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## **Forced Transnationalism: Transnational Coping Strategies and Gendered Stigma among Jamaican Deportees**

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**Abstract:** *Once forcibly returned to their countries of birth, how and why do deportees engage in transnational relationships? Through analyses of 37 interviews with Jamaican deportees, this article approaches the question of why deportees engage in transnational practices and reveals that deportees use transnational ties as coping strategies to deal with financial and emotional hardship. This reliance on transnational ties, however, has two consequences: 1) Male deportees who rely on transnational strategies to survive face a gendered stigma because they must relinquish the provider role and become dependents; and 2) The transnational coping strategies serve as a reminder of the shame, isolation, and alienation that deportees experience as a result of their deportation. This consideration of the consequences of transnational relationships sheds light on why some migrants are transnational and others are not.*

**Key Words:** Jamaica, stigma, gender, deportation, coping strategy, transnational ties, remittances

In 2010, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deported 387,242 people—thirteen times as many as in 1991.<sup>1</sup> Deportation is the forced removal of a non-citizen from a host country to one's country of citizenship, a form of state-sponsored forced migration. The high and increasing rate of deportation has important consequences for the study of migration; however, deportation has yet to receive the sustained attention of migration scholars. With more than one thousand people deported every day from the United States, it is safe to say we are in an era of mass deportation. How do deportees fit into our understanding of migration? What sorts of ties do

people legally barred from travelling to the United States maintain with that country? This article addresses these questions by asking how and why Jamaican deportees maintain transnational ties.

The question of *why* people engage in transnational exchanges is important because not all migrants participate in these exchanges. Transnational migrants are a subset of international migrants who retain significant ties to their country of origin while settling into the host country (Parreñas 2010; Wiles 2008). Guarnizo et al. (2003), for example, found that only 10 to 15 per cent of the Salvadoran and Dominican migrants in their survey regularly participated in transnational exchanges. The relative rarity of habitual transnationalism raises the question of why only some migrants use transnational strategies. Transnational practices refer to cross-border activities, and include activities that literally and symbolically cross national borders, meaning that migrants need not travel to participate in these practices (De Bree et al. 2010). This is pertinent for deportees, whose international travel is often greatly restricted.

Analyses of the cross-border engagements of Jamaican deportees shed light on how the forced, shameful, and physically and emotionally stressful experience of deportation affects how and why deportees participate in transnational practices. My analyses of 37 interviews with Jamaican deportees render it evident that deportees use transnational practices as *coping strategies* to deal with financial and emotional hardship. This argument builds on research on the transnational material and affective ties of voluntary labor migrants. Other scholars have found that transnational ties provide female migrants with social connections and support networks (Domínguez and Lubitow 2008), emotional support (Viruell-Fuentes 2006), and affective connections (Burman 2002). Although the deportees I studied were primarily male not female, I found they also relied heavily on transnational material and affective ties. Scholars have found that return

migrants use transnational strategies to gain social status (Goldring 1998) and to create a sense of belonging upon return home (De Bree et al. 2010). The shame associated with deportation means that transnational ties do not bring social status to deportees. In addition, the notion of 'home' is complicated for those deportees who have spent most of their lives in the United States.

Deportation creates economic hardship as well as a sense of alienation, shame and isolation. The shame of dependence is exacerbated by gendered expectations that men should be able not only to take care of themselves, but also to provide for others (Lewis 2007). Due to a *gendered stigma* of men unable to provide for themselves and their children and incapable of controlling their emotions, many deportees found their newfound material and emotional dependence to be shameful. Deportees face a paradoxical situation: they use transnational coping strategies to relieve their financial and emotional hardships. Because of gendered expectations of themselves and others, these same strategies remind them of their isolation and inability to provide for themselves, thereby reinforcing their sense of shame and isolation.

### **Circuits of voluntary and forced migration in Jamaica**

I chose Jamaica as the site for this study for three reasons. First, it is the country to which the United States sends the highest proportion of criminal deportees.<sup>2</sup> Second, the migration stream from Jamaica is longstanding, meaning that many Jamaicans are likely to have spent large portions of their lives in the United States. Finally, proportionately speaking, Jamaican legal permanent residents in the United States are remarkably likely to face deportation: I estimated that one in 24 Jamaican legal permanent residents has been deported since 1996. About 100,000 legal permanent residents have been deported since these laws were passed in 1996. About 10,000 of them have been Jamaican.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, Jamaica has received nearly 30,000 deportees since 1997 – from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom (Thomas-Hope et al. 2009). My focus is exclusively on people deported from the United States. Nearly all (96.5 per cent) of the criminal deportees sent from the United States have been men, and they spent an average of 12 years in the United States, and four years in prison. Some deportees migrated as small children, but many did not – the average age of migration was 23. About three quarters of criminal deportees arrived in the United States before age sixteen (Headley et al. 2005). These descriptive statistics suggest that many deportees will have difficulty reintegrating into Jamaican society and will have strong transnational ties. My sample reflects these demographics.

