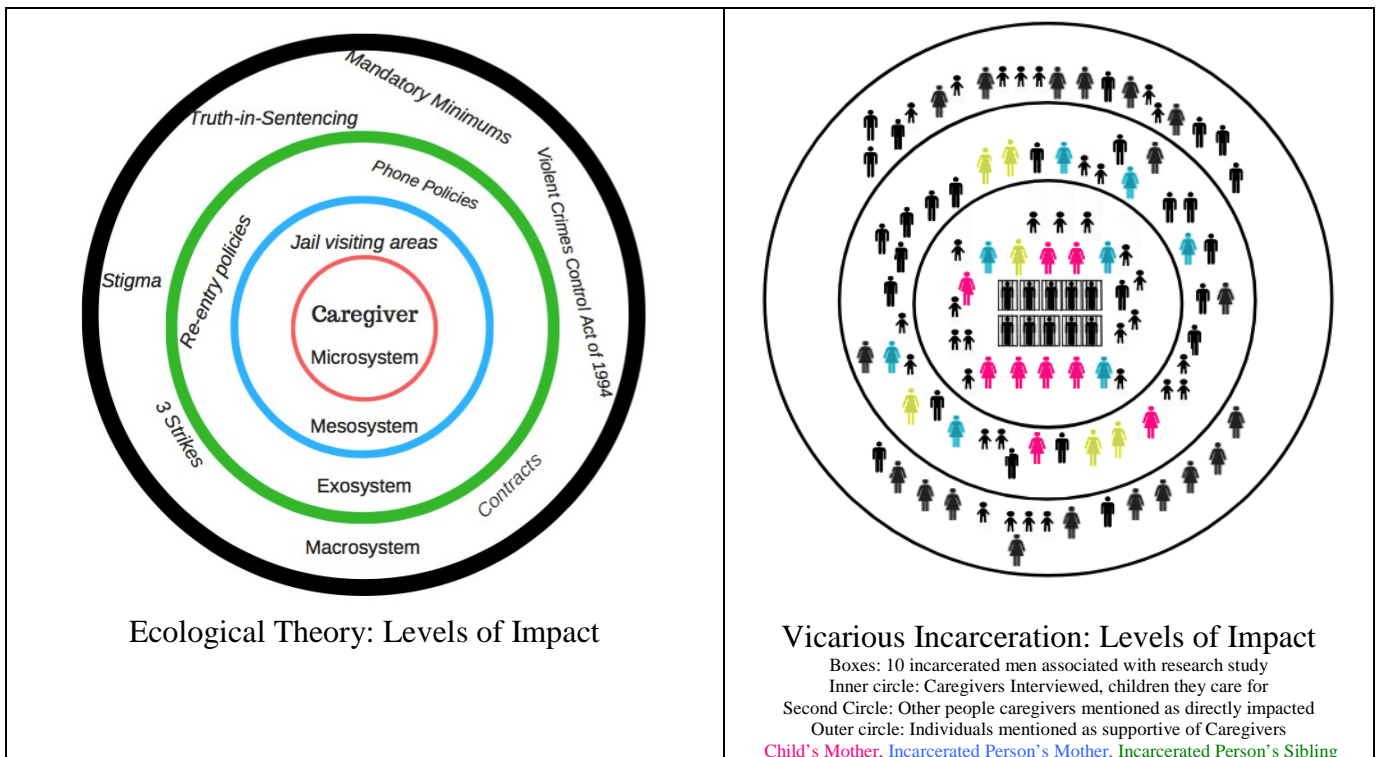


## ABSTRACT

When an individual goes to jail, family members are often left in the shadow of the incarceration. This qualitative research study contributes to the incarceration literature by focusing on caregivers' experiences at county jails, and by suggesting the usage of the term *vicarious incarceration* to fully encompass the levels of impact that incarceration has on the family. Caregivers in the present study engaged in a semi-structured interview modeled after Megan Comfort's (2009) examination of secondary prisonization at San Quentin. Findings indicate that caregivers visiting a county jail do experience secondary prisonization, both at the jail and within the home. However the emotional, physical, and financial toll that incarceration takes on the family has some notable differences from secondary prisonization, thus warranting a new term to describe the phenomenon: *vicarious incarceration*. The discussion contextualizes this finding through Ecological Theory and suggests implications for social work practice.



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