



Home, Interrupted: Crises of Social Reproduction, Mutual Aid, and the Transformation of Place in the Aftermath of an Immigration Arrest

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Abstract

When a U.S. resident is arrested by immigration authorities, significant financial losses immediately begin to accumulate to themselves and to their immediate family. Drawing on a survey of 125 households in Pima County, AZ, this paper examines the scope of these financial losses; the strategies that household members deploy to absorb and manage these losses; and their downstream repercussions for those activities and infrastructures associated with everyday and generational household social reproduction. Attention to these issues foregrounds the collective dimensions of harm – e.g., how the destabilizing effects of arrest, detention and/or deportation are never experienced by any individual in isolation, but rather multiply across those persons and relationships of dependency, care and support to whom these individuals remain connected over time. Given the disproportionate concentration of U.S. immigration policing on communities of Latin American origin, these outcomes carry important implications for the articulation of everyday conditions of labor, inequality and accumulation under racial capitalism. At the same time, people respond to the disruption of relationships of home and family through new practices, relationships and institutions of mutual aid, solidarity and struggle. What results is *movement*: novel patterns of collective life that transform the very communities whose members the state is attempting to violently separate. By exploring this latter dynamic, the paper contributes to emerging literatures on carceral and abolition geographies, connecting everyday conditions of social reproduction and the production and circulation of value to a broader dialectic of community resistance against state violence and material dispossession.

Keywords

Immigration, policing, dispossession, social reproduction, mutual aid, abolition



Introduction

When a U.S. resident is arrested by immigration authorities, significant financial losses immediately begin to accumulate to themselves and to their household. The causes of these losses can include: the seizure of assets (usually a vehicle) at the moment of arrest, and/or the cost of recovering this asset; disruptions to employment and income via prolonged incapacitation (administrative detention) and/or forcible removal from the United States (deportation); the cost of paying an immigration bond in order to obtain release from detention; the cost of hiring an attorney; and the provision by family members of many additional forms of legal, emotional and logistical support to a person facing removal (examples include a household's contribution to a commissary fund, costs associated with visitation, disruptions to employment associated with attendance and accompaniment to court, and various fees required by the government or by private companies who facilitate "alternatives to detention," such as digital ankle monitoring).

This paper explores how these financial losses disseminate across existing family and social networks, and the cumulative impacts of these losses on everyday and generational conditions of social reproduction (e.g., those short-term and inter-generational activities, relationships and infrastructures required to sustain life and prepare individuals for formal, waged work). At the same time, the paper also seeks to understand how efforts to manage these financial losses contribute to the articulation of novel practices, relationships and institutions of mutual aid, and other forms of collective life that allow people to survive, challenge and transform the conditions that surround them. The data presented in the paper is drawn from a survey of 125 households affected by immigration policing in Pima County, Arizona. The survey instrument included questions related to household demographics, immigration history, income, debt and employment; the specific kinds and values of financial losses that were catalyzed by an immigration arrest; the strategies and relationships of instrumental support that household members mobilized to absorb these financial losses; and the relationship observed between these financial losses and other outcomes associated with employment, education, health, housing, household routines, and long-term plans and ambitions.

Attending to the accumulation of financial loss and its dissemination across a household and a community accomplishes several things. First, it foregrounds the collective dimensions of harm – e.g., how the destabilizing effects of arrest, detention and/or deportation are never experienced by any one individual in isolation, but rather multiply across those many other persons and relationships of dependency, care and support to whom these individuals remain connected over time. Frequently, these outcomes accumulate into an acute crisis of social reproduction that carries meaningful and measurable impacts on everyday patterns of labor and accumulation, as well as long-term conditions of socio-economic security and wellbeing. Given the narrow concentration of immigration policing on persons of Latin American origin (see DHS, 2020), this raises critical questions about the relationship between policing, financial dispossession, and the generational articulation of inequality under racial capitalism, a topic of considerable urgency due to the contemporary convergence of abolitionist agitation with an explosion of social protest throughout the United States (Wang 2018; Pulido 2017; Taylor 2016; deVuono-Powell et al. 2015; Davis 2011; Gilmore 2007).

Yet, as Sandoval (2019) reminds us, and as the current wave of protest illustrates, although "borders, mass incarceration, and the deportation regime sever the social ties of people they affect... people thread these relations back together in each other's homes, community spaces, and on the streets." The research in this paper is one reflection of this process, undertaken at the invitation of and in conversation with the grassroots community immigration clinic "Keep Tucson Together" (KTT). KTT emerged as an organic response to an urgent need for legal representation in U.S. immigration court, one that is compounded by the exorbitant costs frequently charged by private immigration attorneys; and it is just one of a constellation of popular initiatives that have emerged to respond to the various everyday

community pressures and crises catalyzed by a sustained nationwide intensification of immigration policing. In the process, people are inventing new forms of collective life that allow them to survive, to challenge and to transform ongoing processes of violence and dispossession. Collectively, such efforts can be understood as comprising a *movement*, a process by which ordinary people “change places... even if geometrically speaking they [haven’t] moved far at all” (Gilmore 2017, 231). Reflecting on these processes, the research and analysis developed here is therefore intended to contribute to the emerging framework of “abolition geographies” (Gilmore, 2017; see also Heynen and Ybarra 2021; Ybarra 2020; Ramírez 2020; Roy 2019), by identifying how networks of solidarity and mutual aid mobilizing noncapitalist financial practices contribute to broader transformations of home and community.

