

# VII Agromig International Seminar

## Migrations, Agrifood and Rural Change

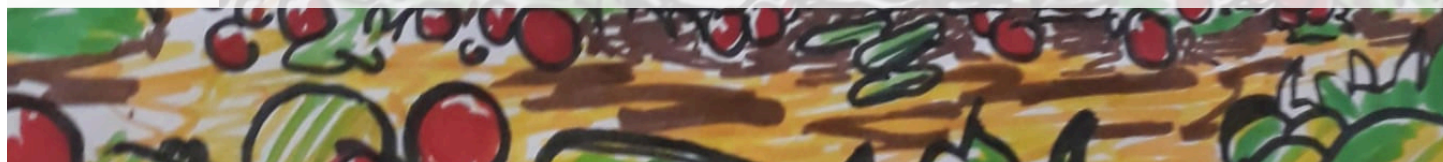


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UNIVERSITÀ DELLA CALABRIA  
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**University of Calabria**  
**23-24 May 2024**





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# VII AGROMIG INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

## Migrations, Agrifood and Rural Change

### Book of Abstract

University of Calabria

Arcavacata di Rende (Cosenza) – Italy

23-24 May 2024

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## **SESSION 1 - Processes and policies of Inclusion and Participation**

### ***Humanitarian intermediation? Third sector's efforts to eradicate caporalato – and their paradoxes.***

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Keywords: agriculture, caporalato, humanitarianism.

As Corrado points out, in several agrifood systems – and especially the Italian one – “caporalato is de facto the only system of work mediation to efficiently guarantee the quota of just-in-time availability of unskilled labour and ensure lower labour costs” (2018: 14). Gang-mastering or caporalato takes many forms. From the illegal intermediation between employers and employees to the provision of means of transportation and housing, in some cases it may blur the line between legitimate and illegitimate, maximization of profit and crucial help. What happens when part of the caporale's role is assumed by humanitarian actors, such as NGOs or grassroots initiatives aimed at overcoming and eradicating migrant farmworkers' exploitation and ghettoization? This coauthored paper focuses on two cases of humanitarian initiatives aimed at facing severe forms of labour exploitation, racial discrimination and housing deprivation in the areas of San Ferdinando (Calabria) and Metaponto (Basilicata), respectively. Based on ethnographic research, the paper analyses the structural contradictions intrinsic in public and private efforts moved by a humanitarian rationale to address deep-rooted issues, such as ghettos and caporalato. While situating such efforts in the context of larger decision-making processes and structural interests that go beyond the individual agency of activists, NGOs and/or social workers, this analysis acknowledges the paradoxes of humanitarianism, including the reproduction of some of the very dynamics they are fighting against, such as labour intermediation, uneven power hierarchies based on race and gender and inclusion/exclusion mechanisms amongst the beneficiaries of such initiatives.

### ***Production of organic food on a farm welcoming people in social vulnerability***

Laissa Kerli, Guimarães Silva, Luana Lopes da Silva, Giselly Isabel, Azevedo dos Santos, Maria Larissa do Nascimento Silva, Arilde Franco Alves, Louis Hélios Rolim de Britto (Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Paraíba - IFPB), Edna Maria da Silva (partner of the Extension Project).

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Keywords: Work in agriculture; Production of food; Women's social reintegration.

Agriculture has been practiced since ancient times, with the objective of producing food for self-consumption and surpluses for commercialization, being one of the most important activities for society, as it is responsible for feeding the world population (Mazoyer, 1997). It comprises several forms, including agriculture practiced by small peasants, aimed primarily at family subsistence, as it disseminates management techniques, generates work and income (Lamarche, 1997; 1998), highlighting in this context sustainable production (Redclift, Goodman, 1991; Ehlers, 1999; Almeida, 1999). Thus, the aim was to develop learning and occupation activities for inmates undergoing treatment and resocialization at Fazenda Esperança Nossa Senhora da Guia, in Alhandra-PB, Brazil, linked to a partner religious entity, which welcomes socially vulnerable citizens, such as drug addicted and homeless women, from the metropolitan region of João Pessoa-PB (Azevedo 2012), which fits perfectly into the theme of “Racialization, feminilization and refugeesation of labour in agrifood” from the VII Agromig International Seminar “Migrations, Agrifood and Rural Change”, at the Università della Calabria, Cosenza, Italy. Methodologically, the Extension Project has been developed through agroecological productive activities in horticulture, fruit farming, poultry farming and goat farming (Altieri, 2001; 2013), aimed at learning and occupation of those assisted, also providing prospects for social reintegration and future alternatives for work and income generation, strengthening the local and regional economy (Alves, 2009; Alves, Silva 2019), in addition to maintaining the partner entity, through healthy food self-consumption (Maluf, 1999), highlighting sustainable practices involving the full use of foods responsible for food security (Bojanic, 2016; FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, 2022). The project started in mid-2023, therefore, in the structuring phase, like the fruit growing and horticultural activities, which are already beginning to show results, especially with regard to the socialization of the women assisted (Maronhas, Schottz, Cardoso, 2014), who integrate and reinsert themselves socially, through activities in agriculture.

### ***Governing hierarchies of migrant labour in horticulture: arrival infrastructures in Haspengouw and Westland***

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Keywords: Governmentality, arrival infrastructures, horticulture

This paper examines national and local policies, discourses and practices around labour migration in two agricultural areas through a governmentality lens. The paper is based on two years of ethnographic fieldwork in the Netherlands (Westland) and in Belgium (Haspengouw). Both regions rely almost completely on foreign labour for the productivity of their horticultural sectors. This has led to increased labour mobility from Central and Eastern Europe, and has changed the socio-material landscape of these semi-rural regions. To understand these regional dynamics, this paper proposes the notion of arrival infrastructures to the field of agriculture and migration. Taking these two approaches together, I show how rationalities and practices of governing migrant labour shape the situation in which migrant workers arrive, channel them into hierarchical categories, and mediate their access to these arrival infrastructures. To analyse these hierarchies in relation to arrival infrastructures, I ethnographically analyse the governmentalisation of precarity at three scales. First, national agricultural labour policies and deregulated labour regimes render migrant workers flexible

to the demands of agriculture and, more crucially, of the agro-industrial market. Second, local approaches and imaginaries are guided by normative notions of who is considered a ‘good’ and ‘deserving’ migrant worker, and what their ideal position in local communities should be. Finally, I show how these scales of governance that shape the arrival situation translate into everyday subjectivities and ethnicity-labour hierarchies in the fields and greenhouses. Techniques of (self)discipline, such as computer-tracked productivity in tomato greenhouses, and incorporated ideas about ‘fast and soft’ hands for proper strawberry picking, are just some examples that reveal these embodied and intersectional hierarchies. I argue that these intimate vulnerabilities are often not adequately addressed in (inter)national or local attempts to combat exploitation and precarity, which is necessary to create more inclusive arrival infrastructures for and by agricultural migrant workers.

***From the ghetto to the camp: governmental strategies of migrant farmworkers’ management of migrant farmworkers in the context of Italian agriculture***

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Keywords: farm labor, migration, refugeeization.

This contribution intends to analyze the social impact of the transformations in the composition of farmworkers taking place over the last decade in Italy. In particular, starting from an analysis of the inversely proportional relationship between the decrease in the Romanian component of the workforce and the corresponding increase of the African component in the context of Mediterranean agriculture, the study focuses on the institutional hypocrisy inherent to the process of refugeeization of the agricultural workforce, exploring the specific confinement and containment policies aimed at managing the most fragile social segment of migrant labor. In particular, building on over 5 years of field research carried out also through some radical experiments of participant observation, the contribution focuses on the governmental strategies of management of this social universe which is expressed in the complex balance between institutional racism and disciplinary treatment, between institutionalization and informalization. If the camps built close to, or on the ashes of, rural ghettos are the most evident expression of these ambivalence from an urban planning point of view, the obstacles encountered in the civil registration of their residents are such from an administrative point of view.

***(Non)Institutional Manifestations of Arrival Infrastructures for Refugees in rural Greece***

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Keywords: Social inequalities; arrival infrastructures; migration networks; migrant industry; rural areas.

The year 2015 was a turning point for the migration and asylum system in the EU and Greece. Almost 900,000 migrants and refugees crossed Turkey's land and sea borders on their way to Europe. The so-called “migration and refugee crisis” dominated academic and political discourse and provoked different reactions from local communities, civil society and long-time resident migrants. Especially in rural areas, the newly arriving refugees triggered different reactions from the local population. At the same time, an additional need for infrastructure arose to accommodate the refugees and facilitate their integration into rural localities. Drawing on the theoretical discussion on ‘arrival infrastructures’ or ‘migrant infrastructures’, the main objective of this paper is to discuss the different manifestations of arrival infrastructures in rural communities and in Western Greece in particular. The paper draws on a recent empirical study conducted in the framework of a H2020 project that explored territorial inequalities and the links with different forms of mobility in both urban (Attiki Region) and rural areas of Greece (Western Greece Region). While the discussion on arrival infrastructures mainly refers to the urban setting, in this paper we argue that the rural context informs and enriches this debate, allowing it to be considered as non-fixed assemblages of institutional and non-institutional (both formal and informal) arrangements that fulfil both tangible and less tangible needs and requirements. The migration infrastructures approach needs to be better linked to the formulation of imaginaries and characteristics of well-being in order to understand refugee agency and also to be more informed by social theory.

## **SESSION 2 - Social Reproduction**

### ***Rural-urban migrants, social organisation, and community ties: the case study of Reino de Quito***

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Keywords: Community architecture; Urban agriculture; Internal rural-urban migration

This presentation will discuss a field study carried out in Quito, Ecuador in August 2023. It focuses on analysing the communitarian architecture of Reino de Quito, a popular-classes neighbourhood inhabited and built by first-generation internal rural-urban migrants. Rural Ecuadorian areas have experienced strong dynamics of depeasantisation in the last few decades, and their inhabitants have migrated en masse to big cities, producing new expansions like Reino de Quito. Before the inaction of public authorities and the lack of basic equipment, this neighbourhood's inhabitants have resorted to a set of collective organisation strategies brought back from their rural background: mingas (collective unpaid work on behalf of the community), assembly-based collective decision-making, or certain forms of communal ownership. Such practices were fundamental social institutions in traditional Ecuadorian peasant communities and remain relatively common in rural areas to this day but are largely absent in urban spaces. In addition, Reino de Quito's inhabitants have recently started

using extensive parts of unconstructed neighbourhood soil for harvesting – which they do following patterns of social relation comparable to those observed in Ecuadorian rural setups. This allows them to strengthen community bonds, to revitalise the neighbourhood's social life, and to access alternative food sources. After presenting the case study in greater detail, a discussion will follow regarding the rearticulation of traditional institutions and practices of agricultural communities as forms of counterpower in the urban contexts where they are expelled to by depeasantisation processes.

