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Deportability and spirituality in a hostile environment: an intersubjective perspective

The United Kingdom's 'hostile environment for immigrants' is having distressing effects on people of African Caribbean heritage, especially those who have been threatened with deportation. While some research demonstrates a strong connection between the threat of deportation (deportability) and abjection, deportable migrants may also develop strategies (e.g. religious participation) to work around state controls. Jamaican family relations and spiritual practices emphasise intersubjectivity. This paper presents intersubjective ethnographic work conducted with a (formerly) deportable research partner, among Jamaican-born Rastafari men who migrated to the UK in the 1990s as young adults. Restrictions against working during deportation appeals leave Rastafari men with the options of idleness, odd jobs in the informal economy or crime (typically selling drugs). Rastafari men find the discipline required to survive deportability through spirituality and engage in a variety of bodily rituals to generate positive energies, which help them remain calm and healthy. Vigilant attention to manners and dress are essential to raising social (and financial) capital on the road. The case of Rastafari migrants in the UK reveals a need for further expansion of ethnographic research into hostile environments from intersubjective perspectives that explore spirituality and deportability in diaspora families.

Key words Rastafari, intersubjectivity, deportation, spiritual body, United Kingdom

'She tries to keep her head up high putting a smile on her face,
as pain and sufferation she continues to taste.

I say one year gone, she pray he's doing fine,
two year gone not a letter or a dime,
three year gone oh she's worried in her mind
but she don't know, he's in prison doing time.

He was doing the devil's work, received the devil's pay,
his so-called friend abandon him on the way,
but what can he write her, what can he say?

Deportation, as he wait for judgement day
he's cracking up inside, you can feel his pain
isolate himself, life ain't the same,

rings and gold chains all gone down the drain.

Mama taught him well, so who him gonna blame?’

Introduction

The dub poem presented above was composed and recited by a Rastafari man from Jamaica called ‘Remy’ and recorded ‘on the road’ in Brixton, (a district of London) by my close friend and research partner ‘Features’ (also a Rastafari man from Jamaica) as part of an ethnographic research project. ‘The road’ has negative connotations in the British popular imagination. For example, in the 2011 Channel 4 drama series ‘Top Boy,’ which depicts London council estate life, being ‘on the road’ is synonymous with engaging in violent, gang-related activity. However, for middle-aged and elder Jamaicans like Remy and Features, ‘road men’ are those who possess ‘street smarts’ and are able to make a living through money-making opportunities (licit and sometimes illicit) that they encounter through social networking, usually at night. While the road is an essential social networking site for Jamaican migrants, as the recording of Remy’s poem demonstrates it is also an important site for ethnographic research on how the threat of deportation (i.e. deportability) impacts migrant lives.

Although Features and I became close due to a shared interest in Rastafari healing, our research partnership was formalised because of something else we have in common: the personal hardships we have each experienced due to the hostile nature of British immigration policies. Intersubjectivity – experience shared between conscious minds – is a central feature of Rastafari spirituality and Jamaican family life. As I have argued elsewhere (Waldstein 2016), engaging in Rastafari spiritual practices with a focus on the body enhances the production of ethnographic knowledge, and helps makes sense of experiences of embodied intersubjectivity. In this paper it is shared experience of being threatened with removal from the UK that made possible the production of intersubjective ethnographic knowledge about life in the hostile environment. The case of Rastafari migrants in the UK suggests that when deportability is explored from an intersubjective perspective, injustices of hostile environments for both migrants and citizens are revealed. This not only has implications for the reform of hostile environment policies (in the UK and elsewhere) but highlights the need for social anthropologists to engage with hostile immigration policies and environments using the intersubjective methods of ethnography.

The active creation of a hostile environment for ‘illegal’ immigrants in the UK has been public policy since 2012 (Wardle and Obermuller 2019), making it increasingly difficult for all migrants to open bank accounts, rent property and access medical care (Waldstein 2019). The roots of the hostile environment go back long before 2012 and since 2006 there have been changes to law and policy to expedite the removal of ‘foreign criminals’ from the UK; the threshold for criminality has been lowered, while family ties and length of stay no longer carry as much weight as they once did (de Noronha 2019). The hostile environment is having particularly distressing impacts on people of African Caribbean heritage, including those with permanent settlement (or even citizenship) who lack proper documentation, in addition to individuals with criminal records and those who have overstayed visas.

Due to hostile environment policies, many elders from Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean who are entitled to permanent settlement/British citizenship have been denied their rights to work, claim benefits, and/or access healthcare. Many have also been detained and/or deported. These injustices of the hostile environment were cast into the spotlight when news of the ‘Windrush deportation scandal’ made international headlines in 2018. The Windrush generation came to the UK in the 1940s–1970s and is distinct from a ‘newcomer’ generation, which migrated in the late 1990s (Reynolds 2012) and is the focus of this paper. The British government has publicly apologised to the Windrush generation and has pledged to help affected members secure the documentation they need to prove their right to permanent settlement. However, it continues to defend the deportation of other foreign nationals from the Caribbean (many of whom are from the 1990s wave of migration), including those with British children and spouses (de Noronha 2019), even during the coronavirus pandemic.

