

***Confounding Borders and Walls: Documents, letters and the governance of  
relationships in São Paulo and Barcelona prisons<sup>1</sup>***

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Spanish women arrested in São Paulo, and Brazilian women arrested in Barcelona, often carry letters and documents in folders, plastic bags and envelopes, well protected in pockets, purses or knapsacks. The papers tell of events in the lives of these women, and provide clues and legibility to relationships maintained with people and places outside prison. In this paper, I analyze how letters and documents are products of family and transnational relationships that they can also produce. The paper looks at how they are used as evidences of families and loving relationships that each day are evaluated, and recognized or rejected, by public safety authorities, prison wardens, prosecutors, public defenders, consulates and immigration police. The letters and documents tell stories that are used to substantiate the deportation or immigration of Spanish women imprisoned in São Paulo and Brazilian women imprisoned in Barcelona.

At the time of the study (from March 2010- March 2012) there were twenty-seven Brazilians imprisoned in women's penitentiaries in Catalonia and thirty-five Spanish women in São Paulo's penitentiaries. To this paper, I have chosen to tell the story of four women: Marta and Rosa, two Spaniards arrested in São Paulo; Cristal and Luz, two Brazilian arrested in Barcelona.

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<sup>2</sup> The doctoral study underway in the Department of Social Anthropology at Unicamp, under the supervision of Adriana Gracia Piscitelli, entitled *Affairs and Marriages: Romantic relationships and experiences of conjugality in women's prisons in São Paulo and Barcelona* (grant recipient of the Research Support Foundation of São Paulo – FAPESP 2010/08618-5), is part of the international cooperative research project between the Center for Gender and Sexuality Studies of UNICAMP/PAGU and the Anthropology Department of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili de Tarragona / Catalonia.

*Marta Téllez and Eduardo Deán: Writing documents, plotting familiarities.*

I, Natália Corazza Padovani, bearer of Registro Geral nº 12345678-X, anthropologist, married to Douglas Gonçalves, bearer of Registro Geral nº 87654321-X<sup>3</sup>, artist, resident of Santo André, SP, declare to have knowledge that the rehabilitant Marta Téllez, matriculated under nº. 123456, lives in a stable union with rehabilitant Eduardo Deán, matriculated under no. 654321. I also declare that I know that Marta and Eduardo met in Spain, their native country, when they both were 16 and that, since then, have maintained a stable, conjugal loving, relationship.

Santo André, June 2011. Signature of the declarant recognized by similarity.

In this document which was sent to the Secretariat of Penitentiary Administration and to the Penitentiary of Itaipu, both in São Paulo state, Brazil, two conjugal unions are present, my own with Douglas Gonçalves, and that of Marta Téllez with Eduardo Deán. About the first, there is nothing to be declared, only affirmed and above all, identified. The second, needs to be more legible (Das and Poole 2004: 25-26) and particularly, to be deemed legitimate. The declaration, which encompasses in the text the conjugal and heterosexual legitimacy of the declarant, seeks to validate another conjugality, which is also heterosexual: that of Marta Téllez and Eduardo Deán, Spaniards who are imprisoned in São Paulo.

Marta's sisters and Eduardo's mother sent similar declarations and the correspondence that arrived from Spain was signed and registered by a Spanish notary and bore the imprint of the General Consul of Brazil in Madrid guaranteeing its veracity. They also included photos of family occasions. In the brief and colorless lines, the declarations depict the long-term nature of the relationship.

These documents were written after Marta, having completed two years of her sentence, had been granted semi-liberty. In practical terms, Marta could spend a few pre-determined days outside of the prison. Contrary to what happened with many of her Spanish companions who Marta met in the penitentiary, her deportation order never arrived and thus, while the Ministry of Justice remained silent about the issue, she could

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<sup>3</sup>All ID numbers and names are fictitious.

continue to plan her life out of prison, within Brazilian borders.<sup>4</sup> On the days of temporary leave from the penitentiary, she would sleep at the houses of friends and, if she could get a job “in the street,” she would also have the right to leave the prison to work and return only to sleep. The completion of her sentence in a semi-open regime might allow her to visit Eduardo, but only if she could prove a conjugal relationship with him.

