

U.S. Citizen Children De Facto Deported to Mexico

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Between 2000 and 2015, the U.S. deported unprecedented numbers of Mexican immigrants. During the same period, the population of U.S.-born children living in Mexico doubled in size. This study estimates the number of U.S.-born children who emigrated to Mexico from the United States in order to accompany a deported parent: de facto deported children. The data come from the Mexican National Survey of Demographic Dynamics (ENADID), a national probability sample of households in Mexico collected in 2014 and 2018. About one in six U.S.-born children living in Mexico in 2014/2018, amounting to an estimated 80,000–100,000 U.S.-born children, were there because the U.S. government deported one or both of their parents. De facto deported U.S.-born children are socioeconomically disadvantaged in Mexico compared to U.S.-born children whose parents migrate to Mexico for other reasons. Women are overrepresented among deported people who bring their U.S.-born children to Mexico, and when deported mothers bring their children, they are far less likely to do so with a partner than are deported fathers. U.S. policy should consider the interests of U.S. citizen children forced to live abroad when redesigning immigration and child welfare policies.

Introduction

The first two decades of the 21st century recorded the largest number of deportations ever in U.S. history (Department of Homeland Security [DHS] 2018a). Many immigrants the U.S. government deports have children in the United States (Amuedo-Dorantes, Pozo, and Puttitanun 2015; Hagan et al. 2008). When the U.S. government deports the parent of a child living in the United States, there are three possibilities for family reorganization: (1) the child remains in the United States, and the parent remains in the country of origin, causing family separation (Amuedo-Dorantes and Arenas-Arroyo 2019; Andrews and Khayar-Cámara 2020; Golash-Boza

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2019); (2) the parent re-enters the United States, subjecting themselves to possible criminal penalties, a nevertheless common strategy (Amuedo-Dorantes, Pozo, and Puttitanun 2015; Cardoso et al. 2016; Vargas Valle, Hamilton, and Orraca Romano 2022); or (3) the child immigrates to the parent's country of origin to accompany the deported parent (Boehm 2016; Caldwell 2019; Zayas 2015). It is unknown how many families separate, versus reunite, and where they reunite when facing the deportation of a parent (Capps et al. 2015).

In this article, we estimate the number of U.S.-born children who emigrated from the United States between 2009 and 2018 in order to accompany a parent deported to Mexico. These children were *de facto deported*: although the U.S. government did not order them deported, *de facto* deported children are forced to leave the country in order to remain with their parents (Kanstroom 2007). U.S.-born children are U.S. citizens by birth. They have the right to return to and work in the United States, vote and run in U.S. elections, sponsor family members for immigration status, and access U.S. social services. The *de facto* deportation of young U.S. citizens results in the physical and social separation between them and the U.S. institutions and social systems designed to care for, educate, and support them. It is a forced exile (Zayas 2015).

There are no existing estimates of how many children emigrate from the United States to accompany a deported parent. In the case of Mexico, there is reason to expect the number is large (Capps et al. 2015). Between 2000 and 2015, the population of U.S.-born children in Mexico doubled in size to more than half a million, most of them living with Mexican-born parents who were previously in the United States (Masferrer, Hamilton, and Denier 2019). In that same period, the U.S. deported more people than ever before, the large majority (70 percent) to Mexico (DHS 2021). Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reports state that between 2015 and 2018, 160,864 people deported from the United States claimed a U.S.-citizen child (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017a, 2017b, 2018b, 2019a, 2019b). Some of them presumably reunited with their children in Mexico.

In this article, we estimate the size and characteristics of the population of U.S.-born children who were *de facto* deported to Mexico between 2009 and 2018, a period that includes large-scale return migration and deportation to Mexico, as well as growth in the population of U.S.-born minors in Mexico (Capps et al. 2015; Gonzalez-Barrera 2015; Masferrer, Hamilton, and Denier 2019). In doing so, we contribute to efforts to understand how U.S. immigration policy extends beyond the borders of the United States to affect the lives of young people who are forced to live elsewhere (Silver 2018). While several studies have speculated that the disadvantages faced by U.S.-born minors in Mexico may result from the hardships of their parents' deportation, those studies have not differentiated between children

in Mexico who migrated due to a parent's deportation, versus those who migrated for other reasons (Amuedo-Dorantes, Pozo, and Puttitanun 2015; Cruz 2018; Masferrer, Hamilton, and Denier 2019; Menjívar and Gómez Cervantes 2016; Wassink 2020; Zúñiga and Giorguli Saucedo 2020).

We also consider how deportation interacts with family structure and gender. U.S. immigration enforcement has been called a “gendered, racial removal program” because it disproportionately targets Latino men (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). The deportation of men has consequences on family left behind, transforming the partners of deported men into single mothers and depriving children of their fathers (Allen, Cisneros, and Tellez 2015; Andrews and Khayar-Cámara 2020; Barros Nock 2019; Dreby 2012; Enriquez 2020; Golash-Boza 2019). The process of bringing children to Mexico to accompany a deported parent may be gendered, as well, given gendered expectations about the in-person caretaking of children and gendered patterns of family migration (Dreby 2010, 2012; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1995; Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie 2002). For these reasons, we expect that women are overrepresented among deported people who return with children. We provide initial evidence of such a pattern through an examination of gendered differences in the presence of U.S.-born children in the households of women and men who were deported, as well as in whether the deported parent is accompanied by or lives with a partner following deportation.

We analyze data from the 2014 and 2018 Mexican National Survey of Demographic Dynamics (ENADID, by its Spanish acronym) to identify, quantify, and describe the characteristics of U.S.-born children de facto deported from the United States to Mexico between 2009 and 2018. The ENADID is the first population data source in Mexico to include questions about deportation as a reason for migration to Mexico from the United States, and the data allow us to link U.S.-born children to their parents within households. Using these data, we answer the following research questions: (1) How many U.S.-born children living in Mexico in 2014 and 2018 were de facto deported by the U.S. government? (2) How did de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico in 2014 fare in terms of various indicators of social well-being, including school enrollment, disability, household structure, access to health care, and household socioeconomic precarity? (3) Is the process of de facto deportation gendered? Specifically, are women overrepresented among deported parents with U.S.-born children in Mexico? And, how does the parental structure—the presence and migration status of the partner of the deported parent—of de facto deported children vary when it is the mother or the father who was deported?

