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### Introduction

The United Kingdom (UK)'s hostile environment toward ('illegal') immigrants is having particularly distressing impacts on people of African Caribbean heritage, including individuals with criminal records, those who have overstayed visas and those who are entitled to permanent settlement (or even citizenship) but do not have the documentation to verify this. The UK has been implementing policies to create a hostile environment for 'illegal' immigrants since 2012, which make it difficult for migrants to open bank accounts, rent property, and access medical care. It also places strict penalties on landlords, teachers, doctors, etc. who fail to report suspected 'illegal' migrants to the authorities, which has led to reports of discrimination against people with foreign sounding names or appearances. In the UK, deportation is distinguished from administrative removal (i.e. of persons with no legal entitlement to remain) by being deemed 'in the interest of public good.' Thus, it has been a process of removal generally reserved for migrants with criminal convictions, even if they have been granted permanent settlement in the UK (Hasselberg 2015).

However, the "Windrush deportation scandal" (in which elders from Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean who are entitled to permanent settlement/citizenship were detained or deported) has revealed that the impacts of the hostile immigration policy are not limited to individuals with criminal records or are in the UK 'illegally.' Caribbean men and women of the Windrush generation came to the UK in the 1940s-70s. They, along with their children who either traveled with them or were born in the UK, comprise a community of established migrants who are in many ways distinct from a 'newcomer' generation who migrated in the late 1990s (Reynolds 2012). The British government has publicly apologized to the Windrush generation and has pledged to help affected members secure the documentation they need to prove their right to permanent settlement in the UK. However, it continues to defend the deportation of other foreign nationals from the Caribbean (many of which are from the 1990s wave of migration), including those with British children and spouses.

Deportation is a process that 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. the threat of removal) does not necessarily exclude migrants physically, but instead includes them socially, under conditions of protracted vulnerability (De Genova 2002), which can become embodied in both an epidemiological (i.e. processes through which bodies incorporate aspects of social, political and biological environments) and a phenomenological (i.e. how illegality shapes embodied, lived experience) sense (Willen 2012). Deportability leads to the risk of developing mental and physical health issues due to increased stress and anxiety (Willen 2007; Drotbohm and Hasselberg 2015; Reeves 2015). Illegality can also cause stress that is silently embodied as ulcers, fatigue, headaches, depression (Gonzales and Chavez 2012) and increased allostatic load (Willen 2012). However, it 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).

This paper explores how deportability is embodied in the Jamaican diaspora and the spiritual coping strategies that are developed as a response. In particular, it focuses on Jamaican-born, Rastafari men who migrated as young adults to the UK in the 1990s and early 2000s and will contribute to debates about the social construction of deportable subjects and the (intersubjective) embodiment of deportability. Based on interviews with (currently or formerly) deportable Jamaican men, as well as observations and experiences living in a south London neighbourhood with a visible Jamaican presence, we argue that while some coping strategies can ease the burdens of deportability for migrants themselves, those burdens may still be passed on to their families. Thus, attempts to understand the construction of migrants as deportable subjects, must take into account the effects of deportability on their relations.

### The Embodiment of Deportability

Despite efforts to control unauthorized migrations, states tacitly accept them as a cheap and disposable supply of labor (Sigona 2012). Deportability is one of the defining characteristics of migrant 'illegality' (De Genova 2002) and criminalization (Newstead and Frisso 2013). It has been

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theorized as an embodied and affectively charged condition of being and a lived predicament (Reeves 2015). There is debate in the literature about the nature of deportability as a form of political (and social) subjectivity. Some scholars (e.g. Willen 2007; Gonzales and Chavez 2012) demonstrate a strong connection between the threat of deportation and a state of abjection characterized by worry and stress. 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 host country (Luibheid et al. 2017). While some migrants are considered to be deserving (or potentially deserving) of inclusion in society, others are so marginalized they blame themselves, even when hostile immigration policies underlie their exclusion (Hasselberg 2015). However, other work (e.g. MacGregor 2012, Reeves 2015) suggests undocumented migrants are autonomous from state controls and develop strategies to work around them.

