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Cover Page Footnote

We would like to express our gratitude for comments on an earlier draft of this paper to Drs. Ted Brimeyer and Baker Rogers.

Family Preservation Strategies: Regendering Labor in Mixed-Status Marriage After Co-Deportation

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Harsh U.S. deportation policies disproportionately target Latin American immigrant working-class men and subsequently divide families. The unique experiences of co-deported, mixed-status couples are missing from the deportation literature—that is, U.S. citizens, primarily women, who live outside of the United States with their deported Latin American immigrant spouses (what we call co-deportation) rather than living separately. Using hegemonic masculinity, this research qualitatively analyzes the experiences of eleven mixed-status couples internationally co-deported. Findings suggest couples' gender dynamics shift paid and unpaid labor to sustain family life living as co-deportees. Co-deported couples are a testament to how adaptable heterosexual gender dynamics can be, but they also demonstrate the deep entrenchment of hegemonic gender. This research provides implications for social workers advocating for transnational co-deported families.

Keywords: mixed-status marriage, gender dynamics, hegemonic masculinity, deportation

U.S. citizens' foreign-born spouses have priority immigration status; however, punitive deportation policies during the last several decades have made it difficult for citizens with undocumented spouses to adjust their legal statuses (Schueths, 2012). Between 1996 and 2016, the U.S. government deported nearly 6 million immigrants with a record number of 435,000 deportations in 2014 (Chishti et al., 2017; Gonzalez-Barrera & Krogstad, 2016). Since the mid-1990s, ninety percent of deportees, mostly men, originate from Mexico and Central America (Golash-Boza, 2015).

Media stories more than academic research have documented how U.S. citizens sometimes live outside of the United States with their deported immigrant spouses rather than live separately, a situation we refer to as co-deportation throughout this paper. Headlines such as "American citizens, in love and in exile, are waiting for immigration reform" (Margolis, 2013), "Banned from America: How U.S. immigration policy has forced some American citizens into exile" (Ferriss, 2014), and "Choosing 'exile' over break-up, U.S. citizens follow 'banned' spouses abroad" (Viñas, 2013) illustrate the reality about how some mixed-status marriages (i.e., U.S. citizens married to non-citizen spouses) manage harsh deportation policies. Only a few studies have examined immigrants' lives after they have been deported from the United States (Brotherton & Barrios, 2009; Cardoso et al., 2016; Golash-Boza, 2014). Even less is written on how the deportation of a spouse results in some U.S. citizens living abroad (what we will refer to from here on as living as a co-deportee) with their deported spouse and how this rearranges gender dynamics. Most scholars who study changing gender expectations in the global context focus on transnational parenthood (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 2006; Parreñas, 2005). Missing from this migration discussion are the unique experiences of U.S. citizens, primarily women, who are co-deported with their Latin-American spouses and how gender dynamics change life after co-deportation.

Beyond legal status, couples have multiple mixed statuses, such as race, sexuality, nationality, and social class. Therefore, this work fills a gap in the family, gender, and deportation literature by focusing on the experiences of diverse families (López, 2015). Specifically, though, we focus on how race, class, sexuality, and citizenship collide with gender to both constrain and aid the available strategies mixed-status couples used to keep their spouses and

families together post-deportation. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 18 participants, representing 11 heterosexual mixed-status couples, co-deported. This analysis expands the theorizing of gender and immigration by exploring how deportation reorganizes gender performances for heterosexual mixed-status couples, including U.S. citizens.

U.S. Migration to Latin America

Due to limited research on co-deported, mixed-status couples, assessing the literature on U.S. migrants to Latin America is a helpful place to start. International mobility tends to privilege U.S. citizens migrating south, who are mostly white and often are referred to as expatriates or lifestyle migrants; alternately, Latin Americans migrating north are primarily brown and are typically known as immigrants or migrants (Croucher, 2009; Hayes, 2015). According to the U.S. Department of State (2017), approximately one million U.S. citizens currently live in Mexico. Research on U.S. migrants to Latin American countries, although a relatively small group, find these individuals are generally “retirees, younger adventure-seekers, and some pursuing economic opportunity in a global marketplace” (Croucher, 2012, p. 2). Although U.S. citizen migrants tend to be more affluent than the citizens in their receiving countries, they may not be as well-off as citizens living in the United States. Economic insecurity in the north has pushed some U.S. citizens to move from wealthier nations to less prosperous nations because they are interested in maintaining their pre-retirement lifestyle with lower-cost property taxes and healthcare (Hayes, 2015).

