Starting again: Life after deportation from the United Kingdom

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Abstract: This chapter draws on testimonies of individuals who have been deported from the United Kingdom (UK) to identify what happens once migrants are forcibly returned to their so-called "home" or third countries. The narratives underscore the distressing nature of administrative removal and deportation and the challenges of starting one's life again, particularly after having experienced often lengthy periods of immigration detention in the UK prior to expulsion. Returnees' experiences speak to the difficulties of (re)establishing oneself and the resilience needed to cope with the numerous losses—financial, occupational, familial, cultural—associated with their exclusion from the UK. The chapter highlights the particular challenges resulting from being deported directly from immigration detention as well as the ways in which informants have tried to (re)establish themselves and carry on.

Introduction

When I met Dev[1] in mid-June 2014 at Colnbrook Immigration Removal Centre, he was in remarkably good spirits despite having been detained for over three weeks and facing administrative removal to Bangladesh. He had been living in the United Kingdom (UK) for four and a half years, having migrated to study. Prior to being detained, Dev was enjoying his life in the UK, even though it had been hard living without a regularised status. An upbeat, energetic young man in his early twenties, Dev had been residing in a city in the English Midlands—a place he said had "touched [his] heart" and felt like his hometown—spending time with his friends and girlfriend, a young woman who had also migrated, from Eastern Europe, to the UK to study. When the college he was attending lost its operating licence and closed, financial difficulties prevented Dev from continuing his studies at a different college and he was subsequently unable to renew his student visa. He became a "visa over-stayer" and continued to live in the UK irregularly until his arrest and detention in late May 2014.

As Dev describes it: "Everything was going good... And suddenly, one morning, they just came, just brought me down, just put [me] in hell. Just like that. Just one single morning. That one morning has just ruined everything." He was taken to a police station and held for several hours before being transferred to an immigration removal centre (IRC). He spent ten days at this centre before being transferred to Colnbrook IRC where I met him.

Dev did not want to return to Bangladesh. He liked living in the UK. He also did not want to go back empty-handed without having completed his studies, especially after his family had supported him financially to come to the UK to get his degree with the goal of getting a good job. In addition, he wanted to stay with his girlfriend and was not keen about the prospect of a long-distance relationship and the logistical and financial difficulties of figuring out how—and where—they could be together. For Dev, the years he spent in the UK are especially important to him because they mark his transition from his late teens into adulthood, a transformative life experience: "Once I'm in [the] UK for a long time, and everything has changed in my mind, my thoughts... Everything has been changed." His hopes and dreams for the future were fixed on the UK; it was the home he imagined and promised the lifestyle he desired.

Although Dev did not want to leave the UK, he did not fight his removal to Bangladesh. Unlike many other rejected migrants who are deported, Dev did not face persecution in his "country of origin" and admittedly had a good family there. Still, he did not want to go. In mid-July 2014, after about two months in detention, he was escorted by two private security agents to the airport and into immigration holding where he had to repack his luggage to meet the thirty kilogram weight restriction. The escorts then took him onto the Jet Airways aeroplane headed to Bangladesh (via India) and left him there to travel as a "normal" passenger. Landing, finally, in Dhaka, Dev fortunately had no trouble being accepted back into Bangladesh by immigration officials. He took a long, hot taxi ride to his village and family home, a place from which he would adjust to his new situation and figure out what next.

In 2015, the UK enforced the removal of 12,056 people (Home Office 2016).[2] This chapter draws on testimonies of individuals like Dev who have been administratively removed or deported from British immigration detention to identify and explore what happens once migrants are forcibly returned to their so-called "home" or third countries.[3] The narratives highlight the distressing nature of deportation and the challenges of starting "from scratch." Returnees' experiences, for the most part, speak to the difficulties of (re)establishing oneself and the resilience needed to cope with the numerous losses—financial, occupational, familial, social, cultural—associated with their exclusion from the UK and the specific issues associated with a forced removal from immigration detention. In so doing, the chapter points to the affective implications of removal and deportation as punitive border control practices that both unmake and remake people's identities, sense of belonging, and ideas about home.

I begin by outlining the contemporary context of immigration detention and deportation in the UK as reflective of the criminalisation of migration and the expansion of penal power in the service of border control. I then discuss my research methodology and data, introducing my informants who have experienced the British state's power of expulsion directly from the confines of immigration detention, often after lengthy periods of incarceration. The third section thematically explores returnees' experiences of forced removal, including the consequences of detention and deportation on their adjustment and (re)integration. The concluding section

considers how the themes emerging from this study advance knowledge of the post-deportation lives of migrants.