In what follows below, I first situate the present study by reviewing some of the ways that geographers and scholars within cognate disciplines have described the consequences of intensified immigration policing for children, families and communities. Next, I explain the process used for data collection, including the nature and scope of the data collected. I then turn to a summary and discussion of key research findings, expanding on the insights and arguments introduced above. I conclude the paper by suggesting several directions for future research and intervention.

Measuring the Financial Outcomes of an Immigration Arrest

Over the past twenty years immigration policing, detention and deportation have expanded dramatically in the United States. Between fiscal years 2002 and 2013 annual immigration removals jumped roughly 260%, from 165,168 to a peak of 432,281; while in fiscal year 2019 the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) accomplished 359,884 removals, a number significantly larger than the historical norm (DHS 2020). Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security reports total immigration arrests (representing the formal initiation of enforcement action) increasing 77% between FY 2018 to FY 2019, from 572,566 to 1,013,539 (DHS 2020).

The hardships that result from these patterns of arrest are seldom experienced by any one person in isolation. A great deal of research in geography, anthropology, sociology and related disciplines has examined how an immigration arrest carries deep and long-lasting repercussions for children and for other members of person’s immediate household. For example, Gelatt et al. (2017) find that following an immigration arrest, families will “sometimes go without basic necessities like electricity or heat, experience housing instability because of missed rent payments, or go without needed medical care” (14). Meanwhile, multiple studies reveal measurable effects on health and development (Wang and Kaushal 2019; Nichols et al. 2018; Lopez et al. 2017), including how children with detained or deported parents exhibit symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at rates significantly higher than those rates observed among their peers (Rojas-Flores et al., 2017; Zayas et al. 2015; Perreira and Ornelas 2013). Such symptoms include behavioral changes like “loss of appetite, sleeplessness, clingy behavior, [and] an increase in fear and anxiety” (Dreby 2012, 833); as well as “rage, aggression, fear, depression, distractedness, confusion, and uncertainty about their futures” (Kerwin et al. 2018, 231; see also Chaudry et al. 2010). These conditions also follow minor children into school, as observed in research that finds that a parent’s detention and/or deportation often results in children expressing reduced interest and ability to concentrate, as well as a measurable decline in attendance, grades and performance (López and Matos 2018; Martinez 2014; Abrego and Gonzales 2010).

Enriquez (2015) introduces the term “multigenerational punishment” to name these phenomena – which, she argues, “[tend] to occur within families because of the strong social ties, sustained day-to-day interactions, and dependent relationships found among family members” (Enriquez 2015, 939). Yet, although Enriquez notes that “[c]hildren’s dependence on their parents also means that they will share in their economic situation” (948), she observes that “the means through which this occurs is unclear” (950).

Indeed, comparatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to the financial dimensions of harm that follow from an immigration arrest (although see Johnson and Woodhouse 2018; Lee 2018; Patler and Golash-Boza 2017). What literature does exist attends specifically to income, without taking a broader lens to account for the dispossession of accumulated wealth and/or other assets (cf De Trinidad Young et al. 2018; Warren and Kerwin 2017; Capps et al. 2016; Brabeck and Xu 2010). Much of this work also focuses either on one particular moment along the continuum of arrest, detention and removal (for example Patler's [2015] study on the impacts of long-term administrative detention); or else relies on secondary nationwide datasets to generate broad-scale projections (Amuedo-Dorantes et al. 2018; De Trinidad Young et al. 2018; Warren and Kerwin 2017; Gelatt et al. 2017; Capps et al. 2016). The data presented in this paper was collected to address this research gap, with the aim of capturing as comprehensive an understanding possible of the financial losses that accumulate to U.S. resident households following the immigration arrest of an immediate family member; as well as the strategies used by households to absorb these financial losses.

Household Demographics and Case History

Between August 2016 and July 2018 survey data was collected with the assistance of a cohort of 11 paid undergraduate researcher assistants, who, together with the author, worked in teams of two to conduct a 110-question survey with a total of 125 households in Pima County, Arizona. Survey completion took an average of one hour, and no more than two hours. All student research assistants completed a 40-hour research training that covered data collection, data entry and analysis, research ethics and human subject protection protocols. All members of the research team were bilingual in Spanish and English, and a majority of student researchers were recruited with the help of Scholarships A-Z, a grassroots organization that provides financial assistance and peer support to student recipients of the U.S. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Research participants were invited to respond to survey questions using whichever language they preferred - with about 70% choosing to answer in Spanish, and the other 30% choosing English. Participants were recruited using a hybrid targeted and snowball sampling method that began at four sites that regularly provide services to noncitizens, with participants then asked to refer additional qualifying subjects to participate in the study. Appropriate efforts were undertaken to ensure confidentiality and informed consent, and research participants were offered a gift card worth \$20 as a token of appreciation for their time.