Our research documents the distinct ways that some U.S. citizens, primarily white women, are being co-deported south with their Latin American-born husbands. Although mixed-status couples may not have the same degree of privilege and perception of choice as “lifestyle migrants,” previous research suggests that co-deported couples have higher levels of education and income than mixed-status couples forced to live in two different countries. Schueths (2019) conducted qualitative interviews with mixed-status couples separated from one another and found that having a deported Latin American husband removed from the home and no longer providing financially led some U.S. citizen women with low

levels of socioeconomic status to depend on public welfare for their family's livelihood when they had not had to previously. Many women who remain in the United States support their husbands after deportation with remittances and money for their legal fees (Lewis, 2013).

After removal, deportees tend to have a difficult time finding steady employment in their Latin American country of citizenship (García & De Oliveira, 2011); subsequently, deported individuals, usually working-class men, have difficulty finding jobs with a living wage in their country of birth. For these men, their inability to support their families and their dependence on their partners often lead to gender stigma. Golash-Boza (2014) interviewed Jamaicans who were deported from the United States and found the men were ashamed that they had to rely on remittances from family to survive.

Globally, men with fewer resources and low rates of education are more likely to be left out of the labor market, which can be an emotional challenge (Kabeer, 2007). Research suggests that unemployed working-class men have difficulty maintaining their self-worth without work (Legerski & Cornwall, 2010). Beyond poverty, the greatest stigma comes from the inability to fulfill important gender roles, notably that of provider. Our research contributes to the understanding of how gender dynamics change for mixed-status couples, particularly with co-deported Latin American husbands and their U.S. citizen wives.

Changing Gender Dynamics

Ideas of gender, masculinity, femininity, and the dynamics within heterosexual couples are being challenged all the time. Traditional masculinity placed men as the head of household, protector, provider, and primary breadwinner (Lee & Lee, 2018); however, within heterosexual couples, men have become more involved in family domestic labor in the United States, including parenting (Bianchi et al., 2000). Despite men doing more non-traditional work, research suggests that couples' labor negotiations (i.e., childcare, paid and unpaid employment) tend to be swayed by conventional gender expectations (Dush et al., 2018; Gibbons & Luna, 2015). Cultural standards related to breadwinning as true masculinity and

caregiving as proper femininity are deeply ingrained in U.S. society and worldwide.

Although conventional gender labor divisions continue as a norm for many couples, researchers have documented shifts toward egalitarian gender practices in both the United States and Latin American countries. Changes in the global economy, specifically the feminization of labor, have resulted in a growing number of women in the paid labor market and a growing number of men struggling to find employment (Hoang & Yeoh, 2011). Taking a global perspective, Kabeer (2007) found that an increasing number of husbands have approved of sharing job market responsibilities with their wives, while others have resisted this arrangement by refusing domestic and childcare duties and, in some cases, leaving their families. Furthermore, women and men in migrant households have been found to share in the decision-making process and chores (Baca Zinn & Wells, 2000). Covre-Sussai et al. (2014) measured decision-making in seven Latin American countries and found that gender equality has increased. Similar to the United States, Latin American women with higher socioeconomic status tend to be in more equal partnerships than their lower socioeconomic status peers. These changing dynamics may regender labor within the family and, in some cases, may produce stay-at-home fathers.

Families with a working mother and a stay-at-home father are gradually becoming more common in the U.S. but are still an understudied phenomenon (Lee & Lee, 2018). Longitudinal studies have found that spouses with egalitarian gender beliefs, wives with higher education levels compared to their husbands, and high unemployment rates are more likely to produce a stay-at-home father (Kramer et al., 2015; Kramer & Kramer, 2016). Stay-at-home fathers tend to be part of middle-class families. Longitudinal findings also showed that in the past, stay-at-home fathers were almost exclusively men who were unable to work and who would prefer to be participating in the labor market. Now, men either identify as being unable to work or as a voluntary caregiver, with a substantial increase in men who identify as caregivers. However, stay-at-home father families tend to be created because of financial problems and labor market challenges for men with low education and skills (Chesley, 2011; Kramer & Kramer, 2016). Chesley's (2011) qualitative work with economically advantaged white couples suggests that stay-at-home

fathers learned to appreciate their position, even if participating in unpaid labor was not the original goal. Chelsey (2011) notes, "This shift in family arrangements can promote change toward greater gender equality even in couples that initially hold entrenched, gendered beliefs" (p. 1655).

