"Tough on illegal immigrants". Immigrant control and exclusion in contemporary Italy

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1.1 The Securitization of European Space

In the last decade a number of authors have cast a light on the nature of the regulations implemented, since the first half of the nineties, at EU level to manage migrations coming from extra-EU countries. Studies showed that the general trend was to set increasingly restrictive rules that were also matched with a representation of immigration as a threat for security and with a reorganization of the political frontiers of the European Union (Brion 1995).
Since the Maastricht Treaty, and with the Schengen Convention (Parkin 2011), a clear and cogent connection was established between priorities at European level, concerning international migrations monitoring (including asylum seeking ones) and the devices to be used to fight transnational criminal organizations (mafia and terrorist networks). Moreover, migration control and asylum decisions were to increasingly involve supranational and intergovernmental institutions. Indeed the necessary corollary to the abolition of internal frontiers, which besides creating the free European market, would have also certainly fostered the reorganization of criminal networks at transnational level (Bigo 1996), was a general reinforcement of security. This was pursued by intensifying controls on external borders with devices emblematically represented by the Schengen Information System.
Such developments were acknowledged by the Amsterdam Treaty (1997), later at the Tampere Council Meeting, with specific attention for international migration related issues and in The Hague Programme (1994). On these occasions an EU level frame of reference was defined. The latter was based upon: the creation of specific routes for economic migrations; the narrowing and harmonization of asylum policies; the promotion of cooperation and assistance among member states' services by transferring the technologies and funding of programmes aimed at, once again, the return of illegal immigrants to their countries of origin (Zaiotti 2011).
This led to a gradual externalisation of EU boundaries towards migrants' transit and/or origin countries (Audebert, Robin 2009). The reorganisation and re-articulation of control systems (Mezzadra 2006, Walters 2009, Guild, Bigo 2005) was in fact extended beyond the political frontiers of Europe, with an "external flexibilisation" of borders (Cuttitta 2007).The growing militarisation of the new "frontier" was put into action in 2005 by instituting the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX), which coordinates frontiers control and security actions of the states and promotes, among other things, a tight and capillary patrolling of the whole Mediterranean basin (Andrijasevic 2008, Neal 2009). As a consequence to these transformations, the European model of migration control was reconfigured according to a complex architecture of "concentric circles" (Pastore 2006), which radiate from the controls made within single states territories to the ones carried out along national borders and finally to the ones made beyond external maritime frontiers (including carriers and consulates) delegating to third party states preventive and repressive actions towards illegal immigration. The coordination and implementation of said policies saw the active participation of national states, transnational political groups, international agencies and new global agents (Düvell 2004, Adrijasevic, Walters 2010).
Therefore, twenty years on from the Maastricht Treaty it can be stated that the security measures adopted in the European political space were implemented, at least partially, thanks to a strong

politicization of international migration. This benefitted from a constant restatement of a continuum concerning crime, terrorism and immigration, from an obsessive recall of hydraulic-warlike metaphors ("invasion", "waves", "uncontrolled fluxes", "siege", etc.) and from the evocation of an ever-looming, external menace to the stability of the European social and economic system (Maneri 2009). Hence migrations became a sort of meta-issue grouping together problems such as internal security, the crisis of welfare systems and the ethnic-national identity of European states, which are three subjects that would have been otherwise difficult to ascribe to a unifying frame (Bosworth, Guild 2008, Huysmans 2000).
The "securitisation" of migration policies, was also allowed, at least on a symbolic level, by the spreading of control practices, technologies and devices (visas, residency permits, expulsion aircrafts, detention and identification centres for migrants and asylum seekers, etc.) suggesting the existence of an actual political technology of governmentalism (Bigo 2000, Foucault 2004, Rahola 2007) hinged on depicting the foreigner (the migrant) as a public enemy (Dal Lago 1999, Palidda 2008).

