

Who is entitled to feel in the age of populism?

Women's resistance to migrant detention in Britain

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This article examines the practice of immigration detention from the perspective of detainees' emotions as a way to focus on their security. The policy of detaining non-citizens who are deemed to be 'suspicious' and 'risky' has become a widely implemented immigration control policy in Europe, the United States and Australia, even if these individuals' incarceration cannot be defended penologically.¹ Incarceration of some immigrants has become a practice used by states to assure the public that they are in 'control' of immigration. Immigration has long been constructed as a source of anxiety and fear in the West in the context of rising far-right populism.² In other words, detention has become an institutionalized manifestation of anti-migrant populist emotions. Following this line of thinking, the discussion in this article adopts the concept of 'detention-as-spectacle'.³ Interviews conducted with former detainees will reveal how the theatrical security performance of sovereign control in the age of anti-migrant populism causes emotional and bodily insecurities to immigrants. The interviews will demonstrate how immigrants cope with these insecurities through their feelings and practices of 'everyday security'.

Temporal and spatial incarceration (re)produces racialized and gendered bodies as objects of migration control security regimes. Detainees develop feelings and notions of security in their daily lives at the same time as they experience detention. For this reason, women's experiences and feelings before, during and after detention should be an area of interest for feminist International Relations (IR) and security studies, particularly at a time when anti-immigrant populism is on the rise and the emotions underlying it are 'institutionalized'.⁴ To date, this has not been the case; to address this problem and challenge the normalization of 'detention' as a security policy, this article investigates how women immigrants 'feel' detention and

¹ Alex Klein and Lucy Williams, 'Immigration detention in the community: research on the experiences of migrants released from detention centres in the UK', *Population, Space and Place* 18: 6, June 2012, p. 748.

² Klein and Williams, 'Immigration detention in the community', p. 743; Nick Vaughan-Williams, "'We are not animals!' Humanitarian border security and zoopolitical spaces in Europe", *Political Geography* no. 45, 2015, pp. 1–10; Lauren Martin, "'Catch and remove": detention, deterrence, and discipline in US noncitizen family detention practice', *Geopolitics* 17: 2, 2012, pp. 312–34; Alison Mountz, 'The enforcement archipelago: detention, haunting, and asylum on islands', *Political Geography* 30: 3, 2011, pp. 118–28.

³ Cetta Mainwaring and Stephanie Silverman, 'Detention-as-spectacle', *International Political Sociology* 11: 1, 2017, pp. 21–38.

⁴ Neta Crawford, 'Institutionalizing passion in world politics: fear and empathy', *International Theory* 6: 3, 2014, pp. 533–57.

enact their emotions in formulating their own daily security practices. Taking stock of the explorations of ‘everyday security’ and emotions in feminist IR research⁵ and beyond, the article asks: ‘Who is entitled to feel in the age of populism?’ It will argue that feminist IR and security studies should focus on the emotional daily performances of immigrant women who experience detention, because who is entitled to feel intertwines with another question: ‘Who merits security?’⁶ The answer to this question is politically and normatively contested. Emotions can work in the politics of security in two ways: they can help to ‘normalize’ some people’s being considered to merit security in certain political contexts at the expense of others, and they can also reveal pluralism of (in)security.

The article consists of three sections. The first section will discuss conceptually how emotions should be studied in relation to detention as an institutional manifestation of anti-immigrant populism in feminist security studies. This section will start by discussing detention in the context of anti-immigrant populism and the emotions underpinning it, as studied in the literature on populism. After deconstructing the political problem, the everyday ‘felt’ security approach will be discussed as a framework within which to study subjects whose feelings and security are overlooked and marginalized in the context of anti-immigrant populist discourse. The section will conclude with an explanation of the methodology adopted here. The second section will present the context of detention in the United Kingdom and will contextualize the narratives presented by the interviewees, who were former detainees at Yarl’s Wood detention centre. The final section will be based on the three interviews and will discuss how the everyday felt security approach can help feminist IR and security studies to challenge the insecurities inflicted on women immigrants by the practice of detention. The discussion draws an alternative picture of detention and security, by focusing on the everyday feelings of women immigrants as subjects who merit security and are entitled to feel.

Anti-immigrant populism, emotions and everyday (in)security

The importance of analysing emotions in security studies has been widely discussed. For example, emotions are investigated as instruments through which subjects can be governed by security practitioners,⁷ through which the mostly unrecognized human cost of security practices can be demonstrated,⁸ and through which ways to resist such affective practices with positive emotions can be analysed.⁹ Emotions are studied as a constitutive dimension of individual and collective identities with

⁵ Laura Sjoberg, ‘Centering security studies around felt, gendered insecurities’, *Journal of Global Security Studies* 1: 1, 2016, pp. 51–63; Linda Åhäll, ‘Affect as methodology: feminism and the politics of emotion’, *International Political Sociology* 12: 1, 2018, pp. 36–52.

⁶ Sjoberg, ‘Centering security studies’.

⁷ Clara Eroukhmanoff, ‘Responding to terrorism with peace, love and solidarity: “Je suis Charlie”, “Peace” and “I Heart MCR”’, *Journal of International Political Theory* 15: 2, 2019, pp. 167–87.

⁸ Alex Edney-Browne, ‘The psycho-social effects of drone violence: social isolation, self-objectification and de-politicisation’, *Political Psychology* 40: 6, 2019, pp. 1341–56.

⁹ Katherine E. Brown and Elina Penttinen, ‘A “sucking chest wound” is nature’s way of telling you to slow down ... : humour and laughter in war time’, *Critical Studies on Security* 1: 1, 2013, pp. 124–6.

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political effects.¹⁰ Many feminists understand emotions/affects not as a research subject to be studied objectively, or as a variable to be tested, but as a way of knowing.¹¹ As a critical method, the study of affects paves the way for understanding and problematizing how power works, how some ideas and practices ‘get under our skin’, and how emotions work. It does this by moving the subject (individually or communally) away from emotions as object.¹² Feminist research is less about what emotions ‘are’ and more about how we come to feel in certain ways towards certain objects. It does this by exploring historically produced, contextual power relations, and what emotions do in this context. In line with the existing research on emotions, the discussion here will adopt a feminist perspective. It will allow us to problematize certain emotions and counter them with others that are often marginalized politically. Therefore, it aims to reveal power relations that operate through the *affective* politics of security in the context of anti-immigrant populism.