The next section contextualises anthropological work on deportability within relevant literature on (Jamaican) intersubjectivity and spirituality. Then, after describing how Features and I drew on our (inter)subjective perspectives to develop a methodological strategy for collecting ethnographic data, I present the main findings of our research, divided in two sections. The first returns to the main themes of Remy’s dub poem (family who expect remittances, pressure to take on illicit work, the precarious nature of friendships, and anxieties related to potential deportation) to structure a description of life under the threat of deportation. This is followed by material on the role of Rastafari spirituality in coping with life in the British hostile environment. The conclusion of the paper reflects back on the immigration histories of myself and Features to highlight how they have been shaped by the different positions we hold in society. The Rastafari case reveals a need for further expansion of ethnographic research into hostile environments, which has much to gain from intersubjective approaches that explore spirituality and deportability in diaspora families.

(Inter)subjectivity and spirituality of deportable migrants

British law distinguishes deportation (removal deemed ‘in the interest of public good’) from administrative removal (i.e. of persons with no legal entitlement to remain). Thus, deportation has been a process of expulsion generally reserved for migrants with criminal convictions, even if they have been granted permanent settlement (Hasselberg 2015). Deportation extends before and after removal. It is lived continuously and binds together deportees, their families, government agents, lawyers, judges, security/airline personnel and activists (Drotbohm and Hasselberg 2015). Unlike deportation itself, deportability (i.e. experiencing the threat of removal) does not necessarily exclude migrants physically, but instead includes them socially, under conditions of protracted vulnerability (De Genova 2002). There is also evidence that negative effects of deportability extend to migrants who are legally settled (Basok et al. 2014) or even to children and spouses who are citizens of the destination country (Luibheid et al. 2018).

Deportability has been theorised as an embodied and affectively charged condition of being (Reeves 2015) that increases the risk of developing mental and physical health issues (Willen 2007; Drotbohm and Hasselberg 2015; Reeves 2015). Scholars (e.g. Willen 2007; Gonzales and Chavez 2012) have demonstrated a strong connection between the threat of deportation and a state of abjection characterised by worry and stress. However, deportability may be experienced in a variety of ways and while some deportable migrants live in fear of being detected by the state (see Willen 2007), others are stuck in a limbo of uncertainty while they await the outcome of deportation appeals (Hasselberg 2015). In the UK, migrants who are waiting for the outcome of deportation appeals are generally allowed to live in the community but are not permitted to work. While this feature of the hostile environment might encourage some migrants to leave 'voluntarily', this is not what typically happens when they have British families. In fact, one way that migrants survive long periods of deportability is through intimate ties with settled migrants and citizens.

As Luibheid et al. (2018) show, undocumented migrants draw on diverse intimate ties for support, beyond those that are recognised by the state. While fictive kin, common-law partners and godparents etc. may not be recognised by immigration authorities, building social networks with them supports the wellbeing and belonging of deportable migrants, especially when knowledge of traditional healing, healthy eating and local healthcare resources flow through such networks (Waldstein 2017). In Jamaica, people understand human reproduction as a process of sharing blood (and other bodily substances) that binds kin into altruistic relationships, and as Sobo describes, 'it is as if by virtue of sharing one's substance they are part of one's self; this deepens the meaning of the notion that self-care involves caring for one's kin' (1993: 56). This intersubjective perspective on relationships among kin is reflected in transnational family support networks, which are a potential source of support for migrants ensnared in the hostile environment but are also complex and multifaceted. Research on the diaspora in the UK shows that male 'newcomers' from Jamaica frequently develop intimate relationships with established female migrants and British citizens. While this strengthens intergenerational, transnational ties, the gendered pattern of these relationships contributes to distrust of Jamaican-born men among more established migrants from the Caribbean (Reynolds 2012).

Religious participation is another source of support and positive affirmation for deportable migrants. Spiritual citizenship refers to the role of religious participation in mitigating deportability, and also contributes to wellbeing (Guzman Garcia 2018). Among Zimbabwean migrants and asylum seekers in British detention centres, Biblical narratives play a role in affirming detainees' humanity and asserting their right to be in Britain (McGregor 2012). While some participants in a study of undocumented migrants in the United States felt that they were 'invading' a foreign country that they did not belong to, they justified their presence with the idea that God created the earth and thus all places are available to Christians (Guzman Garcia 2018). Likewise, Rastafari migrants who follow a spiritual lifestyle may see themselves as deserving of citizenship wherever they choose to live, and challenge deportation on the grounds that borders are man-made and conflict with Divine law (Waldstein 2019).

