlin, 2022; Western, 2018), by reinforcing that housing insecurity is a central way that coresident romantic partners experience incarceration-related harms. Our reliance on narrative information provides a more nuanced accounting of housing insecurity after partner incarceration than available in prior survey research (Geller & Franklin, 2014). We extend past work by identifying how women manage housing insecurity and the trade-offs they encounter in their homes. Women leverage personal safety nets (including moving into the homes of family members, friends, and co-workers) and institutional safety nets (including shelters, vouchers, and sober living facilities) to find housing opportunities. Given the amount of work required to find stable housing arrangements for their children after romantic partner incarceration, securing housing may be a form of "inventive mothering" enacted by the romantic partners of incarcerated men (Randles, 2021). Moreover, women often described fraught relationships with their hosts, which may strain long-term resources and extend the symbiotic harms of incarceration into other domains. We also extend past work by showing how romantic partner incarceration not only prompts reactive moves away from independent living arrangements—it also prolongs stays in shared homes.

Importantly, disentangling the consequences of partner incarceration, compared to vulnerabilities that lead to partner incarceration (such as poverty), for housing insecurity is difficult, as these vulnerabilities and incarceration are mutually reinforcing. We find that some respondents had precarious housing situations prior to their partner's incarceration, but most reported living in homes that they valued (ranging from more desirable rented bedrooms to private apartments), and their partners' incarceration forced moves away from these hard-won homes. Additionally, partner incarceration, rather than poverty more generally, shaped the housing trajectories of women across several unique dimensions. First, incarceration introduced uncertainty around their partners' future presence in their household (Turney et al., 2023). At baseline, many men were still awaiting case adjudication and many women expressed uncertainty over whether their partner would be away for weeks, months, or years, or whether their partner would be reincarcerated in the future. These uncertainties over the future made it challenging to plan to leave surveilled, shared homes in the present. Second, incarceration introduced uncertainty around romantic relationships. Other women were uncertain over whether or not they would continue their relationship, which influenced their housing plans. Finally, women expressed uncertainty around whether their partner would be able to live in their current home upon release. Stigma or space-related concerns meant that some women's families did not want their partner to move in after his release, and institutional housing providers had similar

restrictions. Romantic partner incarceration may further intersect with other vulnerable statuses to compound housing insecurity. We find suggestive evidence that a noncitizen legal status magnifies these uncertainties and prolong stays in surveilled living arrangements, as women in relationships with noncitizen men were also uncertain if their partner would be able to remain in the country. Our sample includes only three undocumented/mixed-status families, but research systematically focusing on housing and surveillance among these families could extend this research in important ways. Taken together, these incarceration-related effects wove additional uncertainties into women's housing plans, beyond other vulnerabilities they had endured.

Our second primary finding is that housing insecurity following romantic partner incarceration facilitates the surveillance of women outside of the criminal legal system. As women attempt to stabilize themselves and their children after partner incarceration, they also become entangled in public and private safety nets that monitor them (Brayne, 2014; Fong, 2020; Hughes, 2021; Stack, 1974). We show how the scope of surveillance among these women extends well beyond their experiences in jails and prisons (Comfort, 2008) or their engagement with criminal legal institutions (Goffman, 2009; Miller, 2021). Drawing on broader research on surveillance among the housing insecure (Harvey, 2022; Hughes, 2021), we show how women looking for new housing arrangements after partner incarceration enter shared living arrangements where they are monitored, scrutinized, and have limited autonomy. Stigma related to their partner's incarceration further contributed to romantic surveillance for several respondents, as some women struggled to secure homes for their partners, pending their release. In contrast to the often episodic surveillance from criminal legal institutions through monitoring from jail staff, parole officers, and police (Comfort, 2008; Sandoval, 2020), surveillance within homes from private safety nets and institutional housing providers occurs daily and, if women do not comply with this surveillance, can lead to further housing insecurity. Moreover, because romantic partner incarceration disproportionately pervades communities of color, experiencing housing insecurity after incarceration may be another pathway linking family member incarceration to the surveillance of minoritized families, in particular.

In identifying the four primary types of surveillance (domestic, caregiving, romantic, and financial) that women commonly report in shared living arrangements, we advance research on the compromises and costs associated with living in a doubled-up household (Harvey, 2022; Harvey et al., 2021). Though we focus on reactive moves prompted by romantic partner incarceration, families who move into shared living arrangements after reactive moves may more generally also experience these four types of surveillance (DeLuca & Jang-Trettien, 2020). In addition to identifying how women in doubled-up homes experience these multiple domains of surveillance, our findings suggest the duration of surveillance endured by the romantic partners of incarcerated individuals can extend beyond the life course of a romantic relationship, as a substantial minority of women in this sample had ended their romantic relationship with their incarcerated partner at the time of their baseline interview. In contrast to criminal legal surveillance that usually diminishes as romantic relationships dissolve, the surveillance that women experience as a result of housing insecurity continues even after they end their partnership.