Populism is not only a discourse espoused by certain self-identified populist political parties; it is a constellation of ideas, practices, institutions and norms that shape and direct political and social thinking and behaviour.¹³ In a nutshell, populism of the right and the left relies on the distinction between ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ and purports to defend the former against the latter. In general, populists adopt an ‘anti-pluralist’ stance. They claim that they are the sole representatives of the people who are homogenized in the populist discourse.¹⁴ In addition to targeting ‘the elite’, such homogenization excludes and stigmatizes individuals and social groups who are not deemed to be part of ‘the people’. For the populism of the right, particularly in the global North, these include minorities and immigrants.¹⁵ Anti-immigrant populism combines ‘ethno-nationalist xenophobia’ and ‘anti-establishment’ sentiments, which are particularly powerful in far-right populism.¹⁶ In the discourse of far-right populism, anti-immigrant populism sometimes takes the form of nativism,¹⁷ ‘an ideology which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the nation-state’.¹⁸ Fear, anger, hate and anxiety towards the ‘other’ are studied as emotions felt by the supporters of nativist, anti-immigrant

¹⁰ See, among others, Emma Hutchison, *Affective communities in world politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Ty Solomon, ‘Attachment, tautology, and ontological security’, *Critical Studies on Security* 1: 1, 2013, pp. 130–32.

¹¹ Clare Hemmings, ‘Affective solidarity: reflexivity and political transformation’, *Feminist Theory* 13: 2, 2012, p. 150.

¹² Sara Ahmed, *The promise of happiness* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 216.

¹³ Cas Mudde, *The populist radical right in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Rogers Brubaker, ‘Why populism?’, *Theory and Society* 46: 5, 2017, pp. 357–85.

¹⁴ Marlies Glasius, ‘What authoritarianism is ... and is not: a practice perspective’, *International Affairs* 94: 3, May 2018, pp. 515–34.

¹⁵ Jens Rydgren, ed., *Class politics and the radical right* (London: Routledge, 2012).

¹⁶ Jens Rydgren, ‘Is extreme right-wing populism contagious? Explaining the emergence of a new party family’, *European Journal of Political Research* 44: 3, 2005, pp. 413–37.

¹⁷ Piero Ignazi, *Extreme right parties in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁸ Mudde, *The populist radical right in Europe*, p. 22.

populism.¹⁹ Immigrants are a frequent target of these emotions, perceived as the ‘undeserving’, ‘threatening’, ‘unassimilable’ and ‘unknown’ other, and as a risk or problem for the security of ‘the self’.²⁰

In this analysis, anti-immigrant populist emotions are studied not at an individual or social level, but in their ‘institutionalized’ forms. Once emotions are institutionalized, they are ‘translated and embodied into practices and procedures designed to meet emotional needs and organizational goals’.²¹ Institutionalized emotions, especially negative emotions such as fear, anxiety and anger, are manifested in policies, organizational structures and budgets; they produce long-term effects and invoke more emotions.²² The institutionalization of emotions enables the removal of emotional language, which is replaced by a language of justification, necessities and reasons that normalize policies.²³

Emotions underlying anti-immigrant populism—fear, anxiety, anger, suspicion—have been increasingly institutionalized in North America, Europe and Australia, partly in attempts to ‘meet the emotional needs’ of anti-immigrant and nativist populist groups, and partly in attempts to stop their rise. Incarceration and spatial exclusion of some immigrants as objects of populist emotions is one practice that reflects this institutionalization of emotions.

Detention has been conceptualized in relation to ‘spaces of exception’, where the sovereign authority temporarily suspends the rights of its objects.²⁴ However, this approach, redolent of the work of Giorgio Agamben,²⁵ sometimes leads to an articulation of the detainee as *homo sacer*, a being without political voice or rights.²⁶ This interpretation has been contested through migrant activism, even under the most restrictive conditions.²⁷ The present analysis advances the latter approach by articulating (former) detainees as subjects whose emotions play crucial roles in the production of their subjectivities in the politics of security, beyond sovereign security logic and practices. The understanding of detention centres as ‘spaces of exception’ conceals what the practice of detention does *politically through emotions*. Therefore, the analysis in this article adopts the concept of ‘detention-

¹⁹ Catarina Kinnvall, ‘Ontological insecurities and postcolonial imaginaries: the emotional appeal of populism’, *Humanity and Society* 42: 4, 2018, pp. 523–43.

²⁰ Ruth Wodak, *The politics of fear: what right-wing populist discourses mean* (London: Sage, 2015); Dominique S. Wirz, Martin Wettstein, Anne Schulz, Philipp Müller, Christian Schemer, Nicole Ernst, Frank Esser and Werner Wirth, ‘The effects of right-wing populist communication on emotions and cognitions toward immigrants’, *International Journal of Press/Politics* 23: 4, 2018, pp. 496–516; Kinnvall, ‘Ontological insecurities’.

²¹ Crawford, ‘Institutionalizing passion in world politics’, p. 547.

²² Neta Crawford, ‘Preface’, in Linda Åhäll and Thomas Gregory, eds, *Emotions, politics and war* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. xx.

²³ Crawford, ‘Institutionalizing passion in world politics’, pp. 546–8.

²⁴ Engin Isin and Kim Rygiel, ‘Of other global cities: frontiers, zones, camps’, in Barbara Drieskens, Franck Mermier and Heiko Wimmen, eds, *Cities of the South: citizenship and exclusion in the 21st century* (London: Saqi, 2007), pp. 170–209.

²⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Means without end: notes on politics*, trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

²⁶ See e.g. Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr, ‘The irregular migrant as homo sacer: migration and detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand’, *International Migration* 42: 1, 2004, pp. 33–64.

²⁷ Kim Rygiel, ‘Bordering solidarities: migrant activism and the politics of movement and camps at Calais’, *Citizenship Studies* 15: 1, 2011, pp. 1–19.

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as-spectacle'.²⁸ Following the 'border spectacle' concept,²⁹ detention-as-spectacle articulates detention as a 'display of sovereignty' that criminalizes 'inmates' through confinement in architecture of a prison-like style, restricting rights and freedoms.³⁰ The theatrics of detention-as-spectacle are arranged for multiple audiences, one of which is the local population, in order to assure them that 'their government holds the monopoly of power over territorial borders and mobility'.³¹

Detention 'corroborates the populist impression that an out-of-control, unwanted, and potentially dangerous inflow of non-citizens is amassing at the gates', and is justified as a sovereign practice to secure the nation.³² In spite of growing evidence against the usefulness of detention as a deterrence strategy and a mechanism to filter out 'illegal migrants',³³ including evidence of its excessive financial cost,³⁴ states (particularly those in the West) have used it increasingly.³⁵ The fundamental objective of spatial exclusion of some immigrant groups and of the bodily and emotional violence to which they are subjected (handcuffing, solitary confinement, restriction of freedom of movement) has less to do with migration management than it does with responding to anti-immigrant and nativist populist emotions of fear and anxiety towards the racialized, gendered and sexualized 'other'.³⁶ In relation to institutionalized emotions, detention-as-spectacle is a political manifestation of whose emotions matter. Consequently, it is also a manifestation of whose security matters in the age of populism. The emotional and physical violence the detainees must endure because of the theatrics of detention is marginalized, as is their affective, embodied resistance to these violences. Their notions and practices of how to live a secure life are overlooked. A challenge for feminist IR and security studies is to prioritize who/what has been ignored in academic analyses and politics alike. The 'everyday (in)security' approach can facilitate this normative/analytical objective.