Jamaican spirituality is highly individualised and flexible (Wardle 2017), and the 'religious space' of the diaspora in the UK has been described as fluid (Chivallon 2001). As Austin-Broos (2020) explains, through the course of the 20th century

Pentecostalism superseded Baptism as Jamaica's most popular religion, reflecting increased individualism, urbanisation and transnationalisation. The Pentecostal church is also a dominant force in the African Caribbean diaspora in the UK (Chivallon 2001). Toulis (1997) argues that Pentecostalism has been central in the construction of new identities with which to negotiate mainstream representations of African Caribbeans in British society. However, Chivallon (2001) reminds us that the boundaries between religions are open and that family networks in the diaspora bring together Pentecostals and Christians of other denominations with Rastafari, and other peoples. In addition to the many Christians (Pentecostal and otherwise) in the Jamaican diaspora, there is also a substantial Rastafari presence in the UK (Waldstein 2020). Although the stereotypical image of the dreadlocked, cannabis-smoking Rastaman appears to directly oppose the Pentecostal church mother figure, Rastafari and Pentecostalism have much in common. In addition to similarities in spiritual practice – both Rastafari and Pentecostalism emphasise language that is beyond understanding to those who lack the revelation – they both involve resistance to the Jamaican status quo (Austin-Broos 2020).

In an early ethnography of Rastafari in England, Cashmore (1983) describes the movement as restricted to troubled youth and young men. Today there are many publicly active Rastafari women in the UK and families have been well represented at the events I have attended over the years. Not only have Rastafari people earned respect from their Caribbean compatriots who support their food shops, market stalls and Reggae performances, but the movement has also made its way into British popular culture (e.g. as illustrated by the popular BBC children's programme 'Rasta Mouse'). Rastafari is a Pan-African spiritual and socio-political movement that is indigenous to Jamaica. Reparations for the trans-Atlantic slave trade (including repatriation of the diaspora back to Africa) are central political aims of the movement, while food and health sovereignty (i.e. eating organically produced and minimally processed vegan foods, and using alternative medicines such as herbal remedies and spiritual healing) are important components of Rastafari spiritual lifestyles. Central to Rastafari spiritual practice is the ritual of grounding, which Yawney (1978) defines as occurrences of intersubjectivity experienced by groups of people who smoke cannabis together. This intersubjectivity involves the dissolution of boundaries between self and other, and may be verbalised, acknowledged in non-verbal ways (including telepathy) and/or embodied (Waldstein 2016). The next section describes how Features and I used our intersubjective experiences as an essential methodological resource.

Intersubjective ethnography and experiences of deportability

The seeds of my interest in deportability were planted several years before the British hostile environment was implemented openly. In 2009, after living and working in the UK for four years on a permanent academic contract, I received a curt, one-page letter from the Home Office informing me that the application to renew my work permit had been denied, and I no longer had any grounds to remain in the UK. If I did not make plans to leave (or appeal), my dependents and I would be 'removed to the United States'. I was being penalised for applying (in error) for Child Benefit after the birth of my daughter.

Six months and nearly £4000 in legal fees later, an immigration tribunal upheld my appeal, but my life would never be the same. As I described in my book on deportable Mexican migrants ‘it was not until I understood the threat of deportation through my own lived experience that I fully appreciated how certain stresses of migrant life can manifest as anxiety, nausea, pain and general dis-ease’ (Waldstein 2017: 47).

In the years that followed (as I completed the naturalisation process and became a British citizen), I met more and more Jamaicans who disclosed that they had similar immigration issues, during my research on Rastafari healing in England. After Features won his own deportation appeal in 2015, the publication of an article in *The Guardian* in 2016 (Holbourne, 2016) about unlawful deportations of Jamaicans inspired some successful small grant applications, and from June 2017 to February 2018 I was able to formally employ Features as a research assistant. The foundation of our research is a close friendship that spans years, in which we have not only spent significant amounts of time in each other’s lifeworlds but have spent countless hours *reasoning* (a Rastafari style of discourse, see Waldstein 2020) about our respective experiences as migrants in the UK hostile environment. The funding allowed us to develop this foundation into an intersubjective research project and to co-produce the ethnographic knowledge on which this paper is based.