### ***A new housing question. Reflecting on migrant agricultural labour force exploitation and dwelling, in Italy***

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With regard to migrant labour in agriculture, the question of housing and dwelling is central in many respects. From a Marxian sociological point of view, housing is inherent to the sphere of the reproduction of labour power and, therefore, affects the exchange value of variable capital. In Italy, in the absence of actually viable alternatives, the great majority of migrant agricultural workers are marginalised and forced to live in informal settlements, in State or Third Sector reception centres, in the bosses' houses, or in overcrowded flats on the outskirts of villages. A combination of low purchasing power and systemic racism impose these housing patterns as a way for a backward, underdeveloped, agrarian capitalist class to ensure production while keeping wages below a threshold, giving them access to the global agri-food supply chains. In fact, whether housing costs were higher, wages would necessarily rise because no worker could afford to receive a salary that does not even guarantee his/her simple reproduction. Within this framework, the same provision of low-cost, or even free (yet low-quality) housing solutions from the State or the employer makes possible the maintaining of a low-price labour force. At the same time, from an anthropological perspective, migrant dwelling reveals the material and cultural relationship of migrants to the host society. In this regard, we believe it is crucial to consider the subjectivity of migrants themselves. What seems to emerge are contradictory tensions. For example, the so-called “ghetto” emerges as an ambivalent space: it is partly a place of migrant sociality, autonomy, and self-organisation, and partly a place where the individual risks being trapped, a paradoxical comfort zone of racialised poverty, as well as a base for the “storage” and “distribution” of the labour force. Institutional accommodations, on the other hand, are perceived as useful infrastructural alternatives aiming to maintain the “physical capital” of migrant daily labourers, yet under an “aseptic” social and existential point of view. Finally, farmhouse 'hospitality' is also considered to be a comfortable solution, but at the same time, it produces isolation and reinforces the power of the employer over the worker. We argue that such a dynamic, which is often veiled by a humanitarian ideology, as well as by a multiplicity of emergency, urban decency and public safety narratives, is not only in the sole interest of the agrarian capitalist class and the international supply chains ruling the agrifood business (and conversely to the detriment of the emancipation and integration of migrant workers on the basis of justice and equality) but it's a process revealing the way a “colour line” overlap to social class, racializing agricultural work and space.

***Seasonal Agricultural Workers in Contemporary Turkey: Some Reflections on the Nexus of Production/Social Reproduction***

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Keywords: production/social reproduction, gender over generation, migrant/refugee labor

Rural areas in Turkey are currently facing the intersecting crises of neoliberal rural systems and food/environment/climate emergencies, as well as conflict and disaster displacement. There are complicated and contradictory outcomes of the crises for agricultural labor groups who are caught in rapidly changing land/labor regimes, cross-border and intra-country migratory movements, and diverse governance regimes in small and medium rural and urban towns. With a particular focus on IDP, local and refugee agricultural workers (such as minority and displaced Kurds/Arabs, Syrians under temporary protection, and local workers) in commercial agricultural production, this paper examines their gendered and generational experiences/practices from a production/social reproduction nexus. We focus primarily on the interplay between the spheres of production/social reproduction in terms of its gendered effects on women's work, but we also argue in this paper that the nexus should be formulated in a more holistic and inclusive way. This means understanding these effects by emphasizing intra-household and intergenerational dynamics beyond the point of women's work. This not only disaggregates the gendered and generational household, but also allows us to see how the household as a unit supports and reproduces these effects or improves certain strategies/tactics through the axes of gender and generation. The analysis is based primarily on qualitative field-level data from several case studies of seasonal and migrant agricultural workers collected in different regions of Turkey during the pre- and post-earthquake periods. In addition to secondary sources such as I/NGO reports and official statistics, our data is also based on interviews with various local actors such as local government members, migration officials, trade unions, I/NGOs, small farmers, and the like.

***Labour control via controlling the means of social reproduction: Insights from the Myanmar refugees in Southern China***

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Keywords: captive labor, social reproduction, coercion

In recent decades, massive numbers of Myanmar villagers have been observed to cross the border and work on farms in rural China. Many of these Myanmar workers lost means of production (i.e., land) at their home in Myanmar, and are unregistered as refugees defined by the United Nations. Since 2000, the number of these refugees has been increasing with continual civil wars in Myanmar. As an anomaly, these Myanmar refugees are not completely free labour aligned with the logic of the market economy, but somehow being captive labour. In other words, they are confined to work for certain Chinese farmers who provide accommodations and other help to them. They need to get the permission of host households in China before they can sell their labour to other Chinese farmers. How do we understand their captive status? What are the mechanisms that secured the accessibility and availability of these captive labourers in the farms of the border villages of Yunnan Province, South China? To answer these questions, we analyse the dynamics of captive labour control based on data collected during four field trips in Yunnan Province in 2011 and 2023. We find that their labour is captured not through force, nor “moral obligations”. The Myanmar refugees’ heavy reliance on their hosts for small plots for accommodation and self-consumption, loans in emergency, and children’s enrolment in schools and medical services place them in such a vulnerable position. Thus, we argue that labour control can be achieved not necessarily by force nor by economic means, but through the control of means of social reproduction. By doing so, this paper hopes to contribute to a better understanding of labour control dynamics.

***Dynamics of social reproduction and territorialization in Rural Productive Villages: effects of the Transposition of the São Francisco River on the lives of rural families in the Sertão Paraibano/Brazil***

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Keywords: Forced Displacement; Peasant Family; Public policy.

The implementation of development projects in Brazil dates back to the 1950s and has resulted, throughout Brazil's recent history, in the compulsory displacement of traditional communities (Scott, 2009). The São Francisco River Transposition project carried out in the Northeast region of Brazil is a work of the federal government and aims to transfer water from the São Francisco River and take it to 310 northeastern municipalities affected by drought. Numerous communities were affected by this project, especially traditional communities. In this sense, the objective is to provide a brief explanation of some changes that have occurred in the lives of rural families in the municipality of São José de Piranhas in Sertão Paraibano, Brazil (Nascimento, 2018). Thus, we observe that the present study fits into the theme, “Mobility and dynamics of social reproduction in rural areas”, at the Università della Calabria, Cosenza, Italy. Since 2004, the daily lives of rural families in the municipality of São José de Piranhas have been undergoing changes resulting from the implementation of the São Francisco River Transposition Project. Initially, the changes were due to the presence of strangers who probed the sites of rural families in the municipality with cameras,

video cameras and measuring instruments. The strangers (Martins, 1993) who walked through the farmers' lands were linked to the federal body (Ministry of National Integration) and were there to begin the process of expropriation of the lands that would give way to the São Francisco Transposition canal. The rural families affected by the transposition project are conjugal and shared the spaces of the farms with other generations, thus forming an extended family. These families planted rice, beans and corn, and also raised poultry and some heads of cattle, complemented by other activities, such as: public services, small businesses, government programs such as Bolsa Família, pensions and income. in salaried activities outside the region. In 2006, the process of expropriation of the sites began. Most rural families were displaced and resettled. Some families were compensated and are housed in the city or elsewhere, other families were resettled in Rural Productive Villages and receive monthly assistance through the Temporary Transfer Program to cover household and family expenses. The monthly assistance provided by the federal government through the Temporary Transfer Program has not only helped families to modify the structure of the houses in which they live in Rural Productive Villages, but has also played a significant role in resuming traditional ways of life in the new space. With the monthly money transferred by the government, families have purchased small animals, such as: goats, goats and birds. The resettlement time for besieging families in the VPR is just two years. During this time, relocated families have been transforming and giving new meaning to these spaces. In this case, it is observed in the research trails that the tradition evoked by families to transform these spaces is presented not in the sense of a past that is reflected in the present, but as a past that is evoked in the present, to think about the future (Woortmann, 1990).

***Fragmented labour regime and the sugar frontier in Africa: migrant, gendered and contested.***

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As the frontiers of capital accumulation expand in Africa in the form of new agricultural value chains, large-scale plantations and agribusiness enclaves, those establishing these rural development schemes face a number of challenges especially linked to the need of bringing together simultaneously different elements or factors of production such as land, labour and nature in new agri-food assemblages. Sugarcane, as a flex-crop, is today perhaps one of the paradigmatic crops driving this expansion with countries such as Uganda and Tanzania being at the forefront of this boom and national governments actively pushing for setting up of new large-scale agri-food enclaves, the entry of new economic actors, the control and transformation of new territories and landscapes, the discipline of incoming working people.

The paper explores the character of the labour regime and the multiple and fragmented labour forms within the sugar agro-poles using case studies in the Morogoro region of Tanzania, the regions of Busoga, Acholi, and Bunyoro in Uganda. It points to the existence of plural and diverse labour forms co-existing side by side: wage and non-wage, formal and informal, male and female, youth and child, migrant or domestic labour. It points to the dynamics of super-exploitation, the political challenges and social struggles emerging in the process of incorporating different forms and disciplines of labour within these new development initiatives.



### **SESSION 3 - Temporary labour migration**

***Essential Work, Dispensable Workers. Roles assigned to migrant labourers in the agroindustry of Huelva (Spain) during the Covid-19 pandemic.***

Juan Castillo Rojas-Marcos (IUEM-Comillas), Carlos Ruiz Ramirez (IUEM-Comillas / Oxfam Intermón), Yoan Molinero-Gerbeau (IUEM-Comillas).

Keywords: Migrant Farmworkers; Essentiality; Covid-19 Pandemic

Although the volume of foreign workers carrying out agricultural work in the Spanish province of Huelva has been considerably high for decades, the conditions associated with their presence and work in the territory, conceived as temporary by both the GECCO circular programme and the authorities, have traditionally occupied a marginal space in the public debate. Guided by what Morice, among others, called "migratory utilitarianism", the governance of these migrations rested on an absolute extraction of surplus value aimed at squeezing the most out of a precarious and docile labour force due to its deportable condition. In line with Sayad, the Huelva enclave was thus organised to import labour, not workers, which led to the primacy of the most precarious social, residential and working conditions. This invisible labour force, however, gained unprecedented notoriety in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, at which point the government had to define whose workers were essential enough to be exempted from quarantine. In this article, we will examine how the essentiality framework was governed during this period (2020-2022) and how migrant workers themselves experienced this condition to determine whether the pandemic break brought about a change in the governance of migrant agricultural labour or whether on the contrary, despite the exceptional situation, it only served to deepen the existing migrant utilitarianism.

***Labor borders: recruitment of Central American migrants in “exodus” through southern Mexico and indigenous Mexican “braceros” in the Californian fields.***

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Keywords: externalization of borders; Central American exodus; Mexican agricultural workers.

The contribution proposes the concept of “labor border” to explore the migration policies in the Central America-Mexico-United States region, through two case studies. First, the United States H-2A program for the temporary recruitment of foreign agricultural workers from Mexico. Subsequently, the Mexican regularization programs with temporary labor opportunity, implemented by the Mexican government in the context of the so-called “Central American exodus”: the Social

Emergency Program (Programa de Emergencia Social) and the Sowing Life (Sembrando Vida). The objective of the research was to analyze how the political use of a labor border contributes to the social construction of a hierarchy of immigrant workers, as well as to the process of externalization of border controls by the United States to the south of Mexico. The research took place between March 2016 to June 2021, with a combination of mainly qualitative methodologies: collaborative fieldwork, action research, participant observation, audiovisual monitoring, ethnography, semi structured interviews.