Everyday 'felt' security and insecurity: who merits security?

Asking 'where are women in international relations?' in order to understand how international relations are lived and produced, Enloe took readers from statespersons' relations and geostrategic movements of states to banana plantations.³⁷ This

²⁸ Mainwaring and Silverman, 'Detention-as-spectacle'.

²⁹ Nicholas de Genova, 'Alien powers: deportable labour and the spectacle of security', in Vicki Squire, ed., *The contested politics of mobility* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 111–36; Ruben Andersson, *Illegality, Inc.: clandestine migration and the business of bordering Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

³⁰ Mainwaring and Silverman, 'Detention-as-spectacle'.

³¹ Mainwaring and Silverman, 'Detention-as-spectacle', p. 33.

³² Mainwaring and Silverman, 'Detention-as-spectacle', p. 22.

³³ See e.g. Robyn Sampson, 'Mandatory, non-reviewable, indefinite: immigration detention in Australia', in Amy Nethery and Stephanie J. Silverman, eds, *Immigration detention: the migration of a policy and its human impact* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 104–13; Detention Action, *The state of detention: immigration detention in the UK in 2014* (London, 2014).

³⁴ Joint Committee on Human Rights, *Immigration detention*, House of Commons HC 1484, House of Lords HL 278 (London, 7 Feb. 2019), p. 3.

³⁵ Global Detention Project, *Annual Report 2016* (Geneva, 27 July 2017).

³⁶ Ali Bilgiç, 'Migrant encounters with neo-colonial masculinity: producing European sovereignty through emotions', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 20: 4, 2018, pp. 542–62; Wodak, *The politics of fear*.

³⁷ Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, beaches, and bases: making feminist sense of international relations* (Berkeley, CA.: Univer-

new way of thinking about international relations questions what the political is and where politics happens beyond macro-focused and elite-driven IR research. In IR,

the everyday can be read as a text that illuminates central practices at the heart of the production of 'international' representations, the reproduction of relations of domination—gendered, economic, social—at the international 'level', as well as the consumption of 'international' goods, ideas, and norms.³⁸

Studying or focusing on the 'everyday' broadens the analytical scope of politics by focusing on ostensibly 'apolitical' actors, interactions and spaces on a small scale. When the everyday is understood as 'a site of practice',³⁹ politics goes beyond the 'macro' level of states and tackles the problem of 'methodological elitism'.⁴⁰ Focusing on the everyday enables an analysis that explores how 'elite'-driven policies are enacted in mundane spheres of life. This enactment involves appropriation, acceptance and reformulation of policies, as well as resistance to them by individuals and groups.

'Everyday security' engages with security and insecurity through the messiness of the everyday. It does not start the security analysis with a definition of security or insecurity already abstracted from the real, nor is it interested in what security, or insecurity, 'is'. Instead, it casts light on how people experience, understand and perceive security and insecurity in their everyday, habitualized lives. 'Everyday security' is lived, practised and felt by individuals,⁴¹ so it is contextual and contingent.⁴² Since it is not a 'thing' or a 'noun that names', but rather is 'conceived of through its embodied, fluid, social-processual and social-relations dimensions',⁴³ 'everyday security' complicates the question of how to study security and suggests that there are several ways of answering it.

Individuals are the focus of everyday security approaches in two ways. First, they experience and feel policies of 'security' that are designed either to 'secure' them or to construct them as a threat. Second, there are 'mundane and quotidian practices and habits that are understood or characterized by people and groups as being "about security", which are crafted and carried out on a regular (everyday) basis'.⁴⁴ Individuals perform routines, habits and practices in a discursive terrain of security and insecurity where identities and subjectivities are constantly 'theorised, negotiated, and contested in everyday life'.⁴⁵ Everyday security opens

sity of California Press, 1989); Helen M. Kinsella and Laura J. Shepherd, 'Well, what is the feminist perspective on international affairs?', *International Affairs* 95: 6, Nov. 2019, pp. 1209–14.

³⁸ Xavier Guillaume, 'The international as an everyday practice', *International Political Sociology* 5: 4, 2011, p. 446.

³⁹ Liam Stanley and Richard Jackson, 'Introduction: everyday narratives in world politics', *Politics* 36: 3, 2016, p. 230.

⁴⁰ Stanley and Jackson, 'Introduction', pp. 225–6.

⁴¹ Adam Crawford and Steven Hutchinson, 'Mapping the contours of "everyday security": time, space and emotion', *British Journal of Criminology* 56: 6, 2015, pp. 1184–202; see also Sjöberg, 'Centering security studies'.

⁴² Christina Rowley and Jutta Weldes, 'The evolution of international security studies and the everyday: suggestions from the Buffyverse', *Security Dialogue* 43: 6, 2012, p. 523.

⁴³ Paul Higate and Marsha Henry, 'Space, performance and everyday security in the peacekeeping context', *International Peacekeeping* 17: 1, 2010, p. 34.

⁴⁴ Crawford and Hutchinson, 'Mapping the contours of "everyday security"', p. 1190.

⁴⁵ Rowley and Weldes, 'The evolution of international security studies', p. 515.

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analysis up to the banal, mundane and routine daily practices of ‘non-experts’ in security. Bringing emotions into the everyday security framework, Sjöberg argues that (traditional) security and insecurity are lived by people through their (gendered) experiences, senses and *feelings*: security and insecurity are felt together in people’s everyday gendered lives.⁴⁶

A feminist approach of emotions can contribute to advancing understanding of the daily workings of security in relation to power relations. Pedwell and Whitehead, referring to Hemmings,⁴⁷ argue that affects ‘do not circulate freely, but tend to travel along already defined lines of cultural investment’.⁴⁸ People give affective responses to certain objects in historically produced, power-laden discursive contexts where gender, race, class and other identity markers interact.⁴⁹ Power-laden discourses produce some people (in this discussion, immigrants deemed to be ‘dangerous’ and ‘risky’) as ‘objects’ of affective responses, and others as subjects. They normalize some affective responses as ‘only felt natural’:⁵⁰ in anti-immigrant populist discourses, these include such emotions as fear, anxiety and hate towards immigrants. This naturalization is political and bestows the entitlement to feel on *some* people, meaning their feelings are produced as politically important and, therefore, in need of political attention.