Under the Brazilian Penal Execution Law of 1984 prisoners have the right to visits from “a spouse, companion, relatives and friends on determined days.” However, prison regulations refer explicitly to “family ties.”

The visit, in particularly an intimate visit, *has the purpose of maintaining and strengthening family relations* with the person deprived of liberty (First paragraph of officio 2191/2001, p.6. Emphasis by the author.).

Art. 102 – For a visit to be registered on the list of the prisoner’s visits, the following documents should be presented:

agreement, in writing by the prisoner, about the convenience or not of the visit;  
*proof of the condition of being a spouse, companion or the kind of relative;*  
*copy of proof of residence for the past six (06) months;*

*certificate of criminal record* (Resolution 144 of 29/06/2010 of the Secretariat of Penitentiary Administration of São Paulo State. Emphasis mine.).

In this text, visits are defined as means to *maintain and strengthen* family relations *proven by the visitors’ documents who must also prove they have no criminal record*. Marta and Eduardo’s conjugal and familiar relations shape an apparent contradiction in the legal framework described by the paragraphs of the official determinations and regulations. The illusory incoherence in which Marta and Eduardo’s marriage appears to be classified, is, however, much less obscure and much more ordinary than may appear. Heterosexual couples, composed of Brazilians, Spaniards, Bolivians, or Nigerians, with or without children, fill the mailboxes at men’s and women’s prisons with letters exchanged between people incarcerated in the institutions. Wives and husbands, lovers, fathers and mothers attest to the family ties recognized by

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<sup>4</sup> All foreigners imprisoned in Brazilian territory and accused of committing a crime according to national laws, respond, in addition to criminal charges to an administrative process for deportation moved by the Ministry of Justice.

the state. But these family ties that the Secretariat of Penal Administration is concerned with *maintaining* and *reinforcing* according to the texts that it publishes, do not necessarily correspond to a presumed opposition to crime and prison.

The effort to document Marta's and Eduardo's relationship attempts to express a specific familiarity; a familiarity separated from the prison. This is what is involved in documenting the relationship: To remove it from legal incongruence and attest that it is a family relationship that deserves legal recognition. Marta's effort goes beyond the documents with official seals, signatures and stamps. In her day-to-day speech, she classifies her marriage with Eduardo as "different from relations you find *here*," it is "*true* love." She is concerned with demonstrating that it is "*different* from all other relationships in prison". For Marta, her relationship with Eduardo is based on "*pure* love," while the relationships that she witnesses in prison are "amusements," "crazy" "unrealistic passions," "they aren't love."

Marta prepares her narrative to differentiate her relationship with Eduardo from the other prison affairs, romances and marriages. By doing so, she produces a documentary foundation that is concerned with affirming, on one hand, the long term and official nature of the relationship, and on the other, the love and reality that ground it. She imbues the narrative about her marriage with proof and evidence of the kindness and care that Eduardo has for her and that she has for Eduardo, even if this proof is part of a prior history with criminal records complete with adventures evaluated by the state as transnational crime. Marta makes an effort to prove that her marriage is not fleeting, that it remains alive despite all the contingencies of prison and goes beyond the prisons. She affirms that it is *pure* because it is not contaminated by the prison.

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We sit at one of the tables in the yard of the prison and she begins to read the letters with flowers and bombs designed on the envelopes. Each illustration provides a clue to the content of the letter: if it is loving, erotic or angry. A flower penetrated by a thick stem, a witch with a garter belt flying on a broom, a present with chocolates. Marta wants to show me the letter that has a bomb on the envelope. A letter with a quarrel. "These are the best!" she said. In the letter, Eduardo complains that he got a picture of Marta, taken during a mother's day party by the photographer hired by the prison:

Very well, dear Marta. To tell you the truth, I don't know why you sent me the photo. To *mess* with me,

to make me feel bad? I realized that you are fooling me, and that you are taking those *shitty* drugs that they sell there. I, for my part, am still strong, dark and tanned and don't have the face of a *junkie* that you have in this cursed photo!

