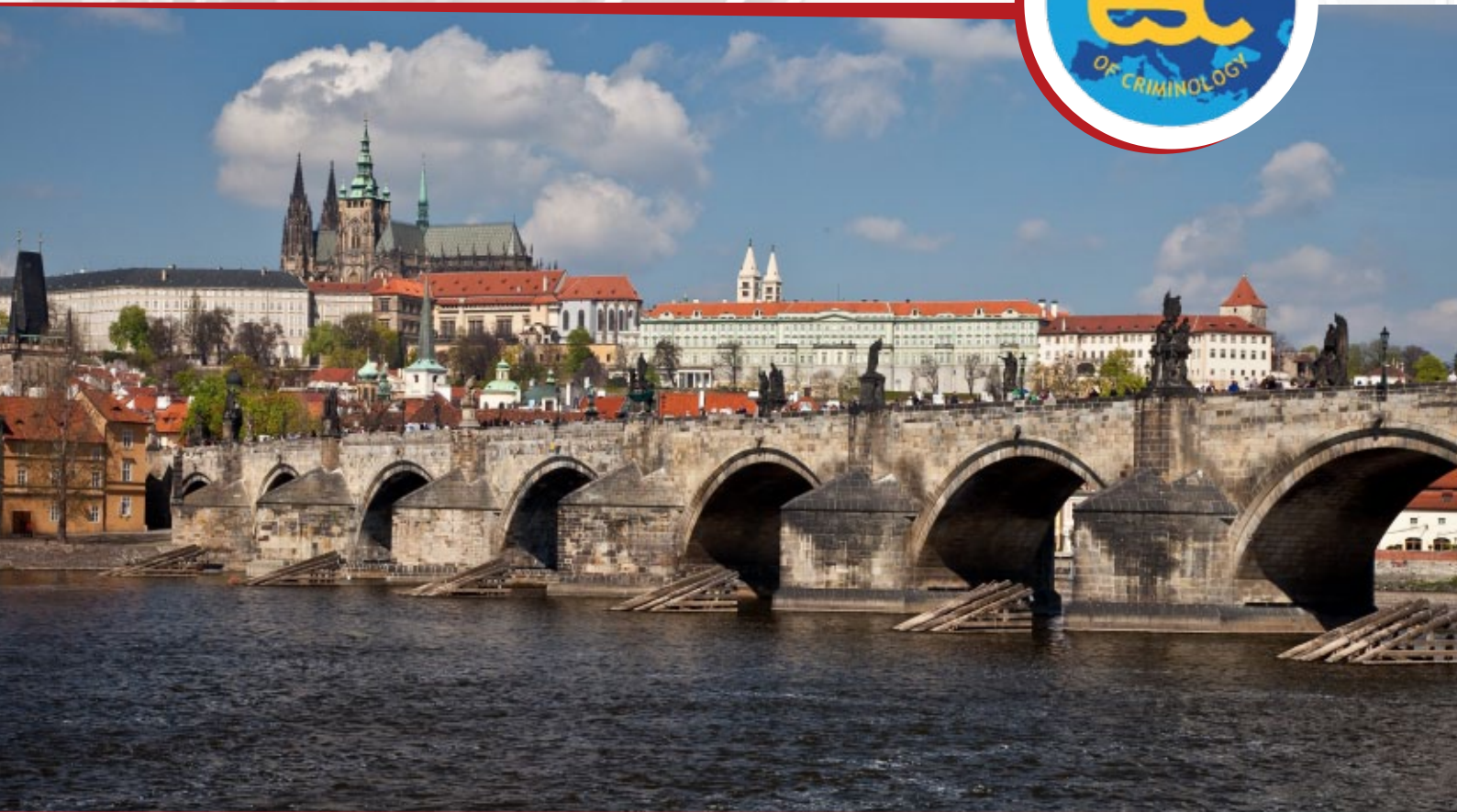




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Migration, gender and control in the life paths of foreign national women detained in Portugal

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In the last decades, with the increase of mobility and new migration patterns in Europe, terms such as 'resident', 'temporary', 'legal' or 'illegal' immigrants became part of the public and private discourses (Matos, 2013). Furthermore, the national cross-border control agencies became more complex and broader in their scope of action. Therefore, several foreign national citizens, men and women, have been detained for

citizenship purposes. This paper concerns a research project that aims to understand how gender, migration paths and control intersect in the lives of women detained for not having permission to stay in Portugal. Several visits were made in the last months to a Housing Unit of the Portuguese Border Control Agency and six detained women were interviewed. The project findings challenge assumptions about the relation between gender, migration and the detention of foreign national women. Several examples of the complexity of such relation are provided. For instance, results show that gender plays a crucial role in women's decision to migrate (to escape from a certain context or relationship); and that the lack of citizenship itself can be used as a control device within the context of a gender relationship. The way detention reinforces or mitigates adversity in the lives of these women is also discussed.

Keywords: Women, Detention, Migration