Detention, deportation, and the criminalisation of migration in the UK

Immigration detention and deportation are two interrelated practices that form part of the state's response to managing unwanted migration, controlling borders, and (re)asserting sovereign power (Welch 1996; Bosworth 2008; Bosworth and Guild 2008). These are not new practices; both have long histories as tools of containing and excluding those deemed threating or undesirable (Bashford and Strange 2002; Walters 2002; Weber and Bowling 2008; Bosworth 2014; Gündoğdu 2015). Nor are detention and deportation exceptional; rather, they are now normalised responses within state security discourses that frame migration as a "crisis" (Gündoğdu 2015) and disproportionately affect racialised and economically marginalised populations (Fekete 2005; Hernandez 2008; Wacquant 2008; Golash-Boza 2015a, 2015b). The extension and/or merging of criminal law and penal power into the administrative realm of immigration means that logics, tactics, and strategies common to criminal justice and penal systems are increasingly utilised to regulate transnational mobility, including the state power to detain and expel (Stumpf 2006; Aas 2007, 2011). Over the past few decades, such powers are extending to new populations, including foreign-national offenders, asylum seekers, and international students (Bosworth 2014).

Detention is a key mechanism through which expulsion can be more easily effected: the containment of noncitizens identified for removal within secure institutions (ideally) provides docile bodies who can be easily escorted to the airport and put on aeroplanes. In practice, things are much messier. Individuals may fight—both legally and literally—their removal from the UK, resulting in long and/or multiple stints in immigration detention as well as the often traumatic experiences—and more serious consequences—associated with failed attempts at expulsion.[4] The state's ability to remove noncitizens is subject to procedural safeguards and legal norms which provide checks on the power to deport (Phuong 2005; Gibney 2008; Gündoğdu 2015). For instance, the travel documents necessary for legally removing individuals are, for a variety of reasons, often difficult to obtain (see, e.g., Independent Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency 2014), further delaying or, in some cases, impeding territorial exclusion. De Genova's (2002) notion of deportability highlights the precarity of noncitizens who are subject to the ever-present threat of removal.

Immigration detention is a unique site from which to experience deportation because the carceral conditions significantly limit how individuals can prepare, both emotionally and practically. People who are detained have few, if any, choice for when, how, and where they go. The Home Office sets the date and time, the means (charter flight or commercial airline), and the destination. It also arranges the escorts—typically subcontracted to private security firms like Tascor or G4S—to accompany the individuals being deported on their flights to ensure they are properly delivered to their destinations. As such, those who are detained and facing removal experience notable constraints on their ability to act in their own best interests, narrowing—but not removing altogether—the scope of choices available.

Detention tends to be sudden and unpredictable,[5] even when it looms in people's minds as a possibility (see also Hasselberg 2016). Most do not have the chance to pack or dispose of belongings, rehome pets, or settle affairs, including retrieving savings from bank accounts. The

Home Office does not permit temporary release from detention to prepare for departure. Those who are detained have to rely on friends or family members to assist them in this regard, packing up belongings into suitcases and delivering these to the detention centre. The inability to properly prepare for removal contributes to people's sense of detention and deportation as unjust, undignified, and punitive. It also underscores the criminalising and control-oriented nature of these practices, particularly in regards to lack of options (e.g., temporary escorted or unescorted absences) available to detainees to prepare themselves for deportation. The lack of preparedness, in turn, makes it hard for people to (re)establish themselves once deported and may compound the psychological distress associated with removal (Cassarino, 2004).

Studies of post-deportation outcomes for migrants highlight issues of impoverishment and financial hardship, displacement and loss of identity, cultural estrangement, psychological distress, shame, renegotiations of familial relationships, (gendered) stigmatisation, and, for some, law-breaking and (re)imprisonment (Peutz 2006; Brotherton and Barrios 2009, 2011; Khosravi 2009; Drotbohm 2011, 2015; Zilberg 2011; Schuster and Majidi 2013, 2015; Golash-Boza 2013, 2015b). These issues, combined with the act of return to similar—or worse—situations from which people originally migrated, often create the conditions for re-migration (Khosravi 2016; Hiemstra 2012; Schuster and Majidi 2013, 2015; Galvin 2015; París-Pombo and Peláez-Rodríguez 2015). A smaller body of work explores deportee agency, including the ways in which they are able to use "foreign-earned capital" and transnational networks to improve their post-deportation outcomes (e.g., Anderson 2015; Golash-Boza 2016). In some instances, deportation may result in death or serious injury, both during and after removal (Athwal 2015; Fekete 2005; Walters 2016). Significantly less, however, is known about what happens to migrants removed to third countries under the Dublin III Regulation[6] or similar protocols.

The "idea of deportation," Khosravi (2016, 172) observes, "is to restore the displaced, out-of-place people to their 'natural' place of life, their 'home-land.'" It is a complex practice of deterritorialisation, an unmooring that can break apart families, disrupt hopes and dreams, unsettle identities, rewrite futures. As Coutin (2015, 674) reminds us, "deportation is not a discrete event; rather, it begins long before an individual is apprehended, through the myriad practices that make someone vulnerable in the first place" (see also Drotbohm and Hasselberg 2015; Hasselberg 2016), as well as extends beyond after the actual removal itself, enmeshing (some) migrants in what Nyers (2003, 1070) terms a "deportspora," an abject, "transnational space of expulsion, oscillating between redeparture and redeportation" (Khosravi 2016, 178). And, as Walters (2016) convincingly argues, deportation has a particular corporeality as it is made possible through various modes of transport necessary for moving human beings from one place to another. It is marked by traumatic ruptures and emotional suffering through both time (before/after) (Blue 2015) and space (here/there). The impacts and implications of deportation are also felt far beyond the individual deportee, extending to his or her family, the sending and receiving communities, and to broader social, economic, and political contexts (Hiemstra 2012; Hagan et al. 2011; Hagan et al. 2015; Khosravi 2016). And yet, although deportation is a violent exercise of state power and one that unequally impacts racialised and poor migrants, it does not reduce people to, in the words of Agamben (1998), "bare life"—irrevocably damaged and politically insignificant. People resist, survive, adapt, (re)build their lives, (re)integrate, and carry on, even in difficult circumstances not of their choosing.