Eduardo's letter ends with his signature and the design of a strong dark and tanned man. Marta says that she had to explain to Eduardo that she got thin because she wasn't used to prison food and that she was not taking drugs. She added: "see how we take care of each other? He loves me. Cares for me." The "letter bomb" documents Eduardo's love. Marta wants to exhibit it, show it, to publish Eduardo's love and make the relationship legible.

But the correspondence exchanged between Marta and Eduardo is more than documents. The flower, the stem, the bomb, the witch and the broom denote codes that go beyond the liturgical language of the legal documents. Marta certainly uses them as proof of the relationship she has with Eduardo, but also carries them close to her. Eduardo's letters are the touches, the kisses, the fights, the pleasure, the affliction the fear, the support that Marta feels in her body. She puts them on the wall of her cell. With Eduardo's letters, Marta lives her marriage and proof that he exists inside (outside) the prison.

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After nearly two years serving a sentence in a closed regime, Marta's sentence was reduced to a semi-open regime. She could finally visit Eduardo. But she would need to prove the existence and legitimacy of her marriage. Marta armed herself with letters, official documents, signed and notarized declarations in letters, papers and stamps, that made the matrimony of Marta Télles and Eduardo Deán legible. The paperwork was intended to remove from Marta and Eduardo's relationship the apparent incongruence of their being foreign inmates who were also married: a family with a transnational criminal record.

This brings us to the documents produced exposed above. These documents were used by the social workers at the unit where she was serving a sentence in semi-liberty to form a small dossier that was sent to the sector for rehabilitation and discipline of the Penitentiary of Itaí, where Eduardo was incarcerated in a closed regime. After a large period of analysis, Marta was finally granted permission to visit her husband, in an administrative visit. Marta traveled the two hundred fifty kilometers from São Paulo to Itaí to spend about an hour with Eduardo in the conference room which is divided in the

middle by a grate or a glass and is usually reserved for meetings with lawyers. After two years of prison, without physical contact, two years exchanging letters, Marta and Eduardo could see each other. But only see: there was a glass between them, a prison guard, two entrance gates, a metal detector, documents, approvals and denials. The conference room is the space of the relationship, properly documented and made legible for and by the state, of two imprisoned people. The letters continued to play the role of hands.

***The paths of Rosa: transnational prisons, families, commerce and love.***

Natália, I have so many things to tell you! I got my semi-open sentence! I can't wait to have my *escape* to be glued to my computer, talk with my mother! I am not going to ask for a transfer to the prison where Lola went. It's not worth it anymore. I will wait to get out and I will see her in the street. About your question in the last letter, if I want to stay in Brazil: Yes! The response is yes! I really want to stay with Lola, I want to have a steady relationship with her. *It won't be the prison walls that will stop me from following my heart!* (Emphasis mine).

I met Rosa from Barcelona at the São Paulo Women's Penitentiary. She was accused of trying to board a plane in the International Airport of Guarulhos (São Paulo) with cocaine paste in her bags. While serving her sentence, Rosa, who was then twenty-one, met the Brazilian Lola, who, together with her mother Lídia, was also serving time in that penitentiary, both accused of coordinating a drug trafficking network between Brazil and Spain.

Like Rosa, Lola had been detained at the airport, where the federal police waited after months of investigation that included tracing her telephone calls. After having spent years in Spain, Lola met Rosa while imprisoned in Brazil. They fell in love and mounted a "cafofo," a home in a cell, in the penitentiary where they lived together for more than a year.

In September 2011, I said goodbye to Rosa and Lola, when I left for five months of research in Spain. I was taking notes from the addresses of inmate's family members in Catalonia, Madrid and Valencia. Rosa was one of those who gave me phone numbers and addresses, but she also told me about the cheap stores, the best bars and the tattoo artists she knew. She told me about the places she liked to go to in Barcelona, gave me travel tips and designed maps to guarantee a good stay in the city in

which she had lived for a few years. She was my host in Barcelona, although she was sitting on a concrete bench in the pavilion of the prison. Before I left, she also gave me another recommendation: whispering, she told me that she did not tell anyone of her family about her marriage with Lola. I could not talk about it.