Containing the City of Tucson and bordering Mexico to the south, Pima County was an ideal research site because it plays host to the full constellation of local, state and federal police agencies involved in the practice of immigration enforcement in the United States. These include federal agencies like Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. Border Patrol; but they also include state, county and local law enforcement, with the state of Arizona having been at the forefront of legislative initiatives to mandate that such agencies cooperate fully with federal immigration officials (see Boyce et al. 2019). For the purpose of this study, a "household" was defined as any collection of persons living at the same residential address at the moment when an immigration arrest occurred, and an immigration arrest was defined as any detention or arrest that resulted in a person's transfer to federal immigration custody, regardless of the duration of federal custody or the legal or material outcomes that followed (however, to simplify the analysis only those costs that occurred after a person entered federal custody are considered here). The above criteria allow for the research to capture and compare a variety of experiences that resulted from an immigration arrest, e.g., whether an individual was immediately released; subjected to prolonged detention; won some form of legal relief in immigration court; or was deported from the United States. In order to qualify for participation in the study, at least one household member had to have previously experienced at least one immigration arrest that occurred after the household had established a domicile in Pima County for a period of at least one year. This allowed for the exclusion of recent first-time border crossers; however, if an individual was a long-term resident of

Pima County prior to being deported, and was then arrested while attempting to cross back into the United States, this arrest was included in the analysis.

The 125 households included in this study were found to contain 519 individual persons: 220 minors and 299 adults. 323 were U.S. citizens, while an additional 56 were recorded as Lawful Permanent Residents. 80% of households reported containing at least one U.S. citizen or Lawful Permanent Resident – a finding that is consistent with nation-wide estimates of the proportion of undocumented residents living in mixed-status households (Taylor et al. 2011). Although households were required to have established residence in Pima County for at least one year prior to study participation, the average length of residency was 16.4 years – a finding that also tracks with other estimates of the duration of U.S. residency among mixed-status households (Warren and Kerwin 2017).

The 125 households described above reported experiencing a total of 231 immigration arrests – with 46% of households experiencing more than one arrest over time. Analysis of the relationship between immigration policing and financial loss was limited to a sub-sample of 140 legal cases that had reached a formal conclusion at the time of survey participation, and that were initiated between the years 2006 and 2018 (2006 was chosen as a threshold because of important changes to U.S. federal immigration enforcement policy that occurred during that year, including a near doubling of the size of the U.S. Border Patrol and an unprecedented expansion of interior enforcement initiatives like U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s §287[g] program). Among these 140 legal cases, 53% resulted in eventual removal from the United States; while 43% resulted in some form of legal relief allowing an individual to remain in the country. An additional 6 arrests resulted in immediate release from custody, either because the detained individual was found to be a U.S. citizen, or to already have some other kind of lawful presence in the United States.

Direct and Indirect Financial Losses

The financial losses generated as an outcome of an immigration arrest can be divided into two categories: direct losses and indirect losses. Direct losses are defined here as those losses that were a direct and inevitable outcome of arrest, or of a family’s decision to mount a legal fight to avoid deportation. These financial losses include money paid out of pocket, as well as income lost while a person was in detention, appearing in court, and so on – and when that person was therefore physically unable to work. Also included in this category are other lost wages and costs incurred by household members as they provided emotional and logistical support to an arrested individual, such as detention visits or accompanying a person to court. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the different categories of direct financial loss measured in the course of data collection; the proportion of cases reporting this category of loss; and the median and average value of each category of direct financial loss per case reporting it.

Table 1

Category of cost	Proportion of cases reporting this category	Median value of financial loss	Average value of financial loss
Assets seized and not recovered	13%	\$3,000	\$5,038
Assets seized and recovered (cost of recovery)	21%	\$700	\$707
Wages lost while in detention	58%	\$2,000	\$6,834
Money sent to detained persons	29%	\$150	\$844
Cost of visiting a person in detention	18%	\$490	\$1,277
Value of bond (not recovered)	15%	\$3,500	\$5,238
Losses from attending court hearings (transportation, lost wages)	20%	\$500	\$714
Losses from routine reporting to ICE (transportation, lost wages)	4%	\$650	\$710
Cost of hiring a smuggler to return to the USA	35%	\$2,000	\$2,385
Amount sent to support family members who have left the USA	29%	\$400	\$1,370
Cost of hiring an attorney	32%	\$3,750	\$3,782
Fees paid to government	20%	\$910	\$1,843
Fees paid for ankle bracelet monitoring	1%	N/A	\$10,650
Total Direct Costs per case		\$4,525	\$9,149

Table 1. Categories of direct cost, proportion of cases reporting this cost, and median and average value of cost per category. The calculations of median and average here are based on the subset of cases that actually reported this cost.

As the data in table 1 indicates, there is great variability in the kinds and value of losses that households report. This results from the many possible trajectories that a person's immigration case can follow. One significant variable is the length of time that a person is physically incapacitated by being held in custody. Because immigration detention in the United States is administrative and formally non-punitive, the length of a person's detention frequently bears a positive correlation with their determination to fight their immigration case, and/or their belief in the likelihood of success. Thus, even in cases where an individual successfully fights their removal in U.S. immigration court and is allowed to remain in the country, practices of immigration detention can result in their spending months or even years behind bars, unable to work and separated from their loved ones. Among the 69.5% of cases that reported an arrested individual being placed into long-term immigration detention (defined here as any period of detention lasting longer than the 72-hour statutorily-defined window available for initial processing), this detention resulted in an average financial loss to their household of \$72.52 *per day*; while the duration of long-term detention varied from 3 days to 30 months.

Finally, deportation is another outcome that can result in significant and enduring financial consequences, due to existing wage differentials between the United States and those countries to which deported individuals are returned. As already discussed, 52% of cases within this sample ultimately resulted in deportation. Among those deported, 29% transitioned from being regular monthly

contributors to household income, to recipients of an average of \$368 per month of financial support for the duration of time when they were abroad. On the other hand, 83% of deportees had ultimately returned to the United States (usually without authorization) at the time that an interview was completed, having remained outside the country for an average of 2.25 months prior to their return (it remains to be assessed whether this particular research finding reflects the unique geographic situation of border populations, with many residents maintaining strong connections in neighboring states in Mexico – and where deportation therefore tends to involve a journey of hundreds rather than thousands of kilometers).

