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Impacts of U.S. Immigration Detention and Transfers on the Well-Being of Those Detained Within a Punitive For-Profit System

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IMPACTS OF U.S. IMMIGRATION DETENTION AND TRANSFERS ON THE

WELL-BEING OF THOSE DETAINED WITHIN A PUNITIVE FOR-PROFIT

SYSTEM

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

GLOBAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL STUDIES

by

Karina J. Livingston

2021

To: Dean John F. Stack, Jr.
      Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

This dissertation, written by Karina J. Livingston, and entitled Impacts of U.S. Immigration Detention and Transfers on the Well-Being of Those Detained within a Punitive For-Profit System, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

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Rosa Chang

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Benjamin Smith

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Jorge Duany

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Mark Padilla, Major Professor

Date of Defense: July 2, 2021

The dissertation of Karina J. Livingston is approved.

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Dean John F. Stack, Jr.
Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

_____
Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2021

DEDICATION

This dissertation was only possible because of the experiences endured and shared by my

research participants. I therefore dedicate this dissertation to all my participants, to all the

men I visited in immigrant detention, and to any person who has ever been or is currently

detained in the United States. I hope this work can help prevent similar experiences from

happening to other immigrants in the future.

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To my husband, I can never thank you enough for all the support and encouragement you have provided me over the years. Thank you for walking along side me in all of my life's endeavors. To my family, thank you for all your support and patience. I know I told you it would take only five years to complete my PhD, but throw in a wedding, moving to start a full-time job, a global pandemic, and here we are seven years later at the finish line. To my parents, thank you for always allowing me to follow my dreams and for teaching me the importance of perseverance and hard work. Without the foundation you instilled in me I would not be where I am today.

This research was inspired by the experiences I had as a volunteer for Immigrant Action Alliance. I could not have done this difficult work without the support of my IAA family, especially my dear friend Bud Conlin.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

IMPACTS OF U.S. IMMIGRATION DETENTION AND TRANSFERS ON THE

WELL-BEING OF THOSE DETAINED WITHIN A PUNITIVE FOR-PROFIT

SYSTEM

by

Karina J. Livingston

Florida International University, 2021

Miami, Florida

Professor Mark Padilla, Major Professor

The United States has the largest detention infrastructure in the world, with over 250 official detention centers and over 1,000 partner facilities. This research project aimed to analyze the U.S. immigration detention system to understand how the history of U.S. immigration and U.S. social structures like immigration law and detention practices, specifically transfers, affect immigrants. Woven into U.S. detention practices is a long history of exploitive and racist policies that have scapegoated new waves of immigrants since the late 1800s, which evolved toward the criminalization of immigrants in the mid-1990s.

One of the contributions of this dissertation is its focus on transfers – the movement of detainees between detention centers – as these are a growing detention practice and are often excluded from media coverage and immigration literature. This dissertation demonstrates how transfers contribute significantly to the maintenance of the deportation regime and the trauma and emotional effects of detention. It also analyzes the

motivations behind transfers, including the operational, financial, strategic, and punitive incentives that drive these movements of detainees.

Fifteen (15) semi-structured interviews were conducted with detainees following their detention in order to understand and give voice to an immigrant population that is often silenced and to understand how U.S. detention institutions and practices foster immigrant vulnerabilities. Qualitative interviews allowed participants to express, in their own words, their experiences of immigration detention, particularly the effects of transfers between detention centers, and the impacts that detention practices had on them physically and psychologically.

This research provides testimony that immigration detention transfers indisputably increase the suffering and negative impacts of detention on detainees' overall well-being. In their narratives, the participants reported inhumane conditions and human rights violations and expressed their fear of being transferred. They also illustrated instances where transfers were used punitively, confirming that Immigration and Customs Enforcement fails to follow many of its own standards and regulations regarding transfers. Transfers are one more component of the immigration industry that prioritizes profit over human rights.

Ending immigrant detention is the ultimate solution to eliminate the trauma faced by detainees. This dissertation offers alternatives to detention and other recommendations that can be implemented to ameliorate immigrant experiences while detention continues.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The current U.S. immigration detention practices, such as quotas and transfers and the surge of detention centers over the last 40 years, have added significantly to the mental, physical, and legal hardships that immigrants face (Flynn, 2014). The United States has the largest detention infrastructure in the world, with over 250 official detention centers and over 1,000 partner facilities (including county jails, Bureau of Prisons facilities, Office of Refugee Resettlement centers, hospitals, and hotels, but excluding Customs and Border Patrol facilities) (Tidwell, 2018). Between 2009 and 2017 the United States also had an unprecedented detention quota, mandating that at least 34,000 immigrants should be held in detention daily. The overall purpose of these quotas is to ensure a profit stream. These contracts guarantee that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will pay for a certain number of detention beds, which creates an incentive to detain more people in order to fill those beds to make a profit (Detention Quotas, 2015; Detention Watch Network, 2018; Immigration Detention 101, 2015; Kerwin & Lin, 2009; Riveros, 2014). In May 2017, the official quota, was eliminated after a long-fought campaign by immigrant activist groups. However, the removal of it was ineffective at reducing detentions since in recent years daily detention numbers reached almost 40,000, well above the previous quota. While the national "bed quota" is no longer in place, there are still local quotas written into facilities contracts, most of which are with private prison corporations. Additionally, another corrosive practice of immigration facilities is that of transfers.

Transfers play a strategic role in filling beds. Although the quota no longer exists, transfers are still happening in order to fill beds for private contracts between ICE and other types of facilities like county jails and private corporations. ICE also has contracts with the transportation companies that bus immigrants from center to center. These are all incentives for ICE to strategically move people in detention. Transfers can be used to give the illusion that detention centers are overflowing and therefore warrant the construction of new facilities. Detention facilities receive additional funding for each new booked individual, which incentivizes the practice of transfers. However, these transfers have significant mental, physical, and legal impacts on detainees. One of the important contributions of this dissertation is its focus on transfers, as these are often excluded from media coverage and immigration literature even though they contribute significantly to the preservation of the deportation regime and the trauma and emotional effects of these movements on detainees. Even when transfers are not used punitively but for legitimate reasons, like an evacuation because of a natural disaster, ICE's transfers of detainees cause physical and psychological harm. The execution of transfers in response to emergency situations, as I will describe in more detail later, are unorganized and inhumane, and prove ICE is not equipped to handle these kinds of situations.

The social science literature on deportation emphasizes the processes by which undocumented people become "deportable", or subject to deportation, placing them into an indefinite state of vulnerability. This dissertation research aims to understand these vulnerabilities that are woven into U.S. detention institutions and practices. It focuses on understanding how mobility, or the transfer of a person during detention, might increase the suffering or the impacts on the well-being, both physical and psychological, of

detainees. This contributes to the scientific literature in that it provides a rare case study of the ways that immigrant detention contributes to disparities in health and wellbeing, adding an ethnographic focus on embodied experiences of detention. Further, the work contributes to applied policy development on immigrant detention and public health. Indeed, the necessity of this work is heightened and urgent because in 2017, ICE requested that the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) approve its plans to destroy records related to detention practices (Lopez, 2017). Listed under the 11 types of records requested for destruction were sexual assault, solitary confinement, and even death in custody. This request put an entire paper trail of human rights and constitutional abuses at stake. The request was revoked after much backlash, but similar requests could be made in the future.

The historical context presented highlights significant contributions and patterns of practice that shaped today's detention practices while revealing the importance of this dissertation study. There is an urgent need to study and understand detention policies and practices from the perspective of those most affected. We must examine how detainee transfers, in particular, contribute to the maintenance of political and economic systems that justify the ongoing human rights abuses experienced by detainees. This dissertation addresses these needs by interviewing men who were previously detained and who were directly impacted and who experienced first-hand the impacts of the U.S. detention system. This dissertation fills a gap in the literature and media coverage of detainee transfers and the role they play in the preservation of the deportation regime and the various impacts they have on detainees.

The Problem of Immigrant Detention and Emerging Federal Regulations

People are detained for various reasons, including unauthorized entry into the country, while their claims for asylum are received and adjudicated, and prior to being removed from the country for loss of or lack of legal status. This means that people in detention may be new arrivals who attempted to enter the United States without going through a checkpoint. Others surrender at the border seeking asylum, while others either fall out of status or were able to enter unauthorized and are discovered later. Thus, not everyone in immigration detention has a "criminal" background or has broken a law. In fact, a study published in November 2019 by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) at Syracuse University found that about 50,000 immigrants were held in detention nationwide and that nearly 32,000, or 64%, of detainees had no criminal conviction on record. This is up from just under 40% 4 years prior. By the end of April 2019, Krome was listed as one of the ICE detention centers with 50% or more of detainees with no criminal conviction coming in at 51.7%. In the United States, intakes naturally happen disproportionately along the southern border with Mexico.

Since the number of people in detention grew under the Obama and Trump administrations, ICE adopted a transfer policy in order to manage the imbalance of intakes it processes. In 1999 only one of every five detainees were transferred. In 2008, the majority, or over 52%, of detainees were transferred. Of those transferred about 24% were subjected to two or more transfers (TRAC, 2009). According to a report by TRAC titled "Huge Increase in Transfers of ICE Detainees" (2009), "The number of transfers now exceeds the total number of individuals detained" (p. 1). For these reasons it is

important to analyze the multiple possible motivations behind transfers, whether overcrowding, financial, or punitive, and the impacts of those transfers.

From 1994 to 2008, the number of people detained each year grew from about 81,000 to 380,000 (Kalhan, 2010). Today it is estimated that more than 300,000 immigrants are detained in the United States every year. These numbers are alarming because before the 1980s there were no official detention centers except for the ones at Ellis Island and Angle Island, but these increases also imply a rapidly expanding, profit-driven deportation regime at the cost of human suffering. These increases have let to the historical emergence of regional immigrant processing centers. South Florida is home to the Krome Service Processing Center in Miami, which is an all-male facility and has a capacity of about 600 which is sometimes stretched to over 800, as seen in the TRAC report where there were 799 detainees held at Krome in April of 2019, and a contract with ICE for a daily minimum bed quota of 450 (Bringing Justice to Immigration Detainees, 2011; Farah et al., 2015; TRAC, 2019). Krome (thereafter referred to with this concise name) is an ideal location to study contemporary politics of immigrant detention and deportation, because it illustrates some trending patterns nationally. Two such patterns are the scaling-up of "guaranteed minimums" in numbers of immigrants detained over the past five years, and in the increasing importance of transfers between detention facilities. The most recent 2015 data on transfers revealed that a total of 4,382 detainees were transferred from Krome accounting for 81 percent of the 5,396 detainees that one way or another left the facility (either by transfer, deportation, or release; TRAC, 2016). Of the 637 facilities nationwide that housed detainees and had more than 10 transfers for the entire year, Krome ranked in the top 5 percent of transfers to other detention centers.

TRAC also reported that for about 36 percent of detainees that year, Krome was their first stop after apprehension. The other 64 percent has been transferred in from another detention facility.

While Congress had established a national minimum bed quota of 34,000, in 2015 these "guaranteed minimums" were taken to the local level. According to the Detention Watch Network (2015), Krome was one of 15 facilities nationwide provided with a contract for daily minimums. Krome is contractually required to maintain a minimum of 450 detainees within its South Florida facility. As mentioned above, according to TRAC, Krome was one of the top 25 facilities in 2015 in terms of number of transfers

That fiscal year Krome housed 4,382 immigrants but made 5,346 transfers, with some people passing through the same facility multiple times (TRAC, 2016). This is likely linked to Krome's status as one of eight ICE Service Processing Centers as compared to a holding/staging facility or contracted facility. Krome is the only service processing center in the state of Florida. Service Processing Centers are only one of nine or more types of facilities used by ICE to hold detainees.

The Deportation Regime

Hernandez (2008) argues that deportation of immigrants unfolded throughout the 20th century and has continued in the 21st century in conjunction with national crises, xenophobia, and racism. Deportation is a tool used by states to exercise their sovereignty and power and to cleanse society of "unwanted bodies" (De Genova & Peutz, 2010). Not only does it cost American taxpayers over $8 billion a year to keep detention facilities running, but in some cases, detainees pay the ultimate price of detention with their lives.

It is estimated that from 2004 to 2019, 193 immigrants died in detention, making this an enormous human rights concern for potential violations of numerous treaties on the rights of detainees (Shepherd, 2020; Freedom for Immigrants, 2018; Nowrasteh, 2020; Raphael & Lazarus, 2017). Various immigrant activist groups have documented that detainees suffer inadequate conditions of confinement, telephone access, visitation hours, food, clean quarters, overcrowding, functional toilets and showers, and counsel, and prolonged and indefinite custody. The average length of detention before removal varies significantly by state and whether people are seeking asylum or fighting their case. In 2017 the national average length of stay at an immigrant prison was 34 days, compared to 22 days in 2016, with the highest averages of some centers reaching 107 days (Freedom for Immigrants, 2018). As described further in the Background of this Study section of chapter 3, since 2016 I have been volunteering with the nonprofit Immigrant Action Alliance (formerly Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees) as part of their visitation group at the Krome Service Processing Center. During my time as a visitor and in conjunction with my data collection for this study, it was uncommon for me to visit a man who had been detained for less than 3 months, with some men being detained up to 3 years, and in rare cases even longer. Indefinite confinement has become a primary concern of scholars and activist working on the deportation regime. As described by Turnbull (2017) , long periods of detention are utilized by immigrant regulatory regimes around the world as forms of punishment or deterrence for immigration, although it includes many individuals who have committed no crimes beyond their crossing of national borders, often to seek asylum.

Mental health problems and the sequelae of violence are major consequences of the deportation regime. Immigrants in detention suffer physical and mental abuse, face extreme social isolation when their families are broken up, and many suffer death by either suicide or neglect (Karaim, 2015). According to Zachary Steel (2006), past and ongoing detention contribute independently to the risk of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and mental-health-related disabilities, which can persist up to 3 years after release. Similarly, it has been found that those who have been detained experience an "ongoing sense of insecurity and injustice, difficulties with relationships, profound changes to view of self and poor mental health" (Coffey et al., 2010, p. 2070). Depression, concentration and memory disturbances, and persistent anxiety are additional consequences documented in the literature (Coffey et al., 2010). In Chapter 4 of this dissertation, I describe some mental health concerns faced by interviewees in detention, which echo many of the trends described by Coffey and colleagues.

One of the key elements of the deportation regime as elaborated by De Genova and Peutz (2010) is the increasing use of neoliberal regulatory mechanisms that treat immigrant bodies as commodities and function to restrict immigrants' access to legal representation and immigrants' rights initiatives. The longer immigrants are held in detention the more profit can be extracted from them, and the more transfers they experience the harder it is for them to effectively defend their case in immigration court, all of which compromises the person's mental and physical well-being. Transfers are a prototypical example of both of these elements (neoliberal regulation and the obstruction of detainees' rights). Between 2003 and 2007 detention center transfers doubled. Transfers exacerbate the conditions mentioned above and also "disrupt detainee's ability

to present effective arguments for release and against removal by interfering with attorney-client relationship, delaying and complicating proceedings, and even change the applicable substantive laws" (Kalhan, 2010, p. 48). In other words, when people are transferred, they are often moved further away from support systems and their legal representation who may no longer be able to represent them. It can take days for family or lawyers to find someone who has been transferred. Depending on where the person is transferred, they may be facing completely different court circuits (Pon, 2019).

Major correctional corporations, like GEO Group, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), and Management and Training Corporation (MTC), used to lobby the government to set quotas to ensure their profits. By raising the quotas in the past and by setting local quota agreements, corporations that are contracted to run federal facilities or who run private for-profit facilities are able to extract a greater value per detainee, by pushing the limits of their capacity, which functionally exchanges human rights protections for profit. In 2018, the daily cost to hold someone in immigrant detention was $140 per adult detainee (Urbi, 2020). In 2017, GEO Group received 184 million taxpayer dollars for immigrant detention and CCA received $135 million for detention-related services from the federal government. Krome is a federal facility but it is managed by Akima Global Services, a private for-profit corporation. These larger corporations are not the only ones that are profiting. In 2015, ICE identified 14 different companies involved in detention "business," led by GEO Group, CCA, and Ahtna Corporation. Among the other 11 listed were county jails, transportation companies, and security companies (TRAC, 2016), coinciding with the increase in transfers between detention centers. Immigrants' bodies are thus commodified by the government and profit-oriented

corporations, which can extract value from them via the deportation regime. The construct of the deportation regime thus invites us to critically engage in the ways that immigrants are increasingly incorporated into neoliberal regulatory structures and corporate motives that function to undermine human dignity and rights. Ultimately, as I argue in the following section by drawing on Critical Medical Anthropology, these trends have embodied consequences for the health and wellbeing of an increasing number of immigrant detainees.

Critical Medical Anthropology

This study uses a critical medical anthropology (CMA) perspective to analyze the impacts of mobility in U.S. detention practices using the concept of structural vulnerability. CMA originated in the 1970s, when there was an effort among neo-Marxist and critical structuralist anthropologists to expand on theoretical perspectives in medical anthropology by taking into account different scales and ethical orientations. At the macro-level, CMA provides a theoretical framework that emphasizes the determinant effects of political economy on health, while also considering the micro-level effects on individuals and giving voice to the experiences of the most vulnerable. Singer (1995), a foundational figure in CMA, defines the approach as a theoretical and practical effort to understand and respond to situations and problems of health, illness, and treatment in terms of interactions between the macro level of the political economy; the national level of political and class structures; the institutional level of health (or detention) systems; the community or local level of beliefs and actions; and the micro level of the meaning, behavior, and experience of the disease (or ill health), human physiology, and

environmental factors. The perspective of CMA thus requires multi-level thinking and analysis, involving a tacking back-and-forth between structural processes and their "downstream" effects in human experience. Singer et al. (1992) describe CMA as a holistic, historical effort concerned with life context, social relationships, and cultural understandings. In the heuristic vision of CMA, micro (or local/personal experiences) are embedded in macro (or structural systems) but are never reduced to it. In other words, individual experiences matter and should always be understood in context to the social structure of which they are a part (Singer et al., 1992). CMA understands that health situations are products of the encompassing contexts of political, historical, and economic forces. This study uses a CMA perspective to analyze the physical and mental health impacts of mobility in U.S. detention practices with respect to structural vulnerability.

CMA as a school owes an intellectual debt to the social theorists Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci, among other materialist thinkers, in addition to the Frankfurt school of theoretical-critical thought, phenomenology, and political economy (Csordas, 1988). According to Baer, Hans, Singer and Susser (1997), CMA has three basic theoretical assumptions: (1) knowledge and power are connected; (2) disease and treatment occur within a capitalist global system; and (3) interventions in public health must address macro-level factors while incorporating micro-level perspectives, particular amongst the most vulnerable. The critical approach to understanding health problems in CMA is different not only because of its macro-social analysis, but also because of the importance it gives to historical and political-economic context (Morsy, 1996). Morsy continues to explain that contextual factors are essential to CMA, and their emphasis explains the predominance of broad historical and global analyses within this tradition, many of which

include an analysis of entrenched global power relations and their embodied health consequences for those most disempowered within the system. This multi-level analysis that is typical of CMA is exemplified in Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States* (2013). Holmes explores accounts of everyday suffering of Mexican migrants and their connection to modern-day food systems. As he explains it,

> The suffering of Triqui migrant laborers is an embodiment of multiple forms of violence. The political violence of land wars has pushed them to live in inhospitable climates without easy access to water for crops. The structural violence of global neoliberal capitalism forces them to leave home and family members, suffer through a long and deadly desert border crossing, and search for a means to survive in a new land. The structural violence of labor hierarchies in the United States organized around ethnicity and citizenship positions them [the undocumented immigrant] at the bottom, with the most dangerous and backbreaking occupations and the worst accommodations. Due to their location at the bottom of the pecking order, the undocumented Triqui migrant workers endure disproportionate injury and sickness. (pg. 108)

In other words, the migrant farmworkers in Holmes study experienced both physical illness because of the labor processes of which they were a part. Globalization drew them from their underdeveloped country of Mexico in search of work in the United States were capitalism depends on their cheap labor.

According to Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987), medical anthropology scholarship can be generally categorized into three perspectives: the individual body, the social (or natural) body, and the body politic. Immigration issues fall most clearly within the concept of the body politic or, the social and political construction of the "nation," which has presumably defined geopolitical borders and distinguishes "citizens" from "others" (non-citizens). For instance, in applying such a framework to immigrant health issues, medical anthropologist have argued that when the body politic is perceived as

threatened or under attack, it is often constructed as vulnerable and permeable, leading to expansion of social controls regulating the boundaries of the nation-state and purging of unwanted ("invading") bodies (Douglas, 1966; Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987). Some medical anthropologists have incorporated the Foucauldian notion of biopower in conceptualizing how immigrants are discursively constructed in times of heightened border anxiety (as, for example, during the Trump Administration). Discourses of U.S. border protection construct justifications for the exclusion of unwanted bodies who may be represented as diseased, "risky," or fraught with criminality and mental illness. In the case of mental illness, Human Rights Watch has observed that "ICE will even detain a non-citizen, found incompetent to stand trial by a criminal court or ordered to receive treatment at a psychiatric facility" (Human Rights Watch, 2010, p. 69). Clearly, mental illness is not viewed in such policies as a health condition requiring protection, but rather is a danger warranting expulsion from the nation.

Critical medical anthropology was born out of a critique within medical anthropology of the tendency of traditional anthropologists to restrict analysis to the micro level, failing to connect personal relations and experiences to larger encompassing social, political, or economic systems, particularly systemic expressions of social inequality and their outcomes on local and global scales. In order to examine today's contemporary immigration detention policies and practices, one must consider their relation to the legacy of colonialism on the one hand, and the emergence of neocolonialism on the other (Singer, 1989). Class structure and, by extension, class struggle, is linked closely to the colonial past, which after independence created, in many

previously colonized nations, a sort of "pseudo-independence," leaving colonizer and colonized tied together through a colonial past and neocolonial present (Singer, 1989).

From the macro-perspective of CMA, the health and suffering of immigrants who are caught up within the deportation regime are historically embedded and linked to global political-economic forces based on colonial relations, which generate conditions of deep suffering in many immigrants' countries of origin and shape their health during the immigration process. For example, Mexican migrant laborers in the United States are vulnerable or at high risk for HIV infection and therefore contribute to HIV and marital HIV transmission back in Mexico (Albarran & Nyamathi, 2011). Another recent example would be of the global coronavirus pandemic and it's spread through deportations. According to an article by Brigida and Joachin (2020), entitled "The Coronavirus Pipeline", "Guatemalan officials and advocates say the [deportation] flights have formed a detention-to-deportation pipeline that has spread the coronavirus through already vulnerable deportees, contributing to a crash in Guatemala's health care system and sparking violent anti-deportee backlash in receiving communities."

Biomedical power, or regimes of public health, can be used for the maintenance of the political interests or uphold nationalist or imperialist principles, rather than simply focusing on individual clinical or behavioral goals (Gorsky & Sirrs, 2017). It is for this reason that CMA stresses the importance of incorporating a political-economic analysis of the person and larger social systems. As Singer (1989) writes, "Under capitalism, even human feelings are transformed into commodities produced under alienated conditions for sale on the market, the individual [experiences or illnesses] can only be fully understood in the context of macrolevel relations and processes" (p. 1199). As mentioned

earlier, medical anthropologists have applied a similar perspective to immigrant detainees in recent discussions of the neoliberal roots of private detention facilities and their commoditization of immigrant bodies (Ackerman & Furman, 2013).

A critical medical anthropology framework will guide this work in two ways. First, it is reflected in my analysis of the political economy of detention and the larger institutions involved. Second, it will guide an analysis of the embodied effects produced at the micro- (individual or local) level, and the macro (national or international) structural factors that condition or promote these effects. This study focuses on understanding the suffering of detainees through an analysis of laws and social structures that are complicit in the harms and ill health experienced as a result of detainment and the forced movement of detainees via transfers. In sum, I will attempt to understand the physical and psychological effects that are due to detainment and transfers within the deportation regime, as reflected in the local case of Krome in South Florida.

The New Mobility Paradigm

Much of the past work in immigration studies has concentrated on patterns of immigration, reasons for migration, assimilation, and the political economy of immigration (Brettell, 2000; Guarnizo et al., 2003; Massey et al.,1993; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). References to immigrant detention practices and experiences are woven into these studies; however, there is a lack of emphasis on the impacts of these practices, perhaps particularly in the area of health. This is more than likely linked to limited accessibility of detention centers. Social research within detention facilities, such as that I describe here, has been relatively rare in the emerging social science literature on the

deportation regime (von Werther et al., 2018). Further, while questions of mobility and vulnerability are addressed in previous works, the concept of mobility is almost exclusively used to analyze why people migrate in the first place or how their movement is controlled as immigrants. Little work has been conducted on the patterns or effects of mobility within immigration detention facilities, as in the case of transfers. In 2019 there was a legal study done by the Stanford Law Review entitled, *Identifying Limits to Immigration Detention Transfers and Venue*. The study focused on the legal impacts of transfers as it pertains to the governments discretion to transfer detainees, the increase in detention transfers, and the fact that detainees are often transferred to the Fifth and Eleventh Circuit courts. According to the study, "…The government has the broad discretion to choose where to detain an immigrant and which courts will hear the immigrant's case. Despite the immense impact on immigrant communities, there is a dearth of legal scholarship examining this practice" (Pon, 2019, p.747). Most importantly the research concluded that the legal framework and justifications for these transfers were "exaggerated and ultimately outweighed by the hardships inflicted on detainees" (Pon, 2019, p.747). It is for these reasons that research on immigration transfers and their impacts on detainees is so important and the emphasis of this dissertation.

