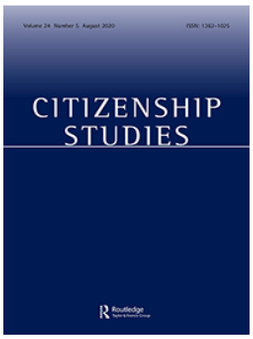

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Fragmented citizenship: contemporary infrastructures of mobility containment along two migratory routes

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ABSTRACT

Several authors have contended recently that the rationality of contemporary migration control can be most adequately grasped by the notion of 'containment', conceived as the redirection of people's autonomous movement into restricted and defined pathways. Following this idea, this article proceeds in three steps. First, it proposes an analysis of the 'infrastructures' through which containment is enforced, showing the plural dimensions (regulatory, humanitarian, commercial, social) of which they are composed. Second, analysing two cases of transnational mobility towards (and across) the EU, it shows the effect of containment on people's spatial and existential trajectories. And third, through the analysis of such cases, it contends that the ultimate effect of containment is the fragmentation of citizenship into a variety of intermediate 'latitudinal' positions characterised by partial and conditional access to rights, which are functional to several forms of exploitation, including labour but also profit extraction through the operations of containment infrastructures themselves.

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Mobility management; infrastructures of containment; Italy; Portugal; differential inclusion; fragmented citizenship

Introduction

The ever-growing scope of migration control is made visible in emblematic form by one of its most coercive, and violent, devices, namely administrative detention. Although there are no available statistics for the total number of migrants detained worldwide, Global Detention Project (GDP) estimates that over the last decade at least 2,000 facilities have been used for immigration-related purposes in approximately 100 different countries.[1] However, despite its spread, detention cannot encompass the broad economies of control which migration governmentality delineates. Indeed, the strategies enacted to regulate migration exceed the walls of detention facilities, and involve a variety of practices and procedures that are implemented through specific tools and technologies. In keeping with this idea, several authors have argued that the rationality of contemporary migration control is better grasped by the notion of 'containment', which seems more suited to describe the stated goal of managing, and not simply halting, human mobility. Containment consists of mechanisms that disrupt autonomous

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movement, fixating bodies in space or alternatively forcing them to move, dispersing and isolating them, operating spatio-temporal accelerations and multiplications as much as suspensions and decelerations (Mountz et al. 2013; Tazzioli and Garelli 2018; Tazzioli 2018, 2019), even within detention facilities themselves.[2] In particular, Tazzioli and Garelli define containment as 'not only limited to a repressive strategy (e.g. mechanisms for stopping and pushing-back migrants),' but rather related 'to various forms of "entrapment" (legal, existential and spatial) that result from mobility control mechanisms' (2018, 5). This theorization brings to the fore the relevance of a plurality of tools in mobility management, that constitute what we call the 'infrastructures of containment' through which migration is channelled and paced.

Different authors have drawn on foundational works in information technologies and science and technology studies (see in particular Bowker, Timmermans, and Star 1996; Leigh Star and Ruhleder 1996; Leigh Star 1999), mobility studies (Hannam, Sheller, and Urry 2006; Urry 2007) and actor-network theory in order to analyse the organisational structures and technical arrangements that compose the 'socio-material entanglement' (Hughes and Forman 2017, 690) that shapes people's and objects' (im) mobility. Building on Brian Larkin's definition of infrastructures as 'matter that enables the movement of other matter' (Larkin 2013, 329), Xiang and Lindquist define 'migration infrastructures' as 'the systematically interlinked technologies, institutions, and actors that facilitate and condition mobility' (Xiang and Lindquist 2014, S124). They typify these as regulatory, humanitarian, commercial, technological and social, to indicate state apparatuses and procedures; NGOs and international organisations; recruitment intermediaries; communications and transport; and migrant networks, respectively. The authors show in particular that the regulation of human mobility is carried out at various levels and that people are 'escorted and encapsulated from the beginning until the end of the migration circuit' (S131; see also Lin et al. 2017). From a related perspective, Pollozek and Passoth (2019) reflect on infrastructures as technical apparatuses that are set up to produce specific 'logistics' of mobility, observing the role of devices, technologies, databases and categories to enact specific 'data identities'. These constitute the bureaucratic avatar ('data double') of migrants intercepted at the EU borders through the hotspot system, which has been regarded as a form of *de-facto* detention, aimed at the selection and classification of migrants and operating mostly outside the scope of any legal provision (Ammirati, Gennari, and Massimi 2020; Santoro 2020).