There is a growing literature on the embodiment of structural vulnerabilities by migrants living under the threat of deportation. Structural vulnerability refers to forms of social, cultural, political and economic marginalisation that result from imbalances of power (Duke 2011). As a theoretical concept, structural vulnerability directs blame and attention away from individual victims of suffering and onto the social structures that produce and organise that suffering (Holmes 2011). The distinction between citizens with rights and exploitable non-citizens who are reduced to “bare life,” i.e. are considered purely biological life forms that exist outside of human society (see Agamben 1998) leaves the bodies of “illegal” migrants excluded from care (Quesada et al 2011; Willen 2012). This is the case regardless of whether (Larchanché 2012) or not (Gonzales and Chavez 2012) undocumented migrants are legally eligible for healthcare. For example, in France, although undocumented migrants are legally entitled to it, the bureaucracy involved in accessing care can be an insurmountable barrier (Larchanché 2012). Thus, not only do stress and anxiety put deportable migrants at increased risk of developing health problems, but this risk is also exacerbated by structural barriers to healthcare.

One way migrants survive long periods of deportability is through intimate ties that they create with settled migrants and citizens. However, as Luibheid et al. (2017) show undocumented migrants draw on diverse intimate ties, beyond those that are recognized by the state, to manage the impact of their deportability. While fictive kin, common-law partners and godparents, etc. may not be recognized by immigration authorities, social networking and building social capital with such intimate relations supports the wellbeing and belonging of deportable migrants, especially when knowledge of traditional healing, healthy eating and local healthcare resources flow through them (Waldstein 2017). 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 2016). 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). Likewise, 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 2016).

Family ties and social networks are important among Caribbean migrants living in the UK, as are herbal medicines and spiritual healing. Olwig (2012) argues that Caribbean migration narratives are gendered because they reflect kinship and caregiving norms, as well as women's desire for respectability (i.e. a nuclear family provided for by the father and cared for by the mother), and men's concern with reputation (i.e. sociability in male peer groups, generosity toward friends and fathering lots of children). The masculine migration narrative involves public displays of individual social and economic achievements, while the feminine narrative focuses on sustaining and maintaining social and economic obligations to the family. Reynolds (2012) found that some (usually male) newcomers from Jamaica develop intimate relationships with (usually female) established migrants in the UK, which strengthen intergenerational, transnational ties. However, the gendered pattern of these relationships contributes to distrust of Jamaican born men among established Caribbean migrants in the UK.

Just as kinship and gender roles travel from the Caribbean to the UK, herbal remedies and spiritual healing practices (Laguerre 1987; Wardle 1999) continue to be passed down through the

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generations of the Jamaican diaspora (Higginbottom and Mathers 2006; Waldstein 2016). In Jamaica spirituality is highly individualized and flexible (Wardle 2017). Although there are many Christians (of a variety of denominations) in the Jamaican diaspora, there is also a substantial Rastafari presence in the UK. Rastafari is a Pan-African spiritual and socio-political movement that is indigenous to Jamaica. Central to Rastafari spiritual practice is the ritual of *grounding*, which YAWNEY (1978) defines as experiences of intersubjectivity experienced by groups of people who smoke cannabis together. While this intersubjectivity may be verbalized or acknowledged in non-verbal ways (including telepathy), it is also embodied (Waldstein 2016). In rural Jamaica people understand human reproduction as a process of sharing blood (and other bodily substances) that binds kin into altruistic relationships and as SOBO (1993: 56) 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.' With certain Rastafari spiritual practices this dissolution of the boundaries between self and other need not be restricted to blood relations (Waldstein 2016). While unity between self and other is an important element of Jamaican traditional healing, it also opens up the possibility that structural violence, which appears to be embodied silently and invisibly by deportable migrants, may not only be sensed by but also shared with others.

