

Francesca Esposito, ISPA-University Institute of Lisbon
José Ornelas, ISPA-University Institute of Lisbon
Caterina Arcidiacono, University Federico II of Naples

In recent years, new migration patterns emerged in Europe and national cross-border control agencies became more complex and broader in their reach and action. Therefore, foreign nationals are now commonly detained for immigration purposes. This paper draws on a research project that aims to understand how gender, migration paths and border control intersect in the lives of women detained for not having leave to remain in Portugal. Several visits were made to a 'Housing Unit' of the Portuguese Border Control Agency and ten female detainees were interviewed. Data were analysed focusing on the role of gender on women's experiences of mobility and detention. The findings challenge assumptions about the relation between gender, migration and the detention of foreign-national women. They reveal how gender plays a crucial role in women's mobility and how lack of citizenship itself (or secure migration status) can be used as a control device within the context of an intimate relationship. The way detention reinforces or mitigates adversity in the lives of these women is also given due attention and discussion.