Background

From 2000 to 2015, the population of U.S.-born children living in Mexico doubled to more than half a million, population growth driven by the

migration of hundreds of thousands of Mexican adults from the United States to Mexico with their children (Amuedo-Dorantes and Juarez 2022; Giorguli Saucedo, García-Guerrero, and Masferrer 2016; Masferrer, Hamilton, and Denier 2019). Zúñiga and Giorguli Saucedo (2020) call U.S.-born children in Mexico the *0.5 generation*: they have U.S. citizenship by birth but will grow up in their parents' country of origin. They are the generational opposite of the U.S. 1.5 generation, who were born in their parents' country of birth but grow up in the United States (Rumbaut 2004). Among the children of Mexican immigrants, the 0.5 and 1.5 generations are nearly equal in size; in 2015, both groups of children counted just over half a million (Masferrer, Hamilton, and Denier 2019; Urban Institute 2021).

In addition to their common population size, the 0.5 and 1.5 generations share the experience of being subject to the harms of U.S. state action, especially immigration policy and its enforcement. Bean and colleagues (2015) developed the "membership exclusion" theory to understand how immigration policies restrict immigrant integration through the denial of formal and informal membership in U.S. society. Policies that target, surveil, police, restrict access to social services, and otherwise limit immigrant rights in the United States generate stress, undermine family function, affect child development, and limit socioeconomic mobility (Bean et al. 2015; Berger Cardoso et al. 2018; Enriquez 2020; Menjívar and Abrego 2012; Patler 2018; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011; Yoshikawa 2011). These impacts extend beyond the first and the 1.5 generation to the second generation, as well. In spite of their U.S. citizenship, U.S.-born children of immigrants nevertheless experience the harms of immigration policy as it restricts the rights of their parents (Bean et al. 2011; Dreby 2012, 2015a, 2015b; Yoshikawa 2011).

Theories of immigrant integration did not anticipate that large numbers of U.S.-born children would leave the United States, forming the 0.5 generation abroad. Yet, the experience of de facto deportation is one way the current U.S. immigration policy regime exerts a profound influence on the lives of children of immigrants, even extending beyond U.S. borders (Dreby 2012; Enriquez 2015; Medina and Menjívar 2015; Silver 2018). Arguably, the 0.5 generation (living abroad) is impacted differently by U.S. immigration policies than the 1.5 generation and the second generation (who live in the United States), an implication made by Dreby's (2012) pyramid of deportation risk and harms. Because de facto deported children are forced to leave their country of citizenship to remain with their parents, they experience total separation, at least in the short term, from U.S. institutions and social systems designed to support them.

Few studies have examined the experiences of U.S.-born children who migrate to Mexico, perhaps because it is a relatively recent phenomenon, and even fewer have studied the particular experiences of de facto deported children. Research on U.S.-born children in Mexico has focused on challenges in schooling among the "students we share," that is migrant children

between Mexico and the United States (Gándara 2020). Bureaucratic barriers to school enrollment for children born outside of Mexico and limited resources for foreign-language learners in Mexican schools aggravate the schooling of U.S.-born children in Mexico (Giorguli Saucedo et al. 2021; Hamann, Zúñiga, and Sánchez García 2008, 2018; Jacobo Suárez 2016; Jacobo Suárez and Jensen 2018; Medina and Menjívar 2015; Sánchez García and Hamann 2017; Zúñiga and Giorguli Saucedo 2020; Zúñiga and Vivas-Romero 2014). As a result of these and other challenges, U.S.-born children in Mexico experience delays in enrollment and are more likely to exit school early than nonmigrant children in Mexico and the United States (Glick and Yabiku 2016; Rendall and Torr 2008; Vargas Valle and Camacho Rojas 2015; Zúñiga and Giorguli Saucedo 2020). Studies have recently documented that U.S.-born children in Mexico are also less likely to be enrolled in health insurance than Mexican-born children (Amuedo-Dorantes and Juarez 2022; Borja et al. 2021; Wassink 2020). In Mexico, children's enrollment in the public health insurance system strongly depends on the formal employment of parents. Thus, children's insurance coverage will reflect the increasing informal employment and declining earnings among Mexican returnees and U.S.-born adults (Denier and Masferrer 2020).

Only a few studies have specifically examined the experiences of U.S.-born children whose parents the U.S. government deported to Mexico (Barros Nock 2019; Boehm 2016; Caldwell 2019; Dreby 2015a; Zayas 2015). These five qualitative studies followed families deported to Mexico. They found that the experience of *de facto* deportation is uprooting and disorienting for children, resulting in difficult school and social transitions and emotional withdrawal. The studies described new depths of economic deprivation due to the difficulty that deported parents face finding work and to impoverished conditions in the communities where they settle. The studies provide substantial evidence that *de facto* deportation has harsh consequences for U.S. citizen children. There is no reason to expect that these experiences are unique, but they refer to only a few instances of what is likely a much broader phenomenon that requires demographic data and analysis, as well as comparison to children who migrate for other reasons.

We might expect that *de facto* deported children fare worse, on average, than children whose parents return for other reasons. This is most plainly because deportation is forced. Of course, returns take place on a continuum of compulsion, and it is difficult to draw a line between voluntary and involuntary return (FitzGerald and Arar 2018; Jardón Hernández and Hernández Lara 2019; Wheatley 2011, 2017). At one pole, deportation leaves parents with few choices. At the other, people plan to return because return is in the best interests of the family.

Another reason that *de facto* deported children in Mexico may experience greater disadvantage than children whose parents migrate for other

reasons is because of how deportation interacts with family structure. Men comprise the large majority (90 percent) of people deported to Mexico (DHS 2018a; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). When fathers are deported and leave their families behind in the United States, their partners become “suddenly single mothers,” and there are severe economic consequences on the family (Capps et al. 2015; Dreby 2012). Yet, the ability to leave children in the United States likely depends on a parent or trusted guardian also remaining behind. Therefore, deportation *with children* may select on single parents, who may not have a co-parent with whom to leave their children. It may also select on mothers, who are more likely to care for children following separation from a partner, and who are more likely to migrate with children than are men (Dreby 2010, 2015a, 2015b; Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie 2002).

We assess this possibility by comparing the family structure of de facto deported children in Mexico to the family structure of children who migrate with their parents to Mexico for reasons other than deportation. We also consider how the family structure differs when it is the mother or the father who was deported. Specifically, we ask, when a mother is deported and is accompanied to Mexico by her U.S.-born children, does the father return to Mexico as well, and under what conditions? Are the patterns of partner accompaniment different when it is the father who is deported?

