

A Qualitative Study of Latinas Coping with the Deportation of Their Partners

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Abstract

In recent years, Latinos in the U.S. have been significantly impacted by increasing deportation rates. This study aimed to explore the experiences of Latina women whose partners were deported and how women managed these events guided by the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were administered to a community sample of 8 Latina women from the greater D.C. metropolitan area whose partners had been deported between 1 and 10 years ago. All women had at least one child under the age of 18 years living in the home at the time of the deportation. Data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis. Findings suggest that despite facing numerous stressors, women rely on various resources to overcome consequences resulting from their partner's deportation including religious resources, family and friends, and social service agencies. Positive and negative perceptions of the detention and deportation process emerged in the analysis. Women also engaged in various coping strategies to manage their experiences. While overall adaptation levels varied among participants, all participants reported positive and negative outcomes in the post-deportation period. Implications for clinical practice and intervention are discussed. Researchers also make recommendations for future research.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Problem and its Setting

The number of unauthorized immigrants in the United States who are deported each year is steadily rising, impacting families and the communities to which these individuals belong. The Department of Homeland Security defines deportation, or “removal” as “The compulsory and confirmed movement of an inadmissible or deportable alien out of the United States based on an order of removal” (Simanski, 2014). Many times, the terms removal and deportation are used interchangeably in existing literature; although “removal” is the official term adopted by the U.S. government (Hagan, Eschbach, & Rodriguez, 2008). According to data published by the Office of Immigration Statistics, an all-time high of approximately 438,000 unauthorized immigrants were removed from the United States in 2013 and returned to their countries of origin, including those who were removed from within the U.S. and those apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border (Simanski, 2014).

Among those who were deported in 2013, Latinos accounted for over 90 percent of this group, partly due to the fact that most unauthorized immigrants are Latino. Mexicans make up the largest group of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S., followed by Hondurans, Guatemalans, and Salvadorans. According to DHS data for 2013, 72 percent of those removed were Mexican nationals, 11 percent were Guatemalan, 8.3 percent were from Honduras, and 4.8 were from El Salvador (Simanski, 2014). As Latinos are the group that is typically most affected by deportation in the U.S., most unauthorized Latino immigrants live in constant fear of detention and deportation. This fear is evident in one factory worker’s narrative about a worksite raid told in the book *Underground America*:

The agents arrived and they yelled, “Immigration!” And everyone started to run for the exits – everyone in the place was undocumented. Most people ran for the emergency doors but Immigration had parked a van right outside the emergency doors and just grabbed everyone as they ran out...In the end only three of the workers weren’t taken away. Three out of fifty (Orner, 2008, p. 68).

Throughout American history, there have been waves of mass deportation of Latino immigrants, generally when there is a shortage of employment opportunities or at times of economic crisis, such as the Great Depression of the 1920s (Chomsky, 2014). In the 1950s, the U.S. government undertook Operation Wetback, which was a “military-style sweep of Mexican and Mexican-American neighborhoods” leading to mass deportation of unauthorized immigrants (Chomsky, 2014, p. 58). The relationship between Latino immigrants and U.S. immigration policies and practices has ebbed and flowed, reflecting the political and economic realities in the United States at those times.

In 2003, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was abolished and was replaced by three separate components housed within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), one of which is Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (U.S. DHS, 2011). The unit within Immigration and Customs Enforcement that enforces immigration policies is known as Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) (U.S. DHS, n.d.). The mission of the ICE’s Enforcement and Removal Operations in the U.S. is “to identify, arrest, and remove aliens who present a danger to national security or are a risk to public safety, as well as those who enter the United States illegally or otherwise undermine the integrity of our immigration laws and our border control efforts” (U.S. DHS, n.d.) Unauthorized immigrants who are apprehended at the border may be removed, allowed to return to their country voluntarily, or asked to appear in an

immigration court. These individuals may then be transferred to ICE for detention pending a hearing or released on their own recognizance (Simansky, 2014). Unauthorized immigrants within the borders of the U.S. who are identified by ICE through worksite raids, during traffic stops, or other means are subject to similar consequences as those apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol (Simansky, 2014).

Typically, an individual becomes an unauthorized immigrant in one of two ways – either he or she enters U.S. borders without permission, or whatever conditions allowed the person to enter lawfully have expired, such as student visas or work authorizations (Kanstroom, 2007). Unauthorized immigrants who are identified by ICE are vulnerable to deportation, but so are legal permanent residents (LPR) under certain circumstances. For example, legal permanent residents who are found guilty of “aggravated felonies” or “crimes of moral turpitude” are subject to deportation regardless of their length of residence in the U.S. (Noferi, 2013; Sladkova, Garcia-Mangado, & Reyes-Quinteros, 2012). Beginning with the Anti-Drug Abuse Act enacted by Congress in 1988, an “aggravated felony” was defined to include murder, drug-trafficking, and firearm trafficking (Noferi, 2013). However, this definition was expanded with the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, such that shoplifting, subway turnstile jumping, forgery, drunk driving, and other crimes that are considered misdemeanors in some states, are now considered deportable offenses (Baum, Jones, & Barry, 2010; Noferi, 2013; Rosenbloom, 2007). In addition, the IIRIRA allowed individuals to be deported retroactively, even if these individuals had already served their time in prison for their crimes or the action itself was not a crime at the time (Chomsky, 2014; Hagan et al., 2008).

According to the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, crimes involving “moral turpitude” include offenses that have to do with controlled substances,

firearms, and certain national-security offenses (Noferi, 2013). Other relevant legislation includes the Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which militarized enforcement of immigration policies at the U.S.-Mexico border, and permitted states to have more power to enforce immigration policies locally, often converting local law enforcement into extensions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Abrego, 2014). The passage of IRCA also made it a crime for unauthorized immigrants to work and created sanctions for employers found to hire illegal aliens (Abrego, 2014). All of the aforementioned legislation has contributed to the ever expanding deportability of unauthorized immigrants and lawfully present immigrants (e.g. legal permanent residents), making it more likely for noncitizens to be deported in growing numbers each year. Despite this upward trend in deportations resulting from increasingly aggressive immigration enforcement, the families and children of these individuals have not been considered throughout these legislative turning points.

Anti-Immigrant Sentiment. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, anti-immigration sentiment in the United States has gained increasing power, with media images of immigrants portrayed as criminals becoming more and more frequent (Abrego, 2014; Steinberg, 2004). This is reflected in the media's use of the term "illegal alien," which has been found to fuel negative political opinions about unauthorized immigrants, and to strengthen their association with criminal activity (Steinberg, 2004). Stories of terrorists who pose threats to national security have been used to support further immigration restrictions and tightening of U.S. borders. It is not unusual to watch the evening news and see images of foreign-born Latinos accused of crimes and blamed for the lack of resources available to Americans, which increases the demand for stricter enforcement of immigration laws so that these "unwelcome others" can be removed (Abrego, 2014; Chomsky, 2014).

There are several anti-immigrant attitudes that prevail in American society that further marginalize unauthorized immigrants and increase the desire to export them outside of American borders (Chomsky, 2007). For instance, many Americans believe that immigrants take jobs away from Americans, are a drain on the economy, and pose a threat to American culture (Chomsky, 2007). Many Americans seem to support the removal of unauthorized immigrants as a result of these commonly held anti-immigrant beliefs. According to Teresa Miller, researcher and scholar on immigration law, “Increasingly, the immigration system functions – like the criminal justice system – to socially control the confinement in secure, disciplinary facilities the unpopular and the powerless, which in this case are undocumented people of color” (2002, p. 216).

Detention and Removal Process. The growing detention system in the U.S. is in part a response to the frequent number of people who fail to appear at deportation hearings (Kanstroom, 2007). There is also evidence to suggest that the U.S. government has made extensive efforts to expand the detention system as a means of discouraging future border crossers and their families (Kanstroom, 2007). Detainees are usually housed in federal penitentiaries, private prisons, local jails and processing centers (Dow, 2007). According to the American Civil Liberties Union, detention exposes individuals to harsh and inhumane conditions, often for extended periods of time, creating a significant financial cost for American taxpayers (Tan, 2014). Aside from the economic cost of detainment, the detention system has enormous consequences to the detainee, to families and to communities as a whole which is discussed in the review of the literature.

The rights of detainees are rather limited – in most cases, detainees are not told they have a right to hire an attorney until after they have been interrogated by the government, and even then, they do not have a right to a court-appointed attorney (Kanstroom, 2007). In order to have

legal representation, detainees must pay for their own representation (Dow, 2007). Unauthorized immigrants who are detained for criminal convictions typically fare the worst in the detention and deportation process. In cases where nonresident immigrants are charged with crimes, they are put on a “fast-track” to deportation known as expedited removal, where there is no physical hearing for the defendant and the case is adjudicated on paper (Kanstroom, 2007). In these cases, individuals are given ten days to respond to the charges against them, and typically these notices are provided in English, which presents significant barriers for many Latinos (Kanstroom, 2007). Due to a lack of knowledge and resources to handle these circumstances, most unauthorized Latino immigrants facing deportation end up being removed from the U.S. (Abrego, 2014). Thus, the removal process for individuals with criminal convictions is rather expedient, leaving families of deportees with very little time to prepare for this life-altering event.

Unauthorized immigrants who enter the U.S. without adequate documentation or approval but are not charged with any other crime face an equally challenging process. Kanstroom, law professor and immigration expert, describes some of these challenges in *Deportation Nation*,

If [the immigrant] has a formal hearing before an immigration judge, he will have certain due process rights: to be heard, to examine evidence, and to receive a written decision... If he wants to appeal the immigration judge’s decision, he may face incarceration during the length of that appeal – which could easily be years. He may then receive a summary decision made by a single member of the understaffed and overwhelmed Board of Immigration Appeals produced after a ten-minute review of his case (p. 4).

Essentially, current deportation laws aim to “cleanse our society of certain people, many of whom have lived here legally for years” (Kanstroom, 2007, p. 19). Whether the unauthorized

immigrant is a recent border-crosser or a long-time resident of the U.S. seems to make little difference – the outcome for most unauthorized immigrants, as mentioned previously, is generally deportation, regardless of the consequences to that person’s family or loved ones.

Impact of Deportation. The disruptive and widespread effects of deportation on families have been documented in a limited number of studies (Capps, Castaneda, Chaudry, & Santos, 2007; Dreby, 2012a; Hagan et al., 2008). Among these potentially disruptive consequences are emotional and psychological trauma to family members of the deportee (Dreby, 2012a; Hagan et al., 2008) as well as social and economic consequences from which families may not be able to recover (Dreby 2012a). Family structures are often disrupted and may dissolve, including many cases where mothers lose custody of children (Yablon-Zug, 2012). In addition, statistics suggest that for every two adults who are deported, at least one child is impacted (Capps et al., 2007).

Professor of Chicano studies Leisy Abrego states in her book *Sacrificing Families*, “The record numbers of deportations, alongside the wave of hateful speech and growing animosity against immigrants, inevitably affect immigrants and their families’ well-being, whether or not all members are undocumented” (2014, p. 8). When an individual is deported, permanently or not, it could be argued that the effects reverberate throughout the family that is left behind, and in the community at large. In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that the fear of deportation itself has the potential to negatively impact families and communities in which individuals have been removed (Dreby, 2012a).

One way in which Latino communities are affected is that both unauthorized and authorized immigrants are likely to experience racial profiling and discrimination, which has been found to have negative physical and mental health consequences (Becerra, Androff, Simino, Wagaman, & Blanchard, 2013). Moreover, fear of deportation and immigration

enforcement actions may lead to a divide within Latino communities. In communities where raids have taken place, those of nationalities that are typically less targeted by immigration enforcement actions have been found to distance themselves from those who are more likely to be affected (Becerra et al., 2013). In addition, children and adults become fearful of law enforcement and develop mistrust of police, regardless of immigration status, and are less likely to report crimes (Menjivar & Bejarano, 2004).

Gender and Deportation. The deportation process is an inherently gendered process. Although Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will not release official data on the sex of immigrants who are removed from the U.S., an overwhelming majority of those deported are male (Dreby 2012b; Golash-Boza & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013). One study of Central American deportees found that men accounted for 88 percent of Honduran deportees and 95 percent of Salvadoran deportees (Blanchard, Hamilton, Rodriguez & Yoshioka, 2011). As a result, immigration enforcement actions disproportionately affect the female partners of deportees. Thus, it was believed that the present study would reveal various stressors that Latinas faced in the absence of their partners. Although limited, initial explorations in this area suggest that Latinas face increases in financial responsibility, economic stress, lack of social support, and increased social isolation (Dreby, 2012a). Consequently, this could mean having to enter the workforce for the first time, managing finances by oneself, and having to secure childcare for extended periods of time (Dreby, 2012a). Many of these changes may begin the moment husbands or partners are detained and deportation becomes a real possibility. Furthermore, depending on the Latina's own immigration status, deportation of her husband or spouse may increase the risk of being detained or deported herself (Abrego, 2014). Because of the large

number of Latina women who are affected by deportation practices in the U.S., the present study focused on their experiences.

Deportation and Domestic Violence. Although deportation may have various negative effects on families, this may not always be the case. One study on immigrant Latina women in relationships where there was ongoing domestic violence found that these women felt socially isolated, powerless, and reluctant to engage in help-seeking behaviors (Reina, Lohman, & Maldonado, 2013). In these relationships, it is possible that the deportation of a husband or partner could bring about the welcome end to a painful or psychologically damaging relationship.

Summary. The number of deportations in the U.S. has been rising each year, affecting disproportionate numbers of Latinos, who are often deported for relatively minor offenses or simply because of their undocumented status. These statistics, in addition to growing anti-immigrant sentiment lead to real fears among unauthorized Latinos and their families. Because it is an inherently gendered process, those most frequently impacted by deportation are Latina women. Following the deportation of their partners, Latinas could experience a significant number of changes, including changes to their economic, social, and emotional circumstances and effects on their family relationships. Although past studies have explored some aspects of how deportation impacts families, no study has looked at how Latinas experience these changes or how they cope with these effects, despite evidence that Latinas are most affected. For this reason, the present study focused on the experiences of Latina women and how they managed the experience of their partners' deportations.

Significance

Current estimates suggest that there are approximately 11.7 million unauthorized immigrants residing within the United States, and that Latinos account for as much as three quarters of this population (Passel, Cohn, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). Despite the growing number of families that are disrupted by the enforcement of current immigration policies, research on how these families experience and cope with these events is scarce. Latina women in particular seem to be disproportionately affected by deportation, and yet the literature is relatively silent on how these women cope with their partners' deportations (Golash-Boza & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013). The current study will attempted to fill the gap that currently exists in the literature regarding this issue.

