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Immigrant Detention Family Study: Examining the Educational
Outcomes for Children of Detained Immigrants

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Social Ecology

by

Gabriela Gonzalez-Martinez

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Immigrant Detention Family Study: Examining the Educational Outcomes for Children of Detained Immigrants

By

Gabriela Gonzalez-Martinez

Master of Arts in Social Ecology

University of California, Irvine, 2019

Professor Susan B. Coutin, Chair

In 2013, Immigration and Customs Enforcement detained 477,000 individuals across the United States—a number that has double in the last decade alone. Immigration laws have become increasingly restrictive by criminalizing the non-citizen population, expanding the grounds for deportation, reducing opportunities for relief from deportation, and making detention mandatory for certain non-citizens. As immigration enforcement escalates, so do the number of children of immigrants who are affected by these laws despite being U.S.-born. Deciphering the consequences that parental detention imposes on children may help inform policy reform efforts. The literature on mass incarceration, a comparable and well-established body of scholarship, highlights a breadth of consequences experienced by children with incarcerated parents including increased poverty, household instability, deteriorating health and decreased educational outcomes. To determine whether similar consequences occur for children during parental immigration detention, I conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with children and spouses of ex-detainees who were held in one of Southern California’s detention facilities for six-months or longer. Findings from this study reveal that parental confinement impacts youth’s behavioral and educational outcomes and produces an element of insecurity and uncertainty—unique to mixed-status families because of the parent’s legal status. Future directions are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The following quote highlights the story of Sofia Mendez, a Guatemalan mother of three Salvador (25), Martin (21) and Camila (13) whose father Mateo was confined in a Southern California detention facility for six months before being released on a \$3,500 bond. Below Sofia describes the disruption that her husband Mateo's detention caused on her children's education.

We moved here because my husband [Mateo] had an order of deportation and the police were looking for him. At the time I was very sick, and ... sometimes we had no food or work, and we weren't doing so great. One day my 17-year old son [Salvador] said, 'Ma, they offered me work at a hencoop,' and then he just stopped going to school. He started working, helping us with rent and food. And my son [Martin]... there was a time when he stopped going to school too because I had no way to help him. Because there, [in Guatemala], you have to pay to go to school.

The quote by Sofia illustrates the educational barriers that the Mendez children faced as a result of their father's precarious legal status. Two out of the three children in the family were pushed out of school as teenagers due to their father Mateo's multiple encounters with immigration authorities. Camila, the youngest of the three, was the only one of her siblings who remained in school, but as her case is presented later in this paper, her father's detention hindered her emotional wellbeing causing significant drawbacks in her educational trajectory.

The dramatic increase in incarceration in the United States since the 1980's has paved the way for a robust body of scholarship on the consequence of confinement for incarcerated persons and their families. Less research, however, has examined a parallel system—mass immigration detention. Due to congress' failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform over the past few decades the question of what happens to children when their parents are forcefully removed from the home, and at risk of deportation, remains largely unanswered. In 2012, nearly 7% of all K-12 children in the U.S. had at least one unauthorized immigrant parent at risk of being placed in detention (Krogstad & Passel, 2015) and in 2013, the number of immigrant detainees under

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) spiked to 477,000 (Simanski & Sapp, 2013). The separation from a parent through immigration detention may have important implications for youth's future life outcomes including educational aspirations and expectations, mental and physical wellbeing, and social and economic mobility, among others. Given the vast expansion of immigration detention and its widespread community impacts, an important gap in the literature emerges: What are the impacts of prolonged confinement on the children of detained immigrants? Building on prior scholarship about immigration and incarceration, this paper offers an examination of the ways in which U.S. immigration laws impact families and disrupt youth's educational trajectories. Specifically, how, if at all, does parental detention—and the threat of deportation—impact youth's engagement in school? A body of work on children of the incarcerated suggests that there exists a generational effect on children whose parents are in jail or prison by creating household instability (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2013). I argue that immigrant detention has a similar generational effect on children living in mixed-status families (families where at least one parent is undocumented), which hinders their ability to perform well academically during their parent's detention. Additionally, some of these negative consequences may persist even after the parent is released—on bond—and/or deported, defining multiple points of suffering for children. Drawing upon semi-structured interviews with eleven Latino families, this paper details the experiences of children and spouses of immigrants confined in detention facilities across Southern California for a period of six months or longer and aims to uncover the costs and consequences of immigration detention for children of detainees.

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

Immigration Enforcement

Despite the categorization of immigration law violations as civil rather than criminal offenses most detention facilities today resemble and operate as jails and prisons to house non-citizens subject to mandatory detention for even low-risk, non-violent crimes (Schriro, 2009). Although Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) categorizes immigration detention as short-term, preventative, and non-punitive custody designed to ensure the appearance of immigrants who might otherwise fail to attend their supposedly fast-track removal proceedings, in reality detainees often spend several months in a detention facility before gaining access to a bond hearing (Bermudez, 2015). The length of stay in detention after a bond amount has been set is contingent on how quickly families can collect the money to pay the bonds which average in the tens of thousands.

A substantial infusion of money into immigration law enforcement in the post-9/11 era (Ackerman et al., 2014, Golash-Boza, 2015) has contributed to this intensified immigration enforcement. Congress has doubled the amount dedicated to imprisoning immigrants bringing the total budget to \$1.7 billion as furor over “criminal aliens” has become intertwined with post-9/11 racist fears and anti-immigrant political rhetoric. Moreover, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003, which replaced the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), is of particular significance for immigration policy because it transferred immigration law enforcement from the Department of Justice to DHS, and immigration policy took on a new meaning as it became central to the war on terror (Golash-Boza 2015).

The Looming Threat of Deportation

Absent inclusive and comprehensive immigration reform many mixed-immigration-status families are divided through detention and the threat of deportation. Scholars have theorized

about the U.S.'s reluctance to provide protection from deportation for undocumented immigrants and anthropologist Nicolas DeGenova has put forth an economic explanation arguing that the agricultural labor needs of the U.S. are restricting Latin American, and specifically Mexican, legal migration. DeGenova argues that migrant illegality is a judicial status, which signifies a person's social relation to the state—a political identity. Within U.S. immigration law, the term “immigrant” is reserved only for legal migrants who have been authorized by the governing body (DeGenova, 2007). Furthermore, immigration law is characterized by a set of strategies, tactics, and compromises that nations implement at particular historical moments to mediate the contradictions inherent in social crises and political struggles around the subordination of labor (DeGenova, 2007). Therefore, by producing a lasting migrant illegality, DeGenova argues that the mere threat of deportation is enough to render unauthorized migrant labor a disposable commodity; and, migrants' illegality has also placed them in a vulnerable position as an exploitable workforce.