### ***Progressive or Coercive? Comparing Recent Changes in Migrant Labour Laws in Canada and Greece***

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Keywords: racism, temporary labour regimes, migrant farmworkers

This paper undertakes a comparative analysis of contemporary changes in temporary labour regimes in Canada and Greece to argue that these reinforce conditions of unfree labour for racialized low-class migrant farmworkers. In both countries, agriculture – small-scale, family-run, and/or commercial agrobusiness – is overwhelmingly sustained by migrants, on temporary or seasonal labour permits or with undocumented status. Ethno-national and racial discourses underpin the denial of permanent residence and citizenship rights to migrant workers while labour regimes require the cheap labour of racialised migrants for sustenance of economies. In Canada, the Temporary Foreign Worker and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker programs operate on a permit system tying workers from the Caribbean and Central American countries to specific employers for eight months a year, both decried as labour coercive. In Greece, till recently, restrictive regularization policies served as efficient labour management tools against asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. Post COVID-19, each country, faced with an impending agrarian crisis due to labour shortage, has initiated policies to retain racialized migrant workers. In Greece, recent changes in immigration laws – bi-lateral migrant labour agreements with Bangladesh and Egypt binding migrant farmworkers to only five years of work in the country with nil residency rights guaranteed afterwards or the offer of three-year restricted residency permits for migrant workers already present in the country – are problematically hailed as a “step forward” in labour rights. Meanwhile, Canada dangles the carrot of inclusion within the nation-state through a points system granting permanent resident status. Student visas for international students, overwhelmingly from India, constitute back door creation of a precariat that works in agriculture. The paper, while critiquing these “progressive” changes, will also discuss resistance strategies of migrant workers. While scrutinizing attitudinal changes within agrarian communities and farmers against racialized workers, it will argue that a more accommodating landscape is an instrumentalist retention strategy.

### ***Eat Jamaican, Eat Canadian: Food In/Security Across Borders***

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Keywords: migrant agricultural labour; food insecurity; intersectionality

Through Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), the food security of Canada and Jamaica are inextricably tied: Canada relies on the labour of Jamaican agricultural workers for crops for domestic consumption and export (Lozanski 2023; Hjalmarson 2022). Jamaica relies on remittances from these workers to support family and community members (Weiler 2022; see Binford 2013). The seasonal transfer of labour and capital sits against the backdrop of Jamaica's heavy reliance upon food imports (Rahman, Singh, and McCordic, 2022; Weis 2004), making Jamaicans vulnerable to the dynamics of currency exchange and trade. SAWP actively seeks participants with farming experience: Jamaica exports 9000 of its farmers each year to support food production in Canada. These farmers have – or had – small-scale farms to provide food for their families and friends with a small amount for local markets. The “Eat Jamaican” program, which fosters food security and nation building (Wheelan 2022), has recognized the importance of local food production for 20 years. These culturally appropriate and accessibly priced crops are critical to food security and food sovereignty in Jamaica, unlike agriculture that focuses on export crops (e.g. sugar cane and bananas; Kemp-Benedict, Drakes, and Laing 2018) or crops for tourism (e.g. honeydew melon Myers 2021; see Scheyvens and Laeis 2021). While many farmers cannot maintain their farms, those farmers who do sustain their farms rely upon the unpaid labour of family members along with casual paid labour. The unpaid labour is typically provided by family members, many of whom are wives and mothers as SAWP participants from Jamaica are disproportionately men. In this presentation, I will move beyond remittances, attending instead to the gendered impacts of food insecurity in sending communities in Jamaica, a case that reflects global patterns of gendered and racialized food in/security.

### ***Exploring Press Coverage in Romania of Seasonal Migration in Agriculture During the Covid-19 Pandemic***

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Keywords: origin country for seasonal migration in agriculture; public debate on seasonal migration in agriculture; content analysis of press articles.

Seasonal migration in agriculture towards other European countries is a significant phenomenon in Romania, both in terms of the number of individuals involved in this process and the specific

characteristics associated with this migration. Despite having a history spanning over three decades, seasonal migration in agriculture remains a relatively understudied phenomenon within Romanian society, receiving limited attention from the general public and in terms of social research. The Covid-19 pandemic period was exceptional and brought this phenomenon into public agenda. In a context of severe mobility restrictions, seasonal migrants' mobility for working abroad was facilitated by national and European authorities, gathering considerable media coverage. Based on an original database comprising approximately 300 press articles published in Romania, our study presents a content analysis of these materials dedicated to seasonal migration in agriculture during the Covid-19 pandemic. The analytical framework encompasses aspects related to destination countries, the centrality of the subject, the reflection of individual characteristics of migrants, topics related to precarious conditions and deprivation of rights suffered by seasonal migrants, and perspectives voiced through the media that shaped the discourse on this type of migration. Our analyses highlight a simplified discourse surrounding seasonal migration in agriculture in Romania, a schematic representation of individual migrants, and a public debate where the overrepresentation of powerful institutional voices rapidly overshadows the perspectives of migrants. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the societal stance toward seasonal migration in agriculture within the context of one of the main countries of origin for this type of intra-European mobility.

## **SESSION 4 - Migration Ecologies**

### ***Coloniality of Labour in the Capitalist World-Ecology's Agriculture***

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Keywords: Coloniality; Postcolonial Migration; Decolonizing Agricultural Work

This communication delves into the intricate processes of immigrant's insertion into global agriculture, aiming to achieve four key objectives: internationalization of Agriculture, Postcolonial Migration in Agriculture, Coloniality of Labor in agriculture, and the opportunity for a decolonization of Agricultural Work. In relation to the first aspect, the communication highlights that over the past four decades, agriculture has undergone a significant internationalization process. This study seeks to illuminate the transformations in the sector during this period, emphasizing the global dimensions of agricultural practices. To the second aspect, contrary to the misconception that migrant labor in agriculture is inherently cheap, this communication contends that its affordability is a product of complex social, political, and economic relations. Beyond the colonial era, it explores a postcolonial migration framework, shedding light on how historical legacies continue to shape contemporary agricultural labor dynamics. The third aspect is based on the concept of coloniality of Labor. The perpetuation of low-cost agricultural labor is intricately tied to the coloniality of labor, a system that

establishes a hierarchy of jobs, subordinating productive activities and workers associated with social reproduction activities. Finally, the fourth aspect is focused on decolonizing agricultural work. Interrogating the power structures embedded in the experiences of migrant farm workers necessitates a broader process of decolonization. This extends beyond migration itself to encompass the very nature of farm work, which is often subordinated in a labor hierarchy due to its proximity to activities related to social reproduction. By challenging this hierarchy of jobs, the study advocates for a comprehensive decolonization of both migration and agricultural labor. In summary, this communication not only explores the historical evolution of agriculture on a global scale but also emphasizes the urgent need for decolonization to dismantle entrenched power imbalances within the intricate web of migrant labor in postcolonial agricultural contexts.

***Migrant Farmworkers and Agri-labour Systems in a Changing Climate: Problematising Adaptation at the Nexus of Precarity and Migration in Turkey***

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Keywords: climate change, agrilabor systems, migration, adaptation

This article examines the climate vulnerability of seasonal migrant farm workers in the context of both socio-economic vulnerability and migratory labour systems, which have been neglected in vulnerability and adaptation studies. Migrant farmworkers experience livelihood stress from multiple sources of socio-economic vulnerability such as class, poverty, gender, age, disability, and ethnicity. They may be undocumented migrants, slum dwellers, marginalised minorities, women, refugees, or children. Against this background, and focusing on the case of Turkey, in this article we present factors that contribute to the climate vulnerability of migrant farm workers and mechanisms through which it interacts with the already high social vulnerability of the group. We operationalise the impacts of climate change as (a) the increased likelihood and frequency of climate extremes, and (b) changing seasonal patterns of crop maturity, harvest, and yield, which alter both the demand for labour and its temporality. For analytical purposes, we zoom in on the 10-year period between 2013 and 2023 to capture both the critical occurrence of extremes and slower changes in the temporality of production phases. Through long-term qualitative research and using a critical political economy approach, we introduce the agrilabour systems approach as fragile equilibria. The adaptation literature and its critics only address site-specific extreme events, but we argue that impacts need to be analysed from the perspective of agrilabour systems, arguing that migrant workers' livelihoods are multi-sited and seasonal migration occurs in an ad hoc systemic manner. Workers' experiences of climate change can only be understood by looking at migration routes, multiple commodities and locations, and the continuity of experiences with climate change rather than a single instance of exposure, loss and damage. Such a perspective allows us to integrate the internal differentiation of migrant farm workers into the analysis of mobility and immobility in climate change research.



***Work in Transition: work in organic farming. Transformation and challenges for workers in the agri-food green transition***

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Keywords: organic agriculture, migrant labour, green transition.

In the last years the green transition has influenced European and national strategies, shaping regulatory policies and financial instruments to support more sustainable productive practices. Within the agri-food sector sustainability has lately been promoted particularly throughout the Farm to Fork and the biodiversity strategies, but also within the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). As a more sustainable alternative to conventional agriculture, these policies assign to organic agriculture a strategic role and target the ambitious goal of reaching the 25% of organic agricultural land by 2050. Within the EU context, the implementation of instruments for the financial support of organic farmers, together with the increase in consumers' demand for sustainable products, led to an increase of the organic market that reached the 56% between 2012 and 2020 (Eurostat, 2020). This transition has also shaped balances and relationships between value chain actors, increasing the role of private actors such as certification bodies. Therefore, governing the transition towards fairer and more sustainable food systems, implies the need to address a wide set of complex, interconnected and multi-scalar social and economic challenges (Yap, 2022), especially within the agricultural sector, which is generally characterized by fragmented and precarious working conditions (Anderson, 2013; Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013). Therefore, the dimension of labour in the context of the transition towards more sustainable food systems gains an increasing relevance. This work aims at examining at different stages of the supply chains the effects of this shift towards more sustainable food systems over working conditions. Based on interviews conducted in 2022-2023 in the area of the Transformed Littorial Strip in the Sicilian province of Ragusa and in Northern Italy fruit and vegetable market warehouses, this research explores the working conditions of migrant workers employed in the organic sector. Results suggest that the transition towards more sustainable production practices does not necessarily affect working conditions which are still subjected to precarious contracts, subcontracting and a lack of security requirements.