Tracing how women experience surveillance resulting from housing insecurity also extends past work on how the criminal legal system embeds or repels individuals from surveilling institutions. Prior research shows that criminal legal contact is associated with system avoidance—for example, evading institutions that have the potential to keep formal records and can make referrals to punitive systems—and that system avoidance can also proliferate to family members of the incarcerated (Brayne, 2014; Haskins & Jacobsen, 2017). However, our findings suggest that women attached to incarcerated men are pushed into, rather than away from, surveilling systems. For coresident romantic partners, incarceration prompts sudden and unanticipated moves from independent homes, leading women to lean on families, friends, and institutional programs. These same sources of support also monitor women in their new homes and limit their autonomy. This surveillance is consequential, as close monitoring can lead to future material insecurity (as women risk being expelled from their new homes) and symbolic penalties

toward women's identities as caregivers and independent adults (Harvey, 2022; Hughes, 2021). These results also suggest the symbiotic harms of incarceration may make system avoidance challenging for family members.

Our third primary finding is that women manage this surveillance by monitoring burdens on their hosts and reinforcing the temporary nature of their stay. Due to structural racism in the criminal legal system, romantic partner incarceration disproportionately impacts minoritized women. As such, managing surveillance to mitigate the threat of additional housing insecurity can be considered a form of motherwork enacted by minoritized caregivers to protect their children (Collins, 1994). Both monitoring burdens and framing stays as temporary require substantial cognitive labor and emotional work (Daminger, 2019; Hochschild, 1979). These findings extend past research on doubled-up living arrangements by underscoring the additional work involved in sustaining shared homes (Harvey, 2022; Harvey et al., 2021). Women living in institutionally supported housing arrangements, such as shelters or sober living facilities, adhere to a strict set of rules that dictate their entry and exit, relationships with other shelter residents, contact with their social networks outside, and their finances. For women living doubled-up in shared homes, they adopt strategies to minimize their presence in their home, to the best of their ability. Both groups of women manage their own and their children's negative feelings toward living in homes that are often crowded, uncomfortable, and have little privacy by reframing their stays as "temporary stops" (Harvey et al., 2020) or stepping stones to their own independent living arrangements. To the extent that most movers left homes where they did not live doubled-up with others, these strategies represent a new household task created by incarceration. This finding echoes and expands past research on the conflicts generated by collective motherwork (Gurusami, 2018) and within doubled-up living arrangements (Harvey, 2022) by highlighting the cognitive labor and emotional work that women use to sustain doubled-up households. By examining how women anticipate hosts' needs, monitor burdens, and manage their children's emotions in shared homes, we identify an understudied "cost" of doubling up and show how cognitive labor and emotional work help maintain shared households.

Limitations

These findings should be interpreted in light of several features of the study design. First, our analytic sample comprises coresident romantic partners, as housing insecurity following romantic partner incarceration is most salient for these women (Geller & Franklin, 2014). However, partner incarceration is also consequential for those not living together prior to incarceration, and future research may examine how these processes of surveillance following housing insecurity varies across residential status. Moreover, more work is needed to explore whether and how women's experiences with surveillance vary across institutional housing settings, given the different ways these programs are managed (e.g., comparing voucher programs, shelters, transitional housing, and sober living facilities). Future research should also examine whether incarceration of household members beyond romantic partners (including adult children and siblings) leads to similar patterns of housing insecurity and surveillance.

Second, the Jail and Family Life Study comprises men incarcerated in jail for at least 2 months (and their families). Patterns of housing insecurity and surveillance may vary among romantic partners connected to men in jail for shorter periods of time. Short jail stays can cause job loss and financial strain (Harding et al., 2014), though, and these families may also experience unanticipated moves. Patterns of housing insecurity and surveillance may also vary among romantic partners connected to men in prison, as longer sentences associated with prison incarceration may either push women to find stable arrangements (knowing their partner is not coming home for a while) or push women into especially economically precarious positions. Future research could better untangle how jail and prison incarceration of family members differentially influence their residential decision-making (and associated surveillance).

Third, findings should be interpreted considering the broader context of the Southern California housing market. Our fieldsite is highly impacted by an affordable housing shortage (California Housing Partnership, 2022). In such a context, our sample almost universally rented their homes, and families who were already highly rent-burdened often have no other alternative but to move after partner incarceration. We would anticipate families in other high-cost metropolitan areas may encounter similar housing challenges, though women living in more affordable rental contexts (or in residential contexts where homeownership is more common) may experience fewer reactive moves after partner incarceration (and, accordingly, less surveillance). More research is needed to explore how variation in different geographic contexts creates uneven symbiotic housing harms for romantic partners.

CONCLUSIONS

We find that frequent and unwanted moves to crowded, surveilled homes are a central way that women experience the symbiotic harms of their romantic partner's incarceration. Among nonmovers, romantic partner incarceration extends stays in shared, surveilled homes. Most women in this study struggled to find safe and stable homes for their families after partner incarceration. Although respondents appreciated the housing assistance that they received from friends, family, and institutional supporters, many also yearned for the privacy and independence that they enjoyed in past homes. These challenges persisted, with many women still searching for long-term housing solutions when we spoke to them for the last time, months, and sometimes years after their partner was incarcerated. As housing challenges embed women into surveilled living arrangements, this suggests that romantic partner incarceration pushes women into, rather than away from, surveilling systems. By highlighting how women's housing providers monitor them at home, we show how this surveillance extends well beyond the criminal legal system, becoming part of everyday life and another household task to manage in the wake of their partner's incarceration.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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