In Barcelona, I contacted Raimunda, Rosa's mother. She was anxious for my visit. She wrote me, called me and said she was waiting for me with a special dinner. On the day of our meeting, she was holding her youngest granddaughter with her left hand and smoking a cigarette in her right. Raimunda had long blond hair, red lipstick, tight jeans and high-heeled boots with which she walked through the streets, stairways and cobblestones to her house. On the way, she showed me the school where Rosa and her other two children studied, the church where they were confirmed and learned the catechism, and the park where she took Rosa to play. The route took us to a housing project on a dead end street, in front of an abandoned lot. Ten people lived in the two-bedroom house: in addition to Raimunda, there were Rosa's grandmother as well as her older sister and brother with their spouses and children (three children in all), and a cousin who had recently lost a job in Madrid, which required him to return to the small city that he had left. Only Raimunda was employed, working as a nurse in the local hospital and doing odd jobs caring for the elderly. Her earnings supported the family at home and Rosa in prison. In the kitchen, making diner and smoking, Raimunda asked:

And this Lola? What's she like? I ask because Rosa fell in love so easily! I have no problem if she wants to be with a woman, but they have to come here and present themselves to me. What does Rosa think? Her family has to come first.

Letters, messages and information had traveled much more quickly than I had. Through Raimunda, I found out that Lola and Rosa had publicly assumed the relationship, even against the wishes of Rosa's family members, who were waiting for her to return to her old companion, Antônio, who was still in the Penitentiary of Itai in São Paulo; the same male penitentiary for foreigners where Eduardo Deán was incarcerated. Before they were arrested, Rosa and Antônio lived in a small apartment in Barcelona. They worked in stores in the tourist zone of the city and sold marijuana and cocaine to augment their monthly income. Together they decided to go to São Paulo to look for the raw material for the drug and take it to Spain. In addition to earning more than four thousand euros each through the enterprise, they could also spend two weeks visiting beaches like Ilha Bela and Parati. That's what they did, but on the day of their

return, they were caught by the Brazilian federal police with more than ten kilos of cocaine paste. Raimunda said she would never forget the telephone call she received at four in the morning. Her daughter was crying on the other end of the line telling her what had happened: that she was in jail in Brazil, and that she would not get to Barcelona the next day.

In the São Paulo Women's Penitentiary Rosa tattooed Antônio's name on the nape of her neck and below had written "amor eterno" [eternal love]. It was a love that was cooled over time by the affairs Rosa had before assuming her relationship with Lola. This love testified to her relationship with a Spain where she no longer wanted to return. Her love for Lola, in turn, made her a bit Brazilian, and placed her in a circuit of other neighborhoods, other streets, other stores, other possibilities for work and family. Rosa, still in jail, no longer remembered to speak of Antônio, except to say that she wanted to cover the tattoo of his name. Rosa tattooed Lola's name on her arm, but this time, without writing "eternal love." In 2012, her semi-open sentence was granted, so that she could spend four days in August in the street, out of prison. On these days, Rosa stayed at the house of someone in Lola's family, where her sister, aunt and the son of the aunt's current companion were living. But this temporary leave, which was granted in August 2012, would be her last. A judge understood that because Rosa's deportation was already decreed, she would be illegal in Brazilian territory, outside of prison. The news of Rosa's deportation reached Lola by a letter written from the Resocialization Center of Itapetininga, 200 kilometers from São Paulo, where Rosa has been transferred after the publication of her permission for a semi-open sentence, after the publication of her deportation order.

***Someone who lives by the lake doesn't lose to a frog: Cristal making relations (il)legible***

That's what Cristal would say: "Me, huh, living by the lake and losing to a frog? No way." Cristal wouldn't lose a thing to a frog. Like Rosa, she traveled across walls, cells, national borders and through drug dealing, love and in Cristal's case, the sex market. The prison walls did not prevent her from getting around.

The first time I saw her was on a day I visited the Can Brians Penitentiary in Barcelona. Cristal was serving the end of her six-year sentence in a semi-open regime in other prison. Every weekend that she had a temporary leave, she would go to the bus



station at seven in the morning to get on line for the buses heading for the distant penitentiary of Can Brians. Cristal had spent more than four years there imprisoned in a closed regime. It is where she met her boyfriend, who she was going to visit; and she was not alone. The temporary leaves on weekends, for most of the Brazilian inmates in a semi-open regime, became visiting days at Can Brians.