***How young farmers of the Cosentino forge sustainable rural livelihoods***

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Keywords: Agricultural livelihoods, youth, rural transformation

Through the 1900s, thousands of Italian workers left the countryside to establish lives in industrializing urban centers, vacating rural communities from the Alps to Sicily. The challenges of

population decline and unemployment, particularly among youth, have persisted and are projected to increase into the present century, with the worst cases in the south. Despite the pains of agrarian change, Calabria emerges as one of the regions receiving an increasing number of younger people who are choosing against urban life to reside in shrinking Italian villages. This research aims to understand the individual motivations and supporting conditions that enable Italian youth to maintain sustainable rural livelihoods. Through interviews with farmers living in the Calabrian province of Cosenza from ages 18-40, we will explore the sentiments and strategies used to manage the viability of the farm and household within the political and economic context of Italian agriculture. The interviews will furthermore be compared to a qualitative study conducted with young American farmers operating small-scale, diversified farms in North Carolina, US. Our findings will elucidate how the livelihood strategies of young farmers in Italy compare with those studied in North Carolina considering the unique agricultural history and food culture of the country. We anticipate that Calabrian farmers may benefit from contexts more suitable for small-scale production given the paradigmatic differences in agricultural policy between Italy, which emphasizes artisanal production, and the US, which prioritizes industrial production. As the effects of a globalized capitalist economy infiltrate even the most remote villages, our comparison and conclusions will add to the story of resistance and adaptation to peripheralization in the rural areas of the Calabrian region, the country of Italy and beyond.

## **SESSION 5 - Processes and policies of Inclusion and Participation**

### ***Migrants from Post-Soviet Southern Countries in Russian Villages and Cities: Strategies of Interaction with Local Communities and the State.***

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Keywords: migrants, Central Asia, Caucasus, Russia

Based on field sociological research of migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus in four rural regions of the European part of the Russian Federation (Moscow, Nizhnenovgorod, Arkhangelsk, and Lipetsk regions), the presentation examines family and community labour strategies of migrant workers related to the processes of work, education, and household network creation and development in Russia and Post-Soviet Southern Countries. Using qualitative methods (in-depth interviews) and quantitative methods (analysis of official statistics on labour migration to Russia from the former Soviet republics of Asia and the Caucasus), we analyze the contradictions between formal statistics and the real informal economy of labour migration in rural and urban Russia. Several long-term strategies of migrants' behaviors are identified, both those related to plans to return to their home countries from Russia and those related to plans to permanently establish themselves in Russia through buying real estate, starting a family, and obtaining Russian citizenship. Here it is shown how

these strategies are often specific due to gender, generational and regional-ethnic characteristics of different migrant groups. Special attention is paid to the study of violations of migrants' rights, cases of ethnic conflicts with the local population and the role of the state in these conflicts. In conclusion, short- and long-term forecasts of the transformation of the scale and share of labour of migrant workers from Central Asia and the Caucasus in rural regions of Russia, depending on the evolution of Russian state policy on labour migration, are discussed.

***Disputed (in)Visibility in Migrant Labour-based Agricultural Enclaves: The Production of Space in Huelva (Spain) as Case Study***

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Keywords: Social Space; Coloniality; Migrant Farmworkers

This presentation will discuss ongoing research on the production of social space (in terms of Lefebvre) in contemporary European agro-industrial enclaves, based on the case-study of Huelva (Spain). Its development follows certain logical steps. The starting point is a description of the dichotomic spatial distribution at play: the space for citizens and the space for non-citizens (in terms of Sayad); the zone of being and the zone of nonbeing (in terms of Fanon); of visibility and invisibility; of State as rule-of-law and of State as blind coercion. Its structure echoes that of the colony: when importing the labour from the (post)colony, the contemporary European society resurrects its logic of articulation, only now on metropolitan soil. Elaborating on the mechanisms through which this colonial spatial logic is deployed will be at the core of this research; understanding what structural material conditions explain its emergence will be crucial too. Additionally, it will be explored how this delineation of social space in two social camps is far from being perfect, far from being clean-cut. Non-European migrants gradually make themselves more and more visible in Huelva towns' spaces of visibility, in their zones of being. This has come to be through different forms of migrants' individual and collective self-determination (agency and/or resistance), which has to be and will be acknowledged.

***Diversity and different migrations in Southern Piedmont vineyards rural areas (Italy)***

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Over the last three decades, various migratory phenomena have taken place in the vineyards areas of Southern Piedmont (North-Western Italy), a territory internationally renowned for the production of

prestigious wines and whose wine-growing landscapes were awarded the UNESCO World Heritage status in 2014. In this agricultural sector, at least since the 1990s, foreign workers from Eastern Europe and the Balkan area have progressively replaced the previous domestic labor force. In particular, migrants from the Republic of North Macedonia have assumed a crucial role: they have entered into the viticulture labor market by responding to a shortage of manpower, becoming indispensable for the development of local economy; at the same time, they have here created a large and articulated community. Being mostly permanent migrants, they have shown not only a differentiation in profiles and individual trajectories over time, but they have also historically played a fundamental role of mediation, informally regulating the flows of temporary migrants, i.e. compatriots arriving each year as seasonal workers. More recently, the same rural context, also thanks to public strategies to promote the area as attractive and to boost its tourist vocation, has become a destination for other types of migration too. In particular, people from Western/Northern European countries (Norway, Sweden, Netherlands), whose presence in the territory seems to combine elements of amenity migration and multi-local dwelling. This proposal, relying on empirical documentation collected by the authors through interviews over the last 12 years, intends to explore this novel diversity by looking at the place-making processes carried out by different types of migrants, on the one hand, and at how cultural difference becomes a key factor in elaborating/negotiating development perspectives and narratives for this rural area, on the other.

### ***Exploitation of immigrant labour in Sardinia (Italy): the CASLIS project***

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Keywords: labour exploitation, immigration, labour market, rural areas, Sardinia

In Sardinia, the presence of foreigners has always been small compared to other Italian regions. Insularity, high transport costs, and the poorly developed economic system do not make it an attractive destination for immigrants. Moreover, Sardinia could be defined as an area with multiple marginality: it is a region in southern Italy and Southern Europe; it is geographically isolated; and finally, 97% of its territory is classified as "rural areas". Nevertheless, the presence of immigrant workers in specific economic sectors, particularly in pastoralism and agriculture, which represent in the island key sectors of its economic system, raises several critical issues. This contribution aims to present the project denominated "Contrasto Allo Sfruttamento Lavorativo in Sardegna" (CASLIS) promoted by the Autonomous Region of Sardinia, together with other institutional partners, to establish a Regional Observatory on the exploitation of the labour of migrant workers. The CASLIS Project goal is to improve the understanding of regional socio-economic context, investigating several factors, including social norms, prevailing governance models of the phenomenon, the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative action, the level and capacity for cooperation between public administrations and other market actors, the role of trade associations and employers. The results of the CASLIS Project, which is still in progress, aim to build a permanent multi-agency observatory on migrant work exploitation with supervision and contrast functions. The Observatory's activities

involve different aspects and professionals, such as linguistic-cultural mediators, legal experts, employment service operators, and social and communication workers. The presentation of this Project aims to bring into the ongoing debate on the exploitation of foreign workers a possible reflection on the active role of public institutions and the need of cooperation between workers and administrations.

## **SESSION 6 - Migration Ecologies**

### ***Exploring Tensions in Narratives Surrounding Asparagus Production and Consumption: Insights from Ongoing Research***

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This paper presents insights from ongoing ethnographic research conducted in a German town well known for its asparagus production. On one hand, the study examines the narratives constructed by local farms, restaurants, the asparagus museum, the asparagus festival and other actors involved in the asparagus-related economy of the town. On the other hand, it focuses on consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards asparagus. Drawing on discourses on gastronationalism (DeSoucey, 2016) and postmigrant societies (Römhild, 2018), the presentation focuses on the tensions inherent in these narratives. It analyzes the celebration of asparagus as part of German gastronomic culture while considering its connections with (people from) non-German spaces. For example, asparagus is harvested by migrants from Romania and Poland and farms in town also produce asparagus in Southern Europe. The study investigates as well how migrant labor is invisibilized and how consumers navigate celebratory narratives around eating asparagus while being aware of the poor working conditions of migrants. Furthermore, the paper explores whether it is possible to discuss German identity and recent social history through the lens of asparagus consumption.

### ***Towards a renewal of bio-social sindacalismo: analysing the ongoing articulations between collectives and syndicates in the Spanish agri-food system***

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Keywords: Corporate Food Regime, socio-ecological struggles, Food System transformation, Alliances for transformative struggles.



The communication is based on the fieldwork done by the team to collect the ongoing struggles in the Spanish Food System, that resulted in a report published by Justicia Alimentaria called *The Secret Ingredient: Labour exploitation in the Spanish Food System*. In this research, we asked for the labour conditions, the role of the state, the proprietaries and the legislative framework put in to work to produce cheap labour in the agri-food system and their strategies to increase exploitation. But most of all, we were interested in identifying new forms of articulations between small collectives that are the front line of labour struggles in the food system and old forms of syndicalism. In this communication we want to focus on these alliances, describing the leverage tools developed by collectives in different territories in Spain fighting for their rights. We develop fieldwork with collectives of the canning industry in Northern Spain, the greenhouse workers in Huelva and Almería, the meat industry in Lleida, the fruit production in Tarragona and the maquila industry in the Basque Country, in order to identify key leverage instruments to fight against the ongoing corporate food industry, increasing sensibility to amplify their struggle beyond their specific territory.

***Cheap Vegetables, Cheapened Lives. Greenhouses, Heatwaves and the Racialized Distribution of Heat Exposure among Roma-Romanian Workers in Vienna, Austria***

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Keywords: agro-ecological transformation, racialized labor ecologies, heatwaves

Heatwaves are fundamentally unsettling food production through droughts and crop shortfalls. This ecological upheaval is adversely affecting the lives and bodies of agricultural workers: inasmuch as they have historically been positioned in marginalized and racialized conditions, they are at the forefront of new, climate-induced vulnerabilities. The following contribution examines these issues in the Austrian context. Therein, 40% of Austria's vegetables are produced in a greenhouse cluster on the eastern outskirts of Vienna. This horticultural powerhouse is sustained by the daily labor of approximately 2000 Roma/Romanian workers who face blatant underpayment, overwork, and institutional neglect. In recent years, heatwaves have doubled, rendering the greenhouse an "extreme environment" (Saxton 2015). In addition to frequent qualms during work, my research indicates that two fatal accidents in the 2010s went unnoticed by local labor authorities. Drawing on 20-month long ethnographic-/activist engagement with Roma-/Romanian workers, this contribution asks: How do biophysical transformations interact with existing forms and systems of oppression? And in what ways are labor, race and ecology implicated in the uneven distribution of heat-related health hazards on farmworker bodies? I analyze these questions through the lens of "cheapening" (Moore 2015), here understood as a strategy of control that puts humans and the rest of nature to work in the least expensive way possible. Rooted in this lens, I examine a) the greenhouse labor process as an intentional structure (Benson 1987) that assembles and disciplines plants and labor-power in specific ways; to b) understand the adverse impacts of heatwaves as co-constituted by racialized workplace hierarchies and symbolic work ethics. Taken together, this analysis foregrounds the interlocking of both economic and ecological moments within accumulation-driven food production. On a broader

scale, it thereby reveals the underlying interactions between monocrop regimes and the racialized history of Roma in the specific European context.

