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Foreign labour exploitation in the agricultural sector of the Province
of Foggia
Structural dynamics



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Abstract

Southern Italy presents high levels of labour exploitation in the field of agriculture (Corrado, 2018). Although it is not possible to precise the number of migrant workers in Italian agriculture due to a context of widespread irregularity, official data shows that around 50% of the workforce is composed by foreign nationals (CREA, 2017). These workers often experience high levels of labour exploitation, being poorly paid, working long hours and being exposed to toxic pesticides. Their precarious situation also extends to their living conditions once most migrants live in ghettos with no access to water, electricity and heating. In order to better understand what keeps migrant farm labourers in such precarious conditions, we decided to frame our research question in these terms:

What are the main factors that contribute to maintain a system of foreign labour exploitation in the agriculture sector of Southern Italy, especially in the province of Foggia?

To be able to answer this question, we decided to use qualitative methods as our primary source of data. During our fieldwork in Foggia, we conducted interviews, visited different locations, got in touch with a variety of actors, developed field notes and observations. However, to cope with the limitations of such a method, we also relied on quantitative methods as our secondary source. This means that we relied on different graphics, statistics, policies and official documents in order to better develop our analysis.

During this thesis, our main argument will be that multiple and complex factors contribute to the exploitation of foreign farm workers and that, to be able to fully understand this situation, it is necessary to look at the structural dynamics underpinning such a system. To better organize our arguments, we will divide this paper in three main sections: 1. *Historical continuities and the current context of widespread irregularity in the province of Foggia*. During this section we will argue that ancient exploratory practices in the field of agriculture still persist and contribute to the exploitation of migrant farm works. We will also explain how a context of widespread irregularity and poverty relates to the above-mentioned exploitation system; 2. *Juridical vulnerability: between securitization and humanitarianism*. In this section, we will argue that Italian migration laws are mainly based on a combination of securitization and humanitarianism. The former, tend to develop control and security measures in order to manage human mobility; while the later justify the development of emergency measures and

tend to portray migrants as victims. We argue that both approaches, although in different ways, contribute to maintain this system of foreign labour exploitation; 3. *Neoliberal globalization*. Here, we will argue that neoliberal globalization affects the way the agricultural sector is structured in Southern Italy. We consider that the restructuring of agriculture according to global market rules brings consequences to both farmers and migrant workers, contributing to their exploitation, especially the exploitation of latter.

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List of abbreviations

CAP - Common Agriculture Policy

CARA - Centro di Accoglienza per richiedenti asilo

EU - European Union

SPRAR - Servizio centrale di protezione per richiedenti asilo.

Introduction

Over the past years, regions like Apulia, Calabria and Sicily have gained media attention because of the growing presence of the so called *ghettos*, where migrant farm workers live. These ghettos are not homogeneous, being sometimes composed solely by abandoned brick houses and other times by containers and cardboard dwellings. They may also contain different ethnicities and nationalities. Nevertheless, they all show a great level of precarity with people rarely having access to heating, water and electricity. The level of hygiene is also quite low, with no access to sewage network or garbage collection. Since their appearance, Italian authorities have dismantled different ghettos, such as in 2017 when the Gran Ghetto, home to around 350 people in the province of Foggia, was demolished (LCI, 2017). With the arrival of the new government into power, the dismantling and evacuation of ghettos in the Southern part of Italy have increased (Infomigrant, 2019).

On June 2016, a new right wing and populist coalition won the elections, formed by the Five Star Movement and Lega Nord. Since its political campaign, Lega Nord has portrayed migration as a security matter which must be stopped and controlled (Palm, 2018). Some months after their arrival into power, a new law came out: The Salvini Decree. The decree aims to harden Italian migration policies by abolishing humanitarian protection, by given more power to the local police and by concentrating asylum seekers in big reception centers - among other things (The Guardian, 2018). This law has passed regardless the high levels of labour exploitation experienced by migrant workers, many of which possess humanitarian protection, especially in the agricultural field. Agriculture is already the sector that presents the highest numbers of irregular work in Europe (OECD, 2012) and this situation is particularly worrying in Italy (Corrado, 2018).