Methods, data, and informants

This chapter draws on data collected as part of a larger study of immigration detention and expulsion in the UK. From September 2013 to August 2014, I carried out ethnographic fieldwork in four immigration removal centres (IRCs) to explore the lived experiences of detention as well as questions of home, identity, and belonging. I then undertook (a) formal follow-up interviews with a sample of informants who had been released into the UK or deported to another country, and (b) kept in touch with them through telephone, text message, email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Skype. The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to understand what happens after detention, including informants' experiences of release or deportation and (re)integration.

This chapter focuses on the research with nine informants (two female, seven male) who were deported from the UK and includes data collected as part of the formal interviews and our correspondence. With the exception of one informant who was removed to Italy under the Dublin III Regulation, the women and men in the study were returned to their "home"[7] countries located in three main regions: Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia. The formal follow-up interviews, which were conducted over the telephone or via Skype, commenced in May 2015 and occurred between ten to 18 months after expulsion from the UK, with an average of 14 months post-deportation. I offered a small honorarium (£15) for participants' time that I sent electronically from the UK. I maintained contact with my informants after initially meeting them in detention and followed up with them periodically using the aforementioned communication channels. This follow-up correspondence was important as most informants were removed after I had ceased fieldwork in the IRC in which we had met. Following up with informants and maintaining contact over time enabled a broader understanding of their situations and how they adapted to their post-detention, post-deportation lives.

The nine informants are:

- Adel: A man in his late twenties from Morocco who lived in the UK for a year and two months. He was detained after breaking the conditions of his student visa. He spent ten days in detention and then was administratively removed to Morocco in 2014.
- Aroleoba: A man in his mid-twenties from Nigeria who lived in the UK for four years. He was detained for having over-stayed his student visa and subsequently claimed asylum. He has a British-born son and had a British girlfriend at the time of his removal. He was detained for two months and then "voluntarily departed" to Nigeria through an Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) scheme in 2013.
- Beata: A woman in her mid-thirties from Namibia. She came to the UK to seek asylum and was detained immediately upon her arrival in the UK for over three months under the UK's Detained Fast-Track scheme.[8] She was administratively removed to Namibia in 2014.
- Bruna: A woman in her late twenties from Brazil who lived in the UK for seven years after over-staying her visitor visa. She was detained for three weeks then administratively removed to Brazil in 2014. Her boyfriend (now husband) was also detained (but in a different immigration removal centre) and administratively removed a week prior to Bruna.
- Buddy: A man in his early forties from Pakistan who lived in the UK for nine years. He was accused of over-staying his work visa after his application was lost. He was detained for three months (much of which was spent being detained with his wife in a family detention

unit) and then administratively removed via charter flight to Pakistan in 2014. His wife was administratively removed to Pakistan before him.

- Dev: A man in his early twenties from Bangladesh who lived in the UK for four and a half years. He over-stayed his student visa. He was detained for four and a half months, then administratively removed to Bangladesh in 2014.
- Levi: A man in his mid-thirties from Jamaica who lived in the UK for 19 years after coming to the UK at age 14. He was married at the time of his deportation and has four British-born children. He served time in prison and as a "foreign-national offender" was subject to deportation. He was detained for over a year, then deported to Jamaica in 2014.
- Olawale: A man in his early forties from Nigeria who lived in the UK for one year prior to his detention. He claimed asylum on the basis of his sexuality and was detained for nearly two years, then administratively removed via charter flight to Nigeria in 2015.
- Zahir: A man in his mid-twenties from Pakistan whose length of time in the UK is unknown. He claimed asylum after entering the UK via Calais, France. He was detained for four months, then administratively removed to Italy under the Dublin III Regulation in 2014. He subsequently re-migrated to Germany to seek asylum there.

All were forced to leave the UK for different reasons and all left directly from immigration detention. As indicated above, most were either "failed" asylum seekers or had broken the terms of their visas through over-staying or working "illegally" and were subject to administrative removal. Half of the informants reported having resided in the UK for significant periods of time, the longest being 19 years (Levi, Jamaica). All but one participant specified that they did not want to leave the UK, yet all, arguably, were returned "involuntarily." The nature of this involuntariness is worth detailing, particularly given the context—immigration detention—from which they left British soil and the conditions facing them in their countries of origin (see Webber 2011). This is not to suggest a false binary, but rather to acknowledge the structural and material conditions from which decisions to "cooperate" and "leave" are made.