In part, this lack of research can be explained by the challenges associated with identifying and recruiting undocumented or mixed status families (Hagan et al., 2008; Hinojos, 2013). Many families with members who have tenuous legal statuses are reluctant to speak with anyone who is in a position of authority, and fears of being "discovered" prevent researchers from having access to this population. As the number of Latinas who experience the deportation of their partners or husbands continues to rise, it becomes increasingly relevant to understand what the experiences of these women are, and how they are able to adjust and manage these experiences, if they are indeed able to do so. Therefore, this study explored the experiences of women whose partners have been deported and how they are able to manage these experiences.

Findings from the present study may help community-based organizations, such as advocacy groups, churches and religious organizations to provide support that is informed by research findings to families in the midst of the removal process. These findings may also help other social services organizations to develop programs to help Latinas and their families to

prepare for an upcoming deportation and to navigate their experience following deportation of a husband or partner.

Furthermore, developing an understanding of the ways in which Latinas cope with the deportation of their partners and husbands can inform practice in clinical settings, including but not limited to mental health treatment. Latinos have been found to seek help from professionals only as a last resort, preferring to rely on extended relatives, friends, and other informal sources of support if at all possible (Villatoro, Morales, & Mays, 2014). However, in the aftermath of deportation, it is possible that Latinas may feel as though they have nowhere else to turn, and may seek the help of a professional. Alternately, Latinas may be referred to treatment or therapy by a social service agency, further increasing the need for clinicians who have some level of knowledge about the consequences of deportation and the experiences of these women. An understanding of the positive and effective coping strategies used by Latinas whose husbands or partners have been deported may provide clinicians with a framework to guide other women who are currently undergoing this process. In addition, understanding ineffective and even detrimental ways of coping in these families may guide clinicians to help Latinas explore more positive coping strategies.

Disseminating these findings could possibly be the first step in addressing the needs of a population that has thus far been largely ignored in the research literature. The present study could serve as a launching point for further investigation into an issue that becomes increasingly relevant in our society, given the rising rates of deportation in the U.S. every year and the continued growth of the Latino population.

Rationale

Collecting in-depth accounts of the experiences of Latinas whose husbands or partners have been deported shed light on how Latinas experience these events and how Latinas cope with the stressors that arise from this experience. Due to the relative lack of information about these issues in the research literature, a qualitative approach seemed most appropriate for this study. Qualitative interviews permitted the researchers to explore Latinas' experiences and ways of coping while allowing them to go into as much or as little detail about their experiences as they found comfortable. Past research has suggested that Latina women may respond more positively to qualitative methods in which they have more freedom to tell their stories and share their culturally nuanced realities, which can be empowering to members of a population that is often silenced (Ahrens, Isas & Viveros, 2011).

In addition, a qualitative interview was indicated due to its adaptability to each individual, which is critical when exploring the experiences of culturally diverse individuals. A qualitative method allowed participants to voice their experiences and ideas in an open-ended format using their own language and terminology. In addition, the collaborative nature of qualitative research puts researcher and participant on an equal plane, and was likely to yield a richer and thicker description of the desired phenomenon.

Theoretical Framework

The present study was guided by the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress as described by McCubbin and Patterson (1983). The ABCX Model was initially developed by Rueben Hill as a model of adjustment to crisis (1949). The model was later adapted by McCubbin and Patterson to account for a post-crisis phase, and was renamed the Double ABCX Model (1983). The Double ABCX Model was selected for the present study because it provided a framework

that captured the components involved in adapting to stress in the short and long term. This model takes into account the pile-up of stressors, crisis-meeting resources as well as new resources gained post-crisis, and perceptions of the crisis, all of which contribute to the family's overall adaptation to a crisis (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

This study aimed to explore the challenges encountered by women whose partners have been deported as well as the coping strategies that women use to manage these experiences. The study will also investigate the ways in which women make sense of their experiences. All of these areas of inquiry seem to be consistent with the Double ABCX Model and thus this framework seems appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Purpose of the Study

Currently there is a gap in the research literature regarding the ways in which Latinas experience and manage the deportation of their partners, despite evidence that more families are being affected by deportation annually (Passel et al., 2013). The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Latinas whose husbands or partners have been deported and to understand the ways in which Latinas manage these experiences. Furthermore, this study aimed to develop an understanding of the ways in which Latinas managed the changes in their families resulting from their partners' deportation. This study begins to address the current gap in the literature and may serve as an entryway into future research that addresses the issues impacting this population.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of Latinas who have had their husband/partner deported as a result of immigration enforcement actions?
2. How do Latinas manage these experiences and the disruptions to the family system?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

First, the Double ABCX Model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) is discussed in terms of its relevance in exploring the crisis that results from the deportation of a family member. Following this discussion, relevant studies related to immigration and deportation are reviewed. Immigration policies and enforcement actions are being applied more aggressively with each year that passes, and this trend is projected to continue in the absence of comprehensive immigration reform (Dreby, 2012a). Existing research highlights some of the consequences and hardships that arise from family separations that result from deportation, including the impact on families, children, and communities. In addition, there is a growing body of literature on the cultural values in Latino culture that may lead family separations to have an especially negative impact in Latino families including but not limited to adherence to traditional gender roles (Rusch & Reyes, 2012). However, there is also a significant amount of literature that supports the existence of various resilience factors in Latino families. This research will be discussed as it relates to the experiences of Latinas whose husbands or partners have been deported.

Applications of Family Stress Theory

The Double ABCX Model. The Double ABCX Model of family stress has been used extensively in past research as a theoretical framework from which to conceptualize a variety of family stressor events that result in family separations, including divorce (Plunkett, Sanchez, Henry & Robinson, 1997), incarceration of a spouse (Lowenstein, 1984), and military deployments (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Wiens & Boss, 2006). In these studies, the Double ABCX Model has been found to be a relatively good fit for explaining the way families define, appraise, and cope with stressors, resources, and crises. When families perceive themselves as having sufficient resources to meet the demands of a stressor event, the crisis has a less negative

impact than in situations where families perceive themselves as lacking sufficient resources (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). However, at least one study has found that the Double ABCX model is inadequate for describing the changes that occur for some individuals during deployment-related separations (Karakurt, Christiansen, Wadsworth, & Weiss, 2013).

Resiliency Model of Family Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation. Since the development of the Double ABCX Model, researchers have continued to refine and expand the model to account for other factors that were not previously addressed by the Double ABCX Model, including the FAAR Model (Family Adjustment and Adaptation Response) which considers how families balance demands and resources, and the Typology Model of Family Adjustment and Adaptation, which describes how a family's established patterns of functioning play a role in the family's response to a crisis (H. McCubbin, M. McCubbin, A. Thompson, & E. Thompson, 1998). The Resiliency Model of Family Stress, Adjustment, and Adaptation is a more recent extension of the Double ABCX Model that takes into account issues of culture and ethnicity (McCubbin et al., 1998). The Resiliency Model is divided into two phases, Adjustment and Adaptation, and each of these phases is shaped by a variety of factors (McCubbin et al., 1998). One of the noteworthy concepts during the Adjustment phase is the idea of family vulnerability, which is how "fragile" the family system is; based on the pile-up of stressors and the particular life-cycle stage of the family (McCubbin et al., 1998). Families that are unable to adjust successfully are said to enter a state of Family Crisis, in which changes in functioning must be made in order to restore stability and harmony to the family and successfully adapt to the crisis (McCubbin et al., 1998). Thus, family crisis is seen as a predictable stage in family adaptation to crisis, and is not necessarily a negative outcome.

Previous research has utilized diverse theoretical approaches to frame the exploration of stress and coping in families facing a variety of stressors, however, the present study will remain open to exploring the experiences of women whose partners have been deported and the way they manage these experiences. While it is possible that participant experiences may fit within the Double ABCX framework, they may also be unique in some ways.

The Unauthorized Immigrant as Political Subject

In order to understand our current detention and deportation system within the U.S., it is necessary to understand the sociopolitical context in which these actions developed. As mentioned previously, throughout the past few decades in the United States, there have been a series of laws and policies put into place that not only control the “illegal immigrant” but actually exclude him from political discourse. One study articulates this by suggesting that, “The illegal immigrant is more than marginalized – They are effectively and legally neutralized” (Pope & Garrett, 2013, p. 175). In other words, because the unauthorized immigrant technically falls outside of the realm of the law, it has even been questioned whether unauthorized immigrants have a “right to have rights” (Pope & Garrett, 2013; Nicholls, 2013). Thus, unauthorized immigrants become a sort of inassimilable and foreign other, making it difficult for American society to be sympathetic toward their plight (Nicholls, 2013). This adds to the difficulties that the families of unauthorized immigrants face, as anti-immigrant sentiment may lead to considerable stigmatization and discrimination (Nicholls, 2013). This has been found to be especially true in communities in which direct contact with immigrant communities is limited (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008). In many small town American communities, perceptions of immigrants are based on media representations and the overall sociopolitical climate surrounding immigration issues (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008).

One of the results of belonging to a population that is virtually silenced is that despite the attention and controversy surrounding immigration reform issues, unauthorized immigrants themselves have little say in these debates (Caminero-Santangelo, 2012). According to one article that addresses this issue,

To speak *and be heard*, in detention and deportation, is a challenge that unauthorized immigrants face in ways that other populations with a direct stake in U.S. legislative battles do not. Yet, personal stories – oral history, life writing, ‘witness’ testimony – play an important, perhaps even vital role in advocacy and human rights struggles...

(Caminero-Santangelo, 2012, p. 449).

Thus, while some efforts have been made in the current literature to capture the experiences of deportees themselves, very little light has been shed on the experience of the deportees’ families, especially wives and partners. In fact, a substantial amount of the existing literature regarding issues affecting unauthorized immigrants has been written in legal and social policy publications, and relatively little literature exists in the social and behavioral science fields.

Immigration Enforcement Actions

In a court brief prepared by 46 different scholars whose work relates to incarceration and detention of unauthorized immigrants, a comprehensive review of our current detention and deportation systems was conducted leading to recommendations for reform (Rabin, 2014). This brief highlights the current condition of our immigration enforcement system and how well it is functioning. One of the key findings is that Department of Homeland Security policies and procedures along with present immigration laws have led to an “exploding caseload that has overwhelmed the removal adjudication system” (Rabin, 2014, p. ES-6). Consequently, due to this exploding caseload of individuals awaiting removal hearings, unauthorized immigrants are

spending increasingly longer periods of time in detention facilities. In this brief, it is reported that the average length of detention for an unauthorized immigrant awaiting removal proceedings is upwards of 550 days (Rabin, 2014). Furthermore, this study found that detention usually involves the placement of individuals in facilities that are far from home, family members, and sometimes also from their attorneys (Rabin, 2014).

Another key finding highlighted in the brief is that among those involved in deportation proceedings, as many as 84% lack legal representation and essentially defend themselves in immigration court (Rabin, 2014). This is especially problematic for the unauthorized immigrant, given that past studies have found that whether or not a noncitizen is represented in immigration court proceedings is the “single most important factor affecting the outcome of an asylum case” (Ramji-Nogales, Schoenholtz, & Schrag, 2007, p. 340).

Impact of Deportation on Families

Research on the impact of deportation on families reveals the detrimental effects on the deported individual, and also the deportee’s family and children. A large study done by the Urban Institute and the National Council on La Raza estimates that approximately one child is impacted for every two individuals who are deported (Capps et al., 2007). In addition, in most cases the children who are affected are U.S. citizens and a majority is under the age of ten, meaning that America’s most vulnerable citizens are often the most impacted by deportation decisions (Capps et al., 2007).

The Urban Institute examined the changes that occur in families following the deportation of a family member (Capps et al., 2007). Some of the short term effects this study found include having to arrange for childcare when a parent is arrested, limited ability to communicate with the detained family member because of a lack of telephones or due to the

remote locations of detention facilities (Capps et al., 2007). Most families were reluctant to seek assistance in the aftermath of the deportation due to fears about their own legal statuses (Capps et al., 2007). Many families even hid in their homes for days or weeks following the deportation as a result of their fears (Capps et al., 2007). The Urban Institute study also found some longer-term effects, such as uncertainties about the future and concerns about whether or not detainees would be released (Capps et al., 2007). Many of the parents of children in this study were detained for periods of up to six months, and among those who were released, most had to wait several months before an immigration hearing was held (Capps et al., 2007).

A study done by Hagan, Eschbach, and Rodriguez examined the disruptions in families that result from deportation, including effects on family ties, remittance behavior, and settlement experiences (2008). It was found that current immigration enforcement policy in the U.S. presents significant social and economic costs to deportees and their families. Most deportees who were interviewed had left behind a spouse and one or more children, which in many instances produced emotional and psychological trauma for these families (Hagan et al., 2008).

Joanna Dreby, whose research focuses on migratory patterns and how legal status affects children, has explored the impact that immigration enforcement has on families, and how it shapes family life (2012a). Some of the consequences to families that were observed following the deportation of a family member include decreases in socioeconomic status, experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness, the sudden formation of single-parent homes, and child-care crises (Dreby, 2012a). In addition, because deportations tend to affect more males than females, mothers often find themselves in the position of being the only providers for their families, and in the absence of their partners, if they too are undocumented, are unable to apply for any government assistance programs such as welfare or food stamps (Dreby, 2012a).

Children may also experience fear of deportation and learn to associate local law enforcement with immigration authorities (2012a). Children may also experience shame surrounding their own status as immigrants, and begin to dissociate from their immigrant identities (Dreby, 2012a). However, some more harmful effects on children include permanent changes in their family structures and in some circumstances; families may dissolve (Dreby, 2012a).

One of the most prominent fears that families expressed in Dreby's study was that mothers might be separated from their children and that children would be placed in foster care (2012a). One of the most troubling consequences of deportation is the termination of parental rights for the deportee or detainee (Yablon-Zug, 2012). Regardless of parental fitness, unauthorized immigrants who are facing deportation must often defend their ability to retain custody of their children, and many courts often decide that it is in the best interest of the child to have an American upbringing rather than returning with the deported parent to a foreign country (Yablon-Zug, 2012). Furthermore, because many parents facing deportation spend a considerable amount of time within detention facilities, failing to appear at child custody hearings often results in loss of custody (Yablon-Zug, 2012). Although Yablon-Zug's study contributes to the legal and family policy literature, it does not consider the emotional or psychological consequences of family separations.

Family separations can be quite traumatic for children, many of whom are U.S. citizens themselves. As one author describes,

In the process of apprehension, detention, and deportation, citizen-children frequently face sudden separations often shrouded with uncertainty from a parent or primary caregiver. Sudden, uncertain separations jeopardize children's attachments. In cases of

parental detention and deportation, often the child does not know if or when a parent will return, an uncertainty that complicates the grieving process of the child (Zayas & Bradlee, 2014, p. 167).

As for deportees themselves, they have been found to be stigmatized and viewed as criminals when they return to their countries, and are often unable to find work as a result (Dreby, 2012a). As Dreby describes, most parents come to the United States in pursuit of a better life for their children, thus deportation represents a defeat of those dreams as well as a defeat of their children's dreams (2012a).