While mobility has been viewed as intrinsic to detention and deportation in prior research, it has generally not considered the context of what might be regarded as 'forced migration' within the deportation regime. Migration (movement between nations) has been counterposed to detention (the state-sanctioned limitation of movement due to incarceration), but there has been an implicit assumption that detention is synonymous with immobility. In fact, one of the most invisible processes in discussions of the

deportation regime is the forced movement of people in detention as they are transferred

between detention centers, an often lengthy process that may, eventually, lead to their

deportation.

In the early 2000s there was a shift and a new mobilities paradigm emerged. It

argued for a more complex understanding of the connection between places and people

through performance. This relatively new and growing field encompasses transportation,

trade, travel, transnationalism, and migration (Blunt, 2007; Cresswell, 2006; Hannam et

al., 2006; Sheller & Urry, 2006). Central to mobility are scale, practice, technology,

location, and embodied experiences. It for these reasons that the new mobilities paradigm

is ideal for studying the nuances of mobility at a micro-level scale, which includes

attention to the transfers that occur in this study population.

Key to this study are the embodied experiences of mobility in relation to U.S.

immigration detention practices. First, immigrants are mobile bodies that live in the

periphery, and as often happens with mobile bodies (vagabonds, Gypsies, Jews, and

homeless people), they are used as scapegoats and labeled enemies of the State. Mobility

is associated with freedom, progress, and civilization, but also chaos and deviance. Still,

movement is natural; animals migrate for survival, and so do humans.

The key aspects of the mobilities field are (1) a focus on the relationship between

human mobilities and immobilities and the uneven distribution of power; (2) the

relationship between mobility and economic infrastructures; (3) an appreciation of

complex mobilities; and (4) a risk analysis/disaster assessment. In other words, this

concept takes into consideration both large-scale movement and smaller local processes,

a trait shared with the field of critical medical anthropology (Hannam et al., 2006; Massey, 1994).

As with CMA, the new mobilities paradigm stresses the fundamental importance of social inequalities and their embodied effects. As previous research within this paradigm has shown (Cresswell, 2006), the concept of mobility can be used to create identities of belonging or exclusion. In some spaces, both of these may operate, with variable effects on embodied experience. Angel Island and Ellis Island, for example, are both sites where a sort of paradoxical embodiment of mobility manifests. Angel Island in California was an immigration station from 1910 to 1940 and a detention center from 1910 to 1940. Here, Chinese immigrants' mobility was regulated and often inhibited, and were pathologized based on their race and social class. Medics looked for deficiencies in sanity, intelligence, literacy, and health in immigrants, and were therefore engaged in scientific practices of othering. In contract, Ellis Island welcomed many European immigrants and also functioned as an immigrant station and quarantine center. Ellis Island is often used as a symbol of American national identity and a space of common immigrant experiences. While this is a myth in some ways (Ellis Island restricted and regulated the movements of Irish, Italians, Eastern Europeans, Jews, and Germans, who were seen as a threat to the body politic), the contrasting discourses of these two immigrant centers demonstrates the distinct shape of social inequalities and the racialized discourses around immigrants upon which the new mobilities paradigm relies (Cresswell, 2006). And these meanings are continually evolving. Today, in accordance with the People of America Theme Study Act of 2001, both of these centers are being converted

into heritage cites and museums. Angel Island was a place that embodied the Chinese Exclusion Act and is now being turned into one that embodies national unification.

What was once a space of exclusion is now intended as a space of commonality. But the new mobilities paradigm reminds us that all such meanings must be historicized and are continually being remade. It is often stated that about half of Americans can trace one ancestor to Ellis Island. But greater awareness of the nation's fraught racial past draws our attention to a key contradiction: the myth of Ellis Island excludes African Americans who came here as slaves, Asian Americans who arrived through Angel Island, as well as Puerto Ricans (who are formal US citizens with limited sovereignty) and immigrants who came across the U.S.-Mexico border (Cresswell & Merriman, 2011). The United States, and different continuencies within that national construct, depict themselves in a contradictory ways: as a nation built by foreigners, and one that constantly tries to control, exclude, and remove foreigners.

Since the events of 9/11 and during the Trump administration, immigrants were largely perceived as a threat in the United States, which often was used discursively to argue that their mobility must be limited. What is obscured by this discourse is the fact that many immigrants experience their mobility as always, already *forced* by broader political-economic structures. This is evident in the words of a Mexican mother cited in Cresswell & Merriman: "I didn't want to come here. Do you know any mother who *wants* to leave their children?" (2011, p. 225). The situation of forced migration is especially true for refugees and asylum seekers. The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol added a mobile component to the international definition of a refugee. According to these documents, refugees are people who have

been displaced from their country of origin; they are forced into migrating to seek

protection based on a "well-founded fear." From the perspective of the refugees and

asylum seekers, what does it mean to argue for their mobility to be limited? There is little

choice in the matter, from their perspective.

As people flee under force for economic, political, or environmental reasons, if

they are unable to achieve a formal asylum or refugee status, they are criminalized by the

US immigration system once they arrive in the US. Asylum seekers may be even more

vulnerable when they are classified as "spontaneous arrivals." Unlike refugees, asylum

seekers are not vetted and transported by refugee relief agencies; thus, they are classified

as greater threats to the State. As Cresswell and Merriman (2011) explain, "Asylum

seekers thus occupy a paradoxical space: they are, by definition, those who seek

protection, but at the same time are punished and less likely to be granted status as a

result of having acted [moved] to access human and legal rights" (p. 258).

Because asylum seekers' movement isn't managed, they are received with

systems and discourses of exclusion, while refugees are received willingly. The contrasts

between these two formal means of immigration demonstrates the kinds of fine-grained

distinctions that are of interest to the New Mobilities Paradigm. The key element in these

contradictory modalities of movement is *how* people move (the means of movement) and

the *state's involvement* in the movement (the state's legal and discursive definitions).

When asylum seekers take movement into their own hands and, as some believe, "skip

the line" (a line that does not actually exist) to the receiving country, they are demonized

for exercising their agency in pursuit of survival. Many receiving countries, like the

United States and Canada, view themselves as hosts who retain the right to decide who

enters and who needs to be removed. Immigration then appears to be a never-ending cycle. People will continue to migrate, as a feature of human nature and a strategy for survival. Capitalist systems depend on cheap immigrant labor, while at the same time nations need to protect borders and citizenship to legitimatize their sovereignty (Agamben, 1998; Cresswell & Merriman, 2011). These tensions generate different conditions for differently positioned immigrant populations, at different historical moments. They also demonstrate the need to use fine-grained ethnography to describe the different ways in which immigrant discourse, policies, and embodied experiences are interwoven for specific populations.

For this dissertation, I have aimed to place the New Mobilities Paradigm into conversation with CMA, as each framework has similar elements that allow for interaction and interchange. My research aims to shed light on the experiences of those trapped within the deportation regime and its continual "process" of immigrant apprehension and removal. Here, I am attentive to the practices of immigrant detention as well as the meanings and categories of immigrant detention and their uses, as well as the ways that immigrants themselves interpret their experiences while in detention. Consistent with CMA, I am also concerned with the embodied effects of these tensions, the ways in which the health and wellbeing of immigrant populations, especially detainees, are deeply affected by the ways in which they are entangled and their mobility constrained or controlled through mechanisms of 'forced mobility' (i.e., transfers within the detention system).

Transfers Between Detention Centers

As mentioned above, one aspect of mobility and migration with respect to immigration is understudied: *transfers between detention centers*. Detainees' mobility is not only restricted, it is controlled and forced. Between 2003 and 2007, U.S. detention center transfers doubled. According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (2009), ICE transferred 261,910 detainees from one detention center to another in 2007. While a total of 1.4 million transfers occurred from 1999 to 2008 (Human Rights Watch, 2009). During FY 2008, the latest period for which complete data are available, the majority or 52.4% of detainees were transferred (TRAC, 2009). Transfers move people away from family, support systems, and legal counsel, which can disrupt their immigration court case and traumatize detainees. This forced mobility also disrupts the "detainee's ability to present effective arguments for release and against removal by interfering with attorney-client relationship, delaying and complicating proceedings, and even changing the applicable substantive laws" (Kalhan, 2010, p. 48). It is estimated that about 46% of all detainees are transferred at least twice before being released or deported (Freedom for Immigrants, 2018). Transfers do not just interfere with detainees' court cases: studies have reported that transfers increase the physical and psychological impacts of detention in general (Coffey et al., 2010; Keller et al., 2003; Steel & Silove, 2001; Sultan & O'Sullivan, 2001). The national ICE Detention Standard—Transfer of Detainees requires ICE to notify detainees of imminent transfers, inform their legal counsel of a transfer, and ensure that official health records accompany transferred detainees. In 2008 the Office of the Inspector General's report, titled *Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Tracking and Transfers of Detainees*, found significant

noncompliance with these standards (Skinner, 2009, pp. 6–8,11). Having worked with nonprofit organizations at detention centers, I have witnessed and talked to other volunteers and detainees who have witnessed transfers being used punitively. During my time as a volunteer for the Immigrant Action Alliance, many men I visited in detention and other volunteers commented on countless instances where men were transferred because they hadn't complied with ICE's demands to sign their order of deportation. Transfers also serve the purpose of moving detainees for deportation and evacuation, and in order to fulfill contracts with state jails and bus transportation companies. There is a need for more research on transfers, their health impacts, and the coping mechanisms used by detainees. This dissertation aims to respond to these needs.

In this dissertation I describe how interviewees perceived and experienced transfers within the detention system, the ways they interpreted the motives behind them, and the consequences on their health and wellbeing. I also draw on stories from other activists and volunteers of Immigrant Action Alliance as a means of contextualizing the uses of these transfers within the system. My primary arguments are that transfers undoubtably increase the suffering and impacts of detention on detainee's overall well-being, that transfers are used punitively by ICE, and that transfers are a part of the immigration industry that prioritizes profit over human rights. In conjunction, detainees fear transfers, ICE does not always abide by its own standards and regulations, and ICE is incapable of adequately caring for detainees during times of natural disasters or outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Structural Vulnerability of Immigrants to Power Structures

The term "structural vulnerability" evolved from the concept of structural violence. According to Galtung (1975), sociologist John Galtung first introduced structural violence in 1969. He developed this concept centered on universal human rights after witnessing the United States disregard third-world poverty and the legacy of colonial inequality. He defined structural violence as "the indirect violence built into repressive social orders creating enormous differences between potential and actual human self-realization" (Galtung, 1975, p. 173). Simply put, structures constrain people and their ideas, as well as constraining the options available for them to thrive. Building on this definition, Paul Farmer (2004) explains structural violence as

> . . . one way of describing social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm's way. . . . The arrangements are structural because they are embedded in the political and economic organization of our social world; they are violent because they cause injury to people. . . . Neither culture nor pure individual will is at fault; rather, historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces conspire to constrain individual agency. (pp. 305–326)

Structural violence has also been described as symbolic systems (words, images, and practices) promoting the interests of dominant groups in constructing and maintaining social hierarchies (Aggleton et al., 2003). According to Galtung (1969), structural violence has a certain stability that allows it to continue through time and becomes built into the social structure, allowing it to go unnoticed. Specific groups of people are socially situated in ways that make them more vulnerable to structural violence. For example, those considered deportable are vulnerable to exploitation, constant fear of discovery, and detention before deportation. At first glance those people or factors who directly inflict physical or psychological pain within institutions may be

blamed, but in reality, their actions are deeply rooted in the *structure*, and in this sense, the structure creates an environment which *precedes and foments* individual acts of violence or mistreatment. Structural violence encompasses not only physical harms but also mental, existential, and interpersonal harms (Holmes, 2013).

However, other scholars were skeptical of broadening the concept of violence to the realm of political economy. This caused the shift from the word "violence" to "vulnerability," a term that Quesada et al. (2011) described as more neutral and acceptable to a wider audience. In their article "Structural Vulnerability and Health: Latino Migrant Laborers in the United States," Quesada et al. (2011) described structural vulnerability as "a positionality that imposes physical-emotional suffering on specific population groups and individuals in patterned ways. Structural vulnerability is a product of class-based economic exploitation and cultural, gender/sexual, and racialized discrimination, as well as complementary processes of depreciated subjectivity formation" (p.1). This definition highlights the fact that structural vulnerability is also a positionality that encompasses political, economic, and cultural sources of physical and psychological distress, which, according to Quesada and colleagues, can have embodied effects on health and psychosocial wellbeing. In other words, people's vulnerability is dependent on their location in the hierarchical social order of power relations and circulating discourses of worthiness, which, in the case of immigrant detainees, may be overlaid with presumptions of their criminality or outsider status (Leatherman, 2005; Quesada et al., 2011; Watts & Bohle, 1993). When immigrants are socially excluded, they are viewed as less worthy or ethically inferior, normalizing or justifying the vulnerabilities that can manifest in many different ways such as racism, sexism, poverty,

and xenophobia. For example, excessive transfers within detention might be viewed as a means by which structural violence is expressed, potentially leading to embodied vulnerability to trauma, psychological distress, suicidality, and other conditions.

The concept of structural vulnerability is used to explore how large-scale social forces come to be translated into personal distress and disease, and thus is in line with critical medical anthropology's concern with how political-economic forces are linked to health outcomes. Anthropologists like Seth Holmes, for example, reveal how market forces, anti-immigrant sentiment, and racism undermine health and health care in the United States. He demonstrates how inequalities and suffering come to be perceived as normal in society and even health care settings. In his book *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* (2013), Holmes describes the way that health care providers interact with migrant farm workers. In one example, a health report stated that "customs of the population" as the reason for overcrowded housing amongst these vulnerable immigrants. In several of his examples immigrant behavior and culture were used to explain health problems instead of social structures (like poverty and the working conditions of corporate farms) that were actually producing the conditions leading to health issues. While migrant agricultural workers' bodies are viewed by corporate representatives as ideally suited to the arduous bending and lifting required by strawberry harvesting, such assessments neglect the corporate pressures to harvest large amounts in impossibly short periods, which result in physical deterioration and overexposure to heat and aerosolized pesticides among the laborers. Holmes's work shows the linkages between structural conditions and the discursive strategies of corporate cultures that erase the humanity of the farm workers and drive their structural vulnerability.

This research focuses on the structural vulnerabilities faced by immigrants, specifically those who are deemed deportable, and more specifically those held in immigrant detention centers. Undocumented immigrants are the most vulnerable of this group because they have no real legal protection and they have been criminalized within the US immigration system. The vulnerabilities that undocumented immigrants face begin before they are ever detained. Immigrants often must first face a difficult journey to the United States. Once across the border, they are in constant fear of discovery. Ever-present surveillance, rhetorics of exclusion, and exploitation place these 'noncitizens', 'illegals, or 'invaders' in a state of extreme vulnerability and suffering.

The fact that in the United States health and well-being are individualized within the logic of corporatized health systems also adds to the structural vulnerabilities faced by immigrants. This is because the responsibility for survival, or well-being, is individualized – as in the need to provide for one's own health care costs – while social and environmental factors are often disregarded. In the words of Quesada et al. (2011) in the United States, "Responsibility for survival relies on an ideology of free-market forces to distribute good[s], services, and health to the disenfranchised" (p.3). The individualization of health discursively removes responsibility from the State, even as affliction is embedded in the large-scale social and economic structures of the State. Those most vulnerable are people who are poor, disabled, or addicted; people of color; migrants; and other stigmatized or socially marginalized groups. Blame for one's health condition is the logical extension of these processes. As explained by Quesada et al. (2011), "This embodiment of subordinate status produces a form of 'symbolic violence' whereby the everyday violence of imposed scarcity and insecurity is understood as

natural and deserved" (p. 2). This individualization of health limits immigrants' access to

healthcare and normalizes the state's attempt to remove these unwanted bodies, who are

deemed unable or unwilling to meet the expectations of the normative, self-sufficient and

'productive' citizen-subject.

Bodies pushed to the periphery of society, driven to a state of "bare life," in the

words of Agamden (2000), are the most vulnerable and suffer ill health and mental and

physical harms. Bare life is the reduction of human life to a condition in which the

sovereign can unconditionally dispose of at will, someone without political freedom, someone

who is denied both political and legal representation (Owens, 2009; Ronneberger, 2007). In the

case of detained immigrants, the intersecting vulnerabilities they experience must be

understood by examining the factors occurring 'upstream.' Their suffering is pre-

determined by the legal and structural violence embedded in U.S. political and cultural

systems, as manifest primarily within the deportation regime. Focusing on the U.S.

detention and deportation system, this dissertation analyzes the structural vulnerabilities

faced by detainees. One dimension I aim to describe is the ways in which detention

centers are spaces where the normal rule of law is suspended and atrocities committed

within that space are enacted by agents of the deportation regime (e.g., ICE agents and

detention center guard), who act temporarily as sovereign and outside the law (Agamben,

2000; Quesada et al., 2011). Legal mechanisms may create conditions for these abuses,

which may include the excessive punitive transfers described further in Chapter 4, but

they are enacted by agents who may feel empowered to act violently or undermine the

humanity of detainees. I aim to use a structural lens to analyze these layers and

understand how the U.S. detention system positions immigrant bodies in conditions that can ultimately contribute to their ill-health.

I rely in my work on previous studies on immigration detention that have reported brutalities associated with the immigrant detention system, which, for example, has been shown to incarcerate people for excessively long or indefinite periods (Kalhan, 2010; Steel, 2006). The majority of detainees in such conditions have been shown to be male immigrants (Golash-Boza & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013), in part because immigrant men are viewed more as a threat than immigrant women. Similar to the history of mass incarceration in the United States, many are poor or of lower class, and a vast majority are people of color (Kanstroom, 2010). These bodies are systemically more likely to suffer because of racist, sexist, and xenophobic sentiments that circulate and limit their agency and life chances. Cultural practices and a rhetoric of fear construct social systems that deprive groups like these of basic rights and justify their suffering. Not only are brown and poor bodies more likely to suffer, they are also more likely to be silenced (Farmer, 2009). As in our previous example of disenfranchised Latino laborers, Latino immigrants occupy a lower place in the global economy and hold a culturally devalued status in the United States. They face disproportionate policing and are used as economic pawns in multiple ways. Green (2011), for example, has described how detainee labor is used to bolster profits of private immigrant detention facilities through public works contracts, through which detainees are forced to work for pennies per hour. Echoing many of the findings of Holmes amongst immigrant farm workers, Green's work reveals the capitalist underpinnings of the deportation regime, the motives of extended

detainment, and the effects on detainees' bodies. Such realities leave Latinos susceptible to ill health at elevated rates (Quesada et al., 2011).

This study aims to understand how the structural vulnerability faced by those deemed deportable is intensified by the specific practices they experience in immigrant detention. The concepts of mobility and structural vulnerability are synthesized to explore how they intersect to shape the health of immigrant detainees. Specifically, I focus on an analysis of mobility within detention, as well as the vulnerabilities emerging from these practices. I aim to reveal the physical and psychological impacts of detention as a result of prolonged and indefinite confinement, but also analyze additional impacts and vulnerabilities associated with issues of forced mobilities (transfers, detainment, and deportations).

Detainees and human rights activists have reported dozens of health issues and human rights violations associated with being labeled "deportable" and being detained, and these impacts are intensified the longer people are detained (Kalhan, 2010; Steel, 2006; Young & Wallace, 2019). Importantly, any noncitizen can get caught within the deportation regime. With the number of people detained annually, the length of average detention, and the number of detention facilities rising, it is increasingly important to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of U.S. immigration practices on detainees. This research aims to go a step further in its analysis to understand the increased vulnerabilities of those who are not only detained but forcefully moved while in detention.

Well-Being and Detention

Health has been described by the United Nations and other international bodies as a fundamental human right (Leary, 1994; UN General Assembly, 1948;). The United States violates many international laws in its immigration practices, including the freedom from excessively punitive practices (such as punitive transfers) and the right to access health care, both of which are discussed in this dissertation. Immigrant activist groups have also documented that detained immigrants suffer limited telephone and visitation hours, scarce food, unsanitary quarters, overcrowding, unfunctional toilets and showers, inadequate counsel, and prolonged and indefinite confinement (Kalhan, 2010). Steel (2006) found in a study of the impacts of immigration detention on the mental health of refugees that "past immigration detention . . . contributed independently to [the] risk of ongoing PTSD, depression, and mental-health related disabilities. Longer detention was associated with more severe mental disturbance, an effect that persisted for an average of 3 years after release" (p. 58). Mental health deteriorates further the longer that people are detained. In 2019, the average length of stay at a detention center nationally was 55 days (American Immigration Council, 2020). However, this data is artificially skewed by noncitizens who are immediately returned at the border after being processed by Border Patrol, meaning that the average incarceration for actual detainees is much higher. For example, the length of stay reported in studies of court proceedings is another indication of extensively long period of incarceration. In 2013 a class action lawsuit found that noncitizens who applied for asylum or relief from removal in California were held on average for 421 days (American Immigration Council, 2020). Therefore, averages vary significantly depending on the state where immigrants are detained, their country of

origin, and whether they are seeking asylum, and disputing their immigration case.

Though the length of time varies significantly by state, the court backlog grows: in

Chicago the average wait time is five years, whereas Miami's estimated wait time is a

year and a half (CMS, 2012; Kerwin & Yi-Ying Lin, 2009).

While Western countries keep implementing stricter measures to discourage

immigrants, they are in fact only aiding the migration black market and pushing these

bodies further and further to the social margins. With the increase in restrictive polices

around the globe, it is important to consider the impacts that these policies and practices

have on the mental and physical health of those targeted (Steel et al., 2006). Immigrants

in detention have reported persistent sadness, hopelessness, intrusive memories, and

panic attacks, which were related to the length of detention; others reported a sense of

injustice, concentration and memory disturbances, persistent anxiety, difficulties with

relationships, poor mental health, and demoralization (Coffey et al., 2010; Keller et al.,

2003; Steel & Silove, 2001; Sultan & O'Sullivan, 2001). Still others reported punitive

and humiliating practices, apparently with disregard for due process, and perceived

arbitrariness of rules in detention (Coffey et al., 2010). Aside from reporting changes in

mood and increased mental health issues, some detainees also reported attempting suicide

while detained (Mehta, 2010). Many felt they would struggle to reincorporate into society

after long terms of confinement (Coffey et al., 2010).

Woven into the U.S. immigration system is the idea of discretion. According to

the Detention and Deportation Officer's Field Manual, immigration judges and

deportation officers can use their discretion to release detainees for various reasons,

including health issues (Torres, 2006), but this discretion was rarely exercised in our

experiences at Krome at visitor volunteers. In chapter 4, I discuss one case, in which a young Haitian man was released because the cost of his health care was excessive. In this case, discretion was used to favor release, but not because the detainees' health was considered. Rather, he was reduced to a cost estimate that was deemed excessive to ICE.

At other times immigration proceedings and detentions are prolonged because of transfers for treatment, for example, when someone needs specialized care that cannot be provided in a detainee's current location. While this may be a credible goal in some cases, these transfers lack transparency and are not subject to periodic review to assess the continuing necessity of treatment in the facility (Mehta, 2010). In other cases, some noncitizen detentions are prolonged because the detainees cannot be removed to their country of origin due to a lack of diplomatic relations (or treaties governing repatriation) with the United States or rejection of the deportee by the receiving country, or when the country fails to provide travel documents (Mehta, 2010).

In any case and for whatever reason, holding anyone for an indefinite amount of time is inhumane. The U.S. Supreme Court addressed this issue in 2001. According to Mehta from Human Rights Watch (2010),

> In Zadvydas V. Davis the Supreme Court struck down the government's policy of indefinitely detaining such individuals, holding that it raised serious constitutional problems, and that the immigration statute only authorized post-final-order detention if there was a significant likelihood of removal in the reasonably foreseeable future. . . . These regulations require review of a person's custody after the 90-day removal period, and again at the 180 day mark. . . . If removal is not likely in the foreseeable future, and the detainee has cooperated with the removal efforts, he or she should be released. This can be filed through a Habeas Corpus action to contest the continued detention. (p. 77)

Nonetheless, this ruling only offers relief to those who have received a final order of deportation. Before this order has been issued, the detainee has no protections against

indefinite confinement. At the Krome detention center, over the past several years, there has been a decrease in the effectiveness of filing a habeas corpus action (Mehta, 2010). These arbitrary and indefinite practices are inhumane, break international law, and cause many health impacts (both physical and psychological) on detainees.

Purpose of Dissertation and Contribution

This dissertation will analyze the U.S. immigrant detention system in order to understand how social structures like immigration law and detention practices affect immigrants. For this study I interviewed 15 immigrant men who were previously held at the Krome Service Processing Center in Miami Florida. I have been volunteering through the nonprofit, Immigrant Action Alliance (IAA), at Krome, since 2016 and have conducted roughly 139 visits at this facility. I have served as executive director, and I am currently a board member. While I do not draw directly on primary data that is derived from these direct and personal engagements with the plight of detainees, they are a crucial aspect of my positionality as an activist researcher, and they inform my analytic sensibilities and theoretical influences. These experiences also inform my approach to case studies, which give voice to the suffering of participants through first-person narratives of detention. While drawing on the 15 interviews, my dissertation highlights three in-depth individual case studies, those of Alexis, Stanley, and Junior. These testimonies give a more in-depth understanding of the effects of transfers in the detention system and to give voice to immigrants in detention who are suffering and are often silenced in public discourses around immigration. My hope is that these case studies

approach a more phenomenological analysis of the embodied experience of detention among participants in my research.