### Methods

The research took place in London, primarily in Brixton, but also in other parts of the south London boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and Croydon, which all have relatively large African Caribbean populations. Brixton, has been a hub of Caribbean culture in London for over half a century but is rapidly gentrifying. Many Jamaicans have moved out of Brixton but still visit the district to socialise, shop, network and trade ethnobotanical items: including roots tonics (fermented decoctions of the roots, barks, leaves, etc. of Jamaican medicinal plants), as well as tobacco, cannabis and numerous other herbal products (from 'black seed' oil to spirulina tablets). Jamaican migrants who are appealing/have appealed deportation orders are a hidden and difficult to reach population, even when researchers live and work in (or are even part of) their communities. Although the unfolding Windrush scandal indicates that a majority of Caribbean migrants have some kind of immigration issue, and many have been threatened with deportation, Jamaicans have a culture of 'keeping one's business to oneself' (Heal 2015). Nevertheless, rather than recruiting participants in institutional settings, as in previous research with deportable migrants (Hasselberg 2015; DeBono et al), we were able to investigate deportability in everyday life, especially 'on the road.' This was possible due to the research partnership between Waldstein and Francis, who not only is an experienced research assistant, but also a Jamaican migrant who successfully appealed a deportation order in 2015.

Even under the best circumstances, finding Jamaicans willing to admit to having immigration issues requires persistence and patience. We began participant recruitment by distributing information sheets through Francis' social network. Information sheets were circulated on multiple occasions at social events, private gatherings and while Francis was out and about on the road. Francis spent time following up with some potential participants face-to-face, while Waldstein fielded questions from others over the phone. We had to strike a balance between presenting ourselves with appropriate professionalism and reassuring potential participants that we were not affiliated with the Home Office or the police. Using a set, structured interview protocol, combined with gradual rapport building was the best way for us to achieve this balance. Waldstein began the development of the structured interview by conducting a series of open-ended life history interviews with Francis, which helped him to understand the kinds of data the project was aiming to generate. Francis then attempted to summarise the topics we had covered into five questions, to which Waldstein added an additional five. Waldstein tested the structured interview by administering it to Francis and comparing the results with those of the life history interviews. This confirmed that the structured interview questions would capture the appropriate data. The structured interview questions are as follows:

1. What was life like in Jamaica?
2. What made you come to England?
3. What made you stay?
4. What are the challenges of staying/living in England?
5. How do you cope with life in England?

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6. How has the struggle to stay in England affected your life?
7. Has it affected your and/or your family's health and wellbeing?
8. Do you like England? Why or why not?
9. Would you like to go back to Jamaica someday?
10. What advice would you give to someone waiting to get their (permission to) stay?

An advantage of the structured interviews is that they could be completed quite quickly (although some participants spent longer on their answers than others). This gave a voice to individuals who did not have a lot of time to invest in the research, but were able to provide on the spot input when they crossed paths with Francis. A few of the participants had close relationships with Francis from long before the study began and with these individuals we used less structured research techniques to collect life history data, including participant observation (i.e. spending time together, living in the same community) and *reasoning* (Rastafari ritual discourse that can be useful in ethnographic research). While Francis lives in south London and discussed daily life with Waldstein in additional semi-structured interviews, Waldstein also spent 3 weeks there during the study period (along with a series of shorter visits) and kept more conventional fieldnotes. Data analysis is ongoing and this draft is based on a preliminary review of structured interview recordings; we listened to the interviews together multiple times and Francis interpreted as needed, to get an overview of participants' responses and draw some preliminary conclusions. Future drafts of this paper will include systematic qualitative analysis of interview transcripts and fieldnotes, as well as quotes and ethnographic vignettes.

### Living Under the Threat of Deportation

We collected life history and/or structured interview data from 10 Jamaican men who had been living in the UK for at least 15 years. We also collected a few contributions in the form of photography and dub poetry:

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 craking 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?

This poem summarises the challenges that most of the men we worked with have faced. Many Jamaicans who overstay visas avoid detection by immigration authorities for a period of time. However, without valid work permits such migrants are only able to secure informal (and usually intermittent) employment "on the road" (i.e. through cultivating social contacts while out and about in the community). This could be a variety of odd jobs that pay cash-in-hand, but there are also economic opportunities in the trade of illicit commodities. While cannabis is considered to be 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. Involvement in the drugs trade is often what leads migrants to be considered for deportation. For example "Len" came to the UK when his older brother sent for him. His brother pressured him into selling drugs by taking his passport away from him. Len overstayed his visa and was eventually convicted of drug possession. He evaded immigration authorities for several years after he was released from prison. By the time he was finally picked up during a routine traffic stop he had three young children who depended on him and appealed deportation based on Article 8 of the Human Rights Act (the right to private and family life). In contrast, several years after "David" had been granted permanent settlement in the UK he was arrested during a drugs

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bust. While he was at the scene at the wrong time, he was not actually involved in the drugs trade himself. However, without proper legal representation, he was pressured into signing a confession and was sentenced to 12 months in prison. Although he was released early for good behavior, he now faces deportation, due to his criminal conviction and must build a case for appeal, as he no longer has any ties to Jamaica.