Another issue that families face in the aftermath of deportation is family reunification. Many mothers face significant financial and emotional obstacles in trying to find strategies to reunite with their families in the absence of their husbands or partners (Dreby, 2012a). Clearly, attempting to orchestrate a family reunification can become an ominous task for many women. To add to the challenges of reunification, deportees are prohibited from returning to the U.S. in the future as re-entry following deportation is considered a felony offense (Capps et al., 2007). Therefore, deportation is not just a temporary disruption to the family system – it often results in a permanent removal of the deportee. If the deportee makes an attempt to re-enter, he or she will be sent directly to prison (Capps et al., 2007).

However, even more difficult for mothers are the disruptions caused to their children, which first and foremost is the loss of a parent. This loss is further complicated for children because the parent continues to exist, even though contact becomes limited and in worst cases, ceases completely (Capps et al., 2007). Other disruptions to children's functioning include effects on school achievement, loss of appetite, frequent crying, sleeplessness, and separation anxiety (Dreby, 2012a). Mothers must find ways to help their children navigate these

consequences, while also making efforts to financially provide for their families in the absence of a breadwinner (Dreby, 2012b). As Dreby describes, it is mothers who must face the greatest challenges following the deportation of their spouse (2012b, p. 842). Despite the existing research literature that describes the challenges and consequences families face following deportation, the literature does not capture the experiences of women who endure these events and research on how women manage these experiences is virtually absent.

Impact of Immigration Enforcement on the Community

There are several consequences associated with the enforcement of U.S. Immigration policies not only for the unauthorized immigrant, but also for families and the community at large. As Dreby describes, “Undocumented immigrants do not live separate and walled-off lives from the documented, but instead live side by side in the same communities and in the same families” (2012a, p. 1). Thus, when individuals belonging to particular communities are deported, it can be expected that there will be consequences to the community in which these individuals are embedded.

A study conducted in Lowell, Massachusetts examined the ways in which immigrants interact with their surrounding community when there is a heightened fear of deportation resulting from ICE actions and presence (Sladkova et al., 2012). The authors of this study found that an increased ICE presence and higher incidence of deportation affects the larger immigrant community in various ways. First, there is a higher level of fear among the overall immigrant community, leading to mistrust of most authority figures, including police, health professionals and financial institutions (Sladkova et al., 2012). Some of the ways in which this fear manifests itself is in an increased reluctance to report crimes, such as in the case of domestic violence, where victims may fear that seeking help will result in the discovery of illegal status (Sladkova et

al., 2012). In addition, many immigrants will refrain from seeking medical attention for various types of health problems, fearing that medical institutions may report them to immigration authorities (Sladkova et al., 2012). Finally, this study found that increased ICE presence and enforcement actions lead to greater community instability, in that immigrants perceive threat and feel they must find new communities in which to live (Sladkova et al., 2012). This may lead to disruptions in the family's employment opportunities and economic realities, as well as disruptions to the communities that are left behind.

Another finding that came from the study in Lowell, Massachusetts is that by increasing deportations within particular communities, the organizations that serve immigrant communities must divert resources away from other efforts to focus on the aftermath of deportation (Sladkova et al., 2012). For instance, as the authors of this study describe, "The organizations' increased preoccupation with detentions and deportations takes resources away from their already established mission and programs, exhausts them financially, and taxes employees with additional responsibilities" (Sladkova et al., 2012, p. 88).

Resilience in Latino Families

In a review of the literature on resilience in Latino families, Cardoso and Thompson found that there are four domains of risk and protective factors, which are individual characteristics, family strength, cultural factors and community support (2010). One individual factor that contributes to resilience is a sense of personal agency, which in a study of Mexican women, was found to lead to a greater desire for employment, autonomy, and education (Campbell, 2008). Some of the strengths that exist in Latino families include the collectivist value of *familismo* or familism, as well as strong kinship ties and family support (Bermudez & Mancini, 2013). Strong family relationships in which parents supervise children closely and

maintain open communication with them has been linked to greater resilience in Latino children as well (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010).

Familismo. The importance of closeness with family members and relationships with one's family in Latino culture is well-established in the research literature. The cultural value of familismo has been defined as a strong identification with one's nuclear and extended family, and choices are often driven by this identification (Smith-Morris, Morales-Campos, Alvarez, Castaneda, & Turner, 2013). In one study, it was found that Mexican individuals defined *familismo* as a concept meaning that "family is first" and that an individual "is always there to support his family" (Sotomayor-Peterson, 2012, p. 221). Some research suggests that this is most salient in families that have recently immigrated to the United States that are less acculturated (Miranda, Estada, & Firpo-Jimenez, 2000). Thus, from the perspective of *familismo*, deportation is a troubling phenomenon that impairs a family's ability to be there for one another.

A study of U.S.-Mexico border crossers found that nearly all of those who make the decision to cross do so for their families. It was found that when men choose to cross illegally through the U.S.-Mexico border, they do so because the benefit for the entire family is perceived to be greater than the risk to the individual (DeLuca, McEwen, & Keim, 2010).

In another study of immigrant Latina women who experienced domestic violence, it was found that women often turned to family relationships for emotional and financial support (Reina, Maldonado, & Lohman, 2013). When making decisions about seeking or obtaining help, women in this study were primarily influenced by the perceived impact that their decisions would have on immediate and extended family members (Reina et al., 2013b). In addition, decisions that would bring shame or stigma to the family were avoided, as a means of protecting family members (Reina et al., 2013b). Many of the women in this study reported refraining from

accepting various types of work opportunities, even if it would provide greater financial independence, because it was viewed as more important to stay at home with their children (Reina et al., 2013b). Given this finding, it is possible to imagine how difficult it may be for a woman whose husband or partner has been deported, and against her will and personal values, must enter the workforce to support her family.

Spirituality. Previous studies among immigrant Latinos have highlighted the importance of religion and spirituality as a means of coping with life stressors (Dunn & O'Brien, 2009). Past research demonstrates the positive impact that spirituality and religion can potentially have for Latinos, including benefits to psychological and physical health, and easing an immigrant's adjustment to living in the U.S. (Abraido-Lanza, Vasquez, & Echeverria, 2004; Falicov, 2009). Some of the ways in which Latinos use religion and spirituality as a positive coping mechanism include seeking social support, engaging in prayer, attending religious services, and constructing appraisals based on religious beliefs (Dunn & O'Brien, 2009). However, there is also some evidence to suggest that religion can become a negative coping strategy, such as when individuals begin to question God's power and ability to answer prayers (Dunn & O'Brien, 2009, 221).

Spirituality is also an important factor to consider in the context of the present study because previous research has emphasized the importance that religion has for Latino women, due to cultural expectations about gender roles. There is a construct in Latino culture known as *marianismo*, which emphasizes the woman's role as both mother and wife, expected to be nurturing and self-sacrificing (Falicov, 1998).

Social Support. An exploratory study of resiliency in low-income Latino families found that social support levels played a critical role in a family's ability to adapt to the challenges they

faced associated with their low socioeconomic status (San Miguel, Morrison, & Weissglass, 1998). Families with higher levels of informal support, such as that of relatives and friends, were less likely to seek formal support from professional organizations (San Miguel et al., 1998). Latinos who lacked close relationships with relatives were more likely to seek support from formal sources, including religious institutions and social service agencies (San Miguel et al., 1998). However, it was also found that Latinos experienced barriers to support, such as language and a lack of familiarity with the social services system (San Miguel et al., 1998). This finding is important because it suggests that resilient families that are willing to seek assistance may experience obstacles in their efforts to obtain needed services.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Design

This study employed a semi-structured qualitative interview that was administered to all participants. A qualitative approach promotes the collection of data in its natural setting and allows the researcher to capture the richness and depths of participants' experiences, which is especially appropriate when research in a particular topic is lacking (Creswell, 2013).

The researcher was reflexive throughout the research process, monitoring emotional responses to participants' stories, especially if interviews became emotionally intense. Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher bracketed all biases and experiences that could influence data collection and analysis. The researcher used memos to keep track of these responses and used these memos in the analyses phase. The researcher ensured that the environment remained safe and did not go beyond the participant's comfort level by allowing participants to know that they did not need to disclose any information they did not wish to disclose.

Participants

Participants included 8 Latina women from the Washington DC metropolitan area that had at least one child under 18 years-old living in the household at the time of their husband or partner's deportation. For the purposes of this study, the U.S. Census Bureau definition of a Hispanic or Latino was used, being a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). In order to be eligible for the study, Latinas needed to be over the age of 18 years-old and had their husbands or partners deported to their nation of origin by forcible or voluntary removal between 1 and 10 years ago, allowing the experience to be recent but not immediate. Latinas were eligible regardless of whether or not they were in favor of the deportation, as leaving out

women who felt favorably toward the deportation could introduce bias. Latinas needed to be in a relationship with their husband or partner for at least one year prior to the deportation, as these women were more likely to have been impacted by the removal of their partners. Participants could be either English or Spanish speaking and were eligible for participation regardless of citizenship or immigration status. Latina women whose partners had re-entered the United States since the removal order were ineligible, as this could alter the dynamics of the family system. In addition, women whose partners have re-entered the United States could have a different set of experiences than the ones eligible for this study.

Participants were recruited from local churches, community advocacy groups, immigrants' rights organizations, outpatient therapists and other mental health providers, as well as by word of mouth. Bilingual flyers (Appendix A) containing pertinent study-related information and researcher contact information were distributed throughout the target geographical area. Participants were also recruited via email (Appendix B) through therapy and mental health listservs and through postings to relevant Internet sites (Appendix C).

Procedures

Prior to initiating data collection, the researcher sought approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon receipt of IRB approval, the researcher began recruitment of participants using flyers, emails, Internet postings and word of mouth. Due to the sensitive nature of the study and challenges involved with identifying members of the target population, this study utilized a snowball sampling method. Latina women expressing interest in the study were screened by telephone to determine eligibility based on pre-established criteria (Appendix D). During the screening, the researcher provided a brief overview of the study and asked participants to respond to screening questions based on eligibility criteria. Participants were

asked their age, whether or not they self-identified as Latina or Hispanic, the date of deportation for their partner or husband, and the length of the relationship prior to the deportation.

Participants were asked whether or not children live in the home, and if so, the number of children and their ages. Those found ineligible were referred to appropriate community resources as needed. Those who met eligibility criteria and were interested in participating were asked to read and sign an Informed Consent form (Appendix E), which was made available in English and Spanish. Participants were informed about their ability to withdraw from the study at any time, which was made explicit in the Informed Consent document and was communicated verbally to each participant, allowing time for questions and clarification. The researcher answered all questions regarding the study prior to obtaining participant signatures. Subsequently, all participants were asked to respond to a Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix F).

Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish, depending on the participant's preference and lasted approximately one hour each. All interviews were electronically recorded for review, transcription, and analysis. All women were interviewed at a location that was convenient for them, either in their home or a comparable setting where privacy and safety could be ensured for both researcher and participant. Due to the sensitive nature of the interview process, interview questions seemed to elicit intense emotional responses from some participants. As a result, the researcher stopped the interview and debriefed with any participants that became visibly upset, or reported painful or difficult feelings during the interviews. In addition, all participants were given a hotline number and referrals to outpatient clinics that provide services in Spanish (Appendix H). Given the sensitive nature of the study, participants were each assigned a pseudonym to preserve anonymity and increase trust in the researcher and

research process. At the conclusion of the interview, all participants were compensated with a \$20 Target gift card.

Instruments

Demographic Questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire (Appendix F) contained items about the participant's age, country of origin, educational level, income and occupation. Participants were asked the date of the partner's deportation as well as how much time passed between the partner's detention or arrest and his deportation. Participants were asked how many children were living in the household and their ages. In addition, participants were asked about their income and occupation at the time their partner or husband was deported.

Semi-Structured Interview. A semi-structured interview was used to gather data on the experiences of Latinas resulting from the deportation of their husbands or partners, and the ways in which Latina women coped following the deportation of their husbands or partners. Women were asked to describe the stages leading up to the deportation, and were asked to describe their experiences during this process. In addition, women were asked to describe the ways in which they coped with these experiences and the resources utilized during this period. Finally, women were asked to describe the process of adjusting to the new family system and structure. The semi-structured interview served as a guideline for the researcher in the data-collection process; however, actual items that were asked varied slightly according to participant. In addition, items were asked in the language preferred by the participant, either English or Spanish. For those who did not provide sufficient information in response to an item, probes were used to facilitate more elaborate responses. The informational script that was used to describe the interview to participants as well as the outline of the semi-structured interview follows:

Pre-Interview Script. This interview will ask questions about different moments in the process of your husband/partner's deportation. The first will ask questions about how your partner was first identified as an illegal immigrant, and then you will be asked about the time leading up to your partner's deportation, including detention and legal proceedings. Finally, you will be asked some questions about life after your partner's deportation. I will be electronically recording the interview so that it can be transcribed later. The audio recording will be destroyed as soon as the interview is transcribed. You may stop the interview at any time.

1. First I would like to ask you about the circumstances surrounding the beginning of the deportation process.
 - a. How was your partner identified as an illegal immigrant?
 - b. Was your partner detained in a detention facility?
 - i. If so, when and how did you learn about his detention?
 - ii. How long was he detained before he was deported?
 - iii. Were you allowed any type of contact or communication with your partner during the detention period? Please describe
 - c. What was this period before the deportation like for you and your family?
 - i. What emotions did you experience?
 - ii. What thoughts did you have?
 - iii. How did you make sense of the experience?
 - d. What changes happened to you, your children, and your family during this period?
 - e. How did you cope with the situation?
 - f. How did your children and family cope with the situation?
 - g. Did you play a role in helping them cope?
 - h. Did you have support during this time? If so, what kind? (*Probe: people, organizations, activities*)
 - i. What support or resources were most helpful? What would you have wished you had during this time?
 - j. How did you cope during this period?
 - k. Looking back, is there anything you would do the same way and anything that you wish you had differently?
2. Could you tell me now when and how you learned that your partner would be deported?
 - a. What was it like for you? (*Probe for emotions, behaviors, and thoughts*)
 - b. What helped you deal with the news?
 - c. What did not help you deal with the news?
 - d. How did your family and children learn that your partner would be deported?
3. Now, I will be asking you about the period following the actual deportation.

- a. What was your partner's deportation like for you? What emotions did you experience?
 - b. What changes happened in the family following the deportation? (*Probe: child care arrangements, work, household chores; contact with partner*)
 - c. What changes happened for your children? (*Probe: emotional, social, behavioral, academic, contact with partner*)
 - d. How did you make sense of these changes? What did you tell yourself about it?
 - e. Did you have support during this time? If so, what kind? (*Probe: people, organizations, activities*)
 - f. What support or resources were most helpful? What would you have wished you had during this time?
 - g. What else did you do or happened that helped you cope during this period?
 - h. How was the relationship between you and your partner affected?
 - i. How was the relationship between your partner and your children affected?
4. . Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your experience of your partner's deportation that would be important for me to know?
 5. Is there anything else you would like to share that has not been discussed?