This dissertation will add to the current immigration literature by intersecting two concepts that are rarely used together. This research interweaves the concepts of structural vulnerability and mobility in order to add an additional element of *forced mobility during detention* to Critical Medical Anthropology's view of migration while also highlighting the increased vulnerabilities experienced by those held in immigrant prisons. In particular, this dissertation analyzes the motivations behind transfers, including the operational, financial, strategic, and punitive incentives that drive these movements, and reports on the physical and psychological impacts of these increasing transfers, which I view as an understudied form of forced mobility.

It is my hope that by shedding light on historical and contemporary patterns of legal violence against immigrants, detention and deportation practices can be challenged. Immigrants are suffering human rights violations, long term psychological issues, unattended illnesses, and even death. As conditions continue to worsen and the number of immigrant removals rises, especially under the past Trump administration, challenging these practices has never been more important. Moreover, the expanding deportation regime has accompanied the relative blurring of borders, as well as a migrant industry that is profiting from these vulnerable bodies that have been excluded in the name of capitalism.

Finally, this work strives to respond to CMA's challenge to move beyond academic analyses and to propose practical interventions and policy changes. As a researcher and activist, this is a daily challenge for me. It is my hope that this work can

help challenge current U.S. immigration practices, minimize transfers, and aid in accomplishing the larger goal of ending immigration detention and passing comprehensive immigration legislation reform. Studies such as this one can serve to give voice to the marginalized within the deportation regime, and potentially to hold ICE and other authorities accountable.

This dissertation is organized into the following chapters: Background and Literature Review; Methods and Methodology; Emerging Themes; and Conclusion. The background and literature review chapter starts with a historical review of the three waves of migration to the United States: the European and Asian wave, the Mexican and Black wave, and the Contemporary wave. It then moves into a discussion of three migration theories which include World-Systems theory, Network theory, and Transnationalism. The third section of the chapter discusses the migration industry. It looks specifically at the way migration is managed, the informal sector of migration, and privatization of the migration industry. To conclude, the chapter ends with a summary of the knowledge gaps the dissertation aims to fill and the social change to which it aims to contribute. This work intersects with the field of CMA and the concept of mobility to address the understudied aspect of immigration detention transfers. It also aims to contribute to the movement for inclusive immigration reform.

The third chapter describes the study Methods and Methodology, particularly the anthropological methods used to carry out this research project and the means by which I adapted to the constraints and challenges of doing research with individuals in detention. These include participant observation at Krome, post-detention semi-structured interviews, and conversations with key informants. The chapter goes into detail on the

researcher's involvement as an activist volunteer and the unique way participants were recruited and interviewed. The work goes on to describe the way the data was analyzed and coded. Next is a discussion of the positionality of the researcher and the challenges faced. The final section of the chapter is a summary of the research participants and sample. This includes a socio-demographic profile of the 15 participants, outlining the time spent in detention and the number of transfers they endured.

The subsequent chapter highlights the three emerging themes found in the data. These include impacts of transfers, health vulnerabilities, and detention profiteering. The first section analyzes the reasons and uses of transfers, the legal impacts of transfers, and the social and psychological impacts of transfers. The following section reports on conditions in detention, medical access, and the psychological impacts of detention in general. The final section entitled "Detention Profiteering" examines the business side of detention and privatization of immigration detention. It compares federal and private detention facilities, contributing to an analysis of the multitude of contracted agencies that are a part of the detention system. These include staffing agencies, commissary, phone companies, and transportation companies (Alvarado et al., 2019). The last section delves into the legal costs of detention. These range from application fees, immigration lawyers, and bonds and bail-bond companies.

The fifth and final chapter reviews the purpose of this study and summarizes its findings. Here the similarities and differences between interviewees' experiences are explored while the meaning and importance of these findings are emphasized. Limitations of the research are addressed. This dissertation ends with recommendations for immigration detention practices and suggests areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW

Colonists who migrated from Europe founded America, yet the federal government has had an ambivalent and often exclusionist relationship with each new wave of immigrants entering the country since the early 19th century. Sentiments of xenophobia and economic crises have created systematic othering of foreigners and a continuous need for a dispensable labor force. From the early immigrants of European and Asian origin, to Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and free Blacks, to today's wave of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants, similar patterns of exclusion, exploitation in for-profit detention centers, and most recently commodification of immigrants have been documented in a wide range of studies, as I aim to outline in this chapter.

To fully understand what facilitates and constrains international migration to the United States today, we must first examine the history of migration to the United States, along with a social analysis of its related laws and policies. This chapter contains a brief historical review of migration patterns to the United States since the late 19th century and details the most significant laws that accompanied each. It will review an extensive timespan but will focus primarily on the most recent immigration wave, from 1965 to the present. In order to analyze these immigration patterns and practices, it is necessary to review the evolution and intersections of migration theories as well. This chapter sets the foundation for research on detention and deportation practices in the United States and the effects those practices have on people caught in the global deportation regime. This

regime is embedded in (1) a long history of immigration to the United States, (2) the immigration laws and policies that followed, (3) changing public sentiments about immigrant groups throughout the decades, and (4) the role that immigrants have played cyclically throughout American history (De Genova, 2010).

In 2019, the United Nations reported 272 million people living outside their country of origin. People migrate for many reasons, but most are forced to move in response to war, violence, unemployment, and poverty (Kearney, 1995). The United States had an estimated 44.8 million foreign-born residents in 2018 (Budiman, 2020). While migration has been occurring since the time of hunters and gatherers as a strategy for survival, throughout the modern era this phenomenon has become increasingly politicized through its ties to power and statehood. In recent decades in the U.S., the hardening of borders and xenophobic sentiments perpetuated by both the government and the society at large have emerged in response to acts of terror and feelings of economic insecurity, as well as globalization and the inevitable weakening of statehood as traditionally understood (Longo, 2017). Nation states are desperately pushing back in response to loss of control over their borders as a consequence of globalization and escalating policy concerns with a presumed invasion by outsiders, often populations of color from the global south (Czajka & Haas, 2014). While currency and goods can cross these borders, humans are often excluded. In addition, globalization has brought new regimes of labor that depend on vulnerable, exploitable immigrant labor, placing immigrants in what some medical anthropologists have referred to as situations of hyper-vulnerability to sickness and mortality (Padilla et al., 2018).

In the United States, undocumented immigrants continue to be socially excluded and are forced to live on the periphery of society. This is tied to the country's need for a cheap, disposable labor force and the migration industry that has grown and prospered in response (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013). A recent analysis by anthropologist Seth Holmes (2013), for example, illustrates how the health and well-being of migrant Mexican laborers in the U.S. are deeply compromised by their position in the global division of agricultural labor. Such laborers find themselves in vulnerable situations as peons of capitalism on a global scale. Without this cheap labor, our economy would suffer; yet detentions and deportations have grown exponentially in the last 30 years. With deportation numbers increasing and the global spread of deportation practices continuing, it is important to understand why these trends are happening and what effects they have on those trapped in them (Flynn, 2014).

Before the 1980s, the United States had no official detention facilities; now it has the largest detention infrastructure of the world, with more than 960 centers and over 250 detention facilities, and their influence transcends international borders (Immigration Detention 101, 2015; Kerwin & Yi-Ying Lin, 2009; Riveros, 2014). With growing numbers of these centers being privatized, increasing work raids, silent raids, and increased forced mobility all supplementing this deportation regime, it is important to analyze why this is occurring and at what expense. From 1994 to 2008, the number of detainees grew from about 81,000 to around 380,000 in the United States (Kalhan, 2010). According to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement *Fiscal Year 2019 Enforcement and Removal Operations Report* (2019), the number of admissions to U.S. detention facilities by both Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs

and Border Protection (CBP) increased from 396,488 to 510,854 in FY 2019. These numbers are alarming given that immigrant detention is a relatively new practice and that the existence of these facilities has raised numerous issues regarding detainees' human rights.

Theories of Migration

While some aspects of migration have been undertheorized because of their close ties to policy and nationalism and are usually studied in law or other fields, there are several theories that seek to explain why international migration takes place and how it functions for the sending and receiving societies (Gammelotoft-Hasen & Sorensen, 2013). These theories stem from different disciplines and have evolved over the years, building on one another. Some are based on economic theories tied to the global industrial revolution, such as push-pull and dependency theory, while others are from the social sciences. Due to limited space and concentration, I will highlight a few key classical theories while expanding only on those that directly inform the topic of this dissertation. By analyzing these theories of migration, this research aims to conceptualize the foundation of U.S. deportation practices.

No single theory can explain international migration completely. Most theories develop in isolation from one another, while a few do build on prior constructs; the largest disconnect within the migration literature follows disciplinary lines, a trend that I hope to disrupt with this work. This work is cross-disciplinary in that it juxtaposes the concepts of mobility and structural vulnerability each borrowed from the disciplines of Geography and Anthropology, respectively. Only a cross-disciplinary analysis can

achieve a full understanding of the contemporary U.S. migratory system. The main shortcomings of economic and labor recruitment theories are not that they fail to identify important migration forces, but that they do not take into account the changing historical context in which they operate or how they shape immigrants' agency in decision-making (Massey et al., 1993; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014).

World Systems Theory

Immanual Wallerstein first proposed this theory in 1974 (Wallerstein, 1974). World Systems Theory (WST) focuses on the ever-expanding global capitalist system but also considers the historical colonial context in which states have variously "developed". Besides allowing social scientists to move beyond strictly economic structures, the theory allows them to take into account different scales and units of analysis (Schiller et al., 1992). WST argues that international migration is a natural consequence of capitalist market formation in the developing world. It also argues that international migration is more likely between past colonial powers ("metropolitan" centers) and their former colonies (the global "periphery") because of the links established during those times. Networks of communication and transportation, exchanges of culture and language, along with investment, already connect these geographical areas. WST contends that the best way for states to control irregular migration, or migration that happens "outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries" (Perruchoud & Redpath, 2011, p. 54), would be to restrict their political and economic ties. In other words, if countries severed colonial ties or foreign investments that set up these networks, they would be able to reduce irregular migration from those places. This is highly unlikely

because it would constrain growing global markets. When attempted, it has proven unsuccessful. As Massey et al. (1993) reason, "Migration ultimately has little to do with wage rates or employment but rather dynamics in the market and the structure of the global economy" (p. 448).

Geographic regions perform different and unequal functions in the global market. Nations considered *developed* comprise the core, while those that fail to develop remain in the *periphery*, and those found somewhere in the middle are classified as the *semi-periphery*. In WST, the relationship between the three is very complicated and dynamic. Migration patterns follow these complicated connections; people usually flow from the periphery to the core, following goods, labor demands, and colonial ties. The core therefore extracts from the periphery; without the periphery, the core could not thrive (Gallaher et al., 2009). The need for foreign investment through land, raw resources, new markets, and cheap labor mobilizes migration both internally and abroad to meet the demands of the core capitalist countries.

Several questions emerge in relation to WST. Do economic forces always outweigh other factors in explaining migration flows? What about borders and laws? Theories such as Wallerstein's pay little attention to the political aspects intertwined with immigration flows or the ways in which borders are surveilled and militarized. Further, it is important to understand that not only economic motivations but also purported development projects and asymmetrical global politics displace populations, often igniting large migration flows (Brettell & Hollifield, 2000; Pessar, 1982; Portes & Bach, 1985; Portes & Walton, 1981; Sassen, 1988). As long as inequalities exist, people will

feel the pressure to move for better opportunities and, at the most basic human level, for survival.

WST views migration as a by-product of global capitalism and an extension of colonial relations. This is where the theory is most criticized, because it fails to acknowledge migrants' individual agency (O'Reilly, 2013). The focus is much too strong on global economic forces, while neglecting local, social, and political structures. Migrants are not merely units of labor (Portes & Bach, 1985; Sassen, 1998). It is important to remember the social, cultural, and political dimensions of immigrant experiences. If this theory explained migration completely, then international population movements should exist only where there is a gap in wages and should stop when wage differentials have been erased. In addition, it would be able to predict migration flows, but oftentimes it cannot. Migration is complex and not determined by one or two factors. It has historical, social and cultural, and complicated political ties.

Network Theory

Network Theory addresses some of the shortcomings of WST. The pioneer of this theory is sociologist Douglas Massey (1994), who first pointed out the importance of social networks in migration flows between sending and receiving countries. Network Theory, as explained by Alejandro Portes (1997), evolved by including more units of analysis like families, households, and even communities. This is important because when striving to understand why people migrate, it is essential to take into consideration that individuals have agency and participate in the decision, not alone or in a vacuum (Brettell, 2000). We are all parts of larger social networks. Massey et al. (1993) defines

immigrant networks as interpersonal ties to other migrants and nonmigrants in both their place of origin and their destination. These ties are usually formed through kinship, friendship, or community. Immigrant networks are self-perpetuating because with each migration the social structures needed to sustain it are created. The cost and risk of migration are minimized each time. Network Theory focuses not on the individual but on the household or community (Brettell & Hollifield, 2000; Briody, 1987; Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991; Massey et al., 1993; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). This theory helps explain why migration patterns continue despite changes in economic and political policies designed to stop them.

However, while Network Theory places a heavy focus on households, it tends to limit individual agency. It suggests that it is not individuals, but households that mobilize, allocate resources, and make decisions for their members. However, in my own experience volunteering at the Krome Service Processing Center, this is often not the case. Many of the men I met at these detention centers made the decision to migrate alone, especially young Central American men. They typically have little to no support while in detention. They cannot depend on family resources or backing.

WST and Network Theory can complement each other. One focuses on the broader historical context of labor markets and the other on the social factors that help explain migration (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Network Theory helps explain why the more migration flows expand, the more independent they become of the original factors that caused them. These social factors help to understand why controlling immigration flows becomes so difficult and resistant to immigration policy and enforcement. Many times, economic factors alone cannot explain the origins and persistence of the flows.

This is because the human factors underlying immigration flows frequently lie outside the control of the state or labor market (Massey et al., 1993).

Transnationalism

This theory highlights the continual movement and communication of migrants between their place of origin and destination. Transnational migration is a pattern of migrants retaining connections with their place of origin (Guarnizo & Portes, 2003) through culture, political involvement, familial ties, or even business negotiations. People's lives are lived, many times quite literally, across borders.

Many scholars use the terms *transnationalism* and *globalization* interchangeably, but as Michael Kearney (1995) argues, they overlap but are different. Globalization alludes to the worldwide social relations that connect distant places such that the events occurring in one place affect and shape events happening far away. It also implies the decay of the traditional geopolitical binaries that have been discussed before, for example, those of core and periphery. Transnationalism usually has a more limited definition. Transnational activities are usually anchored in and transcend one or more nations. Many authors prefer to restrict the term *transnationalism* to the cross-border movement of migrants. This is often because of the more cultural and political dimensions associated with transnationalism.

The theoretical gap filled by transnationalism is that of critiquing bipolar models of migration. Transnationalism emphasizes that "migrants operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political, and cultural borders . . . flowing through multidimensional global spaces with unbounded, often discontinuous and interpenetrating

sub-spaces" (Brettell & Hollifield, 2000, p. 104). In other words, human beings are not bound by borders; as the world becomes globalized, as communication and transportation improve, the world shrinks and borders become less relevant to understanding human actions. As goods and services flow freely from nation to nation, it is only inevitable that humans will too; humans have been migrating and moving since long before borders were constructed socially and politically. These strong ties between places challenge state borders, while intensifying states' immigration policies, border controls, and surveillance in response. This increased mobility across borders characterizes the late 20th and the 21st centuries and has challenged traditional notions of citizenship (Gallaher, 2009).

At the beginning of this section, I noted that no single discipline or theory could explain the phenomenon of international migration. Transnationalism has been able to hurdle one of these struggles by transcending disciplinary lines. Numerous anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, geographers, and other scholars have adopted it. Nevertheless, this perspective runs the risk of losing its conceptual strength by becoming a vague term with multiple definitions and lacking a strong empirical foundation (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998).

Together these theories help explain the multitude of reasons and factors that contribute to why people migrate. WST helps understand the economic factors and past colonial relationships that establish networks and power differentials between sending and receiving countries. It helps explain the waves of migration that have historically shaped the United States. Network Theory, on the other hand, helps us understand how migration is sustained even when economic and political policies change. This is related to the human aspects of migration that are embedded in social networks, shaping a

person's decision to migrate, where they will migrate, and the challenges they face to migrate. In other words, if someone has family or social networks in a receiving country, they may be more willing to migrate there and more likely to receive support upon arrival. Finally, transnationalism accounts for the individual's agency in deciding to migrate, while also taking into account the multifaceted social, political, and cultural ties that humans sustain between the sending and receiving countries.

Migration patterns have complex economic, historical or political dimensions and they are strongly influenced by social ties. However, an individual's agency in the decision to migrate is just as important and often is fueled by economic need, political turmoil, violence, or even natural disasters. It is for these reasons that these complementary theories were selected to guide this research. They help understand why the participants of this research migrated to the United States in the first place, and by extension how they became detained. An individual's motives for migrating directly impact their immigration case and the psychological impact that detention and the fear of deportation have on the immigrant. For example, if someone is seeking asylum they will be immediately put into detention and their case will be handled differently than someone who overstayed their visa and was picked up by ICE. If an immigrant is fleeing gang violence in Central America, for example, they may be in grave fear of being deported back to their country of origin. Still others who were brought to the United States when they were infants may fear being sent to a country to which they have no recollection or connection. These are examples of the reasons it is important to understand why people migrate in order to fully understand the impact that US immigration practices have on immigrants and, more specifically, detainees.

Migration is a natural phenomenon that has been practiced by humans since the time of hunters and gathers and it has been facilitated by globalization and technology. In other words, migration is inevitable and is fundamental to the human condition. This inevitability plays a role in the commodification of migration and of immigrant bodies, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Historical Background of U.S. Immigration and Accompanying Laws

The United States prides itself on being a country of immigrants. Throughout U.S. history, different waves of immigrant groups have arrived from around the world. Three major waves have characterized U.S. migration since the late 19th century: the European and Asian wave from 1880 to 1930; the Black and Mexican wave from 1930 to 1965; and the contemporary wave from 1965 to today, primarily from Latin America and the Caribbean and to a lesser extent from Asia (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Each wave was accompanied by restrictive laws and anti-immigrant sentiments, which have led to today's deportation practices. While this research focuses primarily on the third wave, it is important to touch briefly on each wave. With each wave of immigrants come new challenges, new targets, and new laws.

The European and Asian Wave (1880–1930)

Prior to the European and Asian wave, the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798 was passed under President John Adams's administration. This was the first ever provision for expulsion of noncitizens written into U.S. law. It gave the president the power to remove any alien who was "dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States" (Hing, 2004,

p.18). The act expired in 1800 and was never enforced as no deportations ever occurred under this law. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, multiple amendments and provisions started to appear in US laws that set criteria for deporting undocumented immigrants. Those specifically identified as deportable were groups such as slave laborers, prostitutes, criminals, people who were mentally ill, those with certain illnesses, people who were illiterate, and radicals. What was most significant about these amendments was the time limits placed on deportations. In 1888, immigrants could only be deported within one year of arrival. In 1903, the time frame was increased to three years and in 1907, it was increased again to five years after arrival. While these laws targeted immigrants, they focused on keeping undesirable bodies out, not immigrants in general. A shift toward an exclusionary view of immigrants occurred a little later, with large waves of immigrants entering the United States from Southern and Eastern Europe and Asia (Hing, 2004).

The smaller immigrant wave that occurred during this period was the Asian wave. These immigrants were specifically recruited to come to work in the United States. The California Gold Rush created a need for mine workers that led to the first program that recruited immigrant laborers. Workers were recruited from Southern China since railroad construction work was considered dangerous and attempts to recruit domestic workers resulted in little interest. Travel time from China was also almost the same as from the Eastern United States (Kennedy, 2019). With the increased movement of settlers to the West Coast of the United States came the construction of railroads, which generated more labor opportunities. By 1882, anti-Chinese immigrant xenophobic sentiments had triggered the Chinese Exclusion Act. This law placed a ten-year ban on importing

Chinese laborers and barred Chinese immigrants from obtaining citizenship (Lee, 2002).

However, the Chinese were not the only Asians being recruited. Japanese workers were

hired to work in the sugar cane industry in Hawaii. Later, many relocated to California to

work in agriculture. As more Americans moved out West and as soldiers returned from

fighting in World War I, they feared that Asian immigrants were taking control of

California's farmland and they viewed them as competition in the workforce. This fueled

more xenophobic feelings, leading to the passing of the Alien Land Law of 1913. This

law restricted Japanese immigrants from acquiring agricultural land (Portes & Rumbaut,

2014). These laws established a pattern of legislative responses to xenophobic

sentiments, validating and fueling racism and normalizing rhetorics of exclusion.

The larger new wave of European immigrants who entered the United States

followed the path of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. Whereas immigrants once came

from Great Britain and Ireland, the new centers of emigration shifted to Germany and the

Scandinavian countries. Continuing this pattern, Italians and Eastern Europeans followed.

These large influxes of immigrants radically transformed the U.S. population in the early

20th century. As a result, a display of anti-immigrant sentiment emerged. Immigrants

were often perceived as threats to the American way of life, culture, and language (Portes

& Rumbaut, 2014). World events (such as World War I) contributed to growing

xenophobic sentiments in the United States, targeting groups such as Russians, Germans,

Jews, and Slavs. These populations, although white, were seen as others or undesired and

therefore were marginalized through deliberate racial groupings in American ghettos

(Domonoske, 2014) and eugenic rhetoric (Dolmage, 2018). This led to the first

restrictionist movement, under the National Origins Act of 1924, which placed quotas on

the number of Europeans entering the country (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). More importantly, this law allowed for any immigrant without a visa or who overstayed a visa to be deported without any time limitation.

The Mexican and Black Wave (1930–1970)

The second wave continued these trends of recruiting immigrants to fill labor needs. This wave came from both within and just south of the U.S. border. After the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, the liberated Black population provided a new labor reserve for the North. Mexicans were also recruited to work in the agricultural fields, especially in the U.S. Southwest. Mexican immigration surged after 1910 as a response to the Mexican Revolution. However, immigration almost came to a halt in the 1930s because of the Great Depression. Few immigrants came to the United States because there were no jobs, and the federal government began deporting foreigners in an attempt to reduce unemployment. It is estimated that between 400,000 and 2 million Mexicans were deported during the Mexican Repatriation in the early 1930s. Many of these people had been recruited by the same government that deported them and up to 60% were American citizens (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Since much of the Southwest once belonged to Mexico before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, many American citizens were possibly displaced from land their families had lived on for generations.

With the start of World War II, the United States stepped in to provide food to Europe and American agriculture started to boom once again, along with a need for cheap labor, so the United States turned once more to Mexico and initiated the Bracero Program in 1942. This program allowed Mexican citizens to take temporary agricultural work in

the United States. It is important to note a few patterns here. First, disposable workers are often replaced by new immigrant groups over the decades. Second, in 1944, toward the end of World War II, the U.S. Congress passed the GI Bill. This law helped to assimilate only European immigrants once and for all, solidifying their place as Americans in a nod to their service and dedication to the United States during the war. The bill offered soldiers an opportunity to go back to school, provided access to low-interest loans, and created an unemployment insurance program (Mettler, 2005). But Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans, who also served in the war, were not given the privilege of assimilation through the GI Bill and did not receive its financial rewards. At this time, we begin to see how race becomes a barrier to assimilation. These racial groups remained on the periphery as an ever-necessary disposable work force excluded from assimilating. With the end of the Bracero Program in 1965, Mexican farm workers lost their legal status and many who used to migrate back and forth were compelled to stay in the United States. The program ended because of concerns about exploitation of Mexicans for cheap labor, but after it was removed, these workers were left in an even more vulnerable and marginalized position (Kanstroom, 2010; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014).

During this period, world affairs once again affected deportations in this country. Japanese immigrants and Nazi war criminals were targeted for deportation. Their suspected connections to enemy powers pushed them to the periphery, quite literally at times, even into concentration camps, like those constructed under the Farm Security Administration during president Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s, and as undesired bodies, many were removed (Cresswell, 2006; Hing, 2004).

The Contemporary Wave (1965 to Today)

The third major immigrant wave follows patterns resulting from deep-rooted colonial ties and political interventions. Colonialism commonly left behind a pseudo-independence that tied countries' colonial past to the neocolonial present (Singer, 1989). For example, Quesada (2009) explains that migration from Latin America was accelerated from the 1990s onward and that this acceleration can be linked to the fallout of economic and social displacements caused by the implementation of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement in 2008 (Andreas, 2000; Bacon, 2008; Quesada, 2009, 2011). For example, immigration to the United States from Mexico increased after NAFTA was implemented, instead of decreasing as expected, because Mexico was in fact was adversely impacted by NAFTA because of the exportation of crops and the prices of imported goods that small local businesses could not compete with (Sears, 2014). However, write Quesada et al. (2011), "the exploitative relationship linking foreign trade and political and economic policies toward Latin America to undocumented immigration have been officially complicated and barely register in the popular imagination" (p. 7). Not only are these historical and political ties practically nonexistent in the media and public discourse, but also previous patterns of xenophobic sentiments and an expendable labor force have continued throughout this wave until today. However, the key difference that emerged is the turn to criminalization of immigrants that underlies current immigration policies and regulations. It is important to analyze some of the discourses buttressing this legislation to understand the messages perpetuated about immigrants and in immigration enforcement.