“Indirect” financial losses are defined here as losses of income initially caused by an immigration arrest, but whose duration and value cannot be entirely attributed to that arrest alone. For example, in 67% of cases, a respondent reported job loss as a direct consequence of an immigration arrest, while for 17% of households unemployment or underemployment resulting from an immigration arrest was ongoing at the time of survey participation. This implies at least two things. The first is that indirect financial losses resulting from an arrest can sometimes continue to accumulate over the course of many months or years - potentially indefinitely. The second is that the figures reported here likely represent only a portion of the total loss of income this last category of households will ultimately experience. However, additional factors driving this long-term loss of income must also be considered, such as the condition of a local labor market, a person’s educational attainment and professional qualifications, and laws that govern work authorization for noncitizens in the United States. Nevertheless, when disruption to employment would not have occurred were it not for an immigration arrest, this too can be factored as an indirect kind of financial loss. The median of indirect financial losses was \$3,000, while the average was \$15,129 (a disparity that reflects the significant impact of long-term un- or under-employment on a minority of households).

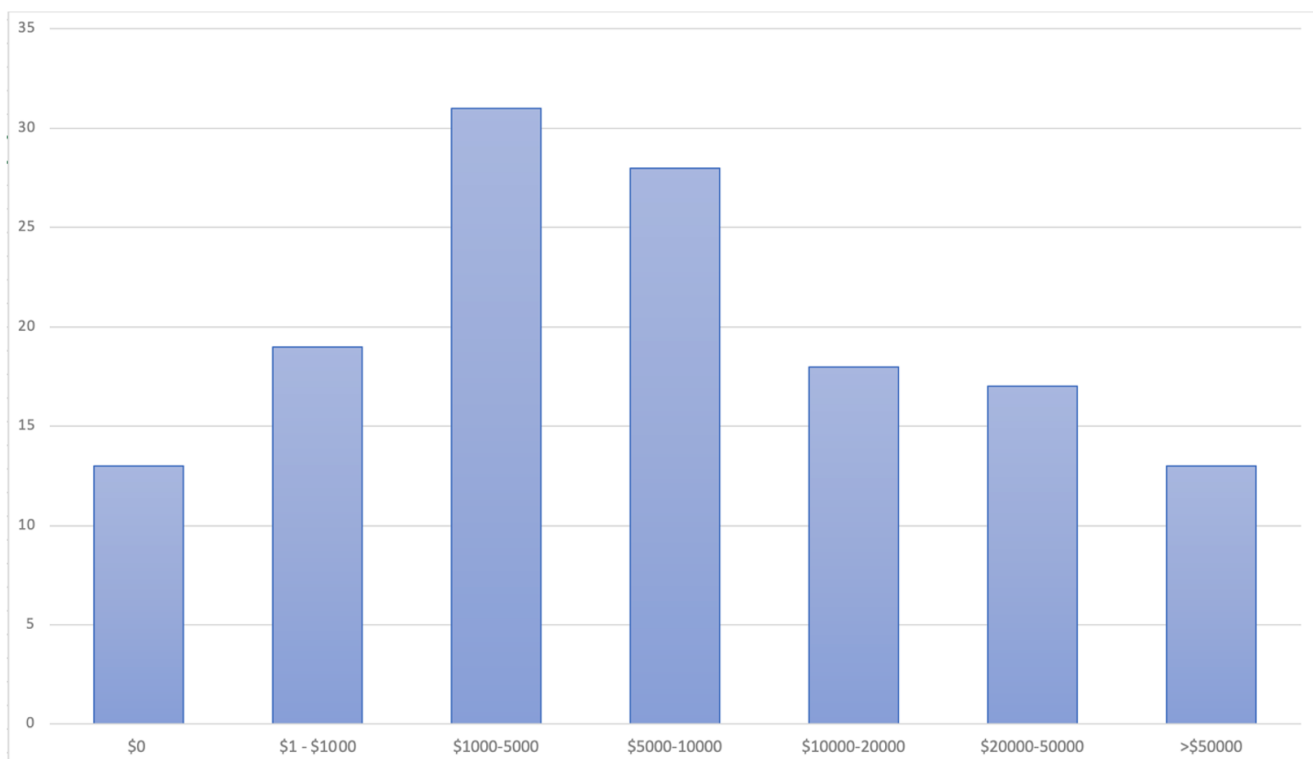


Figure 1. Number of immigration cases across sample of 140 arrests, according to total direct and indirect financial losses.

Figure 1 shows a distribution of total financial losses across the sample of 140 completed immigration cases. The range of total direct and indirect financial losses reported was \$0 to \$229,915; while the total average value of these losses was \$24,151. We can understand more about the implications of these kinds of financial losses when we consider the strategies that families and household members deploy to absorb them.