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity allows researchers to analyze the gender dynamics of co-deported, mixed-status couples. Connell (1987, 1995) articulated hegemonic masculinity, and it was later reformulated by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005). At its core, this framework is relational and "legitimizes unequal gender relations among men and women, masculinity and femininity" and demonstrates the "plurality of masculinities and of a hierarchy among hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity as well as nonhegemonic masculinity" (Messerschmidt, 2018, pp. 46–47). Multiple forms of masculinity exist along a gradient, with some forms providing more power than others (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). For example, nonhegemonic or marginalized masculinities carry less power and include men of color from low socioeconomic backgrounds, including deported working-class Latinx immigrants. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 120) point out that power is not absolute and "at times may actually shift in relation to different axes of power and powerlessness." They also suggest that gender is fluid and that gender performances often differ by context and can be found locally, regionally, and globally, whether living in the United States or Latin American countries.

The machismo stereotype, an exaggerated masculinity, is often associated with men in Latin American culture. However, supporting the tenets of hegemonic masculinity, Gutmann (2007) argues that the machismo stereotype fails to encapsulate the diversity of masculinities he found in his qualitative interviews with Mexican men. Relatedly, Montes (2013, p. 474) explains,

As a global process, international migration strains regional and local gender orders, resulting in changes in local patterns of

masculinity and femininity. How these gender orders change depends on particular regional and cultural characteristics, along with the intersection of other power structures such as class and race.

One form of masculinity, often viewed as progressive, is caring masculinity (Elliott, 2016), which is focused on expectations of nurturing. Caring masculinity does not represent a departure from traditional hegemonic masculinity, but rather an expansion of it (Hunter et al., 2017). Caring masculinity allows men to embrace stereotypically feminine qualities without disregarding the ideal masculinity established within hegemonic masculinity. Hunter et al. (2017, p. 13) point out that “the norms and expectations of fathers are evolving, and that they are no longer required to adhere strictly to traditional, provider expectations of fathering, even if they are still expected to enact particular hegemonic forms of masculinity.” Thus, extending hegemonic masculinity to include a caring masculinity helps better understand co-deported, mixed-status couples’ experiences.

However, whether couples conform with or challenge hegemonic masculinity, it is important to note that they must engage with it (Ridgeway, 2011). As Gutmann (2007, p. 14) put it, even when “the beliefs and practices of ordinary men do not accord neatly with this monochromatic image” of machismo, “ordinary men and women are themselves often acutely aware of and influenced in one way or another by the dominant, often ‘traditional’ stereotypes about men.”

One of the ways that men who embody a caring masculinity continue to reinforce hegemonic masculinity is through what scholars call compensatory manhood acts (Ezzell, 2012; Rogers, 2020). As Ezzell (2012, p. 191) explains, compensatory masculinity acts are used by men to “signify a masculine self and that arise as part of a refusal or inability to enact the hegemonic masculine ideal.” Deported, unemployed Latin American men face tremendous gender stigma, and are no longer able to adhere to traditional masculinity (Golash-Boza, 2014; Kabeer, 2007; Legerski & Cornwall, 2010). These men, even those who would best be described as having adopted a caring masculinity, find that they are unable to live up to the ideal type of manhood set by hegemonic masculinity.

Present Study

To our knowledge, there is no available research that directly examines the strategies co-deported, mixed-status couples employ to maintain their families after deportation. This analysis expands the theorizing on gender and deportation by exploring lived experiences of 11 mixed-status couples co-deported. Importantly, the strategies mixed-status couples employ to maintain their families post-deportation impact how the spouses negotiate the division of household duties and paid labor.

Methods

This research is part of a larger study focused on mixed-status families collected from 2013 to 2014 and approved by the Institutional Review Board at a large, southern, regional university. The focus of this article is on the shifting gender boundaries of co-deported, heterosexual, mixed-status couples. Invitations to participate in this study were disseminated in both Spanish and English and were emailed to multiple immigration reform advocacy groups and social service organizations asking them to share the invitation with their members via email and their social media channels. Additional couples were recruited through snowball sampling.