In 1980, the Refugee Act was passed under the Carter administration. This law was foundational and continues to be relevant today. It allowed for any individual to apply for asylum, regardless of their country of origin. Before, only those fleeing communist countries were granted asylum in the United States. It was not until this time that the United States finally accepted the international definition of a refugee in the 1951 Refugee Convention in Chapter 1 Article 1 as someone who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion . . . is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to return to" the person's country of origin (UNHCR, 1951). This definition is still in use today. Nevertheless, throughout the years, in practice, the United States has favored refugees coming from Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, and Cuba. To this day, Salvadorians, Guatemalans, and Haitians are disproportionately denied asylum (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Therefore, being a refugee or asylum seeker is not an immigrant's personal choice but rather a political decision made by the receiving nation-states who classify immigrants into these categories. To clarify, the only difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker is the person's physical location. Portes and Rumbaut (2014) explain, "Refugees still live abroad and must be transported and vetted" (p. 44). Meanwhile, asylum seekers are also seeking protection, but their status has not yet been determined and they have already made their way to their country of destination. Although refugees must undergo rigorous vetting and asylum seekers are detained until their case is resolved, recent rhetoric has emerged criminalizing these vulnerable populations. In 2016, during the presidential campaign, Donald Trump Jr. shared an image on Twitter stating, "If I had a bowl of skittles and I told you just three would kill

you, would you take a handful? That's our Syrian refugee problem" (Schultheis, 2016, p. 1), perpetuating a discourse of fear and xenophobia.

In 1986, under the Reagan administration, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). In addition to making the hiring of undocumented workers illegal for the first time, it also strengthened border control and legalized over 3 million immigrants. This law was supposed to deter undocumented immigration by implementing employer sanctions, punishing employers who hired undocumented immigrants, and offering amnesty to the undocumented immigrants who were already in the United States before 1982. The hope was to start anew and reset immigration issues, move forward with better enforcement, and to stop marriage fraud (Hayes, 2001; Hing, 2004; Kincaid & Portes, 1994). But the law failed to stop undocumented immigration and only pushed undocumented immigrants further to the periphery (Mahler, 1995). While IRCA did grant amnesty to hundreds of thousands of people, it excluded thousands who had not arrived in the country before January 1, 1982. It also made finding work more difficult and therefore created a vulnerable population prone to even greater mistreatment and exploitation. This bill ushered the United States into its current immigrant enforcement practices and has shaped immigration policies for more than three decades (Meissner et al., 2013). In July 1993 President Clinton delivered a strong message about immigration, saying, "We will make it tougher for illegal aliens to get into the country." As a result, there was a 148% increase in the border patrol budget and 600 new agents, high-tech patrols, new walls, fences, and radar were added (Kanstroom, 2010*).* Approximately 700 miles of the 1,900-mile U.S.-Mexico border is already fenced or walled. This process started under the Clinton administration and continued as part of the

2006 Secure Fence Act passed under President George W. Bush (Epatko, 2017). The industrialization of immigration enforcement began to take hold and would continue to grow. U.S. immigration law has not changed significantly since the IRCA.

In 1990, the Immigration Act was passed. While increasing the number of immigrants permitted to enter the United States, it also revised the grounds for deportation and created a temporary protected status (TPS) for immigrants from specific countries where social, political, environmental, or other conditions temporarily prevent nationals from returning home safely. TPS has been very controversial because its protections vary between groups and must be extended. Extensions are sometimes only evaluated and announced a month or two before they expire. Each individual request for renewal costs hundreds of dollars, which excludes those who cannot afford to pay and commercializes immigration further. In 2017 the Trump administration announced its plans to end TPS for Haitians, Salvadorians, Nicaraguans, Hondurans, and other groups, while extending it for Venezuelans. This shows the selectiveness and political nature of policies like TPS which can effectively leave hundreds of thousands with no immigration status, rendering them deportable. TPS is this another state tool used to keep a population disposable and separate from the receiving nation (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). Protected people are disposable, as the name indicates, in the sense that their status is only temporary and can end whenever the Secretary of Homeland Security determines that the conditions under which TPS was granted no longer exist. Just as refugees' and asylum seekers' statuses are political, so are the statuses of those immigrants who are granted TPS.

The criminalization of immigrants increased in 1996 with multiple new acts. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), which reclassified minor offenses as aggravated felonies, the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act all reflected a new criminalized gaze on migration and emphasized the state's need to protect its citizens and workforce from noncitizens (Lawston & Escobar, 2010). These laws radically changed and expanded the grounds for deportation retroactively. This means that noncitizens could now be deported for an action that was not considered grounds for deportation when it occurred, even if they had already served a prison sentence for the crime. The reclassification of misdemeanors as aggravated felonies directly impacted undocumented immigrants and normalized their criminalization. These laws increased mechanisms for deporting immigrants, reduced grounds for appeals, and once again increased the budget for immigration enforcement. Among these changes, the use of immigrant prisons as tools for managing noncitizens (Bosworth, 2010) also grew. The role of state and local law enforcement in targeting and detaining criminal aliens expanded under the 287(g) Program. Last, a new type of expedited removal proceeding was implemented for anyone accused of terrorist activity (Hagan et al., 2006; Kanstroom, 2010; Menjívar, 2014; Menjívar & Abrego, 2012).

These laws were justified through a discourse of protecting the United States from terrorism after the World Trade Center bombing of 1993 and the Oklahoma City bombing of 1996. However, the Oklahoma bombing was an act of domestic terrorism, providing no real justification for the various acts criminalizing immigrants that were put into law the following year. These acts have had great implications for immigrants, as

Golash-Boza & Hondagneu-Sotelo (2013) write: "Scholars generally recognize IIRIRA as the principal legislation facilitating the removal of hundreds of thousands of immigrants" (p. 275). This is evident in the fact that before the 1980s virtually no detention centers existed in the United States, but by 2009 the country's detention capacity was 33,400, in comparison to just 6,700 in 1994 (Roberts, 2009).

The events of September 11, 2001, added to the anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States and increased the country's dependence on detaining and removing immigrants. In October of that year, President George W. Bush signed the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act, otherwise known as the USA PATRIOT Act. This act instituted even tougher standards for identification, detention, and prosecution of immigrants by labeling them as potential security threats, cementing once and for all the current discourse that immigrants are dangerous and a threat to national security. It was this act that restructured and renamed the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) into the DHS which consists of 3 entities which are the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), ICE, and CBP. Before the Patriot Act, INS was considered solely a processing/administrative agency. Once the agency was renamed and restructured under the act the "goal" or focus of DHS became one of security. Since then, the number of incarcerated foreigners has grown exponentially, and immigration and terrorism have been increasingly intertwined in public policy. Immigration enforcement operations are no longer designed only to keep immigrants out but now also include fighting terrorism and protecting national security, villainizing and criminalizing immigrants (Bosworth, 2010; Menjívar & Abrego, 2012).

Earlier in 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court addressed the issue of indefinite detention of immigrants, finding in *Zadvydas v. Davis* that holding anyone indefinitely is unethical and it is setting a six-month maximum detention period after a deportation order has been issued (Hing, 2004). But in practice today, thousands of immigrants are held in custody much longer. In fact, on February, 27, 2018, in *Jennings v. Rodriguez,* the Supreme Court ruled that immigrants, even those with status (legal permanent residents, TPS holders, or asylum seekers) do not have the right to a periodic bond hearing, potentially holding immigrants indefinitely (Montanaro et al., 2018).

In 2005 the Real ID Act and the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act were passed. The latter further criminalized undocumented immigrants by reclassifying them as felons and forbade any assistance to them (Lawston & Escobar, 2010). It also increased border security and strengthened federal ties with local and state law enforcement. It required employers to comply with electronic employee verification, or E-Verify, to confirm employment eligibility. The Real ID Act implemented measures that must be taken before issuing a state identification card. A person's identity and immigration status must be verified and symbolized (by a gold star) on a driver's license (Department of Homeland Security, 2005). It is important to highlight that these two laws increased the expansion of immigration enforcement through not only local law enforcement but also other state agencies. This started to blur the line between local and federal agencies, while closing in on immigrants and pushing them further toward the periphery and risk of exploitation. This subsequently expanded the need for false documents, which added another layer to the immigration industry as part of the black market.

In November 2014, the Obama administration began announcing several executive orders that tightened immigration enforcement practices but focused on deporting felons, not families. The federal government also required undocumented immigrants to pass background checks and to pay taxes in order to stay in the United States temporarily through programs like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA; Department of Homeland Security, 2021). Another revamp introduced by this administration was targeting employers who hired undocumented immigrants. This resulted in silent raids at workplaces and often caused employers to preemptively fire employees they believed might be undocumented (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012; Meissner et al., 2013). This extension of immigration enforcement added employers to the eyes and ears that are managing undocumented immigrants. As a result, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (2015) defined its two core missions as:

> First, the identification and apprehension of criminal aliens and other priority aliens located in the United States and secondly, the detention and removal of those individuals apprehended in the interior of the United States as well as those apprehended by CBP officers and agents patrolling our nation's borders. (p.1)

The terminology used by ICE is important because it reproduces the discourse that immigrants are criminals and dangerous, bodies that must be removed across the state border. While some of the U.S. population was upset at the increase in deportations, framing the focus around criminals justified the deportations. While this bill was passed in response to growing public disapproval of deportation, the number of deportations and removals continued to rise, reaching the highest ever under Obama's second administration. President Obama was coined the Deporter-in-Chief and by 2016 there had been over 2.5 million deportations under his administration (Golash-Boza, 2016).

However, these numbers are controversial because the ways that deportations are categorized have changed. Returns at the boarder have decreased and instead immigrants are being funneled into the detention and deportation system first. When taking into account removals and returns, the Obama administration did deport more people than under any other president. However, the Trump administration proposed stricter immigration policies and a new round of mass deportations. According to Homeland Security (2017), under the Trump Administration,

> ICE conducted 226,119 removals. While this is a slight overall decrease from the prior fiscal year, the proportion of removals resulting from ICE arrests increased from 65,332, or 27% of total removals in FY2016 to 81,603, or 36% of total removals, in FY2017. (p.12)

On January 25, 2017, President Trump issued an executive order titled Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements, which implemented several new policies designed to limit immigration, heighten border security, and increase detention and ultimately removals. It also suspended and superseded all existing conflicting policies, namely President Obama's executive orders. The language used in the executive order reveals the discourse and attitudes promoted by the Trump administration in an attempt to justify ICE operations. According to the Department of Homeland Security (2017),

> The President has determined that the lawful detention of aliens arriving in the United States . . . is the most efficient means by which to enforce the immigration laws at our borders. Detention also prevents such aliens from committing crimes while at large in the United States, ensures that aliens will appear for their removal proceedings, and substantially increases the likelihood that aliens lawfully ordered removed will be removed.

Referring to immigrants as "aliens" already others them and associates them with something foreign and out of place. This discourse assumes that immigrants are

inherently criminals and insinuates that they should be detained to prevent crimes and to protect the nation. It also validates the administration's proposals to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, increase budgets for patrolling the border and building more detention facilities, and increase raids to detain more undocumented immigrants.

By now, the pattern of governments passing laws by feeding citizens' fears, especially after large terrorist attacks, is clear. Xenophobia not only grows and feeds off these fears but also is further validated by these legislations. It is important to emphasize the danger of these discourses, as perpetuated through laws. The ways these laws are written violate human rights and impose the dominance of one group over another, a form of legal violence (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). When the law is written in such a way as to affect the daily lives of a population, when it normalizes harmful acts, exploits, and perpetuates constant fear, the law, which is normally expected to protect, becomes violent toward its targets. The fostering of fear toward foreign bodies, more recently Latinos and Muslims, is a way to gain consent for state applications of power and protection of labor markets, all the while exploiting a population and profiting from people the most vulnerable people (Golash-Boza, 2016).

U.S. Immigration Detention

It wasn't until 1952, with the Supreme Court ruling in *Carlson v. Landon*, that detention was deemed a necessary part of the deportation process in the United States. Nicholas De Genova (2010) argues that deportation is a tool used by nations to exert their sovereignty over bodies and spaces as a way to measure their effectiveness. Bodies are effectively lost and removed through the maze-like process of detention. Through a

deportation regime, unwanted bodies can be targeted for exclusion or removal as a form

of social regulation. They are forcibly moved to immigrant prisons that exist largely

outside the public eye. De Genova highlights, alarmingly, that deportation has historically

been shielded from criticism and largely left unchallenged. He coined the phrase

deportation regime to emphasize the instrumental nature of deportation. He argues that

freedom of movement is a basic human right that is intrinsically linked to an individual's

sovereignty but is undermined by the global deportation regime. Article 13 of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states, "(1) Everyone has the right to

freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has

the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."

In modern times, sovereign nation-states attempt to control human mobility as an

expression of their power and on grounds of national security. The most significant way

in which a state limits people's movement is through the ideas of secure borders,

citizenship, detention, and deportation. Declaring a body deportable (or more commonly

illegal or implicitly criminal) politicizes the body. According to the DHS, a deportable

alien is any alien who is in or has been admitted to the United States who is subject to

any grounds of deportability specified in Section 237 of the Immigration and Nationality

Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1227. The concept of *bio-power*, described by Foucault (Foucault et al.,

2007), helps to understand the symbolic and instrumental qualities of this social labeling,

referring to "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the

human species become the object of a political strategy" (p.1). Undocumented

immigrants' bodies become objects of the state that are used to demonstrate its authority,

sovereignty, and efficiency. Agamben (2005) emphasize the role of citizenship and the

power of the state to effectively strip individuals of their own sovereignty while excluding others. The idea of the citizen creates a binary of those who belong and those who do not, the latter composing the deportable.

A nation's space is maintained by the deportation regime through border patrols, detention, and transnational deterrence. As borders become militarized, those deemed deportable become enemies of the state and threaten national security, further legitimizing the need for a deportation regime. But as De Genova and Peutz (2010) remind us, "Recall, however, the exceeding judicious and, indeed, juridical denationalization of European Jews and myriad other so-called undesirables by German fascism, which culminated in the meticulous mass deportation of object or enemy *citizens*" (p. 55). The state has the ability to exert its power on any body within its borders. Therefore, detention centers can be compared to modern-day immigrant camps (Crane, 2017; Hatoum, 2015) that violate basic human rights, pay a dollar a day for labor, and effectively deport hundreds, possibly to their death (Crow, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2020; Parker, 2020; Stillman, 2018). Consequently, the deportation regime must be seen for what it is: a resource used to exert the state's power and sovereignty, including for mass incarceration and removals (De Genova & Peutz, 2010). It is this deportable state that makes undocumented immigrants vulnerable and susceptible to structural violence created by the deportation regime.

Undocumented immigrants are tools with which the state can legitimate its power and also a source of cheap disposable labor and commodities for for-profit corporations. In *The Migration Industry and the Commercialization of International Migration*, authors Gammeltoft-Hanssen and Sorensen (2013) cast detention centers as places of segregation

but also as for-profit industries where humans are being held and used for profit. Recall that from 2009 to 2017 the U.S. Congress set a quota of 34,000 immigrants who must be in detention at any given time. While the quota has been lifted, the number of detainees has remained well above that number. More and more detention centers are becoming privatized. These huge corporations (GEO Group, AAC, and MTC) lobby the government to enforce daily bed quotas, which no other incarceration system in the United States has. The system, however, is much larger, including contracted security companies, contracts with county jails, transportation companies, commissaries, and the entire legal system that serves the deportation regime. Detainees are vulnerable and are preyed on by unethical lawyers and bail bond companies (Miller, 2020). These experiences add to the suffering experienced by those trapped within the migration industry and deportation regime.

In 2019, approximately 50,000 human beings were locked up in for-profit private prisons and municipal jails as part of the U.S. immigration detention system (Alvarado et. al, 2019). The numbers show that in order for the quotas to be filled, noncriminal and low-priority immigrants must be held unlawfully. In 2009 it was estimated that 58% of those in detention had no criminal record (Kerwin & Yi-Ying Lin, 2009). This commodification of bodies is closely associated with Green's concept of "nobodies." In her book, *The Nobodies: Neoliberalism, Violence, and Migration* (2011), she defines nobodies as "disposable people who have been displaced and dislocated from their means of survival by a rapacious capitalism . . . profiteering off the poor through the production of their vulnerabilities and the commodification of their very being" (p. 368). Creating nobodies or deportable bodies generates subaltern populations that are forced to live their

lives in the shadows and are denied legal and human rights. According to Green (2011), "Illegality [and deportability] has encouraged racial profiling in the borderlands such that Latinos/Hispanics, whatever their documentation status, are harassed by Border Patrol and ICE. Illegality, moreover, fosters a climate where hate crimes flourish" (p. 378).

The United States has historically relied on slavery or cheap labor to sustain its agricultural and service economies by maintaining a group of nobodies who sit outside the law and are deprived of rights, vulnerable, and exploitable. In other words, labeling bodies (in this case immigrants) in this a way other's them and justifies their potential commodification. This cycle is further exacerbated by the fact that migrants are drawn to the United States because of higher wages and therefore are willing to accept harsher working conditions (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Once noncitizens are placed in detention they can be put to work as prison mates and work for even lower wages than before. Undocumented laborers and prison mates are among our modern-day slave laborers, working in harsh conditions or under threat of punishment or deportation for little to no pay (Holmes, 2013).

Any noncitizen is potentially deportable. Those who are undocumented are more at risk. Before ever being detained, noncitizens who commit a crime, overstay a visa, or cross the U.S. border illegally live in a vulnerable state of fear of detection and are more susceptible to further marginalization and exploitation. Once detained, and after an indefinite stay in the detention system and likely transfers between detention facilities, they are forcibly removed from the country.

According to Human Rights Watch (Mehta, 2010), "The rights to liberty and to be free from arbitrary detention are central tenets of human rights law" (p. 64). Both are

jeopardized in immigrant detention. In accordance with international law, immigrant

detention should be a government's last resort or only be used when the individual is a

threat to society or at risk of fleeing. However, these exceptions are rarely truly justified.

In *Zadvydas v. David* (2001) the Supreme Court stated in its majority opinion, "The

government's need to prevent flight is a 'weak or nonexistent' justification for continued

detention where removal seems a remote possibility at best. . . . And danger by itself is

insufficient to justify prolonged and indefinite detention." Currently, in violation of

international law, detention is the default in the United States and other Western

countries. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is binding law

in the United States, outlines these rights, which also apply to undocumented immigrants

and detention centers. International law also states that immigrants should have their

detention reviewed by a judicial authority and be represented at such a hearing (UNGA,

1988, par. 11.1). But this is not the case in the United States. Some immigrants are

subjected to expedited removal and do not have the right to see a judge, and no one in

detention is provided representation (Mehta, 2010; Kanstroom, 2010). An estimated 84%

of detainees do not have an attorney (Freedom for Immigrants, 2018). Instead, most

immigrants must defend themselves in a judicial system they are not familiar with and

attend proceedings held in a language that is not their own. In February 2018, the U.S.

Supreme Court ruled that detainees, even permanent legal residents and asylum seekers,

are not entitled to periodic bond hearings, increasing the likelihood of indefinite

confinement.

The government defends its position by saying that it ensures that violent

criminals are not slipping through the cracks. But in 2009 data showed that only about

5.6% of detainees had committed a violent crime (Kerwin & Yi-Ying Lin, 2009). Low-priority detention facilities do not house any criminal immigrants. The Broward Transactional Center in South Florida is an example of one of these centers, which also happens to be privately owned. In other words, it makes its profit by detaining innocent people. Not only undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers get caught up in the deportation regime: legal permanent residents and even U.S. citizens have been detained and some even deported (Bier, 2018).

The Migration Industry

Stemming from the transnationalism theory is the new concept of a *migration industry* or a business of migration. Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen (2013) suggest that immigration research must now turn to focusing on the migration industry and its complementing markets. Throughout this dissertation I have provide examples of how migration is becoming commercialized around the globe. A black market has emerged in response to the exclusion of certain bodies by some sending and receiving states. The term *immigration industry* refers to the substantial privatization of migration control. As immigration policies harden, human smuggling, the demand for illegal documents, and corruption among border agents only increase (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013). These industries fuel the engines of international migration by providing the infrastructural resources needed for crossing borders without authorization. Governments today actively sustain and fund large parts of the migration industry. As Massey et al. (1993) explain,

These barriers that core countries erect to keep people out (and by consequence others in), create a lucrative economic niche for entrepreneurs and institutions dedicated to promoting international movement for profit, creating a black market in migration, creating also conditions for exploitation and victimization. (p. 44)

However, this black market is not isolated; many other agents participate in the migration industry. Some service immigrants, while others attempt to control migration, and still others combat the injustices resulting from the migration industry. These actors include state officials, multinational companies, organized criminal networks, private contractors, religious organizations, small immigrant entrepreneurs, migrants helping other migrants, NGOs, and even visitation programs. Corporations like GEO Group, the corrections company that staffs the Broward Transitional Center in South Florida, offer migration management services to governments on a global scale. The transnational nature of corporations like these breaks down traditional notions of state sovereignty, thereby avoiding liability and human rights responsibilities, as explained by Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen (2013), because the corporate veil shields them.

This perspective on the commercialization of international migration is key to my research. The rise in immigration detention centers since the 1980s is linked not only to discourses of xenophobia, or executions of state power, but also to lucrative business, as seen with the shift to private detention centers. It is through these commodifications that humans too become a source for profit, as Lloyd et al. (2010) express: "Cages are used to contain immigrants and transform them into profitable products" (p. 146). In addition, the men I visited at the Krome detention centers had all passed through many of these industries during their journey to the United States and while making their way through the deportation regime. The immigration paradox is that the more the state regulates and secures its borders, the more lucrative and in demand these industries become. Therefore,

humanitarian groups often resist these immigration policies not only because they are ineffective, but also because they increase the vulnerabilities and violence that immigrants face. Through these humanitarian groups, specifically the Immigrant Action Alliance, I was introduced firsthand to the deportation regime and the migration industry.

Contribution of This Dissertation

It should now be clear how deportable bodies are socially constructed through U.S. immigration laws and practices and through rhetorics of fear. In the next chapter, interviews with 15 immigrant men once held at the Krome Service Processing Center will shed light on their experiences with the deportation regime and the impacts that U.S. detention and deportation practices have had on their well-being. This research focuses on transfers between detention centers in order to contribute to this understudied aspect of the U.S. immigration detention system. It does so by intersecting the cross-disciplinary concepts of mobility and structural vulnerability, focusing on the increased vulnerabilities and impacts on well-being that are heightened by movement between centers.

In the current immigration literature, there is a lack of focus on transfers in detention centers. Work has been done to understand the impacts of detention in general and to understand why and how people move or migrate, but there is a gap in understanding the increased vulnerability that is experienced because of movement during detention. My research aims to contribute to the existing literature on immigration detention by addressing these shortcomings. During my experiences as a volunteer at the Krome detention center it became evident that transfers were happening frequently and that they were impacting the men I visited. My review of the literature made it apparent

that there was a lack of information on detention transfers and that therefore the impacts

of those transfers had not been fully studied. This knowledge is what I hope to contribute

to the literature on immigration detention through my semi-structured, in-depth

interviews.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS & METHODOLOGY

This dissertation research used a qualitative approach and three mixed methodologies: ethnography, phenomenology, and ethnographic/spatial mapping. This chapter is divided into the following sections: (1) the ethnographic methodological framework, (2) background of the study, (3) participants and participant recruitment, (4) procedures that guided the collection and analysis of the data, and (5) research challenges, limitations, and the researcher's positionality.

Ethnographic Methodological Framework

Ethnography is considered one of the main approaches in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). According to Schensul and LeCompte (1999) ethnography is a scientific approach aimed at investigating cultural and social patterns; in turn it discovers meanings in communities, institutions, and other social settings. They add that ethnography looks at human behavior and the ways in which people construct and create meaning in their lives.

On the other hand, Emerson et al. (2011) perceive ethnography as a way of understanding and describing social environments. Fetterman (1998) adds that ethnography tries to be holistic by studying as much as possible about a culture, subculture, or community. Ethnography has contributed to the diversification of many schools of thought. Among those theoretical schools of thought are structural

functionalism, symbolic interactionism, cultural anthropology, feminism, Marxism,

ethnomethodology, critical theory, cultural studies, and postmodernism (Atkinson &

Hammersley, 1994). As explained by Cresswell (2013), the lack of an orthodox approach

within ethnography makes it a pluralistic approach that embraces many different

philosophies. This gives researchers more flexibility in the way they approach collecting

their data.

Apart from his theoretical contributions to mixed methods, Creswell (2013) also

outlines good implementation practices for ethnographic methodology: (1) ethnographies

should focus on developing a complete and complex description of the cultural group

they study; (2) in ethnography the researcher looks for patterns among the group's

activities; (3) the observed group must be a group that shares a culture; (4) the research

must be guided by theory; (5) good ethnographic work requires extensive fieldwork that

involves the implementation of different data collection methods, such as interviews,

observations, and ethnographic mapping, among other possible data sources; (6)

researchers depend on participants' "emic" or insider perspective; therefore they should

report the information verbatim and then interpret it from an "etic" (or outsider) scientific

perspective; and (7) the analysis of the data should provide an understanding of how the

group functions.