In the United States, children of Hispanic immigrant parents are more likely to live with two parents (70 percent) than children of Hispanic parents who are U.S.-born (54 percent; Waters et al. 2015). This is also true for Mexican-origin families: in the United States in 2000, 72 percent of children of Mexican immigrant parents lived with both parents, compared to 56 percent of children of U.S.-born parents of Mexican origin (Landale et al. 2006). Studies that disaggregate by the legal or citizenship status of the parents are less common, but one study of data from California found that children who lived with Mexican-origin mothers were less likely to have a father present if the mother was U.S.-born (88 percent with a father present) than if the mother was a legal permanent resident (97 percent with a father present) or if she was undocumented (94 percent with a father present) (Oropesa, Landale, and Hillemeier 2017). We consider these patterns when evaluating the family circumstances of children who are de facto deported to Mexico.

Methods

To answer our research questions, we used data from the 2014 and 2018 waves of the ENADID, a nationally representative, cross-sectional survey of about 100,000 households conducted by the Mexican National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) on a recurring basis. The ENADID is designed to understand demographic processes, especially fertility and

reproductive behavior, infant mortality, and migration in Mexico. The ENADID is collected in person in the fall of each survey year and has been collected six times (in 1992, 1997, 2006, 2009, 2014, and 2018). The survey selects a probabilistic sample of households, representative at the state, regional, and national levels. One adult from each household answers questions about all household members. We used survey weights created by INEGI to estimate population counts and standard errors.

The ENADID is the only existing, population data source from Mexico that allows us to identify the U.S.-born children of deported parents who arrived during the period in which the population of U.S.-born children doubled in Mexico between 2005 and 2015 (Masferrer, Hamilton, and Denier 2019). In 2014, the survey added a new question about the reason for migration to Mexico, which includes deportation as a possible reason. Because the ENADID is a household survey, we are able to identify deported parents living in households with their U.S.-born children. While the ENADID has been used to study the social welfare of deported adults (Dominguez-Villegas and Bustamante 2021) and U.S.-born minors in Mexico (Wassink 2020), as well as the number of people who returned to Mexico as a result of deportation (Gonzalez-Barrera 2015), it has not yet been used to study de facto deportation.

As we will explain below, the ENADID presents certain challenges to our study, including small sample sizes of de facto deported children and errors specific to the structure of the household data. We therefore examined the feasibility of using other common Mexican data sources on migrants and deported people. The Mexican Survey of Migration in the Northern Border (EMIF-Norte) directly samples people upon reentry, providing a unique sample representative of migrant flows through the border. However, the EMIF-Norte survey does not include children and does not follow deported parents to observe whether they reunite with children in Mexico or in the United States. The Mexican Migration Project (MMP) is a rich, historic database ideal for the study of changes in the patterns and determinants of Mexico–U.S. migration. However, the MMP does not allow for population estimates and does not contain sufficient recent data to provide a contemporary portrait of the sociodemographic characteristics of U.S.-born children of deported parents living in Mexico.

Following the model of the ENADID, the long-form questionnaire of the 2020 Decennial Census added questions about reason for return to Mexico among respondents who were in the United States in 2015. Although the 2020 Census would provide a larger sample of U.S.-born children of deported parents (by virtue of the larger sample administered the long-form questionnaire), data collection occurred at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, and there are ongoing efforts to address data quality issues, including concerning the accurate reporting of children (INEGI 2021a). Once these issues are resolved, the 2020 Census could be used to provide an updated study of de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico.

Our analysis of the ENADID begins with children (or minors, under age 18) in each survey whose reported place of birth was the United States ($n = 1,865$ in 2014 and $n = 1,945$ in 2018). To link children to parents within households, we used a variable in the ENADID that identifies the relationships between each household member and the household head. For minors who were the “child” of the household head, identifying the parents was straightforward; we assumed that the head’s partner was also the child’s parent. For minor children who were not the child of the household head, we made educated guesses about which adult was likely to be the minor’s parent. For example, in cases where the minor’s grandparent was the household head, we presumed that the presence of a sole adult child and/or child-in-law of the head indicated the child’s parent(s). However, if there were multiple adult children of the head, we were unable to determine who was the minor’s parent. We were unable to identify the parents of 231 U.S.-born children (12 percent) in 2014 and 256 U.S.-born children (13 percent) in 2018. In 2014, we were unable to identify the parent of 174 U.S.-born minors who lived with grandparents, 2 who lived with an aunt or uncle, 4 who lived with a spouse, and 51 who were not related to the head (in 2018, these numbers were 155, 6, 4, and 91). Most of these children lived in households with no plausible parent.

The ENADID asked all household members over age 5 where they lived five years prior to the survey and over age 1 where they lived one year prior to the survey. In a circular migration supplement, it further asked about any migration(s) of household members in the five years prior to the survey. We defined all people who lived in the United States one or five years prior to the survey or who migrated to the United States and returned to Mexico in the five years prior to the survey as “recent migrants” (to Mexico). All recent migrants were asked the reason for their migration to Mexico. We identified deported people as those who reported that they migrated from the United States to Mexico because “they were deported.” In 2014, there were 393 deported people in the ENADID, 372 were adults, and 227 deported adults lived in a household with at least one minor child. The numbers were smaller in 2018: 266, 263, and 125.

We expect that deportation is underreported due to stigma surrounding deportation, which means our estimates of de facto deportation are likely low (conservative) and our analysis of group differences may be biased by selective underreporting (Anderson 2015; Pinillos Quintero and Velasco Ortiz 2021; Wheatley 2011). One way to assess the problem of bias is to compare the characteristics of people reporting deportation in the ENADID to administrative data on deported people.¹ We compared the gender composition of people reporting deportation as a cause of migration in the 2014 and 2018 ENADID to the gender composition of deportations to Mexico between 2009–2014 and 2013–2018, using U.S. data obtained from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University and

Mexican data from the Mexican government's public records on Mexicans deported to Mexico. The distributions were similar across the three sources. In the ENADID 2014, 87.9 percent of people reporting deportation as a cause of migration to Mexico were men; in 2018, the share was 92.1 percent. In the U.S. administrative data, 93.6 percent of Mexicans deported to Mexico between 2009 and 2014 were male; between 2013 and 2018, the share was 93.2 percent. In the Mexican administrative data, the percentage male from 2013 to 2018 was 89.6 percent, while from 2009 to 2014, it was 90.6 percent.