Strategies Used to Absorb Financial Losses

Families often experience the financial losses reported above as an acute emergency, as they are suddenly and without warning thrown into a position of having to raise many thousands of dollars to hire an attorney and/or bond a loved one out of detention, all while continuing to cover routine household expenses. As seen in Table 2, a significant set of strategies that households deployed to absorb these losses involved the liquidation of accumulated wealth and assets. 42% of households went through the entirety of their savings, ranging from \$200 to \$18,000. Others sold off material goods such as vehicles, jewelry, appliances, work tools, and real property. Related to this liquidation of accumulated wealth and assets were meaningful downstream impacts on the stability of many peoples' housing. 10% of households reported experiencing foreclosure in the aftermath of an immigration arrest, while another 3% experienced eviction from a rental property. Meanwhile, an additional 13% of households reported diverting money they'd been saving to make a down payment on a new home, requiring them to postpone or abandon this ambition. The housing-related outcomes reported here not only carry implications for the stability of peoples' everyday lives, but they also diminish what is in the United States one of the principle forms of accumulated equity and means of intergenerational wealth transfer (Rugh and Hall 2016).

Table 2

Category	Proportion of Households Reporting	Average Value
Financial Savings	42%	\$2,842
Vehicles	33%	\$2,687
Jewelry, appliances, tools and clothing	19%	\$764
Real property	2%	\$11,320

Table 2. The liquidation of wealth and other assets. The value reported here for real property refers to the accumulated equity that a household was able to convert into monetary income upon sale, rather than the total sale price or appraised value of the property.

A second strategy commonly pursued by households to address urgent financial needs while compensating for a loss of income was to redistribute and/or intensify waged labor. For 21% of households this involved already employed persons seeking additional work hours. For 8% this involved an already-employed person seeking additional employment through a second or third job. And in 22% of cases this involved a previously non-employed family member seeking employment, in order to supplement family income. Among those households that reported a previously non-employed person seeking employment, close to one-third (32%) involved minor or adult children who as a result dropped out of school or postponed pursuit of a higher degree.

A third strategy that households used to respond to their acute financial needs involved taking on some form of debt. As seen in table 3, some 73% of households in the sample adopted this strategy. The majority of these loans (88%) were borrowed from immediate and extended family, and from acquaintances like neighbors, co-workers, employers and members of a faith community; while a minority of loans (12%) came from formal lenders like bail bond companies and payday lenders, who charged predatory interest rates as high as 30% per month. Several issues here merit comment. First, as

can be observed, formal lenders were much more likely to package a significant amount of credit within a single loan. However, given the exploitative borrowing conditions imposed by these lenders, it is not surprising that households frequently chose to borrow instead from a medley of other sources identified within existing social networks, and from whom they typically received much more favorable conditions.

Table 3

Category of Lender	Proportion of households reporting	Proportion of loans charging interest	Proportion of loans requiring collateral	Average Value of Collateral	Average Value of Loan
Close Family	42%	6%	8%	\$6,625.00	\$2,500.66
Extended Family	13%	6%	6%	\$10,000.00	\$2,317.77
Friends, neighbors, co-workers	22%	0%	0%	N/A	\$2,163.46
Employer	5%	16%	16%	\$3,500.00	\$2,033.33
Formal Lender	9%	100%	82%	\$23,625.00	\$8,299.09

Table 3. Debt resulting from an immigration arrest, by category of lender and proportion of cases reporting borrowing from this category. “Close family” is defined here as a parent, child, sibling or sibling-in-law who lives outside of the immediate household. “Extended family” is defined as aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, etc. who live outside of the immediate household.

The role of family and acquaintances in the informal extension of debt - often without interest - offers a glimpse at a number of additional strategies that activate noncapitalist financial logics and other forms of mutual aid that articulate according to new and existing relationships and collective institutions. In the process, people come together to creatively invent new ways to survive and transform conditions of hardship - an issue that will be discussed further in section 5 below. But first, it’s important to consider the cumulative impact of those household strategies already discussed, and their implications for peoples’ everyday and long-term positionality within capitalist labor markets – as well as for related patterns of profit and accumulation. In the following section I explore this issue further, supplementing quantitative survey data with participants’ responses to qualitative, open-ended survey questions.

Crises of Social Reproduction and the Collectivization of Harm

Alongside the specific financial pressures identified above, for many families the most difficult and impactful consequence of an immigration arrest is that of involuntary and prolonged separation from a loved one. This kind of separation is an inevitable result of detention and deportation, both of which involve the physical extraction of a person from that web of interdependency through which everyday relationships of home and family are constructed. As discussed in section 2 (above), it is already known that this experience of enforced separation frequently triggers significant health, educational and developmental consequences for an arrested individual’s immediate family – particularly for children. But it is worth reflecting on how the experience of financial dispossession aggravates these outcomes.

A common theme articulated by survey participants involved the challenge of managing acute financial pressure while simultaneously responding to the emotional distress expressed by minor children. As one respondent, a father of three whose wife had recently been placed into long-term detention, narrated:

It’s been rough just this week, with the kids crying in school, and their teachers calling to ask me “what’s going on?” Of course its affecting their schooling... [and] you have to choose between work and the kids, and right now I need money, we need food and I have

to work in order to have the money. I'm working double shifts 6:30am–1:00am, so that I don't lose clients, and we can keep eating. When I'm working late, the kids are afraid that I won't come home, because that's what happened to their mother.

Described another respondent, an undocumented mother who's oldest (adult) child had been arrested, and who was later bonded out of detention:

The youngest [child] cries a lot, he thinks they're going to come for me in our house, that we need to grab our things and go. The kids think they won't be able to finish high school. There's a lot fear, we don't answer the door, we closed the windows and blinds. My son was going to move in with his girlfriend, whose child has autism, and he's really worried about all of the needs that the child will have and that he won't be able to help [with]. Right now he is working early so he'll been home in the afternoon to care for the child, and I had to look for more work because my current job is too unstable, and its too little pay for all the costs.