2. Administrative detention

The situation illustrated in the previous paragraph suggests the need to review the idea of "Fortress Europe", which became so successful during the nineties and two thousands. Indeed the concept assumes a rigid demarcation between an internal space, with virtual homogeneity and stable borders, and an external space pressed against by masses of immigrants longing to access the European territory. Instead not only do European borders seem rather flexible and not at all sealed, by they also prove to be quite porous. Rather than aiming at a rigid exclusion, their action seems to foster a "differentiated inclusion" by creating a multiplicity of legal categories (asylum, humanitarian protection, subsidiary protection, economic stay, irregularity, clandestine condition) matched by differentiated legal statuses (de Genova, Peutz 2011, Mezzadra 2006).
The different statuses according to which migrants are constantly classified and re-classified, work as real boundaries that by intertwining with territorial ones generate new control strategies and devices. The latter do themselves generate a wicked mirror effect, that reproduces state borders in an immaterial way according to the different status received by migrants who are though matched with very tangible forms of reception: "Temporary Protected Areas" for the internally displaced, "Identification Centres" for asylum seekers; "Temporary Reception Centres" for refugees; "Identification and Expulsion Centres" for irregular migrants. As reminded by Rahola "if it is theoretically possible for one individual to belong to all aforementioned definitions, politically there is a constant connection between each definition, as arbitrary as this may be, and one of said "catered centres" in permanently temporary areas. The latter are transit zones, where the temporary quality inevitably collides with their ubiquitous and relentless spreading, matching and marking the equally ubiquitous and de-territorialised borders of the present." (2007, pp.19).

Hence a double movement of "external" and "internal flexibilisation" is generated (Cuttitta 2007). Visa requirements, delegating controls to carriers and sanctions introduced against them, bilateral agreements between states (which in the case of Italy mainly concern the main pools of origin on the Mediterranean), the implementation of detention centres in transit countries on behalf of hosting countries and rejections in international waters represent the main tools of the external flexibilisation adopted by the EU in the last two decades.
Instead, examples of internal flexibilisation are *transit zones* in international airports (Calloni, Marras, Serughetti 2012) or along terrestrial borders, control areas of some tens of kilometres along the external frontiers of the EU – and along internal ones in some specific cases- , rejections occurring after the crossing of the frontier and the centres for the administrative detention of

foreigners. These are projections of borders inside the national territory that are operated against whom does not have the "right" status, meaning the migrant not complying with access and/or stay regulations. He or she is a subject receiving a reduced legal status, whose freedom of movement is denied, forbidden from leaving his/her country of origin and who, when the threat of rejection becomes an injunction of expulsion, can be confined inside special detention places: Identification and Expulsion Centres (CIE) [1]

Therefore the implementation of administrative detention can be perfectly located within a prohibitionist and securitarian frame of reference, which determines migration policies at European level. In Italy these centres were established in 1998, within the outline law on immigration (art. 12, L. 40/1998). Initially referred to as Temporary Reception and Assistance Centres (CPTA), since 2008 (art. 9, L. 125/2008) they are called Identification and Expulsion Centres (CIE). The idea was for these places to increase the effectiveness of expulsion measures from the territory, by "detaining" the expellee for the whole time needed to eliminate any obstacles to his/hers immediate return to the country of origin. Since their implementation these centres were characterised by a constant overlapping between administrative and penal aspects. On the inside, there are forms of "detention" that as temporary as they may be, do deny foreign citizens of a number of freedoms, virtually putting these people in the condition of prisoners, only due to their violation of stay regulations. [2]

Furthermore these centres set forth the social threat posed by the "clandestine" contributing to stigmatise and criminalise the very fact of migrating (Sayad 1999, Weber 2002). Indeed due to the panoply of regulations and material devices by which administrative detention is pursued, it reinforces the widespread perception by the public opinion of the foreigner as a public enemy, and it also plays a part in keeping foreign workers, both legal and illegal ones, in a condition of strong subordination and blackmail – due to the weak and precarious status, which is always potentially subject to change, affecting legal migrants too – (Moulier-Boutang 2002, Mezzadra 2004, Palidda 2008).