There are no other common characteristics of deported people reported in the ENADID and the administrative data sources, so we looked to the literature on deportation stigma to gauge whether and how underreporting might vary among deported people, under the assumption that deported people who experience greater stigma might be less likely to report deportation as the cause of their migration. In Mexico, deportation stigma is associated most closely with English language and certain North American styles (such as low-riding pants and tattoos), style that is more common among younger migrants than among deported migrants (i.e., "voluntary" returnees with that style may also be assumed to be criminals or deported) (Anderson 2015; Silver 2018). Other studies that address the experience of deportation stigma have focused on particularly vulnerable deported populations, such as people who live on the streets or intravenous drug users (Albicker and Velasco 2016; Brouwer et al. 2009), but "floating populations" of deported people on the border often are those who are separated from family through the migration and/or deportation process (París Pombo 2010). It is not clear how this stigma and the resulting pattern of underreporting may affect our analysis of group differences.

We also expect there is error in reporting deportation as a reason for migration to Mexico, considering the substantial variation in removal experiences, which range from apprehension at the border and the signing of voluntary departure orders, to departure following a deportation order but prior to a court hearing, to long periods of incarceration in immigrant detention prior to removal (Boehm 2016; Golash-Boza 2015; Jardón Hernández and Hernández Lara 2019; Medina and Menjívar 2015; París Pombo 2010). In the ENADID, we cannot discern what respondents mean when they report deportation as a cause of return, and we do not impose a particular definition of deportation.

Because the ENADID questions about migration refer only to the five-year period prior to the survey, we could only identify *de facto* deportation among the sample of U.S.-born children whose parents were recent migrants to Mexico. We further defined the sample of children "at risk for *de facto* deportation" as U.S.-born children who themselves also migrated to Mexico in the five years prior to the survey. We included in this cate-

gory any U.S.-born children under age 5. We assumed that children who migrated to Mexico prior to their parent's deportation did so for reasons unrelated to the deportation; however, very few U.S.-born children in the 2014 ($n = 7$) or 2018 ($n = 8$) ENADID migrated to Mexico prior to their parents.

We identified de facto deported U.S.-born children as recent migrant U.S.-born children living in a household with at least one recent migrant parent who reported that their reason for return was deportation. In 2014, recent migrant parents of recent migrant U.S.-born children who did not return for deportation or removal were most likely to state they returned for family reasons (54 percent), followed by work (14 percent). We could not observe whether children migrated at the exact same time as their parents, or whether their reason for migration was to accompany the deported parent. In other words, we assumed that children who migrated over the same period of time as their parents and who lived with those parents in Mexico migrated to accompany their parents. In 2014, the majority (90 percent) of U.S.-born children reported that the reason for their migration was family; 6 reported that they migrated due to deportation, all of them the child of a deported parent.

As already described, we did not observe de facto deportation for U.S.-born children who did not live with at least one identifiable parent or who migrated or whose parents migrated to Mexico earlier than five years prior to the survey. To arrive at an estimate of the entire population of de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico, we applied the observed rate of de facto deportation, which is equal to the number of de facto deported U.S.-born children divided by the number of U.S.-born children at risk of de facto deportation, to the entire population of U.S.-born children. This analysis assumes that the rate of de facto deportation observed among recent migrant children who lived with recent migrant parents is similar to the rate for earlier-arriving families and children who lived apart from their parents. We discuss this assumption further below.

Mexican-born children can also be de facto deported if they migrated to the United States and then returned to Mexico with parents who were deported. However, there were too few Mexican-born de facto deported children in the ENADID ($n = 14$ in 2014 and $n = 2$ in 2018) to analyze separately. We did not combine U.S.-born and Mexican-born de facto deported children because doing so risks confounding the experience of de facto deportation from the United States to Mexico with early life migration from Mexico to the United States.

To answer our second question about the characteristics of de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico, we focused on the 2014 ENADID, in which the sample of de facto deported children was sufficiently large for two-group tests of difference. We compared de facto deported U.S.-born children to recent migrant U.S.-born children with recent migrant parents

who reported other reasons for their return—that is, to children with similar family migration experiences other than deportation. We also compared these two groups of U.S.-born children to all Mexican-born children to give a general baseline comparison. We compared children on demographic characteristics, including age, sex, and Indigenous background (among children over age 3), and then on a set of characteristics of child well-being measured in the ENADID. Child well-being measures included whether the child attended school (among children over age 3), whether the child had a disability, the presence of two parents in the household, if only one parent in the household whether that parent states that they are married, whether anyone in the household receives remittances from abroad, health insurance coverage, the precarity of housing materials and space, and the precarity of access to basic services in the household. We classified a child as having had a disability when a minor was reported to have had difficulty in any of the following due to a health or birth-related problem: (a) learning, remembering, concentrating, (b) talking, or (c) emotional or mental problems, such as autism, depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. Health insurance coverage differentiates children who report having access to services in any publicly funded clinic, including the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE), and Seguro Popular, and those who pay for private coverage in addition or in lieu of public coverage, versus those who report no access to services. Drawing from the Mexican National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social 2019), we defined the physical materials and space of a household as precarious when the dwelling unit met one of the following criteria: (a) dirt floors, (b) cardboard roof, or (c) the rate of people per room was 2.5 or higher. We considered the access to basic services in a household as precarious when the dwelling unit met one of the following criteria: (a) water was obtained from a well, river, lake, creek, or waterpipe, or it was transported from another dwelling unit or from a hydrant; (b) the dwelling unit was not connected to a sewage system, or drainage was connected to a pipeline that led to river, lake, sea, ravine; and/or (c) fuel used for cooking was wood or coal but without stove or chimney for venting.

To answer our third question about the gendered nature of de facto deportation, we examined the partner status of recent migrant parents of recent migrant U.S.-born children, using the 2014 sample. We compared the partner status of recent migrant mothers and fathers who were not deported and who were deported to consider how gender and family structure interact with different processes of migration to Mexico. We differentiated between parents who did not live with a partner (i.e., single parents), whose coresident partner was not a recent U.S. migrant (i.e., they were in Mexico during the five years prior to the survey), whose coresident partner was a recent migrant who was not deported, and

whose coresident partner was a recent migrant who was deported. As with defining parents, here we relied on the ENADID indicator of relationship to the household head to define partners. When the child was the grandchild, we assumed that the head's daughter- or son-in-law was the partner of the parent. We did not observe any same-sex couples among the parents of U.S.-born children in the ENADID.