Jamaica is also a prime site for the study of transnationalism. A recent study found that 15 per cent of Jamaican households currently have a member of the household abroad and 28 per cent have a member who has previously lived abroad, but has returned to Jamaica (Thomas-Hope et al. 2009). For most of the twentieth century, Jamaicans have been leaving the island in large numbers, first to Great Britain, and, since changes to US immigration law in 1965, to the United States. By the year 2000, there were over 500,000 Jamaicans in the United States (Foner 2008). Notably, over half of Jamaican migrants to the United States have been women (Foner 2008; Thomas-Hope et al. 2009). This is remarkable when we observe that nearly all deportees are men (Headley et al. 2005). Many Jamaicans who travel abroad maintain close ties with Jamaica. One study of Jamaicans in Canada revealed that 88 per cent had sent remittances within the previous five years, 77 per cent had travelled home in the previous five years, and 86 per cent had called home within the previous month (Simmons et al. 2005). In 2002, cash remittances accounted for 23 per cent of the Jamaican GDP (Orozco 2004).

There is a long history of transnational flows of people and goods to and from the Caribbean. Recently, the proliferation of technology has facilitated these flows (Potter et al. 2008). Studies of West Indian transnationalism often focus on the business activities of entrepreneurs and the bi-national identity of West Indian professionals (Conway et al. 2008; Horst 2007; Morawska 2007). The experiences of the deportees I met in Jamaica were distinct from those of voluntary Jamaican returnees who purchase large homes in Mandeville (Horst 2007) or of Trinidadian professionals who have a global network of friends and colleagues (Conway et al. 2008). Much of the attention to these transnational flows has focused on how these transnational dynamics are maintained. In this article, I ask *why* people engage in transnational exchanges, and argue that Jamaican deportees use their transnational ties as coping strategies.

### ***Policy background***

In 1996, the US Congress passed two laws that fundamentally changed the rights of all foreign-born people in the United States. The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRAIRA), expanded the grounds for deportation and eliminated judicial review of some types of deportation orders (Welch 2002). Under these laws, noncitizens who are convicted of a wide array of crimes are subject to mandatory deportation (Morawetz 2000). Any noncitizen convicted of an 'aggravated felony' - any felony or misdemeanor for which the person is sentenced to at least one year in prison - faces deportation without judicial review. Furthermore, the law applies retroactively, and there is no statute of limitations for deportable offenses (Master 2003; Morawetz 2000).

The 1996 laws expanded the ability of immigration authorities to deport people and reduced the discretionary power of immigration judges, increasing deportation cases. In the wake of September 11, deportation

became the responsibility of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), part of the newly created DHS. Since the creation of ICE, the number of deportees has risen dramatically, largely due to the injection of massive amounts of money into DHS; its current budget is more than US\$60 billion. Moreover, the surge in interior enforcement has meant that increasing numbers of deportees are people who have lived for many years in the United States.

### ***Methodology and site description***

I used snowball sampling and key informants to find interviewees in Jamaica. I employed two research assistants, both of whom were deportees, to help me find interview candidates. I obtained a sample that closely resembles the overall deportee population in Jamaica. I selected interviewees who had spent varying lengths of time in the United States, who were deported on criminal and non-criminal grounds, who had served varying prison sentences, and who had gone to the United States at various ages. Although the deportee population in Jamaica is nearly all male, I interviewed four women to gain their perspective.<sup>4</sup> I spent a total of seven months in Jamaica, conducting thirty-seven interviews there between December 2008 and January 2011. The interviews ranged in length from twenty minutes to more than two hours, and were all audio-recorded, transcribed, and coded.

### **Deportation, transnational coping strategies, and gendered stigma in Jamaica**

Jamaican deportees often face severe financial hardship compounded by a sense of isolation resulting from family separation. They use their transnational ties as coping strategies to alleviate these hardships. However, this newfound reliance on emotional and financial ties to the United States creates a gendered stigma where men are ashamed of their inability to support themselves and provide for their children. This situation provides a

unique opportunity to explore why people participate in transnational exchanges.