Detention centres also provide a confirmation for the representation of natives as a dominating and privileged population that can exclude the migrant – totally or partially, temporarily or definitively – from enjoying fundamental (civil) rights. Indeed, according to the vocabulary used to write regulation devices, the detainee is considered a "guest" and not a "detainee", thus evoking a peculiar culture of hospitality, which defines a guest someone who cannot leave the place where he/she is received as guest, when he/she may wish to do so, and who does not have any guarantee during his/her temporary and accidental stay.

Furthermore, the "stay" that according to the law should only last for the "strictly necessary time" of the expulsion, over the years has increasingly turned into a real detention[3]. Waiting areas, that were created as temporary solutions, in response to the emergency of irregular migrants fluxes, have actually become "definitively temporary zones"; definitive solutions implemented to confine some sort of "humanity in excess" (Rahola 2003).

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[1] Detention centres for irregular migrants can be conceived as point-shaped borders created to strengthen the impenetrability of linear borders (Cuttitta 2007). At the same time though – as facilities extending in space, fortified and surrounded by enclosures – they manifest all the linearity of the terrestrial border, which is intertwined with the shifting borders of legal status. It should also be noticed that like the migrant incorporates a border in relation to his legal status, also who has to control him (the police officer) when carrying out his duty, will also incarnate the shifting border – internal or external- of state he is working for, with very relevant effects on the discretional level of control practices and on the constant intertwining of penal and administrative aspects. On this point see Caputo 2006, Palidda 1998, Quassoli 2013.

[2] For a history of administrative detention centres and of related regulation profiles see Campesi 2011. For an assessment of the efficacy of the policies and of the devices introduced to monitor irregular migration in Italy see Colombo 2012. For an analysis of the legal "innovations" concerning extra-EU foreign citizens, with particular attention to the creation of a kind of special right of the foreigner and the progressive "administrativation" of the migrant condition see Caputo 2007 and Pepino 2009.

[3] Indeed the maximum detention time has gone from 30 days in 1998, to 60 days in 2002, to 180 days in 2009 to reach 540 days in 2011.

Initially centres' denomination included the term "assistance", with explicit reference to a place fitted to guarantee migrants with humanitarian assistance, medications and support. In the best of cases such title also suggested that the migrant was a victim whose primary needs had to be catered for (nutrition and health), rather than a person entitled to specific rights.
Semantic resorting continued in 2008, when the Italian centre-right government renamed CPTA as Identification and Expulsion Centres. On one hand such change of name showed the basic concept behind the creation of these centres – for the identification and expulsion of irregular migrants – and on the other, it accentuated exacerbation together with a promise of greater efficiency of migration control policies. However once again, the legislator decided to obliterate any reference to the fact that some centres actually operate as detention places, where people are imprisoned, even for very long periods, in the same way prisoners are, with very strong limitations to their personal freedoms.

On the basis of a research on the CIE in Milan carried out by our team in 2009-2010[4], now the aim is to challenge some of the interpretations put forward in literature to analyse the administrative detention of foreign citizens.
First of all, CIEs will be considered as *heterotopic spaces* (Foucault 2001) sifting and choosing specific categories of migrants, undermining one of the fundamental principles of contemporary societies: freedom of movement.
Secondly, we briefly illustrate if and to what extent they function as a disciplinary technology.
Thirdly, on the basis of a parallelism between the idea of *permanent state of exception* (Agamben 2003) and that of *special right* of the migrant (Caputo 2006), the present work will assess to what level CIEs can be included in the "camp form" (Rahola 2007), being a people's *mobility control device* and a *confinement for the humanity in excess*, that through "clandestinisation" allows disciplining immigrated workforce.