Findings

Table 1 presents data to answer to our first research question. Row a of the table shows that there were 1,865 and 1,945 U.S.-born children in the 2014 and 2018 ENADIDs, respectively. These U.S.-born children counted in the survey represented over half a million U.S.-born children living in Mexico in those years. The population estimates of U.S.-born children in the ENADID are close to what has been reported using the 2015 Mexican Intercensal Survey, which estimated the population of U.S.-born minors to be 550,000 in 2015 (Masferrer, Hamilton, and Denier 2019). Both the ENADID and the Intercensal Survey estimates are in the range given by the Mexican Ministry of the Interior: 430,000–600,000 (Secretaría de Gobernación 2016).

Row b in Table 1 shows the subgroup of U.S.-born children who are at risk of de facto deportation: recent migrant children who lived with at least one recent migrant parent. In 2014, there were 417 U.S.-born, recent migrant children who lived with at least one recent migrant parent (row b). This means that a minority, about one-fifth (22 percent) of U.S.-born children living in Mexico in 2014 were members of recent migrant families. In 2018, this number was much smaller; only 175 U.S.-born children in the 2018 ENADID were recent migrants who also lived with at least one recent migrant parent, making up 9 percent of U.S.-born children in 2018. The shift from 22 percent to 9 percent of U.S.-born children who are recent migrants with recent migrant parents reflects the declining migration of parents and their U.S.-born children from the United States to Mexico between 2009 and 2018. This declining trend is consistent with what is observed in 2020 census data, compared with 2000, 2010, and the 2015 Intercensal Survey (INEGI 2021b).

Among recent migrant U.S.-born children whose parents are also recent migrants, 73 were de facto deported in 2014, and 28 were de facto deported in 2018 (row c). These samples represented 23,918 U.S.-born recent migrant de facto deported children living in Mexico in 2014 and 8,309 in 2018. These are population estimates of migrant stocks (children living in Mexico in 2014 and 2018) not flows. The actual numbers of U.S.-born children who were de facto deported to Mexico between 2009–2013 and 2014–2018 were likely greater than what we estimate, if some minors who were de facto deported in those periods emigrated from Mexico back to the United States before the time of the survey.

TABLE 1 Sample sizes and population estimates of de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico in 2014 and 2018

	2014		2018	
	Sample	Population	Sample	Population
a	1,865	573,008	1,945	582,253
b.	417	139,030	175	58,051
c	73	23,918	28	8,309
d	17.5	17.2 (10.1–24.3)	16.0	14.3 (5.6–23.1)
e		98,557 (57,874–139,241)		83,262 (32,606–134,500)

NOTE: In parenthesis are estimates of the percentage and number of de facto deported children using 95% confidence intervals
SOURCE: ENADID 2014 and 2018.

Row d of Table 1 presents the observed rate of de facto deportation. In 2014, the 73 recent migrant, de facto deported U.S.-born children made up 17.5 percent of recent migrant U.S.-born children with recent migrant parents; in 2018, they were 16 percent (row d). The error bands on the survey-weighted estimates are large, reflecting the small samples, but do not include zero. Although recent family migration declined among U.S.-born children in Mexico from 2014 to 2018 (from 22 percent of U.S.-born children to 9 percent), the rate of de facto deportation among returning families remained fairly constant from 2009 to 2018 (at 16–17.5 percent). In both years, approximately one out of every six U.S.-born children who were recent migrants with recent migrant parents living in Mexico was de facto deported from the United States.

In applying the observed rate of de facto deportation to the population of all U.S.-born children living in Mexico in each survey year, we estimated that there were 98,557 (95 percent CI: 57,874–139,241) de facto deported U.S.-born children living in Mexico in 2014 and 83,262 (95 percent CI: 32,606–134,500) de facto deported children living in Mexico in 2018 (row e of Table 1). These populations overlap to some extent (i.e., include the same children), but they are also affected by unique cohort changes: some de facto deported U.S.-born children aged out of childhood after 2014 (an estimated 4,605 (18 percent of) de facto deported children were 14 or older in 2014), some de facto deported children may have emigrated out of Mexico after 2014, and, as we observed, an estimated 8,309 U.S.-born children migrated into the population between 2014 and 2018.

Outside of our period of observation are U.S.-born children who were de facto deported to Mexico prior to 2009. In applying the observed rate of de facto deportation among recent migrant children with recent migrant parents to the entire population of U.S.-born children living in Mexico in 2014 and 2018, we assumed that the rate of de facto deportation is the same for earlier-arriving families: those who migrated to Mexico before 2009 who were still living in Mexico in 2014 and before 2013 who were still living in Mexico in 2018. The assumption for the later survey (2018) is supported in the data from the earlier survey (2014); that is, the observed rates of de facto deportation are similar in the two periods (17.5 percent and 16 percent). However, it is possible that the rate of deportation prior to 2009 was higher or lower than what we observed for 2009–2014. The period prior to 2009 was characterized by lower levels of deportation, but it was also characterized by lower levels of return migration to Mexico (DHS 2018a; Giorguli Saucedo, García-Guerrero, and Masferrer 2016; Masferrer and Roberts 2016), which may suggest that the rate of de facto deportation—the extent to which returning families did so in response to a deportation—was similar.

Since 2015, the DHS has published reports of the number of people deported from the United States who claim a U.S.-citizen child. Prior to 2015, we were able to find records obtained by a journalist via a Freedom

of Information Act request, giving us complete data from 2014 to 2018 (Trevizo 2006; DHS 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017a, 2017b, 2018b, 2019a, 2019b). There are several issues involved in comparing the Mexican survey data to administrative data, including that the DHS data represent events and not people, we cannot know whether some deported parents reported adult U.S.-citizen children in the administrative data, and the definitions employed for inclusion in the two data sources (i.e., the meaning of deportation) may vary. Acknowledging these differences and making certain assumptions about the data, we can make a rough comparison between our estimate of de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico and an estimate of the total population who faced this possibility over the observed time frame. The total count of deported people claiming a U.S.-citizen child reported by the DHS between 2014 and 2018 was 200,164. If we assume that the share from Mexico in this subpopulation is similar to share from Mexico in the total population of deported people (70 percent), an estimated 140,114 Mexicans deported between 2014 and 2018 claimed a U.S.-citizen child. We then follow other scholars in assuming that each parent averages two children, which means that an estimated 280,228 U.S.-citizen children were affected by the deportation of a parent to Mexico between 2014 and 2018 (Menjívar and Gómez Cervantes 2016). Using the ENADID, we estimated that 8,309 U.S.-born children were de facto deported to Mexico between 2013 and 2018 and remained there in 2018 (see Table 1). The comparison between these numbers (8,309–280,228) suggests that a small percentage of families facing parental deportation returned to Mexico with their U.S.-born children (and remained there); in other words, most families facing parental deportation to Mexico during this period separated or reunited in the United States. However, we remind readers that this comparison is subject to significant error and should be interpreted with caution.