In addition, Emerson et al. (2011) speak to the importance of the conscious

participation of the ethnographer and of two important concepts that ethnographers must

consider during their field work: immersion and resocialization. The authors state that

the fundamental aspect of ethnographic work involves achieving a social and somewhat

physical proximity to the day-to-day lives of those they wish to understand. This concept

of immersion gives the researcher access to the fluidity of others' lives and enhances the sensitivity of their interaction. According to Emerson et al. (2011), the immersion of the participant researcher inevitably requires some level of resocialization to achieve a closer sharing of the meanings and signifiers of the study community. In other words, researchers must, in some fashion, actively participate in or become a part of the cultural practices they are studying in order to gain a deeper understanding of the community and to build trust and rapport with its members. Over time, the researcher observes the cultural practices and slowly begins to develop an understanding of those practices and the significance they have for that specific culture.

According to Fetterman (1998), fieldwork is exploratory by nature and in classical ethnographic methodology, researchers expect to spend six months to two years in the field. He goes on to argue that during this exploratory period ethnographers begin to learn the native language, relationships between people, historical data, and the basic structures and functions of the culture they study.

This study was guided by the theoretical and methodological perspectives of Critical Medical Anthropology (CMA) which shaped how the data was collected and interpreted. In the past there has been a tendency to study problems outside the structures and spaces in which they arise. This places the fault on victims instead of the social structures and the environment to which they are subjected. This in turn limits the possible interventions that can be carried out to correct the underlying causes that affect the health or well-being of the people being studied.

Castro (2010) writes that in "the second half of the 20th century, the social sciences began to systematically construct health, illness and disease as legitimate

research objects" (p. 41), thus turning the determinants of health, disease, and well-being into objects of study in the social sciences. This shift toward a social perspective in the understanding of health problems brought with it the use of qualitative research methods, which have been used in anthropology and other disciplines. Muntaner and Gómez (2003) argue that in public health, qualitative research has had greater acceptance and is seen as a complementary methodology to quantitative research. This consequently causes it to be used mostly (1) when there is a lack of background or background knowledge and (2) in situations where qualitative research adds knowledge that cannot be achieved using quantitative methods.

According to Tracy (2019), qualitative research focuses on the dense description of the contexts and problems in the field of study. In accordance with Tracy's approach, Creswell et al. (2007) suggests that qualitative methods should be used when problems need to be thoroughly explored, when we need a complex understanding of a problem, when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, and when we want to understand the context in which the problems occur. These qualities of qualitative research suggest that such a research approach is invaluable for the study of the impacts of transfers on the well-being of detainees.

Background of This Study

In 2016, while working as a research assistant for Dr. Mark Padilla on a National Institute of Drug Abuse-funded grant titled "Migration, Tourism, and the HIV/Drug-Use Syndemic in the Dominican Republic" (Grant 1 R01 DA031581-01A1; PI: Mark Padilla), hereafter referred to as the Syndemics Project, I was mapping the migration

trajectories of the participants when I came across the mention of a detention center in Miami, Florida, called the Krome Service Processing Center. In the six years I had lived in the city, I had never heard of this facility. A quick Google search surprised me further when I realized the center was only 15 minutes down the street from my university, Florida International University. It was then that I first learned about a visitation program at Krome run by Immigrant Action Alliance, then called Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees.

As previously noted in chapter 1, IAA is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that provides direct support to the South Florida immigrant community, including hundreds of people in immigrant detention centers. Since its inception in 2013, IAA volunteers have done over 4,000 visits at what has now grown to include the Broward Transitional Center in Pompano Beach, Glades County Jail in Moore Haven, and the Krome Service Processing Center. The mission of the organization is to end isolation, be the eyes and ears of the community (inside the centers), spread awareness of detention conditions, and ultimately end immigrant detention. By visiting detainees, the organization has been able to provide them with links to the outside world and to legal consultations, phone time, books, and clothing for deportation or release, and even at times help with temporary housing.

When IAA started, it almost exclusively only did visitations at Krome. Over the years the organization has grown to now include two more initiatives and its visitation program has grown to include two other detention centers, as mentioned above. Since 2017, the organization has cohosted the weekly Miramar Circle of Protection, a group of people from various organizations who maintain a weekly presence and pressure outside

one of ICE's check-in facilities. They document the cruel conditions under which immigrants are forced to wait in line for hours since hundreds are given generic appointment times to check in with immigration. Over the years the organization has been able to alleviate some of the hardships by providing water and snacks while also pushing for the installation of benches and covered walkways to protect people from the extreme Florida elements. In the last year, the Miramar Circle of Protection also demanded that ICE stop in-person check-ins during the global Coronavirus pandemic. The third initiative that IAA runs is a weekly mutual aid support group for undocumented woman who have been impacted by the deportation machine. The Women's Empowerment Group is hosted by a volunteer psychologist who offers a safe space for woman to organize and share resources.

As previously mentioned in chapter 1, the Krome Service Processing Center is a federal facility that is managed by Akima Global Services. It was built as a maximum-security facility with a capacity of between 450 (the contracted minimum bed quota) and 800 (the emergency capacity) detainees. Krome is tucked away on the outskirts of the Florida Everglades in West Miami. One would pass right by it without ever knowing it was there because there is no signage or indication of a facility as you pass the street that leads to its double-fenced entrance and guard station.

Krome has a dark and controversial past. It was first built in 1965 as an air defense base during the Cold War era (Chardy, 2015). In 1980, Krome was repurposed into a detention and refugee processing camp that held approximately 2,000 Cuban and Haitian immigrants in tent housing as a response to the Cuban Mariel Boatlift and Haitians fleeing the Jean-Claude Duvalier regime (Chardy, 2015; SPLC, 2019). Krome's

mistreatment of people detained on its grounds has been documented for years and includes reports of widespread abuses and sexual assault (AIJ, 1996). In 2000 it was converted into a men-only facility. Today, ICE promotes Krome as the flagship for immigrant detention facilities. It has six general population pods, a medical unit, a segregation unit for solitary confinement, and a transitional unit for detainees with behavioral or mental health issues. As previously mentioned, the facility is managed by Akima Global Services to handle the daily operations. They are contracted through 2024 (SPLC, 2019). The facility also has three courtrooms, six attorney-client visitation rooms, and 26 visitation booths. After touring the facility, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that contact visitation was not allowed for nonlegal visits to "minimize contraband" (SPLC, 2019). Finally, the facility also has recreational areas, including the cafeteria, and a law library. The only other volunteers allowed into Krome besides IAA are religious groups.

After two failed attempts, I was finally able to get in contact with the visitation program's leader, Francis (Bud) Conlin. At the time it was a small, informal, volunteer-run organization. I expressed my interest in becoming a volunteer and was informed of the vetting process. First, Bud asked me a series of questions to determine my motivations for volunteering, such as "Why do you want to volunteer to be a visitor at this detention center? Have you ever visited a detention center before? How did you hear about our group?" I was then sent a visitation manual and a confidential information form (including my social security number) that is required by ICE in order to be approved for visitation through the organization.

At Krome anyone with a valid, verifiable government-issued identification card can visit a family member or friend in detention, but the visit must be requested ahead of time and the visitor must have the detainee's alien number and biographical information such as date of birth and country of origin. Visitation policies and rules differ by facility. At Krome, all social visits are noncontact, all visitors are subject to a search and must arrive at least 45 minutes prior to the visit time, woman must follow a strict dress code, and visiting hours are based on the first letter of the detainee's last name.

All visitation programs operate differently. With the help of Freedom for Immigrants (formerly CIVIC), IAA was able to establish its visitation program and come to an agreement with ICE to allow for sign-up sheets to be placed in each pod or housing unit. While having a sign-up sheet is advantageous for spreading the word inside the facility about the visitation program, it also limits who can and cannot be visited. Every week the sheets are emailed to IAA and volunteers are then paired with a detainee who signed up for a visit, based on the languages they speak.

Visiting Krome

On October 27, 2016, I recall moving about my apartment feeling nervous, anxious, and worried I was forgetting something. I double-checked to make sure I had my driver's license, a quarter for the lockers, and a sweater. I wore jeans, a t-shirt, and closed-toed shoes to avoid any issues with the dress code and because I had been warned that the detention center was very cold. I left ahead of schedule to account for Miami's notorious rush hour traffic and to meet with Bud for a short 30-minute orientation before driving up to the guard post. We met right outside the gates in a rocky lot where Bud

explained what to expect during my two visits, gave me ideas for conversation topics, and answered my final questions.

At 6:15 p.m. we got back in our cars and drove up to the guard post to arrive exactly 45 minutes before our first visits at 7 p.m. At the post the guards asked for my identification and they did a 360-degree walk around my car and checked under it for any contraband, opened my trunk, and rolled down my tinted windows. They handed me a visitor sticker with my picture on it, very similar to ones you receive at the hospital.

We parked in visitor spots and headed for the front lobby. We walked through a metal detector and I placed my belongings in a plastic bin to go through an x-ray machine. Cellphones were allowed only for attorneys. Once through the security checkpoints, we could place our belongings in lockers that lined the back wall. The lockers require a quarter, but it is returned once the key is reinserted. Along the other walls were vending machines, a water fountain, a kiosk to deposit money in detainees' accounts, and restrooms. Once inside you are called up to the counter to sign in the visitor book, fill out a form for each scheduled visit, and present your driver's license again. Then you wait. After we waited roughly 45 minutes (many times it would be even longer), a guard came out from behind a locked blue door to call our names. We were reminded that we were allowed to take no personal belongings with us and then we were escorted down a hallway and through three locked doors to the visitation area—an area of three rows of visitation booths made of concrete blocks and thick sheets of plexiglass with telephones at each one.

As I waited for the guard to direct me to a row and booth number, I started to get more nervous. It was my first time in a prison. The air was freezing and making my teeth

chatter. The florescent lights were harsh. Some of the guards were cordial and greeted the veteran volunteers but for the most part they were impatient and unpleasant. I recall wondering if I would have anything to talk about. Would the men even want to visit with me? Would they be nice? What would they be expecting from me? And then, there I was sitting in front of my first visitor and all those doubts and fears went away. He was a father trying to protect his family and give them a chance at a better life.

I remember that first visit with Enrique vividly and I continue to stay in touch with him now, over five years later. His case was unique in that he was the first detainee ever referred to IAA by a guard. Enrique hadn't been eating for three days and after he was evaluated by a doctor, the guard was told he was desperate. After the doctor visit the guard contacted our organization and alerted us that he was recommending that this man be visited by IAA.

As soon as Enrique sat down, he began talking and did not stop for 30 minutes. He didn't need an introduction to the program, since the guard had told him to sign up and explained to him what our organization did. He had a large envelope full of documents, a little notebook with phone numbers, and a prison pen. He started by telling me about his life in his home country of El Salvador. He had been involved with a gang when he was a young teenager and served 11 years in prison before fleeing his country. While he was in prison the police tricked him into giving up some of his fellow gang members. He said they told him he had to prove he had renounced the gang. He even burned off the tattoo on his hand. In return for the information he provided them, he was supposed to have his time reduced but the police didn't follow through. At the end of his 11-year sentence he went into hiding. Another gang member who was incarcerated with

him had also aided in bringing down the others and when he was released, he was killed by the gang. After months in hiding, Enrique and his wife and children were running out of money. They sold their car and left for the United States to seek asylum. Enrique showed me documents from the Salvadorian police stating that he had helped them in an investigation and that his life was in danger.

When they arrived at the border, the family turned themselves in to an immigration officer and asked to apply for asylum. The family was immediately separated, and his wife and daughters were sent to a facility in Texas and granted asylum. Enrique was denied asylum because of his criminal record in El Salvador from when he was a teenager. He was transferred to the Krome detention center. His family in the United States found the money to hire an immigration attorney. However, the family didn't have a strong relationship and after the lawyer failed to present any evidence for his case, the family stopped answering Enrique's phone calls. He had run out of funds, so he longer had money for commissary items or phone calls. He wanted to appeal his case, but he didn't have a lawyer and his window of opportunity to submit his appeal was quickly closing. His life would be in jeopardy if he were sent back to El Salvador. It was this situation that sent him into a state of desperation, causing him to stop eating for three days, and prompted him to sign up for a visit.

Since it was my first visit, I wasn't exactly sure what we could do to help Enrique, but I knew we could at least deposit some money into his phone account so he could call his family. To do so I would need his nine-digit alien number. Krome does not allow visitors to take a pen and paper into the visitation area. I was worried about having to memorize the nine digits, so he told me to ask a guard for a pen. I was reluctant at first,

but he told me, "Tell her you need a pen to write down a phone number." I did that, and I was shocked when the guard brought me a pen and paper. My coordinator would later be shocked too. I was able to write down Enrique's alien number and he wrote down my phone number so we could stay in contact until our next visit. When the guard returned, I gave her back the pen and she told me the first visit was over and to wait for my next visit while they switched groups.

Before I knew it the second visit was over, and my two hours were up. We were escorted back out to the lobby where we had to sign out in the visitation book and collect our belongings from the lockers. At the gate on our way out the guards asked for our visitor sticker and asked to open the trunk once more, to make sure we weren't smuggling anything or presumably anyone out of the maximum-security facility. Bud called me on his way home so we could debrief on our visits. I knew then that I wanted to go back and become a regular volunteer with the organization. I wanted to help these men who were isolated and fighting for their lives in whatever way I could.

I continued to stay in contact with Enrique through visits and phone calls for the next few months. Our organization was able to get him a free legal consultation but unfortunately none of the pro bono lawyers were able to take on his case. Time and his criminal record were working against him. He continued to appeal because it at least bought him more time. He was so afraid to be deported back to El Salvador that he preferred to stay detained if it delayed his return. Prolonging his deportation also gave us time to help him devise a plan for when he did return to his country. He was able to arrange for relatives to pick him up at the airport and I was able to provide him a duffle bag with clothes so he wouldn't have to travel in a prison jumpsuit, labeling him as

deportee. Unfortunately, in February 2017, Enrique was deported and his personal belongings, including the duffle bag I dropped off for him at Krome, didn't make it back with him; they arrived weeks later because ICE failed to ensure his belongings were on the flight.

While I am still currently a volunteer for IAA, this dissertation will focus on the two-year period from October 2016 to November 2018 when I conducted my formal field work. During that time, I primarily volunteered at Krome and participated in approximately 139 visits with approximately 88 different individuals. I also received some 45 written letters from 11 different detainees.

Participants and Participant Recruitment

The participants for this research project were recruited in a unique and unorthodox way. I knew that I could not and would not want to interview participants while they were in detention for multiple reasons. First and foremost, when I did visitations, I was providing a service and resource to someone; I was there for their needs. Second, in order to conduct interviews at a detention center it is necessary to acquire approval from ICE and under my circumstances that was not an option. Aside from the logistical maze required for ICE's approval, if I were to get it, it would be under ICE's terms and conditions. Requesting approval could also have jeopardized my role as a volunteer because ICE might ban me. More importantly, I wanted to protect the participants and did not want them to be targeted for speaking with me. In an article published in the *Miami Herald* on June 17, 2020, Wendy King, the executive director of IAA, stated, "We have received information over the past 24 hours from people detained

at Glades County Jail that leads us to believe jail staff is retaliating against individuals for speaking out about conditions inside the jail." For these reasons I decided that the best and safest option was to interview men post-detention, after they had been released or deported. Post-release these men could be anywhere in the world. Consequently, keeping in touch with the men I visited was important and vital to participant recruitment. This happened organically because many times I would visit with the same detainee multiple times and form friendships. Once free, many of the men would find me on social media or applications like WhatsApp to keep in touch.

It was from this group of roughly 20 men who had kept in communication with me post-detention that I attempted to recruit all 15 of my participants. However, in order to recruit all 15 participants, I had to expand my recruitment criteria. At one point in my recruitment process, I had depleted my pool of willing participants. I had lost touch with some men, and another 5 or so were not willing to participate. Still others who had originally agreed to participate later changed their minds. At this point I had to reevaluate my inclusion and exclusion criteria. I contacted my fellow volunteer, Bud, who offered to reach out to men he had kept in contact with post-detention and ask if they would be interested in participating. I then adjusted my exclusion criteria to not only include participants I had visited at Krome. After adjusting my criteria, I was able to finish recruiting the participants with the help of my key informant, Bud. These semi-structured interviews took place from December 2018 to June 2019.

The study population consisted of a total of 15 immigrant men who had been previously detained at Krome and who had been visited by Immigrant Action Alliance. I speak both English and Spanish fluently, so I was only able to visit and interview men

who spoke either language. The average age of the 15 participants was 34 and their

countries of origin included Mexico, El Salvador, Haiti, South Africa, Nicaragua,

Guatemala, Somalia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Romania, and India. Two participants, both

from Haiti, left their country of origin before the age of 5. Twelve of the participants left

their country of origin between the ages of 16 and 35. One man left his country of origin

at age 56. In this sample group, 6 men were single, 4 were married, 3 were separated, 1

was divorced, and 1 participant preferred not to respond. In total, 5 of the participants had

children and of those, 3 said they had at least 1 child living in the United States.

Of the 15 participants in this study, 5 had never lived in the United States; they

surrendered at the border seeking asylum. One participant had lived here for less than a

year. Of the 9 others, 3 lived here between 1 and 3 years, 3 lived here between 11 and 15

years, and the other 3 lived in the United States for 20 to 25 years.

Data Collection

The concepts, theories, and characteristics of the ethnographic methods discussed

above function as guides for the implantation of data collection for this research. In line

with Creswell's (2013) suggested good practices for ethnographic research, this

dissertation used the following data collection methods: (1) ethnographic fieldwork notes,

(2) semi-structured interviews, and (3) ethnographic mapping.

Ethnographic Field Notes

Field notes were taken at various social settings but mainly at the Krome Service

Processing Center. Since the volunteer program had been running at Krome for over three

years and I was a regular volunteer, my presence went largely unnoticed, allowing me to experience procedures and conversations in the lobby while being processed and waiting for my visits. After each drive out to the facility, I would write down any notes or messages I needed to relay back to Immigrant Action Alliance as well as any significant observations I made that day. These notes usually pertained to conversations I would overhear, changes in procedures, changes in the guards' behavior or mood, and the limited interactions I would see between the guards and detainees. Going consistently to the Krome detention center over the course of those two years of fieldwork allowed me to observe the day-to-day operations at Krome.

On multiple occasions, I witnessed transportation buses arriving or leaving the facility. Although my observations were limited, I did also witness guards and detainees interacting either in the lobby during a release or when the detainees were being escorted to the visitation area. During my visits I gained the information that the men shared and also witnessed their composure, physical appearance, and moods. I could see when they were physically ill, injured, sad, or in good spirits. It was interesting to see the men's composure change when specific guards would walk by or address them. The men would at time stop speaking as a guard walked by or they would share whether the guard was pleasant and helpful or treated them poorly. During my fieldwork I also observed men who were reluctant to share information, or they were uneasy about what they said over the phone in the visitation booth. Red signs are posted above each phone warning that conversations may be recorded.

Field notes are used by the researcher to analyze meanings and understandings of social situations (Schwandt, 2015). While most of my fieldwork took place at Krome, it

did also include other community organized events such as rallies, marches, protests, and other nonprofit organization or community events centered around immigration and immigration practices. During this fieldwork, I attended multiple rallies around South Florida; two happened right outside the Krome gates. The political climate is vital to understanding U.S. immigration practices and gives context to public sentiments both for and against immigrants today. Aside from collecting observations and documenting sentiments, attending these events led to informal interviews where I was able to take notes on conversations and testimonials on immigration practices, specifically transfers between detention centers. Field notes contain both descriptive information documenting factual data, settings, actions, behaviors, and conversations as well as the researcher's thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns. Field notes help the observer analyze events and consider follow-up questions and can better inform interviews and data analysis (Emerson et al., 2011).

Semi-Structured Interviews

In order to answer my three research questions, I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with men who were formerly detained at the Krome Service Processing Center. Interviews were conducted post-release and over the telephone because, as mentioned earlier, these men could be anywhere in the world. When they were released from detention, they did not always stay in the South Florida area or even in the United States. Consequently, all the interviews had to take place over the phone. They were recorded using a call recording application that was password secure.

Semi-structured interviews were the preferred method of data collection for this research project because they provide some structure during the interview while allowing participants the freedom to talk at length about their experiences and permitting me to focus on themes of particular interest to the study, including narratives of suffering, mobility, and transfers during detainment. The interview guide was six pages long and each interview took an average of an hour and a half to complete.

The questions in the interview guide sought to answer my three research questions to understand the experiences of detainees during their time in immigrant detention. First, how did individuals detained at the Krome Service Processing Center narrate their own experiences of detention and the suffering it entailed? Second, how did institutional norms and practices contribute to detainees' suffering? Finally, how did detainees narrate their experiences of being transferred and how did these transfers impact their suffering?

The first part of the interview guide consisted of demographic questions to obtain a social profile of the participants. This section collected information such as age, place of birth, place raised, family composition, and place of current residence. Part two of the guide collected information about the participants' migratory history. It asked about places the detainees had migrated to, length of stay there, age of migration, reasons for migrating, who they migrated with, and their migration experience.

The third portion of the interview guide was the longest and focused on detention. It sought to understand how participants became detained and their experiences during detention. Was the person detained because he was seeking asylum? Was he detained crossing the border? Was he placed in detention after serving time in prison? Was it his first time in immigration detention? This section also asked questions about conditions in

detention and the detainee's interactions with other detainees, guards, and ICE staff. A large subset of these questions focused on transfers. Had the participant ever been transferred or known someone who was transferred? Under what conditions was he transferred? How did the transfer impact the detainee, his relationships (with family, friends, attorneys)? Was he informed that he was going to be transferred and where he was going to be transferred, and was he given a reason for being transferred?

The fourth and final part of the interview questions gathered postrelease information. How did the participant leave detention? Was he released or deported, and how was that experience? Where is he living now? Has his time in detention affected his life postrelease? Has he attempted to migrate again? If so, where and for what reasons?

According to Patton (1987), interviews are an important source of qualitative data because the interview permits the researcher to enter the world of another person and understand their perspective. In other words, and in line with Creswell's good implementation practices for ethnographic methodology, interviews provide an emic perspective in a "verbatim" manner. Through semi-structured interviews this research project aims to provide a more in-depth understanding of the effects of transfers in the detention system and to give a voice to immigrants in detention, who are often silenced in public discourses around immigration. Discourses around transfers are an important contribution of this dissertation because they are often excluded from media coverage and immigration literature.

Ethnographic Mapping

This dissertation argues that transfers are growing and excessive. This argument is strengthened by mapping transfers so that the movement of detainees can be seen all at

once. In an effort to create a visual representation of the extent and range of transfers

between detention centers, I created ethnographic maps for each participant who was

transferred from the information he provided in his interviews. An example of one of

these participant transfer maps can be seen in **Figure 3.1** below. The transfers are

represented by the blue lines. The red points denote detention centers the participant

visited. Teal points were used to differentiate jails that participants were kept at because

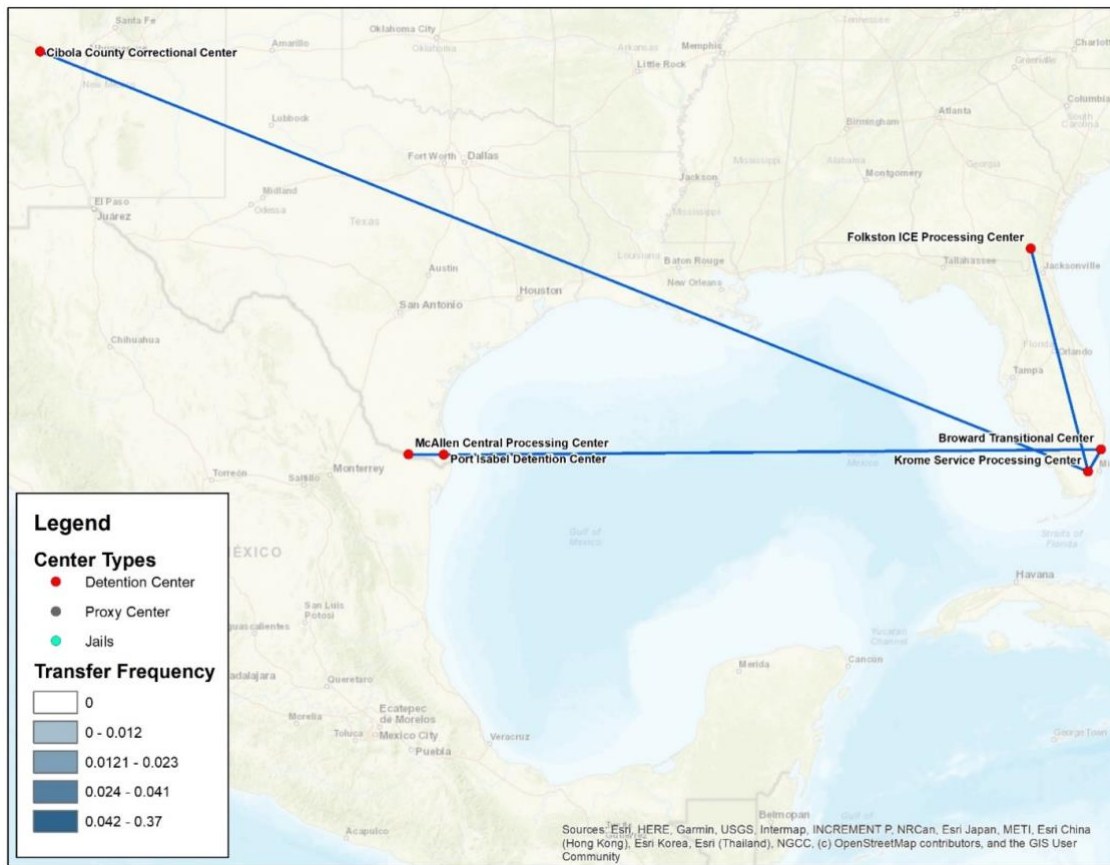of an immigration hold before being transferred to an ICE detention center.