3. Heterotopias

CIEs can be described as *heterotopias*, as they are *other* places in respect to the majority of real places. *Counter-places* where some people – the ones that Bauman defines "vagabonds" (1999) – are subject to the suspension of a number of global and technological societies' fundamental principles: freedom of movement, self-determination, "choosing where to place oneself" (ibid. 96). Vagabonds are therefore coerced – contrary to goods, capitals, information, tourists and élites – to a forced location; their freedom of movement is reduced by frontiers controls, visas, entry quotas, armoured and guarded gated communities, material and symbolic borders, ghetto neighbourhoods as well as administrative detention centres where they are held. Here, migrants are confined when, compelled to violate the law of immobility, they find themselves living in a country different to their "own" without having received due authorization.

In comparison to the rest of reclusion facilities, CIEs are located in areas away from the urban fabric, where access is particularly difficult, as it is left to the discretion of public security forces. For instance, the CIE of Milan, is located by a motorway overpass and the airport of Linate, in a peripheral area on the west side of the city, extremely poorly catered for by public transport.

[4]The investigation was articulated in three stages: (1) outlining the set of rules on immigration control in Italy and in Europe, in order to historically frame the implementation of administrative detention; (2) systematic collection of secondary data on the functioning, the effectiveness and efficiency of CIEs; (3) the analysis of procedures and the management practices of CIEs (with particular attention to criticalities) using a case study (the CIE in Milan) that beside the collection of documents also included nineteen discursive interviews with people who for different reasons had close relationships with the CIE in via Corelli: officers of Milan police, personnel of the management company (CRI), lawyers, magistrates, workers of the non-profit sector and militants from ant-racist groups.

Its collocation seems to respond to a logic of spatial segregation. The isolation and distancing of irregular migrants is pursued by means of a physical separation that marks a sharp difference from the rest of the city, as well as between regular and irregular migrants (the latter being susceptible to detention and expulsion). Such logic brings to mind the "binary division" and the "coercive assignment" typical of XIX disciplinary societies (Foucault 1975). However it also results to be coherent with the progressive relocation, over the last decades, of detention facilities, from the city centre – where throughout the nineteenth century and for part of the twentieth century they marked the presence of power, and embodied some sort of warning for the population – to the margins of cities, towards empty, threshold and scarcely visible urban areas.
The separation from surrounding urban space is also guaranteed by a number of control devices scanning access to the CIE, contributing to reify the isolation of "guests", and obstructing any possible escape. The perimeter is indeed delimited by walls and metallic fences, and under continuous surveillance by the police and the army.

Theoretically, like for other heterotopic spaces, there are some criteria defining who could and should be detained in CIEs. They should be citizens without a valid residency permit who have been inflicted an expulsion injunction. However, these criteria define a theoretical population that does not correspond to the one that actually transits by the centres. Considering that detainees are a very small part of the illegally present foreign citizens in the country, the decisive element is often simply chance. Nonetheless there are some practical criteria that make selection slightly less random. The first element – as it results from the analysis of available official data (Colombo 2012) – refers to the presence of bilateral readmission agreements with the countries of origin of foreign citizens. Hence the probability that the expulsion order may be successful represents an important factor of choice, but it is not the only one. Interviews proved that there is a second criterion determined by the alleged social threat of irregular migrants who have already served a term of imprisonment.[5] In fact, at release many ex-detainees without regular residency permits are transferred to CIEs, in order to proceed with their identification and expulsion (as if during the six months before release, the central police station did not have the possibility or the time to make the necessary controls).
In this manner, centres become instruments of control over the territory; an extension of prison fulfilling a supplementary function, confirming the syllogism "irregular equals criminal".[6] In this case too, decisions are left to personal discretion, as police authorities are the ones in charge of assessing the potential social threat of the migrant, which is done differently for every specific context. A consequence of the combined use of CIEs and prisons concerns the condition of promiscuity affecting very different people (workers without criminal records together with former inmates, trafficking victims together with "psychiatric cases") over periods of time that can turn out to be even quite long.
However chance and social threat do not explain why inside the CIE in via Corelli there has always been a "C ward" wholly dedicated to transsexuals who mostly having a Brazilian nationality cannot be expelled as readmission agreements between the two countries have not been ratified. One explanation can be the third criterion used by police forces running CIEs. The latter are in fact considered as a -temporary- resource to remove from cities public spaces, people belonging to those categories that from time to time, become object of social threat campaigns, attracting the protests of citizens groups: transsexuals, prostitutes, ethnic groups considered to be collectively responsible for specific crimes, etc. This routine strongly affects the turn over inside CIEs, to the point that it happened in the past that tens of people were released without any apparent reason, if not that of making space for other expulsion candidates connected to the latest emergency declared in the city.