Table 2 reports the demographic characteristics and measures of well-being of U.S.-born children in recent migrant families (i.e., recent migrant children living with at least one recent migrant parent), differentiating between children who were de facto deported (in column 1) and children whose migrant parents reported returning to Mexico for other reasons (in column 2), and comparing them to the general population of Mexican-born (nonmigrant) children (in column 3). The groups are similar in terms of gender composition (47–49 percent female) and mean age (7–9 years old). De facto deported children are less likely to be of Indigenous background than children whose parents returned for other reasons (8 percent vs. 18 percent), and both groups of U.S.-born children are less likely to be Indigenous than Mexican-born children (32 percent). U.S.-born children were more likely to attend school (91–92 percent) than Mexican-born children when we consider the full school-aged range (from 3 to 17 years), similar to what Giorguli Saucedo and colleagues (2021) found in 2010 Mexican census data. When we limit to primary school ages (6–12), we

TABLE 2 Demographic characteristics and well-being of U.S.-born children in recent migrant families by reason for return to Mexico and Mexican-born nonmigrant children in Mexico in 2014

	U.S.-born de facto deported	U.S.-born migrated for other reasons	Mexican-born nonmigrant
Age (mean years)	8	7 ^b	9
Sex (% girls/women)	49	47	49
Indigenous self-identification (%)	8 ^{*a}	18 ^b	32
Attends school: 3 years and older (%)	91	92 ^b	87
Attends school: 6 to 12 years old (%)	95 [*]	100 ^b	98
Has a disability (%)	6	3	3
Parents in household (%)			
Single parent	30	29	18
<i>Single parent is married (%)</i>	41 ^{*a}	20 ^b	8
Two parents	70 ^a	71 ^b	82
Type of health insurance (%)			
Public only	27 ^{*a}	41 ^b	84
Any private	3 ^{*a}	6 ^b	2
None	70 ^{*a}	53 ^b	14
Household receives remittances (%)	22 ^a	18 ^b	3
Precarious housing materials (%)	16 [*]	8 ^b	18
Precarious access to basic services in dwelling (%)	14	8 ^b	20
Sample (n)	73	344	100,204

NOTE: ^{*} denotes a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between U.S.-born de facto deported and children who returned for other reasons.

^a denotes a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between U.S.-born de facto deported and Mexican-born nonmigrant children.

^b denotes a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between U.S.-born children who returned for other reasons and Mexican-born nonmigrant children.

SOURCE: ENADID 2014.

see a slight difference appear, with fewer de facto deported, primary-school-aged U.S.-born children attending school than primary-school-aged recent U.S.-born migrants for other reasons and Mexican-born children (95 percent, vs. 100 percent vs. 98 percent). De facto deported U.S.-born children are twice as likely as other children to have a disability (6 percent vs. 3 percent), but this difference is not statistically different from zero.

The measure of parents in the household indicates whether both parents coreside with the child, or if the child lives in a single-parent household. Among children living with just one parent, we also report the share whose parent states they are married. Recent migrant children of recent migrant parents are far more likely than nonmigrant children to live in a single-parent household (29–30 percent vs. 18 percent). Among children in single-parent households, de facto deported children are more likely to live with a single parent who states they are married (41 percent), compared to 20 percent of U.S.-born children whose parents migrated for other reasons, which may suggest that deportation leads to family

TABLE 3 The presence of coresident U.S.-born children and the partner status of recent migrant and deported women and men in Mexico in 2014

	Women	Men
a. Percent of recent, not deported migrants living with recent migrant U.S.-born children in household	37	8
Sample of recent, not deported migrants	519	1,422
b. Percent of recent, deported migrants living with recent migrant U.S.-born children in household	45	9
Sample of deported migrants	29	343
c. Parent is a recent, not deported migrant and partner was...		
Not present in household (%)	27	5
Not a migrant (%)	11	11
A migrant (not deported) (%)	51	85
Deported (%)	11	0
Sample of recent, not deported migrant parents	192	117
d. Parent was deported and partner was...		
Not present in household (%)	69	7
Not a migrant (%)	0	10
A migrant (not deported) (%)	0	70
Deported (%)	31	14
Sample of deported parents	13	30

SOURCE: ENADID 2014.

separation to a greater extent than migration for other reasons. About one-fifth of U.S.-born children live in households that receive remittances from abroad. This does not vary by parents' reason for return.

U.S.-born children are far more likely to lack health insurance coverage than Mexican-born children. More than half of recent migrant U.S.-born children in Mexico lack health insurance coverage, with the rate highest among de facto deported children (70 percent, compared to 53 percent of children who migrated for reasons other than deportation). By comparison, 14 percent of Mexican-born children lack health insurance.

The results regarding precarious housing show that U.S.-born, recent-migrant children are less likely to live in precarious housing than Mexican-born children, among whom about one in five live in precarious housing. Among U.S.-born children, a greater share of de facto deported children lives in precarious housing: de facto deported U.S. born children are two times more likely to live in precarious housing than U.S.-born children who migrated for other reasons (16 percent vs. 8 percent) and 75 percent more likely to live with few basic services in the household (14 percent vs. 8 percent). Although some of these differences are not statistically significant, this likely owes to small sample sizes and limited power.

Table 3 provides an answer to our third research question about the gendered nature of de facto deportation. In this analysis, we shift the unit

of analysis from children to adults. In the top two panels (a and b), we see the percentage of adult women and men who recently returned to Mexico and coreside with recent migrant, U.S.-born children. Recent migrant women are far more likely to live in Mexico with U.S.-born children than are recent migrant men, regardless of reason for return (panels a and b). Among people who returned for reasons other than deportation (panel a), 37 percent of women, compared to 8 percent of men, coresided with U.S.-born children. Among deported people (panel b), 45 percent of women and only 9 percent of men coresided with U.S.-born children.