The political authorities respond to these naturalized affective reactions by moving the subject away from the object in order to ‘secure’ the former. The affective/emotional boundary between the subject, who is politically entitled to feel, and the object, whose feelings are politically marginalized, is translated into a physical boundary through the exclusion of the object.⁵¹ As discussed above, this translation—exemplified by the practice of detention—is a manifestation of institutionalized emotions-as-practices with the aim of meeting identified emotional ‘needs’ (of the nation, state or some groups).

Emotions can work in the reproduction, justification and normalization of certain political narratives and practices. They help move the body (politic) away from ‘the other’. When ideas and policies promulgated and conducted in the name of security are ‘felt natural’,⁵² they are placed ‘beyond debate’ and remain unquestioned and unchallenged.⁵³ In this way, these security practices, narratives and structures are (re)produced, legitimized and normalized *affectively*. This is because they respond to the feelings of those who are ‘entitled’ to feel secure, namely those ‘who merit security’.⁵⁴ Detention-as-spectacle represents the sovereign theatrics of security, ostensibly securing the body (politic) by temporarily incarcerating ‘the other’, who is produced as the object of fear, hate and anxiety. The spectacle

⁴⁶ Sjöberg, ‘Centering security studies’.

⁴⁷ Clare Hemmings, ‘Invoking affect’, *Cultural Studies* 19: 5, 2005, pp. 548–67.

⁴⁸ Carolyn Pedwell and Anne Whitehead, ‘Affecting feminism: questions of feeling in feminist theory’, *Feminist Theory* 13: 2, 2012, p. 123.

⁴⁹ Åhäll, ‘Affect as methodology’, p. 40.

⁵⁰ Sara Ahmed, *The cultural politics of emotion* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 56.

⁵¹ Ahmed, *The cultural politics of emotion*.

⁵² Ahmed, *The cultural politics of emotion*, p. 56.

⁵³ Linda Åhäll, ‘Feeling everyday IR: embodied, affective, militarising movement as choreography of war’, *Cooperation and Conflict* 54: 2, 2018, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Sjöberg, ‘Centering security studies’.

primarily appeals to the audience adhering to anti-immigrant populism, who are assured by the state of their status as political subjects, with the entitlement to consider that their felt insecurities are addressed.

In summary, negative emotions towards immigrants in anti-immigrant populist discourses amount to 'felt insecurity'. There are important constitutive elements in the way this type of populism is articulated and practised. Sovereign authorities act on these emotions and institutionalize them in the name of 'security'. However, these emotional performances, which redraw the boundaries between the 'self' and the threatening 'other', provoke the question that underpins this analysis: who is entitled to feel? The targets of anti-immigrant emotions, immigrants themselves, are reproduced as threatening objects who are not 'entitled' to feel or enact their emotions when they feel and experience the security policy that targets them. In other words, the question of who is entitled to feel normatively determines who 'merits' security. To explore what 'detention-as-spectacle' theatrics do to the detainees' everyday felt (in)securities, the analysis here will listen to their own narratives about detention, themselves and multiple 'others' in the context of incarceration.

Methodology

In this research, the method of listening guide (LG) was used to analyse narratives of former detainees about their immigration to the United Kingdom, their experiences of detention and their lives after detention. As part of the narrative analysis in feminist IR,⁵⁵ LG is introduced from psychology,⁵⁶ with 'the aim [of identifying] the inner conflicts, dilemmas, and thoughts of women facing difficult situations' and, consequently, arriving at a deeper understanding of power relations in patriarchal structures.⁵⁷ LG is a useful method for this study because it enables the researchers to clearly identify affective processes at work during periods of detention and afterwards.

The LG method consists of four phases. In the first, 'listening to the plot', key themes, metaphors, recurring expressions and images are identified to contextualize the narrative. In our first phase of listening, we looked into the former detainees' narratives for recurrent themes (e.g. 'feeling free') and metaphors (e.g. 'like prison'). Secondly, in the 'I poem' phase, the research 'traces how the participants present or speak of themselves during the interview'.⁵⁸ This phase was particularly important for our research on emotional subjectivities, as it gave important clues to how detainees perceive and feel about themselves and their (in)security. In the third

⁵⁵ Annick T. R. Wibben, *Feminist security studies: a narrative approach* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge and Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2011); Laura J. Shepherd, *Gender, violence and popular culture: telling stories* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁵⁶ Carol Gilligan, R. Spencer, M. K. Weinberg and T. Bertsch, 'On the listening guide: a voice-centered relational method', in Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley, eds, *Qualitative research in psychology* (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2003), pp. 157–72.

⁵⁷ Ayelet Harel-Shalev and Shir Daphna-Tekoah, 'Bringing women's voices back in: conducting narrative analysis in IR', *International Studies Review* 18: 2, 2016, p. 172.

⁵⁸ Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah, 'Bringing women's voices back in'.

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phase, 'listening for contrapuntal voices', we examined how the participants relate themselves to others, and how they use and reflect on others' experiences in relation to their own. The 'others' in this study were other detainees, family members, immigrant community members and, in general, British society and the state. This phase enabled us to analyse how emotional bonds with others were created, broken or restored through the detention experience. The last phase, 'composing an analysis', synthesizes the findings and analyses in a way that addresses the research question.⁵⁹ This synthesis is presented in the final section of the article.

The research, which was based on three interviews, was conducted in accordance with the principles of feminist research ethics. One of these principles is to establish trust between the researcher and participants. Such trust takes time to establish, and is particularly important for the proposed study in which participants share their life stories. Both authors had engaged with the participants since May 2017. We had conducted grassroots activism together with the participants, worked with them in voluntary schemes to help immigrants in the United Kingdom, and socialized with them. We had had conversations with the participants about their immigration and detention experiences in the United Kingdom over a period of 18 months in informal settings. Thus we were familiar with the participants and their cases; and the participants were familiar with us. The interviews were built upon the existing and continuing conversations, and were possible only because there was a relationship of trust and familiarity between the parties. This explains why the study focuses on small numbers of participants. The interviewees' names have been anonymized.

Detention and afterwards: what the spectacle conceals

In this section we will discuss the everyday felt (in)security of women detainees who were forcefully made objects of the theatrics of Britain's detention-as-spectacle. The discussion will start with a generic picture of detention in Britain, depicting the normalization of the practice and the violence towards immigrants it engenders.

Since its origins in the Aliens Act 1905 and its formal passage into legislation in the Immigration Act 1971, detention in the UK has become a practice with increasingly penal overtones and fewer opportunities for release.⁶⁰ The figures verify its growing scale and severity. In 1993, the UK immigration detention estate had a total capacity of 250. This reflected the level of public opinion about immigration; in 1994, 'less than 5% of respondents thought of immigration as a concern, and it remained rarely mentioned prior to 2000'.⁶¹ By 2013, the detention estate had the capacity to confine some 3,500 people, an increase in capacity of over tenfold since the early 1990s.⁶² In 2015, this had increased again to 4,270.⁶³ In the

⁵⁹ Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah, 'Bringing women's voices back in', pp. 176–7.