[5] See Colombo 2012, 129ff.
[6] On the criminal effects on the immigrated population caused by the very existence of the centres for foreign citizens, see Weber 2002.

In conclusion, when CIEs are used to pursue media campaigns concerning security, they can actually operate very efficiently, even when the expected result – expulsion – is not actually achieved. Indeed detention represents an instrument for police forces to act in a symbolically effective manner in response to citizens' protests for the dangerousness and increasing "degradation" of urban areas (Quassoli 2004).

3.2. Disciplinary Technology

The walls of the CIE, can be compared to a porous membrane that, according to police forces' discretion, filters through a specific type of migrants who have to be excluded form the urban/social fabric. However the CIE is also accessed by other types of people: policemen or soldiers who stay in the more external area, CRI staff (the company managing the centre) which share many of the areas dedicated to detainees, magistrates and, even if with some limitations, lawyers. Then there is a third group of people who, from time to time, have asked to visit the CIE – journalists, activists of associations, public officials, politicians – for whom access regulations have never been wholly transparent, as these were changed over time and were often object of disputes with Police headquarters and with the Prefecture.
For instance in January 2009 the Prefecture of Milan introduced a number of limitations for regional Councillors, who, like for members of the European and national parliament and magistrates (similarly to what happens for prisons), until then had access to the facility without needing a previous authorization. From that time onwards, these categories of people could enter the CIE only if they had received a specific mandate from the President of the Regional Committee or by the President of the Regional Council, and with the Prefect's previous authorization.

The public security authority's decision to either limit or ease access seems to depend upon internal CIE security assessments and on the need to prevent or neutralize tensions that may jeopardize the daily management of the centre. If a loosening of access regulations is perceived as a threat for the running of the centre on the inside then the walls will relentlessly become thicker. A cogent example of this, is what happened in 2005, when protests began inside Milan's CIE on the 8th of April to soon spread to other Italian CIEs. For the whole duration of the protests that lasted three months, the Prefecture ordered for detainees to be denied the possibility to speak to journalists and it also restricted access to politicians and public officials. The isolation of detainees from the external world is pursued not in compliance to a set of legal regulations, determining access in a transparent way, but rather it works on the basis of a set of rules and procedures that are defined in an extremely unilateral and highly discretional manner by police forces.

Furthermore, detainees control also "implies…, physical presence, use of informative and activities and movement monitoring technologies" (Boano, 2005, 1). In Milan's CIE there are enclosures, gates, segregated spaces purposely redesigned to improve direct physical control, together with video-surveillance devices for distant control. The arrangement of the space is sided by a constant and efficient monitoring of what happens in communal areas by means of a camera surveillance system. There is an invisible and omniscient eye reducing detainees' freedom, as they are constantly subject to the power of a gaze, and to the gaze of power. Ultimately, a political control is imposed on a population in order to obtain its subjugation. In this sense the CIE constitutes a perfect example of a disciplinary technology (Deleuze 1990) applied to a rigidly codified and organized space where governmental practices are carried out (Foucault 2004). A disciplined micro-society totally controlled through reclusion, body restrain and the power of intervention on detainees' activities.
With frequent semantic slips, interviewees often call the CIE "a prison", "an asylum", "a psychiatric ward" and detainees became "internees" or "prisoners" under the control of "gaolers". In 2009 a delegation of Italian members of parliament and activists from the radical party, stated