Our research took place primarily in Norwood and Brixton, but also in other parts of the south London boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Croydon, which all have relatively large African Caribbean populations. Rather than recruiting participants in institutional settings, as in previous research with deportable migrants (e.g. Hasselberg 2015), I wanted to investigate deportability in everyday life, both ‘at home’ and ‘on the road’. This meant temporarily moving into a council flat that Features sublets from an in-law, which is on the third floor of a tower block near Norwood Junction. The area is mainly residential with a high street that closes up by 10 pm and a rail station that connects with central London. The shops around Norwood Junction reflect the multicultural nature of the area, including Jamaican takeaway, barber and patty shops. Also, the supermarket carries popular Jamaican herbal products such as Irish moss and ‘strong back’, and the greengrocers have yam, dasheen, coconut and plantain. Although I had spent many weekends at the flat during previous research, summer 2017 was the first time I lived there long enough for the local shopkeepers to recognise my face and start chatting with me.

Jamaican migrants who are appealing/have appealed deportation orders are difficult to reach, even when researchers live and work in (or are even part of) their communities, as Jamaicans have a culture of ‘keeping one’s business to oneself’ (Heal 2015). The few migrants who were willing to share their stories with us live all over Greater London, and in order to collect interview data we had to go out on the road. While Features often invited me to accompany him on the road at all hours during previous research projects (see Waldstein 2020), in the summer of 2017 he felt it was too dangerous for me to be out on the road at night. This was primarily due to the killing of Rashan Charles (a young black father) by police in July 2017, which led to violent protests. And, while I was still able to go out and meet some research participants during the day, many were available only at night. Features had already suggested that a short, structured interview would be the best way to reassure potential participants that we were not affiliated with the Home Office or the police. Thus, we decided to develop an interview protocol that Features could administer on his own, on nights when he was out and about on the road.

Initially, we began with a two-hour *reasoning* during which I asked a variety of questions to draw out Features' life story. This gave him an idea of the type of information I was looking for and he came up with five questions that captured some of the main themes. I added an additional five questions, and we ran through them together in another practice interview. While there was a lot of detail to Features' story that was left out of his answers to the 10 questions, they did capture how the hostile environment has affected his family life and the strategies he uses to cope with this in about 20 minutes. The speed at which the structured interviews could be completed gave a voice to individuals who did not have a lot of time to invest in the research. However, a few participants were reluctant to do the recorded, structured interview, but were happy to discuss their experiences of deportability with Features (and sometimes with me directly) to be included in the study. We collected life history and/or structured interview data (as well as a few contributions in the form of photography and dub poetry) from 10 Jamaican men, aged 35–57, who had been living in the UK for 15–25 years. All research participants identified with the Rastafari movement and were fathers of children born in the UK. All had police records (ranging from minor traffic offences to drug convictions) and had spent time in immigration detention.

In addition to developing interview questions and conducting the structured interviews, Features also assisted with the transcription and interpretation of interview recordings, which was central to data analysis. After I created initial rough transcripts on my own, we listened to the recordings together so that Features could help me with a more complete transcription. This involved helping me to better understand the Patois, and in doing so Features often elaborated on the issues that were raised by informants, which deepened my knowledge of research participants' social worlds. The next section describes some of this social world and the hardships that deportable Rastafari men have faced within it. To protect participants' identities, in addition to using pseudonyms I present data from interviews and conversations as composites of the life experiences of actual participants.

Living under the threat of deportation

As Remy's poem at the opening of this paper describes, one challenge that Rastafari men face in the hostile environment is the pressure of having loved ones back home who expect remittances, as well as dependents in the UK. Caribbean migration narratives are gendered, reflecting kinship and caregiving norms, as well as women's desire for respectability (a nuclear family provided for by the father and cared for by the mother), and men's concern with reputation (sociability in male peer groups, generosity toward friends and fathering lots of children). While the feminine narrative focuses on sustaining economic and social obligations to the family, the masculine migration narrative involves public displays of individual economic/social achievements (Olwig 2012). Like all Jamaicans, deportable men are expected to provide for their families in Britain and, if possible, relatives and friends in Jamaica. As 'Kush' describes, the struggle to support one's children can be all-consuming: 'Well it affect I life a whole heap, number one I start getting youth and all a these things so, the little I should save now, I have to spend on kids now and see them past a certain worst and all a these things, whole heap of struggles.'

The poem continues by describing the circumstances of taking on 'the devil's work' (i.e. illicit/immoral work) to provide for the family. Without formal permission to work, deportable men are able to secure only informal (and usually intermittent) employment, through cultivating social contacts on the road, an essential part of 'hustling'. While Wardle (2002) argues that 'hustling' is just one component of the Jamaican informal economy, Jamaicans in London use the term to refer to any kind of precarious employment. For example, I once had a conversation with a Jamaican friend about my doctoral research on Mexican migrants in the United States. He was curious about what kind of work they did and when I finished listing all the jobs (poultry factory worker, construction worker, waitress, maid, gardener, cook), he replied 'oh they hustling just like us'. In this sense, 'hustling' describes working hard, by any means necessary, to make ends meet. As 'Pizzle' explains it's 'kinda rough but I'm a solider, nothing come easy in life, so you got put hand to wheel and make it what it is, rough but a good rough, shizzle'. Hustling in London might entail a variety of odd jobs that pay cash-in-hand. As Remy describes, 'you need the right documents to work, sometimes you have to work cash in hand which you know is the wrong way, but sometimes you have to do it to survive.' Not only is working cash-in-hand morally suspect, doing so leaves one vulnerable to exploitation. 'I work in a one bakery, and me don't have my stay or nothing, other people get £3.50 and me a get £2.20 an hour', explains 'Bubba'.