The only informant, Bruna (Brazil), who wanted to leave the UK had spent seven years living there irregularly; her detention and subsequent administrative removal marked, for her, a natural ending to this particular migration and to all of the difficulties associated with her life as an irregular migrant, which, in her words, "was not life." In contrast, Levi (Jamaica), Olawale (Nigeria), Beata (Namibia), and Zahir (Pakistan) resisted their expulsion to the bitter end, pursing to the best of their ability all legal avenues of appeal to prevent their return. Others, such as Dev (Bangladesh), Adel (Morocco), Aroleoba (Nigeria), and Buddy (Pakistan), had assessed their options from the confines of detention and opted to "give up" struggling with the Home Office and "comply" with their administrative removal.

Aroleoba (Nigeria), for example, chose, after observing others stagnating in detention for months, to participate in a "voluntary" return scheme that was available to immigration detainees at the time. This scheme—called the Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme and operated by the third sector organisation Refugee Action—offered financial incentives to encourage detainees to "go home," including money for setting up businesses in the "home" country.[9] For Aroleoba, the AVR programme helped him to avoid going back to Nigeria empty-handed. More specifically, the £500 he received at the airport and the other £800 he got after submitting his receipts enabled his onward migration to another African country to study.

It is important to note that several informants indicated their apprehension about speaking about their post-deportation experiences because they did not want to be seen as "victims" of the UK's immigration system. They did not want to be considered only a "deportee" instead of individuals with nuanced histories, presents, and futures. Such considerations draw our attention to and remind us of participants' agentic responses to their experiences and situations.

Life after expulsion

The situations to which my informants returned varied, although fortunately none returned to active war zones. The majority had family in their home countries who provided accommodation and/or financial support, although some had to travel onward from the arrival airport to other villages and cities. Three participants reported, in the words of Levi (Jamaica), "coming home to nothing," which made starting again more challenging and their (re)integration more isolating. This was especially the case for those like Levi and Olawale (Nigeria) who had spent roughly half their lives abroad and for others like Beata (Namibia) who had fled their home countries. The notion of "reintegration" thus incorrectly assumes that these informants, and migrants, more generally, are "integrated" to begin with. However, the responsibility for such problems, and the challenges and pains of deportation, is placed onto individual returnees, their families and communities, and the countries to which they are returned. Upon each successful deportation, the British state absolves its responsibility for what happens next.

In what follows, I highlight emergent themes on life after deportation as reported by my informants. These themes highlight the difficulties of (re)establishing oneself and the resilience necessary to cope with the numerous losses—financial, occupational, familial, relational, cultural, social—associated with deportation from the UK, along with the need to carry on. Even though several informants noted some of the "positive" aspects of being back—the food, weather, and catching up with family and friends—the predominant experience of life after deportation is one of difficulty.

Being deported from detention

Being deported from detention posed significant problems for all informants. Even those who had the support of their families upon their return found life difficult, particularly because they could not prepare themselves from the confines of detention. As Adel (Morocco), explains:

> There's nothing prepared for you. There's nothing. Because already you built all your life
> up to spend it there [in the UK], at least for, like, a couple of years. So you just suddenly
> come back without... with no money, with no papers... You're not even expecting to go
> back, so those [first] two, three months were very hard surviving.

The sudden, unpredictable jolt of being disappeared from their life in the UK and put in immigration detention meant there was little that informants like Adel could do to prepare themselves for going back. From detention, Adel could not retrieve his "papers"—the original educational certificates and other paperwork—from his flat. These documents, he told me, were necessary for him to (re)establish himself in Morocco, such as proving his credentials in order to get a job. Adel pointed to a Eurocentric presumption on the part of the British state that deportees like him could easily replace such vital documents lost through detention and

deportation in their countries of origin. Dev (Bangladesh) also described having lost most of his belongings, including valuable clothes, shoes, and electronics, because of the luggage restrictions on his removal flight. Such experiences were especially frustrating and worked to structurally disadvantage those being deported from immigration detention.

The situations from which informants were expelled from the UK also impacted how they dealt with their return. Levi (Jamaica), for instance, was distressed about his deportation from detention after the way his immigration case in the UK was handled. He was very angry at the British system and for how he was sent back. "I didn't want to come to Jamaica this way," Levi said, referring to having returned empty-handed while being separated from his wife and children, even after spending £20,000 fighting his immigration case.

Likewise, Beata (Namibia) remained significantly affected by her experience seeking asylum in the UK:

> I think about it [detention] all the time. And it's the reason why I'm going through what I went, what I'm going through now. There are things that I have forgotten, but I cannot forget that part.

She was horrified at the treatment she received after being placed in Britain's Detained Fast-Track asylum system. She felt humiliated and discriminated against by a racist immigration system that locked her up in immigration detention when she had come to the UK seeking help and did not believe her. The manner in which deportation occurs thus has important implications for how individuals experience this challenging temporal and spatial rupture and their ability to (re)establish themselves.