Meanwhile, another mother, whose husband had been arrested and remained in detention, described:

You just feel like you can't do anything. Our youngest child started going to see a counselor at school - because he's behaving badly, he draws attention in class, and he doesn't want to do his homework. Even though I don't have papers, I began helping a woman cleaning houses, just to make ends meet. And our daughter is sad – there's a lot of sadness for everyone.

In each of the quotes above we can observe how financial pressure becomes intimately interconnected with a host of other outcomes experienced by multiple generations within the same household, as parents and children renegotiate the responsibilities of caregiving alongside an urgent need to stabilize and/or maximize household income.

All of these outcomes point to an acute crisis of household social reproduction – e.g., of those everyday and inter-generational activities, infrastructures and relationships that sustain life and prepare individuals for formal, waged work. Recognition of this point allows for a greater appreciation of how the institutionalized exercise of violence, including practices of policing, detention and deportation, affect “the unequal distribution of conditions of flourishing that render some bodies, some workforces, and some communities far more precarious than others.” (Strauss and Meehan 2015, 2). This problem is particularly urgent given how, at least in the United States, these measures of violence tend to focus disproportionately on one racial and ethnic subset of the population. Indeed, according to DHS (2020), fully 96.6% of those non-citizens arrested by U.S. immigration authorities in FY2019 were of Latin American origin.

At stake are generational patterns of trauma, precarity and inequality integral to how people become disciplined into particular conditions of life, including specific arrangements of labor necessary for the accumulation of surplus value. For example, as families affected by an immigration arrest lose access to homes, vehicles, savings, etc. (in other words, as they lose access to the fixed capital integral to the stability of everyday life), they become haunted by the specter (the actual material possibility) of non-reproduction – hunger, homelessness, destitution, physiological “weathering” (see Geronimus et al. 2006) and premature death. In an effort to hold this threat at bay, even as carceral practices may cause one member of a household to be removed from the U.S. labor market, others are thrown back into it at greater intensity, increasing the overall degree of exploitation through what is essentially a lengthening of the working day. Meanwhile, by dispossessing a family of accumulated equity, and by disrupting the educational trajectory and accomplishment of minor and adult children, these latter individuals are also likely to experience diminished opportunities for socio-economic security, wellbeing and advancement well into the future.

The implications of these outcomes for wages and the value composition of labor-power (e.g., the average value of that bundle of commodities purchased to sustain everyday and generational reproduction) extend further still. For as Roediger and Esch (2014) remind us, any increase in the vulnerability and exploitation experienced by one subset of workers is likely to place downward pressure on wages for all others laboring in the same sector of the economy. Meanwhile, observe Loyd and Burrige (2007), those industries where immigrants and noncitizens disproportionately concentrate - and where this downward pressure on wages is therefore likely to be greatest - are precisely the industries most integral to “creating and providing [the] daily necessities for living” (Loyd and Burrige 2007, 18), i.e. agriculture, construction, meat-processing, foodservices, daycare, domestic labor, etc. (see also Marks 2012). In Marxist terms, then, what all of this accomplishes is a diminishing of the absolute and relative value of labor-power within one subsection of the working population, which simultaneously has the effect of diminishing the value of labor-power across the economy as a whole. Considered in the aggregate, this then allows for an increase in the rate of surplus value that capital is able to accumulate over time.

Of course, the process described above involves an evident contradiction. As policing and carceral practices undermine the stability of reproduction, they also make it more expensive – an outcome that, if applied to the working class as a whole, would run contrary to a strategy of accumulation premised on the extraction of relative surplus value. On the other hand, observes Davis (1981, *n.p.*), “[t]he employer is not concerned in the least about the way labour-power is produced and sustained, he is only concerned about its availability and its ability to generate profit.” Thus, when applied to only a portion of the working class, and assuming that wages otherwise hold constant, an increase in the cost of reproduction has basically the same effect as the withdrawal of subsidies and support via neoliberal austerity. Both animate the specter of non-reproduction – resulting in the imposition of more work just to make ends meet.

Analysis of the above dynamic can help to clarify the relationship between racist state and state-sanctioned violence, material dispossession, and the interruption of domestic life as an intimately interconnected set of phenomena that have reappeared throughout the history, development and expansion of capitalist social relations globally (Launius and Boyce 2021; Gahman and Hjalmarson 2019; Pratt 2012; Churchill 2004; Luibhéid 2002; Davis 1981). During the contemporary period, these phenomena continue to advance as hallmark features of carceral geographies (see Moran et al. 2017; Escobar 2016; Gilmore 2007), revealing an additional dimension of the political economy of labor and accumulation that has not heretofore been meaningfully investigated within the growing body of scholarship that examines the production and circulation of value within and/or as a result of carceral practices and institutions (see Cassidy et al. 2020; Coddington et al. 2020; Martin 2020; Gill et al. 2016).

Importantly, however, people are not just passive victims of these processes. Instead, they draw on old and weave together new relationships of dependency, care and support, inaugurating practices of mutual aid that allow them to survive and transform the conditions in which their lives unfold. In the process, financial and material burdens come to be shared – and to be increasingly recognized – as *collective*, catalyzing new practices of organizing, community, and resistance. It is to this dynamic that the paper now turns.