Yet, while deportability is only theoretically supposed to render immigrants vulnerable, in practice unauthorized immigrants do face high deportation rates. Since 2009, the Obama administration has deported more than 2.5 million people with over 400,000 removals in 2013 alone (Gonzalez-Barrera and Krogstad, 2014), a rate significantly higher than any president before him. Deportability is clearly present in undocumented immigrant's lives as they may witness the deportation of a family member, friend, co-worker, or acquaintance. Deportability and illegality thus facilitate the subordination of unauthorized immigrants by regulating their lives. Daily activities such as driving and grocery shopping can be dominated by fear, danger, and a conscious awareness of the risk of apprehension. Hence, while DeGenova's work allows us to understand the concept of deportability and how it can govern people's lives through the

workforce, there is still no explanation for the consequences that families face when a loved one is confined. That is, a labor theory cannot adequately capture the significance of parental detention on children of detainees.

Legal Status Vulnerability

Legal status is a gateway to accessing healthcare (Menjivar 2002), housing assistance (Painter, Gabriel, and Myers 2001; McConnell and Marcelli 2007), higher education (Abrego 2006, 2008b), and employment (Gonzalez 2005; Fortuny, Capps, and Passel 2007)—opportunities that undocumented immigrants are systematically excluded from. Some scholars have coined the social isolation unauthorized immigrants face a state of liminal legality. Liminal legality is an in-between state that is characterized as a period of discomfort, waiting, and transformation, where persons are kept in a state of limbo (Gibb, Hambdon, Jamal, 2008; Vogt, 2013). In their work on liminality, Menjivar and Abrego (2012) theorize the ways in which immigration laws impose a state-sanctioned legal violence on the undocumented population as immigration enforcement policies and practices often yield harmful outcomes in the areas of family, work, and school. These different spheres, they argue, create forms of structural violence that produce immediate social suffering when a family member is forcefully removed from the home, and may also produce long-term consequences for key aspects of immigrant incorporation. Furthermore, Menjivar and Abrego (2012) contend that the law can also work at a macro level to block access to resources that promote the successful integration of immigrants. Because non-citizens are generally denied access to public benefits such as those mentioned above, they are trapped in stratifying institutions such as exploitative labor markets and inequitable education systems that impose and maintain an unequal society (Torres-Rivas, 1998).

Liminal legality shapes different domains of life for unauthorized immigrants as laws at the federal, state, and local levels seek to punish them but also place them outside the law. This dual contradictory goal makes immigrants simultaneously accountable to the law when it's convenient to punish them, but excludes them from legal protections or rights (Menjivar and Abrego, 2012). Hence, the premise of legal/structural violence is that while immigration law claims to protect rights, it systematically harms social groups. Using the lens of liminal legality and structural violence may therefore be the more appropriate approach in understanding the experiences detainees and their families.

Intersection Between Detention and Incarceration

Immigration enforcement policies are highly visible in the lives of undocumented immigrants and may produce several consequences for families and children when a loved one is detained. Moreover, the similarities in conditions of confinement between immigrant detention and criminal incarceration makes the collateral consequences of incarceration literature an appropriate theoretical and empirical starting point for research on detention. While the literature on consequences of detention is scarce, the literature on collateral consequences is robust and provides a point of comparison. For example, sociologists have studied the changes in children's behaviors post-parental incarceration (Turney and Haskins, 2014). Psychologists have studied student-teacher relations with children of the incarcerated and analyzed the relationship between parental incarceration and learning outcomes of children (Dallaire, Ciccone, and Wilson, 2010). And, sociologists have studied the propensity to delinquent behavior among children of the incarcerated (Wildeman, 2010). The following section documents the negative impacts that parental incarceration has on children while drawing parallels to the impacts of parental

immigrant detention. Particular attention is given to the behavior changes and the academic performance among children with a confined parent.

Behavior Changes Among Children of the Incarcerated

Children of the incarcerated are prone to undergo antisocial behavioral changes including withdrawal, depression, anxiety, emotional strain, shame and embarrassment post-paternal arrest—factors which may hinder their academic performance (e.g., Arditti et al., 2003; Craigie, 2011; Geller et al. 2009; Geller et al. 2012; Haskins 2014; Poehlman 2005; Wakefield and Wildeman 2011, and Wildeman and Turney 2014). Quantitative studies using ordinary least squares regression and propensity score matching have found that behavioral problems are more common among children who lived with their fathers prior to incarceration—likely due to a strong relationship that imprisonment severed (Geller, 2009). Moreover, behavioral changes among children of the incarcerated tend to become more pervasive over time and have a strong impact on educational outcomes. The dramatic expansion of imprisonment has led scholars to argue that although behavioral problems overall would still be common in a society without mass incarceration, the prison boom exacerbates the propensity of these behaviors and reproduces inequality onto children (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2013).

The threat of familial separation for immigrants poses threats to their children's welfare as well. For instance, children of immigrants may experience psychological stress and a heightened sense of fear as a result of living in communities where significant numbers of families have experienced arrest, detention and/or deportation. In addition, when a child is unaware of the nature of a parent's absence, confusing explanations may lead to radical behavior changes such as withdrawal, depression or aggression (Chaudry, 2011). Often unaware of the

complex immigration process, parents may hide the nature of the detained parent's absence from their child using excuses such as work for their absenteeism. After a prolonged absence, however, children might form their own assumptions as to their parent's departure causing behavioral changes that can hinder their educational achievement.

Educational Barriers for Children of the Incarcerated

Education has long been linked to a host of positive life trajectories such as economic, housing and job stability. Parental incarceration may negatively influence opportunities for upward mobility as children of the incarcerated can suffer poor school readiness, grade retention, and stigma (Turney, 2014; Haskins, 2014)—all factors that contribute to academic underperformance. Young school-aged children are particularly vulnerable to academic failure, as they may experience frequent tardiness or absences during a parent's incarceration. Furthermore, children who have lived through parental incarceration between the ages of one and five years old exhibit lower cognitive (childhood verbal intelligence) and non-cognitive (internalizing--depression, anxiety, and withdrawal, externalizing—destructive acts of aggression, violence and hostility, and, attention behaviors) readiness scores compared to their peers with never incarcerated parents (Haskins, 2014).

Grade retention carries critical consequences for future life trajectories such as criminal justice involvement, economic stability, and social mobility. Quantitative studies reveal through propensity score matching that children of the incarcerated are 1.47 times more likely to experience grade retention compared to their counterparts (Turney & Haskins, 2014). Additionally, children of fathers who experience first-time incarceration when children are between the ages of one and five years are particularly vulnerable to grade retention in the early

elementary school years (i.e. kindergarten through third grade). Importantly, the U.S.'s incarcerated population is not an accurate representation of society; they are poor, low educated, and disproportionately Black (Pettit, 2012). Thus, socio-structural factors may influence the academic outcomes of children of the incarcerated (Turney & Haskins, 2014).