that: “The utter lack of hygiene, of adequate facilities and of social and recreational activities, as well as the complete absence of freedom of movement gives the facility all the characteristics of an actual prison.” (Fiume 2009).
For what concerns the comparison between CIEs and prisons, many of the interviewees accentuated how the CIE entails a sort of radical uncertainty of status and absence of rules for the safeguarding of detainees, which do not apply to the condition of prisoner. As many interviewees cared to point out, in prisons, inmates have an acknowledged individual status as well as clear rights that they can resort to, instead detainees because they belong to a category that “The law would not fully recognize, that the Constitution did not imagine or provide for, and that tradition does not acknowledge <…> they do not have any clearly codified rights, they are no one” (Interview n.1, lawyer).
Ultimately, there is a difference between the aims pursued by the two institutions. Indeed penitentiaries officially work to re-educate the convict for an easier return into society. For this purpose, prisons cater for a number of educational, recreational and therapeutic activities for inmates to attend, which should eliminate the premises that caused the crime in the first place (in psychiatric wards too, the aim is to help the “sick” return to society). Not in CIEs. “Interim” is the only declared purpose of these centres, providing for a temporary deprivation of freedom, to eliminate all the material reasons that do not allow the physical rejection of the foreign citizen from the national territory. Detention time – lower than that of prisons (even if 18 months obviously clash with the concept of temporarily) – amounts to an “empty time”, characterized by the absence of any type of activity that may give some meaning to the detention. Daily life runs in the “simple” wait for a traumatic event – the expulsion- which by the end is ironically longed for.
Nonetheless the resigned wait for an inevitable event and the passive acceptance of the life conditions imposed by the institution, do not wear out detainees’ space of action. The history of Milan’s CIE, like that of other centres, is indeed a history of resistance practices in conditions that in some cases are really very extreme. There are three main modalities of resistance in CIEs. The first is that of coming up with a biography, a name and a country that may avoid the unilateral definition of the situation by the institution; this is can also be done by exploiting stigmatized stereotypes, as well as avoiding and/or delaying expulsion (Sossi 2006).
A second way includes violent protest forms, which may be self-inflicted – through food and water strikes, self-mutilation, and suicide attempts – or be towards the outside with protests and uprisings. [7] The latter can sometimes be successful and lead to an unexpected acknowledgement by judiciary powers of the reasons of the protest.
Lastly, a third resistance modality consists in a sort “reinvention of routine” through a re-signification of spaces, which allows backing out of the totalitarian control of the institutions (de Certeau 2001).

3.3. Governing the excess and disciplining the workforce

Some jurists (Caputo 2007, Pepino 2009) maintain that a kind of “special right” was implemented by instituting CIEs together with a plethora of *ad hoc* regulating devices for the figure of the “clandestine migrant”. The result is that of a distinct set of rules, unhampered from the basic principles of the general system, which tends to criminalise the irregular immigrant as well as increasingly amounting to a “right of the enemy”. The migrant is perceived as a dangerous subject for social order who needs to be constantly monitored by police control.

[7] For instance, during the period of the investigation five protests actions took place that contemplated the partial destruction of the facility and of the furniture. Nothing in comparison to what had happened shortly before in the biggest French *centre de rétention* in Vincennes, which was set on fire and completely destroyed during an uprising in June 2008. See (Agier 2009).

According to said interpretation, an extra-ordinary right applicable only to extra-Community migrants has taken shape. This was the resulting consequence of the pressure made through repeated public alarms concerning immigrants' crime and urban security and the intense exploitation of the topic of "immigration" for political-electoral purposes. A special right that works on the blurring of the boundaries between penal crime and administrative offence, which tends to reduce and abolish those guarantees that are normally recognized to citizens (in terms of fundamental freedoms) and pushes towards the "administrativation" of foreign citizens' rights that are often recognized by police forces rather than legal authorities.