Survival, Resistance, Regeneration: Mutual Aid and the Transformation of Place

We have already observed how an immigration arrest is likely to cause destabilizing effects that disseminate within a household. But every individual household is also embedded within broader webs of interdependency that prove critical to their ability to absorb and survive these outcomes. Table 4 displays informal measures of solidarity and mutual aid that articulate according to previously-existing networks of extended family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, members of a faith community, and even employers. These measures include those patterns of informal lending considered in section 2, above –

but also other kinds of direct financial assistance through individual donations and organized fundraising drives. Often, the amount of money mobilized through these latter strategies was substantial. In 51 cases, the value of individual donations was \$1,000 or more. In 27 cases it was \$3,000 or more. In 13 cases it was at least \$5,000; and in two cases the volume reported was in excess of \$10,000. Informal measures of solidarity and mutual aid also extended to some 37% of families who reported beginning to share childcare duties and/or to consolidate multiple households in order to save money on rent, utility bills, and other expenses.

Table 4

Sources of support	Information	Household	Emotional	Logistical	Money	Average Value of Money
Family	6%	26%	20%	26%	43%	\$2,010
Friends, neighbors, co-Workers	5%	6%	11%	17%	30%	\$1,928
Faith community	0%	2%	2%	3%	5%	\$2,084
Collective institution	2%	2%	0%	2%	3%	\$2,350
Employers	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	\$2,580

Table 4. Categories and sources of mutual aid, including percentage of households that reported drawing on these, and the value of monetary support. “Household” support refers to the consolidation of households and the sharing of routine needs like cooking, cleaning and childcare. “Logistical” support includes issues pertaining to a legal case, including providing a ride to a detention visit or help collecting character references for a bond petition, etc.

The above activities were transnational in scope, with at least three instances of extended family traveling from Mexico to the United States to help with childcare and other routine household tasks. These cases indicate just one of the ways that immigration enforcement can itself be found to drive novel patterns of transnational migration (see Johnson and Woodhouse 2018; Massey et al. 2016;). Meanwhile, 6% of households reported that loved ones living abroad pooled money or liquidated real property in order to send funds north – a phenomenon we might think of as “reverse” remittances, inverting previous patterns of transnational financial support (prior to arrest, 65% of families reported having sent an average of \$280 a month to family living outside of the United States).

Importantly, though, households also augmented these more quotidian and informal sources of material support via community organizing and collective institutions – an important innovation given the relatively limited financial resources available via informal social networks and relationships alone. These collective efforts included one respondent who reported receiving emergency assistance from a network formed through a local Tucson soccer league, in which each participant paid into a common pool on a monthly basis so that if any member of their household was arrested they could draw on this pool for financial support (essentially, this is a form of insurance). A handful of respondents also drew from a community bond fund established by a coalition of grassroots “protection networks.” These protection networks were created by undocumented and mixed-status residents in the aftermath of a series of anti-immigrant initiatives passed in the state of Arizona that coalesced in 2010 in SB1070, a law mandating that all state and local law enforcement cooperate with federal immigration authorities at all times in the course of their routine activities (for more on this law see Boyce et al. 2019). The idea behind the protection network model was to reduce the fear and paralysis that accompanied (and

was an intentional product of) this wave of anti-immigrant legislation. Described one of the early architects and pioneers of this model:

“The idea... [was] to create a sustainable community. In terms of food, family, health, the economy, and peace... We also don’t just involve one sector of the community like kids, adults, or immigrants, we involve everyone. We want the community leading their own fight to achieve their own destiny. We want to be a model of how a neighborhood can defend itself when people work together.” (quoted in Romero and Lopez 2014, 62)

Among other activities, protection networks disseminate know-your-rights training and encourage families to develop a plan for how they will react if a loved one is arrested. This includes identifying emergency contacts; planning who will take over immediate and long-term care for minor children; collecting and preparing documents that might be useful for obtaining bond and mobilizing a legal defense (such as obtaining the signature of a volunteer attorney on a G-28 form - a federal document that establishes that an individual already has legal representation who should be contacted immediately by authorities); and activating rapid-response networks that can provide various other kinds of support (whether this involves addressing the immediate needs of children or other family members, or on-scene presence to monitor and/or intervene in the moment of arrest itself). Eventually, recognizing the tremendous financial burdens often involved in paying an immigration bond, these organizations also came together to create the Protection Network Action Fund (Pronet), a democratically-controlled collective financial pool that the organizations’ membership can draw on as needed (with the understanding that when a person’s immigration case has reached its conclusion, the bond money that returns to them will be reinvested into this pool so that others can draw upon it in the future).

Meanwhile, 20% of respondents reported obtaining free legal advice and/or representation from Keep Tucson Together (KTT), a grassroots community immigration legal clinic. KTT emerged out of a related set of grassroots responses to SB1070, including a series of “stop deportation” campaigns to mobilize pressure against Immigration and Customs Enforcement to suspend removal proceedings against individual members of the Tucson community. After then-ICE director John Morton laid forth a new mechanism in 2011 for the administrative closure of removal proceedings for so-called “low-priority” cases (a policy that came to be known as “prosecutorial discretion”), KTT expanded its efforts to maximize peoples’ ability to obtain this kind of relief. It eventually also began offering free legal consultation; free representation for individuals appealing for asylum or cancellation of removal, as well as others with particularly complicated legal cases; a bond clinic that helps families to petition and prepare for a bond hearing after a loved one has been detained; a clinic helping individuals apply (or re-apply) for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program; and a citizenship clinic supporting those who are eligible and who wish to naturalize.