Alternatively, there are also economic opportunities in the trade of illicit commodities. Although cannabis is an important part of Jamaican folk medical and spiritual culture, its prohibition in the UK links it to the trade of drugs (e.g. crack cocaine and heroin), which may be seen as an evil necessary for economic survival (Waldstein 2020). Involvement in the drugs trade is often what leads migrants to be considered for deportation in the first place. For example, 'Len' came to the UK when his older brother sent for him. His brother pressured him into selling drugs by taking away his passport. Len overstayed his visa and was eventually convicted of cocaine possession. He evaded immigration authorities for several years after he was released early from prison for good behaviour. By the time he was finally picked up during a routine traffic stop, Len had three young children (born to two British women) who depended on him. Eventually, he successfully appealed his deportation order based on Article 8 of the Human Rights Act (the right to private and family life). Moreover, not only do criminal activities lead to the threat of deportation, but deportability potentially leads migrants further into crime. This is because weekly reports to the Home Office (which take nearly an entire day) make it difficult for migrants to take on certain jobs (e.g. trades and restaurant work) that might otherwise employ people who don't have work permits. This leaves migrants with the choice of becoming idle and dependent on family or selling drugs.

In the poem, Remy associates betrayal by 'so-called friends' with ending up in the British prison system and indeed, the structural inequalities that Jamaican men face in the UK are exacerbated by cultural legacies of hyper-individualism and poor interpersonal trust (see Wardle 2018). The intersubjective, altruistic relationships among kin in rural Jamaica described by Sobo (1993) contrast with a widespread notion in the Jamaican diaspora that people who seem like friends might actually be working against you. Features didn't open the door or even invite anyone to the flat because of a suspicion of others, less out of concern for the security of his home and more about avoiding the jealousy of other people. 'Bad mind' refers to motivations of antipathy or negative empathy (Wardle 2018) and in London it is characterised as something that happens when people wish bad things

on or think bad thoughts about others. As Bubba explains, 'England now look like it save my life 99 time more, cos where me from the people dem can't be trusted, just bad mind how they grow up'. Bad mind is circular and can come back around to the person expressing it. It is also possible to counteract the bad mind that others direct at a person through that person's own good intentionality (Wardle 2018). However, even for the most positive Rastafari men, fear of bad mind and other forms of spiritual attack can make befriending slow, challenging and rare. As 'Ziggy' describes, 'for some people it's like a chess game dem play with people life like pawns, so more time you just have to go it alone, let nature fi take it course, and just pray to the all mighty'.

The culmination of Remy's poem focuses on the mental anguish that accompanies the threat of deportation. In addition to the economic hardship that comes with legal barriers to employment, the uncertainty inherent in deportability can lead to stress and anxiety. Sharing the flat with Features not only gave me greater insight on his lifeworld, but also made me experience some of the everyday complexities and uncertainties of living in it. For example, we had only one set of keys between us, which meant that we either had to leave the flat together and follow the same itinerary, or (if we went out separately) anticipate who would return to the flat first and should therefore hold the key. Miscalculations resulted in unplanned meetups that were costly in terms of both time and money. Uncertainty about whether it will be possible to get any work done is a consequence of not being able to move freely. This is true whether one's work is as a tradesman, which requires the ability to build social networks throughout the city to find jobs, or ethnography that is dependent on being able to link up with prospective research participants.

Enforced idleness and inactivity can increase stress and anxiety. While West Indian migrant women in Canada attribute their medically unexplained symptoms to overwork at physically demanding jobs (Whitely et al. 2006), Rastafari men in London were distressed when they did not have enough work and appreciated physical labour as something that can increase strength and fitness. Instead, their anxieties centre around the inability to provide for their families. For example, Kush summarised the effects of poverty on his children 'Christmas come and nothing I can give them cause Santa Clause bag got a bottomless hole, bag bust out no present, get no presents for I own flesh and blood to make them feel good.' Similarly, Bubba explained how his 'friends dem cry to me sometime, dem feel the pain and tell me, every time bills, bills, bills we can't save for buy a house, it's shameful life over here'. While Bubba's friends may have shared their pain with him, there are also cultural norms and expectations about hiding the experience of hardship that lead many deportable Jamaican migrants to suffer the stresses of deportability in silence. Thus, their behaviour is similar to that of Jamaican deportees who would rather struggle privately than ask family members for help (Golash-Boza 2013). The next section describes in more detail how Rastafari men cope in the hostile environment.