Gender-neutral language was used in all recruitment communications to recruit a diverse sample. However, like past research on mixed-status couples (Schueths, 2012, 2014), women, especially white citizens, chose to participate in this study far more than their undocumented male partners did. Given that this is a challenging population to access, participants may not be representative of the larger population. To be eligible, individuals had to be at least 18 years of age and meet one of the following eligibility criteria: (1) be an undocumented/formerly undocumented immigrant Latinx who had lived in the United States for at least one year and who was partnered or married to a U.S. citizen for at least one year, or (2) be a U.S. citizen and have been partnered with an undocumented immigrant Latinx or formerly undocumented immigrant Latinx for at least one year. Participants were also eligible for the study

if they were currently living outside of the United States due to deportation if they met one of the leading research criteria. Our goal was to interview both members of the couple; however, not all of the male partners participated.

The data for this study come from in-depth, semi-structured interviews, including a demographic survey, with at least one member from each of the 11 couples (18 individuals were interviewed: 11 women and 7 men). These eleven couples were co-deported to Guatemala, Canada, or Mexico, with some living on the Mexican side of the Mexico–U.S. border. Interviews were conducted using English or Spanish using an interpreter, and were conducted by telephone.

Most immigrant participants requested their interview be conducted in English as they had previously been living in the U.S. for multiple years and were comfortable communicating in English. The interviews averaged 90 minutes in length and participants were asked open-ended questions regarding their experience in a mixed-status relationship. They were asked to describe their relationship, and how they cope with immigration stress. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identities. At the time of the study, couples had resided (before deportation) in one of 16 states, representing all U.S. regions.

Data analysis was guided by the following question: How do co-deported, mixed-status couples negotiate the division of labor post-deportation, and how do these dynamics vary by social status? Analysis was done using an inductive coding approach that focused on building larger themes and descriptions emerging from the raw data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interviews were analyzed shortly after they were conducted and the codes that were developed from each round of analysis were then reapplied to later interviews as they came in. Data analysis was an iterative process in which data was reintegrated and reanalyzed several times as new codes were identified.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Characteristics	Women (n=11)	Men (n=7)
Age		
20–29	3	1
30–39	4	5
40–49	4	1
Education		
High school degree or less	1	4
Some college, no degree/associate degree	2	1
Bachelor's degree or higher	8	1
Employment		
Full-time	7	1
Part-time	1	1
Unemployed	3	4
Occupation		
Teacher	5	1
Health/Social Services	3	
Construction		1
Race/Ethnicity/Nationality		
Biracial/United States	1	
Mexican American/United States		1
White/United States	9	
Guatemalan/Guatemala		1
Mexican/Mexico	1	4
Legal Status		
Undocumented in the U.S.	1	6
U.S. Citizen	10	1
Country of Residence		
Mexico	9	6
Guatemala	1	1
Canada	1	

*Participant demographics only include individuals who participated in this study.

Participant Profile

Eleven co-deported, mixed-status couples were interviewed. Ten of the couples included a U.S. citizen wife married to an undocumented Latinx husband, and one couple included a U.S. citizen Latinx husband married to an undocumented Latinx wife. At the time of the interviews, nine couples lived in Mexico, one couple lived in Guatemala, and one couple lived in Canada. The majority of couples were comprised of white, U.S. citizen women, partnered with undocumented Latinx men. The couples, on average, had been married for five years and had been together for eight. Most women had at least a bachelor's degree and the men had at least a high school diploma. The median yearly income for couples was between \$25,000 to \$49,999 U.S. dollars.

Undocumented Latin American spouses were banned from the United States because of immigration infractions, such as unlawful presence, multiple entries, or deportations. Six undocumented spouses were deported; two of these were flown by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to their country of origin, and four departed voluntarily rather than face a formal order of removal. Five undocumented spouses "self-deported;" however, four had re-entered their country of origin to adjust their legal status, assuming their absence would be temporary, but were unexpectedly denied at the consulate. Simply returning to their country of origin triggered a 10-year bar from the United States for these spouses. All four couples reported they would not have left the country if they had known how difficult it would be to return. The fifth individual ended up relocating to Canada, which was neither his nor his wife's country of origin.

Gender Within the Context of Co-Deportation

Before deportation from the United States, the men had all contributed financially to their families through employment, even without legal status. Similarly, all of the women living in the United States, the majority U.S. citizens, were working for pay. Post-deportation, social class—in the form of professional education, savings, or business enterprises—appeared to buffer the impacts of deportation.

U.S. citizen women tended to have more education, resources, and professional skills than their Latin American-born husbands, thereby providing greater opportunities for women's employment abroad compared to men. The men living in their country of origin had few job prospects, making it difficult to contribute financially to the family. Better-educated, professional women were subsisting abroad, and their husbands were also doing better than those deported with more limited income and opportunities for employment.