Experiencing deportation to a third country

Zahir (Pakistan) is the only informant who was not returned to his country of origin. After having his asylum application refused in the UK, he was administratively removed to Italy as per the Dublin III Regulation and left destitute. Without friends or family and encountering an asylum system that was, in his words, "a total mess" due to the lack of shelter or support given to asylum seekers—and which failed him the first time around—Zahir relied on the small amount of money he had saved while working at the British detention centre in which he was confined.[10] Not wanting to beg, he worked "illegally" distributing advertising flyers for Pakistani business owners whom he says helped him but also took advantage of him by paying him very little for his work (e.g., 30€ for 14 hours of work).

Approximately six months after being deported to Italy, Zahir met other asylum seekers who encouraged him to go to Germany. He took this advice and migrated there, with great difficulty, where he once again applied for asylum, still in search of a state that would finally accept responsibility for him. After five long years in Europe seeking asylum in multiple countries yet being restricted by having his "fingerprints" (as per the Dublin III Regulation) in Italy, Zahir hoped that Germany would give him the protection and regularised status that would allow him to build a life. As he waited in Germany for a decision on his asylum claim, Zahir wondered how he could have better spent the past five years and what he might have accomplished instead of irregularly migrating around Europe looking for sanctuary and a place he could call home. Zahir's experience highlights the unique challenges facing non-European migrants deported

within Europe under the Dublin III Regulation, rendering them vulnerable as responsibility is passed from state to state.

Stigmatisation and mistreatment

The experience of detention and expulsion was something most participants tried to keep to themselves, which may contribute to the experience of isolation and social or cultural estrangement. Their attempts at secrecy underscores the stigmatising and criminalising effects of these policies and practices (see also Brotherton and Barrios 2009; Golash-Boza 2013; Schuster and Majidi 2015). Adel (Morocco), for instance, only told a few trusted family members, all of whom agreed not to tell his mother. He also worried how the broader community would perceive his experience, explaining that "it's not good when you say to people that 'I was abroad in France or in England and then I was detained and deported back home.'" Since detention and deportation are not typically well understood but still associated with wrongdoing and illegality, they are difficult practices to explain. Simply, they do not look like "good" things to experience and those subject to them are guilty by association. Adel thus worried that the "stain" of detention and deportation could impact his future career prospects if members of his community found out.

Beata (Namibia) also kept her experiences quiet upon her return:

> I never told anybody that I was actually locked up since the first day I arrived in the UK and was thrown on a plane by English immigration officers who regard coming here to deport Namibians as a holiday, and casually discuss how they are going to enjoy it.

Such experiences were not anticipated by most informants and did not align with preconceived visions of the UK as a stronghold of human rights, particularly for those seeking asylum. Beata's treatment both humiliated and angered her, and highlighted unequal relations of power between the UK and Namibia, and between British citizen (on holiday, free to move) and noncitizen deportee (rejected, forcibly removed), and contributed to her sense of injustice about the experience. By choosing to keep quiet, she tried to manage the shame and stigmatisation associated with her detention, deportation, and failed asylum claim.

Feelings of anger and humiliation were also experienced by other informants. Buddy (Pakistan) said that he was "treated like a criminal" and that the British government dealt with him unjustly, particularly after he had spent nearly ten years legally working there as a skilled migrant. His comment about being treated like a criminal is indicative of the stigmatising impacts of detention and deportation as being associated with wrongdoing and illegality, something Buddy viewed as mistreatment. Levi (Jamaica) also perceived his deportation as inherently unfair as he had grown up in England and had not been back to Jamaica for 19 years. "How is it justified?" he asked. "How can they send someone back to somewhere they don't know?" In addition to his perceptions of mistreatment by the British state, Levi also reported that people in Jamaica, including members of his family, "treat [him] like a piece of shit" because he "didn't come back like Santa Clause" (i.e., with lots of money and gifts). As a so-called "criminal deportee" and "migration failure," Levi did not live up to the expectations of a successful migrant as he returned to Jamaica with nothing after nearly two decades in the UK. Such testimonies point to the stigmatising impacts of deportation and how feelings of mistreatment are common experiences of being detained and expelled from the UK.

The gendered implications of deportation

The gendered implications of life after deportation also emerged through several participants' narratives, reflecting the findings of previous research (e.g., Golash-Boza 2013). Dev (Bangladesh) explained that as the eldest son in his family, it was both his "time to give back" as well as "stand" on his own—responsibilities that were difficult after experiencing deportation and returning with none of the resources (e.g., a UK college degree, money, etc.) that would enable him to assume this gendered role.

Likewise, Buddy (Pakistan) told me:

> I'm trying to stand up again, trying to build things from scratch because as a man it's my job to make something out of it. I have to survive.