The argument that is usually put forward against said interpretation asserts that the law requires that every decision concerning detention should be ultimately made by the legal authority, in compliance to the rules and procedures provided for any limitation of personal freedom. However the investigation proved that often said assessment of legitimacy of the public administration's work is actually a pretence. Due to limitations of space, the reasons for this cannot be described in details in this paper. The only thing that can be said for sure is that often there is a significant hindering of foreign citizens' chance to challenge expulsion/detention injunctions. The idea that CIEs are places of legal exception seems to be confirmed by the rushed and superficial validation hearings run by magistrates who do not have a specific competence on the subject and who often cannot stand up to the decision they have been summoned to take. Furthermore there are procedural complications and serious linguistic and communication difficulties which all account to a *de facto* negation of normal citizens guarantees, without there being an acknowledged violation of constitutional principles.

In this sense, rather than pertaining to the dialectic between norm and exception as the concretization of a "permanent state of exception" (Agamben 2003)[8], CIEs and administrative detention can be interpreted in relation to the creation of a criminal-administrative subsystem. This is provided of an internal logic that allows the administrative activity predestined for the rejection of the foreigner (Caputo 2007), to bend and disregard the principles and the goals of criminal law. As Campesi stated (2011, 33): "In as much as the origin and the creation of detention centres happened under an ambiguous dialectic between exception and norm, now they are regulated in detail by legal rules and they are considered ordinary instruments to manage migrations <thanks to> a police and administrative infra-right that formally imitates the guarantees of criminal law without though substantiating them in any way." [9].

However interpreting centres solely as facilities for exclusion and confinement of a kind of humanity in excess can be rather limiting. Although the monitoring of fluxes seems to be oriented to a rigid exclusion of migrants, the applied modalities by which it is articulated could instead result as being catered for the subordinate and differentiated inclusion of foreign citizens. Such an outcome would be achieved by means of a rigid disciplining including all those willing to accept a submissive integration on a work level, perhaps in the informal sector, without any recognition of social and political citizenship. Those showing hostile and problematic behaviours will instead be excluded, becoming "dangerous" for public order and therefore subject to rejection. Basically a new edition of the distinction between "laborious classes" and "dangerous classes" (Chevallier 1958) and an adaptation of the social surgery actions traditionally carried out in respect to these two classes by modern police (Campesi 2009, Palidda 2000).

Hence CIEs could be interpreted as devices to control people's movement rather than to definitively prevent it, and their function would be not so much to exclude migrants from the territory but rather to foster their "valorisation" through "clandestinisation" (Andrijasevic 2011, Karakayali, Rigo 2011). In this perspective the implementation of administrative detention and the other segregating and repressive measures introduced in the system to pursue the expulsion of the irregular foreigner, together with the lack of efficient legal access routes, of instruments for the absorption of

[8] For a critical reinterpretation of detention centres in relation to Agamben's categories of bare life, camp and (permanent) state of exception, see Guareschi, Rahola 2011. For a history of "camps", see Bernardot 2008.

[9] On this point, see Agier 2009 and Rea 2009.

clandestine immigrants and the tendency towards the precariousness of stay, would only work to maintain migrants in a radically subordinate position which both fosters the creation of a workforce that is extremely susceptible to harsh exploitation and increase the size of informal economy (De Genova 2005, Palidda 2008).

The relative inefficiency of CIEs and of other migration control police devices as well as their peculiar *functioning* would be explained by their delicate productive function. However such a function cannot overlook a more subtle form of productivity that does not seem to relate to either immediately economic logics (no material good is produced and the undeclared labour market is not visibly increased) or functional ones (a great portion of detected and/or detained foreigners is not expelled) and that is manifested on an eminently symbolic level. Indeed the intention behind all this seems to be that of defining the existence of individuals who can be detained and expelled and who are thus legally different (Rahola 2007). The existence of segregated and guarded spaces characterized by the existence of an insurmountable border under military control, which are often the focus of political and media attention – like for the cases of the symbolically central areas for migration control (Lampedusa, Ceuta, Melilla and the frontier between the United States and Mexico, etc…)- would allow creating a category, the clandestine immigrant, that by definition is unworthy of citizenship and liable of a treatment that violates generally recognized rights.

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