### ***Linking agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and labour migration in the European Union***

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Keywords: Biodiversity conservation, agroecology, labour shortage

The European Union (EU) finds itself in a conflicting situation: On one hand, labour shortage in agriculture is increasing with no foreseeable changes. Local labour shortages are being filled by migrant workers. On the other hand, farmers are expected to conserve biodiversity, for example through agro-ecological practices, which in turn requires more labour. The connections between agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and labour migration require further investigation. Additionally, it remains unclear whether these connections vary between host nations and countries of origin. This study employs a participatory system dynamics approach at two levels. Firstly, the research draws on data provided by seven experts to develop a generic EU-wide causal loop diagram. Secondly, the study confirms the validity of this generic model at five study sites across the EU, focusing on local farmers and migrant workers. These study sites are in host nations and in countries of origin that are highly affected by agricultural labour migration. The initial findings show a comprehensive EU-wide model with diverse actors and elements, causal relationships and feedback loops that influence biodiversity conservation on farms, labour shortage, and working conditions. It is evident that this model is highly complex with causal connections that have both positive and negative effects. The specific direction of each relationship depends on several factors, such as biophysical conditions, the farming system, and the economic circumstances. By verifying the model at various locations and farming systems within the EU, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of direct relationships within the broader model and determine individual dependencies' direction more precisely. Our main contribution is to highlight the significance of the emerging agriculture-migration nexus as well as to advance the understanding of and to provide policy recommendations for how a green transition of agriculture can also be just.

## **SESSION 7 - Women in agriculture (SWIFT)**

### ***The role of the peasant women in the socio-productive process of the association ECOVÁRZEA, Paraíba, Brésil.***

Arlide Franco Alves, Ana Livia de Lima França, Elaine Terezinha Dambrosio (Université fédérale de Paraíba - UFPB)

Keywords: Agroecology; Protagonism of women farmers; Women's empowerment.

Although many projects have been socially important, poverty, food shortages, declining health conditions and environmental degradation continue to be problems in developing countries (Pochmann, 2001). In many regions, the modernisation of agriculture has taken place without a concomitant distribution of land. The policies associated with this modernisation have expelled thousands of farmers from the countryside, who have migrated to urban areas in search of work and marginalisation (Garcia Junior, 1998). This process has contributed to the spread of environmental problems such as soil erosion, desertification, pesticide pollution and loss of biodiversity (Redclift; Goodman, 1991). In view of these concerns, agroecology is emerging, which integrates and encourages differentiated management of agricultural practices, adding knowledge in the use of ecological management systems, ensuring productivity and the conservation of agrobiodiversity (Altieri, 2001) bringing the expectation of a new agriculture beneficial to humanity and the environment (Caporal; Costabeber, 2004). Moreover, sustainable agriculture is becoming increasingly important, contributing to the environmental, social and economic development of rural areas and reducing environmental impacts (Gliessman, 1997). An example of this is the activities of the ECOVÁRZEA association, which brings together farmers from agrarian colonisation projects who have opted for agro-ecological production, which it operates, in part, as part of the theme "Worker-driven and women-led innovations in agrifood and rural areas" of the VII Agromig International Seminar "Migrations, Agrifood and Rural Change" at the Università della Calabria, Cosenza, Italy. This association has a history of organization (Santos; Cândido, 2015), guided not only in the production process, but above all, the institutional partnership in the marketing of horticultural products (Alves; Silva, 2019), which highlights the work of women. In this female protagonism, the highlight was the task of direct sale of agroecological products in two locations: at UFPB and IFPB, João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil. Given this, the problem was to raise the degree of this protagonism, highlighting the role of peasant women in the socio-productive process of ECOVÁRZEA, taking as a reference existing studies on this socio-economic initiative (Santos; Cândido, 2015; Cândido et al., 2016). As far as the world of work is concerned, male domination is linked to the patriarchal relationships that still exist. In this hierarchy concerning the sexual division of labour, the female is generally inferior and considered secondary, since in family units the division of labour is generally administered by the male (Chayanov, 1974). Consequently, when analysing the work of women farmers, it is necessary to consider domestic work, which is normally carried out without division, generating an overload and to the detriment of women's participation in public spaces and production systems (Vargas et al., 2013). This growing participation in public and political spaces, as well as in production, fosters greater self-esteem and independence, reinforcing empowerment (Maronhas et al., 2014). Thus, agroecological production promotes access to information and provides strategies for women's economic and political empowerment (Ferreira, 2000ti). As a result of this study, it was found that women have a high level of action at trade fairs and an active voice within the Association, despite the difficulties associated with the double working day. As a result, the fairs are consolidated as a potential source of emancipation and empowerment for the paraibana women farmers of the ECOVÁRZEA Association.

## ***Towards the Tomato Dream: Skilling and Deskillling of Migrant Labor in Antalya***

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Keywords: tomato, Turkey, small producer

From the 1990s on the greenhouse tomato production in small holdings in Antalya, a major agricultural hub in the Mediterranean coast of Turkey, exponentially increased as a result of economic liberalization policies. This new model of small-holding production mainly for export has been created by thus integrated into an industrial scale of production and consumption. Sharecropper, tenant and small land-owning families have learnt the craft of growing tomatoes in the greenhouse not in a vacuum. The skills of being a small producer demands establishing relationships with the wholesale market middleman, pesticide dealers, and large landowners, relations that are embedded in the ways agribusiness locally took shape in the region of Antalya. In this paper, I would like to bring questions and observations from my fieldwork regarding the feminization and ethnicization of labor in the coastal town where I conducted my work. I argue that the feminization of the skills required to grow tomatoes in the greenhouse is a strategy of devaluation of migrant family labor in the global value chain of contract farming. The economic and social (de)valuation goes hand in hand, since “migrants” who mastered the craft of tomato production bring in with them the intertwined social and political histories of regions apart (ranging from the Taurus highlands to the present-day Syria) within what is called the middle east, at the fringes of Europe.

## ***Female led innovations in italian farming***

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The paper intends to contribute to the discussion on the understanding and recognition of women's role in promoting innovation in Italian agriculture, presenting the preliminary results of a case study focusing on women-led innovations in farming. The research is carried out as part of the FLIARA project (GA101084234) which aims to improve understanding, awareness and recognition of women's role in a more sustainable rural future, as well as to develop more effective policy proposals and governance frameworks that can support women-led innovations in rural contexts. Twenty semi-structured in-depth interviews with women farmers located in different Italian rural areas were conducted in the period January 2024-March 2024. In remote rural areas (4 experiences analysed), women tend to create/lead innovative agricultural practices related to the valorisation of local resources. These activities allow them to live in areas often characterized by depopulation and where services are very limited. These are projects that female respondents started from scratch. Innovations, in this case, stem from creative ideas and are related to new products and new services. In two out of four cases, the provision of land or facilities by the local authority enabled the initiation

or consolidation of the experiences analyzed. In rural areas close to the city (3 experiences analysed), farming innovations focus mainly on providing educational services for children (e.g. kindergarten) as well as for adults, often for people belonging to marginalized groups. In two out of three cases, these are takeovers of family farms. Women's management made it possible to initiate significant transformations in production processes and expand the services offered. In rural villages (3 experiences), women-led innovation is diversified. It may entail the creation of new products or new services offered by the farm, with an emphasis on educational or tourism-related services, characterized by a focus on reuse and anti-waste in the context of a circular economy and with a special sensitivity to environmental issues. The women interviewed, in all rural areas, choose to promote sustainable agriculture (e.g. organic, biodynamic), adopting either a strong multifunctional approach (Wilson 2008) or an agro-ecological approach (Giraldo; Rosset, 2018).

### ***Disposable bodies, denied rights: women farmworkers in the Sicilian countryside***

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Keywords: women farmworkers, vulnerability, re-existence

Since the mid 2010's the issue of the so-called increasing refugeeization of the workforce employed in the agricultural sector, especially in Southern Italy, has acquired visibility in the scientific debate (Dines & Rigo 2015; Ortensi 2015) and has been further evidenced in more recent research carried out in other rural contexts where refugees and asylum seekers are often employed as disposable low-skilled labour force (Della Puppa & Piovesan 2023). Usually hired as seasonal workers, they move from one harvest to another, experiencing particularly bad living conditions and very low wages, although mostly legally employed with formal contracts. The hierarchization, vulnerabilization and subaltern integration of migrant workers into the agro-food supply chain, however, do not only operate along the colour (black) and legal status (refugee/asylum seeker) line. In other rural areas, such as in the so-called Transformed Littoral Strip-TL - the biggest greenhouse area in Italy running along the Sicilian coast for 150 km, extending from Pachino to Licata -, the massive instalment of greenhouses has significantly contributed to deseasonalize agriculture and farm work which can count on the ongoing availability of large numbers of migrant men and women – largely coming from EU countries (i.e. Romania) and Tunisia – stably settled in the area and formally employed (Piro & Sanò 2017; Piro 2021). Although these farmworkers are mostly white, European, legally resident in Italy, their working and living conditions are still extremely poor, within a scenario made of industrial and globalized productive relations which at the same time evoke the direst and most degenerate traits of the past agrarian world coupled with postcolonial forms of citizenship (Mellino 2013). The outcomes of our fieldwork, aimed at unpacking and deconstructing the supposed homogeneity of the category of "migrant farmworker" in terms of race, nationality, gender, legal status and other personal conditions, clearly evidence the ongoing process of spoliation of rights, racialization, sexualization and vulnerabilization particularly affecting Romanian women working in this sector where we assist to the emergence of "a new hierarchical stratification of whiteness that looks towards East" (Grappi,



Sacchetto 2013, p. 321). Thus, the paper addresses the conditions of fragility in which many migrant women find themselves, but also the counter-strategies they adopt in order to survive and re-exist.

***Internal migrations and feminization of labor in the agroexport sector in the plain of Chtouka (Morocco): a look from the fields to the households***

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Keywords: internal migration, farmworker, reproductive work

The development of agroexport poles in the Atlantic plains of Morocco has led to an important increase in internal migrations for labor purposes in the last decades. In this paper, we focus on the mobility and work of female seasonal agricultural workers employed in the Chtouka plain, which hosts the main productive sector of fresh vegetables in the country. Following the proposals of feminist economics, we analyze the labor experiences of female farmworkers, focusing on the articulation between productive and reproductive work. Specifically, we will focus in the arrangements that are made to combine childcare with salaried work. In doing so, we aim to: (1) provide a more complex view of the work and life experiences of female seasonal workers; (2) show the concrete way in which the accumulation of surplus value occurs in global agricultural chains, understanding that, in addition to labor exploitation, this is based on the appropriation of care work that ensures the reproduction of the labor force (Dunaway, 2014); (3) further the understanding of the bases of social reproduction in an enclave of globalized agriculture, characterized by the proletarianization of the workforce, labor precariousness and a deficit in the provision of public services (Catusse, 2010). The methodology used was qualitative. Interviews and observations were conducted in the workplaces and life of farmworkers in Chtouka.