Our preliminary analysis suggests that appealing deportation orders can take up to a decade for Jamaican migrants. While waiting for decisions on appeals, appellants and their families suffer economic hardship, anxiety and uncertainty about the future. Weekly reporting puts even more limitations on the ability of migrants (who do not have permission to work in the UK) to make a living. Individuals who are evading immigration authorities, as well as those who are appealing deportation orders have access to the informal economy. However, 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 typically employ undocumented workers. This leaves many with the choice of either becoming completely dependent on family or selling drugs. Not only does deportability potentially lead migrants into crime, but it creates family tension and economic hardship. There are high rates of mental illness, especially depression, among African Caribbean peoples in the UK, which is linked to stress and anxiety. For deportable migrants and their families the stresses and anxieties of deportability are intense both at home and “on the road.”

Among the ‘newcomer’ cohort of Jamaican migrants, men are particularly at risk of deportation, but may endure the stresses of deportability in silence due to cultural norms and expectations about hiding the experience of hardship. Nevertheless, anxieties surrounding weekly reports to the Home Office, raising enough funds to cover legal expenses and the prospect of future separation are shared by appellants and the people who depend on them for emotional and economic support. For Jamaican men in London, successfully appealing a deportation order requires not only financial resources to cover legal fees, but also the ability to withstand long periods of unemployment and idleness. Men expressed anxieties about their children suffering from hunger, and described their own experiences of depression and isolation.

### **Surviving Deportability**

Back in 1965, 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 very 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” (p. 80). Over 50 years later in the UK, deportable Jamaican migrant 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 also smoke cannabis together, especially Rastafari men. Caribbean social networking strategies, such as maintaining informal relationships through mobile phone calls, which have been shown to help economically marginalized people make a living (Horst and Miller 2005) are also important in the UK. The men we interviewed worked as and when they could (some had regular employment, others had to work clandestinely) but all struggled to make ends meet. To supplement whatever money they could earn through jobs, they also built social capital on the road after finishing paid work. Social capital may be mobilized throughout the deportation appeal process (which requires someone to stand surety, character references and help with legal/court fees) with labor, skills and services offered in exchange for assistance.

However, maintaining a social network with strong (family) ties that may offer financial assistance, as well as weaker ties to acquaintances who share information is hard work. Moreover, it is risky for black men in London to be out at night, even if they are not involved in criminal activities. Avoiding displays of suffering is a very important part of avoiding trouble and building social ties, and requires vigilant attention to appearance and manners. Many Jamaican men find the discipline required to survive and build good reputations through spirituality. For example, in Rastafari (which has a lot of influence in the UK’s Jamaican diaspora) cultivation of a spiritual body is encouraged through various dietary, meditative and creative practices. Roots tonics and other herbal medicines are taken to purify mind, body and soul (as well as to maintain health). Many Jamaican men also

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find solace and guidance in prayers and psalms. All of these practices generate positive energies that help spiritual bodies to remain calm and healthy despite adversity. When deportable migrants face barriers to professional care, health is maintained through traditional medicines and other healing techniques from Jamaica and beyond. Thus, rather than draining the NHS, deportable migrants help support a variety of alternatives such as herbal products, bush doctors and spiritual healers. For deportable Jamaicans, spiritual energy is not just applied to bodies but also to the appeals themselves. There is a variety of spiritual healers (some from Jamaica and other Caribbean nations, others from West African countries) in London who have knowledge and skills that are perceived to help with deportation appeals. Spiritual cleansings help remove blockages and negative forces that can adhere to a person and frustrate their appeals.

### Conclusion

Jamaican men found the discipline required to survive through spirituality and engaged in a variety of bodily rituals to generate positive energies, which helped them remain calm and healthy. However, it was less clear whether spiritual coping strategies were being passed on to their children. This case suggests that while some coping strategies can ease the burdens of deportability for migrants themselves, those burdens may still be passed on to their families.

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