Among the activities for men and women inmates together that occurred at the male/female Can Brians penitentiary, Cristal told me most about the movies: “Since it was always dark, it was easy for us to escape to the bathroom, or do things right there. We planned everything and one covered the other, to distract the security guards.” It was at one of these movie sessions that Cristal met her Peruvian boyfriend.<sup>5</sup> Cristal began her relationship with the Peruvian through letters they exchanged between the modules. After exchanging letters for some time, she asked her tutor to authorize a *vis-à-vis*, or that is, conjugal and family visits between them. Unlike São Paulo penitentiaries, in Barcelona prisons intimate visits are allowed between jailed couples, including homosexuals. The couple does not need to prove family or matrimonial ties. The only condition is that both parties declare a desire to have the *vis-à-vis*.<sup>6</sup>

It was through the network for the control of information and exchanging letters that Cristal’s affair with the Peruvian ended some time after I met her. On the afternoon that Cristal would sign her conditional liberty, she called me and asked if I could accompany her and if, later, we could go out to celebrate. Cristal continued: “Do you know about the “scandal?” I already knew. I had received e-mails and calls from other Brazilian women inmates warning me of the end of Cristal’s relationship with the Peruvian.<sup>7</sup> When we met later she told me about the “scandal”: A Colombian woman, also imprisoned in Can Brians, was interested in Cristal’s boyfriend. The Colombian sent letters and more letters to Cristal’s Peruvian who, after a few forays by the

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<sup>5</sup> That’s how Cristal always called him, “My Peruvian.”

<sup>6</sup> The rules and regulations for the visits in the prisons of Barcelona are quite flexible. For a person to visit a prisoner they only need authorization from the inmate and a photo ID. The number of Brazilians who entered the prison system of Catalonia was impressive. Although they were in irregular situations in Spain, they went to prison to visit boyfriends, girlfriends, friends and family members, simply carrying a long outdated passport.

<sup>7</sup> The semi-open regime in the Catalan prison is quite different from the semi-open regime in São Paulo. Any person in a semi-open regime could spend the day in the street and return for lunch, dinner and to sleep in the prison. If they had formal work outside the prison, the inmate could spend the day outside the penitentiary, returning only to sleep. Inmates in a semi-open regime who work, also have the right to spend ten straight days per month outside the prison and only return at the end of this period. During my field work in Spain, I regularly went out with women serving a semi-open regime in Wad Raz to lunch, dinner, drinks and even to a *fórró* [Brazilian dance]. Many of them rented houses or rooms in houses of relatives of Spanish or Colombian immigrants, illegal immigrants who they met in prison. A network of residence was constituted through the prison.

Colombian, responded. Cristal found out about this flirting between the Colombian and her boyfriend because an employee at Brians, “who liked her a lot,” showed her the records of the letters sent and received between the modules. The employee, according to Cristal, wanted to warn her of the betrayal by her boyfriend.

The records of the letters sent and received, and mainly the fact that the prison employee warned Cristal about the “suspicious” letters exchanged by her boyfriend outside the relationship, and exposed a network of control made possible by the correspondences sent between the modules and to or from the prison. This network for controlling information, however, is sustained by relationships and gossip, more than by records. Cristal knew this, and for this reason, she studied affinities, words, clothing, gestures and even the letters she exchanged. On the day I met her, visiting day at the penitentiary, Cristal was wearing tight jeans, high heels and a plaid shirt open to the middle of her chest, which she exhibited with pride. She placed her hands over her breasts, adjusted them and said: “Ah, I turbo-charged these woman!” On the afternoon that I met Cristal to sign her conditional release, however, I barely recognized her. She seemed shorter, wearing sneakers and a loose sweat suit; her nails weren’t long or painted. When we reached the rehabilitation sector of the secretariat of justice of Catalonia, where Cristal would sign the “divorce,” as she liked to call her conditional liberty, she promptly introduced me to the social workers and police officers who accompanied the process: “This is my Brazilian friend, she’s an anthropologist.” Cristal added: “I told you, I have friends in Brazil who’ve never been arrested!”