In the bottom two panels of Table 3 (c and d), we limit the analysis to parents of U.S.-born children and examine partnership status: whether there was no partner in the household (signaling single parenthood), a partner was present in the household but not a recent migrant (which could signal a reunited or new union), the partner was a recent migrant who was not deported (signaling nuclear family migration in panel c and de facto deportation of the partner in panel d), or the partner was a recent migrant who was deported (signaling de facto deportation of the partner in panel c and two-parent deportation in panel d).

Panel c in Table 3 shows that among recent, not deported migrant parents of recent migrant U.S.-born children, a far greater share of recent migrant mothers lived without a partner: almost a third (27 percent) of recent migrant mothers with U.S.-born children did not live with a partner in the household, while only 5 percent of fathers did not live with a partner. We examined whether these parents who lived without a partner reported their marital status as married, which might suggest family separation across borders. Among parents who returned for reasons other than deportation and lived with their U.S.-born children without a partner in the household, 11 percent of mothers reported they were married and 1 percent of fathers did; because these percentages are based on very small sample sizes, we did not present the numbers in the table. Small and similar shares of mothers and fathers (11 percent) lived with a partner who was not a recent migrant (row 2 of panel c). The majority of both fathers (85 percent) and mothers (51 percent) who recently migrated with their U.S.-born children also lived with a recent migrant partner, signaling nuclear family migration (row 3 of panel c). However, the share of fathers who experienced nuclear family migration is much greater than the share of mothers; in other words, when fathers migrate with children, they are far more likely to also migrate with mothers, while mothers are far more likely than fathers to migrate with children without a partner. About one in ten (11 percent of) recent migrant mothers live with a recently deported partner, suggesting they, like their U.S.-born children, were de facto deported: they migrated to accompany a deported partner. No men in the 2014 ENADID sample were de facto deported—that is no men migrated for reasons other than deportation from the United States between 2009 and 2014 and lived in a household with a deported partner in 2014.

Panel d of Table 3 shows us the partner status of deported parents of U.S.-born children, using the same categories as in panel c. Most deported mothers did not live with a partner in the household: 69 percent, compared to only 7 percent of deported fathers. Of deported mothers without a partner in the household, three said they were married, and two received remittances from abroad; the remainder declared that they were single. These numbers are not reported in the table due to very small sample sizes. The other group of deported mothers (31 percent) lived with a partner who was also deported. As we already saw in panel c, no deported mothers were accompanied by migrant partners who were not deported. We also see that no deported mothers lived with nonmigrant partners. Among deported fathers, the pattern is quite different. The majority (70 percent) lived with a migrant partner, suggesting that when men are deported and their U.S.-born children migrate with them, so does the mother. Ten percent of fathers lived with a nonmigrant partner, and 14 percent lived with a partner who was also deported.

Discussion

When the U.S. government deports the parent of a child living in the United States, there are three possibilities for family reorganization: (1) separation: the child remains in the United States and the parent remains in the country of origin; (2) reunion through parental migration: the parent reenters the United States, subjecting themselves to possible criminal penalties; or (3) reunion through child migration: the child is de facto deported. It is unknown what share of families facing this terrifying set of options separates versus reunifies, or where they reunify. In this study, we focused on the third possibility for family reorganization and found that the U.S. government de facto deported a large number of U.S.-born children to Mexico in the early 21st century. Using data from two waves of Mexico's demographic household survey, the ENADID 2014 and 2018, we estimated that 98,557 U.S.-born children were living in Mexico in 2014 and 83,262 U.S.-born children were living in Mexico in 2018 because they migrated to accompany a deported parent to Mexico. These numbers imply that about one in six U.S.-born children living in Mexico in these years were there because the U.S. government deported one or both of their parents. We expect that our estimates of de facto deportation are conservative because deportation is likely underreported as a cause of migration, some de facto deported children emigrated back to the U.S. before the time of the surveys, and we were unable to identify parent-child relationships in complex households in the ENADID survey.

When we compared our estimate of the number of de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico who arrived between 2013 and 2018 to an estimate of the number of U.S.-citizen children claimed by Mexican people who were deported from the United States in that period, we determined

that the number of children who are de facto deported is much smaller than those who likely remain in the United States following a parent's deportation. U.S.-born children who do not accompany their parents to Mexico are either separated from their deported parent or reunite through the parent's reentry to the U.S. Research suggests that many may reunite in the United States (Amuedo-Dorantes, Pozo, and Puttitanun 2015; Cardoso et al. 2016; Vargas Valle, Hamilton, and Orraca Romano 2022). One study found that two-thirds of parents deported from the United States to Mexico between 2014 and 2018 intended to remigrate to the United States (Vargas Valle, Hamilton, and Orraca Romano 2022).

De facto deportation is relatively rare, but it nevertheless affects a large number of U.S.-born children in Mexico. In this way, our analysis of de facto deportation is not dissimilar from studies of other relatively (and, in these cases, fortunately) rare events, such as housing instability among immigrant families (Pedroza 2022), solitary confinement in immigrant detention (Franco, Patler, and Reiter 2022), and parental incarceration (Turney 2014). Although these events are rare, it is nevertheless tremendously important to study them with existing data, while thinking carefully through the errors inherent to those data and making efforts through subsequent research to address them.

We also found that de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico in 2014 experienced greater socioeconomic disadvantage than U.S.-born children whose families migrated for reasons other than deportation. De facto deported U.S.-born children are more likely to lack access to health care and face more precarious housing conditions than U.S.-born children who migrate with their families for reasons other than deportation. Whether these patterns reflect selectivity in who returns via deportation, versus for other reasons, is not clear from our data. Our findings are consistent with those reported by qualitative studies of families who return to Mexico following a deportation (Barros Nock 2019; Boehm 2016; Caldwell 2019; Dreby 2015a; Zayas 2015). Future research on U.S.-born children in Mexico should consider parents' reason for return as an important dimension of stratification in the life circumstances of migrant children.