Buddy's gendered and heteronormative responsibilities "as a man" were tied to the breakdown of his marriage, a process that began in the UK when he and his wife were detained and deported, and ended in divorce in Pakistan. He explained that his wife asked for a divorce because of the immigration troubles they experienced in the UK—troubles that were indicative of his gendered failure to provide for his family. Similarly, Adel's (Morocco) engagement with his fiancée was called off because detention and deportation were unacceptable "marks" on a future son-in-law, presumably signalling a lack of worth as a man and future provider. Such losses underscore both the emotional tolls and the stigmatising consequences of these practices.

In contrast, Bruna (Brazil) did not experience her deportation as stigmatising but it brought the issue of reproduction to the forefront, including the roles of wife and mother. When I asked her what she wanted to do after being back in Brazil, she told me: "I want to have family. I want to build my family. I want to have kids." Unlike Buddy and Adel, Bruna's deportation did not result in the loss of her intimate relationship. Her desire to have a family also precluded re-migration as an option for post-deportation life. The intersections between gender, reproduction, and migration are noteworthy here; due to the challenges of living life irregularly in the UK, Bruna delayed having children, while being deported Brazil helped prioritise her desire for a family.

Experiencing isolation

Several informants reported a solitary existence after deportation—a feature of life that was, for some, self-imposed and, for others, occurred through social and/or cultural estrangement. Aroleoba (Nigeria), for instance, said that he lost touch with most of his friends in the UK but this was his choice. At first, he says he shut himself away "to get [his] head straight" (i.e., mentally and emotionally process his situation) and then when he felt ready, he started socialising again. However, interacting with his African peers occasionally made him feel badly because of what he lost through his deportation from the UK. Buddy (Pakistan) also felt "antisocial" because of his experiences, including the breakdown of his marriage, explaining that he chose to focus on work rather than spending time with others. He described how his family did not understand what he went through, which contributed to his sense of isolation.

After being deported from the UK, Beata (Namibia) reported (via email) that she was both isolated and stigmatised:

> I did not only experience rejection from family but also from my community at large and some of my friends. Everybody was treating me as if I was a murderer or some sort of a demon.

This estrangement left her feeling rejected and depressed. Overcoming the experiences of detention, the failed asylum claim, and deportation were made much more difficult due to the seclusion and stigmatisation Beata encountered upon her return.

Similarly, Levi (Jamaica) said he did not have any friends except for one man he met in immigration detention and was also deported to Jamaica but lives at the opposite end of the island. He was also extremely disappointed with members of his family in Jamaica who offered no support: "Everyone I thought I could rely on isn't there [for me]." In response, Levi distanced himself from his family, saying: "I'm alone, by myself." He explained that post-deportation life was a "hard, hard situation" to deal with by himself, which increased his feelings of disillusionment and anger both towards his family and the UK immigration system.

Olawale (Nigeria) also experienced isolation on account of his sexuality and fear of being "outed" as bisexual in a country in which homosexuality is illegal. He worried about failing to live up to normative conceptions of masculinity in Nigerian society and was cognizant that by not having a girlfriend, he was not conforming, which increased his risk of being found out. Yet, at the same time, he did not feel this was a sustainable solution; he needed to come out eventually. "I've lost so much," Olawale told me, "not just time, [but] losing my life because I don't live my life, I'm living someone else's." Staying away from others helped him protect himself, but also increased his susceptibility to suspicion for failing to confirm to masculine and heteronormative cultural norms.

Coping with distress

Life after expulsion was, for some, therefore characterised by significant psychological distress, linked both to the reasons for migration (e.g., asylum-seeking) and the social, material, and financial situations to which they were returned. While there is not enough space to detail the mental health consequences of the sort of indefinite immigration detention that participants experienced prior to their deportation (see, for example, Bosworth 2016), it is important to note how detention can produce new vulnerabilities or compound pre-existing ones while generally being a traumatising experience. Returnees' experiences of detention can thus shape how they cope with the distress of deportation.

Beata (Namibia), who, as noted above, had sought asylum in the UK and was detained immediately upon arrival, was having a difficult time when I interviewed her:

> I really try to get back to just the way it was... I tried, but I seem to be going downhill. I just can't pick up... it's now almost two years, and just nothing is working. Everything is going from bad to worse.

Estranged from her family and having lost her job and belongings due to the reasons she left Namibia to seek asylum in the UK, Beata returned to "nothing." Initially, she found a job but was let go because of her deteriorating mental health.

> Sometimes I feel like I don't... I'm not thinking of taking my life, but sometimes I feel that I'm really dying. And sometimes I don't sleep because I'm afraid I might die in my sleep,

just, just like that; that maybe it can just happen. I've lost so much weight. And I'm not getting my period any more. I haven't got my period in something like more than half a year, because I've lost so much weight. And sometimes I feel sick, just sick.

Beata was suffering from clinical depression yet had limited access to psychological counselling or to a social safety net that would provide her support while she dealt with her mental and physical health issues. She coped with the assistance of anti-depressants and by smoking cigarettes.

Olawale (Nigeria) worried about returning to old habits, including drinking alcohol, to survive his situation. He worked out at the gym to burn off the stress associated with his failed asylum application and having been returned to a context in which he could not be himself as a self-identified bisexual man. The toughest part, Olawale said, was the realisation that "there's no way out of this." Coping with the distress of deportation was especially challenging due to feeling of being "stuck" in the situation, pointing to the sense of powerlessness associated with this lived experience for some participants.