The way that Cristal dressed and introduced me explained the importance of my presence for her on that day. It wasn’t certain that she would gain conditional liberty. She would first have to prove to the rehabilitation employees that she had “a circle of relations and support outside the prison.” Moreover, she had to prove that her ties to the prison were weak. That’s what Cristal did. When asked by the social worker about her boyfriend in prison, she responded that she was very disappointed with him and would stop visiting him. “You can see there that I don’t even write him anymore.” Two hours later, after a long deliberation by the social workers, Cristal signed her conditional liberty. While we walked through the streets, she said: “it’s easy. I say everything that they want me to say. I answer correctly. I say that I have friends in Brazil, I write to my family, I say that I want to return to visit my mother, “me, huh! That’s all I need, to live by the lake and lose to a frog!”

After it all went ok, and her “divorce” was signed, Cristal told me in detail about the “scandal” of the end of her relationship.

It’s like this, I’m a hooker. When I was arrested for drug trafficking, I had already been living here in Spain and when I went to visit my family, I took things that I sold to my clients. The Peruvian, poor guy, didn’t know anything about this. In my semi-open I was already working, but that Colombian girl found out and wrote to my Peruvian and told him everything. Then, he wanted to break up. But then I thought: It’s better like this, this way I don’t have to justify the relationship with him in rehab. The tutor told the social worker that we are no longer together and that’s it. Later I’ll work it out with him. I’ll mount my décolletage, go visit him, and say that I’m never going to turn another trick. Its a lie right?

Letters, gossip and documents. Cristal assembled her clothes and her strategies to work out the signing of her “divorce” from the Catalan prison system. Working as a prostitute during the temporary leaves under the semi-open sentence, Cristal saved money to buy false pay slips and receipts from the owner of a cafeteria. These documents “proved” that she was working legally in Barcelona, a fact that authorized her to spend more time in the street. More hours in the street were more hours working, and therefore, more hours receiving the money needed for the production of documents, ballasts of legality and legibility of her migrant situation in Spain. Cristal plotted at the “margins of the state” (Das and Poole, 2004), arming herself with legality, mixing the licit and illicit. Cristal maintained the walk in calm steps to execute the necessary strategies and change her documentation as a prisoner to that of a legal migrant.

***To be an illegal immigrant in Spain is worse than being an international criminal! Luz between prisons, internment centers and peripheries.***

On March 1, 2012, a Thursday, I arrived in São Paulo after five months of field research in Catalonia. On Saturday, March 3, I received a call from Luz’s sister. She wanted to know about Luz, mainly to know about who was the boyfriend with whom Luz said she would stay in Spain. I told her briefly about Luz’s relationship with her Colombian boyfriend, Carlos, whose Luz met in Brians Penitentiary and whose face she had tattooed on her left breast. The following week, Francisca called me again. She now had greater reason for concern: Luz had been detained by the Spanish immigration police known as the *extranjería* and was detained in an Internment Center for Foreigners. Furthermore, Luz was pregnant.

To be caught by the *extranjería* and held in an Internment Center for Foreigners was Luz's greatest fear after leaving prison and deciding to stay in Spain, illegally, to wait for Carlos' release. On the day of her release, Luz walked out of prison apprehensively, looking to the sides to be sure that there were no *extranjería* police: "ok, now I am illegal. All I need is to go to a Center for the Internment of Foreigners (CIE) after five years in prison." While serving her sentence in a semi-open regime, Luz had studied on the Internet and in newspapers all kinds of information about the CIEs and sought to inform her friends, who were also leaving the Catalan penitentiary system and were illegal immigrants, about the risks and living conditions of a CIE: "to be an illegal immigrant in Spain is worse than being an international criminal! In prison we have a doctor, a bathroom. I read that in the CIEs there are no facilities."