Children with incarcerated parents may also experience stigmatization in school. Parental confinement may provoke teasing or ostracizing by other students; it may also cause youth to receive differential treatment such as lower classroom expectations or experience stigma from teachers. For example, previous studies reveal that children with incarcerated mothers suffer lowered teacher expectations. When compared to maternal rehabilitation (mother is “away at rehab”), maternal absence (mother is “away”), and maternal education (mother is “away at school”), maternal incarceration ranks highest among teacher stigma rating children of the incarcerated far less competent than their peers (Dallaire et al., 2010). Thus, adults who could offer emotional and material support for students may actually perpetuate the stigmatization of children of the incarcerated and shape their educational outcomes.

Mixed-status families experience uncertainty and strain when a parent is detained and facing the threat of deportation, which may obstruct children's academic achievement. The threat of deportation causes families to consider relocation. When families migrate back to their country of origin following a spouse's deportation the children—especially if they have lived the majority of their life in the U.S.—are forced to master a new and distinct school system on their own. If and when the family returns to the U.S., youth's formal education is interrupted yet again as they must learn to reintegrate to a different academic environment. Deciding not to relocate can still yield problems for children who are forced to grow up in a single-parent household. For adolescents, financial instabilities may ease their transition into the workforce and eventual

departure from school; at the very least, it could cause youth to fall behind in their coursework. Additionally, multiple periods of separation (migration, detention, deportation) may traumatize children who are too young to understand their parents' constant absenteeism. Given that schooling experiences can significantly shape one's life outcomes awareness about how parental detention influences youth's academic trajectories is a requirement to developing the appropriate strategies to better serve this population.

METHODOLOGY

This study stems from a larger project on immigration detention.¹ The present research study was designed to understand what are the collateral consequences of immigration detention on non-detained family members (e.g., spouses and children) during and after a parent's detention. In order to capture the impacts of forced familial separation, families were interviewed and given the opportunity to detail their experiences with the detention process. The interview guide is a detailed instrument built from existing studies of the education, health, financial and other outcomes of criminal incarceration and adapted to the immigrant detention context. It aims to capture multiple areas of life in order to assess how children's experiences may have been impacted by parental detention. A significant portion of the research on the collateral consequences of incarceration is quantitative in nature. Thus, this research adds nuance to

¹ The Immigrant Detention Study was carried out by two PI's Dr. Emily Ryo from USC and Dr. Caitlin Patler from UCLA. The project was carried out in three stages. The first stage took place in 2013-2014 and was a baseline survey administered to immigrants in detention facilities across Southern California who were class members of *Rodriguez vs. Robbins*, class action litigation mandating that detainees held in the Central District of California for six months or longer be granted a bond hearing to determine whether their detention remained justified. In total, 565 *Rodriguez* class members were surveyed in stage one. The goal of the baseline was to understand the population of long-term immigrant detainees, their experiences with the new bond hearings, and prepare to follow them post-release. The second stage of the project follows a subset of the baseline participants as they re-enter their communities post-release on bond. During stage two, 121 individuals were interviewed in the first year, post-release, with the goal of uncovering the impacts of long-term detention on former detainees and their families. I worked with Dr. Patler (the sole PI of stage three) to submit an IRB application, collect data, and take sole authorship of this manuscript.

existing work, identifying new categories of challenges by speaking in-depth with participants about their experiences, rather than relying on aggregate survey data.

Two interview instruments were created: one for spouses and one for youth (ages 11 through 30). The youth instrument partially draws on items from the Year 9 Follow-Up Wave of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, 2011). Questions schemes were adjusted as necessary for older vs. younger children. The spouse/partner protocol asked a variety of questions regarding economic and housing stability, relationship quality, as well as the spouse/partner's impression of the impacts of parental detention on each child. The goal was to triangulate the child and parents' understandings of these experiences and offer a holistic account of the familial impact.

Recruitment took place in the following manner. First, respondents who indicated having a spouse and/or child at the time of the IDS baseline survey (see footnote 1) were recruited for participation in this study. The primary goal was to sample individuals in a family unit. Thus, I attempted to interview a spouse/partner and at least one child between the ages 11 and 18, but up to age 30 as necessary). To achieve this, list-based sampling was used to identify respondents who met the study criteria. Although the goal was to interview more than one family member, not all units included children that were eligible.² In total 20 respondents including children under the age of 18, adults over the age of 18 with a detained parent, and spouses/partners of detainees were interviewed for this study.

Youth participants needed to be at least 11-years old and have had a parent detained in a Southern California immigration detention facility for six months or longer. By focusing on adolescents, I sought to capture a) long-term consequences and b) effects that may only appear or be problematic in adolescence due to youth's transition into adulthood. Spouse/partner

² No children under the age of 11 were not interviewed for this study.

participants were required to speak Spanish and/or English and have had a significant relationship with their partner before his/her detention in order to be able to track any changes in their child's schooling experiences resulting from the parent's absence.

Interview data were collected between December 2015 and February 2016. The interviews were conducted in English or Spanish by myself and another researcher. Most of the interviews took place in-person and ranged between forty minutes to 2.5 hours for youth and between one to 3.5 hours for adults. The majority of the respondents lived in Southern California. Interviews primarily took place in public places convenient to the respondents such as coffee shops and fast-food venues, and in some cases I was invited to the respondents' homes to conduct the interview. In cases where the respondents were no longer living in California or lived outside of a 50-mile radius, the interviews were conducted via telephone. As compensation for their time, adults received a \$40 gift card and youth received a \$20 gift card for their participation. Field notes were written after every interview which detailed ethnographic observations about the respondent's demeanor and attitude as well as a summary of the main themes that surfaced during the interview and any noteworthy matters. All interviews were audio-recorded (with the respondent's permission) and transcribed, and respondents were given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

For the analysis, field notes and interview transcripts were uploaded onto Dedoose, an online coding software system, and were coded and analyzed in two waves. During the first wave of coding a set of codes were derived from the literature on the collateral consequences of incarceration as well as the immigration literature on deportation, broadly. As additional themes emerged during the first wave of coding, additional codes were created to capture these themes and previous transcripts were recoded for consistency. To ensure intercoder reliability, the

transcripts were coded by myself and another researcher and reviewed on a weekly basis. Once the coding was complete, I closely examined patterns in the data to understand youth's schooling experiences during and post-parental detention. The examples in the sections that follow were selected because they most clearly illustrate these patterns and highlight the complications families and children face when a parent is forcefully removed from the home.

FINDINGS

Immigration enforcement practices in the U.S. lead to the involuntary separation of parents and children, for an undesignated amount of time, when the government detains and threatens to deport the parents of citizen children. Promoted as removing “dangerous criminals” from the streets, in reality, many detainees and deported persons are often not criminal offenders and are detained simply because of their undocumented status. Yet by contrast, the consequences children endure during parental absence from the home are physical, material, and long-lasting. Separating children from a parent may be a traumatic event regardless of age and maturity. In the course of this research study interviews revealed three major ways in which parental detention influences youth's educational trajectories: (1) it produces changes to children's behavior, (2) it formally disrupts their academic track, and (3) it creates feelings of uncertainty. For each of these categories, their after-effects are often enhanced by specific aspects of life in noncitizen and mixed-immigration-status families.