Eight of the ten U.S. women citizens worked, most of them full-time, after co-deportation, in education or health and social services-related professions. The one U.S. citizen man co-deported also worked full-time in construction. Five of the U.S. citizens (four women and one man) maintained employment in the United States by either living near the Mexico– U.S. border or by working virtually. Three U.S. citizen women were not working; two were living off of substantial savings, one including Veterans Benefits, hoping their residences in Mexico would be temporary; and one was actively searching for employment but earning a small income by renting out her home in the U.S. while co-deported.

With most U.S. citizen women working abroad, noncitizen men were more likely to be responsible for domestic labor in the home, including childcare (most had children living in the home), except for one husband who purchased a business using the money he earned while living in the United States. The latter is the only couple that reported conventional gender dynamics during co-deportation, even though the wife, Tracey, a white woman with an advanced degree, worked online part-time teaching. Tracey indicated that she would prefer a more egalitarian relationship but that she had learned to live with patriarchal gender practices to preserve her family.

If work were available for the Latin American-born spouses, it tended to be long hours with few days off and for extremely low pay by U.S. standards. Some families said it would be more cost effective for their family to have the husbands stay at home and take care of domestic duties. Victor, who is currently not employed outside the home and is living off of his wife's U.S. Veterans Benefits, discussed the challenge of living off a low-wage job in Mexico. He explained, "Life it is very difficult here, everything is very expensive and what you make, it is not enough to survive." His

wife, Bonnie, described the standard decision-making process for couples with a stay-at-home husband:

A typical wage here is 400 to 1,000 pesos a week, so you're talking like \$30 to \$80 a week to have somebody gone out of the house 40 to 60 hours a week. To me, it's not worth it. I'm here to be with my husband.

Similarly, Heidi, who works in the United States in social services, reported their particular border community is not entirely safe due to high crime rates. She feels comfortable making the hour commute to her U.S. job where she makes "like 100 times more" than he would make in Mexico. "It wouldn't make any sense for [my husband Mateo] to be working and making no money, and we'd never see each other, and it would be more dangerous, and for, like, maybe \$80 a week. Maybe." Mateo did not complete high school and worked painting houses when he lived in the United States; if he could find work in Mexico, it would be in manufacturing, with few safety regulations and the frequent threat of violence from criminal gangs. Heidi discusses corruption in their area: "The police don't do anyone a damn bit of good. It's just not very safe."

Defying Stereotypes While Maintaining Masculinity

Like most co-deported couples, lack of viable employment opportunities for men living in Latin America rearranged gender dynamics. However, even with these shifts, married couples still are attentive to and frame their family life within the context of traditional gender responsibilities. Kellie and Tristan's situation illustrated how this process works. Kellie has a graduate degree; this enabled her to find a full-time teaching job, making her the breadwinner of the family. With only some high school education, Tristan had fewer chances for employment, but is one of the most fortunate participants; he got a part-time job in the service sector during hours his wife is not working. Subsequently, his socioeconomic status has led to him to take on the majority of unpaid household labor. Kellie is keenly aware that her family is defying gender expectations when she describes her husband, Tristan as the "housewife."

We have like reverse gender roles because right now, [Tristan] is staying home with the kids while I go to work during the week, and he cooks and cleans and raises the kids. When the kids cry, they want their da-da. They don't want their mama. So that's kind of odd, especially for Mexico, which is such, like a machista country.

Tristan agreed: "We are a little bit different than other couples. I am the one, I do the cooking, and I like to clean the house, too...I am the one that spends time with the [children] and do activities with them." Tristan went on to discuss the contradiction he saw between his lived experience and what he thought Mexican society expected of him:

The man is the one who is supposed to be working all the time and women staying home raising the kids. So now I'm doing her job...So [Kellie] is the one who's working now and so she's the man of the house.

Although Tristan viewed domestic labor as women's work, when he mentioned the crime rate in their city, it was clear he still regarded himself as the protector of the home: "I believe as a head of household you worry about what may happen to your children and their security. Plus, I feel more responsible because they are here because of me." Tristan blames himself for their co-deportation; thus, he is now both a caregiver and a defender.

Like Tristan, Jen's husband Christian did most of the domestic labor. Similar to other couples we spoke to, she did not perceive their family arrangement as typical for Latin America. Jen recounted the reaction from her colleagues as an example: "People are always shocked at work, because I work mostly with women, that my husband does so much. I'm like, 'Yeah, he does more than I do in the house.'" Similarly, Christian pointed out, "I'm not a typical Macho Mexicano." He continued:

I want to be honest—I think I do more housework than her. Like I really like to have my house clean...And so because I'm working less hours than her, so I think it's just the right thing to do. I'm more in the house.