Barriers to re-migration

Given the challenges facing returnees, it is perhaps unsurprising that onward migration—actual and/or imagined—was a common response to post-deportation life. For most informants, their forced returns meant they were not able to accomplish their aspirations through their migration to the UK—what de Regt and Tafesse (2016) term the "good sides of migration"—such as completing their education, being granted asylum, or obtaining permanent resident status. This increased in some the desire to try again. For instance, Buddy (Pakistan) sought opportunities for further migration as a skilled migrant worker in the Middle East, but was not able to find something comparable to the job he had in the UK. Dev (Bangladesh) also wanted to re-migrate to work or study in another western country and would ask me via Facebook as to whether being detained and deported was likely to negatively impact his future visa applications. However, the major impediment to him re-migrating was having enough money for the visa application, particularly after his family had spent considerable amounts getting him to the UK on a student visa in the first place.

As noted above, Aroleoba (Nigeria) used his AVR money to move to a nearby country to pursue his education, reworking the unhelpful AVR scheme to his advantage. After spending a few months in Nigeria after his deportation, his decision to re-migrate was a way of responding to his new situation and gave him the opportunity to focus on himself and his education so he could, in his words, "bounce back." However, the desire for further migration was in Aroleoba's mind. He did not want to live in Africa; Europe or North America were his ideal destinations because of the standard of living. Like Dev (Bangladesh), Aroleoba left Nigeria when he was an adolescent (age 17) and similarly viewed his most formative experiences as occurring in the UK and Europe, not Africa. Yet, despite wanting to re-migrate, he told me that he was "done struggling," referring to the challenges of migrating to the global north and having lost all that he had worked for during his time in the UK.

Likewise, Bruna (Brazil) recognised the difficulties associated with migration to a western country, particularly for those with limited access to regularised channels like migrant work visas. She viewed her inability to pursue an education as a result of her time spent living irregularly in the UK. Yet, Bruna and her husband tried again, re-migrating to Canada after

obtaining work visas shortly after being deported to Brazil. They spent about seven months in Canada before going back to Brazil due to an illness in the family. Regarding further migration, Bruna said: "I'm tired... We're not young any more, you know, to have adventures." With aging parents and the desire to have a family, re-migration was not a feasible option for her.

Re-migration to the UK was very much desired by Levi (Jamaica), who wanted to find a way to get back to his wife, children, and extended family. Yet, he felt stuck: "I don't know how I'll get out of Jamaica." The lack of financial resources to move on, combined with his criminal record and ten-year ban on re-entering the UK due to his deportation, presented significant obstacles. Similarly, Olawale (Nigeria) spoke about the challenge of being returned to a place in which, in his words, there was "nowhere to go" (see also Coutin 2010). The feeling of being stuck was thus a common experience among informants as the barriers to re-migration stacked up. Even as some informants were returned to conditions that sparked their original migrations (see Schuster and Majidi 2015), the impediments to re-migration were too great for most, at least in the short-term.

Ties to the UK

Several informants also noted both the emotional and practical challenges of managing their transnational ties to the UK after deportation. Dev (Bangladesh) explained that

> [s]till now, I always listen to [...] England Capital FM, and watch the news, watching the X Factors, the UK shows. I'm just evolving here, like gradually [...] I can't get rid of these things.

He still felt connected to the English city where he had lived, following the news and watching British television shows online. Dev told me that it was hard to speak Bengali properly at first, which marked him as an outsider. Yet he used his English language skills—what Golash-Boza (2016) terms "foreign-earned capital"—to get a job at a call centre. Dev's identity and sense of belonging was very much tied to the UK and it was hard to for him to (re)adapt and let it go. Indeed, at time of writing, his Facebook profile indicates he still lives in the UK. Dev's new life in Bangladesh was very much "defined in relation to the (im)possibility of returning legally" to the UK (Coutin 2010, 206), something that pained him.

Expulsion from the UK also meant the separation of informants from their family, friends, and communities. For Levi (Jamaica), deportation separated him from his wife and children, as well as other family members, including cousins whom he had helped migrate to the UK. Similarly, Aroleoba (Nigeria) was separated from his then British girlfriend and his British-born son. Bruna (Brazil) missed her friends in the UK and her younger sister who was also living irregularly there. These relationships were either lost through the rupture of deportation or had to be managed virtually through telephone or social media. Deportation thus does not singularly impact the individual and her or his sense of belonging, but extends to family and friends as well, generating new transnational ties to the UK in its wake.

Conclusions

The above discussion highlights the variety of experiences and situations that characterise and shape life after expulsion for my informants. The findings echo previous research on post-deportation experiences and outcomes such as emotional distress, financial hardship, stigmatisation, gendered expectations, and desires for re-migration. In this chapter, the

diversity of locales to which informants were sent, their different backgrounds, reasons for migration, and length of time in the UK, and their varying access to familial support and resources, offers nuanced insight into life after forced return for a small sample of informants.