**SESSION 8 - Aspects of discrimination, racism and vulnerabilities in rural areas**

***The pandemic as a political opportunity. Media visibility and mobilization of immigrant day laborers in Spain.***

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The fear of food shortages during the covid- 19 pandemic reinforced the visibility of the agricultural sector as one of the essential activities for European states. The situation of the agricultural workforce

in Europe, mostly composed of migrant workers from countries of the global South, became the subject of political, media and academic debate. Research published in this context shows that the health crisis has further reinforced the precariousness of the working and living conditions of foreign day laborers. However, so far, the same attention has not been paid to how migrant agricultural workers took political advantage of the public centrality given to them by the covid-19 crisis. Taking as a case study four agro-exporting regions of Spain, this communication analyzes the cycle of workers' protests and mobilizations between June and December 2020. What we demonstrate is how day laborers and their support organizations managed to transform the strong public visibility during the pandemic (composed of positive and negative images of migrant day laborers) into a political window of opportunity to claim rights and protest the situation of structural precariousness in the sector.

### ***Labor Vulnerability Among Migrant Agricultural Workers in Spain: Perceptions of Professionals***

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Keywords: Agricultural work, labor exploitation, migration

Various social actors highlight the precarious living conditions of migrant agricultural workers in Spain. Their administrative situation and economic instability make them more susceptible to various forms of abuse. NGOs like Caritas have warned that over 80% of this group experiences economic exploitation, and the Spanish Ombudsman has urged affiliated organizations to seek an alternative to this situation. In response to this scenario, this study aimed to understand the working conditions and factors influencing the remuneration of this group in Spain. For this purpose, in-depth interviews were conducted with 92 professionals linked to caring for these workers in the fields of health, social services, NGOs, agricultural organizations, and labor unions. Fieldwork took place in four autonomous communities traditionally hosting a significant presence of this group (Catalonia, La Rioja, Murcia, and Andalusia) between February 2021 and March 2022 as part of the first phase of the AGROMISALUD project. The results reveal that, despite existing regulations, various labor rights violations occur among the workers. Respondents indicated that it is common for working hours to exceed the norm, wages are often paid on an hourly or piecework basis, and the final salary varies depending on the profit made by the farmer. The precarious legal and economic situation of migrant agricultural workers forces them to accept these conditions to survive, negatively impacting their health and the development of their migration project.

### ***Race, Citizenship, Class and Berries: The naturalization of social suffering among migrant farm workers***

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This paper explores the overdetermined naturalization of social suffering in the transnational USA-Mexico berry industry. Central to this analysis is the normalized nexus of ethnicity, class, and suffering among Indigenous Mexican migrant farm laborers. The majority of Triqui men and women from the Mexican State of Oaxaca migrate regularly to other parts of Mexico or the USA for work. These workers occupy the lowest rungs of multiple labor hierarchies transnationally, including that of berry farms in the Pacific Northwest region of the USA. The Pacific Northwest berry business is organized de facto along lines of perceived ethnicity. Each group perceives itself and other groups through lenses dependent on and at the same time product of their location in this social formation. Thus, this ethnic-labor pecking order is taken for granted as natural by its participants. This social formation, however, also maps onto a hierarchy of suffering. The lower a group is found on the labor ladder, the more bodily suffering, deterioration, and violence inherent to their work. Not only is this conspiracy of institutional racism and suffering seen as normal by those involved, but also by migrant health professionals. These biomedical practitioners see only individual responsibility and interpersonal interactions, remaining unaware of social forces. They perceive farm laborers as “irresponsible” and as “perpetrators”, who choose to engage in behaviors that produce their own suffering. Thus, insult is added to injury with Indigenous Mexican agricultural laborers being blamed for their own victimization. This paper explores the ways in which symbolic violence normalizes structural violence, structural racism, and social suffering.

***Roma women's mobility within EU and their employment in agriculture: between changing identity and denied recognition***

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The general purpose of this paper is to understand the working conditions of Roma migrant women residing in Calabria, in the Piana of Lamezia - Sant'Eufemia, analysing the links, the contradictions, the conflicts that their forms of employment make evident within the agricultural sector and in the entire local society. The research adopts the gender and intersectional perspectives that have emerged both in Romani studies and in the literature concerning the processes of feminization of agriculture and racialization of the migrant workforce. Starting from these theoretical references, and on the basis of research materials collected through many years of participative observation, we will consider agriculture as a field of subjectification and contestation in which Roma women shape different social roles and values, but also as a space in which new social asymmetries and gender-based violence are reified. More specifically, we will see how the growing commitment of Roma women in agriculture implies a decisive questioning of values and lifestyles rooted in tradition. On the one hand, in fact, new social relations and collective identities emerge from clear dynamics of emancipation and cultural hybridization facilitated by mass access to wage labour, by the desire to find independent opportunities for professional recognition as well as to promote the right of children to study and live in a new country. On the other hand, however, the dynamics of racialization present in the local

context keep submitting Roma migrant women to patriarchal bonds and powers useful to face the absence of regular residence permits, child care services and equal opportunities into the labour market. Even after years of stay, in fact, a huge fracture emerges between these women, the companies where they work and the inhabitants of the area. Although almost all the women we met try to redefine the traits of their cultural belonging, the local producers, together with various representatives of the third sector, affirm that they are immediately identifiable as Roma due to their way of living, working, dressing, to raise children. In brief, the right to maintain a certain identity is brought into tension by Roma migrant women because it is considered in conflict, in a relationship of irreducible exclusivity, with the "right to have other rights". But, faced with a context in which the ethnic recruitment processes present in the labour market cross with the absence of policies and public services supporting women employment and mobility, the agency elements that highlight Roma women only minimally affect the situations of strong gender disparity present in their family structures and in the way of doing agriculture on which local entrepreneurship bets. Our findings consequently stress, from one side, how the consistent access of Roma migrant women in agriculture exhibits patterns of cultural and territorial insertion that assume a central value from the point of view of women's empowerment and of the revitalization of semi-abandoned peripheral areas. From the other side, however, this paper also shows the emergence of new dynamics of patriarchal oppression and ethnicization which contrast the elements of innovation brought locally by these female components. It comes from here the importance of considering women's experiences when developing job design interventions, to promote gender-sensitive solutions that can adequately address both the issues of development settings and multiple discrimination in agriculture. From a methodological point of view, the analysis is based on mixed techniques of investigation, consisting in the examination of secondary resources (literature, city plans, statistics, laws and decrees) and in a long period of field research. In a first phase, between 2010 and 2020, seventy in-depth interviews were carried out with representatives of the local administration and of the Roma communities who live in Calabria. Afterwards, between June 2022 and January 2023, this work has translated into a new phase of field research, designed to identify the continuities and discontinuities that can be found in the policies and in the strategies that address the insertion of Roma women in the agriculture sector. During this second phase, twenty in-depth interviews were in particular carried out with Roma migrant women who work in agriculture and live in the area of Lamezia.

### ***The Natural Border. Bounding Migrant Farmwork in the Black Mediterranean***

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Keywords: Italy, agri-food, racial capitalism

In my research, I tell the recent history of Mediterranean rural capitalism from the perspective of marginalized Black African farm workers. I show how in the context of global supply chains and repressive border regimes, agrarian production and reproduction are based on fundamental racial hierarchies. Taking the example of the tomato — a typical 'Made in Italy' commodity — I ask how

political boundaries are drawn around the land and the labor needed for its production, what technologies of exclusion and inclusion enable capitalist operations to take place in the Mediterranean agrarian frontier, and which practices structure the allocation, use and commodification of land and labor across the tomato chain. While the mobile infrastructures that mobilize, channel, commodify and segregate labor play a central role in the 'naturalization' of racial segregation, they are also terrains of contestation and power—and thus, as *The Natural Border* demonstrates, reflect the tense socio-ecological transformation the Mediterranean border space is going through today.

### ***Investigating migrant workers' occupational health in agriculture***

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Keywords: migrant farmworkers, occupational health, Italy

In the last few years, especially in the aftermath of Covid pandemic, agricultural workers' occupational health has become a matter of general interest. Still limited attention, however, has been devoted to this topic, despite the fact that agriculture is typically recognized as a dirty, dangerous and demanding sector. By using an approach that look at health's social determinants and inequalities (Dahlgren & Whitehead 1991; Rinaldi & Marceca, 2017) combined with an intersectional lens (Habib et al., 2016), the paper investigates the social causes affecting migrant workers' occupational health. In addition, it explores social consequences (Lindholm et al., 2002), intended as the subjective perceptions, representations, and coping strategies migrant workers adopt in case of sickness. The paper draws on previous research, and on the preliminary findings of current empirical research in two agricultural areas (one in the North and one in the South of Italy). First, by exploring health social determinants, it shows how the organisation of the labour process, and in particular workload, combined with high work pace, improper rotations and indefinite tasks, use of chemical products for fertilizing, contribute worsening migrants' health; in addition, the paper highlights how living conditions (living inside the companies or in informal settlements with poor access to running water and electricity) heavily affect migrant workers' physical and mental health. Second, the paper delves into social consequences in cases of migrant workers' sickness. In particular, it shows how both male and female migrant workers often need to conceal pain and suffering, although sometimes using them as a strategy to negotiate margins of manoeuvre with employers or health practitioners. In conclusion, the paper shows how migrant workers' occupational health is worth being explored through a comprehensive approach, considering the social causes and consequences of disease, its 'objective' and 'subjective' dimensions and its bodily and emotional aspects.

## SESSION 9 - Land, conflicts, rural livelihoods

### *Territory of Agrarian Conflicts: impasses in collective actions to fight for land at Usina Laginha between rural social movements and the grassroots union of rural workers in Alagoas, Brazil*

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Keywords: Agrarian Struggle; Productive Reconversion; Country Trade Unionism

The process of sugarcane expansion in the Northeast, after the second half of the last century, was restricted to the tray regions, as this is an area that favors the use of new machines and technologies. However, these trays, according to Andrade (1994:110), are areas parallel to the northeastern coast, whose extension runs from Rio Grande in the North to the State of Sergipe in Brazilian territory. However, the new process of productive reconversion evidenced by the sugarcane agribusiness sector, in the northern portion of the eastern mesoregion of the State of Alagoas, lives in a context, over the last 30 years, as already studied by several authors (Andrade, 1997; Heredia, 1988; Lima, 2005; Novaes, 1993; Mello, 2002; Silva, 2011), of strong agrarian territorial disputes in which various projects are configured to replace sugar and alcohol activity, which have been developed for more than three centuries in the region. The aim of this work is to analyze, in the context of closures and restructuring of the sugar and alcohol sector in Alagoas (Lima, 2005), the configuration of projects presented by social actors competing for the lands of Usina Laginha, owned by the João Lyra group. And, specifically, understand how differences between the orientations of peasant organizations in the Serrana dos Quilombos region, taking into account eight rural social movements, which occupy the land, and the STR (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Ruais), experience impasses in collective action struggle for the land and construction of an agri-food project, as it carries out the expropriations of approximately 5 thousand hectares of land from the bankrupt estate. In this way, the present study fits perfectly into the debate environment on the theme “Workers' struggles and resistance, collective organization and unionization, alliances and strategies for social justice”, at the Università della Calabria, Cosenza, Italy. Methodologically, the study was developed within a perspective that understands social processes from the subjective dimension developed by individuals inserted in social groups, as an important procedure to understand the difficulties of interaction between individuals who experience unequal relationships. To this end, we share the procedure used by James Scott (2002), as the perspective of “resistance to everyday domination” presented by this author allows us to understand the conflicts experienced by militants and leaders of social movements and the hidden trade union action of the STR, in front of to the current process of changes in the relations of agrarian domination in the countryside. The research process began with three Scientific Initiation projects, PIBICs, developed since 2015 within the scope of the research group on Work, Education and Rural Social Movements – GETEMSC, at the Uneal-CNPq/Brazil Base. It can be seen, following the example of the contributions made by Fernandes (1999;2000); Palmeira (2004); Rosa (2009), the complex changes in social relations resulting from the alteration of the agrarian social structure in Brazil and the region studied. In this way, it is observed in the present work how the difficulty of

negotiating and building a process of collective action between peasantry entities, creates and reinforces internal divisions, due to feelings and resentments, which do not allow unity to carry out the struggle. and conquest of land and the food sovereignty project.