Taking inspiration from this body of scholarship, we consider the notion of 'infrastructures' as a profitable conceptual tool, enabling us to think through a variety of processes and actors under the same umbrella, whilst reflecting on their capacity to halt, as much as on their enabling of movement, as proposed by Larkin. Furthermore, some of the authors who have employed the notion of infrastructures so far have focused mostly on the technical aspects of containment, leaving its rationales and effects largely unattended. To the contrary, we argue that the current process of infrastructuring mobility is in keeping with a political-economic rationality of management which produces, in Ong's words, 'latitudinal' forms of citizenship (2006, 121-segg.), founded not on the territorial continuity of sovereign spaces but on the logic of exception, racialisation and ethnicisation that rely on (quasi-) carceral discipline.

Following Mezzadra and Neilson (2013), we identify such governmental project also as one of 'differential inclusion', that ends up fragmenting citizenship rights across a broad continuum, ranging from quasi-total rejection to various forms of partial (and therefore subaltern) recognition. In the field of citizenship studies, the notion of 'fragmented citizenship' has been coined to indicate a process of partial recognition. For instance, in their study of Israeli sexual citizenship, Machtei Samov and Yishai (2018) define fragmented citizenship as the marginalisation of some individuals and groups (namely, in this case, LGBTQIA+ subjects) who are only allowed to enjoy part of the rights that full citizenship entails (namely identity and conduct, but not marriage). This fragmentation, in their view, is not something fixed, but it is rather a fluid process that, as citizenship itself, constantly shifts its boundaries .

Within the broader project of mobility management and citizenship fragmentation, criminalisation (including but not limited to the illegalisation of one's residency status) and detainability[3] play an important role, effecting 'the indispensable disposability of deportable labour' (De Genova and Peutz 2010, 153), but are by no means its sole operations. In particular, as we show in the next sections, detention and its overspills constitute a fundamental moment, albeit far from exclusive, in the process of capturing migrants' autonomous life projects, producing a gendered, racialised and subordinate underclass, bound to eventually serve – or be otherwise productive, even in abandonment and/or confinement – in ethnicised niches of the labour market under highly exploitative conditions. And yet, the productivity of containment infrastructures, including detention ones, exceeds this function: not only does the securitarian-humanitarian entanglement, on which they are grounded, represent a veritable business in and of itself, but it also serves to *pace* bodies and their capacities, acting as a sort of 'decompression chamber' for the flow of mobile living labour (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013).

As we will point out in the following sections, troublesome journeys characterised by exclusion, confinement and exploitation may result not only from the refusal of a demand for a visa or international protection, but also from the process of hierarchical inclusion on which these latter are based (Vacchiano 2018). However, people who are targeted by mobility control also display an extraordinary ability to resist containment and its multiple infrastructures (Bosworth 2014; Esposito et al. 2019b, 2019a; Matos and Esposito 2019; Peano 2012). Indeed, as evidenced by our protagonists' stories, they struggle to contrast criminalisation and to (re)enact autonomous strategies of movement and existence (see Scheel 2019). In this light, we believe that an analysis of governmental forms of mobility containment cannot overlook the daily tactics, disputes and negotiations carried out by those who are subjected to them, and who actually play a crucial role in the transformation of those same regimes.

Against this backdrop, we examine stories of migration along two routes, and the infrastructures of mobility containment that had a role both in channelling our interlocutors' trajectories into specific spatial, social and existential paths, and in activating specific ways of surviving, coping and resisting. Our goal is to show the role of such infrastructures in curtailing alternatives and choices and in fragmenting citizenship into a set of precarious positions characterised by graduated, partial access to rights, and through which people are placed into and maintained in a subaltern status. The life stories we present are drawn from the collaborative research work we carried out in Italy and Portugal and from one of the authors' direct experience, within and without facilities

of migrant detention. Such stories serve to highlight both the transnational nature of the apparatus of differential inclusion – which displays a strong EU-wide component and increasingly relies on externalisation – and the specific features it acquires in accordance with the organisation of national and regional infrastructures of containment, in sending, transit and receiving countries. Among them, as the cases we discuss are set to show, we certainly include various forms of humanitarian protection, which have a role in influencing people's life itineraries (see Vacchiano 2019). For the Portuguese case, one of our interlocutors, who narrated his journey through the border and its multiple infrastructures, also took part in the co-writing of this paper. For the Italian case, we chose to focus on the trajectories of Nigerian women who reached Italy through contracts of debt bondage, as we believe they are particularly telling of the processes we seek to analyse, deserving close attention and treatment also for their gendered specificities.