Figure 3.1 *Participant transfer map*

All the individual maps were then compiled together using geographic

information systems (GIS) technology to do a spatial analysis of all the participants

transfers to detect potential patterns of movement (see **Figure 3.2**). A line density map

was generated to show the frequency of moves between facilities and to create a visual of the transfers between detention centers, as described by the participants (Brown & Knopp, 2008).
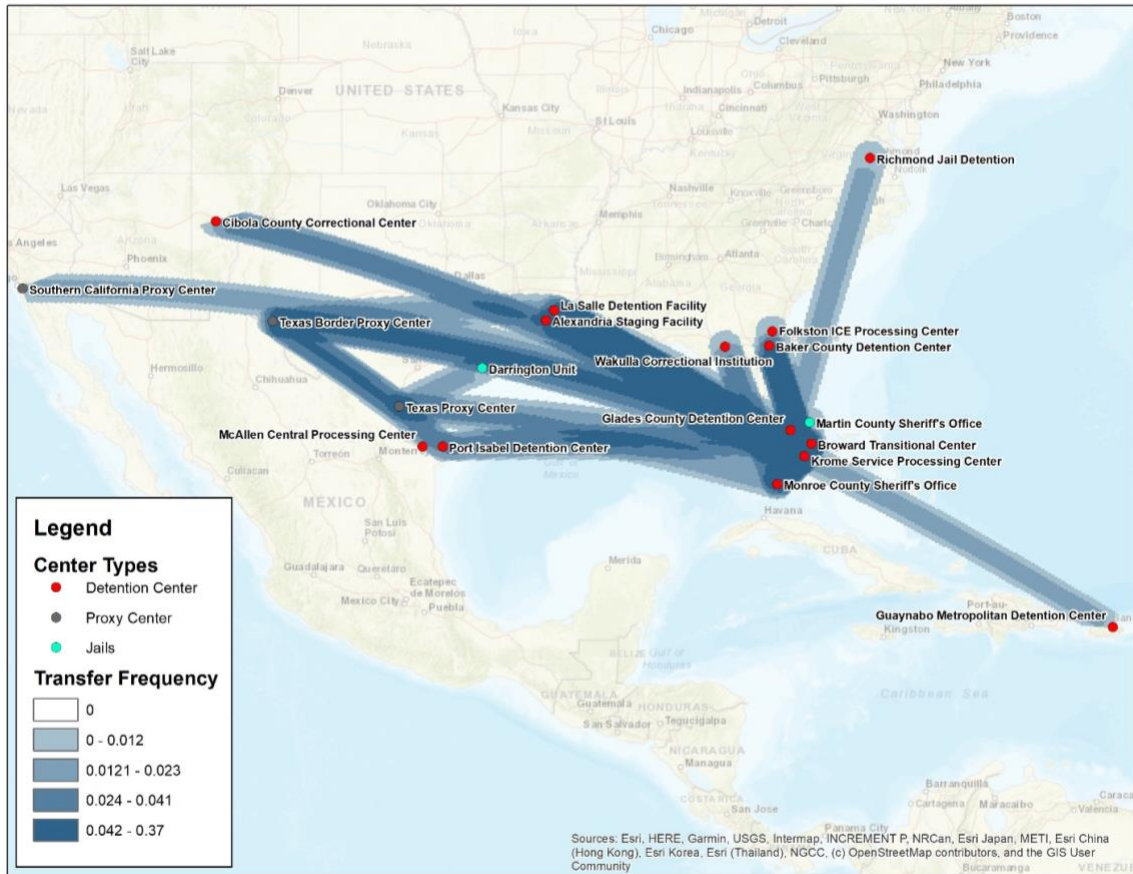
Figure 3.2 *Spatial analysis of all participant transfers*

I developed and implemented these types of maps based on my previous work as a research assistant on the Syndemics Project. From that work, I created a manual titled *Methods of Mapping Ethnographic Data on Migration, Tourism Labor, and Health Risk in the Dominican Republic*, which lays out step-by-step the way in which I translate qualitative interview data into visual maps using GIS (Livingston et al., 2016). This mixed-methods approach allows for triangulation in the data analysis between what I

witnessed during my ethnographic fieldwork and what participants shared during their interviews. Mapping participant transfers makes it easier to see the geographic information, making it easier to understand. This sort of analysis is important because the literature states that detention transfers are increasing and intensifying the hardships that individuals face in detention. By mapping these trajectories, I will be able to investigate the relationship between movement and structural violence experienced by people trapped by the deportation regime.

However, I encountered an unexpected limitation while conducting my interviews that impacted my ethnographic mapping analysis. Multiple participants could not remember or did not know the name of some of the detention centers they were transferred to. This trend was particularly common amongst participants who spent time in detention centers along the US – Texas border and when participants were transferred in response to a hurricane evacuation. This means that the maps I created could not be used to accurately depict the exact trajectories of the participants. In an attempt to still give a sense for the number of transfers I created "proxy" centers (denoted by grey points) to represent a transfer that happened, but that the destination was not reliably determined. One participant could only remember one facility he had visited and did not know where he was during a hurricane evacuation so his transfers could not be included. I was therefore not able to use the density map to decipher any patterns that might have arose between participants. The small sample size of 15 participants also caused its own limitation on the spatial analysis because the results would have been limited to only the participant pool and could not have been used to make a countrywide statement on transfers. I decided the maps were still important to include because they provide a visual

representation of the quality and amount of movement the participants endured, which could be combined with first-person narratives to better describe their experiences. Considering the map is missing data it is still staggering to see how much movement this small sample of detainees was subjected to through transfers. The fact that participants could not remember or did not know exactly all the locations they had been transferred is also telling and emphasizes the uncertainty that is embedded in U.S. detention practices.

Data Analysis Procedures

To best protect participants' confidentiality, each recorded interview was transcribed within two days of completion. After an interview was transcribed and saved to an encrypted storage device, the recording was deleted.

Once all interviews had been transcribed, the data analysis process began. This research project used thematic analysis, which involves extracting themes from qualitative data by looking for common, salient, or repeated words and phrases that were used by participants or recorded in field notes (Bryman., 2016).

Using an iterative process, a codebook was developed to identify themes of particular interest to this study. I hand coded all 15 interviews and revised the codebook periodically to ensure that it accurately represented the emerging patterns in the data. Once all interviews had been inductively coded and the codebook had been finalized, I went back through each interview to make sure all the information had been accounted for and no major patterns had been missed. Then all codes were arranged into categories to extract the three major themes that emerged naturally from all the data collected. These

themes were transfers, health vulnerabilities, and detention profiteering. These will be expanded on in detail in the next chapter.

Challenges, Limitations, and Researcher's Positionality

As a researcher and activist studying a vulnerable population of prisoners, as defined by the 2018 Code of Federal Regulations on Protection of Human Subjects (45 C.R.F. §46.101), I experienced many challenges throughout this research.

First, as previously stated, this research was challenging because of the limited access to detention centers and the nature of immigration detention in the United States. My unique position as a volunteer at the center gave me access to the facility and the ability to go relatively unnoticed, and it built rapport with potential participants.

When working with prisoners the researcher must take into consideration the autonomy of the individual and the prisoner's true freedom to make decisions, like participating in a research study (Palmer, 1976). Vulnerable populations, or groups who experience "diminished autonomy due to physiological/psychological factors or status inequalities" (Silva, 1995, p. 15), often experience multiple factors that diminish their autonomy (Moore & Miller, 1999). Immigration detainees, for example, are both undocumented and prisoners. Moore and Miller (1999) argue that the additional challenges associated with conducting research with vulnerable populations also account for the underrepresentation of vulnerable populations in research and scientific literature: "Reasons for excluding vulnerable groups from research projects may include fear that protocols will become particularly cumbersome, fear of disapproval of the proposal by

the institutional review board (IRB), and fear that vulnerable groups are inaccessible" (p. 1035). These specific kinds of concerns informed the data collection techniques used in this research project. Interviews were conducted postrelease in order to bypass the IRB requirement that ICE approve the interviews if conducted while the participants were in detention. I also took into consideration the risk of participants being targeted by ICE officials for participating in the study.

There is a risk of coercion for vulnerable populations because of their diminished autonomy (Williams, 2020). As a volunteer for IAA, I was able to offer detainees some financial assistance through our organization. We raise money to pay for phone time, commissary items, books, and clothing for release or deportation. This was another factor that played into the decision to conduct interviews postrelease. The participants were not offered anything in exchange for their participation in the study. If interviews had been conducted while the men were in detention, they might have felt obligated to participate if they needed the money or assistance from IAA.

Participant recruitment therefore also took place postrelease to minimize the possibility of coercion of the detainees. In other words, the decision to do both the participant recruitment and interviews postdetention was made to mitigate any pressure or disenfranchisement the participants might have felt if asked to participate while in detention. On the one hand, the detainees may have felt obligated to participate if they wanted to keep receiving assistance from the organization. Or on the other hand, they might have felt threatened or afraid to participate in the study for fear of being targeted by the guards and being harassed or transferred or jeopardizing their immigration case. These fears might have stopped the detainees from signing up for future visits, which

might be their only resource while in detention. Potential participants might not have felt

safe enough to share their story even if they felt inclined. Therefore, to avoid contributing

to the detainees' suffering, hindering their legal process, or excluding potential

participants, it was evident that interviews should not take place while the participants

were in detention.

Although conducting interviews postrelease did minimize many of these concerns

about protecting the participants and their vulnerability, it did not solve all the potential

shortcomings. I experienced some challenges with participant recruitment with the first

set of inclusion criteria. The participant pool became depleted because of the challenges

of keeping in touch with the men postrelease and limitations on the number of visits I was

able to conduct. The criteria were adjusted to include any detainees who had been visited

by an IAA volunteer, which excluded other possible participants but I believed that

detainees would be more willing to participate if, as stated by Emerson et al., (2011), they

established rapport with me or a fellow volunteer. However, it must be acknowledged

that participants might have felt obligated to participate because of the support that I or

AII provided them while they were in detention. They may have felt indebted to me,

which could have compromised their autonomy or freedom to make the decision to

participate willingly. In order to address this limitation, I did everything I could to

communicate to each participant that participation was completely voluntary during

recruitment and once more when reading and discussing the consent form before each

interview. There were men who declined to participate and still others who changed their

mind after initially agreeing to an interview.

The participant pool was further depleted because of the logistical issues associated with conducting interviews postrelease. These participants could be located anywhere in the world. Therefore, recruitment was limited to men who were physically and financially able to communicate and who willingly kept in communication with the researcher or other IAA volunteers. Reliable and private phone access was necessary for participation. Having a safe space to speak openly and candidly about their experiences was vital. The vast majority of the participants used Facebook or WhatsApp to communicate with me so access to internet could also be considered a limitation for potential participants.

I used a reflexive approach to address my positionality in this research. Reflexivity "involves understanding how [the] processes of doing research shape its outcomes, reflecting upon the ways in which we carry out our empirical research projects, and explaining to an audience how we move through research manufacturing processes to certain conclusions" (Corlett & Mavin, 2018, p. 3). Positionality as described by Major and Savin-Baden (2012) "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study" (p. 71) and as expanded upon by Rowe (2014) it influences what a researcher chooses to investigate. Some positionalities are culturally ascribed, like race, gender, and nationality, while others are more fluid or contextual, like life experiences or political views (Holmes, 2020).

As I reflect on my positionality, I acknowledge that my views are shaped by my life experiences as the daughter of an American father and Mexican mother. I grew up in a small costal town in Florida with a large Mexican community. I recognize my position of privilege as a young, educated woman who can pass as white. Additionally, I must also

reflect on my positionality as a volunteer at the detention center. To be a volunteer I must have a valid form of identification and pass a background check. I must also have transportation to the remote location. I could only visit detainees who spoke English or Spanish. Krome is an all-male detention center, so my positionality is further situated in the fact that I am a female volunteer. The men might present themselves differently to me than to a male volunteer. Some participants expressed being excited to talk with a woman while others appeared to hold back when paired with a female volunteer. These interactions were also dependent on the ages of the volunteers and detainees and their cultural backgrounds.

Finally, I also faced challenges associated with being a researcher and an activist. As explained by Cancian (1993), "Participatory research, distinguished by high control over research by community members, equalizes power within the research process, but often retards academic publication and career advancement." Specifically, writes Cancian, activist research "aims to [challenge] inequality by empowering the powerless, exposing the inequalities of the status quo, and promoting social changes that equalize the distribution of resources" (p. 92). Yet Cancian's study revealed that even successful activist academics who were able to retain control over their research experienced "mild to severe conflicts with departments, and develop[ed] various strategies for combining activism and career success" (1993, p. 92). The author argues that this tension between academia and activism is healthy and necessary because it reminds activists to detach from the emotional ties they may have to their research or participants and that their work must reach beyond the academic institution, beyond that ivory tower, to encourage social change. I experienced these tensions and had to find a way to balance being an objective

researcher with strong opinions and passions as an activist. While I am mindful of the importance of avoiding being emotional in scholarly writing, I argue that all social science research is personal to researchers in one way or another because of their positionality. By taking a reflexive approach and by being mindful of my positionality I have attempted to remain as objective as possible while providing various sources to back up any strong statements or suggestions made throughout this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

A thematic analysis was applied to the data collected in this study. This approach involved developing themes from the qualitative data by identifying key words or phrases that were mentioned frequently by all or a majority of the participants (Bryman, Bell, and Teevan, 2012). Three major themes emerged from the interviews: (1) the impacts of transfers on detainees; (2) health vulnerabilities faced in detention; and (3) instances of detention profiteering. This chapter will dive deeper into each theme and highlight the study participants' personal experiences while in detention. Interviews that were conducted in Spanish have been translated into English and all participant names have been changed to protect participants' identity.

Impacts of Transfers on Detainees

The first major theme that emerged from the 15 interviews I conducted, and the focus of this dissertation, was the impacts of transfers on detainees. Of the 15 participants, 13 had been transferred at least once. Every participant expressed some sort of anxiety about either having been transferred or being transferred in the future, or they expressed worry about others who had been transferred.

Case Study: Alexis

Alexis fled his home country of El Salvador when he was 21 years old, in fear for his life as a person struggling with his gender identity. He expressed that there were no human rights or protections for people of different sexual or gender orientations in his country. After crossing through Guatemala and Mexico, he and his friend turned themselves in to immigration at the US-Mexico border seeking asylum.

Alexis spent a total of nine months in immigration detention in the United States and was transferred from center to center a total of eight times. After turning himself in at the Texas border he was taken in for questioning and processing, which took four days in a temporary holding facility named the McAllen Central Processing Center, which he described as very cold and packed with people:

> They only give you an [emergency blanket] to cover yourself against the cold. Every meal was a bologna sandwich and a drink. They take your fingerprints and ask you so many questions. A short interview and after all that nightmare you're put on a bus. A bus ride where you're handcuffed and chained from the waist to your ankles.

This was Alexis's first of several transfers between detention centers. From McAllen, he was transferred to Port Isabel Service Processing Center. He described spending four days in an "icebox" where he was given an identification number, a uniform, and a medical exam before being released into the general population. He spent three weeks at Port Isabel before being transferred to the Broward Transitional Center (BTC) in Pompano Beach, Florida. He described his four months at BTC as feeling less like a prison:

> It was different there; the place tries to make you feel like you aren't detained. They give you different foods, different privileges (like TVs in the dormitories), and different kinds of people.

My gender entity (entidad) and my identity are different, and so I was scared in detention. It was difficult. In our dormitory, there was a man who sexually assaulted me. He tried to force himself on me. I had to run and call for a guard. They took me to the infirmary for four days because I became depressed. A psychologist and social worker spoke with me because I was very affected by the incident, because I didn't know that in this immigration process I was going to be detained for so long. I didn't know what was going to happen to me. For my safety I was moved to another detention center, which was Krome.

At this point in the interview Alexis revealed that he preferred to be called by feminine pronouns, so I will now refer to Alexis as "she." Alexis's relocation to Krome was her fifth transfer in detention after spending one night going through processing at another facility (she did not know the name) in Florida before finally arriving at Krome. At the maximum-security facility she immediately noticed a difference in ambiance and compared it to the facilities she spent time in along the border; they were more prison-like and had fewer amenities than BTC.

After a few weeks at Krome, where Alexis experienced more harassment and discrimination, the entire facility was evacuated in preparation for the imminent threat of Hurricane Irma. Alexis was transferred by plane to Cibola County Detention Center in New Mexico. Detainees who were transferred temporarily because of the hurricane spend a few weeks at that facility before being flown back to Miami for processing. Because of the damages to the Krome detention center caused by the hurricane, the detainees could not be housed there for several months. Therefore, they were flown back to Miami to be processed overnight and then bused all the way to the Folkston Immigration Processing Center in Georgia. It was from this facility that Alexis was finally granted bond and was released from detention.

Alexis was one of the two participants with the most transfers (eight) among my study population. Alexis was transferred for multiple reasons. Her first transfer was simply from a temporary makeshift holding facility to a more permanent long-term detention center. She doesn't not know why she was transferred from Puerto Isabel to BTC. However, unlike most participants, she does know the reasoning behind most of her transfers. She was transferred from BTC to Krome because of the assault she experienced at BTC and the psychological impacts it caused her. Krome is often referred to, by ICE, as the flagship of ICE detention centers in terms of medical care. The center has a mental health treatment center known as the Krome Transitional Unit. This is a pod with 30 beds for detainees with psychological or behavior problems, who are separated from the general population and monitored and treated before rejoining the rest of the detainees. However, the reality painted by detainees held in the transitional unit reveals that the medical care given there is substandard (Silverstein, 2019). Despite that fact, the availability of the transitional unit at Krome is more than likely the reason that Alexis was transferred there when she reported feeling depressed after she was sexually assaulted. However, detainees are never or rarely given a reason for being transferred.

Alexis's transfer from Krome to New Mexico was in response to evacuations ahead of Hurricane Irma. What is unclear is why those detainees had to first be transferred back to South Florida for processing before being transferred again, by bus this time, to Folkston, Georgia. It was clear that they could not stay at Krome because it had suffered damages from the storm.

Reasons for Transfers

ICE first established transfer procedures in 2004 when it released a document titled *ICE Detention Standard: Detainee Transfer*. In 2012, ICE updated its detainee transfer procedures in a document titled *Policy 11022.1: Detainee Transfers*. ICE detainee transfer standards are also outlined in Part 7.4 of the 2011 ICE operations manual titled *Performance-Based National Detention Standards*, which was updated in 2013 and again in 2016. These standards list reasons a detainee might be transferred, including medical reasons, change of venue, recreation, security, and other needs of ICE. They go on to list reasons ICE will not transfer a detainee, including (a) when the detainee has immediate family within the Area of Responsibility (AOR), (b) the detainee has an attorney of record within the AOR, (c) pending or on-going removal proceedings have been scheduled within the AOR, or (d) the detainee has been granted bond or has been scheduled for a bond hearing (ICE, 2012). In the examples below, I will highlight excerpts from participant interviews that show instances where it is likely that ICE did not followed its own standards.

Similar to Alexis, other participants reported being transferred for medical reasons or hurricane evacuations. For example, one participant from India reported being deeply depressed while in detention. He described not eating, hitting himself, and even attempting suicide. He stated, "But I got transferred to Florida, because that's the only place you have a mental unit." This is seemingly ironic in the fact that detainees are sometimes transferred for mental health reasons when the transfer itself could increase the mental and psychological impacts faced because of detention and could therefore increase their mental instability.

Four participants were transferred because of hurricane evacuations. One participant from Zimbabwe recounted,

> During the hurricane season, it was the most terrible. At that time I said, "You know what, this is it. What am I doing here?" Even if I [am deported] I might just hide myself, try to survive, instead of being chained. Then we almost got into an accident, and so many things happened [while being transferred because of a hurricane evacuation].

In the days leading up to Hurricane Irma's expected landfall various news outlets released stories about the transfers sparked by the storm's projected path. On September 6, 2017, the *Miami Herald* printed a story titled, "Feds moved 1,900 immigration detainees out of Irma's path, may have to move them again" (Rosenberg, 2017). The article reported detainees being transferred from the Krome Detention Center, Monroe County Jail, Broward Transitional Center, and the Glades Detention Center. Almost a year later another article was released by the *Daily Beast* titled *ICE Can't be Trusted to Care for Detainees During Hurricanes* (Barbero, 2018). This article expanded on the transfers and reported the conditions under which detainees were evacuated. It gave a detailed account of detainees being shackled for more than eight hours, during which they had little or no access to restrooms and were served cold dehumanizing food. Many were held for days waiting to be processed in cold holding cells. The personal stories of the detainees highlighted by Barbero suggested that ICE had violated multiple of its own transfer standards, "includ[ing] standards on environmental safety, meals, use of force and restraints, and timely processing" (Barbero, 2018). These stories do not seem extraordinary when compared with stories narrated in lawsuits and news reports of substandard treatment of immigrants in detention. After Hurricane Laura hit the U.S. Gulf Coast in August 2020, many news reports surfaced of detainees sleeping outside and

under inhumane conditions when the storm knocked out electricity in the area for almost three days (Merchant, 2020).

Several other participants reported that they witnessed deportees being transferred for punitive reasons. For example, a participant from South Africa commented, "There are people that could not speak English and they're told to sign, and if you refuse to sign––I've been sent to a lot of facilities because of [refusing to sign documents]." He went on to describe in more detail an interaction he once had with an ICE officer:

> My deportation officer came and said, "You've got to sign that you're going to [be deported]." I said, "No, I'm not signing. I'm waiting for [a response to my motion]." He said, "I can see you've got a motion pending, but you know what? You really have been here long enough, so you've got to sign [your deportation order]." I said, "No, I'm not signing." And within a week I was sent to Jacksonville. It's terrible there. It's really, really terrible. It's the worst, I think, immigration facility in the whole of Florida.

This punitive use of transfers is contrary to ICE's own detainee transfer standards found in Policy 11.22.1 from 2012. Section 5.2c, "Transfer Determinations," states that a transfer will not take place if a detainee has "pending or on-going removal proceedings, where notification of such proceeding has been given." Therefore, the fact that the deportation officer knowingly tried to coerce the detainee to sign his order of deportation while he had a pending motion violated ICE's written policy.

Others reported the use of transfers to wear people down. A participant from Mexico explained,

> This last time [I was detained] I was lucky I wasn't transferred out of the facility, but a lot of people are constantly being moved to other centers, Glades, I heard. Those centers were really bad for the people who are there. ICE transfers detainees with the purpose [of wearing down] people who are looking for some way to stay in the country. Many of those people are being moved to those centers so that they surrender [to be deported]. . . . It was all the people who had [spent] more time [in detention] and were requesting some kind of [assistance]. . . . Most

of those who are moved are the ones who are requesting asylum. They are the ones who are moved from one center to another. They even send them [to Glades] and you see them sent back. . . . They've lost a lot of weight.

Many interviewees stated that if detainees stayed too long, ICE would transfer them to worse detention centers to "break them down," so they would "just want to be deported." This use of multiple movements, or transfers, as a form of punishment or to subdue people in prison or detention, has been referred to as "diesel theory" (Niles, 1999).

Finally, according to some participants, other volunteers, and previous reports, transfers are conducted for business or profit reasons. For example, as Bud Conlin, the co-coordinator of Immigrant Action Alliance (IAA) explained, transfers helped fulfill contracts with transportation companies or county jails. I once had a conversation with another IAA volunteer who explained that transfers could also be used to move deportees strategically to help justify the need for a detention center or even more detention centers.

Legal Impacts of Transfers

Many participants mentioned various ways that transfers impacted their immigration cases. A detainee could be transferred away from his lawyer, he could be moved to a state where he faced different and usually stricter laws, or the transfer could impact the length of his case. In the words of one participant, "Once they move you from one detention center to another, it'll jinx your case."

A participant from South Africa said in regard to his transfer, "My attorney couldn't reach me. He didn't know where I was, the case kind of takes a different turn, and your mental state become different." Others reported that their lawyers were no

longer able to visit them or even dropped their case because they had been transferred. A

participant from Ethiopia reported,

> Some lawyers will just decline your case, and they will never contact you even
> though you paid them beforehand. . . . There's nothing you can do about it if your
> lawyer doesn't show up, no matter how much money you paid him, because you
> moved from his location. You cannot do anything. And he may not give you back
> the money. So that's a real problem. . . . Most of the time you may not get your
> [commissary] funds transferred on time, or you may even lose them from your
> personal account. Sometimes you may not find your items transferred with you.

This recurring issue of detainees lacking access to their legal counsel goes against ICE's

detainee transfer standards in Policy 11.22.1 from 2012. Section 5.2b states that a transfer

should not occur, unless deemed necessary by a Field Operations Directorate, if the

deportee has "an attorney on record within the AOR." The fact that this participant and

many others also reported losing property or even funds deposited in their commissary

account after a transfer also violates section 5.13, Property standards, which states that all

funds and personal belongings, both small and large, must be transported with the

detainee (ICE, 2012).

The very first immigrant I visited in detention was from Nicaragua. He had been

transferred from Texas. During his interview he expressed,

> Those [transfers] affect us because . . . let's say the person who was going to help
> me was in Texas . . . and it was easier for me to handle my case in Texas than to
> be sent to Miami. . . . Since each state is different . . . [there are stricter] laws in
> some states.