Coping and Rastafari spirituality

For Jamaican men in London, successfully appealing a deportation order requires not only financial resources, but also the ability to withstand long periods of unemployment and idleness. Back in 1969, Wilson described the social systems of Caribbean village communities, which were related to reputation and the social exchanges required to build it. Because men are mobile, they carry social networks and form peer groups

through meeting informally ‘upon bars, rum shops, front room stores, cotton or palm trees or a corner. They play dominoes, cards or checkers, they drink in a ritual fashion, they argue, they sing, they boast, brag and fight. They may also work together and they certainly influence each other’ (1969, p. 80). Over 50 years later in the UK, deportable Jamaican men engage in these same activities to build much-needed social capital. However, they do so in kitchens, outside clubs and in gardens and many (especially Rastafari men) also smoke cannabis together (see Waldstein 2020).

The men involved in this research work as and when they can (some have regular employment, others work clandestinely), but all struggle to make ends meet, even those who have won their deportation appeals and have permission to work. To supplement whatever money they earn through jobs, they also build social capital on the road after finishing paid work. This is done by buying each other (alcoholic) drinks and sharing cigarettes and *spliffs* (i.e. cannabis), as well as engaging in the Rastafari ritual of *reasoning*. Through *reasoning* on the road, Rastafari men can build their reputations and in doing so they also share important information (e.g. about work opportunities, legal assistance, housing). Social capital earned through reputation can be mobilised throughout the deportation appeal process (which requires someone to stand surety, character references and help with legal/court fees) with labour, skills and services offered in exchange for financial assistance. While Len was reluctant to ask his brothers in Jamaica for financial assistance when he needed to be bailed from immigration detention, he was able to ask for and accept help from a *breddrin* (brethren/associate) in London because he (Len) could offer decorating and carpentry skills in return.

Maintaining a social network with strong ties that may offer financial assistance, as well as weaker ties (of varying degrees of trustworthiness) who share information, is challenging. Moreover, it is risky for black men to be out at night in London, even if they are not involved in criminal activities. Avoiding displays of suffering is an important part of both staying out of trouble and building social ties on the road. It requires vigilant attention to appearance and manners, as looking poor can have particularly dangerous consequences. For example, one of de Noronha’s (2019) Jamaican deportee informants explained that he had been a victim of racist violence in England because he looked poor (i.e. a chipped tooth he could not afford to have fixed made him look like a ‘thug’). Likewise, Golash-Boza (2013) describes how one of her Jamaican deportee informants was reluctant to sell his expensive clothes and jewellery, even though he was broke, because wearing them made it look like he had money.

In Rastafari, self-indulgence in material things is commonly associated with the sin of vanity. However, in the UK, Rastafari people typically appear in public as well dressed as any of their Jamaican peers. It seems that similar to Neapolitan *popolino* who engage in strong continuous interaction between material and spiritual aspects of life (Pardo 1996), individual, material wellbeing is pursued by Rastafari men because it will, in turn facilitate socially oriented generosity. Apart from the financial costs of purchasing and maintaining a wardrobe, the tensions between looking sharp, eschewing vanity and avoiding envy must be carefully balanced each time a Rastafari man gets dressed, if he wishes to maintain strong social networks and good reputation. If Features is any indication, an hour or more can be lost to selecting an outfit for a day and/or night on the road.

Rastafari men find the discipline required to balance such tensions through spirituality, which also helps them navigate uncertainty. Cultivation of a ‘spiritual body’ is encouraged through various dietary, meditative and creative practices (see Waldstein 2016). Roots tonics and other herbal medicines are taken to purify mind, body and soul

(as well as to maintain health). While ethnopharmacological research supports the efficacy of many medicinal plant species used in Jamaica (Vandebroek and Picking 2016), including those used in roots tonics, Rastafari perspectives on nature mean that the consumption of plants (as medicines and food) is as much a spiritual as a physiological practice. Roots tonics typically contain species with purgative properties. By preventing waste from accumulating in the digestive tract and/or blood, these herbal concoctions keep the spiritual energy flowing and makes prayer and meditation more effective. Rastafari men (and women) find solace and guidance in prayers, psalms and meditation. Reflecting on his deportation appeal, Features explained, 'It could affect my life worse, because of my spirituality I pray and I just ask *Jah* for help and sometimes I get odd jobs. I got a bit stress at one stage, but we just pray and maintain our faith and hope through the struggle.' According to Pizzle, prayer can also attract positive attention from spiritual beings that offer assistance; 'I'm coping but give God thanks. It's not me that's working in cold, snow, cramp, someone is here with me, angel carry me through.'