A methodological note

This article is based on the work we carried out over the years in Italy, Portugal and Nigeria inside detention sites; border zones; reception centres for asylum seekers and so-called 'victims of trafficking'; as well as labour camps and other 'ghettos'. Since 2005 Irene Peano has been conducting research on different forms of migrant labour exploitation and particularly on the migration experiences of Nigerian women, in Italy and in Nigeria, also being an active member of militant networks which support the struggles of migrant farm and sex labourers in different parts of Italy.[4] Francesca Esposito has been working for ten years as an advocate and a researcher within and without migrant detention facilities in Italy, Portugal and the UK, also joining militant groups acting in solidarity with people with experiences of transborder mobility. Francesco Vacchiano has been integrating research, activism and clinical practice in the field of mental health and migration, developing his activity in Italy and Portugal, as well as in North Africa. Finally, Ali Murtaza is an anti-detention activist and has participated in the co-writing of this piece by sharing and critically reflecting with the other authors on his lived experience of border-crossing from Pakistan to Portugal (see the section below).

The reflections we present are therefore the results of this long-lasting engagement in the field and, particularly, of the encounter with several people on the move. Therefore, and in spite of our different positionalities and backgrounds, the research we conduct is strongly based on long-lasting personal relationships with people heavily exposed to mobility control. These relationships, whenever possible, extend beyond first encounters and develop across time, not infrequently in forms of mutualism, into which we are drawn by the survival strategies of our interlocutors, and which in some cases involve collective organisation and direct action.

Consistently with this critical engagement, solidarity is the pillar on which our research ethics is based (see also Lykes 2013). This ethics of knowledge production ultimately involves problematising the circuits of power in which white Europeans with academic affiliationsare imbricated and using privilege to support people who struggle against extreme conditions of injustice. The work presented in this paper is based on such premises.

Two cases of transnational mobility towards the EU

From Pakistan to Portugal: infrastructures of containment through preventive illegalisation, spatial confinement and temporal suspension

Francesca first met Ali in 2016, when she was conducting her fieldwork in a Portuguese 'Centro de Instalação Temporária' – the term used to indicate migration-related detention facilities in Portugal. At that time, Ali was 20 years old and was confined with a relative of his, Asad,[5] who was only 17. Ali had fled Pakistan in March 2015 and was looking for a dignified life in Europe. His previous application for a Schengen visa had been unsuccessful due to its strict requirements, among which a large amount of money on Ali's bank account, demanded as collateral. As an alternative, Ali resorted to a grassroots intermediary who rigged up a makeshift way to reach Greece through Iran and Turkey. The journey – partially by flight and otherwise on foot – was long and perilous, as well as very expensive: in total, it cost him around 12 thousand euros. In 2015, Ali landed on the island of Kos, which had recently been turned by Greek and EU authorities into a site of first identification for migrants. After a week spent first in the streets and then in an overcrowded facility, he was fingerprinted and interviewed by both police officers and UNHCR staff. He was then authorised to move within Greece for a time-limited period, during which he reached the border with Macedonia and, through the services of other intermediaries, found a way to move northwards. The border constituted a device whereby his concrete conditions of movement were channelled, shaped and paced:

> We crossed all Macedonia by walk. Two days constantly without food and water, in the forest, with rain and a temperature of minus 10 degrees. Finally, we reached Serbia's border. We took a bus to Belgrade and, after one night sleeping in a park, we headed to Hungary. We crossed Hungary by walk under heavy rain, passing through thick forests and walking for about ten hours in the mud.

After a perilous journey of several days, Ali managed to reach Austria by car, with a group of about 55 people. Once they crossed the border, the intermediaries dumped them at a site where the police showed up. Despite manifesting their will to leave the country and head to Germany, the majority of migrants, including Ali, were forcibly registered and fingerprinted, while also being kept for two days in custody:

> I told them [policemen] that I didn't want to stay in Austria, that I wanted to go. But they didn't let me, because I didn't have documents and, according to EU regulations, I had to be fingerprinted. I didn't want to, but I was forced to give my fingerprints.