This article brings the experiences of deportees into migration studies through a consideration of the relationship between transnational practices and hardships deportees experience. Studies of deportees are rare, and most research on the experiences of deportees is outside of migration studies. Ethnographic analyses of deportees point to transnational practices deportees engage in, such as international communications, receiving of remittances, and illegal border crossings, as well as those they are less likely to engage in, such as travel for tourism or business, sending remittances, or maintaining households in two countries at once. These studies of deportees identify five themes common among deportees: (1) unfamiliarity with the land of citizenship; (2) profound despair with regard to future prospects; (3) salience of state power in the lives of deportees, both in the United States and abroad; (4) transformation of deportees from senders to receivers of remittances; and (5) feelings that a stigma is associated with being a deportee (Brotherton 2008; Brotherton and Barrios 2009; Noguera 1999; Peutz 2006; Precil 1999; Zilberg 2004, 2007). These works have highlighted the extreme duress deportees endure and the socio-psychological costs of deportation. This duress was also evident in Jamaica, especially in terms of financial hardship and emotional stress.

### ***Financial hardship***

The deportees with whom I spoke in Jamaica were either among the working poor, the unemployed poor, homeless, or living in precarious situations. In light of the difficulty deportees have in securing work, especially permanent work, many of them depended on remittances from relatives abroad to survive. The money deportees received from the United States was usually just enough to keep them alive. Even deportees who were able to secure



employment in Jamaica struggled to make ends meet with low wages and temporary work.

Many deportees felt obliged to ask their friends and relatives in the United States for money to survive. Samuel, who was deported after spending nearly all of his life in the United States, including 25 years in prison, has great financial difficulty in Jamaica. When I asked how he gets by he told me: 'You nuh, I beg. I ask relatives in the States that I need a \$50 here, \$50 there and, if they can, they will. They extend.' Darius, who also was deported after a long prison sentence, told me that his three sisters and one brother in the United States correspond regularly with him, and, were it not for them, he would be homeless. Darius's fear of homelessness was not unfounded – my research revealed that one of the biggest problems deportees in Jamaica face is the lack of stable housing.

Most deportees dreamed of being able to fend for themselves and hoped to receive money from abroad that would enable them to set up a business. Harry, for example, used money from relatives abroad to purchase a cargo van. He makes a living by charging for cargo services. Others told me they had already set up a business and it had failed. Winslow, for example, used money he received from relatives in the United States to set up a fishing business. However, his business failed when drilling began near where he was fishing, scaring all of the fish away.

Many deportees who have not yet started a business told me that they plan to do so. Elias, for example, is using the money his family sends him to set up a business on the beach selling jerk chicken.

I'm trying to rent one of the stalls and stock it up ... I'm trying to do some jerk chicken. ... I'm trying to set up this place on the beach. All

the money they would send me, that's what I put in the stall, and only thing needed now is for it to get stocked.

With no source of income in Jamaica, Elias is reliant on his ties to the United States to get his business off the ground. Kareem is also waiting on money from the US so that he can buy a vehicle and start a taxi business. In addition to a vehicle, he needs to get his Jamaican driver's license and relevant permits.

I need to get my license. I need a thousand dollars to get my permit. You just need a TRN, you know what I'm sayin'. Because that's my really dream; I always like driving ... Driving is my dream, so that is what I am going to do and just start building from there ... My mother is suppose to come but I'm really not going to wait on that. I am going to try and get my license and get a car from somebody. When she come, I will ask her to lend me the money to buy one and then I will work and pay her back on it. Whatever if she want to give it to me or whatever ... I need the money to buy one and I'll work and give it back to her...

In this excerpt from Kareem's interview, it is evident he will have to rely on his mother to realize his dream of starting a business, although he would rather not, and is quick to point out that he will pay her back. Kareem and Elias both will require remittances from abroad if they are to be able to start businesses. They see their cross-border engagements as a necessary tactic for them to achieve financial independence in Jamaica. For them, transnational ties are coping strategies to deal with financial hardship.

Many deportees were not well off in the United States. Many admitted that life was hard. The difficulty of survival in the United States often led them to seek work in the illegal economy. Carl, for example, told me, 'landing in

Brooklyn, coming from Jamaica, is not an easy place.’ Disappointed with the opportunities available in Brooklyn, Carl turned to selling drugs. Eventually, Carl was ‘deep in the business’ and pulling in large amounts of money transporting cocaine and marijuana. These activities eventually led to his deportation.