Behavior Changes Among Children of Ex-Detainees

Familial separation poses serious risks to children's economic security, wellbeing, and long-term development. In order to provide context for a child's physical and psychological wellbeing during parental detention, an 11-item stress scale was adapted into the interview instrument from the American Psychological Association. First, youth were asked to report any significant changes in a number of symptoms (e.g., frequency of headaches, nervousness, sadness, etc.), during a parents' detention and again in the last 30-days (at the time of the interview). The scale is designed to measure changes in multiple areas including eating and sleeping patterns, aggression, and anger, and loss of interest/motivation, among others. After answering this series of yes or no question, youth were then asked to describe in more detail how these behaviors changed and to report on their overall wellbeing during and after a parent's detention.

When a parent is forcefully removed from the home and placed in detention, children are vulnerable to a series of behavioral changes immediately following the arrest, throughout the length of detention, and even after the parent's release or deportation. Withdrawal, isolation, and the coping mechanisms that youth experience during a parent's detention were frequently brought up in interviews. Signs of withdrawal were represented in several different forms.

For example, 18-year old Julian began to isolate himself from his family during his father's absence. His technique of withdrawal was to immerse himself in a virtual domain—the world of video games. Emma, his older sister, described her concern about Julian's behavior: "He's really closing himself off. He doesn't like to talk about [my dad's detention]. I mean if he does he starts crying so I'm pretty sure there's something wrong with him, he just doesn't want to tell us." Besides isolating himself from his friends and family, Julian's motivation for school and other activities declined after his father's arrest. He stopped attending school and quit his

part-time job. At the time of his interview, Julian's parents were undergoing a trial separation, and his mother, Juana, was considering sending him to live with his father in hopes that he would get back on track with school and work after re-introducing an adult male father figure in his life. Julian appeared to be shielding himself from the world and cutting communication with his friends and family. The video games allowed Julian an escape into a virtual reality where his family's troubles did not exist.

Changes in children's behavior frequently caught the attention of school teachers. When Azucena (a 33-year old mother of four, from Rancho Cucamonga, CA.) was interviewed, she noted how differently all of her children responded to their father's detention. Her youngest son David, now seven, was four years old when his father was apprehended and too young to attend school at the time, but he attended a day care center; she recalls how he was affected by his father's absence:

Gabriela: Did you notice any difference in David's behavior?

Azucena: Yes, the teachers were concerned because he did not want to talk. They would ask him something and he would just [shrugs shoulders]. The teachers would say 'it's like he's not fully present, like we're not even here.' They thought he might have autism, but no, it was all because of what was happening with his dad. I mean, he did not have autism, I think it's just that he locked himself in his own world.

Azucena was unconvinced that David's loss of focus was likely due to autism. Instead, she believed David's isolation was a retreat into his "own world" or an alternate reality in response to his father's absence and that it was his way of coping with his reality, as if existing in two realities, one where his father was absent, and a second where he did not have to think about what was occurring. Similar to his younger brother David, Carlos Jr. (14), also seemed detached from reality. During his free time in school, he would physically seclude himself from others by sitting alone at the edge of the field and ignoring anyone who approached him and asked what

was wrong. Carlos Jr. mentioned that being asked about his father would make him upset. By segregating himself from others he could avoid being placed in the uncomfortable situation of having to talk about his father's absence.

Sometimes the withdrawal and isolation children exhibited led parents to seek out professional help for their children. From the Ramirez family, Antonia (a 44-year old, mother of three, from Los Angeles, CA.) articulated her concerns about her 13-year old daughter Julieta's behavior:

I got her counseling, so she could open up because I noticed that she was keeping to herself too much and that's not good because she started getting too attached to me. I have nieces her age, but she wanted nothing to do with them. They would [play] on bikes or skateboards, so I worried [about her] a little. She needs to do little girls' activities.

Julieta and Antonia lost their home after her father Juan was arrested by immigration authorities. The pair moved in with Antonia's parent, but Julieta was unhappy about the new living arrangement. Julieta's view of her own behavior during this time echoed her mother's concerns. She mentioned locking herself in her room to avoid interacting with multiple family members that would visit her grandparents' house frequently. Both of these interpretations (from a mother and daughter's perspective) detail how children become withdrawn and isolated as a result of a parent's detention.

Youth engaged in different strategies to cope with the reality of their parent's sudden and unexpected absence. For some, coping mechanisms involved blaming the parent for the family's situation. For example, from the Ortiz Family, Luciana—a mother of four children—Lorena (14), Gerardo (10) Alejandro (6), and Alexa (3) from Las Vegas, NV—explained that two of her children blamed their father for his absence. For example, six-year old Alejandro refused to see his father, Nicholas, during his stay in the Adelanto detention facility. Luciana recalled:

“When his dad was still not here, my son [Alejandro] was really angry at him and it came to a point when he was like “I don’t wanna see my dad.” When he was in Adelanto, they went to visit him, and he was like I don’t wanna see him. I don’t wanna talk to him. He was really angry.”

At the young age of six, Alejandro exhibited very clear signs of hostility toward his father for abandoning the family. The state had criminalized Nicolas and deemed him a danger to society, and to some extent Alejandro did the same. Luciana shared Alejandro’s perception of his father:

I remember [the therapist] was like draw a picture about how you feel. So, he drew a picture of a big house with us inside and then outside he drew a monster and then he gave it to the therapist and she was like: ‘what is in this picture?’ And he was like ‘it’s our house. This is me, this is my mom, my sisters and brother and then this is the monster.’ And then [the therapist] was like ‘who is the monster?’ And he was like ‘the monster is my dad and he’s trying to get inside our house.’ And that made me feel like oh my god he feels like his dad abandoned him. He just left and didn’t come back, and it was really, really hard on him.

This powerful quote delineates a child’s perception of his father as a result of the detention process. When Nicolas was first apprehended, Alejandro wanted to see his father and questioned the reasons for not being able to hug, touch, or have any physical contact with him during visitation. As the detention wore on, similar to the way society criminalized Nicolas, Alejandro almost demonized him for his absence and blamed him, not understanding the larger forces at work keeping the family apart.

Familial separation is difficult for children to understand and at any age they can construe their own ideas about a parent’s absence. For Alejandro, his father’s detention manifested in fear of abandonment and Luciana had a difficult time getting him to school because he feared that she would “not come back” like his father. Lorena, Luciana’s oldest daughter, also resented Nicolas for his absence and blamed him for the family’s troubles. During visitation Luciana’s daughter used to remind Nicolas that his responsibility was to be on the outside taking care of her and that

the family' troubles were his fault for being locked up. The teen rationalized that Nicolas's detention was the cause of her own misbehavior.

Children of detainees also showed signs of frustration, anger and hostility post-parental arrest, which could lead to punishment exerted by their parent, the school, or even law enforcement. When asked about his general mood at that time, Julian said the following:

I had like mood swings at the time. I was in class and this guy in front of me was moving his chair and I was so pissed that I was gonna hit him, but the teacher saw me she was like "what's going on" and I was like whatever and from there it was better, but yeah it wasn't that easy to open up about it.