It is possible, as Dreby (2012) suggested in her deportation pyramid, that the harms of U.S. immigration enforcement are deeper for children who are forced into exile from their country of citizenship as compared to those who are at risk of parental deportation: children of noncitizen parents living in the United States. We can assess this possibility by comparing our findings to published research on the characteristics of children of Mexican immigrant parents in the United States. One measure in our study that is roughly comparable to measures in U.S. data sources is health insurance coverage. Published estimates of uninsurance among children of likely undocumented or undocumented immigrant parents in the United

States range widely, from 14.9 percent of Mexican-origin children of two undocumented parents in California between 2001 and 2014 (Oropesa, Landale, and Hillemeier 2016), to 35.5 percent of children of immigrant parents without lawful permanent residence in the United States between 1996 and 2009 (Ziol-Guest and Kalil 2012), to 67 percent of Mexican- and Central American-origin children of undocumented immigrants in Los Angeles, CA, in 2000 (Gelatt 2016). We found that 70 percent of de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico lacked health insurance in 2014. This level of uninsurance is much higher than the U.S. national estimate from the late 1990s through 2009 (which included non-Mexican families) and the California estimate for Mexican undocumented immigrant families between 2001 and 2014. De facto deported children living in Mexico in 2014 had similar levels of insurance coverage as the children of undocumented Mexican and Central American immigrants living in Los Angeles in 2001, prior to U.S. and California state reforms that expanded health insurance coverage to people who could not afford it (through the 2011 Affordable Care Act) and to the undocumented (in the 2016 CA Senate Bill 10).

Another point of comparison is the coresident family household structure. We found that 30 percent of U.S.-born children in Mexico in 2014 lived with only one parent. Among preschool-aged children born to Mexican immigrant parents in the United States in 2001, 12.4 percent lived with a single parent (Landale et al. 2014). In a study of data from California, even lower levels of single-parenthood were observed for children of noncitizen Mexican mothers, including mothers with legal permanent residence (2.7 percent were single parents) and undocumented mothers (5.7 percent were single parents) (Oropesa, Landale, and Hillemeier 2017). A high degree of family separation accompanies family migration (Enchautegui and Menjívar 2015; Nobles 2013; Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie 2002). The difference we observe in migrant family-household structure across countries (higher rates of single-parenthood among migrant families in Mexico than in the U.S.) could reflect that migrant families in the United States are more settled (and therefore reunified) than recently returned migrant families in Mexico. However, we found that only 20–41 percent of U.S.-born children in Mexico who lived with only one parent lived with a parent who stated they were married. Return migration by single parents with children could reflect a response to partnership dissolution and/or the difficulties of single-parenthood as an immigrant in the United States. We found that a greater share of U.S.-born children lived with a single parent who stated they were married when the parent was deported than when the parent returned for other reasons, suggesting that deportation may lead to separation between married parents to a greater extent than migration (with children) for other reasons.

When we limited our analysis to migrant parents and considered how patterns of family migration vary for mothers and fathers, we found strongly

gendered patterns that interact with deportation to inform distinct household structures for recent migrant U.S.-born children in Mexico. Although women made up 7.8 percent of deported adults in the 2014 ENADID, they comprised 30 percent of deported parents who brought their U.S.-born children with them. This is consistent with other gendered patterns of family migration: children are far more likely to separate from fathers than from mothers (Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie 2002). Moreover, we found that three-fourths of deported mothers who returned to Mexico with children returned without a partner; in the cases where the father was present in the household, the father was also deported. By contrast, when deported fathers returned with children, the majority (70 percent) were accompanied by a migrant partner who was not deported. We also found that 11 percent of recent migrant mothers were de facto deported; they migrated to accompany a deported partner, while no men in the ENADID 2014 were de facto deported. This could reflect several phenomena. When women are deported and they return to Mexico with children, they may not be accompanied by a partner because they are already separated; de facto deportation—that is, bringing children to Mexico following a deportation—may select on single parents, who do not have a partner with whom to leave their children. Alternatively, families could decide that it is best for mothers and children to return together, with fathers remaining in the United States to support them. However, only a small share of mothers who were deported and lived without a partner in Mexico stated that they were married. Different data are needed to understand how deportation interacts with family dissolution.

Nevertheless, our findings reveal that the harms of immigration policy are gendered not only in disproportionately targeting men, which has important family consequences in the case of separation (Andrews and Khayar-Cámara 2022; Dreby 2015b), but the U.S. deportation regime also places disproportionate burdens on deported mothers, who are far more likely than deported fathers to live in Mexico with U.S.-born children without a coresident father. This is further evidence of what Dreby (2010, 87) has called the “moral burden of transnational parenting” on mothers. The presence of de facto deported mothers also suggests that there is a group of women who, although the U.S. government did not order them deported, were forced to leave the United States to remain with their partners and children. There are no men who follow this pattern, at least in the ENADID.

While it is clear that women are overrepresented among the population of deported people who return and settle with U.S. born children in Mexico, Mexican data do not allow us to assess whether mothers or fathers are more likely to return with children, given a deportation order. We would need to observe the population of families at risk of de facto deportation, that is, parents with a deportation order with U.S.-born children in the United States. To our knowledge, U.S. population data identifying families that have experienced the deportation of a parent from the

United States do not exist. Our data do allow us to conclude that mothers and fathers who return to Mexico with children following a deportation do so under different family circumstances: fathers with a partner, mothers alone.

The origins and destinies of de facto deported U.S.-born children in Mexico are rooted in both Mexico and the United States. There are no good options for families who face a parental deportation. The U.S. government has forced de facto deported children to live outside their country of citizenship in order to remain with their parents. Our research suggests that, in doing so, they face disadvantages unique to their circumstances as de facto deported children in Mexico. Yet, the U.S. legal immigration regime has issued a series of rules and established case precedent making it virtually impossible for judges and immigration officials to consider the hardships facing children as sufficiently important to remove a parent's deportation order (Boehm 2016; Caldwell 2019; Enchautegui and Menjívar 2015). As the Biden Administration pushes for immigration reform, information regarding the number of de facto deported U.S.-born children and the circumstances they face after de facto deportation should be weighed.

De facto deported children have not so far been considered the subject of policy intervention. The U.S. government should increase the effort it makes to take care of its young citizens, regardless of their parents' immigration status or the child's country of residence (Masferrer and Pedroza 2021). In addition to informing U.S. immigration reform, our research should motivate and inform binational programs focused on child and family welfare to improve the lives of U.S. citizens whom the U.S. government forces to reside elsewhere.

Data Availability Statement

The Encuesta Nacional de la Dinámica Demográfica (ENADID) 2014 and 2018 can be found and downloaded from the Mexican National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Information at <https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/enadid>.

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Note

1 The data are not directly comparable because the administrative data represent events (i.e., a single person could be included more than once), whereas the survey data represent people. Moreover, an unknown number of people deported from the U.S. reentered; the survey data only include deported people who were in Mexico in 2014/2018. For these reasons, it is not possible to compare counts across the data sources.

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