The men in Christian's family are very traditional and have made personal remarks about how much childcare and housework he does: "And my dad, he says I'm a *mandilón*, which is a word in Mexico that they use for guys that help their wife." Gutmann's (2007) older Mexican male participants created a dichotomy of men as *macho*, someone who provides for his family, or *mandilón*, someone who is controlled by women. Christian is emasculated when his family mocks him for being dominated by his wife. The men in his family equate egalitarianism with authority. Vera, who works full time, reported that her husband, Sal, also does not fit the stereotype:

He's very opposite of what I think people generally think a Mexican man is as far as the *machismo*, the general stereotype about Mexican men. He doesn't really fall into them. So, he's very much—since we've been here in Mexico, he's been the domestic one; he takes care of the home and I've been the one working. So, we've kind of switched roles, but he does it.

The men had mixed feelings about the ways in which gender was restructured. Ricardo, who is currently not working because of his lower socioeconomic status, had always worked outside of the home in the United States, sometimes more than one job so that he could send money back to his family. "I'm mad sometimes because sometimes I wish to support [my wife] and support my mom, and now this—it's like I can't do nothing...when I'm by myself in that house, sometimes I'm crying. Makes me so sad sometimes." His wife, Ellie explained, "With no job, he can't really support himself, much less support, you know, me or the rest of his family." Now that Ricardo is no longer the provider, it has also been hard on his extended family; for nearly 20 years Ricardo sent them remittances. Through Ellie's full-time professional employment, they are able to help some, but not to the degree he was used to.

Similarly, Vera's husband has low socioeconomic status, and she reported that not being employed outside the home has been "very embarrassing" for her husband Sal. She went on to say that "it's very looked down on here for the woman to be working and the man not. People don't understand our situation." Feeling rebuked

by his community, Vera said her husband, “doesn’t like to go out.” Ricardo’s isolation is a strategy to maintain hegemonic masculinity.

Mateo also experienced gender stigma. “It was a hard transition,” Mateo said about moving back to Mexico and having lower socioeconomic status. “Because I’ve always made the money in my family, my group. And it’s hard because she’s [wife] had the power.” Heidi, Mateo’s wife, quickly added, “That’s making it sound a lot easier than it really was.” Heidi reported that Mateo “was on suicide watch for the first year” after the transition: “He felt like he was in jail, he was scared to go outside, he hated it.” From her perspective, “it was very difficult [for Mateo] to adjust to me making the money.” However, she considered herself lucky to be able to earn an income for the family: “You’ve got to do what you’ve got to do. But it’s been rough on him.” Mateo’s stoicism allows him to talk about the emotional realities without revealing his vulnerability.

However, not all the men were uncomfortable with the shifting gender dynamics within their relationship. For instance, Tristan, who works on the weekends at a restaurant while his wife works as a full-time teacher, said,

I like it. I’m with my kids all the time like playing with them, teaching them a lot of stuff. I love it. I like that. I like the feeling like I pick up [Kellie] from work and just like a warm meal on the table – like all this stuff. Dinner’s ready; trying to make sure that the table’s clean so that she feels comfortable when she gets home from like a really long day.

Tristan had not heard many negative comments from family about being “the woman of the house”; however, his wife Kellie interjected, “Not to your face anyway.” While Tristan reported liking taking care of the family, he guarded his masculinity and responded, “Maybe not to my face but they won’t say nothing to me, no, because they know I’d beat their ass.”

Co-Deportee’s Relative Privilege

Despite the hardships of living abroad, co-deported couples maintained some level of socioeconomic privilege as compared to couples who were forced to separate. The majority of co-deported couples

would not describe themselves as financially advantaged, as they too experienced economic hardships common to many middle-income families. However, these couples could afford to relocate to another country, whereas some of the divided couples in an earlier study (Schueths, 2019) were not even able to visit, or infrequently visited, because the U.S. citizen spouse was unable to afford the travel.