At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher debriefed with each participant regarding any uncomfortable or painful emotions that arose throughout the interview process. In addition, the researcher monitored participant's emotional responses throughout the interview and stopped interviews as needed, to ensure participant comfort and safety.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure reliability, a second coder, Dr. Mariana Falconier, reviewed and coded all transcripts to ensure inter-coder agreement. Validity was established through peer review or debriefing, and by triangulation.

Reflexivity. As another method of establishing validity, it was important for researchers to clarify their positions and assumptions about the research topics, which is encouraged within a transcendental phenomenological framework (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the primary investigator and co-investigator self-identify as Latina, which was a key aspect to acknowledge since as Latinas, the investigators may have a tendency to advocate for the population being studied. Prior to coding of transcripts and throughout the data analyses, investigators had an

ongoing discussion about personal experiences, biases and assumptions that could impact the coding process.

To minimize impact of assumptions and biases on the research process, researcher JE maintained a journal in which experiences were bracketed on an ongoing basis. The contents of this journal were also used during the analysis phase.

Analyses

All study-related data were organized into electronic files, including screening data, demographic questionnaires, interviews, and journal entries. Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to analyze all data. According to Braun and Clarke, TA allows the researcher to identify, organize and shed light on patterns of meaning across a set of data (2012). While many patterns of meaning, or themes, emerged, the analysis served to identify those themes that were relevant to answering the specific research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In this case, Thematic Analysis was conducted inductively. Thematic Analysis involves six phases, the first of which is to familiarize oneself with the data through immersion. Researchers immersed themselves in the data by reading and re-reading transcripts, demographic questionnaires, and journal entries. The second step involved systematic analysis of the data to generate initial codes, which each coder (JE and MKF) conducted independently to establish reliability of codes. Third, codes were grouped into themes. In the fourth phase, themes were reviewed by checking them against the dataset and ensuring that themes accurately captured the data. In this phase, themes were modified, merged or eliminated if found to be an inappropriate fit with the data. Fifth, themes were further defined and named, including descriptions of each theme. In the sixth phase, a report was produced to tell a compelling story about the data and answer the research questions.

CHAPTER IV: MANUSCRIPT

A Qualitative Study of Latinas Coping with the Deportation of Their Partners

According to data published by the Office of Immigration Statistics, an all-time high of approximately 438,000 unauthorized immigrants were removed from the United States in 2013 and returned to their countries of origin (Simanski, 2014). Among those who were deported in 2013, Latinos accounted for over 90 percent of removals (Simanski, 2014). Mexicans represent the largest group of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S., followed by Hondurans, Guatemalans, and Salvadorans (Simanski, 2014). Due to high rates of deportation, Latino immigrants experience frequent fear of detention and deportation (Orner, 2008).

Typically, an individual becomes an unauthorized immigrant in one of two ways – either he or she enters U.S. borders without permission, or whatever conditions allowed the person to enter lawfully have expired, such as student visas or work authorizations (Kanstroom, 2007). Unauthorized immigrants who are identified by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) are vulnerable to deportation, but so are legal permanent residents under certain circumstances (Kanstroom, 2007). Changes in U.S. legislation in recent decades have contributed to the expanding deportability of unauthorized immigrants as well as legal permanent residents, contributing to the growing number of deportations annually (Abrego, 2014). Although Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will not release official data on the sex of immigrants who are removed from the U.S., it has been found that an overwhelming majority of those deported are male (Dreby 2012b; Golash-Boza & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013). As a result of the high rates of deportation of Latino men, those left behind are often Latina women and their children (Dreby, 2012a).

This study explored the experiences of Latina women whose partners had been deported and how Latinas managed these experiences. For the purposes of this study, the U.S. Census Bureau definition of a Hispanic or Latino was used, being a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (Humes et al., 2011).

Impact of Deportation. A few studies have documented the disruptive and widespread effects of deportation on families (Capps et al., 2007; Dreby, 2012a; Hagan et al., 2008). Among these potentially disruptive consequences are emotional and psychological trauma to family members of the deportee (Dreby, 2012a; Hagan et al., 2008), social and economic consequences (Dreby 2012a), and disruptions to family structures including cases where mothers lose custody of their children (Yablon-Zug, 2012). Some statistics suggest that for every two adults who are deported, at least one child is impacted (Capps et al., 2007). In contrast, in cases where there has been domestic violence, deportation of the abuser may actually bring about the end of a painful and psychologically damaging relationship (Reina et al., 2013a). In these cases, deportation may bring about a positive change within the family system.

Although past studies have begun to explore the changes that occur in families following deportation, the research is limited and no study has explored how Latinas cope with or adapt to these events. In part, this lack of research can be explained by the challenges associated with identifying and recruiting undocumented or mixed status families (Hagan et al., 2008; Hinojos, 2013). Findings from the present study will begin to address this gap and may inform future programs and interventions for Latinas and their families. In addition, findings from this study may inform practice in clinical settings, including but not limited to mental health treatment.

Furthermore, the present study may serve as a launching point for further investigation into an issue that is becoming increasingly relevant in our society.

Review of the Literature

Research on Family Stress. The Double ABCX Model of family stress has been used extensively in past research to conceptualize adaptations to crises resulting from different types of family separations. Past research has utilized the Double ABCX Model to investigate family separations resulting from divorce (Plunkett et al., 1997), incarceration of a spouse (Lowenstein, 1984), and military deployments (Hill, 1949; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Wiens & Boss, 2006). In these studies, the Double ABCX Model has been found to be a relatively good fit for explaining the way families define and cope with stressors. When families perceive themselves as having sufficient resources to meet the demands of a stressor, the crisis has a less negative impact than in situations where there is a perceived lack of resources (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). In the case of deportation, past research suggests that families face a variety of stressors and resources, which could influence overall adaptation to the crisis. While the Double ABCX Model has not been specifically applied to women's experiences of deportation, the present study was guided by this theory due to its widespread acceptance in the study of family stress.

Resilience in Latino Families. Despite the hardships that Latino families may face when a member is deported, a few studies have found that there are various factors that contribute to resilience in Latinos in the face of adversity. Cardoso and Thompson (2010) reviewed the literature on resilience in Latino families and found that there are four domains of risk and protective factors, including individual characteristics, family strength, cultural factors, and community support. Cardoso and Thompson found that various personal characteristics or internal factors could serve a protective function in the face of stress, such as self-esteem,

positive ethnic identity and use of positive coping strategies. Strong family relationships in which parents maintain open communication and supervise children closely has been linked to greater resilience in Latino children. Another factor that has been linked to resilience in Latino families is the idea of *familismo*, or familism, which is essentially a strong collectivist identification with one's nuclear and extended family and has been supported by a large body of literature (Bermudez & Mancini, 2013; DeLuca et al., 2010; Miranda et al., 2000; Smith-Morris et al., 2013; Sotomayor-Peterson, 2012) From the perspective of *familismo*, deportation is both a troubling phenomenon that may impair family functioning but may also contribute to the ways in which families cope with disruptions to the family system. Another source of resilience for many Latino families is religion and spirituality, which has been found to provide psychological and physiological benefits for Latinos, and may facilitate the adjustment for some Latinos to living in the U.S. (Abraido-Lanza et al., 2004; Falicov, 2009; Dunn & O'Brien, 2009). Finally, social support levels have also been found to play a critical role in the resilience of Latino families, where higher levels of social support predict better adaptation in the face of obstacles associated with low socioeconomic status (San Miguel et al., 1998). However, it has also been found that Latinos experience various barriers to social support, such as language and a lack of familiarity with the social services system (San Miguel et al., 1998). This finding is important because it suggests that resilient families that are willing to seek assistance may experience obstacles in their efforts to obtain needed services.

Deportation. A large study conducted by the Urban Institute and the National Council on La Raza in 2007 examined the impact of deportation on families. Key findings include both short-term and long-term consequences of deportation for families. Among the short-term consequences are that families experience decreased and limited levels of contact with the

detained or deported family member, many families hide in their homes for days or weeks following the deportation, and that most families experience fears about seeking assistance due to their own tenuous legal statuses (Capps et al., 2007). It was also found that at least one child is impacted for every two individuals who are deported, and that most of those children are U.S. citizens (Capps et al., 2007). Some long-term consequences include economic and psychological distress, as well as uncertainty about the future (Capps et al., 2007). A study by Hagan, Eschbach, and Rodriguez (2008) examined the disruptions in families that result from deportation, including effects on family ties, remittance behavior, and settlement experiences and found that there are significant social and economic costs to deportation for families. For instance, families often become more economically dependent on the U.S. government in the absence of a breadwinner, and in many cases the deportee may feel obligated to return to the United States and continue sending remittances to family, resulting in circular migration patterns. Families of deportees may also experience emotional and psychological trauma associated with the deportation (Hagan et al., 2008).

Joanna Dreby's research has also investigated the impact that immigration enforcement actions have on families and how these actions shape family life (2012a). Dreby found that deportation often results in the formation of single-parent homes, a shift from working class status to poverty, as well as housing insecurity and homelessness. It was also found that children may learn to fear authority figures and law enforcement officials, and may attempt to dissociate from their immigrant identities. Dreby also found that many children of deportees suffer in their scholastic achievement, experience loss of appetite, frequent crying, sleeplessness, and separation anxiety. In summary, deportation often results in significant changes and disruptions to families of deportees with the heaviest demands often falling on the spouse that is left behind,

yet research on how the partners of deportees experience these separations and manage their experiences is limited.

The Present Study

The present study explored the experiences of Latina women whose husbands or partners have been deported, and how Latinas manage these experiences. A qualitative approach was used to capture the experiences of women whose partners have been deported in an effort to address the gap that currently exists in the research literature in this regard. Areas of inquiry included participant perceptions of the pre-deportation, deportation, and post-deportation periods, including stressors, resources, coping strategies and adaptation to these events. In depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews were administered in person in order to obtain rich data from each participant.

Methods

Participants

Eight women who self-identify as Latina or Hispanic and whose partners were deported between one and ten years ago were interviewed for the present study. The U.S. Census Bureau definition of Latino or Hispanic was used for this study, being a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (Humes et al., 2011). All women were over 18 years old, and were in a relationship with the deportee for at least one year prior to the event. Two participants were bilingual (English and Spanish speaking) and remaining participants were monolingual Spanish speakers. In order to meet “deportation” criteria, researcher relied on participant self-report and included individuals whose partners had been removed from the United States through immigration enforcement actions. Women whose partners had re-entered the U.S. following the deportation were excluded

from this study, since it was considered that these women would have a different set of experiences from those included in the present study.

Participants were recruited through local churches that serve the Latino population, community advocacy groups, immigrants' rights organizations, outpatient therapists and other mental health providers, as well as by word of mouth. The researcher attended various community events to gain direct access to immigrant Latina women and establish trust. Flyers and emails were distributed to various recruitment sites in the target geographical area, including information about the study such as eligibility criteria, requirements of participation, and compensation in the form of a \$20 Target gift card.

Procedures

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in order to conduct the study. Participation in the study was of a voluntary nature and each participant was given an Informed Consent form to read and sign in her preferred language. During the course of recruitment, the researcher identified twenty-one women who were eligible to participate in the study, and of these women, thirteen declined. Eight women agreed to participate, completing the phone screening, demographic questionnaire, and in person interview of approximately sixty minutes.

The demographic questionnaire inquired about participant's age, country of origin, educational level, household income pre- and post-deportation, and occupation. In addition, the demographic questionnaire contained questions about the date of the partner's deportation as well as time elapsed between detention or arrest and the actual deportation. Finally, the demographic questionnaire asked about individuals living in the home, their ages, and relationship to the participant.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Each participant was interviewed in-person for approximately 60 to 75 minutes. The researcher conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews to gather data about the experiences of Latinas resulting from the deportation of their husbands or partners and how they managed these experiences. Two interviews were conducted in English and six were conducted in Spanish. The interview was divided into three areas; first women were asked to describe the stages leading to identification or arrest by immigration officials, then women were asked about the detention period when applicable, and finally women were asked about their adjustment post-deportation. The researcher stopped interviews with two participants due to emotional distress brought on by memories of the deportation. The researcher resumed interviews when participants positively indicated a desire to continue.

The interviews were digitally audio-recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The researcher reviewed transcripts numerous times to ensure accuracy of transcription, and to remove any identifying information from transcript content. Throughout the data collection phase, various measures were taken to protect participant confidentiality.

Analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to analyze all study data as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), using an inductive approach. To become familiar with the data, researchers immersed themselves in the data through reading and re-reading of transcripts. In the immersion process, researchers kept memos and began formulating initial codes independently to establish reliability of codes. Initial codes were then categorized into tentative themes. Themes were then checked against the data to ensure that themes fit with the data. Themes were then further defined and named, including descriptions of each theme. Finally, in order to ensure reliability of

the findings, researchers discussed findings with one another and established a consensus about what was found, reviewing and further defining themes. The analyses also involved translation of participant data from Spanish to English for those who completed interviews in Spanish.

Demographics

Eight Latina women were interviewed for the purposes of this study. Two participants identified as Mexican, two participants identified as Guatemalan and two participants were from El Salvador. The remaining two participants were from Peru and Honduras. All participants had at least one child, and one participant had as many as eight children. One of the participants was remarried, one participant was in a dating relationship with a new partner, and all other participants reported remaining single following the deportation of their partners. All participants reported receiving various types of financial, instrumental, social and emotional support. Education levels ranged from less than a high school education to a completed bachelor's degree. Four of the participants had less than a sixth grade education. Additional demographic information about the participant sample can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Demographics*

	Age	Nationality/Country of Origin	Partner's Country of Origin	Number of Children	Size of Household	Household Income Pre-deportation (Thousands)	Household Income Post-deportation (Thousands)	Duration of Time from Arrest to Deportation (Years)	Date of Deportation
1	36	El Salvador	El Salvador	2	7	\$20-\$30	\$0-\$5	3	July 2013
2	38	El Salvador	El Salvador	5	11	\$30-\$40	\$5-\$10	1	March 2008
3	30	Mexico	Guatemala	1	2	\$30-\$40	\$30-\$40	1.5	March 2014
4	30	Peru	Guatemala	2	4	\$0-\$5	\$0-\$5	3 months	June 2008
5	30	Guatemala	Guatemala	2	6	\$30-\$40	\$10-\$20	3 weeks	May 2011
6	35	Guatemala	Guatemala	1	9	\$0-\$5	\$10-\$20	1	March 2013
7	31	Mexico	Mexico	2	6	\$20-\$30	\$10-\$20	3 months	April 2012
8	62	Honduras	Honduras	8	8	Unknown	\$5-\$10	3	May 2012

Participants reported differences in legal status, as well as reasons for the deportation of their partners. Following the deportations, family compositions changed as well as the frequency of contact between participant and partner. Some of these findings are depicted below in Table 2.