In no small measure, KTT’s expansion depended on a growing network of volunteers who previously had received support from the organization. One thing that these volunteers began to consistently observe was that although the financial outcomes reported in this paper may not ultimately prove to be the most significant impacts that a family has to endure (when compared, for example, to the emotional anguish of long-term separation), they were frequently identified by clients as being the most urgent, as bills piled up and households struggled to make ends meet. This observation led to the present study, as members of the organization voiced a desire to better understand the contours of these financial outcomes, and potential strategies for their amelioration.

There are several issues worth considering when reflecting on those institutions and practices of mutual aid examined here. First, each speaks to Heynen and Ybarra’s (2021) observation that “carceral geographies of detention, incarceration, policing and deportation are not exceptional, but everyday

spaces where people of color struggle to live, work and play” (22; emphasis in the original). When the state undermines peoples’ ability to maintain those infrastructures and activities necessary to sustain life, people therefore come together to regenerate these infrastructures, often in creative new ways. These include the activation of diverse material and financial practices that eschew capitalist logics of profit and accumulation, prioritizing instead the support of one another’s capacities to survive and to resist in place. The forms of community that result frequently transcend divisions of immigration status, nationality, and borders – weaving together forms of identity and collective life at radical odds with those narrow, “law and order” citizenship-based parameters asserted by the nation-state and its carceral appendages (see also Boyce et al. 2019; Sandoval 2019; Conlon and Gill 2015; Loyd and Burridge 2007).

Involvement in these kinds of community efforts often has a meaningful politicizing effect on its participants. Narrated one respondent:

There aren’t as many bad long-term consequences because of all of the people who’ve helped. If they hadn’t been there for us, the consequences would have been otherwise... My older children had the fear that I would be deported, [and] it pushed me to go to the March in Washington. It’s worse to stay in the shadows, it’s one of the reasons I decided to fight.

Described another respondent:

After [my husband] was arrested [for a second time], we started asking ourselves: do we really want to be here? There is so much racism, and criminalization, just for wanting to have a better life, to have more opportunity, you know? But now we fight. At first we thought of leaving, but because of the help we received now we know we need to fight and help others and move forward. I think right now we need to inform ourselves, to not be afraid, to fight for our rights and involve ourselves with others in our community.

In each of the quotes above, we can observe how “[a]ction, crucially, includes the difficult work of identification – which entails production, not discovery of a ‘suture or positioning’” (Gilmore 2007, 236; quoting Hall 1990). In other words, by entering into new kinds of relationships with one another, peoples’ understandings of themselves also begin to change. What results is *movement*: the articulation of new patterns of political struggle and collective life that transform the very homes and communities whose members the state is attempting to violently separate via the extractive mechanisms of arrest, detention and deportation.

Conclusion

Cumulatively, those practices of solidarity, mutual aid and political struggle considered above have accomplished important material changes in peoples’ everyday lives – including in the scope and intensity of immigration policing to which residents of southern Arizona are exposed. After years of organizing, advocacy, direct action and protest by the protection networks, KTT and others (including litigation threatened by the American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona), in February 2015 the City of Tucson finally changed its General Orders for the Tucson Police Department (TPD) to all but prohibit officers’ routine cooperation with federal immigration authorities (limiting without categorically ending the city’s compliance with SB1070). Prior to this change, TPD was responsible for a significant proportion of immigration arrests reported by respondents in this study – a pattern that peaked in 2012 when TPD initiated 50% of all such arrests. When comparing the five years before and after this policy change, we can also observe a 73% reduction in the average annual number of Notices to Appear issued to Pima County residents (a “Notice to Appear” communicates the formal initiation of deportation proceedings, and, as discussed by Kocher [2020] its measure is a useful, albeit imperfect, indicator of the

total number of arrests). This latter reduction continued through the Trump presidency, in defiance of national trends (TRAC 2021). Meanwhile, drawing on the research discussed in this paper, in 2021 members of KTT launched the “Justice for All” ballot initiative, which if passed will finance universal legal representation for any Pima County resident facing removal proceedings in federal immigration court. This effort reflects just one of the many kinds of measures that city and county government can undertake to mitigate the financial hardships discussed here (for more see Boyce and Launius 2020).

Of course, each of the accomplishments mentioned above is both modest and provisional. Much remains to be done to disrupt and dismantle practices of policing, detention and deportation, as well as to ameliorate and repair those generational patterns of harm already identified. Similarly, there remain many additional trajectories of research that could inform and augment these efforts. For example, given its impacts on patterns of foreclosure and eviction, it would be worth investigating how the uneven intensification of immigration policing in different regions of the United States is helping to shape broader patterns of urban change and development. Such research might proceed by mobilizing what Ramírez (2020) calls a “borderlands analytic” to understand how “borders are produced structurally, socially, and spatially in gentrifying cities and are policed by the same carceral geographies that patrol the margins of the nation-state” (149). Inquiry along these lines promises to generate novel insights that would transcend the issue of immigration enforcement *per se*, shifting attention toward the broader intersections of policing with displacement, dispossession, and the articulation of the rent gap. There is also, of course, a need to explore and experiment with movements and communities that are successfully fighting these kinds of outcomes, and who are developing alternative models of safety and security that do not rely on institutions of organized violence and bureaucracies of extraction and control. Given the visionary abolitionist agendas currently proliferating among grassroots activists and organizers, the task for scholarship that aligns with these efforts could not be more urgent.

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