***Learning from small farmers on potentials and limits for the agroecological transition in Western Sicily: a participatory action research***

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Keywords: agro-ecological transition; participatory action research; vulnerabilities of small farmers

Like many Mediterranean areas, the Italian island of Sicily is facing multiple environmental pressures such as soil loss, fire hazards, and extreme meteorological events with negative impacts on local food systems. In response to these threats, a re-thinking of local agriculture and natural resource management is becoming increasingly needed. Agroecology is known as a robust proposal for building more resilient food systems, grounded in small farmers' knowledge and practices. However, such valuable experiences struggle to operate and survive in Sicily because of unfavorable socio-cultural, environmental, and political-economic conditions. The key to supporting small-scale farmers in the agroecological transition is learning from them about the way they perceive, understand and overcome structural limits and environmental constraints. We approached the problem by adopting a participatory action research methodology, which involved selected groups of farmers in Western Sicily and some of the authors as scholar-activists. We build a participatory appraisal process using multiple qualitative methods resulting in a diagnosis of the resilience of the agroecological network involved in the study, by considering farmers' adaptation practices and identifying both vulnerabilities and strengths. The methodology identified possible leverage points for the agroecological transition in Western Sicily related to changing water supply and fire hazards management, to supporting small farmers' income and to disfavoring agribusiness systems, and to shifts in social practices related to food. Knowledge co-creation contributes to a transformative change toward the development of a participatory guarantee system, based on solidarity and knowledge exchange relations among farmers, scientists, urban residents, and social organizations. Throughout the process, small farmers enhance their awareness and ability to share the ecological and social values of their experiences. At the same time, scientists practiced new ways to overcome the mistrust barriers associated with top-down positionings, employing a participatory bottom-up assessment method that fosters trust, commitment and continuity.



## ***Unintended Outcome of the Land Rush: Emergence of Capitalist Farmers and Migrant Farm Laborers in Ethiopia***

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Keywords: land rush, migrant labour, Oromia, small scale commercial farms.

The scholarship on agrarian change places a significant emphasis on the practice of hiring in and hiring out labor. Moreover, the debate regarding the viability of small farms in the face of commodification hinges heavily on the availability of family labor. My study shows, however, that hiring in and hiring out labor is not inherent to small farms hiring out and large farms hiring in. In this regard, emerging sets of small and medium farms in Oromia region demonstrate a significantly greater degree of heterogeneity. These include small farms that do not hire in, those that just hire in partially, and those that hire in fully. The practice of hiring in labor is, therefore, not exclusive to large-scale corporate farms. These commercial small farms in the region use cheap migrant labor from other areas within the region and from other regions, particularly Sidama and the Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples' (SNNP) region. A proliferation of such commercial small farms is one of the unintended outcomes of the land rush though the anticipated effect of promoting large-scale industrial agriculture, as envisioned by the government, has never materialized to a considerable extent. This paper also argues that these unintended outcomes are, however, equally important in terms of recasting the landscape or terrain of agriculture in Oromia region. Commercial small farms exhibit a capitalist orientation and operate under a fully commodified system, which includes the hiring of labor. Though the growth of small capitalist farms has always been a policy strategy, its emphasis and reality have not gained much momentum. The land rush, unintentionally, infused energy into the state's ineffective agenda to the point where it has gone on its own to gain its own life and so much momentum.

## ***Labour and environmental issues in the agro-industrial production of bagged salad in Italy***

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Keywords: supermarket revolution; labour subcontracting; labour and environmental conflicts.

In this contribution, we present some findings of our empirical study on the commodity system of pre-washed and ready-to-eat bagged salad in Italy. Between 2018 and 2020, we realised 38 in-depth interviews, with actors at different levels of this commodity system (farmers and farmworkers; workers, managers and technicians of processing plants; representatives of labour cooperatives, producer organizations, and trade unions) in the main production regions in Italy, Lombardy in the North and Campania in the South. Bagged salad epitomizes a number of characteristics of the agro-

industrial production and “retailing revolution”; over the last 30 years, this commodity system introduced a number of innovations in production, processing, distribution and consumption, while the sales have been constantly rising. Our contribution deals with, first, the transformations in labour organization and, second, the environmental impact of this commodity system. Referring to labour organization in processing plants in Lombardy, the analysis focuses on three main points. First, working times and shifts are organized to meet the just-in-time requirements of the retail chains, for example with the introduction of labour shifts on night, Saturday and Sunday; second, a relevant part of the labour operations in processing plants are subcontracted to cooperatives of convenience, with the aim of reducing labour costs and reach a greater production flexibility; third, trade unions play an important and ambiguous role in labour management in the processing plants. Concerning the environmental sphere, this commodity system presents at least five relevant problems: production waste (e.g. up to 60% of some lettuces are wasted during the processing); greenhouses' environmental and landscape impact; the necessity of single-use plastic for the packaging; the use of large quantity of water in processing plants, to wash vegetables and disinfect machineries; the necessity of large quantity of energy to keep the temperature in the plants and the trucks constant at 4°C. Finally, we shortly describe some of very few conflicts that have taken place in this commodity system in Italy by now, in the domains of both labour and environmental struggles.

***Dovetailed politics of migrant farmworkers and land grabs: Implications for struggles within and against capitalist land enclosure***

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The few studies of ‘failed land deals’ focus on intended scam, speculative investments that never materialized, or protests against land grabs., while studies of ‘successful land deals’, highlight the absence or opposite of these elements. Underscored is the agency of the owners of capital and the state, and on a few occasions, of communities impacted by the land grabs. But it is rare that the role played by farmworkers in the success or failure of land grab enterprises is examined. Land grabbers (often the state acting on behalf of owners of capital) may or may not expel original occupants, users or claimants of a land. In cases where expulsion was not the option taken, rural working people were subsumed by capitalist enterprises in various ways, often through contract farming schemes and employment. In cases where villagers were expelled or dispossessed, they suffer livelihood diminution. Enterprises that arise in land grab sites often use labour-saving mechanized production systems. But they still need labour, albeit often much less than the promised employment during land acquisition negotiation. Seasonal wage workers are what are usually required. For this, the availability of cheap cross-border migrant farmworkers becomes a vital factor to the potential success of the capitalist enterprise in gaining momentum. By cross-border we mean country cross border as well as in-country cross-border in terms of subnational state or identity-based territorial border. These

precarious migrant workers tend to be mobile and seasonal, dragged by gang leaders from one job site to the next. Migrant labour movements are done legally and illegally, formally and informally, with or without documents, although labour contractors tend to favour the informal, illegal and undocumented types for they tend to be cheaper and more socially and politically compliant. The social conditions of their work make it difficult for them to get organized and mobilized for labour justice struggles. Yet, without their support, struggles within and against capitalist enterprises emerging from land grabs will be weak and prone to divide-and-rule tactic of the land grabbers. The empirical evidence for our papers were gathered through fieldwork in Ethiopia, Cambodia, Colombia, Myanmar, Thailand and China.

### **Domestic Investment or New Strategies for Land Grabbing in Developing Countries: A Case of Burundi**

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Keywords; Food security, land grabbing, land acquisition

Burundi is among the small countries in central Africa with 27,834 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population estimated to be 13 million in 2023, and 90 % of people are engaged in agriculture. Urban and rural land have been targeted to increase agriculture produce and improve food security. Then, domestic investors were given land for the mentioned purpose. However, there are no tangible data on how much land has been given to the individuals and how it has increased the agriculture produce. This paper intends to collect data on how much has been acquired, by whom, and for what purpose. A mixed research approach to collect and analyse data will be applied. Quantitative data and qualitative data are envisaged to be collected. The methods for data collection will include desk review of media and social movements reports. This will be consulted to know and locate different districts affected by this domestic investment. Likewise, the focus group with people living around these lands will be conducted to get information about the former owners of these lands, the status of current owners of these lands and the modes of land acquisition, the original use, current use, and the impact on the livelihoods of people. Furthermore, the key informant interview with local leaders and social movement leaders related to land claims will be conducted to know the consequence of these massive land acquisitions in the case study areas. Regarding the data analysis, quantitative data will be analysed by using descriptive analysis by using SPSS. This will include the calculation of correlations of land acquisition and livelihoods, the relationship between domestic investment and improvement of agriculture produces (Food Security), and the relationship with domestic investment and land grabbing. Qualitative data will be analysed by using content analysis.

## **SESSION 10 - Round Table (SWIFT)**

### **Presentation of SWIFT Project and the session by Marta Rivera (CSIC)**

This session will focus on the situation and condition of migrant women in agriculture. It will not only focus on the workers in agriculture, but also on the condition of peasant women. The session will be moderated by the partners of a Horizon project called SWIFT (Supporting Women-led Innovations in Farming and rural Territories). Marta Rivera from CSIC is the project coordinator for the SWIFT project.

SWIFT is a project set up with the purpose to advance the position of women and LGBTQI+ persons in farming, and to investigate how agroecological processes can promote gender equality. The approach of the project is transdisciplinary that engages with applied feminist innovation studies research.

The project aims at:

- (1) Design and test an innovative SWIFT methodology and conceptual framework grounded in feminist approaches and human rights-based perspectives;
- (2) Co-develop intersectional methodologies and tools to analyse women-led innovations in agriculture and food systems;
- (3) Strengthen co-learning across initiatives to amplify women-led innovations and empower diverse groups of actors to act for change;
- (4) Provide and test practical tools to reframe agricultural and rural policies based on the SWIFT conceptual framework;
- (5) Scale novel feminist and human rights-based perspectives on productive and reproductive contributions to sustainable rural development into agricultural policies

The session will contribute to the discussion on the condition and obstacle faced by migrant women in agriculture, while collecting grassroots experiences on how agroecology support gender equality in agriculture.

The objective of the session is to collect recommendations for policy change in the field of migrant women in agriculture. The recommendations can be taken by the SWIFT project to propose a policy change in the final stage of the project.