⁶⁰ Mainwaring and Silverman, 'Detention-as-spectacle'.

⁶¹ Migration Observatory, *UK public opinion toward immigration: overall attitudes and level of concern* (Oxford, 8 June 2018).

⁶² Global Detention Project, *United Kingdom detention profile* (Geneva, June 2011).

⁶³ Mainwaring and Silverman, 'Detention-as-spectacle'.

latter year, the proportion of the public professing themselves concerned about immigration peaked at 56 per cent,⁶⁴ and the far-right populist UK Independence Party (UKIP) came third in the general election. Detention centres multiplied to fit the growing numbers of detainees under a series of governments led by the Labour or Conservative parties. In 2018, the UK immigration detention estate included ten detention centres which received 24,748 people (a decline of 10 per cent from 2017) (see table 1).

Table 1: UK detention statistics, 2015–2018

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. released from detention</i>	<i>No. returned (EU) or deported (non-EU) from UK</i>	<i>Total</i>
2015	17,720	15,106 (of which 3,258 EU)	33,226
2016	15,204	13,473 (of which 4,048 EU)	28,677
2017	15,077	13,178 (of which 4,617 EU)	28,255
2018	14,335	11,152 (of which 3,583 EU)	25,487

Source: National Statistics Office, 2018.

Despite the normalization of detention, powers to detain are very broadly defined and there is no independent scrutiny of the lawfulness, appropriateness and length of detention.⁶⁵ This lack of independent scrutiny has been criticized strongly by parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights.⁶⁶ Its report underscores the high financial cost of detention, the role of private security companies in managing detention centres, the lack of time limits on detention, its punitive character (e.g. transportation in handcuffs and prison-like facilities) and the lack of evidence that detention reduces irregular migration. As will become apparent from the interviews, detention in Britain is less a principled and regulated policy and more akin to unregulated theatrics acted out for certain audiences.

Both the physical infrastructure of immigrant detention and the management of detainees are adapted from the security practices of penal institutions and replicate the practices of criminal law. These similarities are evident in characteristics such as human transport in barred vans; police-like uniforms for immigration officers; handcuffs and guards; the clothing of detainees in uniforms; the use of solitary confinement; physical brutality; and monitoring internet use.⁶⁷ The UK applies criminal law practices throughout the course of detention, such as bail hearings and administrative reviews, which take place in the absence of a

⁶⁴ Migration Observatory, *UK public opinion toward immigration*.

⁶⁵ Alice Bloch and Liza Schuster, 'At the extremes of exclusion: deportation, detention and dispersal', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28: 3, 2005, pp. 491–512.

⁶⁶ Joint Committee on Human Rights, *Immigration detention*, pp. 11–25.

⁶⁷ Medical Justice, *A secret punishment: the misuse of segregation in immigration detention* (London, 2015).

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formal charge. Because detention is thought to facilitate sovereign immigration goals, it is not deemed to need further legal justification.⁶⁸ In practical terms, the only relevant legal status of a detainee is his or her lack of British citizenship.⁶⁹ The prison-like conditions in which they are held have generated strong affective dissonance among detainees, as will be clear from the interviews with former detainees that follow.

Non-governmental organizations in the UK have raised questions about the justification for using detention at all. Right to Remain, Detention Action and Bail for Immigration Detainees have argued that there are workable alternatives to detention that can achieve the governmental objectives of security, public order and efficient processing of asylum applications.⁷⁰ Furthermore, community activism projects have promoted rights and justice for asylum-seekers and other migrants by identifying and questioning the root causes and structures that make detention a routine rather than exceptional practice. For example, Leave to Remain has delivered a public awareness and advocacy campaign entitled 'These Walls Must Fall', in favour of phasing out immigration detention and replacing it with an alternative, humane community system of monitoring migrants.⁷¹ Through empirical research with former detainees, the British Red Cross has outlined the ways in which detention compounds the vulnerabilities of asylum-seekers and other migrants.⁷² Its report *Never truly free* examined from the point of view of detainees the major welfare issues they faced in detention. It explained how their experience of sovereign power confined and dehumanized them, offering a rare insight into migrants' views of the harm caused 'by a damaging system of immigration control'. This included being unprepared at the moment of detention—both practically and mentally—feelings of criminalization, insufficient information and advice, reliving past trauma (such as female genital mutilation) and being cut off from their lawyers and support networks.

Despite the cost of immigrant detention, evidence questioning its effectiveness, and advocacy about possible alternatives, successive UK governments have insisted on investing in indefinite detention both politically and economically. We have explained this insistence by reference to the emotional work done by 'detention-as-spectacle'. The following discussion will illustrate how feminist IR and security studies can challenge the sovereign security logic, which has institutionalized anti-immigrant populist emotions as 'detention-as-spectacle', by giving priority instead to those women whose feelings of security and insecurity

⁶⁸ Stephanie Silverman and Evelyne Massa, 'Why immigration detention is unique', *Population, Space and Place* 18: 6, June 2012, p. 679.

⁶⁹ Mary Bosworth, 'Subjectivity and identity in detention; punishment and society in a global age', *Theoretical Criminology* 16: 2, 2012, pp. 123–40.

⁷⁰ <https://righttoremain.org.uk/>; *Alternatives to detention* (London: Detention Action, 24 Jan. 2019), <https://detentionaction.org.uk/about-detention/alternatives-to-detention/>; *Implementation of alternatives to detention in practice: the case of bail in the UK* (London: Bail for Immigration Detainees, 1 Feb. 2015), <https://www.biduk.org/resources/62-implementation-of-alternatives-to-detention-in-practice-the-case-of-bail-in-the-uk>. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 23 Feb. 2020.)

⁷¹ Right to Remain, *These walls must fall*, <https://detention.org.uk/>.

⁷² British Red Cross, *Never truly free: the humanitarian impact of the UK immigration detention system* (London: British Red Cross, 2018).

rity are marginalized. The discussion is divided into three sections, in which we consider, respectively, life before, during and after detention. In each section, the key emerging themes demonstrate the existence of a common thread that runs through the interviewees' narratives of detention. The three women we spoke to are referred to here as Vivien, Angel and Phoebe (not their real names).

Life before detention

Regarding life before detention, a common key theme among the interviewees was a feeling of security and even freedom. Despite their status as asylum-seekers, none of the women we interviewed could imagine that they could be detained. For Vivien, being in a predominantly English-speaking yet multicultural environment strongly shaped her discourse of everyday security. This security partly stemmed from her lack of information about the concept of international protection and the existence of an asylum system in the UK: 'I enjoyed seeing people around me and hearing English—I was happy ... Because I did not know about asylum then, I felt secure. I was thinking it would be always like this.'