Those deportees who did not become involved in the drug economy in the United States earned enough to survive there. In the United States, they had furnished apartments, cars, and access to modern technology. In Jamaica, living in rented rooms or from couch to couch, deportees experience a decline in their financial status. A minimum-wage job in Jamaica would not permit them to have the lifestyle they had in the United States. Thus, they dream of starting a business, which they expect will be more lucrative and allow them to achieve the financial independence they desire and once had. The only way many deportees imagine they will be able to get together the capital to start a business is if someone abroad sends it to them. Deportees often rely on transnational coping strategies both for day-to-day survival and for fulfilling dreams of opening businesses in Jamaica.

### ***Emotional hardship***

As important as the receipt of financial assistance was, many deportees spoke with passion about the significance of staying in contact with relatives and friends in the United States to hold on to a part of themselves. O’Ryan is a poignant case. Although he had been back in Jamaica for seven years, he still considered Brooklyn ‘home’. Jamaica is O’Ryan’s country of birth, yet the relationships he had forged in the United States and the strong ties he had there made it such that Brooklyn was more his home than Jamaica. ‘Home’ is both an ‘abstract place of identification and a concrete set of relations’ (Olwig 2002: 15). For O’Ryan, his familiarity with the landscape and attachment to people Brooklyn made it his home. Burman (2002) writes of transnational ties as diasporic yearning. With Jamaican deportees such as

O’Ryan, we see this yearning reversed. For many Jamaican deportees, the home they yearn is not in Jamaica, but in the United States, where their families, friends and memories reside.

O’Ryan moved to the United States when he was six years old, as a legal permanent resident, to join his mother and grandmother, who had migrated a few years before. He finished elementary and junior high school in Brooklyn. O’Ryan dropped out of high school, but earned his GED and enrolled in Mercy College, where he studied computer programming. One evening, O’Ryan gave a ride to a friend whose car had broken down. On the highway, they came upon a roadblock. At that point, his friend told him he had drugs with him. The police found the drugs. O’Ryan was sentenced to three to nine years for drug trafficking. He chose to do boot camp, so he spent only eighteen months in jail.

On the day O’Ryan completed boot camp, his mother, his girlfriend, and his newborn daughter came to the graduation. He was expecting to go home with them, but immigration agents were waiting for him and told him he was going to be deported. O’Ryan had been in the country for nearly twenty years, and had no family he knew in Jamaica. At the age of twenty-five, O’Ryan was deported to a country he barely knew. Like many Jamaican children (Bauer and Thompson 2006; Foner 2008), O’Ryan’s mother had left him in the care of his grandmother in Jamaica until he was six, and then took him to the United States, never to return. Thus, although his deportation involved a return to the same grandmother who had raised him from age two to seven, O’Ryan had made a new life in Brooklyn, and no longer felt connected to his childhood home.

O’Ryan uses transnational strategies to cope with separation from his family and friends. His emotional life is still in New York. He maintains constant contact with people in New York to ‘live his life’, as he put it, and his friends

and family in New York are the most important people in his life. After seven years in Jamaica, he still finds it hard to accept that he is permanently exiled to Jamaica and cannot return to New York:

One thing is guaranteed that no matter where I go or what I do I'm born in Jamaica; I am a Jamaican, you know and I just gotta accept [it] ... I keep hearing from my family that you're in Jamaica, you need to start thinking about Jamaica ... and it's not easy ... to me. I'm still in America. I mean, that's home ... regardless of that, I grew [up], I did everything there. I went to school there. I mean, that's everything. Everything that happened to me for the first time happened to me in New York. I have no experiences of Jamaica ...

I mean it's truthfully, it's like I said everything, that I whenever I think about anything, I really still do think about New York. So it's like I still wanna know how everything is going, if everybody is okay. It's like, basically, I'm still trying to live my life, but not.... I don't get to live it physically, you know what I'm saying. I like talk to people and find out what's going on.

In this excerpt, we can hear O'Ryan trying to convince himself that he wants to come to terms with his Jamaican-ness as well as with the fact that he now lives in Jamaica. At the same time, as Karen Fog Olwig (2002) points out, migrants' place of birth is not always their 'natural place of belonging'. O'Ryan struggles with feeling as if New York is where he belongs, even though his deportation makes it clear that his official place of belonging is Jamaica. For O'Ryan, maintaining ties to Brooklyn, where he considers 'home', has been crucial for his psychological well-being. O'Ryan, like other deportees who had lived their whole lives in the United States, never called anyone in Jamaica when he lived in the United States. Once he was separated from loved ones, he called 'home' on a regular basis. This contact

with his prior life helped him deal with the emotional stress his deportation provoked.