This chapter stresses two important aspects associated with informants' experiences of expulsion and life after deportation. First, it shows the lasting impacts of immigration detention. Being removed from immigration detention prevents people from preparing for their return, precluding even the most basic steps they could take to help minimize some of the difficulties and challenges associated with deportation such as selling belongings to raise funds, or retrieving original documents necessary for obtaining employment in the home country. The experiences of detention also impact how people adjust, compounding the emotional distress of deportation. It is also through deportation that some of the carceral logics of detention extend to the country of origin (or return), which can become a site of confinement for returnees (Coutin, 2010).[11] As Coutin (2010, 205) observes, even as they "enjoy the right to exit their countries, this right is not particularly meaningful if there is nowhere to go." Although they are no longer detained, returnees face being stuck with no money to go elsewhere and restrictions on their ability to do so (e.g., bans on legal re-entry).

Second, informants' narratives emphasize the challenges of starting their lives again after deportation. As noted above, although none of my informants were sent to active war zones, all were sent back after transformative migration experiences and had to (re)start their lives while lacking the necessary preparation and resources to do so. All were returned to countries with little to nothing in the way of social safety nets that could assist them in (re)building their lives. Most relied on family and friends to meet their basic needs (i.e., shelter, food) and/or to gain employment. Significantly, these data show that all informants are trying to (re)construct their lives, foregrounding issues of agency and the resilience to carry on, even in difficult situations not of their choosing and whilst having to manage psychosocial distress.

It is essential, therefore, to consider returnees' agentic responses to their post-deportation lives—including my informants wishes to be portrayed as whole human beings, not as "deportees" or as "victims" of the UK immigration system. Failing to recognise returnees' agency and humanity risks missing the nuances and complexities of the lived experiences of deportation. The data presented here are only moments in time. Longitudinal research with individuals who have experienced detention and deportation would help improve understanding of how they put their lives back together, while attending to people's agency, resilience, and strengths. Above all, these data show that deportability, actual expulsion, and life after deportation are very much structured and mediated by global inequalities characterised by unequal access to avenues for regularised migration, impoverishment, and limited access to social security, along familiar lines of race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Notes

[1] All informants were given a pseudonym, either one they picked themselves or one I chose for them.
[2] An "enforced removal" is defined as an instance "where it has been established that a person has breached UK immigration laws and has no valid leave to remain within the United Kingdom. The Home Office enforces their departure to ensure they leave the UK" (Home Office 2015, n.pag).
[3] In the UK, administrative removal and deportation are separate legal processes and categories. Although both involve the expulsion of individuals to another country and restrictions on re-entry (ranging from one year to ten years' duration), deportation refers specifically to individuals who are subject to expulsion due to their criminal convictions and is now mandatory for those receiving

sentences of imprisonment greater than 12 months. However, in this chapter, deportation is used throughout to denote the forced removal of a migrant from a state's territory.

[4] Such experiences range from the upset associated with being taken the airport or onto an aeroplane only to have the flight cancelled at the last minute and being returned to detention, to the trauma of screaming and/or physically resisting removal on a commercial aeroplane—both of which are experiences described to me by informants in my larger study. See also the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (2016) for an assessment of escort and ticketing processes for enforced removals.

[5] A common pathway into detention—and then to deportation—is being detained when reporting at one of the Home Office's immigration reporting centres. Informants in this study were also arrested during immigration raids at their homes or places of work.

[6] The Dublin III Regulation stipulates that only one European Union Member State is responsible for determining an asylum application. Consequently, an individual may be returned to the Member State deemed responsible for her or his application (EUR-Lex 2015).

[7] There is not space here to delve into the nuances and problematics of the term "home" and how it is experienced both legally (e.g., as in being denied residency or citizenship and hence the right to claim a certain place as "home") and emotionally (e.g., through the act of being expelled from what may be considered "home" to the "home" the British state has determined).

[8] Detained Fast-Track was, at the time of research, a scheme that enabled the Home Office to detain those whose asylum claims it deemed quickly determinable to an expedited process that also limited opportunity for appeals. This process has since been suspended due to its unlawfulness (see Phelps 2016).

[9] In 2013 during the early stages of fieldwork, the then UK Border Agency and the IRC operators pushed the AVR program, which was contracted to the British charity Refuge Action, within IRCs. In addition to financial incentives, this program offered eligible participants the chance of a more "normal" return flight, such as flying without private security escorts, and larger luggage allowance. However, the Home Office changed the eligibility criteria for the program, excluding those in immigration detention and reclassifying this population as undeserving of this option. See Webber (2011) and Black et al. (2011) for more on "voluntary" return programs.

[10] In the British system of immigration detention, detainees are frequently employed (typically for £1 per hour) as kitchen assistants, food servers, cleaners, litter pickers, and activity orderlies, although the privilege to work may be withheld by the Home Office for detainees who are non-compliant with their immigration cases or contravene the centre rules. See Burnett and Chebe (2010).

[11] Thanks to Mary Bosworth for drawing my attention to this point.

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