



## Classroom Supplement for Monetary Sanctions and the Criminal Legal System: Punishment and Revenue

### Discussion Topics and Questions

Many people have a “do the crime, do the time” mentality about persons convicted of criminalized activities. However, as discussed throughout the articles in this issue of Focus On Poverty, monetary sanctions can have long-lasting and even permanent repercussions for individuals exposed to the criminal legal system. What reforms, if any, would you propose to limit the long-term costs of legal debt for those who have difficulty paying?

Discuss the dual role of criminal legal financial obligations as both punishment and revenue generation. When does this dual-purpose serve justice seeking ends, and when does it become an unjust burden further amplifying inequalities in the United States?

Acquaintanceship density refers to the tightness of social networks across the spectrum of urban-to-rural demographic differences. Network norms develop over time within place-based networked communities and can be difficult to change once institutionalized. Yet change is essential to address the echoes of biased social systems still resonating throughout the United States; how does studying these social networks help understand both the strengths and weaknesses of court-system acquaintanceship density?

### IRP Resources

IRP webinar: The costs of monetary sanctions in the criminal legal system. Alexes Harris, Robert Stewart, Kate O’Neill, Daniel Boches, and Brittany Friedman. April 2022.

<https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/the-costs-of-monetary-sanctions-in-the-criminal-legal-system/>

IRP podcast: Native Americans and monetary sanctions. Brianna Waters & Robert Stewart. May 2022.

<https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/brianna-watters-and-robert-stewart-on-native-americans-and-monetary-sanctions/>

IRP webinar: Monetary sanctions: Using fines and fees to punish the poor. Alexes Harris. July 2017.

<https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/monetary-sanctions-using-fines-and-fees-to-punish-the-poor/>

IRP Poverty Fact Sheet. Pay-to-Stay jail fees in Wisconsin. Will Maher. October 2018.

<https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/pay-to-stay-jail-fees-in-wisconsin/>

IRP podcast: How governments and corporations made the criminal justice system profitable. Joe Soss.

May 2017. <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/how-governments-and-corporations-made-the-criminal-justice-system-profitable/>

## Other Resources

Alexes Harris, (2016). *A Pound of Flesh: Monetary Sanctions as Punishment for the Poor*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Veronica L. Horowitz et al. (2022, June). Dual debtors: Child support and criminal legal financial obligations. *Social Service Review*, 96(2), 226–267. <https://doi.org/10.1086/720016>

Brennan Center for Justice. (2021). *Punitive Excess*. Series of reports and analysis. <https://www.brennancenter.org/series/punitive-excess>

David J. Pate, (2016). The color of debt: An examination of social networks, sanctions, and child support enforcement policy. *Race and Social Problems*, 8(1), 116–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-016-9167-8>

Rachel Condry & Peter Scharff Smith (2018). The sociology of punishment and the effects of imprisonment on families. In R. Condry & P. S. Smith (eds.), *Prisons, Punishment, and the Family: Towards a New Sociology of Punishment?* Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198810087.003.0001>