O’Ryan recounted to me that his great-aunt had found him crying in the backyard one day; he was ashamed that she had seen him, a grown man, crying. And, worse still, she called his mother in the United States to tell her about it. Having no one in Jamaica with whom he could share his grief, O’Ryan relied on his ties to the United States to keep him emotionally afloat. These affective transnational ties bear some resemblance to the emotional ties parents maintain with their children when they travel abroad to work (Parreñas 2005). The differences lie in the fact that, as a grown man, O’Ryan is ashamed of his inability to cope with his situation without relying on his mother and other relatives in the United States for transnational emotional support. O’Ryan hung his head and lowered his eyes as he recounted to me this story of him shedding tears, indicating that he was ashamed of having been reduced to crying.

Morris had a similar story, even though he travelled to the United States for the first time at age eighteen. After eleven years in the United States, he was deported to Jamaica and moved in with his mother in one of Kingston’s infamous ghettos. When I met him, he had been in Jamaica for eleven months. He still found it hard to think about anything other than the United States: his five children, his business, his life. In the United States, he ran a restaurant and worked as a musician in the evenings. In Jamaica, he felt lost and was unable to find gainful employment. He felt useless in Jamaica, and as if he were living in a foreign country. Having spent the prime of his life in the United States, he was devastated by his banishment. He told me, ‘It’s like I am dead.’ I asked Morris what he does in his free time. He replied:

Nothing. Just watch TV and try to reminisce back on America. My mom always tell me, ‘Why you don’t watch the local news?’ And, I say it

can't help me, you know, what I mean. I just watch overseas ... My life wasting, wasting, wasting, wasting. ... Most of the time I spend alone ... Me and my mango tree, you know. It's just very weird, very weird to me right now. This is more like stress every day, you know what I mean, hurt every day. I try to pick up my mistake every day, you know. I just leave whatever I leave behind and move forward.

Morris's words render his emotional stress evident. Apart from finding it hard to gain a financial footing in Jamaica, it was also difficult for Morris to come to terms with his exile from the United States. In his mind, he still lived there. His transnationalism was emotional as well as financial; it was difficult for him to think about anything other than the United States and his former life there. Similar to O'Ryan who talked to his mother in New York to find out what was going on there, Morris watches U.S. news to keep abreast of current events in his former home.

Victor, who migrated to the United States when he was four years old, also described similar feelings when he was first deported to Jamaica: he said he used to 'sit in [his] room and stress the hell out'. Victor found it incredibly difficult to survive in Jamaica, a country he had barely known before being deported. He grew up in the United States with his mother and sister. Upon graduating from high school, Victor got a job as a messenger. He worked there for a couple of years, but the pay wasn't enough for him to move out on his own. He turned to selling drugs, and in 1996 was caught with fifty pounds of marijuana. He served two and a half years in prison, and, in 1999, was deported to Jamaica, the country he had left when he was four years old. Victor was twenty-seven years old. He had visited Jamaica once when he was about fifteen, but had no close ties there, and no one to take him in. With no job skills and no connections, Victor could not find work in Jamaica. I asked him what he did to survive, and he replied he sold whatever he could find. He burned CDs and sold them; he sold used clothes. His mother was barely

scraping by in the United States and could not afford to support him. I asked Victor where he slept. He replied 'here and there'."

For Victor, Brooklyn continued to be home: 'I come from Brooklyn ... I grew up in Brooklyn all my life.' He still talked regularly to his mother in the United States, whom he described as 'the cornerstone' of his life. Victor used his emotional ties to his mother as a coping strategy to deal with extreme emotional and material duress.

With regard to his plans for the future, Victor told me he intended to leave Jamaica. In the ten years since he had been deported, he had tried several times to return illegally to the United States without success, usually with material assistance from someone in the United States. Despite the difficulties involved in travelling illegally to the United States, he planned to try again to get 'home'. For him, like many deportees, 'home' continued to be the United States, even after he had lived in Jamaica for years and had no legal way to return to the United States.

For Victor, O'Ryan and Morris, deportation provoked financial and emotional stress. This stress is compounded by a gendered shame surrounding their inability to provide for themselves and to cope emotionally with their new situations. Their transnational ties to the United States become coping strategies to alleviate the financial and emotional stress, but do not take away from the shame they experience. I discuss this shame in more detail in the next section.

### ***Alienation, shame and isolation***

Deportation creates a sense of alienation, shame, and isolation. Deportees rely on transnational strategies for survival, yet these same strategies serve as a reminder of their alienation and exclusion. Morris, introduced above, spends his days thinking about the life he had in the United States. His losses



are compounded by the fact that Morris, who once provided for his mother in Jamaica and his family in the United States, now depends on them for his survival. Morris had married a US citizen shortly after arriving in the United States. They separated after being married for several years and having three children together. Once Morris was deported, he continued to keep in contact both with his wife (they never legally divorced) and his girlfriend – with whom he had another child. Although he found it shameful, he depended on them for financial support. He also was ashamed that he depended on his mother for survival, when he used to send her money. Morris told me:

well I survive off my mother daily bread you know ... it's very sad at age thirty five ... to come back and survive off my mama's bread ...