Table 2. *Participant Contextual Information*

	<u>Participant Legal Status Pre- Deportation</u>	<u>Participant Legal Status Post- Deportation</u>	<u>Reason for Partner's Identification by Immigration Authorities</u>	<u>Conflict or Violence in the Relationship Pre-deportation</u>	<u>Communication with Partner Post- deportation</u>	<u>Present Family/Household Composition</u>
1	Unauthorized	Unauthorized	Driving without a license, DUI	No	Infrequent phone contact	Separated, living with friends
2	Unauthorized	Work Authorization	Criminal charges in country of origin, extradited to his country	No	Weekly phone contact	Separated, living with extended family
3	Legal Permanent Resident	Legal Permanent Resident	Driving without a license, DUI	No	Daily phone contact	Separated, living alone with child
4	U.S. Citizen	U.S. Citizen	DUI, sharing license plates with another unauthorized immigrant	Yes, physical and verbal abuse	Infrequent phone contact, visited partner once in country of origin	Divorced from partner, remarried to new partner
5	Unauthorized	Work Authorization	Driving without a license on three occasions	Yes, verbal and psychological abuse	None	In a committed relationship with new partner
6	Unauthorized	Unauthorized	Identified as having false documents in the workplace	No	Infrequent phone contact	Separated, living with friends
7	Unauthorized	Unauthorized	Neighbor reported him to immigration authorities	No	Infrequent phone contact	Separated, living with extended family
8	Work Authorization	Work Authorization	Accused and convicted of sexual crimes against a female acquaintance	No	Phone contact more than once per day	Separated, living with friends

Researcher Characteristics

Both the investigator (JE) and co-investigator (MKF) self-identify as Latina women. The investigator is a Guatemalan-American and the daughter of Guatemalan immigrants. The co-investigator is from Argentina and immigrated to the U.S. as an adult. Although neither researcher has personal experience with deportation, as Latinas, there exists the tendency to advocate for this population. In addition, both the investigator and co-investigator likely subscribe to similar cultural beliefs and values as study participants. The investigator (JE) kept a journal throughout the research process in order to bracket experiences and biases to ensure that

findings accurately portray participant experiences. The investigator and co-investigator also held meetings to discuss biases and reactions to participant data and study material.

Findings

Numerous themes emerged in the analysis of the data that will be presented within the framework of the Double ABCX Model. Themes emerged that reflect each of the post-crisis components of the Double ABCX Model, including the pile-up of stressor events (aA factor), new and existing resources (bB), perception and definition of the crisis (cC), and finally the woman's post-crisis adaptation (xX). Women's coping strategies for managing the deportation process are also presented.

Pile-up of Stressor Events (aA)

Participants reported a variety of stressors throughout the detention and deportation process. Some stressors included prior strains in the relationship with their partner such as conflict or violence. Other stressors reported by participants include socioeconomic and financial disruptions, legal challenges and disruptions to family relationships.

Pre-existing Strains. Two of the participants reported conflict and violence in their relationships before the deportation process was ever initiated. Participant 4 stated, "Our relationship wasn't the best. I mean there were times when he was violent... at one point I even thought about getting a restraining order." Participant 5 also described how conflict in her relationship impacted her ability to obtain support from others in her household:

They [members of participant's household] did not want to help me when I asked them to help with money... that they use their things as collateral for my husband's bail. They did not want to help me with that. Because they also saw the problems we had as a couple, so they weren't in favor.

Disruptions Begin with Identification by ICE. All participants spoke about the disruptions they faced beginning with the moment when their partner or husband was identified by ICE as an unauthorized immigrant, which in some cases occurred within the context of other criminal activity. Among the disruptions they faced were socioeconomic disruptions, legal issues, and changes in family relationships. This is expressed in the following excerpt from Participant 6, when she says, “The changes for the most part happened when... when they arrested him... because since that day, we had to find a way to move forward... with the children, with the rent, with everything.”

Socioeconomic Disruptions. Participant 1 described the financial challenges the family faced following her husband’s arrest, saying:

The changes were many, because like I said, we had a house, we were doing well, we had everything... the change was abrupt in that we moved to a single bedroom, just us alone... at first I survived with some money that we had saved up but then after that I got in touch with the assistance programs to help with the food and all that.

Participant 3 also verbalized the financial difficulties she faced following the deportation, also mentioning the fact that her husband became economically dependent on her when he returned to his country:

When someone is deported to a third world country, where there’s barely enough money to put food on the table, their family in the U.S. ends up supporting them, you end up supporting them, sending it back home. And then you end up paying all the lawyer fees and everything else on top of it, so it becomes an extreme expense... He makes three dollars a day down there.

Legal Issues. Six of the participants also spoke about the legal issues they faced beginning with the arrest of their partners. This is illustrated in Participant 5's account where there is a clear risk associated with visiting the detention facility where her husband was being held due to her unauthorized legal status:

They told me, the man that lives here, said I couldn't show up there at the detention center because I don't have papers... Yes, that's what the woman said too, that 'you can't do anything because if you go, if you get a lawyer you're going to have to go to jail, to visit him, or anything else,' she said. And there they will ask for identification. And in that time I didn't have any kind of identification.

Other participants mentioned being unaware of their rights and had little knowledge about the deportation process and the immigration system.

Disruptions in Family Relationships. Five of the participants talked about how the deportation process led to disruptions in their family relationships. For these participants, the detention period represented a time in which their partners became distant from the family, culminating with the deportation. For instance, Participant 6 describes it in the following excerpt:

We still talk on the phone, but not as often as before. We loved each other very much, always together... and how much he loved his children. Now, if he calls me once a week, it's a lot... It becomes expensive to call him often... that's the hard part, that the communication is little, and I feel that the children are forgetting him.

Existing and New Resources (bB)

Participants reported relying on various types of resources throughout the detention period and following the deportation. These included religion, extended family and friends, and social service agencies and organizations that target the Latino community.

Religion. Six out of eight participants reported relying on religious resources in order to cope with the entire deportation process. Participants received different types of support from religion, including membership in a religious community, prayer, support by means of faith in God, and acceptance of their circumstances.

Religious Community. Six of the participants talked about the ways that their church community was a significant resource for them, providing emotional as well as instrumental support. This is evident in the following excerpt from Participant 2:

I go to mass, and I belong to a prayer group. They give me words of encouragement, and they help me, for me to always be positive, with strength. They even take care of the children, there are brief moments when I can leave my children there and take part in the discussions, even if it is only for five minutes.

Participant 1 also mentioned the social support she received from her church community, saying “I have many friends there, the pastor also, the pastor has helped me to move forward.”

Prayer and Faith in God. Five participants discussed the ways in which they relied on prayer and their faith in God as a religious resource throughout the deportation process. Prayer and faith primarily seemed to provide emotional and spiritual support for participants who utilized this resource. For instance, Participant 2 relied on her religious faith as a source of strength and comfort:

I always ask God to protect and take care of him... I ask God to help me... It's the church alone that strengthens me, and it gives me the courage to move forward. I know that God does not leave my side. You always have to continue on with his strength.

In some ways, faith in God helped Participant 7 to reframe the deportation experience in a more positive light, also relying on prayer and faith as a type of emotional support and source of comfort:

Things happen, and I don't know why, but I believe that it has made me a stronger person, and after all of this, I have been able to continue with the help of God... to keep my faith. Like they say, faith moves mountains. It's something beautiful, to be able to have faith when tragic things happen that we don't expect, and I know that God is there. He does not leave us if we always have faith.

Acceptance. Three of the participants acknowledged a sense of acceptance that their religious beliefs provided them, which seemed to be an added source of comfort for these participants.

Extended Family and Friends. Six participants mentioned that family and friends seemed to be a valuable resource not only for financial and instrumental support, but also emotional support. All of this is illustrated in Participant 7's experience when she shares the following regarding the support she has received from her cousin:

There with her [participant's cousin], there are fewer expenses than if I lived on my own. Also that... she takes care of my son. Her children go to school with my son. So in all those ways she helps me... Well, and also by not being alone. I think that alone it would have been worse... at least with my cousin; we are together, supporting one another.

Participant 2 referred to the support she received from her family and the gratitude she expected her children to have for that support:

The one who has helped me a lot is my sister, because if it weren't for my sister, I would already be back in my country. My husband's family, it's as if they didn't exist... on the

other hand my sister's family helped me a lot. I tell my children not to misbehave with her because if it wasn't for her, we wouldn't be here. It's difficult for someone to put up with five children.

Social Service Agencies. Three participants also reported receiving social, financial and instrumental support from various social service agencies and organizations that serve Latinos. For instance, Participant 1 describes this when she says, "At first I survived with some money that we had saved up but then after that I got in touch with the assistance programs to help with the food and all that." Participant 1 relied on emergency assistance programs in order to pay for monthly expenses and food.

Perception and Definition of the Crisis (cC)

Seven out of eight participants seemed to report mostly negative definitions of the deportation process, although some positive definitions of the crisis also emerged. Participants also reported their perceptions of resources that would have been helpful throughout the deportation process.

Negative Perception. Participants reported numerous negative perceptions of the deportation process which contributed to an overall negative definition of the experience. Among the negative perceptions that emerged were regrets about immigration, feeling that the deportation could have been avoided, and defining the deportation as the children's loss of their father. Participants also defined the deportation as unfair and scary, and a type of overnight disruption that brought about the end of the family.

Regrets about Immigration. Four of the participants described regrets about having immigrated to the United States, and expressed desires to return to their countries of origin. These participants seemed to have positive perceptions of the United States prior to their

immigration, envisioning the opportunities that would be available to them here, but seemed to experience a shift in this perspective as a result of the deportation. This is illustrated in the following quote from Participant 6:

What I felt, and still feel is regret. In [COUNTRY], life is difficult, there is poverty, there's a lot of danger... but at least the family is intact, and everyone is happy... and that is what hurts me, is asking myself now; did we do the right thing in coming here? Because we came to this country thinking that there would be more opportunities for our children... But that is the hardest thing for me now, the doubt... doubting whether we did the right thing or not.

Deportation Could Have Been Avoided. Participants also expressed perceptions that the deportation in its entirety could have been prevented. Sometimes, participants blamed their partners for the deportation while others blamed themselves. Participant 1 seems to place the blame on the entire family system when she says, "I felt anger, because there are things that can be stopped, that can be prevented, and because of our actions... they happen." On the other hand, Participant 5, whose husband had previous criminal charges for driving while intoxicated, places the blame solely on him:

Things happen because we go looking for them. Because, you see when they caught him the first time, we went to court and the judge said, 'you can't drive anymore.' And I said, if they catch you driving drunk again they will lock you up and deport you. And he didn't listen.

The Deportation is Unfair. Five participants expressed a perception that the deportation itself was unfair. Participant 2 talked about the injustices of the immigration system and expressed a perception that the deportation was not warranted. As Participant 2 shared, "I can't

explain to myself why the punishment is so harsh for a good person like him.” Participant 6 also expressed a sense of injustice about the deportation in terms of the impact on the children by stating, “It’s very bad what they are doing in this country, by separating families. That they separate them this way, I don’t understand it... I don’t understand how they can take a father away from a child.”

“We are no longer a family.” Five of the participants described feeling as if their family had come to an end due to the removal of their partner. Participant 1 describes this when talking about the way she perceived and thought about the deportation:

My family had ended, that it had, that is was no longer a family because, now it would be up to me... from the moment that I was left to do it alone, to struggle alone with my children. Now... now nothing is left.

Participant 6 shared a similar experience:

I simply remember those moments, and I feel sadness. Because I thought that, that we were no longer a family. Without him, it wasn’t the same anymore. As much as we tried to stay in contact, it’s not the same when you have the person by your side.

Despite the fact that these participants and their children remained together, these participants perceived the partner’s removal as the end of the family.

Losing a Father. Four of the participants expressed pain and sorrow about their children’s loss of their father, often becoming emotional during this portion of the interview. For these participants, the loss of a father for their children was more difficult than the loss of a partner. Participant 6 expresses this, stating, “Not having my husband by my side is hard, but what hurts more is that they took away the father of my children... and for me - that is what doesn’t make sense.” These participants seemed to struggle with having to witness their

children's pain while making sense of their fathers' absence. Participant 4 described this as well when discussing her daughter's experience, saying, "I'm sorry if I get emotional (crying), my thing is, why her? She doesn't need this. Every girl needs her dad, and she doesn't have that. I know she sees her friends who have dads."

Positive Perception. Three of the participants shared negative definitions of the deportation, but also made efforts to define the deportation process in a more positive light.

"Things Happen for a Reason." The idea that "things happen for a reason" emerged in the stories of three participants. Participant 7 expresses this by saying, "Well there's a reason things happen, right? God will help us move forward. Like they say, God squeezes us but he doesn't strangle us." Participant 6 echoes this sentiment, saying, "I believe that things happen for a reason, or at least I try to think that way." This perception stemmed from religious beliefs for two participants.

Resolution of a Bad Relationship. However, for Participant 5, whose relationship involved frequent verbal and psychological abuse, the most positive definition of the deportation emerged:

Since things happened, since they caught him, well everything has been more peaceful for me. I've had a lot of support from the people here in the house, and well the truth is that I don't miss him in any way... I have had more opportunities to have my daughter live well, to buy her everything she would want, and to save a little bit of money... I couldn't before because he would take all the money away from me.

It is also important to note that this was only true for Participant 5. Despite the fact that Participant 4 reported physical and verbal abuse in her relationship, her perceptions and

definitions of the deportation were overwhelmingly negative, despite the fact that an abusive relationship had ended.

Coping

Participants utilized various coping strategies throughout the deportation process, including making efforts to protect their children from the impact of the deportation, and continuing to maintain communication with their detained or deported partners. Participants also engaged in problem-solving behavior to manage the stressors and disruptions faced by their families. Participants also talked about the resources they would have wanted that would have facilitated their ability to cope with the deportation process.

Protecting the Children. Six participants discussed ways in which they protected their children throughout the deportation process, such as withholding information or by lying to them, and by limiting contact with their father during the detention period. Participants also protected their children by finding age appropriate ways to explain the deportation to their children, helping them to make sense of these events. The two participants who did not report efforts to protect their children from the impact of the deportation reported age as a primary factor, with one participant's child being an infant and the other participant's youngest child being nearly eighteen.

Lying. Four participants protected their children by lying or withholding information from their children, or providing children with limited explanations of their father's absence. For example, Participant 4 protected her daughter from information about the deportation by lying to her about her father's absence:

I would tell her daddy is on vacation! I would pass the phone to her and let her talk to him. That's the excuse I would use... we won't say jail. I also never took her to see him

there. I didn't want her to see that... So to protect her, every time she would talk to him, I would tell her he's on vacation.