He was forced to file a request for asylum and, afterwards, he was taken to an overcrowded camp for asylum seekers in Vienna. The living conditions in the camp were dreadful: ten people crammed in each room, bad food and no possibility to buy anything outside the camp. After about two weeks, Ali was finally resettled into a shared apartment, in slightly better conditions but still facing significant limitations to his movement. Since asylum seekers were not authorised to work, he struggled to make ends meet with the small monthly allowance provided by the state. After four months, he was informed that his asylum claim had been rejected and enjoined to leave the country. Although he was finally enabled to reach Germany, his administrative status as an illegalized alien had

already been decreed, preventing him to access any form of state protection within the EU. When Ali realised that legal residence was beyond reach in Germany, he opted to try for Portugal, a place referred to by acquaintances as 'a good country for refugees' (for a discussion on the marketing of Portugal as 'a welcoming country for asylum seekers', see Vacchiano 2019). With this aim in mind, in May 2016, he took a bus from Germany to Portugal, together with his young relative Asad with whom he had reunited in Austria. However, at the Spanish-Portuguese border the two were stopped by the officers of the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) and arrested. Despite declaring their intention to file a new asylum request, Ali and Asad were both detained for entering Portugal 'illegally':

> Police caught us, we asked for asylum and a policeman said "there is no asylum in Portugal". I replied: "let me go somewhere else, because I need international protection"; but they took me to jail, handcuffed like a criminal. They put me in a tiny cell, where I spent one night, without no food and a toilet next to my bed. On the next morning, I was taken to the court and the judge decided I had to be put in detention for two months, without committing any crime, just for lacking of proper documents.

In Portugal, like in many other EU countries, detention of asylum seekers at the national borders is a tangible result of the progressive alignment of the national regulation on asylum with the EU framework of mobility control (Costa and Sousa 2016). This process started with the approval of a new asylum law in 1993 and its further revision in 1998[6], which incorporated the new principles and procedures laid down in the Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Convention. Yet, it was only in subsequent pieces of legislation (27/2008 and 26/2014) that such alignment was definitely formalised and the procedures to detain asylum seekers travelling undocumented set out. As a result, in the last few years an increasing number of people seeking asylum in Portugal were kept in detention in dedicated areas at the main airports (Lisbon, Porto and Faro) or in the 'Centro de Instalação Temporária' located in Porto (Carreirinho 2020).

When Francesca first met Ali, he complained about the bad quality of food provided, the void he experienced due to forced inactivity and limited access to the outdoor grounds. However, a great deal of his distress was caused by the uncertainty regarding his case, rendered more acute by the lack of information and especially of legal support (Provedor de Justiça 2019; Matos and Esposito 2019). Understandably enough, detention was a cause of acute suffering:

> I became completely lost, since I lost my hopes, desires, I couldn't see my future. I was like a blind, I couldn't hear anything, I couldn't speak anything, I couldn't fight for our rights. Most of the detainees became mentally disturbed, some of them attempted suicide and some tried to run away from that hell, but there was no way out. They were making us mentally distressed, most of detainees were completely lost.

While, after much insistence, Asad's asylum request was finally registered by immigration officers, Ali was informed that his application could not be received due to the effect of the Dublin agreements, which establish that asylum seekers cannot lodge more than one request within the EU. After two months of imprisonment, and not unlike what commonly happens to other people seeking asylum at the Portuguese border, both Ali and Asad were released for reaching the maximum, two-month term of detention. In point of fact, the wide set of infrastructures of containment (regulatory, technological,

humanitarian, commercial and social [Xiang and Lindquist 2014]) that shaped their trajectory from Pakistan to Portugal had ultimately served the purpose of ratifying their condition of 'illegality' in Europe. With no legal residency, no money and, in the case of Ali, with an order to leave the country within 20 days, they resorted to Pakistani acquaintances, who provided them with food and temporary accommodation in Lisbon.

Following the eventual dismissal of his case, Asad opted to leave Portugal, while Ali succeeded in having his asylum application registered by the SEF within the period he had been set to leave the country.