Dolly and Delano's situation illustrated just how difficult co-deportation can be when both members of the couple have lower socioeconomic status. Delano had some high school and Dolly had a GED. Although the family was working class in the United States, Dolly was able to stay at home and care for their children while Delano, then undocumented, worked full-time. They were even able to purchase a home. After living in Mexico for quite a while, neither could find a job. The only income they had was from renting out their home in the U.S. Several months after speaking with Dolly, she contacted us and said she was now living back in their U.S. state-of-origin with her extended family, working to support her husband and children in Mexico. She desperately wanted to be with them but had no choice but to return to work in the United States. Dolly and Delano's case highlighted that social class, in addition to gender, race, and citizenship, could create a barrier to a decent-paying job.

Contrary to Dolly and Delano, Annette and Cesar were transnationally divided when we first talked with them; however, they are now living together abroad. Annette was able to use her education and resources to move herself and the children abroad and reunite with Cesar after living apart for one year. Cesar, who is unemployed, reported, "In Latin America the man is the one who is the breadwinner, the one who go hunting, the one who go get the food and the meat and the woman is the one that care for the family and everything in the house and everything and the kids." At the same time, Cesar recognized, "I got blessed to have a wife that is educated, you know, and she's a teacher so she always had a job and so she, we can say a breadwinner."

Discussion

Harsh U.S. deportation policies disproportionately target Latin American immigrant working-class men and subsequently divide

families, even when their partners are U.S. citizens. However, some of these U.S. citizen spouses chose to live outside of the United States with their deported Latinx spouses in co-deportation. In-depth interviews were conducted with eleven co-deported heterosexual couples (18 individuals: 11 women and seven men) with multiple mixed statuses, including gender, race, nationality, sexuality, legal status, and socioeconomic status. Findings suggest couples' gender dynamics shift paid and unpaid labor to sustain family life while living as co-deportees.

The co-deported couples' experiences with hegemonic masculinity are complicated and they varied by the multiple and intersectional social statuses they hold. That said, our findings make clear that the division of labor within our co-deported couples was most often influenced by each partner's social class status. We found that the partner who held the highest socioeconomic status within the couple, regardless of gender, became the default breadwinner. In nearly all cases but one, U.S. citizenship provided an additional degree of social privilege, affording resources and opportunities to maintain families and financially support their partners and children. This finding is similar to the research on the division of labor within U.S. heterosexual couples (Chesley, 2011; Kramer & Kramer, 2016), suggesting that co-deported couples live within similar social structures, but typically with fewer resources and opportunities.

Specific to our study, U.S. citizen women—who are mostly white, college educated, earn higher incomes relative to other participants, and have access to resources—could leverage their social status to remain with their partners abroad and provide for their families as the primary wage earners. Crossing the transnational divide forced the undocumented Latinx half of these partnerships to experience a loss of status, specifically in terms of social class. The U.S. citizen partners with high socioeconomic status found their statuses were transferable and at times even elevated outside the United States. Deported individuals, primarily men, who had all worked while living in the United States, now took responsibility for unpaid, domestic labor in the home, including childcare. Thus, unemployed or underemployed, deported Latinx men face new marginalized masculinities and decreasing power while their co-deported, U.S. citizen wives with high socioeconomic status gain relational power (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), but still endure hegemonic mas-

culinity even as breadwinners. Most of the Latinx men living in co-deportation longed to return to the provider role. Even men who expressed a preference for caring masculinity used compensatory manhood behaviors to endorse the hegemonic masculine ideal (Ezzell, 2012) taken from them through the trauma of deportation.

The division of labor between men and women provides us a window into the gendered dynamics within their partnerships. Furthermore, how the women and men feel about how they spend their time reveals their beliefs about what society expects of men, women, and heterosexual families. Evidence of the participants' commitment to the traditional hegemonic gender roles can also be seen in how the co-deported partners discussed their situations; hegemonic gender informed many family decisions the couples made. Several participants commented that they had switched or reversed gender roles with their partners. One spouse referred to her husband as a "housewife," and said he was doing "her job." Another participant described his wife as "the man of the house," now that she was the primary breadwinner. Switching gender roles was a worthwhile sacrifice, as the purpose of co-deportation was to keep the couples physically together. As one wife said, "I'm here to be with my husband." Deported husbands also tended to blame themselves for their families' co-deportations. Perhaps this made the rearranged gender dynamics more digestible. Despite defying the traditional gender role expectations, many participants did not see themselves as gender innovators, but instead saw themselves as situationally induced gender role non-conformists. The co-deported couples in our study demonstrate both the adaptability of heterosexual gender dynamics and the hegemonic power of masculinity.