This particular excerpt demonstrates two important points. First, Julian is explaining how different his general mood was during this time as he was clearly set off by actions that normally wouldn't affect him, and it was difficult for him to control his emotions. Had a teacher not been present, the situation may have escalated to a physical altercation between the two students that could have landed Julian in detention, suspension, or any combination of repercussions the school deemed appropriate. Second, Julian was hesitant to disclose his father's absence, which could have contributed to his short temper. Sporadic mood swings can be common for all adolescents, among children of detainees though, these behaviors highlight the frustration felt during a parent's detention.

A majority of youth interviewees revealed that during their parent's detention, they became increasingly emotional or agitated by matters that otherwise would not have bothered them. These feelings can cause youth to express themselves in verbal or physical ways that are considered out-of-the ordinary for them and can subsequently land them in trouble with parents, teachers, or even law enforcement. One example of this is the Cortez Family. Azucena's husband Carlos Sr. was arrested for attempting to make a purchase with a counterfeit bill. The nature of how Carlos acquired this bill is unclear, but the interviews with his children reveal that they view

their father's arrest as unjust. This perception of unfairness makes it difficult for Carlos Jr. and his younger brother Jonathan to accept their father's detention and leads to feelings of hostility and anger, which manifest in different forms. For example, Azucena mentioned getting phone calls from Jonathan's upset teacher complaining about his rebellion in class by speaking out of turn, disrupting the other students, and encouraging his classmates not to do their work.

Jonathan's teacher was aware of his father's absence due to detention, however, in Azucena's view she was unsympathetic of her son and would punish him rather than offer support.

Behavior changes may also lead youth to come in contact with law enforcement authorities. For example, Luciana recalls that her oldest daughter Lorena, who was 14 years old at the time, started "acting out" as she put it:

Lorena got in like three fights in school. One time she got in a fight and the police called me. She was acting out a lot, she even left the house, not just once, maybe three or four times. She didn't come home after school and I was like where is she. I was calling the police at 2am, 3am because I didn't know where my 13-year old daughter was. She had never done anything like that before. I know [having her dad gone] affected her.

Like her father Nicolas, Lorena became physically absent from the home and, inadvertently, involved with the criminal justice system (CJS) at a young age. Although it was later discovered that Lorena had nothing to do with a school fight incident where the police were involved, she was still exposed to the CJS and the frequent physical violence she was involved in at school subjected her to varying levels of punishment and could have increased her chances of interacting with law enforcement. The literature on school violence and security supports the premise that early contact with the CJS may lead to future offending and or apprehension as well as labeling youth (Kupchik, 2009; Fuentes, 2003; and Fuentes, 2011); if Lorena would have continued to engage in fights at school, she may have faced far worse consequences.

Lorena's was not the only example of familial exposure with the CJS post-parental detention. Soon after her husband's arrest, Martina Montes' oldest son Tomas, who was 23 years old at the time, was also arrested. Though the details of Tomas's apprehension were not revealed, from what was gathered in the interviews with both Martina (mother) and Paola (Martina's daughter), Tomas took on the role as the head of the house and became involved in an illegal business as a direct result of his father's detention in order to increase the family's shrunken income. Tomas had no previous trouble with the law before his father's detention; he had been working a steady construction job, helped his wife raise their son and provided for his family. Both Martina and Paola assured that if not for his father's arrest, Tomas would have never participated in unlawful conduct.

The scenarios in this section prove to be significant for a number of reasons. First, although these findings cannot be generalized to all children of immigrants, the forceful removal of a parent from the home may cause significant behavior changes including withdrawal, isolation, and increased hostility and anger among youth. Second, while children of detainees are not necessarily more inclined to engage in delinquent activity post-parental arrest, there may be a greater opportunity for them to be exposed to law enforcement entities, which can increase their possibility of being apprehended and labeled. Third, familial separation places emotional strain on the children and they cannot always contain their frustration—lashing out at their parents, or others. The behavior changes detailed in the first section may consequently influence other aspects of youth's lives, one of them being their educational outcomes. The next section details the academic outcomes for children of ex-detainees.

Academic (under)Performance Among Children of Ex-Detainees

Parental immigration detention yields school related consequences for children including, but not limited to, trouble concentrating on schoolwork, loss of motivation, lower grades, increased school absence, and desistance from school altogether. Overall, the families in this study all noted that prior to detention they all had no trouble with students' school attendance, performance in the classroom, or grades. Once a parent was apprehended, however, all families noted a series of changes in the youths' schooling experiences.

One of the most common school related consequences was trouble concentrating on schoolwork. Many adolescents reported that preoccupation with their parent's case and the family's resulting economic troubles prevented them from focusing during class and hindered their performance on coursework and exams. The case of Paola, an 18-year old from Norwalk, CA., illustrates the disruption to her education during her father's detention. Paola had enrolled in community college and had recently begun taking courses that summer, just weeks before her father was detained. She mentioned that there were numerous occasions when she had difficulty remaining focused on the instructor's lecture.

Gabriela: While [your dad was in detention], how did you feel about school then?

Paola: I went, I did pass my courses, but I didn't feel as focused as I did like after he was released [from detention]. Because I did attend another semester after he was out already. And that's when I felt a difference because I went to school and I paid attention to it. And when he wasn't here, I was just worrying about how we were going to pay the rent. I thought I should be working instead of coming to school.

Here, Paola contrasts her academic performance during and after her father's detention. In addition, she highlights the many stress factors that contributed to her lack of concentration in school. The loss of income after a parent's arrest caused Paola' family to tighten its spending routines. Like Paola, many of the youth interviewed, regardless of whether or not they were of

working age, felt pressure to economically contribute to the family.

Felipe, 19, from Bakersfield, CA. was in a similar situation as Paola when his father was detained. At a young age Felipe discovered that he has a learning disability which poses and magnifies academic challenges for him. During his father's detention his academic troubles were multiplied by his mother Renata and his older sister Natalia's health and wellbeing. Renata was clinically diagnosed with depression and was on heavy medication throughout her husband's detention. Felipe's sister, Natalia, has a physical condition in her bones that prevents her from standing for long periods of time, and, limits her ability to hold down a job. Both his mother and his sister's health contributed to Felipe's increased state of concern and prevented him from fully reaching his academic potential.

In addition to having trouble concentrating in school, many students struggled to maintain their grades up during their parent's absence. Of the families who participated in this study, there were ten cases in which family members noticed changes in children's grades as compared to before their parent's detention. In some cases, the change in grades was more severe than others. Luciana (a 37-year old mother of four from Las Vegas, NV.) recalled: "everything went down...Lorena, my daughter the oldest one, her grades went down. She just didn't wanna know nothing about school. She didn't care about school. Her grades went to F."