TGB: Do you get any money from the United States? Do people send you money?

Well, my wife sends me money sometimes. My girlfriend sends me money. My last baby mother send me money. .... I feel a way to take money from my wife I never do that before. Worse, my baby mom, cause, in life I just met her. I just met her like couple years ago, you know what I mean, and she be my baby mom, and, you know, just like I used to be the person who help them you know, now I am the dependent one

Morris finds himself in a situation where he depends on economic remittances for survival, but these same remittances serve as a reminder of what he has lost – his family and his economic well-being. In his newfound position as ‘dependent’ instead of provider, Morris told me he ‘feel[s] a way to take money’ from his wife. Morris had difficulty describing this feeling of shame – calling it “a way,” because to discuss his shame would be even

more shameful. As Michael Kimmel (1994) has argued, men are often silent in response to shame surrounding threats to their masculinity.

Caleb also finds himself reliant on others for the first time, and is ashamed of this reliance. In the United States, Caleb was a legal permanent resident, a US army veteran, and worked as a software engineer. In addition, he sent money on a regular basis to his grandmother and aunts. Caleb spoke with pride about the fact that he sent money to support his grandmother while he lived in the United States. Now that he has been deported, however, he finds himself the receiver of remittances. He is not proud of depending on his girlfriend for his economic survival in Jamaica. I asked Caleb if he keeps in touch with his other relatives in the United States, now that he has been deported. His answer is revealing:

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It's not like I don't keep communication with my family, but they say: 'Hey, you been there for twenty years, so you should have had yours.' And, that's a Jamaican's idea—that you're a foreigner, you're rich. ... 'Him did a foreign', meaning, foreign, they are rich. ... Everybody's perception is that if you go to America for even a day you supposed to be rich. You know who sent the wrong signal: the guys who go to the U.S. and sell drugs or rob. They come to Jamaica with the gold chains, the quick house, the pretty cars, and the glamorous lifestyle, so everybody's perception is that American streets are lined with gold.

Since Caleb's relatives think he should have saved up plenty of money in the United States, they shame him about asking for money. Caleb keeps in touch with his relatives in the United States, but is embarrassed to ask them for money. Many deportees felt ashamed of receiving of goods and money from the United States, as Alberto also expressed.

Alberto was born in Kingston in 1954. He travelled to the United States at age fifteen, where his parents had already migrated. Alberto maintained few ties with Jamaica once he left and never once returned for a visit to Jamaica in the forty years he lived in the United States. Although Alberto rarely thought of Jamaica during his US residence, he is lucky his parents did. Because they purchased a home in Jamaica, Alberto had a place to live when he was deported. Alberto had a few thousand dollars in savings when he arrived in 2007. When I spoke to him in June 2009, he was still living off his dwindling savings. I asked him if he received remittances from the United States. His response implied that it would be an insult to his pride to ask his children in the United States for money. He told me: 'I am not the type of guy who likes to ask for help.'

Although Alberto did not like to admit it, he was dependent on the United States for his survival. He lived in his parents' home, built with migrant remittances. The money he lived on was also a form of migrant remittances, in that he was living off his US-earned savings. When that money runs out, Alberto likely will find himself asking his relatives in the United States for money, although he will be ashamed to do so. For Alberto, transnational practices are a strategy of last resort.

Carl expressed similar sentiments with regard to asking his family in the United States for help. As mentioned above, Carl was financially successful in the United States through lucrative involvements in the drug economy. When he lived in the United States, Carl had the financial resources to provide his children with everything they needed and most things they wanted. Now, as a deportee, he was reluctant to depend on them for his survival, even though he needed money from them to get by.

I don't want to depend on my kids and I don't want to put them in no pressure. ... [My son] said: 'Dad, you all right? I'm going to send some

phone to you so you could sell the phone.' I'm, like, 'No I'm all right, kid; I'm all right. I just want you to work, go to school, and take care of yourself.' I got to lie to him. ... I don't want to put no pressure on any of them. If they got it and they are willing to do it, I'll gladly accept it because I'm broke as hell. But I just want them to be safe and all right.