### **Grazia Moschetti (ActionAid Italia) and Viola Huzynets (Community Leader Cambia Terra)**

ActionAid's Cambia Terra programme has, since its first pilot in 2016, had the ambition to take a feminist and transformative approach to building responses to exploitation in the agricultural sector. This characteristic makes it an intervention that necessarily develops over the long term in order to

pursue structural changes, by the protagonism of women workers and the strengthening of their collective agency; the co-responsibility of all the actors that make up the local community in designing and implementing responses to the needs of agricultural workers; the construction of national and local policies, through the call for norms and action plans informed by a strong gender and intersectional perspective. The programme was supported by the Bright project (Building RIGHTS-based and Innovative Governance for EU mobile women) was co-funded by the European Union (Rights, Equality and CITIZENSHIP Programme 2014-2020), the Intesa Charity Fund (Cambia Terra project) and the Italian Buddhist Union (Cambia Terra le invisibili project). It was concentrated in the Ionian Arc (in Apulia, Basilicata and Calabria) and focused mainly on the analysis of the living and working conditions of Romanian and Bulgarian women workers, the most numerous workers of foreign origin in the area. The Cambia Terra programme aims to co-designing community welfare with farm workers - based on their specific needs - and with different local stakeholders, through Co-Cooperation Pacts and co-managed also by women. Alongside these activities, the programme promotes a number of preparatory actions for the success of the interventions, including first and foremost a women's leadership programme and an empowerment course for women agricultural workers.

#### **Letizia Palumbo (University Ca' Foscari of Venice)**

Based on the actions implemented within the TFT (Trasformare la Fascia Trasformata – To Transform the Value Chain) project, Letizia Palumbo's intervention focuses on the work carried out through the creation of a help desk for women living in the rural areas of the transformed zone. This desk has become an important point of reference for many women who need assistance and information on accessing local services, particularly those related to reproductive health. Letizia will highlight the main difficulties and challenges these women face daily in accessing reproductive rights, the connections between their health conditions, working conditions, and the dynamics of exploitation and violence they often endure. Additionally, she will discuss the actions being taken within the TFT framework to address these issues.

#### **Ana Pinto (Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha)**

The collective Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha defends the labour and human rights of the migrant women (mainly from Morocco, Romania and Sub-Saharan Africa) and Andalusian women who work as day labourers and seasonal workers. They documented cases of abuse and mistreatment, and supported Moroccan workers who filed the first complaints of labour exploitation and sexual abuse with the Labour Inspectorate, which reached the European Parliament. They also arrange medical coverage for sick colleagues. In collaboration with the Cooperativa de Abogadas Andaluzas de Sevilla, Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha offer free legal advice and tools to denounce the abuses suffered. Ana Pinto and Nazareth Castro are the authors of the book: *Abramos las cancelas. La lucha de las Jornaleras de Huelva por otro modelo de agricultura* ("Opening the gates. The fight of the women day labourers of Huelva for another model of agriculture").

### **Marta Molina (Universidad de Huelva)**

She participates in the project “Reproductive health care and diabetes in female agricultural workers in processes of circular migration and rural dispersion: organisational improvements and innovative tools”. The project is led by the University of Huelva, seeking to investigate, for at least the next 3 years, the working conditions and health of women seasonal agricultural workers in Huelva. Beyond the socio-health approach, which is important within the framework of the research group and the relevance of the analysis of health variables linked to the context of agricultural work and environmental conditions, we will also focus on delving into and influencing the working conditions that are constantly entailing a violation of rights. Within the framework of the GECCO ORDER, recruitment at source is showing an incessant failure to comply with the regulations.

### **Soledad Quesada (Universidade de Coimbra)**

Food and health are two ideas that go hand in hand, as eating is first and foremost a physiological issue, but also a social, ecological and cultural issue, as well as an economic one. Today, we are in the era of healthy lifestyles, where the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the European Green Pact and its Field to Plate Strategy call for healthy, sustainable and equitable food systems. In addition to the focus on consumption and access to ‘healthy’ food - what is healthy food and by whom is a controversial issue - there is a less visible aspect that has to do with the forms of production and especially who produces the food. We are talking not only about the figure of the peasant farmer, the producer, but also about the agricultural and handling workers who harvest, pack, label, clean, cut, etc. The current model of global agricultural production is based on what the literature calls intensive agricultural export enclaves where the key principle is to maximise production at the lowest cost. This in turn is the result of what Ecology-World understands as the creation of production frontiers and the control of the four cheap natures: raw materials, energy, labour and food. Thus, labour is made cheaper and more precarious so that food can be competitive in global markets and surplus value is maximised. This is the case of crops such as strawberries, blueberries, tomatoes and lettuce, which are very common in southern Europe, where this model based on cheap and vulnerable migrant labour has expanded. SWIFT is carrying out a comparative study between Andalusia, in southern Spain, and Odemira, in southern Portugal, focusing on immigrant women and the red fruit sector. The following is a brief overview based on a visit to Odemira on 20-21 April, a weekend in the middle of the red fruit harvesting season, accompanied by Alberto Matos from the Beja delegation of SOLIM - Solidariedade Imigrante, an immigrant NGO that works for the rights of immigrants.

## **SESSION WITH THE ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Nino Quaranta and Cassandra Benavent (Associazione Rurale Italiana)**

Associazione Rurale Italiana (ARI) is a farmers' organisation composed of farmers and people who care about the promotion and defence of peasant, agro-ecological and solidarity-based agriculture and food sovereignty. ARI aims to bring together in an organised and representative collective force people and groups committed to models of peasant agriculture compatible with food sovereignty understood as the right and duty of every people to produce and consume their own food; that ensure the maintenance of viable countryside with numerous farmers; that provide healthy, diverse and accessible food for all that respects nature in its various forms (animals, plants, land). ARI supports spontaneous local aggregations that aim to work for the promotion of their own territory in connection and in synergy with aggregations in other territories and within a framework of global solidarity. ARI is present in the most important Italian agricultural regions with local groups. ARI is affiliated at European level with the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) and at world level with La Via Campesina (LVC), the world's most important farmers' organisation with 200 million members in all continents.

### **Stefano De Angelis (Unione Sindacale di Base)**

USB Braccianti was created with the aim to promote the self-government and self-organization of migrant farmworkers, building on the experience of the inhabitants of Torretta Antonacci informal settlement (formerly called Gran Ghetto di Rignano), situated in the Foggia province. The main goal of the organization is to overcome the emergency-driven and repressive approach characterizing the management of migrant farmworkers informal settlements, placing at the center the voices, interests and needs of workers themselves, with the aim to promote their autonomy and self-determination. The establishment of this section of the union USB, specifically focused on migrant farmworkers, has been fundamental in the past years in order to promote the direct interlocution between migrant farmworkers living within informal settlements and local, regional and national institutions. Since its foundation, USB braccianti has promoted various initiatives within informal settlement, among which also the establishment of a legal drop-in center in Torretta Antonacci informal settlement. In addition to that, in May 2023 the organization promoted, together with migrant farmworkers living in the informal settlement of Torretta Antonacci, the occupation of a publicly owned abandoned land adjacent to the informal settlement, which has been reconverted for the production of tomato.

### **Martina Lo Cascio (Contadinazioni/Fuori Mercato)**

Contadinazioni was symbolically born in 2014 at the ghetto of seasonal migrant workers employed in the olive harvest, Nocellara del Belice, in Campobello di Mazara (Trapani, Sicily). The informal group involvig precarious workers and migrant labourers works for food self-determination by addressing at the issue of labour and with agro-ecological techniques. Contadinazioni is part of the



national trade union association FuoriMercato and has conflictual mutualism as its approach. Since 2020 carries out union training work that came out of the 'Bring water to the ghetto' campaign and led to the self-management of a property confiscated from the mafia. Contadinazioni-Fuori mercato has as its main activities the creation of a network of Sicilian producers; support for peasant agriculture, farmers and peasant women and self-management work projects; trade union support; promotion of an ecological approach and of participatory guarantee.

### **Catherine McAndrew (Landworkers' Alliance – ECVC)**

The Landworkers' Alliance supports a model of change based in grassroots organising and social movements as drivers of social and political transformation. It aims to bring people together in order to build collective power that can create practical and political solutions to the multiple crises we currently face. Solidarity and movement building across sectors and between social movements around the world is a cornerstone of its approach. On the ground, the Landworkers' Alliance works to build the social, economic and environmental elements of the solutions they want to see. This work is rooted in the principles of solidarity and mutual aid, which bring together people working to create solutions and develop pathways step by step, integrating elements of the future into the day to day of land-based work. At the policy and governance level it works to develop and defend legal and policy instruments that protect and advance the changes necessary for the society.

### **Ana Pinto (Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha)**

The collective Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha defends the labour and human rights of the migrant women (mainly from Morocco, Romania and Sub-Saharan Africa) and Andalusian women who work as day labourers and seasonal workers. They documented cases of abuse and mistreatment, and supported Moroccan workers who filed the first complaints of labour exploitation and sexual abuse with the Labour Inspectorate, which reached the European Parliament. They also arrange medical coverage for sick colleagues. In collaboration with the Cooperativa de Abogadas Andaluzas de Sevilla, Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha offer free legal advice and tools to denounce the abuses suffered. Ana Pinto and Nazareth Castro are the authors of the book: *Abramos las cancelas. La lucha de las Jornaleras de Huelva por otro modelo de agricultura* ("Opening the gates. The fight of the women daylabourers of Huelva for another model of agriculture").

### **Marta Rivera (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Spain - CSIC)**

SWIFT is a four-year project funded by Horizon Europe. It aims to reinforce and amplify innovations led by marginalized actors in European agriculture. Women farmers, LGBTQ+ farmers, migrant women and agricultural workers face unequal social, economic and political structural barriers in European agricultural and food systems. SWIFT stands for Supporting Women-Led Innovations in Farming and Rural Territories. In SWIFT, Women-led innovations (WLIs) refer to grassroots innovations that address structural inequalities in agriculture in rural areas. The project will contribute to gender mainstreaming in agricultural and food policies by providing theoretical and practical tools

(farm viability indicators; gender responsive budgeting; participatory feminist methodologies) to favor a change of framing in those policies towards food as a human right, that are necessary to promote sustainable transformation in agriculture and food, including the transformation of gender norms. SWIFT adopts a feminist, human rights-based, participatory and inclusive research methodology that applies an intersectional perspective, thereby rendering visible diverse experiences of inequality and giving a voice to those who are most marginalized. The aspiration of the partners in the project is to contribute to a change of framing within EU policies of food as a commodity towards food as a human right. This will bring major changes in terms of access to land, working conditions of agricultural workers and other people employed in the food system, dignified farming conditions for all, and more equity.

### **Francesco Piobbichi (Mediterranean Hope)**

Mediterranean Hope is the migrants and refugees programme of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy. In the Gioia Tauro Plain in Calabria, it promotes a model of widespread living. It has supported housing intermediation and created the hostel for seasonal workers, Dambe So, through the redevelopment of an old, disused and abandoned hotel, whose economic sustainability is guaranteed by the contribution of the labourers (equal to 3 euros per day) and the social share from the sale of organic oranges by the SOS Rosarno alternative food network, which involves critical consumers and small agricultural producers. Hospitality in the hostel allows the labourers to renew their residence permits, to support the pathways of emersion from irregularity and exit from the ghetto system.