Increased school absences during a parent's detention or lack of motivation to attend school were a common occurrence among children in this study. For example, 19-year old Felipe missed classes for two straight weeks following his father's detention and 17-year old Julian would constantly skip school because he was worried about his father's health and wellbeing in detention. Other times, court-related activities caused children to miss school. For instance, 13-year old Julieta recalled missing classes because she had to attend her father's hearings which

took place during school hours. In addition, the unpredictability of courts leads to frequent rescheduling of cases, making her miss more days of school. Increased school absence is linked to worsened academic performance and grades (Lehr, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2004; Phillips, 1997; Sheldon, 2007); and, missing school on consistently exposes students to academic failure and grade retention.

For some families, the most intense educational consequences they endured was children dropping-out of school altogether. Of the eleven families that participated in this study, six children from four families, all teenagers or young adults of working age, dropped-out of school soon after their parent was apprehended by immigration authorities. Their reasons were principally motivated by the financial burden the family faced during detention. Family responsibilities including out-of-school employment and care of siblings and elders have been cited as having a great influence on female students as well as students of color, and, are main contributors for youth desisting from school (Stearns and Glennie, 2006). 17-year old Julian, 19-year old Felipe, and 18-year old Paola were all just under 18 years old when their fathers were arrested, and each mentioned their family's financial instability as the main reason for dropping out of school. In these cases, youth were forced to make the difficult choice between attending school or working to help subsidize their family's income. The following excerpt highlights the choice students have to make:

Gabriela: Was when you decided to stop going to school or were you still going to school when you got the job?

Julian: I had a job while I was going to school. I knew the owner, so he was cool with me working there as much as I could, but I wanted to work more and help out more, so I just quit school from there.

Julian was fortunate to find an employer who was willing to work around his school schedule without being demanding on the job. Yet, even then he commented that his father's absence

forced him to assume adult responsibilities and he took it upon himself to be a provider for his mother and siblings. Although none of the students were working full time the pressure of juggling both work and school along with their father's detention was enough to force them to choose familial duties over school responsibilities.

Not all students are passionate about school and for youth who are already less motivated or lack the drive to pursue their educational goals, any added pressures can facilitate their abrupt end to their academic trajectories. This was 18-year old Paola's case. She shared, "I've never been a person that likes school. I get distracted easily. I go to school because, you know, it's the future, my future, but other than that, if I had a choice not to go, I wouldn't go." Though she did aspire to be a veterinarian, and understood the training that entailed, Paola was unenthusiastic about following her academic dreams. Her father's detention compounded the feelings of not wanting to be in school and this, along with the low grades she received, made it easy for her to not re-enroll in college courses the following semester. Nineteen-year-old Felipe echoed these same sentiments of feeling forced to leave school during his father's detention:

I thought I had to leave school because my mom is sick and I wanna help her. And the other reason I stayed home was because I had a hard time understanding the course content and I didn't have that much money to pay for classes and books and all that stuff. So, I stopped going.

Apart from citing lack of transportation and money to pay for classes and materials, Felipe noted that his mother was battling diabetes as well as depression and remained heavily sedated throughout his father—Adan's—detention. Considering his mother's medical condition, Felipe assumed a sense of responsibility to not add any more strain by asking her for money and transportation to school, but also, to staying at home and looking after her. With an absent father and a mother battling health complications Felipe was unaware of the financial support he was eligible for as a U.S. citizen and instead de-enrolled from college.

The narratives presented in this section reveal several barriers to academic achievement children face when a parent is forcefully removed from the home because of the parent's legal status. In some cases, the negative academic experiences lead to poor academic performance, while other times they lead students to end their academic trajectories abruptly and prematurely. Familial separation is then magnified by the complicated nature of the immigration detention process and the threat of deportation transforms families' lives in significant ways. The following section details the uncertainty and recurring trauma that families of detainees endure when a loved one is apprehended by government authorities, highlighting the uniqueness and distinctiveness of immigration detention in comparison to criminal incarceration.

Insecurity & Uncertainty Prevalent Among Mixed-Status Families

The complexity of the immigration system produces multiple stages of uncertainty for detainees and their families. The first wave of uncertainty surfaces during the initial apprehension when families of detained immigrants are unaware how long a family member will stay in custody, whether or not bond will be granted—and if so how high, and concern about the fate of the detainee—namely, whether or not they will be deported. The second wave of uncertainty surfaces when individuals are released, after bond payment. While paying the bond grants a person temporary release from detention (often with conditions of confinement such as ankle monitoring or in-person check-ins at field offices) and the opportunity to appeal a case outside of a detention facility, release on bond does not equal freedom or a not-guilty verdict. Quite the contrary, released individuals may still lose their appeal and be placed in removal proceedings.

For the Ramirez family, Juan's detention surfaced feelings of insecurity and uncertainty from the moment he was apprehended. Juan (a formerly detained father from Los Angeles, CA.) had been deported prior to the family's enrollment in the study, and his 13-year old daughter Julieta along with her mother Antonia had spent months driving from Los Angeles to Tijuana, Mexico to visit him. His wife and daughter knew all too well the potential consequences of a second apprehension. During her interview, Antonia expressed concern with the degree of force used during the arrest for which he was recently in detention. She remembers sitting in the car ready to pull out of the driveway and head to work one morning when the vehicle was surrounded by a Special Weapons and Tactics team with guns drawn, tapping the window and screaming, ordering her to turn off the engine:

They grabbed him, threw him on the floor and jumped on him, I was so upset. I recall the person who arrested him the first time. She looked at me, she said, 'Antonia? You know why I am here.' I said, yeah. 'I'm not going to stop you. Do your job.' But I told her 'you know there's no need for all that. He's not a criminal, you know he's not a criminal he just re-entered the country that's it there's no need for that.'

An initial encounter with immigration officials as aggressive and forceful as the one experienced by the Ramirez family set the stage for the degree of treatment they could expect to receive in the immigration system. Antonia felt dismayed by how her husband's case was handled in court and she believes Juan was discriminated against due to his appearance. "I think they go by the tattoos. I think that's why they put the bond so high. But if they look at his records [you'll see] he never shot anyone, he never carried a gun, so I think that was ridiculous. I think they just based it on 'oh well he was ex-gang member whatever. Let's give him a \$50,000 bond.'"

While experiences in detention are comparable to incarceration there are still stark differences that, in the eyes of mixed-status families, make detention more unbearable. The indefinite nature of detention can place strain on families as their ability to plan for the future is

blocked. Luciana (a mother of four from Las Vegas, NV.), describes the difference between her husband's incarceration and detention. "In jail you're like well, you're gonna do time and you're gonna come home, but immigration, you're up in the air, you don't know what's gonna happen." The uncertainty of a parent's stay in immigration detention may also cause psychological, emotional, and financial strain for the families. Antonia, whose husband is currently appealing his case, recalls how she lived two years of her life in uncertainty when he was in a detention facility in Southern California.