Consistent with Golash-Boza (2014) and Lewis (2013), the deported men in our study experienced gender stigma attached to their new caretaking roles. Co-deported participants reported that their friends, coworkers, and the community in general found the reversed gender dynamics of their relationship remarkable. In co-deportation, the men experienced social sanction from their peers through ridicule or name-calling for failing to fully conform to the hegemonic ideal of masculinity. The men in our study reported crying, feeling embarrassed, and feeling unable to show their faces in public. One breadwinning wife shared the gender stigma felt by her husband and reported he was "on suicide watch for the

first year” after co-deportation. The deported men experienced gender contradictions, “enacting femininity while simultaneously rejecting it” (Messerschmidt, 2018, p. 83).

Our findings also revealed that the deported men used at least two compensatory manhood techniques to neutralize gender stigma (Ezzell, 2012; Rogers, 2020), including isolation and appeals to their physical prowess. We found multiple examples of men isolating themselves from their community to avoid social sanction. For example, one participant, who said he loved being a more active parent and taking on a greater share of the domestic labor, said he had not experienced any sanctioning from his friends and family. However, his wife added, “not to your face anyway.” He countered, “They won’t say nothing to me, no, because they know I’d beat their ass.” To compensate for the sting from losing his economic power, he and others appeal to their physical power. In a similar vein, after acknowledging he was no longer the provider for his family, he redirected the discussion to the high local crime rate, asserted he was the protector of the family, and referred to himself as “head of household.”

Implications for Practice

Social workers have historically played a critical role in supporting immigrant families and must continue this legacy by increasing advocacy for racialized immigrants with low socioeconomic status and their families, who are swept up in the deportation regimes. Unfortunately, few undocumented Latinx immigrants living in the United States report having contact with a social worker (Hanna & Ortega, 2016), making it likely that even fewer deportees have had contact with a social worker. We agree with Ayón (2014, p. 13), who argues that social workers can play a significant role in helping immigrant families when it comes to “navigating systems of care, coping with discrimination, and oppressive environments, strengthening ties among community members, and advocating for policy change.” We concur with Hanna and Ortega (2016), who argue that social workers need to gain more education on how anti-immigrant policy, “due to racist laws, discriminatory procedures, and acts of prejudice” (p. 47), harms not only Latinx immigrants, but also their U.S. citizen family members. Danso (2016) conducted a meta-review and found that migration studies have been neglected in most

social work programs and must be included in the social work core curriculum. Another way to promote the institutionalization of migration studies in U.S. social work education may be adding it to one of the National Association of Social Work (NASW)'s 16 specialty areas. Similarly, we recommend the NASW include antiracism, which is currently missing, in the Code of Ethics.

Institutionalizing migration studies in social work education will have benefits for the co-deported couples in this study. Couples in this study and others (Schueths, 2012, 2014, 2019) who voluntarily left the United States in hopes of adjusting a barred spouse's legal status reported that if they had known how long and difficult the process would be to return as a family, they would have opted for continuing to risk living in the United States. Although the co-deported couples were resilient and able to, at times, regender the distribution of labor, some of the deported men were distressed and may benefit from clinical social work services. Future research should examine the mental health outcomes of co-deported, mixed-status families, especially for deported men with little access to mental health services.

Additionally, some U.S. citizen spouses and children work and attend school in the United States; they may have a listed address in one or both countries. Social workers on the U.S. side of the Mexico–U.S. border can support transnational spouses and children by providing a thorough, culturally sensitive, biopsychosocial assessment. It may be assumed that these individuals only live in the United States or only live in Mexico and because of the stigma of deportation, some families may not feel comfortable sharing that their parent or spouse has been deported. Some U.S. citizens may be eligible for services and need assistance negotiating both public and private social service systems. Social workers can fill a missing role in both community practice and clinical practice by providing co-deported families education and information to help them make informed decisions. If families are better prepared to manage the consequences and challenges of co-deportation, they will be more likely to thrive.

Conclusion

Ultimately, co-deported couples reorganized gender dynamics as a family preservation strategy, but still remained within the confines

of traditional hegemonic gender roles. U.S. citizenship clearly provides benefits unavailable to undocumented immigrants on their own. However, spouses with citizenship, even when combined with higher education and income, are still unable to use these statuses to their full advantage; they cannot snap their fingers and magically transport their families back to the United States. The intersection of social class, citizenship, and gender provided the greatest benefits to the couples, at the very least, to physically maintain their partnership, even if abroad. But what kind of privilege is it to be forced to choose between your country and your spouse?

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