Angel's feeling of security stemmed from the opportunity to perform her own agency as an active female member of the multicultural community in Britain, an agency she lacked in her country of origin:

Before detention, I felt free in the UK, even though I was under the provision of the Home Office and my immigration situation was tough. This was because as a woman in the UK I was free to go wherever I wished, and I experienced a freedom in this country [being a volunteer in the community] that I did not experience as a woman and girl in the country I was born in. It was after detention that I learnt the real difference between a free and a captive life.

However, this feeling of security quickly turned into one of fear and uncertainty induced by the mandatory requirement to present themselves regularly at an Immigration Reporting Centre (IRC). Two interviewees were detained when they went to report. The women spoke of being completely unprepared, both physically and mentally, for the manner in which they were discredited by officers in the IRC as asylum-seekers, and for their subsequent detention.

When I reported, being detained was not on my mind because I knew I was complying with the Home Office. However, officers [at the Reporting Centre] told me I was in the country illegally ... They would ask: 'Why don't you go back to your country?' 'You can go back through voluntary return, we can give you money to do so.' And I would answer, 'No, I don't want to go back.' Then they would say, 'How is your case progressing at the moment?' These question-and-answer sessions were very distressing. (Angel)

The women experienced detention-as-spectacle through IRC sovereign power practices that confined them, dehumanized them and rendered them helpless. They said they felt like criminals:

A van came and it was announced I was detained. I did not resist. Then suddenly [the officers] brought out handcuffs! When I saw them, I broke down and implored that they do not handcuff my child, who grew up in the UK. They did not accept my pleas. (Angel)

Detention-as-spectacle was confirmed by the enforcement tactics used by the immigration officers. Phoebe told us: 'The detention van was only five steps away from the door of the Reporting Centre. I asked why I was being handcuffed ... They responded that it needed to be done for the security cameras.'

Life in detention

While in detention, the women felt under coercive pressure to leave the UK, despite being individuals who had sought protection and whose asylum claims had not yet been decided. They all gave accounts of the detention centre's 'call', a recurring expression they used. Although the 'call', carried out by immigration officers, could be about anything, those occurring in the morning hours to 'sign transfer papers' were perceived by our interviewees as tactics to 'break them' so they could sign documents to leave the UK.

I felt scared every day. Every morning [officers] would call me to sign travel documents as a pressure tactic. I was issued tickets to go back, then these were cancelled, and new ones were issued, and it was very stressful. It's a battle with the immigration officers. I witnessed people and families being deported. (Phoebe)

Despite the fear caused by the 'call', being with other detainees generated a feeling of security, protection and mutual support: the women helped each other to become better informed about what was happening to them and how they could navigate administrative procedures about their detention:

There were women there who had been in detention two or three times. They helped to release people by writing for them, because they already knew what the UK is all about. I did not know anything. (Vivien)

The people in the detention centre who shared my faith took me in and protected me. They tried to encourage me, because I did not understand much. The other detainees kept me sane and explained that although everyone in detention has an ongoing immigration case with the Home Office, detention still happens; nobody has committed a crime. (Phoebe)

All the women we interviewed understood the dynamics among detainees as relational. One woman formed a relationship with a fellow detainee, and told of the feeling of security the relationship gave her in an environment of risk and uncertainty.

Daily acts of resistance around advice work, food scarcity and faith practices also helped the women to regain a sense of security and identity. All the female asylum-seekers we interviewed explained that these acts of resistance confirmed their identity as social beings with critical faculties and gendered/sexual identities. This feeling of security encouraged them to question the asylum administration practices to which they were subjected even while they experienced fear.

From one interviewee's standpoint as a mother, challenging food insecurity in detention was an essential resistance strategy through which she could offer security to detainees more vulnerable than herself:

Motherhood made me conscious of food scarcity in detention. The lack of food my child faced affected me very much. There was a detainee who was sick and the food served was not suitable for her health condition. She only had 37 pence, so she could not afford to buy anything for her condition from the detention centre's shop. So I purchased some things for her with the little money sent to me from my community outside ... Another detainee told me that she could not sleep at night because of hunger. I packed her a bag with all the food I had in my room and left it in front of her door. (Angel)

Another interviewee spoke of her feeling that her security in detention and that of her fellow detainees was bound together, which encouraged her to feel courageous and use her skills to assist others in the same position:

I was not strong and independent outside, especially after becoming homeless, but when we went inside I felt there was nothing left to lose so I started taking on responsibility for myself and others, which was like a coping mechanism. I helped other detainees with letters, form-filling and translation [to help their release] ... I had to fight with the immigration officers who kept on saying we had no case. (Vivien)

Feelings of strength and an urge to fight their incarceration were accompanied by fear and uncertainty during detention. The women felt security and insecurity together in their everyday practices when they got 'calls', were called names by the guards (see below) or prayed together in solidarity with other detainees. Reflecting on her period in detention, Vivien recalls how it changed her self-perception:

Detention took away my fear. It gave me more confidence to speak. I have seen it all in there. It made me stronger and now I can speak to any crowd. I will not wish to go back there; I have seen it all. I was there for four months.

During their incarceration, detainees also developed resistance strategies to detention and possible deportation. One of the most publicized tactics was the hunger strike in 2018, which Vivien explained with striking clarity: 'The detention centre was making money out of us ... when nobody eats it is bad market for them.' Indeed, detention in the UK has proliferated through contractual arrangements with private security companies. A handful of private contractors (Serco, G4S, Mitie and the US-owned GEO Group) have contracts with the Home Office to run the country's ten immigration removal centres, and now form the cornerstone of immigration detention in the United Kingdom. The profitability of the industry is not fully known because of commercial confidentiality agreements; however, an analysis by the *Guardian* revealed a 20–40 per cent profit margin on the contracts,⁷³ some of which were valued at award in excess of £200 million.⁷⁴ At the same time, in the financial year 2017/2018, the detention estate cost UK

⁷³ Niamh McIntyre, 'Private contractors paid millions to run UK detention centres', *Guardian*, 10 Oct. 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/oct/10/private-contractors-paid-millions-uk-detention-centres-some-firms-making-30-percent-profit>.

⁷⁴ Corporate Watch, *Detention centre profits: 20% and up for the migration prison bosses* (London, 18 July 2018), <https://corporatewatch.org/detention-centre-profits-20-and-up-for-the-migration-prison-bosses/>.

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taxpayers £108 million.⁷⁵ It was estimated that it costs, on average, £85.92 per day to hold someone in detention.⁷⁶

The racialization of detainees can be observed in Vivien's reflection on the security guards in detention:

Some of them are really good. They have feelings, but they have to do their job. They talk to you nicely, encourage you. Some security guards resign because they do not like seeing this treatment. However, some others treat you like this because they are racist. Even if you are dying, they call you names ... They call you 'wretched', 'you leave your country to take our jobs' ...