Carl was proud of having filled his gendered role as a provider and breadwinner (Linden 2007), and his words make it clear he is having trouble coming to terms with his newfound dependency on his children. When I met Carl in Jamaica, he still wore an expensive gold bracelet, even though he admitted he was broke. He promised that next time we met he would buy me a meal, implying that he still saw himself as a provider. Carl was practically penniless in Jamaica, yet did not want to sell his gold bracelet or expensive clothes, as this look garnered him respect in Jamaica. He told me that people called him 'boss man', as his clothing and jewellery made it appear that he had money. Carl had only been back in Jamaica for a few months when we met, meaning his clothes and shoes were still new. It remains to be seen what will become of Carl once the reality of his newfound poverty sets in.

### ***Gendered stigma***

The alienation, shame, and loss that deportees experience is exacerbated by gendered expectations that men should be able to handle themselves, materially and emotionally. Deportees' reliance on transnational strategies serves as a reminder of their inability to fend for themselves. Deportees who rely on remittances for their survival expressed shame at their dependence on these remittances, and often were reluctant to ask their relatives for much-needed resources. The stigma of dependency is a *gendered stigma*: many of the deportees made references to themselves as 'grown men' who should not be reliant on others, and spoke proudly of how they had always provided for their families. In Jamaican society, being a provider is a crucial

aspect of being a male: women and children may be dependents, whereas men must be financially independent to be considered masculine (Lewis and Carr 2009; Lewis 2007). In line with this, Delvin told me 'right now, I just need an income. I feel if I do not get an income I am not going to be a man'.

Deportees' inability to provide for their loved ones in the United States was sometimes as hurtful as their newfound reliance on their families abroad. Alberto, for example, was deeply ashamed his children were in foster care. He was living with them and their mother when he was deported in 2007. In 2009, when we spoke, he told me that his children were 'without proper homes'.

Their mother, I don't know, something went wrong with her. I don't really want to tell this part of the story, but I will tell it right now. I don't tell people. I will tell you because it might make an impact on what deportation does to families. That is the only reason why I mentioned it, but I am private about my life and my children. Right now two of my youngest kids are without proper homes right now ... their mother is not right. I have three sisters ... and a lot of times I spend time thinking about asking them to take one of my child and the other take the next. But I can't bring myself to ask them.

Because of gendered expectations, men do not like to ask for help or to admit that they cannot fulfil the provider role. Oftentimes, men would rather stay silent than admit defeat or shame (Kimmel 1994). Alberto could not bring himself to ask his sisters for help because to do so would be to admit that he is helpless in this situation, unable to fulfil his role as provider for his children.

These former long term residents of the United States are in a paradoxical situation: they find it crucial to their well-being to maintain transnational ties

to their former home, yet are ashamed of their newfound dependency on these transnational ties. Caleb received regular remittances from his common-law wife in the United States, yet was not proud of this dependence. Carl left his children a house and several cars in the United States, yet was reluctant to accept their money, even though he had no other means of survival in Jamaica. And, Alberto was too ashamed to ask his sisters in the United States to help him get his children out of foster care.

*Female deportees: reliant but not ashamed*

Nearly all (96.5 per cent) of Jamaican criminal deportees are men. I interviewed four female deportees to gain some insight into the gender differences between male and female deportees. The stories of the female deportees were fairly similar: three were drug couriers and one was caught with drugs inside the United States. These women chose to transport drugs for the same reason: they needed money to support their families. As Julia Sudbury (2005: xxx) argues, 'the failure of the legal economy to provide adequate means for women's survival is the key incentive for those who chose to enter the drug trade.' These women engaged in illegal activity not for their personal gain, but to provide for their families that which the state denied them - schooling, health care, and food.

Whereas the men spoke of being homeless and needing money for their daily bread, the women's primary concern was to provide for themselves and their children, especially those who still had young children at home. Their transnational ties to the United States added a survival strategy to their toolkit. Wendy, for example, receives used shoes and clothes from the United States, and resells them in the market.

I have some friends in America that will send worn clothes and shoes from their children and I would sell them. ... They just send them to me because the only money they pay is the freight to send the barrel

because things they were going to throw away, somebody could use them.

Here, Wendy diminishes the effort her American friends make by saying that they send things 'they were going to throw away'. This contrasts with male deportees who often acknowledged the Herculean efforts of their family members abroad to send them money by pointing to the global recession and to how hard it is to get by in the United States.

Naimah is another woman who was deported for smuggling drugs. Naimah took up an offer to take a package to the United States in return for \$2000 because she was having trouble making ends meet as a single mother with three children. When Naimah was discovered at the port of entry with one kilo of cocaine, she was arrested, imprisoned, and then deported. I asked Naimah how she supports herself.