Thanks to his determination, he was entitled to receive help by an organisation supporting asylum seekers and was accommodated in a reception centre in the outskirts of Lisbon. After five months in an overcrowded space and only a bunch of hours of Portuguese language tuition, he was forced to leave the facility in order to make room for other people. When his first, provisional residence permit was issued in June 2017, Ali was finally allowed to work. Still, his horizon of possibilities was severely limited by the precarious conditions into which he was structurally maintained. Being unauthorised to move to another EU country, and having his scarce allowance suspended, he had to rely initially on help from his family in Pakistan and then on employment under exploitative conditions. After a sequence of experiences of abuse and labour exploitation, he found a job in a restaurant, for a salary of 700 euros. Three years after his arrival, Ali is still waiting for a response to his asylum claim.[7] In his case, as in many others, an impressive sequence of administrative acts of preventive illegalisation – inaugurated by the refusal of the visa in Pakistan and continued with the dismissal of his asylum claim in different European countries – was performed in order to actively manufacture his long-lasting liminal status. Put differently, Ali's mobility and access to entitlements and rights was conditioned by a myriad processes, rules, technological devices and actors, these latter including bureaucrats, police officers, brokers, and international organisations. These state and nonstate subjects, partaking in both regulatory and humanitarian migration infrastructures, as well as in the commercial one (e.g., intermediaries and employers), played a role in his life trajectory, which was actively shaped by the transfer of money, documents and data between these actors and across states. Yet, to this combination of infrastructures of containment, which resulted into an encapsulated mobility and, ultimately, into existential and social restraints, Ali responded through steadfastness and endurance. Despite all the hindrances, he continued to struggle to achieve his goal of a dignified and safe life in Europe. Furthermore, acknowledging the importance of making his story known, he participated in numerous public events and activist initiatives, in which he committed to report the violent regime of control which Portugal contributes to enforce.

From Nigeria to Italy: infrastructures of containment through criminalisation, bondage and arbitrariness

Historically, the migration trajectories of many Nigerian women, especially from Edo State, had Italy as their first and foremost destination in Europe. Whilst it is important to attend to the specificities, complexities and ambiguities of individual stories, in the vast majority of cases these women's experiences of highly contained mobility are initiated and sustained by contracts of debt bondage, until recently sealed, among

others, through the swearing of oaths at what are locally known as 'native doctors' shrines' (Peano 2011, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). Restitution of the money often implies the sale of sexual services through various degrees of coercion, control and persuasion. In point of fact, women's mobility is facilitated, conditioned and restrained in peculiar ways by specific migration infrastructures which operate across the divide between legality and illegality.

The lack of authorised means of migrating drive women to seek intermediation in order first of all to reach Europe, and then to engage in one of the few (and certainly the most remunerative) economic activities to which they can aspire given their often undocumented status, their lack of recognised formal education and the discrimination to which they are subjected. In this respect, it is significant that many of the Nigerian women we encountered, when confronted with the fact that they had to engage in forms of debt bondage and sexual labour which exposed them to great risks and violence, would answer plainly that this was their only choice to escape a condition they did not find favourable at home, to hope for a better future and care for themselves and their kin. 'What else could I do?' was the rebuttal of Esohe, a woman that Irene met in Benin City, Nigeria, who had sought her way to Europe in two separate instances, having been deported a few years after her first arrival in Italy. Indeed, intermediaries, and especially '*madams*' – the women who were in many cases the final owners of newly come, fellow nationals' debt, to whom the latter owed for passage, board and accommodation – are often portrayed as benefactors (see Taliani and Vacchiano 2006; Peano 2013a). Concurrently, ambivalence characterises such relations, predicated on hierarchy and, in case of insubordination and refusal, on intimidation, segregation and coercion. Arguably, the threat of detention and deportation exerted by the EU border regime actively fosters such forms of authority, violence and dependency, whilst not overdetermining them in any simple, unilinear chain of causality.

At the same time, a humanitarian apparatus (made of NGOs and other international and state bodies) represents the other side of criminalisation, offering mostly a paternalistic and victimising 'way out' of the contracts of bondage and sex work *per se* (Crowhurst 2012; Giordano 2014; Peano 2012). In order to hope for regularisation as recognised victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, since the first implementation in 1998 of anti-trafficking measures in Italy, women are forced to undergo an assessment procedure at the hands of the police, with the aid of *ad-hoc* non-governmental agencies licensed by the state. Recognition of legal status for women in situations of bondage is often contingent upon their provision of information relevant for criminal investigations and the prosecution of traffickers, as well as on their acceptance of a 'protection and rehabilitation' programme which imposes heavy restrictions upon individual life choices and movement. This logic was further reinforced by the directives issued by UNHCR (most recently in the summer of 2017), which contain guidelines for the identification of victims of trafficking among claimants for international protection, and for related procedures of referral (see also Rigo 2018). In all cases, regardless of the outcome of asylum or protection claims, the application process is very time and energy consuming, and it involves several interviews and evaluations that probe into the intimate details and the traumas in women's lives. Furthermore, programs of rehabilitation usually involve forms of spatial containment, which include board in shelters (the majority of which is run by confessional, catholic organisations) where women often cannot cook for