She continued:

They don't believe you about anything. Even if you are sick nobody believes you. When you complain that your environment is not good, nobody believes you. Some stupid people [detainees] think if they would become friends with officers, they would intervene in their favour. But when they take you to the airport, they will not fight for you.

Vivien's words recall a report for the Home Office made by the Tavistock Institute in 2015 that reviewed the mental health issues in immigration detention centres and found significant systemic weaknesses.⁷⁷ Among many comments, it pointed out that detention centres do not carry out the same level of mental health assessments for detainees as prisons; it criticized the 'culture of disbelief' that affects how staff assess health complaints and especially self-harm.

Life after detention

The women's feelings after they had left detention related to their self-perceptions and perceptions of others before, during and after detention. While solidarity during their confinement gave the interviewees a feeling of security, with the end of that confinement came an increase in fear. However, as in detention, fear was accompanied by a sense of resilience through having experienced and lived through the worst. Some (though not all) of our interviewees dealt with fear through community activism and becoming vocal against detention. When asked what would make them feel secure in their lives after detention, getting 'status' was a common theme.

My life is caged [without status]. I cannot even go to school; it is my dream. I want to work, but I am always 'on holiday'. Who would like that? ... I would love to keep busy. (Vivien)

The women's self-perception appears to be heavily shaped by resilience:

I volunteer more now and I help people more than ever. Before, I thought of myself as a victim, but after detention I no longer feel like a victim and wherever I get the chance to raise my voice, I try my best to do that. (Angel)

⁷⁵ Home Office, *Annual Report and Accounts 2018* (London, 2018).

⁷⁶ Stephen Shaw, *Report into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons* (London: Home Office, 2016).

⁷⁷ Tavistock Institute, *Review of mental health issues in immigration return centres* (London, 2015).

The Home Office wants us to get depressed, and they want to get us depressed in there too [in detention]. I will not let them. I refuse to lay down. I tell myself everything will be fine. I have a lot to contribute. (Vivien)

Phoebe, who came to Britain as a minor and thought of herself as 'British' until she was detained, experienced affective dissonance after detention, leading to a feeling of shame:

I felt 'What did I do wrong?' Why were we treated like this, criminalized? ... I just wanted to know what happened ... I lost all my hopes and dreams. I realized that I could not go to university ... I lost friends and felt very insecure. I did not tell people [about detention] because I was ashamed ... I was very depressed. It was very hard for me to go out of the house.

Vivien still reports regularly to the IRC, and she described the experience as follows:

I go to sign every two months. I feel more fear as the day approaches. That's how they take us, by saying we don't have an application. It's like going to the lion's den. I have been signing for over a year. I just feel fear, fear. Before the reporting date you are already dead with fear. (Vivien)

One of the most important affective-political implications for former detainees is how they perceive the rest of the British society. Phoebe, who came to Britain as a child, answered the question of how she thought of 'British society' in her first years:

I did think [of British society] as rich, white Caucasian men, and horse races when I heard the word British. But at school, it was a cultural mix of everything, cultures, countries, languages ... that was the image. That was my gateway to England ... It was easy. It did not feel like a culture shock. I could interact with anyone. Boy, girl, race, religion ... It was very easy and simple. I do not remember struggling.

Following her detention and release, however, this feeling of security has been replaced by feelings of social exclusion and distrust:

I feel like an outsider. I am more conscious of my race. I always feel like everyone else around me has rights that I do not, which makes me feel inferior. Others have education, a house ... I cannot have these. I feel there is a gap between the people I used to know ... No matter how much I might explain to them, they will not understand. Therefore I feel like an outsider ... [Detention] was very embarrassing. The first thing people think is, she must have done something wrong. That's the worst feeling: when people start to doubt you.

When we asked her, 'Do you still feel British?' Phoebe answered: 'No.'

Vivien's experience of racialization by the guards still arouses strong feelings in her about British society. She is open about her feelings towards the 'British'. When she was asked whether she felt part of society, she said:

No. Some are good but sometimes ... What we have been through ... Sometimes I feel hatred because of my experience being put in detention. Not that the British community

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itself put me in detention, they are innocent, but at the same time they are the same as those who put me in detention—they are British ... I still feel this way because I am still struggling with immigration issues.

Detention turned Vivien into an activist, and she often interacts with women detainees:

I am trying to give them encouragement. When I speak to them, I do not hide that I was detained. I told them I was there. Now so many of them come out and we are a source of encouragement for them to live their lives ... Socialize ... Love together ... I still preach at the church and they send people like me. I like to raise awareness among people who do not know.

This does not mean that she no longer has feelings of insecurity. She continued: 'When I still walk on the street, I think that anything can happen, my ears are alert ... my eyes are sharp to do anything to defend myself.'

The narratives of the interviewees revealed key themes that recurred in our conversations. Before detention, they all felt a sense of security and safety, partly owing to lack of knowledge but mainly because of the feeling of security of being in Britain (multiculturalism for Phoebe, the English language for Vivien, and a 'free country' for Angel). However, this feeling of security was shattered once they were made aware by the Home Office of their precarious status, although both Angel and Phoebe had claimed asylum. Life during detention was marked by feelings of both security and insecurity. Fear, the uncertainty surrounding 'the call', inability to make sense of prison-like conditions, being racialized, and not being considered 'honest' by the guards: these emotions coexisted with the hope, happiness and feelings of resilience that emerged from their solidarity with fellow detainees. Similarly, their lives after detention have been shaped by contradictory feelings of insecurity and security.

A normative discussion: who is entitled to feel and who merits security?

'Who is entitled to feel?' is a normative feminist question, as its answer is deeply embedded in power relations. However, the question does not in itself explain how feminist IR and security studies can challenge the populist marginalization and silencing of certain others as security threats and risks. That issue relates to another normative question: 'Who merits security?' The underlying sovereign security logic that constitutes the basis of detention-as-spectacle must be countered by an alternative articulation of security, which challenges the politics of producing *some people* as deserving security at the expense of others. This can be done through adopting a security perspective that operates in the mundane, everyday 'affective' practices of individuals. The notion of everyday felt security concerns how security policies are 'felt', not only by the people who are supposed to feel 'secure', but also by the targets of these policies: those who are deemed 'dangerous'. It enables us to unpack how the targets of security regimes, such as immigrants, understand and practise *affectively* their own security in their resistance. As demonstrated above,

immigrants not only feel security and insecurity, they also feel and enact their own perceptions of what it means to have or live in security. This section, based on analysis of the interviews, will discuss how the everyday felt security approach can advance our knowledge about detention-as-spectacle.