Limiting Contact with Detainee. Six participants protected their children by making decisions about the appropriate level of contact with their fathers, beginning with the detention period. This was expressed by Participant 1 who decided to stop taking her children to visit their father in the immigration detention center, saying "It was not an appropriate place for the children... It affects them psychologically so for me it was very hard that they go to the jail to see their father." Participant 2 expressed a similar sentiment, and decided to stop taking her children to visit their father in the detention facility based on a counselor's recommendation, saying, "I was advised not to go visit him anymore because I was damaging them, my children, because they were too young."

Helping the Children to Understand. Six of the participants reported efforts to help their children cope with the loss of their fathers by offering explanations and helping them to understand the deportation. For instance, Participant 7 shares the ways in which she helps her son to make sense of his father's absence:

I show him the picture of his father and I tell him it's his daddy, that he loves him very much, that one day we'll see each other again. He asks me questions about his father, he's still young, but I try to help him understand the most I can, that his dad is far away but still loves him.

Continuing Communication with the Partner. Three participants reported that they were able to maintain an ongoing relationship with their partners throughout the detention period as well as post-deportation. When describing their relationships prior to their partner's arrest, these participants spoke affectionately and positively about their relationships. These women

seemed to make an effort to maintain a close connection with their partners through visits to detention facilities and ongoing phone contact. For instance, Participant 8 describes this saying, “I speak to him as many as three, four times a day.” In addition, when asked about what helped her to get through this period while her partner was detained, Participant 8 said, “For me, honestly it was the visits. Every fifteen days I went to see him, and that was enough for me. That is what helped me, to continue having contact with him.”

Problem-Solving Strategies. Five participants engaged in problem-solving strategies in an effort to reduce stressors or to make stressors more manageable for their families. Some of these problem-solving strategies were aimed at resolving housing insecurity and homelessness, as well as finding ways to secure basics needs such as food or clothing. For instance, Participant 3 shared her decision to live in her car following the deportation of her husband when she became homeless:

It was scary and stressful; we had to find places to park at night where we knew the police wouldn't find us. Yeah it was, and then I sort of kept posting online about places to stay. I found a really nice guy who let us stay in his office for three hundred dollars a month.

Participant 7 talked about her efforts to reduce financial instability by obtaining a second job saying, “I took another job, a second job, to be able to pay for the room where I'm living with my son, and also to pay for the food, the clothes for my son.”

Resources That Would Have Been Helpful. Seven participants mentioned the resources they would have found helpful during the deportation process. Four participants specifically discussed their perception that therapy or counseling of some kind would have helped them cope

with the deportation in a more positive manner. This is illustrated by the following quote from Participant 4:

I would love to go to counseling, I think it would help, especially her [participant's daughter]... I know I could have done counseling, but I just didn't. I didn't know where to go, I wasn't sure if I could trust someone. I kept thinking, what am I supposed to do?

Three participants also mentioned their desire for more information and knowledge about the immigration system, and felt that a better understanding may have helped them navigate the process more effectively.

Adaptation (xX)

Participants reported both positive and negative outcomes as a result of their experiences of their partner's deportation. Although there were more negative outcomes, all participants reported some positive and negative outcomes resulting from their experiences.

Maladaptation. Negative outcomes for participants included family relationships that became distant, experiencing sadness and fear about the experience, yet feeling as though the deportation was not something they discuss with others. Participants also reported a negative impact on their children and feeling an overall lack of empathy or understanding in their surrounding context.

Family Relationships after Deportation. Among the negative outcomes following the deportation was the fact that for many of the families, the partner became increasingly distant from the family. Six out of eight participants reported that as a result of the deportation, their partner was no longer a part of the family system and contact was limited. Participant 1 discussed this outcome, attributing it to differences in gender by saying, "He's already made a life for himself over there... for men it's a lot easier... wherever they may be."

“We Can’t Talk About the Deportation” – Lack of Understanding from Others. Four participants explicitly stated feeling as though they could not talk about their experience and that it was difficult to trust others with their stories about the deportation. They also expressed the idea that others could not empathize or understand their experiences. Despite the fact that other participants did not mention this, five of the participants requested that interviews take place outside of their homes, so that others did not become aware of their participation in the study. Participant 4 shared her struggle with disclosing her experience to others, saying “I can’t talk about it with anyone. Nobody gets it... I really can’t, even though I think about it all the time.” Participant 3 shared similar concerns:

You don’t want to talk about it, because you can end up having extra problems. You can’t even talk about it at work, because it can affect your job, it can affect everything. I don’t even use his last name anymore. People judge you because of it, because of all this immigration stuff on the news.

However, despite the fact that several participants felt that they could not safely speak about their experiences to anyone, six of the participants indicated a desire to be able to speak openly about their experiences, and two of the participants thanked the researcher for the opportunity to share their story.

“Sadness in My Heart.” Seven of the participants described painful emotions ranging from sadness and frustration, to feeling depressed and hopeless. Participant 6 described, “It’s hard to think about all of that... the sadness that I carry in my heart.” Participant 2 shared something similar, feeling that she did not allow her sadness to bring her down, yet still struggling to let go of that emotion:

I believe that even though I never gave up, it has caused me damage because deep down I always have that feeling of resentment in my heart. I never let go of the bad things I had inside my heart.

Fear of Further Deportation. Three of the participants reported fears about other members of the family being deported, and in the case of Participant 8, other members of her family had actually been deported in addition to her husband. Participant 2 expressed this worry in her description of the thoughts that she experienced immediately following her husband's arrest;

I thought that they were going to take me too... and the children at school? What would happen to them? I thought about my little ones, I thought... I thought they would take me too. But one woman said not to worry, calm down and don't cry. And I said, well if they take me, what am I to do?

Participant 2 also described her own encounters with the immigration authorities, and thus her tenuous legal status had been a source of anxiety and fear on several occasions in the past. Her husband's deportation seemed to heighten this fear and worry.

Negative Impact on the Children. Five of the participants reported negative changes in their children after the deportation, including changes in behavior, emotional issues, and decreased academic performance. Participant 2 reported significant emotional disturbances in her children, especially in one of her sons who began to express suicidal ideation following his father's deportation:

My son, the one who's thirteen, was very attached to him. He would always ask me when his father was coming, and that's when he began to have nightmares and to say that he was going to kill himself. One time he even put a rope around his neck.

Bonadaptation and Resilience. For some participants, the deportation process seemed to result in some positive outcomes, including an increase in goal-directed behavior and a focus on the future, as well as serving as the catalyst for developing a wider and more diverse support network. Participants also demonstrated resilience by acknowledging the challenges presented by the deportation, yet feeling that it was an event they were able to overcome.

“Salir Adelante” – Focused on the Future. Three participants mentioned a desire to move forward and focus on the future, which seemed to be a positive means of adapting to the overall deportation experience. This was illustrated in the following excerpt from Participant 6:

I am always looking forward to the future... we have to move forward right? I believe that one day we will see him again. I believe that in the end, we will go back to my country, because that way we can be together again.

These participants seemed to be hopeful and optimistic, and demonstrated an effort to construct positive meaning out of the deportation experience.

Establishing a New Support Network. Another positive outcome reported by participants was the development of a larger and more diverse support network. All eight participants reported relying on external sources of support, but seven participants also sought new resources including aid from family and friends, social assistance programs, and religious organizations. As a result, these participants expressed a sense that having a larger support system was a positive outcome of the deportation experience. This is reflected in Participant 1’s account, “At first I survived with some money that we had saved up but then after that I got in touch with the assistance programs to help with the food and all that.”

“It Has Passed.” Five participants acknowledged the pain and suffering that resulted from the deportation process, but also that time had helped the family to heal and move on from

that experience. Even though the deportation presented significant challenges for these participants, participants displayed an ability to adapt in positive ways. For example, Participant 8 describes this in the following excerpt:

The ones that helped me the most were my family, my friends, and all those that were with me through all of this. But also, that time has passed. At the beginning of all of this it was very, very hard for me, yes. But now, over time, I am more at peace... I am more at peace now. All of this has already passed. I feel better now... I don't think about it as much now.

Discussion

In the past decade, the U.S. Latino population has been significantly impacted by increasing deportation rates, often leaving Latina women and their children behind to overcome these events. This qualitative study aimed to explore the ways in which Latina women adapt to the deportation of their partners guided by the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). The eight female participants that were interviewed faced a variety of stressors, including socioeconomic disruptions, legal issues and changes in family structures. Similar stressors have been cited in previous literature describing the impact of deportation on families (Capps et al., 2007; Dreby, 2012a; Dreby, 2012b). Two participants also faced pre-existing strains in their relationships due to conflict and violence. Neither of the participants with pre-existing violence in their relationships had ever reported the violence to authorities, in support of past findings on unauthorized immigrants and domestic violence (Reina et al., 2013a; Sladkova et al., 2012). All participants reported that their partners spent time in immigration detention facilities, and two participants' partners spent as many as three years in a detention center.

Participants seemed to rely on a variety of resources, including religion, which seemed to be the most prominent resource utilized by study participants. While past literature has emphasized the critical role that religion and spirituality plays for Latinos in coping with life stressors (Dunn & O'Brien, 2009), this study further extends this by illustrating the nuanced ways in which religion provides support for Latina women whose partners have been deported, including membership in the church community, prayer, faith in God, and acceptance of their circumstances.

Positive and negative perceptions of the deportation process emerged, although negative perceptions were more prevalent than positive ones. Among the negative perceptions were regrets about having immigrated to the United States and feeling that the deportation could have been avoided. Participants also expressed that their partner's deportation meant they were no longer a family and that their children had lost a father. This is an important finding in that it captures the collectivist definitions of family that are characteristic of Latino culture (Bermudez & Mancini, 2013; Miranda et al., 2000; Smith-Morris et al., 2013; Sotomayor-Peterson, 2012). Within a culture that places great value on the bonds between nuclear and extended family members, the abrupt removal of a husband and father has obvious negative implications. The idea of familismo seemed to be endorsed by most participants in their definitions of the deportation, as not only the loss of a member, but the end of the family. Furthermore, participants seemed to be more concerned with the loss of a father for their children than the loss of a partner, which is also consistent with the emphasis within Latino culture on the parenting role.

Partners became increasingly distant from their families, in an emotional and physical sense, beginning with the detention period. As a result, the children of deportees seem to

experience what has been defined as ambiguous loss in the research literature (Boss, 2007). This type of loss is a loss that is unclear and thus families are left to live with the “paradox of absence of presence” (Boss, 2007, p. 105). In this case, children have knowledge that their fathers continue to exist, but physical contact and connection is limited or nonexistent. Despite the fact that nearly all participants made efforts to explain the deportation to their children and account for the father’s absence, this was a struggle for nearly every participant – helping children to understand the sudden disappearance of their father in a way that would not cause further harm to the child.

Some positive perceptions emerged as well, including the idea that things happen for a reason, which seemed to be rooted in religious beliefs. In one case, the deportation was perceived as the resolution of a relationship involving conflict or violence. These positive perceptions seemed to play a role in the participants’ resilience, despite reporting various hardships resulting from the deportation process.

Participants coped with the deportation in several different ways, primarily by focusing on protecting their children, which was accomplished by lying to them or withholding information about the deportation, limiting children’s contact with their father while in detention, and finding ways to explain the deportation to the children to help them to make sense of their father’s absence. Not only is this finding consistent with the literature on familismo, that highlights the emphasis on the entire family system, it also speaks to the strength and resilience of these women. As mentioned previously, participants faced a considerable number of stressors and challenges that began from the moment their partners were identified by ICE, and yet the women were not focused on these challenges as much as on the experiences of their children. Participants were concerned with the welfare of their children above all else, and also cited their

children as the main reason for overcoming the deportation experience. In some ways, these findings also support previous studies that highlight the importance of *marianismo* in Latinos, in that women seemed to sacrifice their own needs and interests in favor of their children and focused on helping and protecting them (Falicov, 1998).

Other coping strategies that emerged include making efforts to maintain communication and connection with the detained or deported partner, as well as engaging in problem-solving behavior to minimize or reduce stressors and thus make them more manageable for the family. Participants also were able to identify resources that would have been helpful had they been available during the deportation process, including therapy and counseling services and other types of emotional support. At the conclusion of the interviews, many participants expressed gratitude about being able to share their experiences, despite initial fears about doing so. Participants also expressed a desire for more knowledge and information about their rights and the immigration system overall.

The women and their families seemed to experience positive and negative outcomes as a result of the deportation. Negative outcomes included increased distance in family relationships, which in some cases resulted in a complete loss of contact with the deported individual, and feeling that others in the surrounding environment could not empathize or understand with the experience of having a family member deported. Women talked about feeling intense sadness as well as fear about additional deportations in the future. In some ways, these outcomes are shaped by the political climate in which these unauthorized or mixed-status families are embedded. In a sociopolitical context in which the unauthorized immigrant has been marginalized and stigmatized (Nicholls, 2013), an already challenging process becomes a greater burden for the deportee's family.

Positive outcomes included an increased focus on the future, and the fact that the loss of a partner served as a catalyst for the women to expand their existing support systems. This finding is interesting because previous literature has suggested that Latinas seek support from professionals only as a last resort, generally when support from friends and relatives has been exhausted or is unavailable (San Miguel et al., 1998; Villatoro et al., 2014). Although the participants in this study seemed to prefer the support of family and friends, many did seek support from social service agencies. While this finding should be interpreted with caution given the relatively small sample size, it reflects the courage of these women in taking steps to seek formal sources of support despite the fact that many had unauthorized legal statuses. It could also reflect the magnitude of the crisis for these women, in that they felt they needed to turn to non-family sources of support. On the other hand, it may be a reflection of the recruitment strategy, which heavily targeted community organizations and agencies. Clearly, further research would be needed to clarify the decision-making processes of these women in choosing to seek support outside of their family and friend networks.

While the findings are generally consistent with previous research on the consequences of deportation on families (Capps et al., 2007; Dreby, 2012a; Dreby, 2012b; Hagan et al., 2008), this study contributes significantly to our understanding of how women experience the deportation of their partners as well as the emotional and psychological impact it has for families. Furthermore, this study highlights the resourcefulness and resilience of these women as well as their focus on the entire family system in navigating their experiences. Previous literature has described the vast negative consequences that the partners and families of deportees face, including significant social, economic, and psychological consequences (Dreby, 2012a; Hagan et al., 2008). The present study contributes to this body of literature by shedding light on how

Latinas manage these consequences in the aftermath of their partner's deportation. In addition, it gives voice to a population that is often silenced and unable to participate in discussions about issues that pertain to them (Caminero-Santangelo, 2012).