themselves, talk on the phone, receive visits or decide what to wear. Thus, life in the shelters is often perceived as a form of carceral detention and moral discipline.[8]

Detention is also a common feature in many Nigerian women's life stories. Women whose profiles, in the vast majority of cases, qualify them as 'victims of trafficking' according to the law, have made up the majority of the female population in administrative detention (Esposito et al. 2019a, 2016).[9] Inside detention facilities, these women are exposed to differential treatment, being also affected by collective deportations carried out through Frontex-operated charter flights (Beretta et al. 2016; Esposito et al. 2019b). At the same time, imprisonment for criminal offences also features in many life stories, and relates to the specific infrastructures within which these women migrate – 'pipelines' (Carrisi 2011) for the smuggling and trafficking not only of people, but also of drugs, in which one's chances of enfranchisement often relate to the taking up of intermediary roles in such criminalised networks. Engagement in criminal activities might represent a near-necessity for some of the women, when faced with the impossibility to engage in sex work and with the difficulty of finding alternative, remunerative employment. Such was the case of Stella, a woman who had arrived in Italy in the late 1990s through a contract of debt and who in the early 2000s gave birth to a son. With a young baby to feed and relatives (including an older son) to support in Nigeria, being also undocumented, she took up dealing marijuana, which she sourced from her partner and father of her baby. When caught, she faced trial and was finally convicted but avoided prison on account of her status as the mother of an infant baby, unlike some of her close friends (other Nigerian women with a history of debt bondage and sex labour) who were repeatedly incarcerated for various offences (related not only to the sale of drugs but also to the performing of illegal abortions and the aiding and abetting of prostitution). In some cases, administrative detention followed incarceration (indeed, a significant proportion of people in Italian detention centres come straight from prison following a judicial order of expulsion or due to the expiry of their residence permits while they are serving prison time).

Irene met Stella several years later, in the summer of 2012, in a shantytown where the woman had taken refuge in 2010 after all her other income opportunities had failed. After first leaving her son with a friend and then sending him back to Nigeria, she opened a bar in the shack she built with borrowed money. There, she collected some rent from the girls who sold sexual services using the rooms located at the back, whilst at the same time paying a monthly fee to the woman that had provided the initial capital for the enterprise. The shack burnt down and was rebuilt several times, until it was finally mowed down by a large-scale eviction operation in March 2017, during which a large fire built up in the slum, killing two young men in their sleep. At that point, Stella found a room in a nearby country house where other African migrants also lodged. After a long collective battle that involved the (largely West African) inhabitants of many shantytowns, in late 2017 she was able to obtain a two-year humanitarian protection, but a few months afterwards she was diagnosed with cancer. Nearly alone, abandoned and completely debilitated, she eventually died in the care home where she was able to spend the last few months of her life after long, painful and exhausting intercessions.

If the infrastructures of containment described above (laws and their selective application; reception programmes and their facilities; detention and deportation as impending scenarios) appear to have remained rather constant for the past twenty years, other

features have changed through time. With the intensification of flows along the central Mediterranean route, recently the main entry point for Nigerian women due to the growing digitisation and biometric rewiring of the border regime that made airport crossing increasingly difficult, also came readjustments to patterns of containment. On the one hand, *connection houses* opened up along the way, and especially in Agadez (Niger) and in Sebha and other Libyan cities: brothels-cum-migration hubs, i.e. places where migrants are kept waiting by smugglers, until the favourable occasion arises for crossing. Many women describe the experience of being kept inside such spaces as akin to imprisonment. Rape or the threat thereof – itself a tool of containment and discipline – are common features of their stories about Libya. In some cases, women also tell of having transited through detention centres whilst in Libya, whether 'official' or 'unofficial' ones. In these accounts, the boundaries between legal and illegal detention, and between different spaces of containment, appear indeed very labile. In Italy, Asylum applications are the main chance of legalisation for those crossing the border without a visa and a residence permit, who, upon reaching EU soil are channelled through hubs, large and small asylum seekers' reception centres and, since 2015, *hotspots*.