Adopting the everyday felt security approach enables us to understand 'detention-as-spectacle' in terms of how this theatrical sovereignty performance works *vis-à-vis* the detainees. Our interviewees often highlighted that the experience of detention changed their self-perceptions, their perceptions of Britain, and their emotional outlook. Whereas their lives before detention, however precarious, were marked by feelings of happiness and safety, incarceration as a performance of sovereignty made them highly insecure, fearful and anxious. This demonstrates that the main purpose of 'detention-as-spectacle' is not limited to addressing constructed insecurities fed by anti-immigrant populist emotions. It also includes, perhaps in a more subtle way, rendering some immigrants insecure by infusing fear into their everyday lives. 'The call' during the detention is a unique example of this fear-inducing sovereign performance. As the interviewees repeatedly mentioned, such insecurity continues to exist within them in their everyday lives after detention. Feminist security studies can focus on insecurities that are felt every day, but often overlooked in consideration of the migration–security nexus.

Furthermore, the everyday felt security approach introduces a new articulation of the question of the 'other' in the politics of security. First, it facilitates a type of analysis that focuses on the 'undeserving other' in the affective politics of anti-immigrant populism. 'The other' is not only an object of emotions on the part of the subject, who merits agency regarding the power to 'feel'; it is also a subject who feels and enacts their own emotions. In line with the feminist objective of working with those who are marginalized and 'unnoticed', an understanding of the feelings of 'the other' in anti-immigrant populism is a way to problematize what populism and its exclusionary and nativist practices 'do' to their targets, including both their bodies and their subjectivities. This understanding offers a new insight into the extent of violence that institutionalized populist emotions inflict on individuals and groups. Living in prison-like conditions with limited rights and future uncertainty, being racialized and constantly approached with suspicion ('Nobody believes you') all inflict effective violence on detainees.

However, this is only part of the story that emerges from the narratives of our interviewees. Emotions/affects demonstrate the salient ways in which power works and how resistance to violence is felt, expressed discursively and enacted bodily. All the interviewees, in particular Phoebe, felt a marked discrepancy between how they thought of themselves and how the detention experience treated them. Hemmings's concept of 'affective dissonance' can be a starting-point for understanding the importance of this mismatch. Affective dissonance rises from the mismatch or gap between one's 'truth' about oneself and one's experiences in the world arising from social expectations and norms.⁷⁸ This ontological–epistemological mismatch can spark affective responses. In other words, people

⁷⁸ Hemmings, 'Affective solidarity', pp. 152–3.

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'know' about the workings of power *as they feel* the dissonance. In our interviews, these emotional reactions emerged as feelings of shame or being a 'criminal'. Individuals and groups outside the locus of power may feel affective dissonance more strongly because of 'the conditions of existence that provide differential access to power and authority'.⁷⁹ However, in gendered, racialized and classed power-laden discursive contexts, their affective responses, feelings and emotions can be overlooked. This is not because they do not feel, but because they are produced as the objects of the subject's emotions.

Once the subject is a target of violence that leads to spatial, social and emotional exclusion and isolation from the 'outside', her emotions become her politics, both during and after detention. According to Hemmings, affective dissonance can lead to 'affective solidarity', namely a struggle for an alternative 'standpoint knowledge and politics' with those who are also in the margins.⁸⁰ Helping other detainees, praying together and becoming involved with anti-detention campaigns are examples of 'affective solidarity'. Thus a feminist answer to the questions 'Who is entitled to feel?' or 'Who merits security?' expands affective politics to include those whose emotions do not 'matter' in the politics of security. The everyday felt security approach brings 'the other' of dominant security discourses into the core of the security analysis to understand the extent of their insecurities and resistance. Feminist IR and security studies should pay attention to affective dissonance and solidarity as sources of alternative knowledge, as they often go unnoticed.

The second, innovative way in which 'the other' is discussed through the everyday felt security approach concerns how the interviewees constantly challenge and produce 'the other'. British society, for example, was quite ambivalently constructed as 'the other' following the detention experience. For one interviewee, society was identified as complicit in her suffering; for another, it was the other in relation to which she felt 'inferior'. This is another area that requires more analytical attention: what does spatial incarceration do to the societal bonds between detainees and broader communities? The narratives of our interviewees have demonstrated that it breaks these bonds by converting society into an ambivalent 'other' for former detainees.

Finally, our interviews have shown the elusiveness of security, and how security and insecurity coexist in the everyday. As Sjöberg emphasizes, feelings of security and insecurity are not mutually exclusive, and (in)security is not an objective condition.⁸¹ The articulation of security as 'felt' is an attempt to release the concept from the confines of a sovereign mentality by focusing on people, without adopting a foundational approach to what security 'is'. A feminist security analysis can challenge such a foundationalist approach by opening the space to individuals and by listening to their stories in their own words. Representations of their emotions in their narratives about 'the self' and 'the other' demonstrate the multiple ways of feeling the interaction between security and insecurity.

⁷⁹ Hemmings, 'Affective solidarity', p. 155.

⁸⁰ Hemmings, 'Affective solidarity', p. 157.

⁸¹ Sjöberg, 'Centering security studies', p. 57.

Conclusion

Anti-immigrant populism has been on the rise in Europe in the past two decades. Negative emotions towards ‘undeserving immigrants’ have found political manifestations in policies, regulations and discourses. Detention has been one of the most important sovereign security practices intended to ease the anti-immigrant populist emotions that are now embedded in mainstream political discourse. Feminist IR and security studies face an analytical and political challenge in attempting to address this harmful discourse. This article has argued that feminist IR and security studies can challenge the sovereign security practice called ‘detention-as-spectacle’ by exposing what the spectacle hides. It has examined the narratives of women detained in the UK, in order to understand how they felt security and insecurity as a counter-narrative to the sovereign security narrative shaped by anti-immigrant populism.

The following conclusions can be derived from the discussion. First, for feminist security studies as well as broader critical approaches in security, exploring the emotions underlying security discourses and practices can problematize them and their normalization. In the case of detention, once emotions are institutionalized, they can be presented as rational security policies by concealing the normative prioritization of some groups’ security over others. The normalization of some security practices affectively interacts with the normative question of whose security matters more, politically. The answer to that is plural, contextual and temporal. The objective and challenge for feminist security studies is to understand and demonstrate this pluralism by focusing on those individuals and groups whose (in)security is marginalized in dominant security discourses.

Moreover, while the objects of emotions can be subjected to violent security practices, their own emotions can also be key to understanding how they think about their agency during and after their experience of these practices. As demonstrated in the interviews, authorities often use emotions to intimidate the detainees, both during detention and when reporting. However, emotions also enable the detainees themselves to make sense of their agency in their everyday lives.

Finally, at the policy-making level, the detention estate is costly and can significantly damage the emotional ties of the immigrants with broader community. Although to do so is beyond the scope of the present discussion, the policy of detention should be rethought in relation to the integration and belonging of immigrants in the societies in which they live.