"It's really hard knowing that you have to drive to the facility, pick up your daughter, every weekend is taking your daughter in there to that place, just for her to be able to see her father behind a glass! Uh for two years. Uh... I think it takes part of your life, it takes your stability, it just breaks you in every single way. I don't even think I have the words to tell you how much it affects you. It just...breaks you, it breaks you."

This example highlights how the punishment imposed on parents extends through to the children of detainees. That is, children also suffer parallel consequences and are subjected to a "de facto detention" which treats U.S. citizen children like undocumented immigrants incapable of reuniting with their parent and essentially re-structuring families into single-parent households.

Detention patterns are gendered. As such, the detained parent is most frequently a father and the head of household which imposes a steep economic impact on the family. Even when families do manage to post the relatively high bond amounts imposed by the courts there is no guarantee that the case will have a favorable outcome. Lacking constitutional protections such as court-sponsored legal counsel families must find a way to raise money for attorneys and bonds through savings, family contributions, church donations, and many are forced to put up their house as collateral. Although the public notion is to assume that paid attorneys automatically place immigrants at an advantage in the system, this is not always the case. Participants mentioned time and again that even when they paid for an attorney this person was often

unreliable, hard to reach, and “just took my money” leaving families to fend for themselves in a complex system.

Upon release from detention there are two possible outcomes for ex-detainees, they can either win their appeal and be granted the opportunity to stay in the U.S., or, the second and most common outcome is that they will lose their case and be ordered to exit the country. As a result, a second phase of uncertainty and insecurity surfaces. Three of the eleven families reported that they had a plan in the event that the spouse was denied bond and deported directly from the detention facility. This back-up plan frequently entailed the deportee resettling in Tijuana, Mexico, finding work, and saving money to re-enter the U.S. without inspection. More commonly, families tried to avoid this thinking. Others noted that planning for deportation would mean they gave up. “Then what are we fighting for?” said Antonia, a mother of three from Los Angeles, CA. noting that giving up would mean all of the time, energy, and resources spent fighting the case would be wasted. For others, the mere thought of their spouse’s deportation was unimaginable because “he didn’t do anything wrong,” and in a few extreme cases, exiting the U.S. meant putting the deportee’s life in danger and they feared exposure to violence if they returned to their country of origin.

Among the many forms of uncertainty that emerge for families post-release is a heightened awareness of legal authorities. For example, while she herself is a legal permanent resident, Antonia mentioned how nervous she gets when driving in the car with her husband.

I’m okay if I’m driving by myself but if [my husband’s] in the car and they pull behind me, I know they run my plates. If he’s in the car I get nervous. He says: ‘who cares if they pull us over.’ I care! I don’t want to get pulled over. They’re gonna question you and then you know...I always think that, when he’s in the car.

Prior to her husband’s detention Antonia and her family enjoyed outdoor activities such as going to the park and bike riding, all of which came to a halt when Juan was apprehended. The concern

about being stopped and questioned by the police inhibited Antonia's willingness to engage in as many social and outdoor activities as before. Even though Antonia has legal permanent residency status, she worries that encounters with law enforcement might put her husband at risk of apprehension, causing her to live in constant fear for her family.

Well-founded concerns of re-capture are common for ex-detainees and their families—and for some, the possibility of being re-detained comes closer as was the case for the Cortezes. Azucena's husband Carlos had several conditions of release aside from the \$15,000 bond the family paid. The first condition was participation in the Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP) that required in-person house visits from an ISAP official. The second was in-person check-ins to the ISAP facility in San Bernardino, CA. During one of these visits to ISAP Carlos was informed that an application for his appeal had not been filed in time and thus he would be re-detained contingent upon bed space in the Adelanto detention facility. At the time, Azucena was in the third trimester of her fourth pregnancy and worried about her husband's future. She recalled thinking "I'm pregnant, I cannot work two jobs, what am I gonna do?" Carlos was luckily released after 12 hours in custody by mere luck—lack of bed space at the detention facility, highlighting the arbitrariness of the system. This example underscores the prevalent fear of re-apprehension as even a simple misunderstanding (like misinformation by a lawyer) can lead to the re-detention of immigrants and underscores the constant state fear of deportability and fear families live in.

Instances such as that of the Cortez family demonstrate how insecurities do not automatically disappear post-release and influence several aspects of everyday life. Carlos is unaware of how the legal system works, what petitions, motions, etc. he can and should file for his case, and can only do so much for his lawyer to submit required paperwork on time. The

immigration system, however, did not consider nor care about the circumstances and was about to separate a man from his family for a second time on a minor technical infraction. Other families were even less fortunate than the Cortezes. Eighteen-year-old Paola's father Joaquin was arrested and detained for a second time after receiving a notice to appear at an ICE field office. Upon arrival Joaquin was handcuffed and informed that the judge had ordered his immediate removal. Paola recalls the day her dad was deported:

Paola: He got sent a letter that he had [to appear in] court. That morning I went to work, and when I came back, [my parents] weren't home yet. When my Mom got home she was – how do you say it?

Gabriela: Trembling?

Paola: Trembling, yeah, a lot. I asked, 'What happened?' She was like 'your dad got deported.' I'm like, 'Okay. It starts all over again, I guess.'

The Cortez and the Montes families' scenarios challenge the notion that ICE focuses its enforcement efforts on apprehending and removing "dangerous criminals" from society and brings to light the uncertainty that families endure throughout immigration detention and the post-release appeals process. These case studies underscore the ways in which minor administrative errors can lead to a person's re-apprehension and threaten permanent familial separation via deportation even when there has not been a crime committed. Moreover, fear and uncertainty remain, and in some cases are magnified rather than eliminated, after a parent's release from detention. Thus, long after release on bond, families continue to be struggle with the web of immigration and the insecurity of their unknown fate plagues their ability to plan for a future.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to investigate the consequences for families and children whose parents experienced a prolonged period of confinement in immigrant detention facilities across southern California. Prior literature on the consequences of enhanced immigration enforcement has detailed the fear of apprehension pre-detention, or, familial experiences post-deportation, but very few actually attempt to examine the collateral consequences for families in the liminal state of existence during and post immigrant detention. Currently, as many as 6.6 million children in the U.S. live in mixed-legal status families where at least one parent is an unauthorized immigrant at risk of being placed in detention (Warren & Kerwin, 2017). The findings of this study reveal that familial separation via immigrant detention may produce behavioral changes, obstruct youth's educational paths, and thrust families into a complicated system that hinders their wellbeing and limits their ability to plan for the future.

Immigration detention is meant to serve as a temporary hold for immigrants while their immigration cases are resolved and is not a guilty sentence being carried out. However, the uncertainty that characterizes the entire immigration process is stressful to families who express that insecurity of the outcome makes detention practically unbearable. Unlike incarcerated U.S. citizens who cannot legally be deported, noncitizens run the risk of being deported to their country of origin completely impacting and altering their family's life in the U.S. regardless of whether or not a spouse and children decide to relocate with them. Complicating matters, even individuals who have legal status in the U.S. (e.g., LPR status, Visa, Temporary work permit, etc.) are at risk of losing their position if it is considered they have violated the law. In this way, immigration detention in the U.S. acts as a form of state sanctioned violence to produce and reproduce immediate and long-term social suffering to detainees and their families as their futures

in this country lie in the discretion of a single judge. The high uncertainty, recurring trauma of the judicial process, and forced separation produced by parental immigrant detention causes effects that may have long-term consequences for these families and this population.