These infrastructures of containment, in which again differential degrees of liberty and deprivation are enforced, are a key component in Nigerian women's experiences. If 'Hotspots', despite their heterogeneity across different sites, can be equated to spaces of detention proper (Ammirati, Gennari, and Massimi 2020; Santoro 2020), hubs and other kinds of reception centres allow so-called 'guests' to leave, but impose a night curfew and restrictions on the number of days one can spend outside the camp without losing the right to a bed. In no case are visitors allowed, and food may not be prepared autonomously, but is provided by private contractors. Hosts/inmates often complain of the poor quality of the food, which is often one of the reasons for the sparking of protests. Furthermore, consumption of psychiatric drugs, and especially of tranquillisers, may be encouraged by the staff or requested by migrants, whilst several of Irene's interlocutors have reported suspecting that sleep drugs were simply added to their food, since they felt drowsy immediately after eating, to the point of being incapable to move and just falling asleep.

Overall, forms of abuse and mismanagement are common and have been repeatedly denounced by asylum seekers in these sites. In August 2018, a group of Nigerian women hosted in a reception centre in the district of Lucca, Tuscany, blocked the circulation of traffic to stage a protest against the state of limbo in which they had been kept for over two years: some had already been through the interview at the asylum commission, their application had been rejected and they were waiting for the outcome of the appeal trial. Others had not yet been notified of the outcome of their interview. All complained about the lack of documents as well as by the isolation and abandonment they suffered in the camp, which was far away from urban centres and was not adequately served by public transportation, as well as having infrastructural issues. The women had been transferred from an overcrowded tent hub near Lucca, managed military-style by the Red Cross. In this setting, Grace, a 19-year-old mother of a baby aged 18 months, also from Nigeria, had been subjected to compulsory psychiatric treatment for seeking to leave the camp with her baby, who was taken away from her.[10] In the majority of cases, the (often young, even underage) Nigerian women would leave the centres immediately after having filed their asylum applications, without waiting for the outcome, usually to join those who

hold their debt, or some of their acolytes, or seek a way out of their debt bondage in spaces of refuge such as the shantytown in which Stella found both a source of income and, ultimately, illness, abandonment and death.

Like in Ali's case, here humanitarian infrastructures also display a containing dimension, one which has solidified in recent years, parallel to the digitisation of international borders. Humanitarian infrastructures apply selectively to Nigerian women's experiences of debt bondage, often reinforcing immigration laws rather than shielding those who would qualify as trafficking victims from their most repressive aspects. Regulatory infrastructures, such as laws against undocumented migration, drug dealing, trafficking or the exploitation of prostitution, can be seen to apply selectively and, as in this case, whilst potentially diverging in their goals and outcomes, all have a containing effect. The same holds for commercial and social infrastructures, such as the contracts of debt bondage and the relationships and connections which allow many Nigerian women to reach Italy, if through great risk and violence. Whilst they are ostensibly designed to overcome the strictures of EU immigration laws, in conjunction with such laws they end up enforcing a regime of containment and subjugation, if often experienced ambivalently by those exposed to it.

Conclusive remarks: on fragmented citizenship

The migration trajectories we described above are channelled through multiple, intersecting – and sometimes conflicting – infrastructures of containment that display regulatory, humanitarian, commercial, technological and social dimensions (Xiang and Lindquist 2014). The regulatory dimension of such infrastructures is made up of governmental apparatuses, including the laws disciplining migration, asylum, sexual labour, trafficking and exploitation, among others, and their selective implementation mechanisms across and within national borders. They operate mostly as a criminalising agent, making illegal commercial intermediation (defined as smuggling or trafficking in legal parlance, depending on their coerciveness and spatio-temporal frame) all the more necessary for those from poorer countries who do not have access to large amounts of money and wish to migrate into the EU and make a living there. For them, EU borders are formally sealed, marking, as we saw in our examples, preventive illegalisation and detainability even when channelling bodies through humanitarian infrastructures. As we have shown, despite their differences, hotspots, camps, jails, detention centres and asylum seekers' reception facilities display many common features: heavy restrictions on the freedom of movement, temporal suspension and waiting, impossibility to prepare and eat the food of one's choice, more or less forced pharmacological treatment, lack of a free social, affective and intimate life and at the same time lack of privacy in overcrowded and often deficient facilities.