A third legal impact mentioned by the participants was the potential for a transfer to

prolong their case. A participant from Mexico who was not transferred himself recalled a

situation that happened to one of the men in his pod:

> [The guards] took a roommate away and . . . transferred him on a Friday night and
> he had his court appearance on Monday. . . . The lawyer had to appear in court

alone. . . . When he returned, I heard him say that the judge had been upset because they had done that, because his court hearing was three days away. And that obviously hurt him because they gave him another court date . . . two months away. So, he had to wait two more months after they transferred him, when he was already expecting the final decision, for some news, good or bad.

Having a case extended is not only frustrating for a detainee but can also have immediate and long-term psychological impacts. In this example, the detainee's court date was moved back two months. This is not unusual given the backlog in the U.S. immigration court system.

Social and Psychological Impacts of Transfers

This section will only cover impacts associated directly with transfers. The next section will go into greater detail about the conditions, medical care, and psychological impacts in the detention centers.

Several participants reported feeling even more isolated after being transferred away from friends, family, volunteers, or their lawyer. One participant reported that he never knew when he was going to be transferred and noted, "Once you transfer it's hard for you and your layer to have any contact, or for your family members to have any contact." In general, all participants had a fear of transfers, even if they had not been transferred. Another participant said that although he was only ever detained at Krome, "[I was] really, really afraid they were going to [transfer me], that they were going to put me somewhere else, because there were other people in there who were being sent off to different parts of Florida and upstate New York." This statement shows how transfers psychologically affected everyone in detention, not only those who were physically transferred.

A reoccurring sense of uncertainty about being transferred was palpable across all the interviews. Those who had been transferred suffered uncertainty during the entire process. This is a direct violation of ICE's detainee transfer standards in Section 5.3, Notification in the Event of a Detainee Transfer (ICE, 2012). Section 5.3 states that if a detainee has an attorney on record, the attorney must be notified of the transfer and the notification must "include the reason for the transfer and the name, location, and telephone number of the new facility as soon as practicable on the day of the transfer, but in no circumstances later than twenty-four (24) hours after the transfer occurs." Section 5.3 also states that detainees must be notified,

> Immediately prior to transfer, the sending office will ensure that the detainee is informed, in a language or manner he/she can understand, that he/she is being transferred to another facility and is not being removed (if applicable). . . . At the time of the transfer, ICE will provide the detainee, in writing, the name, address, and telephone number of the facility to which they are being transferred, using the Detainee Transfer Notification form.

Participants frequently mentioned the lack of notice before and during a transfer. One participant after another expressed the same experiences. Stanley, a young Haitian, said,

> Hell no. You don't get no heads up. They just come for you. They're lying. When I was there, they don't tell you crap. They just come for you. When you ask them where you're going, they say they don't know. . . . I found out where I was going when I got there.

A participant from Zimbabwe similarly reported,

> There was no notice, no nothing. At 2:00 AM, someone could just come by your door [and say], "Hey, you're getting out." "Where? Where am I going?" "You're going somewhere." Usually they just lie to you that you're going to Krome.

These testimonies point to the fact that ICE is not practicing its own standards when it comes to notifying detainees of a transfer. Abel, an Ethiopian who was transferred four

times and spent almost two years in detention, summarized the entire transfer process in these words:

> The transfers were the worst times for every detainee. Because there was no notice beforehand, and they would just come in the middle of the night, when you're sleeping or any time and violently wake you up. That was all detainees talk about all the time. Then they will keep you in waiting rooms when you're being transferred. They will wake you up before [sunrise]. They will keep you in a cold room because they don't want you to be late or anything to happen to you before they finish the transfer processing. So, they will keep you for a day in a cold room without sleep before they transfer you. They just tell you, "Wait there." . . . And then when they transfer you, you will be chained to the seat and shackled, and they'll move you to wherever they want to take you. . . . [At the new facility], you have to go through the same process. If you're being transferred from BTC to Krome, even though it's maybe an hour's drive, it's going to take three days for a detainee to settle down there because it's going to take one day before he moves . . . to be put in a cell with no mattress or anything to sleep on, and then a day of travel, and then another day you have to wait in the processing room [at the new center]. . . . The way they woke you up, they like to make you afraid. It's very bad, the transfer. I used to hate it. . . . The waiting rooms are the worst. They keep you there for hours and you're frozen in there…No, never. Never. No notice, no, no, no way.

Transfers intensify the negative experiences detainees have in detention. The above stories make it clear that transfers affect detainees not only in legal terms but also physically and psychologically. Their rights are infringed upon every time ICE does not follow its own standards for transfers. Detainees find themselves in a limbo of fear and uncertainty about whether—and more than likely when—they will be transferred.

Health Vulnerabilities Faced in Detention

In addition to vulnerabilities related directly to being transferred, each detainee also reported on conditions at the detention centers. They all expressed a lack of access to medical care and they shared psychological impacts they faced while in detention.

Case Study: Stanley

Stanley's story is a prime example of the medical neglect that many immigrants face in detention and the impacts that this can have on them both in detention and post-release.

Stanley was brought to the United States from Haiti by his mother when he was around five years old. It wasn't until he was 17 years old, when he got into some trouble with the law, that he found out he was not a citizen. His mother passed away when he was a child and therefore it was not until his interaction with the police that he realized his mother had never done the paperwork for him to become a US citizen and he was undocumented. It was too late; he now had a criminal record and could no longer qualify for programs such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). DACA gave immigrants who arrived in the United States before the age of 15 and who met several guidelines, like not having a felony, the possibility of deferred action postponing their deportation for two years, after which the deferment must be renewed (USCIS, 2021). However, under the guidelines for requesting DACA status—alongside the criteria that Stanley did meet, like age of entry—the applicant must "have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and [must] not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety" (USCIS, 2021, p.1). Thus, by the time Stanley learned of his illegal status, it was too late for him to qualify for DACA because he had a felony, which automatically disqualified him. He was handed over to immigration.

Stanley described his time in detention as a "nightmare" and "worse than jail." He reported on the conditions inside the center, but he also shared his experience of being

diagnosed with an inherited heart condition while in detention. The doctor gave him a short life expectancy if he did not receive the medication and surgery he needed. The medication cost $10,000, which meant he wasn't receiving it in detention, and it was not even available in Haiti. Knowing this, he approached the judge at his next court hearing and stated that with his heart condition, keeping him detained or sending him to Haiti was "like you're sending me to my death." While the judge did not dismiss his case, he did take interest in Stanley and gave him more time to find a lawyer. As Stanley shared, the judge "felt so bad that . . . [after a] couple of days, he called me back just to get me a lawyer."

Stanley remained in detention, fighting his legal case, now with a lawyer, but he also was fighting for his life. While in detention he encountered a doctor who did not believe he had a heart condition, even with paperwork from other doctors. Stanley showed me the documents when I visited him in detention and later shared them with me after his release. The doctor told him that if he was anything, he was "delusional." Stanley said, "It's like they have a problem believing immigrants in there. Just because you're an immigrant, they have no respect for you, period."

Stanley remembers one night having difficulty breathing and almost passing out. He said, "When I got to the hospital, they found out that what I was saying was true. If they'd have kept me in [detention] for a couple of days more . . . I would've died." They tried to send him to the same doctor who called him delusional, but Stanley insisted they take him to another doctor. They finally sent him to another hospital where he says the doctors told him, "You're not leaving here, kid. You've got a blood clot by your heart somewhere." He spent three to four weeks in the hospital. Eventually, because ICE could

not afford to get him his medication, they released him under supervision. This means he must check in at an ICE field office periodically. At one of his check-ins, Stanley reported being given an ultimatum. He said, "I'm supposed to be getting surgery, and I'm already working on that, and from what it looks like on their [ICE's] side, if the surgery gets done, after everything is finished, they're going to continue the process of trying to deport me back to Haiti." At the same time, he said his doctor was telling him, "If you don't get the surgery, obviously, you're going to die." He described realizing that if he got the surgery, ICE would pick him up again and put him in detention to be deported.

Stanley's story highlights three of the main concerns brought up by my participants in relation to health vulnerabilities they experienced in detention: the conditions inside the detention centers, the lack of medical access while in detention, and the psychological impacts they endured in detention and continue to battle post-release. A participant reported that after all he had been through in detention, "I'm not the same person."

Conditions at Detention Centers

Over the years, as covered in chapter 1, conditions at detention centers have been reported by immigrant rights organizations and the media time and time again to be inhumane and unacceptable. My participants were no exception. They reported a lack of medical treatment, strict routines, unhealthy or cold food, freezing holding cells and rooms, long waits to be moved (within and outside of the facilities), constant uncertainty about their immigration case or being transferred, being sent to solitary confinement, and mistreatment by guards. They expressed feeling lonely, anxious, and depressed. Some

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participants also described a fear of large crowds and difficulty sleeping post-release.

Below are some of their accounts of the time they spent in U.S. immigration detention.

As highlighted by Stanley's story and many participant reports that they were only given Tylenol for a wide range of ailments, medical treatment was not reliable. Apart from not receiving the correct care, many people avoided going to the clinic. One participant stated,

> There are people who are sick, but they don't want to go to the medical facility. They choose not to because they're going to be tortured, being in a cell there. You know, I'd rather be in an open bay than in a cell again, and waiting. . . . It's cold, sleeping on concrete."

The participants reported that at Krome it could take up to a few hours to get a medical appointment but that at other centers, like the Monroe County Jail, it could take up to a week or two. In other words, many times, people are discouraged and would rather not go through the "hassle" of trying to see a doctor. As one participant described it,

> Find out how people are moved within the [detention] facility. . . . Two hours, sometimes even three hours. In line, chained, sometimes put in a cell, to see a practitioner or nurse, then put back in a cell, and sometimes you miss your meal, but they would bring meals. Then get back to the dormitory in the next four hours. That's torture. . . . People that see that, and they don't want to do it because they feel like it's a hassle to get there and come back. . . . Baker [County Detention Center] is worse. They take you to the medical facility. They have to put you in shackles.

Another topic that was often brought up was that many of these centers had strict daily routines. Everyone had to get up at the same time, eat at the same time, go outside at the same time, and so on every day, whether they wanted to or not. If they did not comply, they would be punished and put into "the box," or solitary confinement. One man described it "as if we lived in a nursery for children."

Most detainees mentioned that the food was better at Krome than at the other detention centers. They did not say it was healthier, but that they received larger portions and it tasted slightly better. Many detainees who were transferred to the Baker County Detention Center noted that everyone there was always hungry, that the portions of food were not large enough, and that the food was terrible. At Baker, there was no outside recreation area. Detainees there would never see the sunlight unless they were being moved between buildings. Participants reported people being noticeably unhappier there.

One participant recounted a situation he witnessed where the guard's response to an elderly man dropping to the ground was slow, a reflection of his indifference. He explained,

> At Krome . . . people's lives are being lost and nobody ever talks about it. So, an old guy apparently dropped. But then suddenly [we found out] that he passed away. For some reason, we didn't have phones for three to four days. . . . His life could have been saved, but due to their negligence, they took their sweet time . . .we couldn't call anyone. If someone drops right now, even though I'm [CPR certified] . . . I can't resuscitate them. I could help them, but I'm not allowed to do so. If I were going to try and help somebody . . . I'll be kicked. I'll get my ass beat by the guards. While they watch a man die.

Participants reported a variety of interactions with guards. Some offered help with translating documents while others were described as aggressive and unfriendly. One detainee said he experienced and witnessed a lot of racism toward immigrants at the Monroe County Jail. He recalled,

> [The guards] don't want you to get close to them. They won't answer your questions. If they call you for something, it's in an aggressive way. . . . If they're Hispanic, and you don't speak English, even if they speak Spanish, they will not speak to you in Spanish. That's traumatic.

Two participants reported being sexually assaulted by either guards or other detainees while detained. We previously recounted Alexis's assault by another detainee

which led to her transfer to another facility. However, a second participant reported being

harassed and sexually assaulted by a female guard in Jena, Louisiana. He recounted his

experience,

> It was a female officer. I got molested by her in jail. We made a complaint, the
> officer got fired, but there was still no conclusion. They still would just ignore
> you. Say, "It happens to a lot of people." She was just touching me and woke me
> up in the middle of the night and harassing me. When I was taking a shower,
> she'd just come in and look at me. I was sleeping, she woke me up about 30 times
> in the night. She was moving around and woke me up. She said, "What are you
> doing?" I would say, "Nothing." [And then] fall asleep again, taking the
> medication. She woke me up again. I'd just go [get] water . . . by the counter and .
> . . she'd just grab me there and hold me.

Just as some participants suspected that they were transferred for refusing to sign

a deportation order, others described being treated worse for refusing to sign documents.

A detainee shared an experience in which he believed a deportation officer overstepped

his boundaries and influenced the immigration court:

> I think they even influence the court system, to be honest with you. [They tried to
> have me] illegally deported, and I refused to get on the plane. They brought me
> back, and they locked me up for a month in [solitary] confinement. They started
> calling the court to expedite my [deportation]. . . . [The deportation officer]
> literally called me to the office and called the court to say, "You need to expedite
> his motion." So, I called my lawyer, and my lawyer said, "By law, they're not
> supposed to be doing this."

Detainees also mentioned that their deportation officers were assigned 30 to 40

cases at a time. They were rarely if ever able to have a one-on-one meeting with their

deportation officer. One stated that the deportation officers "aren't telling you the truth.

That's the problem. Because if they would be straightforward and tell . . . us that you

would be deported in a month . . . at least you would know. But that information got to

me only after I hired a lawyer."

The number of times a detainee must be patted down each day and even internally checked appears excessive and abusive. The participants all experienced being checked for contraband before being moved to any other area in the center. If they were going to recreation, they were patted down before going outside and when reentering. If they were being taken to visitation, they would be patted down multiple times. This occurred for any other kind of movement within the facility.

A participant shared his experience of the guards at BTC:

> The guards are awful. Not all of them, but the majority of them are not so nice. They don't know what they're doing. They know that you're a refugee, and they don't treat you like an equal human being. Because they believe they can get away with a lot of stuff. I have seen some girls complaining about being drugged and then the guards touching their body. When they complained about it, nobody did anything about it, unless it was some kind of major issue or very violent. . . . But there were a lot of other cases that went unnoticed.

In general, all the participants also had grievances about the extreme and persistent cold, the constant noise, the lights always being on, and having to use the toilet in open spaces. Many didn't use the toilet for days because of the lack of privacy.

Another topic that came up a few times in the interviews was related to being released from detention. Various participants reported winning their case or posting bond, but not being released for up to five days. One participant stated, "My bond was posted, and they refused to give me back my driver's license." This was not uncommon. Of the dozens of men, I visited at Krome, many reported not being given their legal documents when they were released or deported, even if the ICE officers had them right there in front of them. This meant that they would have to get new ones and in the meantime be without identification, which would limit their movement and actions.

Another man said, "I won my case, but they didn't let me go that day. I was

forbidden to tell [the other detainees] that I had won my case. . . . Imagine if you tell a

person [a detainee] that someone without an education and without money won their

case, that can help them psychologically to continue with their case." This second point

made by the participant touches on the notion that detainees who helped others fight their

cases were often transferred, as mentioned previously.

A few detainees reported that those who signed up for visitation would never get

called. They would see some sign up and be called at the time of visitation, but others

never seemed to be on the list. This could be because there are not enough volunteers to

visit everyone who signed up, but our nonprofit made a conscious effort to visit as many

people who signed up as possible, especially if they signed up multiple times. One

participant reported,

> Every week I wrote my name [on the sign up sheets] and requested a person to
> visit me. Months went by without anyone visiting me. . . . I understood that [the
> guards] didn't like me and I think they tore [the sign-up sheet from of the binder]
> and didn't deliver it. . . . I thought they didn't want me to have access to people
> from the outside. . . .

Lack of Medical Access

Stanley's case showed various ways in which there was a lack of medical access

in detention and an overall indifference or disbelief of the guards toward immigrants and

their health. However, Stanley was not the only one to experience these kinds of

hardships in detention.

Another participant, from Nicaragua, was diagnosed with a cancerous tumor in

his leg while he was in detention. He reported that he did not have access to the

medication he was prescribed and that he was merely given painkillers. He recalled that

two days after they operated on him to remove the tumor,

> They chained me up again and put me back in the van. My wound was not yet
> even completely closed. I was bleeding and staining my dressing and clothes. . . .
> Those were not conditions for caring for my wound. I had to be transported again.
> . . . My leg became swollen and they had to take me back. . . . I was in the hospital
> again and on antibiotics. And then again I was chained with a swollen leg. . . .I
> was so worried they were going to cut off my leg because of the infection I had
> contracted. . . .Two days after [being released from the hospital the second time] .
> . . I said, "Look officer my leg is swollen, and it hurts." He didn't listen to me. He
> only told me, "Move and shut up." He just told me to move and he treated me
> poorly. "I asked him for a pain pill or something, but he said no. . . . I was
> transferred by plane and I arrived with my leg swollen in Louisiana and there the
> doctors gave me antibiotics. . . . I could barely walk. My leg wasn't well and I
> couldn't stand it anymore.

Again and again, participants would describe instances in which guards or doctors

would dismiss their pleas for help or express disbelief at the symptoms they were

reporting. The detainees often described the guards taking their time responding to their

request to go to the medical ward. A man recalled feeling like he was having a heart

attack, and when he told the guard, he responded, "Oh yeah, I'll take you in a bit." The

detainee had to beg the guard to take him to the infirmary. Another man broke his finger

and it took three days for anyone to look at it; the guards insisted it wasn't broken. When

he finally had it checked, it was broken, and he was taken to a hospital. These testimonies

show a pattern of disbelief and neglect of the health and well-being of detainees. These

reports become even more concerning when considering ICE's ability to care for

detainees during natural disasters or especially global pandemics (I return to the issue of

the COVID-19 pandemic, which followed my period of data collection, in the

Conclusion).

Psychological Impacts of Detention

Participants expressed various instances in which their mental health had been impacted during their time in detention. The majority of participants reported suffering psychological traumas that stayed with them well after they were deported or released. Many reported feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression, and some even attempted suicide. Several participants who were at one time or another taken to the transitional unit at Krome or who were transferred to a hospital because of a mental breakdown reported being given medication that made them, as they described it, "basically a dead man. Lie in bed, get up, eat, and sleep." One of the most alarming accounts was provided by a man from India. He reported being severely depressed and said that he had tried to kill himself a few times. He was put in solitary confinement so, as ICE put it, he wouldn't hurt himself. He described these painful experiences:

> I went to Larkin Hospital, and another one in Broward. I was in the mental unit for about three or four months. They brought me back [from the hospital], and I was on so much medication that I didn't know what was happening to me. I was drooling. My body stopped hurting. I became a zombie. That was how much medication I was taking. One day I just woke up and I was in India.

This participant reported being so drugged that he had no recollection of being deported back to India. He had been deported illegally without his consent or any prior notification.

Another participant shared what it was like being in detention and suffering psychologically from the trauma he experienced:

> It's like a contamination, you catch other people's depression. You come to a point where you think it's better to not exist. That's where getting visits from volunteers really helped me. . . . I didn't want to admit it, but I needed help. I needed to talk to someone who wasn't detained. . . . I don't know how to explain it . . . It's like different stages. The stage of loneliness, the stage of depression, the

stage of anxiety, a yearning to be out, a stage where you're ready to give up. Then comes a stage where you might finally get help, support, relief, and you find hope and strength again.

Visitors can offer detainees an outlet to express what they are feeling, help them find hope, and provide them a link to the outside world.

I recall interviewing a man from Romania who told his story in an almost comical, theatrical way. It was almost as if he were a main character in an action movie. We found ourselves laughing and at one point he stopped me and said,

I try to make it sound like it's been an adventure, but that's just how I cope with it. It was really scary. . . . It might come off as funny, but it's not. You can laugh. That's why I'm saying it—it's just to calm myself down. . . . I just want you to know that it was a really, really, really bad experience.

Participants reported not being able to go to crowded spaces up to two years after their detention, as one said, "because of the constant yelling, constant noise. It basically dehumanizes you. You don't feel like a person." Others said they now prefer to be alone. One participant put it this way: "I know not only me, but I know people who were affected so badly, who went crazy, lost their sanity or changed their behavior because of the detention and the tough life they went through." Some participants reported having to see a psychologist post-release to help them cope with the emotional trauma they experienced in detention. Many reported "nights without sleep" and "getting easily agitated and irritated." These testimonies show the many health vulnerabilities experienced by detainees. Their stories demonstrate that the impacts of detention on an individual can affect them long after they have been released or deported.

The criminalization of detainees also had a psychological impact on participants. Despite constantly being told they were not in jail, they all felt like they were, because in

actuality they were. Several participants commented feeling stigmatized when they were transported to hospitals for treatment because they were handcuffed and then chained to the bed. One participant shared,

> I did go to the ER while I was there. I was in the ER with handcuffs and shackles on me. I remember I had to go to the bathroom when I got there, and ugh, you're in these things and you have shackles on you. I remember a family coming to me and saying, "We don't know what you did, son, but we will pray for you."

This was a man with no criminal convictions. Several of the participants who had been in prison before being transferred to immigration detention said that there was no difference between detention and jail. If anything, detention seemed to be even worse. One participant expressed,

> We were in jail. They kept saying it's not jail. I'd always tell every guard, if it's not jail, then why are you guys treating us like we're in jail? I had just got out of jail and went straight to immigration. I told them, you guys are treating us worse than [the prison guards] are. In places like Baker, that are county jails, the guards are contracted to run the facility using their policies regardless of the different operations happening there. In other words, the guards are going to treat the detainees the same as inmates.

The criminalization of detainees affects more than those held in detention; it also affects their family and the way others in society view them. One participant who I visited frequently at Krome would mention not wanting his children to come to see him even though they lived in South Florida. Eventually they did visit him, but he said it affected him and his children a lot:

> [Detention] affects you a lot . . .not only me, but also my kids. They asked me during their visit if all the people that were here were criminals, . . . if they had done something bad. They have this idea that people who were locked up in here had committed some kind of crime. . . . Really, the rest of us pay for the crimes of the few who are criminals in there. . . . I do feel we are labeled by people outside. . . . It's because of misinformation.

Many participants reported losing family ties because of detention. Two or three wives of the participants filed for divorce while they were in detention. One man said, "It was difficult. I was stressed out all the time, depressed. . . . Yeah, of course it affected me. I lost the most important relationship with my wife while I was in detention, and I can never get that back again." The detainees lose their freedom, their jobs, their businesses, their belongings, and their families.

Detention Profiteering

In the United States, adjusting one's status by applying for a green card or citizenship means facing a long-backlogged process, and it is also expensive. According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website, it costs $725 ($640 filing fee + $85 biometric fee) to submit an application for citizenship. Applying for a green card can cost between $750 and $1,225 (USCIS, 2019) and filing an I-130 Petition for Alien Relative costs $535. In 2020, USCIS attempted to impose new increased fees but a federal judge granted a motion for preliminary injunction, which blocks any increases for now. Among other changes and increases, *Forbes* reported that "the rule would increase the cost to become a U.S. citizen by more than 80%, rising from $640 to $1,160. The United States would also become one of the few countries in the world to charge an individual for applying for asylum ($50)" (Anderson, 2020).

As of July 1, 2020, applying for citizenship took between six months to two years, or even longer depending on where the applicant lives. This process includes waiting for a notice of receipt, biometric appointment, interview, and test at USCIS, and the naturalization ceremony (Malone, 2020). In 2020, USCIS released data showing that the

green card backlog for employment-based immigrants had surpassed 1.2 million

applicants (Bier, 2020).

However, the U.S. immigration system is backlogged and expensive in other

ways. Immigration detention costs U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars each year. The FY

2021 budget for DHS included $49.8 billion for "net discretionary funding." Of the total

budget, 14% is allocated to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and 24% is

allocated to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (DHS, 2020). As mentioned previously,

according to ICE's FY 2018 budget, on average it costs about $134 a day to keep an adult

in immigration detention (DHS, 2018). However, immigrant activists' groups believe the

number to be higher, closer to $200 a day (Urbi, 2018).

At the end of FY 2020, the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse reported

1.2 million pending cases in immigration court. The largest backlogs were in Texas,

California, New York, and Florida (TRAC, 2021). The immigration court backlog

directly impacts immigrants in detention who are fighting their cases. The longer the case

takes, the longer they can spend in detention. As mentioned, prolonged and indefinite

confinement has been directly associated with severe mental disturbance (Steel et al.,

2006).

Case Study: Junior

Junior's story highlights the third theme that emerged from my interviews,

detention profiteering. It gives testimony to the great cost of being in detention and

fighting one's immigration case.

Junior was originally from South Africa but lived almost 13 years in the United States before being picked up by immigration officials at work. He spent about 20 months in detention before being deported. Junior migrated to the United States because of a job offer. He came to work here temporarily and went back to South Africa. His company was so satisfied with his work that it extended an invitation for him to return and arranged his visa. When Junior was picked up by immigration officials, he was completely caught off guard. To the best of his knowledge, he had done nothing wrong.