It is curious that the end of a prison sentence is directly related to the end of a secure status established by the prison. Liberty without deportation is a liberty without guarantees of rights that were assured by a prison sentence. But Luz did not even consider an exchange of her conditional liberty for deportation, an option offered by Catalan courts to all foreign prisoners. She would wait, at any cost, for the end of Carlos' sentence. While we headed toward the beach to celebrate her freedom with sparkling wine and plastic cups, Luz received calls from Carlos' relatives in Colombia. They wanted to be sure that Luz was released. She also received other calls. Proposals to travel through Europe, by bus, carrying drugs. For each trip, she would receive about three thousand euros. Luz hung up the phone: "it's illegal, but what they'll offer me is to carry drugs or work as a hooker. I want to work as a caretaker. I don't want to run the risk of being arrested again!" Aware of the loss of security provided by prison documents, Luz knew that the exit through the penitentiary gates implied her entanglement in a network of illegalities, illegitimacies and irregularities.

The news of Luz's detention and pregnancy combined fear and a dream come true. Luz and Carlos were eager to have children. Now detained in a CIE, Luz could not communicate with Carlos, she ran the risk of being deported and having to wait in Brazil for her companion to be freed. Moreover, without the necessary medical care, Luz could lose her baby. The situation placed her pregnancy at risk. Francisca asked for help to remove Luz from her situation as a pregnant illegal immigrant in a distant country and to reintegrate her into a network of documents and civil legibility that could only be made possible by the Brazilian consulate. Luz was released from the CIE one month later. She is in Brazil now. Carlos still is in prison.

*Plotting flows and fixity: producing papers and the foundations of (il)legibility of relations*

To be without documents is to be documented in a specific way. The absence of documents impeded Luz from circulating through the streets of Barcelona, but not through Catalanian prisons. Without documents, Luz continued to visit Carlos in prison. Moreover, she continued to have the right to stay with Carlos once a month in a private room, the right to realize the conjugal *vis-à-vis*. This right was denied to Marta despite her effort to produce documents that legitimated her conjugality with Eduardo. Marta and Eduardo's conjugality was classified by government agents in Brazil as suspect and criminal. This classification made it difficult for the couple to exercise their right to maintain family ties. Luz, in turn, only had the right to maintain her family ties through the punitive institutions.

The relationships that Luz documented, make visible ties with her Colombian husband jailed in Catalonia and with their daughter who was born in the city of Barcelona. In this way, Luz is defined as a Brazilian, a former prison inmate, pregnant by a Colombian sentenced for "crime against public health," and illegal immigrant with weak ties to her "country of origin." Luz is classified by the relationships that keep her in Catalonia despite her irregular situation. These relations – noted regularly by the penitentiary agent who registers Luz's passport number at each visit made to Carlos in Can Brians – eclipse her ties with Francisca. Not by chance, then, her detention in the CIE triggered Luz to activate family and kinship ties with Francisca, also making them visible, legible and documented by the employees of the institutions of the Catalan government.

Cristal, in turn, plots legibility and illegibility. She tactically produces layers of registers that tie her to family in Brazil, to formal employment in a cafeteria in Barcelona and indicate the break of her ties with her Peruvian boyfriend imprisoned in Can Brians. Cristal speaks, writes and dresses "what they want." She uses papers that facilitate the registration of a "good prognosis." These papers are produced, however, by means of her work in the sexual market and in drug sales. Cristal creates shadows over those sexual and emotional involvements that could result in a "bad prognosis"

Rosa is not able to do this. Like Luz, who had Carlos' face tattooed on her breast, Rosa tattooed Lola's name on her arm. But this writing reveals a tie without documentation. It identifies her with attributes of sexuality and class that inspire the worst prognoses by the penitentiary agents and those of the Ministry of Justice. These

prognoses put her deeper into the prison buildings and, against her wishes, lead to transfers between prison units and ultimately deportation.

Veena Das and Deborah Poole (2004) recall that the exercise of state power of administration and control is constituted, in large part, by written procedures, that emphasize some characteristics and ties over others. Letters and documents register, and define the people presented in this article. They either fix them or enable them to move. They present discursive layers of legibility and illegibility that, agencied according to attributes and asymmetries of power, produce prognostics and identities based on ties which, in the narratives and trajectories described here, are identified by the word “love.” Love, as understood by the people I talked to, activates values that are linked to notions of family, kinship and conjugality in the production of documentation of relations. This documentation is used in the governance of individuals by institutions that control borders. At the same time, it is deployed by the people in this article to create alternative routes to and from prison.

\* Translated by Jeffrey Hoff

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