Detainability, for those branded with its mark, operates through the possibility of being enforced at any time, as a specific mechanism of existential and social precarisation. Indeed, the stringent infrastructures of containment in which Ali, Asad, Stella, and many others were caught was highly effective in determining their trajectories even before detention, and in setting limits to the horizon of possibility in which they could move after release. The sequence of mechanisms of containment our interlocutors describe in their accounts – e.g., visa refusal, arrest, attribution to one or more specific

administrative classes, dismissal of asylum claims, temporary hospitality in reception units, detention, abandonment – operates to bend their autonomous search for wellbeing into disposability to occupy a marginal, racialised and gendered place in host communities, particularly in labour markets but also through forms of valorisation that go beyond labour itself (e.g. as detainees or 'guests' of concentration facilities).

The continuity of the current racialised im/mobility regime with past colonial configurations, and, in particular, with previous forms of management of non-White populations, is posited by Barak Kalir through the notion of 'Departheid', a regime of permanent subalternisation of people who, coming from former colonies, challenge 'the historic link between a sense of White supremacy and a sense of control over territories governed by Western powers' (Kalir 2019, 9). In particular, Kalir reminds us that stripping people of citizenship or preventing them from acquiring it fully has historically been the prerequisite of more violent forms of exploitation, forced removal or even physical extermination. Thus, what we observe today, and what our stories describe, is the fragmentation of citizenship into partial forms of entitlement and conditional access to rights that follows a 'latitudinal' pattern (Ong 2006) providing a flexibilised labour force disciplined through spatial, ethnicised forms of quasi- or hyper-carceral segregation. In the cases we described, for example, Nigerian women are often bound to work in the sex industry just as other non-EU migrants are inserted into specific niches of labour markets (e.g. construction and other menial jobs, such as in the food service industry as in the case of Ali). Such proliferation and fragmentation are actively produced through infrastructures of containment that, whilst actively generating discrimination and racialisation, present themselves as rational tools of mobility management. And yet, in no instance is people's containment a smooth business: multiple frictions account for its operations and always unstable outcomes. As Walters (2015) suggested, migration governmentality is also a 'viapolitics,' in which alternative itineraries are carved through and against the meshes of mobility control. It is within and against such cracks and conflicts that contestations can gain leverage and lead, on the one hand, to a radical rethinking of the national-bound forms of conceiving and enforcing citizenship, but also, on the other hand, to counter the progressive dismantling blows of a neoliberal order which has arguably set up infrastructures of containment as one of the first, experimental grounds for the ever generalising erosion of collective rights.

Notes

1. https://www.freedomforimmigrants.org/detention-statistics.
2. For a review of partially similar approaches in the broader field of carceral geographies, see also Moran, Turner, and Schliehe (2017). The edited collection by Turner and Peters (2017) also highlights the interplay between mobility and stasis in the carceral system (cf. Mincke and Lemonne 2014; Philo 2014).
3. We draw here on De Genova's notion of 'deportability' (2002), extending it further to encompass detainability as an incumbent perspective with disciplining effects on those who are subjected to it.
4. See www.campagneinlotta.org.
5. We chose to use a pseudonym to protect his anonymity and privacy.
6. Law 70/93 of 29 of September 1993 and Law 15/98 of 26 March 1998.

7. According to the law in force at the time of writing, asylum interviews should be scheduled within 18 months from the filing of the asylum application. Yet, several asylum seekers state they find themselves in the same condition as Alí, having waited for their interviews for much longer (see also Vacchiano 2019).
8. For a similar point about shelters for returnee 'trafficking victims' in Nigeria as spaces of detention, see Human Rights Watch (2019).
9. Due to the lack of systematic data collection and release by the State authority responsible for administrative detention (i.e. the Ministry for Internal Affairs), figures are partial and only partially comparable across time. Nonetheless, it is clear that, because of the read-mission agreements between the Italian and the Nigerian government, Nigerian nationals are particularly represented among such population of detainees.
10. https://hurriya.noblogs.org/post/2018/08/09/castiglione-di-garfagnana-lu-le-donne-del-centro-di-accoglienza-bloccano-la-strada-per-documenti-e-liberta/

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