Given that immigration violations are civil rather than criminal one should not expect administrative detention to impact families in such ways. Yet as has been demonstrated by the narratives in this paper, families of detainees become engulfed in the legal system along with their loved ones regardless of having American citizenship themselves. Although the legal system treats the immigrant as an individual entity, and judges decide cases based on the actions of a sole actor, those decisions significantly transform the lives of family members who depend on the detainee as a principal provider. The entire family unit therefore suffers the legal repercussions and serves a de facto detention along with their spouse and parent. Using Menjivar and Abrego's concept of liminal legality I raise the argument that even youth who are U.S. citizens themselves experience liminality as members of families and communities impacted by immigration enforcement practices. As the testimonies of those closest to detainees reveal here immigration policies also infringe on the rights of U.S. citizens when children are involuntarily forced to exist in the same liminal space as their parents—and to a degree are mirroring their parents' detention in the free world.

The nature of the qualitative data collected in this study allows for a more in-depth analysis at the ways by which youth are impacted by their parent's detention and the findings from this study surface several theoretical takeaways. First, youth are experiencing behavioral changes that partially mirror that of detainees themselves and may have severe consequences for their future wellbeing. For instance, Lorena, the fourteen-year old from Las Vegas, NV, demonstrates one way in which children can be characterized as troubled teens, and children can

be labeled as “bad” and admonished by parents, teachers, and—in more serious cases—law enforcement. The behaviors exhibited by children of detainees may warrant concern from parents, school officials, or law enforcement, and increase their possibility of encounters with the criminal justice system.

Second, the diminished academic outcomes for children of detainees warrant greater attention. Of the nine youths interviewed, all affirmed their grades declined when their father was in detention. Furthermore, youth who already felt they had trouble understanding the material or focusing in class experienced an even greater pressure in school during this time and many older teens ultimately dropped-out. While this study is composed of a relatively small sample size and is not representative of all the children of detainees, it highlights how parental detention may influence youth’s academic performance and significantly shape their educational aspirations and outcomes.

Third, the complexity of the immigration system produces multiple waves of uncertainty and stress for the surviving family members which ultimately alters the family dynamics and lifestyle. Planning for future life events is placed on hold when a parent is detained because of the ambiguity about a parent’s length of stay in detention, or threat of deportation. What’s more, many families cannot even begin to consider an alternative living arrangement in the event that a spouse is removed from the country. The uncertainty and insecurity that the immigration system breeds therefore leaves children trapped, living in a liminal space until their parent’s case is resolved.

CONCLUSION

A robust body of scholarship documents the dramatic rise and harms of mass

incarceration, yet very few studies have been able to empirically examine the impacts of mass immigration detention, a system that has grown to mass proportions in the last decade alone. Recent figures show that well over six million children in the U.S. have at least one parent who is an undocumented immigrant and at risk of being placed in detention and deportation proceedings (Warren & Kerwin, 2017). This nature of familial separation can significantly interrupt youth's educational trajectories at multiple stages in their lives. Future research should seek to examine the consequences of parental detention for youth beyond the educational arena and as they transition into adulthood. Doing so would underscore the need for legislation that provides greater protection from deportation for immigrants, as well as services for their family members during the detention process and after bond release. In doing so the negative outcomes that families of detainees face may be minimized, and increased awareness about the consequences of detention may help mitigate the inequality reproduced onto the next generation, children.

Appendix A

Demographics Table

Pseudonym	Family Name	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Legal Status	Relationship to focal R
Camila	Mendez	Hispanic/Latino	Female	13	U.S. Citizen	Child
Sofia	Mendez	Hispanic/Latino	Female	42	Undocumented	Spouse/Partner
Paola	Montes	Hispanic/Latino	Female	21	U.S. Citizen	Child
Martina	Montes	Hispanic/Latino	Female	44	U.S. Citizen	Spouse/Partner
Julian	Reyes	Hispanic/Latino	Male	18	U.S. Citizen	Child
Emma	Reyes	Hispanic/Latino	Female	22	U.S. Citizen	Child
Juana	Reyes	Hispanic/Latino	Female	49	Undocumented	Spouse/Partner
Julieta	Ramirez	Hispanic/Latino	Female	13	U.S. Citizen	Child
Antonia	Ramirez	Hispanic/Latino	Female	44	Legal Permanent Resident	Spouse/Partner
Felipe	Puente	Hispanic/Latino	Male	19	U.S. Citizen	Child
Natalia	Puente	Hispanic/Latino	Female	21	U.S. Citizen	Child
Renata	Puente	Hispanic/Latino	Female	41	U.S. Citizen	Spouse/Partner
Carlos Jr.	Cortez	Hispanic/Latino	Male	14	Undocumented	Child
Jonathan	Cortez	Hispanic/Latino	Male	11	U.S. Citizen	Child
Marina	Cortez	Hispanic/Latino	Female	33	Undocumented	Spouse/Partner
Luciana	Ortiz	Hispanic/Latino	Female	37	Undocumented	Spouse/Partner
Lucas	Cisneros	Hispanic/Latino	Male	45	Visa	Spouse/Partner
Ana	Campuzano	Hispanic/Latino	Female	35	Undocumented	Spouse/Partner
Laura	Fuentes	Hispanic/Latino	Female	62	U.S. Citizen	Spouse/Partner
Ignacio	De La Cruz	Hispanic/Latino	Male	42	Undocumented	Spouse/Partner

Appendix B

Family Tree

Family Name	Detained Parent	Spouse Interviewed	Spouse Legal Status	Children Interviewed	Children's Legal Status
Mendez	Mateo	Sofia	Undocumented	Camila	U.S. Citizen
Montes	Joaquin	Martina	U.S. Citizen	Paola	U.S. Citizen
Reyes	Antonio	Juana	Undocumented	Emma & Julian	U.S. Citizen
Ramirez	Juan	Antonia	Legal Permanent Resident	Julieta	U.S. Citizen
Puente	Angel	Renata	U.S. Citizen	Natalia & Felipe	U.S. Citizen
Cortez	Carlos	Marina	Undocumented	Carlos Jr. & Jonathan	Undocumented & U.S. Citizen
Ortiz	Nicolas	Luciana	Undocumented	N/A	U.S. Citizen
Cisneros	Isabella	Lucas	Visa/TPS	N/A	U.S. Citizen
Campuzano	David	Ana	Undocumented	N/A	U.S. Citizen
Fuentes	Ricardo	Laura	U.S. Citizen	N/A	U.S. Citizen
De La Cruz	Marta	Ignacio	Undocumented	N/A	U.S. Citizen

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