Most of the women in the sample were unauthorized immigrants themselves, meaning that many assistance programs are unavailable to them, including housing programs, food assistance, and welfare. The women in this study seemed to highlight the financial and economic struggles they faced following the deportation of their partners above other types of consequences, but also acknowledged emotional and psychological difficulties. Overall, participants seemed to feel that the detention period marked the beginning of a gradual deterioration in family relationships and growing concerns about the children.

Finally, each participant's ability to adapt to the overall deportation process seemed to depend on the collective impact of the stressors faced, resources available and the perceptions formed about the experience, which is consistent with the conceptualization of family stress reflected in the Double ABCX Model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). All of the participants seemed to face many stressors; and some participants faced additional stressors that existed prior to the arrest of their partners, making their families inherently more vulnerable prior to the detention or deportation periods. Furthermore, the most valuable resource among participants seemed to be religion, although it was used in slightly different ways by each participant. In the end, the participants who seemed to struggle most with adapting to the deportation were those who had the most limited resources and most negative perceptions about the event.

Limitations

The findings from this study reflect the experiences of a relatively small sample of Latina women who were recruited from the community, primarily through word of mouth. Recruitment

efforts involved targeting agencies and organizations that work with the population of interest, thus participants were more likely to be receiving support from these agencies and it could be that for some women that were not included in this study, resources are even more limited.

However, despite focusing recruitment efforts on organizations and agencies that work with a large number of immigrant women, only a small number of eligible women expressed interest in participation. Among those who did express interest, some participants made efforts to conceal their true identities until they felt the researcher could be trusted. The researcher's identification as a Latina and ability to speak to women in their native language seemed to prove beneficial in gaining their trust, yet this may be an added limitation in future studies if researchers are of non-Latino or Hispanic background. Many organizations reported that eligible women were afraid to speak about their experiences and thus were unwilling to participate, which supports the findings of previous research that has cited challenges in the recruitment of undocumented or mixed status families (Hagan et al., 2008; Hinojos, 2013). It is likely that there are other women who experience greater levels of fear than the women who participated in this study. Furthermore, all of the participants are women that have chosen to remain in the U.S. following the deportation of their partners. Women who chose to return to their native countries following the deportation may have a different set of experiences. Also, most of the deported partners in this study were of Guatemalan origin, thus it is possible that findings may be different for individuals from other countries. Finally, because women described experiences that in some cases took place as many as seven years ago, it is difficult to know whether participants accurately captured their experiences and perceptions of the deportation process.

Clinical Implications

Findings from this study have some implications for clinical settings and for agencies that work with Latino immigrants and families impacted by deportation. Some participants specifically mentioned the desire for counseling or therapy services to be available to them throughout the deportation process, and other women expressed a general desire for emotional support and resources. However, participants seemed to feel that these types of resources were not available to them, or were fearful about seeking them on their own. Based on the fact that seven out of the eight participants turned to their local churches for support in the aftermath of the deportation, it seems that church-based support groups or interventions are most likely to be utilized by this population. Churches and religious organizations are often seen as safe places for the Latino community, and programs and services delivered in such a setting are more likely to be trusted. Ideally, programs targeted toward this particular population would combine a psycho-educational component with mental health and psychological intervention. Clinical programs could inform participants of their legal rights, providing education about the immigration and deportation systems while also providing therapy in group or family based formats. Finally, based on the level of fear in the Latino immigrant community, clinical interventions would ideally be conducted by professionals that identify as Latino or possess a high level of cultural competence and sensitivity.

Future Research

Some areas for future investigation include exploring the experiences of women whose partners have been deported and have no children. For all participants in this study, children seemed to play a key role in their ability to adjust and adapt to the crisis. In the absence of children, it is likely that the adaptation process would differ in a significant way. Future research

could also focus on the experiences of families in which women or children are deported, or in cases where there are multiple family members who are deported, since it is likely that families navigate these events in slightly different ways. Furthermore, research on the adult children of deportees would contribute to our understanding of the long-term impact of deportation on families. Finally, future research could also focus on the experiences of organizations and agencies that work with the families of deportees, to gain a better understanding of the challenges that are faced in the implementation of programs for this vulnerable and fearful population. Overall, there is a vast amount of research that could be conducted within this population, and more can be done to assist the families that remain in the United States following the deportation of a family member.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore the experiences of Latina women whose partners have been deported and how they adapted to these experiences. Participants talked about the various stressors they faced beginning with their partner's arrest including socioeconomic disruptions, legal issues, and changes in their family structures. Participants also utilized various resources throughout the deportation process, some of which they sought out in response to the detention and deportation. Participants formed positive and negative perceptions about the detention and deportation, which seemed to be related to the stressors they faced as well as the resources that were available to them. Participants also utilized various coping and problem-solving strategies to overcome this experience and to adapt to the changes in their family structure and relationships. Overall, participants demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity created by the deportation process, yet some participants responded in more maladaptive ways. Participant experiences reflect strong adherence to Latino cultural values including the tendency of relying

on family and friends for support to overcome obstacles, consistent with findings from previous research. Finally, participant experiences reflect the complexity of losing a family member to deportation. While past studies have explored the consequences of deportation for families, this study allowed women to voice their individual experiences as members of a population that has traditionally been excluded from the research literature.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Flyer

VA Tech Research Study is Recruiting:

LATINA WOMEN WHOSE HUSBANDS OR PARTNERS HAVE BEEN DEPORTED

The VA Tech Marriage and Family Therapy Program is currently recruiting Latina women who have had their husband or partner deported to participate in a research study. The study explores the experiences of Latina women who have had their husbands or partners deported and had children living in the home at the time.

You will be screened over the telephone, complete a demographic questionnaire, and complete a face-to-face interview lasting approximately one hour reflecting on your experience of having your husband or partner deported.

If you participate, you will receive a \$20 Target gift card for your time.

Who is eligible?

- *You must be a Latina woman over the age of 18
- *Your husband or partner has been deported to his country between 1 and 10 years ago.
- *You had at least one child under the age of 18 living in the home at the time of the deportation.
- *You are not eligible if your husband or partner has returned to the U.S. since the deportation.

INTERVIEW IS AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH OR SPANISH. ALL
INFORMATION PROVIDED IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

If you would like to participate, please contact:

Jessica Escobar (703) 338-0256
Principal Researcher Jessi86@vt.edu

Recruitment Flyer (Spanish)

Investigación en VA Tech Busca Participantes:

MUJERES LATINAS QUE HAN TENIDO A SU ESPOSO O PAREJA DEPORTADO

El programa de Terapia de Matrimonio y Familia está buscando mujeres Latinas que han tenido a su esposo o pareja deportado para participar en una investigación. Esta investigación explora las experiencias de mujeres Latinas que han tenido a su esposo o pareja deportado y que también tenían hijos viviendo en su hogar en la fecha de la deportación.

Se le hará una entrevista preliminar por teléfono, completará un cuestionario demográfico, y habrá una entrevista en persona que dura aproximadamente una hora que tiene que ver con su experiencia de haber tenido a su esposo o pareja deportado.

Si participa, recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de Target de \$20 por su tiempo.

¿Quién puede participar?

*Mujeres Latinas/Hispanas que tienen por lo menos 18 años de edad

*Su esposo o pareja fue deportado hace 1 a 10 años

*Usted tenía por lo menos un hijo menor de 18 años viviendo en su hogar en la fecha de la deportación

*No califica si su esposo o pareja ha regresado a los Estados Unidos desde la deportación

LA ENTREVISTA SE PUEDE HACER EN INGLES O ESPAÑOL Y ES
TOTALMENTE CONFIDENCIAL.

Si desea participar, comuníquese con:

Jessica Escobar
Investigadora Principal

(703) 338-0256
Jessi86@vt.edu

Appendix B

Participant Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Jessica Escobar and I am currently working toward an M.S. in human development with a concentration in Marriage and Family Therapy from Virginia Tech. For my thesis, I am examining the experience of Latina women who have had their husbands or partners deported. I am currently recruiting for this study.

You are eligible to participate if:

- You are a Latina over the age of 18.
- You live in the DC, VA or MD
- You have a husband or partner who was recently deported (1-10 years ago)
- You and your partner were in a relationship for at least one year prior to the deportation
- You had at least one child under 18 years old living with you in the home at the time of the deportation

You are not eligible to participate if your partner has returned to the U.S. since the deportation.

What is involved in participating in the study?

- A 10-minute screening over the phone
- A brief demographic questionnaire
- A face-to-face interview lasting approximately one hour. The interview will ask questions about your experience of having your partner deported and how you have coped with your experience. Interviews will occur in a location convenient and safe for you.

Participants will receive a \$20 Target gift card at the conclusion of the interview process.

If you, or anyone you know is interested in this study, please contact me at jessi86@vt.edu or (703) 338-0256. Thank you!

Jessica

Participant Recruitment Email (Spanish)

Hola,

Mi nombre es Jessica Escobar y estoy estudiando para mi maestría en desarrollo humano con una concentración en Terapia de Matrimonio y Familia de Virginia Tech. Para mi tesis, estoy investigando la experiencia de mujeres Latinas que han tenido a sus esposos o compañeros deportados. Estoy reclutando para este estudio actualmente.

Usted califica para participación si:

- Es una Latina de por lo menos 18 años de edad
- Vive en DC, VA o MD
- Su esposo o compañero fue deportado recientemente (hace 1-10 años)
- Usted y su esposo o pareja estuvieron en una relación de por lo menos un año antes de su deportación
- Tenían por lo menos un hijo menor de 18 años de edad viviendo en su hogar en la fecha de la deportación

Usted no califica si su esposo o pareja ha regresado a los estados unidos desde su deportación.

¿Qué es lo que requiere participación en este estudio?

- Una entrevista preliminar por teléfono que dura aproximadamente 10 minutos
- Un cuestionario demográfico breve
- Una entrevista en persona que dura aproximadamente una hora. En la entrevista, se le preguntará acerca de su experiencia de la deportación de su esposo o compañero, y como ha enfrentado esta experiencia. La entrevista será en un lugar conveniente y seguro para usted.

Participantes recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de Target con un valor de \$20 al final de la entrevista.

Si usted, o alguien que usted conoce está interesada en participar en este estudio, por favor comuníquese conmigo enviando un correo electrónico a jessi86@vt.edu o llame al (703) 338-0256.

Gracias!

Jessica

Appendix C

Internet Posting

Hello,

My name is Jessica Escobar and I am currently working toward an M.S. in human development with a concentration in Marriage and Family Therapy from Virginia Tech. For my thesis, I am examining the experience of Latina women who have had their husbands or partners deported. I am currently recruiting for this study.

You are eligible to participate if:

- You are a Latina over the age of 18.
- You live in the DC, VA or MD
- You have a husband or partner who was recently deported (1-10 years ago)
- You and your partner were in a relationship for at least one year prior to the deportation
- You had at least one child under 18 years old living in your home at the time of the deportation

You are not eligible to participate if your partner has returned to the U.S. since the deportation.

What is involved in participating in the study?

- A 10-minute screening over the phone
- A brief demographic questionnaire
- A face-to-face interview lasting approximately one hour. The interview will ask questions about your experience of having your partner deported and how you have coped with your experience. Interviews will occur in a location convenient and safe for you.

Participants will receive a \$20 Target gift card at the conclusion of the interview process.

If you, or anyone you know is interested in this study, please contact me at jessi86@vt.edu or (703) 338-0256. Thank you!

Jessica

Internet Posting (Spanish)

Hola,

Mi nombre es Jessica Escobar y estoy estudiando para mi maestría en desarrollo humano con una concentración en Terapia de Matrimonio y Familia de Virginia Tech. Para mi tesis, estoy investigando la experiencia de mujeres Latinas que han tenido a sus esposos o compañeros deportados. Estoy reclutando para este estudio actualmente.

Usted califica para participación si:

- Es una Latina de por lo menos 18 años de edad
- Vive en DC, VA o MD
- Su esposo o compañero fue deportado recientemente (hace 1-10 años)
- Su esposo o pareja estuvieron en una relación de por lo menos un año antes de su deportación
- Tenía por lo menos un hijo menor de 18 años viviendo en su hogar en la fecha de la deportación.

Usted no califica si su esposo o pareja ha regresado a los estados unidos desde su deportación.

¿Qué es lo que requiere participación en este estudio?

- Una entrevista preliminar por teléfono que dura aproximadamente 10 minutos
- Un cuestionario demográfico breve
- Una entrevista en persona que dura aproximadamente una hora. En la entrevista, se le preguntara acerca de su experiencia de la deportación de su esposo o compañero, y como ha enfrentado esta experiencia. La entrevista será en un lugar conveniente y seguro para usted.

Participantes recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de Target con un valor de \$20 al final de la entrevista.

Si usted, o alguien que usted conoce está interesada en participar en este estudio, por favor comuníquese conmigo enviando un correo electrónico a jessi86@vt.edu.

Gracias!

Jessica

Appendix D

The Experiences of Latinas Coping with the Deportation of their Partners

Screening Questions (English)

Participant ID: _____

Date: _____

Script: Thank you for your interest in this study involving Latinas whose partners have been deported. I am going to ask you a few questions to determine whether or not you are eligible for this study. This screening will take approximately 10 minutes. Would you like to continue?

(Proceed with questions if potential participant says yes)

1. How old are you? _____ *(18+ years old)*
2. Do you identify as Latina or Hispanic? _____ *(Yes)*
3. When was your husband or partner deported? _____ *(1-10 years ago)*
4. How long did your relationship with your husband/partner last prior to his deportation?
_____ *(At least 1 year)*
5. Has your husband/partner re-entered the United States since the time of his deportation?
_____ *(No)*
6. Did you have at least one child under 18 years old living in the home when your partner was deported? _____ *(Yes)*
7. If so, was that child the son or daughter of the individual who was deported?
_____ *(Yes)*

If any of the potential participant's responses differ from those indicated in the parentheses, they are not eligible for participation. If they are not eligible, potential participant will be thanked for their time and interest in the study. Those who are eligible will be asked if they would like to schedule an interview.

The Experiences of Latinas Coping with the Deportation of their Partners

Screening Questions (Spanish)

Número del Participante: _____

Fecha: _____

Guion: Gracias por su interés en esta investigación de Latinas que han tenido a su pareja deportado. Voy a hacerle unas preguntas para determinar si califica para esta investigación. Esta entrevista preliminar tomara aproximadamente 10 minutos. ¿Desea continuar?