In addition to consulting Rastafari herbalists and engaging in prayer, some research participants also sought advice from various Afro-Christian spiritual healers (some from Jamaica and other Caribbean nations, others from West African countries) in London. These healers have knowledge and skills that are perceived to help with deportation appeals. For example, in preparation for his hearing, Len had a series of spiritual baths at a church in Croydon. As he explained to me, the church's pastor is a Jamaican woman with a gift for spiritual healing. He has no desire to attend the noisy, crowded services that she leads. But he has consulted her privately and followed her prescriptions, which included reciting certain psalms while bathing the body with a combination of holy water and spiritually powerful herbs and minerals, specially prepared by the pastor's sister. The baths are meant to help remove blockages and negative forces that can adhere to people and frustrate life events, such as deportation appeals.

To conclude this discussion of coping and Rastafari spiritual practice, I would like to briefly address the effects of the hostile environment on the (British) people who have intersubjective relations with deportable migrants. During my summer in Norwood, Features and I kept very different routines. He would leave for his part-time tiling and decorating jobs around midday and continue with work and/or go out on the road to do research until the early hours of the morning. In contrast, I maintained my normal pattern of falling asleep early (around 9 or 10 pm) and waking up soon after sunrise (around 6 am). This was in part due to the early morning sounds of the tower that never failed to wake me, but which Features seemed to sleep through obliviously. When I was in the flat, I also found it very difficult to tell from which direction noise was coming or even whether knocking was on our door or the neighbour's. Around 11.30 on a Saturday morning, I was already long up when there was an insistent banging on the door. Features keeps the deadbolt locked from the inside and does not answer knocking on the door or even the ringing of the buzzer unless he is expecting visitors. He instructed me to do the same, no matter the circumstance. But this time the pounding went on for at least 10 minutes before shouting began. It sounded like the person was calling for Virginia and wanted to make sure she was all right.

The pounding and intermittent shouting continued for another 10 minutes and eventually whoever it was stated they were the police and that Virginia should open the door so he could make sure she was ok. At the word 'police', my guard immediately went up and I could feel the effects of adrenaline rushing through my body. While we

weren't engaging in any criminal activity, we were subletting the flat informally. I had no idea why the police would be knocking at our door and the visceral response was a reflex I could not control. I then heard the sound of something being put through the letterbox and after a final knock the caller gave up and left. After I sat for a while in frozen silence, my heart rate finally began to slow. I went to ask Features (who was still sound asleep, snoring loudly) what was going on, but I noticed there was nothing beneath the letterbox, so it seems they were looking for the neighbour after all. Later, after describing the incident to Features, he suggested that he has always been able to sleep so soundly because he engages regularly in both physical work and meditation. He tried his best to reassure me that there was no need to worry about the police or anyone else who might knock and that I shouldn't be 'taking on any burdens like that'. I explained that sometimes not worrying is easier said than done, and he acknowledged that some people are more vulnerable to shocks, stress and worry.

Features then reflected on how his own teenage son was a case in point; he had an uncharacteristic string of school detentions around the time that Features last had to renew his residence permit. On questioning him, his son admitted that he was acting out because he was afraid Features would be put back into immigration detention and deported. Features was completely confident that his residence would be renewed, both because he was law-abiding and contributing to society, and due to his faith that the Creator (*Jah*) would make everything work out. He seemed surprised and disappointed that his son would still be worrying about his immigration status after it had finally been regularised. He elaborated that:

Well I don't think it [being up for deportation] affect my health so to speak because of spirit. What happen is it affect my family because they're there wondering what's gonna happen so it affect them cos like it's a long time that they know I'm up for deportation, it affect my family mentally, it affect the kids. At one stage I was reporting by the Home Office and I had to take them up there, but I don't really let the kids know cos it make them stress.

There is a growing body of research on the intersubjective experience of distress among kin; for example, in an ethnographic study of depression in Appalachia, women 'took over' others' feelings, knew kin's feelings as their own and contained their own feelings to strengthen the family (Snell-Rood et al. 2018). Meditation, herbal medicine, physical work, plant-based eating, prayer and artistic expression help Rastafari men in London survive (or even thrive) in the hostile environment. Yet their children and partners may suffer (and attribute suffering to) stress and anxiety related to the fear of a loved one's deportation, and/or discomfort with informal economic activities. The Rastafari case suggests that policies aimed at making migrants' lives more difficult are actually hitting their British children.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to reflect on how my experience of being threatened with deportation in the UK hostile environment compares with that of Features (and his Rastafari *bredrin*). The period of time from when I received my refusal letter from the Home Office to the day they returned my American passport with my UK work permit renewed was less than one year. When the Home Office (erroneously)

informed my employer that I could not work during the appeal process, the university offered to pay my salary anyway. My family in the United States were the first to know what was happening, and while I actually had enough savings to cover my legal fees for the appeal, my parents offered to pay them. Although I stopped short of contacting the press, my colleagues, my students and my students' parents not only knew what was happening but signed petitions and wrote letters in support of my appeal. It was a disruptive and stressful time that had some profound, longer-term effects on my family and work life, but it didn't lead to any serious economic hardship.