I get a little help here and there ... Right now I am at my mother's house. My mother went away. She is in England now with my sister. They kinda help me a little. ... but she says it's not for me; it's for the kids because I just had twins a month ago now

Similar to Wendy, Naimah diminishes the assistance she receives, calling it 'a little'. Naimah's sister and mother send her money, but instruct her to spend it on the children. For Naimah, there is no shame about receiving money from someone else to help her children survive. As Charmaine Crawford (2003) points out, Caribbean women often see mothering as a collective effort, and thus would not be ashamed others are helping them to raise their kids, especially when those others are abroad and have more access to financial opportunities. Naimah transported drugs to the United States with the hope of making enough money to meet her and her

children's needs. After being deported, she still has the same needs: food, housing, school fees and medical needs for herself and her children.

I spoke to very few women, and we thus cannot draw too many conclusions from this very small sample. Nevertheless, we can analyze closely what deportees had to say about their newfound reliance on relatives, and it becomes clear that many men feel emasculated by their inability to provide for their families, and even to fend for themselves as deportees. The women, in contrast, found it normal that others would help them out, so long as they also helped themselves.

### **Conclusion**

In recent years, migration scholars have begun to develop more complex understandings of the quantity and quality of transnational exchanges. The findings reported here make it clear that the strategic use of transnational ties is an area worthy of exploration. In addition, this study renders evident the importance of both affective and material ties generated by voluntary as well as forced migrations. This study also sheds light on the ways people feel about transnational ties and how these feelings are shaped by gendered expectations and societal stigma. The concept that transnational ties are coping strategies is likely to apply for other migrants and deportees. In addition, the findings reported here indicate that scholars should pay attention to the gendered expectations surrounding the receipt of financial and social remittances.

Deportees keep transnational ties with their former host country because they depend on these ties for their survival. Forcibly uprooted from their friends, families, and livelihoods in the United States, many deportees find themselves looking abroad for emotional and financial support. Many of these deportees previously had sent remittances back to Jamaica, and, while doing so, saw themselves fulfilling an important role as providers. Many of the male deportees are now ashamed of their reliance on remittances and



their inability to provide even for themselves, much less their family members in the United States and Jamaica.

This newfound dependence creates a gendered stigma. The few women with whom I spoke had not lived for very long in the United States, and most had travelled there as drug couriers. The purpose of their migration to the United States was to be able to provide for their children. When this migration attempt ultimately failed due to being caught and deported, they find themselves in a similar or worse situation than before and are again reliant on remittances to survive. The four women with whom I spoke did not express any shame with regard to their reliance on friends and relatives abroad. In contrast, many of the men indicated that their inability to fend for themselves and provide for their families was emasculating. To be real men, they needed to be providers.

The stigma of poverty, specifically the inability to provide for themselves, was the most powerful stigma in the lives of deportees. It is not just being poor that is shameful; it is the inability to perform important gender roles, specifically that of being a provider. Thus, deportation creates a newfound reliance on transnational coping strategies, and this reliance creates a gendered stigma because of male deportees' inability to be providers.

Transnational ties can be used as coping strategies to deal with hardship. This reliance, however, can come at a cost. Maintaining contact with 'home' - whether the country of birth or an adopted country - serves as a reminder of what one once had at home. For deportees, using transnational strategies to survive ensures they are reminded of what they once had, and have lost.

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#### Notes

1 'Immigration Enforcement Actions: 2010', June 2011. Online at: <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/enforcement-ar-2010.pdf> Accessed June 21, 2011.

2 In 2010, of the 1,475 Jamaicans deported 1,161 (78.7 per cent) were deported as criminals. This was the highest among the top ten receiving countries of deportees. From 'Immigration Enforcement Actions: 2010', June 2011. Online at: <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/enforcement-ar-2010.pdf> Accessed June 21, 2011.

3 Detailed data on deportees from the United States are not freely available; thus, these are estimates. My calculations are based on Bernard Headley's estimates in his book (Headley et al. 2005), Department of Homeland Security data releases, Migration Policy Institute numbers (Glennie and Chappell 2010), and a report by Human Rights Watch: *Forced apart: By the numbers*. Human Rights Watch obtained their data from the Department of Homeland Security through a Freedom of Information request. Bernard Headley obtained his data from the US embassy in Jamaica. Glennie and Chappell obtained theirs from the Department of Homeland Security and Jamaican data sources.

4 I do not discuss the women in this piece because the women (with one exception) were not legal permanent or long-term residents of the United States. Instead, they were circular migrants who were deported after being convicted of drug smuggling.

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