(Proceda con las siguientes preguntas si participante potencial contesta que sí)

1. ¿Qué edad tiene usted? _____ *(18+ anos de edad)*
2. ¿Usted se identifica como Latina o hispana? _____ *(Si)*
3. ¿Cuándo deportaron a su esposo o pareja? _____ *(hace 1-10 años)*
4. ¿Cuánto tiempo duró la relación con su esposo o pareja antes de su deportación?
_____ *(por lo menos un año)*
5. ¿Ha ingresado su esposo o pareja nuevamente a los estados unidos desde que fue deportado? _____ *(No)*
6. ¿Tenía por lo menos un hijo menor de 18 años de edad viviendo en su hogar en la fecha de la deportación? _____ *(Si)*
7. ¿Si contestó que sí, ese niño o niña es hijo del individuo que fue deportado?
_____ *(Si)*

Si alguna de las respuestas del participante potencial no coincide con las respuestas entre paréntesis, no califican para participar. Si no califican, se le agradecerá el tiempo y el interés del participante potencial en la investigación. A los que califican se les preguntará si quisieran hacer una cita para una entrevista.

Appendix E

Research Informed Consent

Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: A Qualitative Study of Latinas Coping with the Deportation of Their Partners

Principal Investigators:

Mariana Falconier, Ph.D., Assistant Professor/Committee Chair, Department of Human Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Jessica Escobar, M.S. Candidate, Department of Human Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

I. Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the experience of Latina women whose husbands or partners have been deported from the United States.

II. Procedures

You will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and an in-person interview lasting approximately one hour. In-person interviews will take place in your home or in a public setting agreed upon by you and the researcher.

III. Risks

You may feel emotional discomfort when being interviewed about your personal experiences. The researcher will have mental health referrals available should you wish to further process thoughts or emotions that arise from the interview. Payment for service from any mental health providers to which you are referred shall be your responsibility, and shall not be covered by the researchers, nor Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

IV. Benefits

The answers you provide will help us learn about the experience of Latinas whose husbands or partners have been deported so that clinicians may be better able to help others with that experience in the future. Talking about your experience may provide some therapeutic benefit to you. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made as an incentive for participation in this study.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

- All of the information provided during the interview and over-the-phone screening is confidential.
- At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent.
- All identifying information provided during the audio-recorded interview will be removed and replaced with aliases in the typed transcript and study report. Any identifiable information will be stored separately and securely from coded data.
- All data will be kept in a locked and secured location.
- If you wish to delete any information that may violate your confidentiality, you can bring that to the researcher's attention for omission. If you do not respond by the designated date for your review, the researcher will assume that you have no changes to submit.
- The only individuals with access to the audio recording and original transcript will be the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigator. If outside transcriber services are used, the Co-Investigator will request that the transcriber sign a confidentiality agreement.
- The audio tapes will be destroyed as soon as they have been transcribed and checked.
- Portions of your interview text may be used verbatim in the report of the project and/or in subsequent publications. No identifying information will be associated with any part of your interview that may be used.
- The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation

You will receive a \$20 Target gift card upon completion of a demographic questionnaire and interview.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

You do not have to participate in this research study. If you agree to participate, you can decide to stop participating at any time without penalty.

VIII. Participant's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

1. I will complete a demographic questionnaire. I will complete an in-person one-hour interview. The interview will take place in my home or at a location agreed upon by myself and the researcher.

IX. Participant's Permission

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Name (please print)

Researcher's Signature

Date

If you have any questions about this research study or its conduct, and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, you may contact:

Mariana Falconier, Ph.D

Investigator

Jessica Escobar, M.S. Candidate

Investigator

Dr. David M. Moore

Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review
Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance

703-538-8461/marianak@vt.edu

Telephone/e-mail

703-338-0256/jessi86@vt.edu

Telephone/e-mail

540-231-4991/moored@vt.edu

Telephone/e-mail

Research Informed Consent (Spanish)**Consentimiento Informado para Participantes en Proyectos Investigatorios Involucrando Seres Humanos**

Nombre del Proyecto: Una Investigación Cualitativa de Latinas Afrontando la Deportación de sus Parejas

Investigadoras Principales:

Mariana Falconier, Ph.D., Assistant Professor/Committee Chair, Department of Human Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Jessica Escobar, M.S. Candidate, Department of Human Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

X. Propósito de la Investigación

El propósito de la investigación es de aprender más acerca de las experiencias de las Latinas que han tenido a sus esposos o parejas deportados de los estados unidos.

XI. Procedimientos

Se le pide que complete un cuestionario demográfico y una entrevista en persona que dura aproximadamente una hora. Entrevistas en persona se llevaran a cabo en su hogar o en algún lugar público en el que usted y la investigadora estén de acuerdo.

XII. Riesgos

Puede ser que experimente incomodidad emocional durante la entrevista acerca de sus experiencias. La investigadora le proveerá una lista de recursos de salud mental por si desea de continuar a procesar sus pensamientos y emociones que salgan durante la entrevista. El pago por los servicios de cualquier profesional en esta lista que usted consulte será su responsabilidad, y no se cubrirá por los investigadores, ni el Instituto Politécnico de Virginia y Universidad Estatal.

XIII. Beneficios

Sus respuestas nos ayudaran a entender la experiencia de las mujeres Latinas que han tenido a su esposo o pareja deportado para que los profesionales clínicos puedan ayudar a otras personas con esta experiencia en el futuro. Hablar de su experiencia le podría proveer un efecto terapéutico. No se promete ni garantiza que algún beneficio se obtendrá como incentivo por participar en esta investigación.

XIV. Límites de la Anonimidad y Confidencialidad

- Toda la información que usted comparte con nosotros por teléfono o en persona es confidencial.
- Los investigadores no revelarán resultados que contienen información que podría identificarla a usted a ninguna persona que no esté trabajando en este proyecto sin su autorización escrita.
- Toda información que se obtiene durante la grabación de la entrevista será removida y se usarán seudónimos en la transcripción escrita y el reporte de la investigación. Cualquier información que pueda identificarla será guardada en un lugar aparte y asegurado de los datos codificados.
- Todos los datos serán guardados en un lugar bajo llave y seguro.
- Si usted desea borrar alguna información que pueda violar su confidencialidad, puede hacerle saber a la investigadora para que sea omitido. Si usted no responde para la fecha designada para su revisión, la investigadora concluirá que usted no tiene cambios que someter.
- Las únicas personas con acceso a las grabaciones de audio y la transcripción original serán la Investigadora Principal y la Co-investigadora. Si se utilizan los servicios de un transcriptor externo, la Co-Investigadora le pedirá al transcriptor que firme un acuerdo de confidencialidad.
- Las grabaciones de audio serán destruidas en cuanto sean transcritas y revisadas.
- Porciones del texto de la entrevista pueden ser usadas palabra por palabra en el reporte del Proyecto y/o en publicaciones subsecuentes. Nunca se asociará información que la pueda identificar con cualquier parte de su entrevista que se pueda usar.
- La Junta de Revisión Institucional (IRB) del Instituto Politécnico de Virginia y Universidad Estatal puede ver los datos de esta investigación por propósitos de auditoría. El IRB es responsable por la supervisión de este proyecto y los sujetos humanos envueltos en las investigaciones.

XV. Compensación

Usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de \$20 de Target al completar el cuestionario demográfico y la entrevista.

XVI. Libertad de Retirarse

Usted no está obligada a participar en esta investigación. Si usted está de acuerdo en participar, puede decidir de retirarse de la investigación en cualquier momento sin ser penalizada.

XVII. Responsabilidades del Participante

Yo consiento voluntariamente a participar en esta investigación. Tengo las siguientes responsabilidades:

2. Completare un cuestionario demográfico.
3. Completare una entrevista en persona de aproximadamente una hora. La entrevista se llevará a cabo en mi hogar o un lugar en el que la investigadora y yo designemos.

XVIII. Permiso del Participante

Yo he leído este Formulario de Consentimiento y las condiciones del proyecto. He recibido respuestas a todas mis preguntas. Por lo presente reconozco lo escrito y consiento voluntariamente.

Firma del Participante

Fecha

Nombre del Participante (letra de molde)

Firma de la Investigadora

Fecha

Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de esta investigación o el procedimiento, los derechos de sujetos de investigación, y con quien comunicarse en el evento de danos relacionados con la investigación, puede comunicarse con:

Mariana Falconier, Ph.D

Investigadora

Jessica Escobar, M.S. Candidata

Investigadora

Dr. David M. Moore

Presidente, Virginia Tech Institutional Review
Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance

703-538-8461/marianak@vt.edu

Teléfono/correo electrónico

703-338-0256/jessi86@vt.edu

Teléfono/correo electrónico

540-231-4991/moored@vt.edu

Teléfono/correo electrónico

Appendix F**Demographic Questionnaire (English)**

1. Age: _____

2. Marital Status: ___Single (never married) ___Separated ___Married ___Divorced
___Widowed

3. How would you define your relationship with the deported partner?

- ___ Legally married and romantic partner
- ___ Legally married but not viewed as romantic partner
- ___ Divorced or legally separated
- ___ Co-parenting relationship
- ___ No relationship
- ___ Other: _____

4. In what country were you born? _____

5. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

- ___ Did not complete high school
(What was the last grade completed? _____)
- ___ High school graduate (diploma or equivalent, such as GED)
- ___ Technical or Vocational degree
- ___ Some college credit, no degree
- ___ Associate's/Bachelor's Degree
- ___ Master's level or higher

6. Are you currently working? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, what is your occupation? _____

7. What is your total household income?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 or less | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-\$40,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000-\$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-\$50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000-\$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-\$60,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-\$30,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$60,000 |

8. What was your total household income at the time your husband/partner was deported?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 or less | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-\$40,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000-\$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-\$50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000-\$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-\$60,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-\$30,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$60,000 |

9. Were you working at the time of your husband/partner's deportation? Yes No

If so, what was your occupation? _____

10. How many people live in your household and what is their relationship to you?

11. Do you have any children and if so what are their ages? _____

12. How old were your children at the time of your partner's deportation? _____

13. When was your partner deported? _____

14. How much time passed between your partner's arrest/detention and the date of the deportation?

15. Was your partner involved in any immigration court proceedings? _____

16. Did your partner have legal representation? _____

Demographic Questionnaire (Spanish)

1. Edad: _____

2. Estado civil: ___ Soltera (nunca casada) ___ Separada ___ Casada ___ Divorciada ___ Viuda

3. ¿Cómo describiría su relación con el individuo deportado?

___ Casados legalmente y envueltos románticamente

___ Casados legalmente pero no envueltos románticamente

___ Divorciados o separados legalmente

___ Relación de padres

___ Ninguna relación

___ Otro: _____

4. ¿En qué país nació usted? _____

5. ¿Cuál es el nivel de educación más alto que ha alcanzado?

___ No completó la escuela secundaria

(¿Cuál fue el último año escolar que terminó? _____)

___ Completo escuela secundaria (recibió diploma o su equivalente, como el GED)

___ Completo un programa técnico o vocacional

___ Algún crédito universitario, no completó la universidad

___ Carrera de grado universitario

___ Maestría o un nivel más avanzado

6. ¿Tiene actualmente un trabajo? ___ Sí ___ No

Si contesta si, ¿cuál es su trabajo? _____

7. ¿Cuál es su ingreso anual?

___ \$5,000 o menos

___ \$30,000-\$40,000

- \$5,000-\$10,000
- \$10,000-\$20,000
- \$20,000-\$30,000
- \$40,000-\$50,000
- \$50,000-\$60,000
- Más de \$60,000

8. ¿Cuál era su ingreso anual del hogar antes de la deportación de su esposo/pareja?

- \$5,000 o menos
- \$5,000-\$10,000
- \$10,000-\$20,000
- \$20,000-\$30,000
- \$30,000-\$40,000
- \$40,000-\$50,000
- \$50,000-\$60,000
- Más de \$60,000

9. ¿Usted trabajaba cuando deportaron a su esposo/pareja? Sí No

Si contestó que sí, ¿cuál era su trabajo en el momento que deportaron a su esposo/pareja?

10. ¿Cuántas personas viven en su hogar y qué relación tienen con usted?

11. ¿Tiene hijos? ¿Qué edades tienen sus hijos? _____

12. ¿Qué edad tenían sus hijos cuando deportaron a su pareja? _____

13. ¿Cuándo deportaron a su esposo/pareja?

14. ¿Cuánto tiempo pasó entre la fecha que arrestaron/detuvieron a su esposo/pareja y la fecha en la que fue deportado?

15. ¿Su pareja estuvo envuelto en procedimientos de la corte de inmigración?

16. ¿Su pareja tuvo representación legal? _____

Appendix G

Confidentiality Agreement



VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Human Development
Northern Virginia Center
7054 Haycock Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22043-2311
703 538-8470 Fax: 703 538-8465

Confidentiality Agreement for Interview Data

I, _____ agree to safeguard the identity of participants enrolled in the *Qualitative Study of Latinas Coping with the Deportation of Their Partners*. I will not disclose or discuss participant-related material outside of meetings with the research team. I will protect the confidentiality of all participants by safeguarding participant related-materials, which includes identifiable information disclosed in participants' interviews.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix H**Resources and Referrals for Participants (English)**

Therapy and Counseling Services	
<u>Center for Family Services</u> 7054 Haycock Rd Falls Church, VA 22043 (703) 538-8470	<u>Catholic Charities (Northern VA)</u> 200 N. Glebe Rd, Suite 506 Arlington, VA 22203 (703) 841-3830
<u>Multicultural Clinical Center</u> 6563 Edsall Rd, Springfield, VA 22151 (703) 354-0000	<u>Catholic Charities (DC & MD)</u> 924 G St NW Washington, DC 20001 (202) 772-4300
Crisis and Emergency Services	
<u>Woodburn Community Mental Health Center</u> 3340 Woodburn Rd, Annandale, VA 22003 (703) 573-0523	<u>Crisis Link</u> (703) 527-4077 <u>911</u>
Legal Assistance	
<u>Hogar Legal Services</u> 6201 Leesburg Pike, Suite 307 Falls Church, VA 22044 (703) 534-9805	<u>Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services</u> 924 G St NW Washington, DC 20001 (202) 772-4352

Resources and Referrals for Participants (Spanish)

Servicios de Terapia y Consejería	
<u>Centro de Servicios para la Familia</u> 7054 Haycock Rd Falls Church, VA 22043 (703) 538-8470	<u>Caridades Católicas (Norte VA)</u> 200 N. Glebe Rd, Suite 506 Arlington, VA 22203 (703) 841-3830
<u>Centro Clínico Multicultural</u> 6563 Edsall Rd, Springfield, VA 22151 (703) 354-0000	<u>Caridades Católicas (DC & MD)</u> 924 G St NW Washington, DC 20001 (202) 772-4300
Servicios de Crisis y Emergencia	
<u>Woodburn Centro Comunitario de Salud</u> <u>Mental</u> 3340 Woodburn Rd, Annandale, VA 22003 (703) 573-0523	<u>Crisis Link</u> (703) 527-4077 <u>911</u>
Ayuda Legal	
<u>Hogar Servicios Legales</u> 6201 Leesburg Pike, Suite 307 Falls Church, VA 22044 (703) 534-9805	<u>Caridades Católicas Servicios Legales de</u> <u>Inmigración</u> 924 G St NW Washington, DC 20001 (202) 772-4352