After describing a forceful and embarrassing interaction with ICE officers in front of his coworkers, he explained that during processing, an ICE officer told him a letter had been mailed to him with an order to appear in court and that he had not shown up. At least two other participants reported that they were accused of skipping court when to the best of their knowledge, they never received the letter. Junior explained, "I did not —and I repeat this—I did not receive the letter. . . . I don't know why it didn't come. . . . I had no reason not to go." In other words, for 13 years he had complied with all immigration policies, so why would he have missed court? He asked himself how he was going to prove he never got the letter. He had to hire a lawyer, which cost him $7,000. He needed to prove that his address on file with immigration was up to date and that he had not moved. This was his best option for proving he had not received the letter to appear. But the immigration judge decided his evidence was not sufficient. He appealed to a higher court, but he said that the judge responded, "Your motion wasn't timely; hence we will go with the first judge's decision." His appeal was not timely because he first tried to appeal to the original judge on his case but was then evacuated because of a hurricane. In

other words, the circumstances out of his control. With each appeal, his time in detention was extended by months.

Junior exhausted his life savings in the 20 months he was in detention: "Almost two years is a long time, spending money [in detention]," he said. The entire time he was in detention he continued paying his rent of $1,700 a month because he didn't want to lose his apartment and all his personal belongings. He said, "I left everything. When you leave a car that you paid for, you leave furniture that you paid for . . . " He had paid cash for all of his belongings because, he said, he never wanted to be in debt. In the end he had to abandon all his belongings.

Junior sustained his own commissary account and paid for phone calls while he was in detention. He remarked, "In Baker, phone calls are not cheap. It's even cheaper to call somebody in New York than in Florida." Both Junior and another participant spoke of a man they met at Baker who had shown them his phone account and he had spent between $3,500 and $3,800 on phone calls alone. When Junior was transferred to Baker and Glades, he was not able to keep in touch with the volunteer who visited regularly at Krome, Bud, because of the exorbitant cost of phone calls. Junior also mentioned, "You have to sustain yourself, you know. . . . Meals are bad."

Eventually Junior's spirit was broken. He was tired of fighting and had run out of money. He was deported with a 10-year ban on returning to the U.S. But he had not given up. He kept fighting his case back in South Africa. He learned of a petition, the I-212 form, that can be filed to lift the ban. It takes 6 to 10 months for a response and the petition can be denied. It cost Junior about $1,200. At the time of his interview, Junior was still waiting for a response to his petition.

The Business of Detention

Profiteering in immigration detention is often left out of the discussion of the U.S. immigration business. Detention is expensive. There are a variety of ways that money is effectively extorted from detainees: lawyers' fees, filing fees, phone calls, the commissary, and bonds and bail-bond companies. Many participants expressed giving up or being forced to give up on their case because they could no longer afford to keep going. One explained, "I couldn't pay anymore. I cannot afford this because it's been a year now, and I no longer have the money to continue."

The price of commissary items and phone calls varies across centers because some are county jails or private for-profit centers, and others are federal facilities. This was evident in Junior's testimony. As Junior described, another participant explained, "The minute that they sent me to Monroe, I couldn't afford the expense. . . . If you don't have money, you don't eat. [They only serve you] a little bit of food. So you're going to go hungry if you don't have money. . . . It's just terrible."

Detainees are hyper aware of this situation. As one participant clearly stated, "[Detention is] just like jail. . . . It's just basically a moneymaking machine." They also understand that detention is a business in the United States; they know that companies are profiting from their incarceration. One participant said, "But you have to understand that this is a business. It costs the state about $120 per inmate, per day. It's a multimillion-dollar business." In the United States we profit from caging people in immigration detention.

Many different industries and individuals profit from the U.S. detention system: lawyers, contracted staffing agencies, commissary and phone companies, transportation

companies, county jails, for-profit facilities, and bond companies. Bond is set by the judge and it varies depending on the detainee's country of origin. Detainees from Central America are usually granted "small" bonds between $1,500 and $5,000 while those from other countries, like China, are burdened with some of the largest bonds. A participant recalled, "I met some [detainees] from China, and their bond was $30,000." Bond companies like Libre by Nexus require any immigrant with a bond of over $5,000 to wear an ankle monitor in order to use their services, and the person must pay $450 a month just for the monitor. That price does not include the monthly payments for the bond itself. According to this company's website people must pay "setup fees, monthly program fees, maintenance fees, equipment damage fees, and program non-compliance fees" in order to participate in its program. It seems that at every turn, people or corporations are taking advantage of the vulnerable state detainees find themselves.

Over the course of the four years I had been volunteering for IAA, I and my colleagues saw firsthand the many injustices detainees face, but the ones we were warned of most frequently were bond companies and immigration lawyers. Countless times we heard detainees complaining that they had paid a lawyer who either never showed up again or did nothing for their case. A veteran volunteer described this exploitation as "shooting fish in a barrel." These immigrants are vulnerable and desperate for help, making them easy targets. This is exacerbated by the fact that more and more, judges are not hearing cases if the detainee does not have a lawyer. One participant stated, "Sometimes even the judges won't deal with people [who have no lawyer]. Back in the day they used to. Nowadays they'll tell you, . . . I'm going to . . . adjourn this case until you get a lawyer." Thus, detainees feel an additional pressure to find a lawyer. However,

the majority of the immigration lawyers we heard about from the men we visited and participants in this study were not of much assistance. One participant said, "That attorney didn't even submit a briefing schedule in BIA. And when the BIA appeal got dismissed, I didn't even get notified by the attorney or Immigration. . . . My attorney messed up, and now I have a withholding of removal." Another participant reported, "I had [an immigration lawyer], but she was just cashing in and not doing anything, so we had to switch lawyers." Each of these situations costs the detainee more money and either prolongs or jeopardizes their case altogether.

Discussion

This dissertation sought to understand the impacts of transfers between detention centers on immigration detainees in the United States. There is currently a gap in the research and literature of immigration studies on transfers and more importantly, the impact of transfers on detainees. The data collected for this research project paints a clear picture that transfers between detention centers are an important aspect of detention that warrants analysis because of the many impacts they have on detainees. The reasoning behind transfers is complex, raising questions about the actions of ICE with regard to oversight and supporting the argument that transfers are an aspect of the immigration industry. Studying and revealing all motives behind transfers has proven to be important because of the increased vulnerabilities they cause detainees.

The main findings of this dissertation are outlined below in order of significance in relation to the purpose of this study and the research questions that guided this work. Transfers increase suffering and negatively impact the well-being of detainees. Detainees

are treated inhumanly, shackled in buses and planes with no information about where they are going or why. Transfers can take days from when processing begins to when processing is complete at the new facility. The conditions of transfers were reportedly worse when they were prompted by large evacuations for hurricanes threatening South Florida. This calls into question ICE's capacity to effectively handle and navigate mass evacuations of its detention centers whenever a natural disaster is imminent or strikes near one of its facilities. This was evident in the testimonies given by my participants and as reported in the media when hurricane Laura hit Louisiana, leaving ICE facilities without electricity or running water, overflowing toilets. ICE did not evacuate the facility in anticipation of the storm and with temperatures in the 90s, detainees had to resort to sleeping outside (Shepherd, 2020). It bears mentioning that in regions such as South Florida – prone to natural disasters and increasing climate-related events – these conditions are likely to become more dire in the future.

Confirming reports by Kalhan (2010) and various immigrant activist groups, the participants in this research study reported suffering limited telephone and visitation hours, cold, scarce and unhealthy food, unsanitary quarters, overcrowding, nonfunctioning and public toilets and showers, inadequate counsel, and prolonged and indefinite confinement.

Transfers negatively impact not only the physical well-being of detainees but also their psychological well-being because they are not informed ahead of time of their transfer or told where they are going. They are taken from their cot in the middle of the night and placed in freezing holding cells while they are processed for the transfer, and later experience the same while being processed at the new facility.

Similar to the findings of Steel's (2006) study, participants reported feeling depressed, anxious, having trouble sleeping, and other mental-health-related disabilities. Participants also reported feeling dehumanized, humiliated, stigmatized, and criminalized not only by guards, but also by family and people who would see them in public settings (like hospitals) and because of the horrible conditions under which they were detained and transferred. Several reported ongoing mental disturbances even years after their release. Two participants specifically mentioned needing therapy because of their experiences in immigration detention.

Transfers can also cause psychological harm because they move detainees away from support systems like friends, families, lawyers, and volunteers. Transfers can cause detainees' cases to be shifted from one circuit court to another. This impacts the laws applicable to their case and if they had a lawyer, the lawyer may no longer be able to represent them, and it can potentially extend the length of their case. These abrupt practices and the long backlog in the immigration court system take a toll on detainees' physical and mental health.

Transfers and the imminent fear of being transferred exacerbate the atrocious conditions experienced in detention because of the uncertainty they create. All 15 participants reported numerous instances where detainees were not told ahead of time that they were going to be transferred or where they were being transferred. Several participants reported either personal experience of being transferred or witnessing transfers that were done for punitive reasons. For these reasons, all my participants also expressed a fear of being transferred.

It is for these reasons that is important to understand why transfers are happening. Some reasons reported by participants in this study were refusing to sign their order of deportation, getting into an altercation with another inmate, or merely continuing to appeal their legal case. These examples demonstrate that ICE uses detention transfers for punitive reasons even though they claim they do not. In 2008, an ICE official told a Human Rights Network interviewer, "We don't transfer as a punitive measure, we're not out to get them . . . but when a facility requests [a transfer], we have to move the detainee out." ICE has often been criticized for conditions in detention centers and its lack of oversight. The testimonies presented in this dissertation illustrate that ICE is not capable of properly caring for detainees, especially during natural disasters, and they do not always comply with their own rules and regulations, notably when it comes to transfer standards and practices.

This research also argues that transfers are a component of the migration industry. As explained to me by a fellow volunteer, a center receives money every time a new detainee enters the facility, and transfers can help give the impression of overflowing centers and justify the need to open facilities or keep them open. Volunteers often reported hearing of detainee's commissary account balances disappearing after a transfer. The sole fact that there exist private, for-profit, detention centers is evidence enough that detention practices are part of the migration industry. Contracts with county jails, commissary companies, phone companies, and transportation companies are all also part of the commodification of immigration (Darby, 2019). Unethical lawyers and bail bond companies are other examples of the profiteering suffered by vulnerable immigrant detainees.

The facts that ICE does not comply with its own rules and regulations and that

transfers further amplify the negative impacts of detention on detainees point to why it is

imperative that another entity oversee ICE's operations. The results of this dissertation

confirm the urgent need for reformation of US immigration detention practices and more

broadly for comprehensive immigration reform. US immigration practices have

historically violated basic human rights and have negatively impacted detainees' well-

being both physically and psychologically, all of which are intensified when they

experience transfers.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This research project aimed to analyze the U.S. immigration detention system to understand how the history of U.S. immigration and U.S. social structures like immigration law and detention practices affect immigrants. This research had a unique focus on transfers because transfers are a growing detention practice that is often excluded in media coverage and immigration literature. It aimed to understand immigrant vulnerabilities that are woven into U.S. detention institutions and practices and to give a voice to the often excluded population of detainees who were pushed to the periphery of society and effectively silenced. Through semi-structured interviews conducted postdetention, participants were able to express in their own words their experiences in immigration detention, particularly their experiences of transfers between detention centers, and the impacts that detention practices had on them physically and psychologically.

The participants' testimonials respond directly to my research questions. The focus of this research project was to understand how mobility, or transfers, of detainees might impact their well-being, both physically and psychologically. This research provides testimony that immigration detention transfers indisputably increase the suffering and negative impacts of detention on detainees' overall well-being. In their narratives, the participants reported inhumane conditions and human rights violations and expressed their fear of being transferred. They also illustrated instances where transfers were used punitively, confirming that ICE fails to follow many of its own standards and

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regulations that were originally outlined by ICE in the National Detention Standards in

September 2000 but have been revised over the years. Transfers are one more component

of the immigration industry that prioritizes profit over human rights. Woven into U.S.

detention practices is a long history of an exploitive and racist society that has

scapegoated new waves of immigrants since the late 1800s and turned toward the

criminalization of immigrants since the mid-1990s. The impacts of xenophobic and racist

rhetorics and laws are evident in today's immigration practices and were felt sharply by

my participants in the ways that they were treated by guards and staff, the criminalized

view their families had of them while in detention, and the interactions they had with the

general population during transfers and hospital visits. These findings are important

because of the continuous flow of immigrants to the United States and the increasing

number of immigrants in detention.

The conditions in immigration detention became serious health concerns in 2020

during the global COVID-19 pandemic. According to a Detention Watch Network

(DWN) report, *Hotbeds of Infection: How ICE Detention Centers Contributed to the*

Spread of COVID-19 in the United States (Hooks & Libal, 2020), ICE's response to the

virus has been an avoidable calamity: "Throughout the pandemic, ICE failed to provide

adequate supplies of soap and PPE to people in detention and to detention center staff"

(p. 7). Thousands of infections and virus-related deaths could have been prevented if

CDC guidelines were followed and if actions were taken sooner and more seriously.

Social distancing is nearly impossible in detention and as the DWN report also states, "In

at least one detention facility in California, ICE purposefully rejected universal testing

because it would be too difficult to quarantine all detained people who may test positive"

(Hooks & Libal, 2020, p.7). Central to the report was the finding that ICE's institutional failure to mitigate the pandemic contributed to the spread of COVID-19 across the United States. A key finding from the report was that "counties with ICE detention centers were likely to report COVID-19 cases earlier in the pandemic than counties without a detention center" (Hooks & Libal, 2020, p.8). There are also numerous reports of the United States deporting infected immigrants and contributing to the spread of COVID-19 around the globe (Hooks & Libal, 2020; Kassie & Marcolini, 2020). ICE has been criticized at various times in the past for its mismanagement of infectious disease control within its detention facilities, with transfers being a leading factor. This point was evident in an outbreak of mumps in detention centers in 2018:

> In October 2018, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported five confirmed cases of mumps among immigrants transferred between two ICE detention centers. By August 2019, there were 898 reports of mumps cases in 57 facilities. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 84 percent of patients were exposed while in custody. (Hooks & Libal, 2020, p. 6)

This is one more example of how transfers play a significant role in the spread of illness in detention and how movement of detainees negatively impacts detainee's well-being, specifically their health.

Although my official research is over, as an activist researcher, I continue to volunteer and work with immigrants in detention. During the height of the COVID-19 outbreak in Florida, I recall having to translate for Esteban, a young man from Guatemala who was detained during the pandemic. By the time he was deported, he had been transferred 18 times and had contracted COVID-19. He was transferred an exorbitant number of times because of multiple failed attempts by ICE to deport detainees to Guatemala. The Guatemalan government placed caps on the number of deportees allowed

from the United States because "the country [said] it had continued to receive deportees with Coronavirus" (Madan, 2020). Esteban shared with me his experience of contracting the virus in detention. He was transferred to a cell with an older man who was very sick. He recalled the man coughing throughout the night. Esteban requested to be moved to another cell, but his requests were ignored. Within two days he became symptomatic and tested positive for COVID-19. He was then put into quarantine, which meant he had to spend two weeks in solitary confinement, providing yet another example of ICE's medical negligence and proving it is not equipped to handle the care of detainees during times of crisis like natural disasters or global pandemics.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration my participants' narratives, the extensive research conducted for this dissertation, and my own experience as an advocate, I present the following recommendations. The first recommendations presented here come from the participants themselves. Many participants wondered why county jails and facilities are being used to house detainees, especially long-term. In Florida, the Baker County Jail and the Glades County Jail house both inmates and detainees. The Monroe County Jail ended its lucrative contract with ICE in April 2020, more than likely because of complications with COVID-19 (Madan, 2020). One participant stated, "[It's] cold, expensive. Monroe is hell. I don't know why they put, detainees there. . . . It's really terrible. I think in Monroe, whatever they do, they do just to make you [give in to being deported]." Another participant expressed a similar sentiment and suggestion: "I think the system should just stop. . . . That's my suggestion. Monroe should be out of the discussion," suggesting

detainees no longer be held at that facility. Regarding the Baker County Jail, the participants noted that because it was a jail, there was no outside recreation area, which meant they were not granted any outdoor time. As one participant put it, "Baker is a county jail. There is no outside. It's a prison. . . . That was the worst one, probably."

Immigrant Action Alliance is currently part of a campaign to shut down the Glades County Detention Center in 2021. The organization has been documenting conditions at the facility for years and has filed various civil rights complaints. On February 22, 2021, Americans for Immigrant Justice, along with eight other immigrant rights organizations, including IAA, submitted a federal civil rights complaint titled *Violations of Civil Rights, COVID-19 Protocols, Reckless Endangerment, and other Abuses at the Glades County Detention Center (Florida)* against both the Glades County Detention Center and ICE. As an activist researcher, and inline with my participants' recommendations and IAA's long-term goals, I agree and recommend that ICE contracts with all county facilities be terminated. These facilities are not equipped for long-term housing of detainees. On January 26, 2021, President Biden signed an executive order directed at phasing out federal private prison contracts. However, this order does not appear to apply to ICE contracts (Adams, 2021).

Besides recommending the discontinuation of using county jails to house detainees, participants also recommended that the government seek an alternative to detention. Various participants believed that they were being treated unfairly because they had no criminal background and felt as if they were being treated worse than criminals. They envisioned other possibilities. One participant explained:

It's frustrating because you know for a fact that [detention] can be avoided. I don't think it's necessary. I was kept almost three years in detention for no reason at all, and then I ended up being released. So, what was the point of them paying that much money and keeping me in detention for that long and subjecting me to verbal abuse and all those kinds of things that you feel when you're in detention? And so, I think . . . it's just a business.

Thus, participants feel that detention is not always necessary or warranted, confirmed by the fact that the majority of immigrants who find themselves in detention have no criminal background. One participant suggested the following alternative:

[If the undocumented immigrant] has committed no crime, I believe the most prudent thing to do with these people, instead of keeping them [detained], is to put an ankle monitor on them, and when it's their court date if they don't appear then deport them.

However, as mentioned previously, bond companies that require ankle monitors have been criticized for charging undocumented immigrants additional exorbitant monthly fees of over $400 to wear the device. Aside from issues of profiteering, ankle monitors also carry with them a negative stigma, a criminalization of the person wearing them. For these reasons, immigrant activist groups have steered away from pushing for ankle monitors as an alternative to detention. Instead, these groups advocate for the Family Case Management Program, which was canceled by the Trump administration in June 2017. According to an article published by the former Deputy Director on Immigration Policy for the ACLU, Ruthie Epstien (2018), entitled, "The Tried-And-True Alternatives to Detaining Immigrant Families," this program operated in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, and Washington, D.C. and was designed for undocumented immigrant who were not a flight risk. It was meant to

ensure court appearance and compliance with any final court orders, but [it does] even more—[it] allow[s] families to live outside prison walls while their case moves through the system, [allowing] them to more easily find an attorney and

prepare their defense. . . . Non-detained immigrants with legal representation are far more likely to win legal relief. It also means that parents can raise their own children as normally as possible, limiting . . . long-term trauma to the family. (para. 4)

The program was ended because the Trump administration argued that if immigrants were released while their cases were still in court, they would disappear from the government's radar. However, this was not supported by the data. According to a report published by the ACLU in 2018, the program had a 99% effectiveness rate in families appearing for their court dates. It was also significantly less expensive, costing about $36 per day per family as compared to $319 per day per family in detention (Epstein, 2018).

While ending immigrant detention is the ultimate solution to ending the trauma faced by detainees, there are other recommendations that can be implemented to at least improve the condition detainees are facing while detention continues. Based on the literature and the findings of my study, I recommend minimizing all transfers that are unnecessary or used punitively. Transfers prompted by natural disasters have been increasing and it appears likely that they will continue to increase. The government must ensure that ICE is adequately equipped to handle the evacuation of all detainees. ICE should therefore be monitored and held to its own standards, improve its standards, and alert detainees of any unavoidable transfers. By implementing these changes, mental, medical, and physical impacts of detention can be minimized. Undocumented immigrants have human rights and should not be used as pawns by the state to exert its sovereignty. Vulnerable undocumented immigrants should not be caged for profit and reform is needed to protect them against profiteering and extortion. New immigration policies should directly address the use of transfers and should protect immigrants against

profiteering. These concerns have not been high on the radar for immigration policy or legislation in the past.

Advocacy must continue to push for improvements in the quality of medical care and psychological services in detention centers. It is alarming that in a small sample size of 15 male detainees, at least two men reported sexual assault abuses. One can hypothesize that the prevalence would be higher in a larger, more balanced sample size that included female detainees. There are dozens of media articles and official reports of sexual abuses, assault, and harassment, usually against woman and children in detention. In 2017, Freedom for Immigrants filed a federal complaint with DHS titled "Sexual Abuse, Assault, and Harassment in U.S. Immigration Detention Facilities." This complaint was prompted by the prevalence of reported abuses and the government's lack of action to investigate these reports. According to Freedom for Immigrants summary of the complaint, "between January 2010 and July 2016, the OIG [Office of the Inspector General] received over 33,000 complaints of sexual assault or physical abuse against component agencies in DHS. But the Inspector General investigated less than 1 percent of these cases" (para. 4). It is important to consider the intersection of transfers and the possible increased exposure that detainees could have to these abuses. The more detainees are transferred, the more exposure they have to other detainees and other staff members, which theoretically increases their chances of being sexually abused or assaulted.

This study provides evidence of the need to hold Immigration and Customs Enforcement accountable for its actions and for more oversight to be placed on the organization to ensure it complies with not only its own regulations but also human rights

laws. ICE operates almost entirely without any oversight (Goodoy et al., 2019). It has

been up to nonprofit organizations and watchdog groups to put pressure on ICE, monitor

its practices, and hold it accountable to the law and its own rules and regulations. The

Biden administration has taken its first steps to address some of these issues and restrain

ICE. The *Washington Post* (Miroff & Sacchetti, 2021) reported on February, 7, 2021, that

"the Biden administration is attempting to reorient ICE. . . . Its priorities swing wildly

from one administration to the next." President Biden outlined new guidelines for ICE to

prioritize arrests and target those who are threats to national security or public safety,

which will hopefully lower the detention and deportation numbers, and to implement

stricter oversight. These guidelines include focusing "on cases that present threats to

national security, border security, and public safety" and the novel requirement for "ICE

field offices to submit weekly reports to Washington detailing the implementations, . . .

[which will increase] transparency and accountability" (Miroff & Sacchetti, 2021). These

changes are promising in that they provide much needed oversight to ICE operations.

While ICE argues that these changes will hinder its ability to arrest and deport criminals,

again this is not defended by the data because in 2019 64% of detainees had no criminal

conviction on record.

It is my hope that by shedding light on historical and contemporary patterns of

legal violence and profiteering against immigrants, detention and deportation practices

today can be challenged. This research aimed to contribute to minimizing the number of

transfers between detention centers, but it has a larger goal of contributing to the

movement to end immigration detention altogether. This research shows the importance

of further research on transfers and the need to focus on transfers in future policies and

legislation. The United States needs comprehensive immigration reform. These goals

respond to the challenge of Critical Medical Anthropology to move beyond academic

analyses and propose practical interventions and policy changes.

The simplest request of the study participants—one that can significantly improve

detainees' experience—was that they be treated with dignity. As one participant put it,

"Dignity goes a long way for someone's overall experience." With simple shifts in the

rhetorics used to talk about immigrants and the decriminalization of immigrants, we can

significantly improve the experiences of detainees and immigrants in general. As reported

by Boundless (2021), one step is already being taken by the Biden administration in a

move to

> use more inclusive language when referring to immigrants. . . . USCIS officials
> were told to use *noncitizen* or *undocumented noncitizen* instead of *alien* and
> *illegal alien* in agency communications and official documents. Biden has also
> proposed replacing *alien* with *noncitizen* in immigration laws as part of his
> immigration agenda.

Limitations

The findings of this dissertation were limited significantly by the unique methods needed

to recruit participants from the vulnerable population of detainees. Participants could only

be recruited among detainees who had been visited by Immigrant Action Alliance

volunteers. Participants were also limited to only male detainees from the Krome Service

Processing Center who spoke English or Spanish since Krome is an all-male facility and I

only had the language skill to conduct the interviews in those two languages. Finally,

these results are limited because of the small sample size. The fact that interviews had to

be conducted post-release and the need for interviews to be conducted over the phone

also contributed to the limited number of participants. With more time and greater resources, a future study could be conducted interviewing dozens more immigrants (both male and female) post-release. In response to the limitations expressed in the Ethnographic Mapping section of Chapter 3, a larger sample size and a more accurate compilation of transfers between detention centers could also allow for a more significant spatial analysis. With a larger data set, a heat map could be made showing the frequency of transfers between detention centers. A visual representation of movement could be generated and shared to help spread awareness of transfers in detention. Finally, this analysis could potentially be used to determine if there are patterns of transfers between specific facilities. Identifying any patterns could help volunteer organization better track or predict where detainees might be transferred. That could help them better prepare detainees for probable transfers and, if detainees are transferred, it could potentially help family and friends locate their loved ones after a transfer.

The reasons why immigrants migrate can stem from many different social, economic, political, or environmental factors, as discussed in chapter 2. However, when it comes down to an immigrant's decision to leave their country of origin and migrate, the underlying objective is the same: undocumented immigrants who come to the United States are simply trying to survive. In the words of one detainee, "A sobrevivir. O a morir. No hay mas opcion"—"To survive. Or to die. There are no other options." The

United States was founded on three values: freedom, equality, and justice. We as

American's must uphold our core values and fight for these values to extend to all aspects

of our society, including immigration detention practices.

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Livingston, K., Padilla, M., Scott, D., Colón-Burgos, J. F., Reyes, A. M., & Varas-Díaz, N. (2016). Methods of mapping ethnographic data on migration, tourism labor, and health risk in the Dominican Republic. *The Florida geographer*, *47*, http://journals.fcla.edu/flgeog/article/view/88312/84874.

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