In contrast, Features, like other Rastafari men in his position, had to wait almost eight years for his deportation appeal to be resolved. After being bailed from immigration detention, he was not allowed to work and had to report to the Home Office every week until he won the appeal. During this time, he felt pressured to hide his immigration struggles from acquaintances, friends and even family. Similar to Len (described above), Features would rather take his chances finding odd jobs on the road than ask family in Jamaica for money. Avoiding displays of suffering (which requires vigilant attention to appearance and manners) is an important part of building the social and financial capital required to survive deportability. Rastafari men like Features find the discipline needed to survive through spirituality and engage in a variety of bodily rituals to generate positive energies. But while these spiritual practices can help migrants cope with uncertainty, they may not be shared by their children, who instead experience multiple anxieties. By working together in the production of ethnographic knowledge, Features and I have found evidence that the hostile environment harms the British citizens who are in close, intersubjective relationships with deportable migrants.

While I was granted British citizenship within three years of winning my appeal, Features (like most of his *bredrin* who took part in our research) is still working toward his 'permanent stay' (i.e. indefinite leave to remain in the UK). Until then, he and his (British) family must submit their personal documents to the Home Office (and pay the ever-increasing fees) to renew his residence and work permit every two and a half years. While I suggested that he should be named as a co-author on this paper, and that perhaps this would impress the case workers who review his renewal application, I had to respect his decision to keep his identity confidential. Family relationships (and living arrangements) are complicated in the Jamaican diaspora and don't always conform to mainstream British expectations. While Features has maintained a close, proactive, co-parenting relationship with the mother of his children, spends time at the family home with his children regularly and is present for all extended family celebrations, surely the authorities might question why he typically stays in her brother's council flat. Thus, not only does the hostile environment have casualties who are British citizens, it prevents a full intersubjective ethnography when someone who co-produces ethnographic knowledge does not feel free to claim authorship.

These limitations that hostile environments place on ethnographic research with deportable migrants are also the reasons why such ethnography is so important. The findings of this paper suggest that reforms to hostile environment policies should not only include (economic) support for migrants who appeal deportation, but also mental health support for families affected by deportability. The experiences of Features and his *bredrin* also highlight the importance of spirituality in the lives of migrants

and their relations. The flexibility of the boundaries between Jamaican religions and the mixing of different traditions in Jamaican families mean that the spiritual practices through which Rastafari men draw strength may not be shared with their partners and/or children. The further expansion of ethnographic research into hostile environments has much to gain from intersubjective approaches that explore the complexities of spirituality and deportability in diaspora families.

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Déportabilité et spiritualité dans un environnement hostile: une perspective intersubjective

‘L’environnement hostile pour les immigrants’ du Royaume-Uni a des effets désastreux sur les personnes d’origine africaine et caribéenne, en particulier celles qui ont été menacées d’expulsion. Alors que certaines recherches démontrent un lien fort entre la menace d’expulsion (déportabilité) et l’abjection, les migrants déportables peuvent également développer des stratégies (par exemple la participation religieuse) pour contourner les contrôles de l’État. Les relations familiales et les pratiques spirituelles jamaïcaines mettent l’accent sur l’intersubjectivité. Cet article présente un travail ethnographique intersubjective mené avec un partenaire de recherche (anciennement) expulsable, parmi des hommes rastafaris nés en Jamaïque et ayant émigré au Royaume-Uni dans les années 1990 en tant que jeunes adultes. Les restrictions concernant le travail pendant les appels à l’expulsion laissent à ces hommes le choix entre l’oisiveté, les boulots d’économie informelle ou la criminalité (généralement la vente de drogues). Les hommes rastafaris trouvent la discipline nécessaire pour survivre à l’expulsion dans la spiritualité et s’engagent dans une variété de rituels corporels pour générer des énergies positives, qui les aident à rester calmes et en bonne santé. Une attention vigilante aux bonnes manières et à la tenue vestimentaire est essentielle pour se constituer un capital social (et financier) sur la route. Le cas des migrants rastafaris au Royaume-Uni révèle la nécessité de développer davantage la recherche ethnographique dans les environnements hostiles à partir de perspectives intersubjectives qui explorent la spiritualité et la déportabilité dans les familles de la diaspora.

Mots-clés Rastafari, intersubjectivité, déportation, corps spirituel, Royaume-Uni