In addition, although it is not possible to precisely state the number of migrant labourers in Italian agriculture, official data from 2015 showed that almost 50% of the workforce

employed in the agricultural sector was composed by foreign people (CREA, 2017). Still according to official figures, in 2015, 50% of all farm workers were working without a contract; 80% of them were foreign nationals (OPR, 2018). Among migrant farm workers, around 42% are women, especially coming from East Europe. Nowadays, the main national groups of agricultural labourers in Italy are, respectively, Romanians, Albanians and Moroccans (Corrado, 2018). Since 2007, with the enlargement of the European Union (EU), the number of East-European workers grew, especially in comparison to Africans. This is so because to irregularly employ EU workers represents less risks to employers, once they do not expose themselves to criminal lawsuits for supposedly facilitating irregular migration (ibid).

These workers are often exposed to harsh working conditions, receiving low wages, working long hours and being in contact with toxic pesticides. Furthermore, the system of labour exploitation in the Italian agriculture sector has a particular figure that is called *caporale*. The caporale can be defined as a person that illegally intermediates work relations in different sectors, especially in the field of agriculture. The caporale connects foreigners to local farmers and, in exchange, takes a percentage of the workers pay (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014). The figure of the caporale had been part of Southern Italy agricultural system for more than a century (Kish, 1966) and covers the whole national territory, although it is stronger and more constant in the Southern regions (Scotto, 2016). The size of the phenomenon varies from province to province, based on the characteristics of the agricultural sector in the different areas. The province of Foggia, also called Capitanata plain extends itself on a large portion of Northern Apulia (Map 1 - Appendix), an area of over 3000 square kilometres (Scotto, 2016). The size of the estates has a crucial meaning for the organization of labour in the fields as it widens the gap between the worker and the landowner. This is so because the larger the field, the more employees the farmer needs. This makes it harder for employers to regroup and organize all the needed workforce, allowing the emergence of a series of intermediaries who provide their services to both parts, at the expense of the workers.

Within Italy, Apulia is one of the regions that presents the highest levels of labour exploitation (Ambrosini, 2011). There, the social vulnerability of migrants results, many times, in accidents and deaths. In 2018, for instance, 16 farm workers died in two car accidents while going to work (Corrado, 2018). This year, a Gambian boy living in Borgo Mezzanone died while sleeping after his shack caught fire because of a portable heater he had bought to keep himself warm (Comitato Lavoratori delle Campagne, 2019b). These are just a few examples of violent events involving migrant farm workers over the last years.

Under these circumstances, our research focused on the existing system of labour exploitation of migrant workers in the agriculture sector of Southern Italy, more specifically in the province of Foggia. In Apulia, agriculture plays a prominent role in the economical context. It is on the top of the list in Italy for the production of many products: wheat, tomatoes, olive oil and grapes. There, fruits and vegetables rely primarily on the production of small and medium-sized farms. These food goods are mainly meant to fresh consumption or processing and they usually serve the demands of big retailers and supermarkets. However, unemployment rate stood at 18.8% in 2017, higher than the national average. In Apulia, as well as in other Southern Italian regions, the labour market is defined by a widespread irregularity, which can easily accommodate foreigners' different legal status (Corrado, 2018).

Against this background, our research has drowned us to further examine the local context, with a particular focus on the main factors that contribute to maintain the exploitation of migrant farm workers in Italy. In this pursuit, we went to the province of Foggia for 10 days, talking with migrants and with different actors that work with this target group, - such as NGOs, the Municipality of Cerignola and trade unions. Our research was mainly concentrated around two towns: Foggia and Cerignola. After coming back from our fieldwork and analysing our data, we decided on the following research question:

What are the main factors that contribute to maintain a system of foreign labour exploitation in the agriculture sector of Southern Italy, especially in the province of Foggia?

In order to answer this question, we decided to divide our analysis in three main sections, which correspond to three different perspectives: a historical and social perspective, a legal and political perspective and an economic perspective. Although we divided our analysis in these main three parts, this does not mean that they are not connected between each other. On the contrary, as you will see during this paper, all the aforementioned perspectives are intertwined and influence each other in different ways. Finally, even if we did our fieldwork solely in the province of Foggia, much of the information we found was not only applicable to Foggia, but to Southern Italy more generally. For this reason, this thesis will combine both data that directly relates to our fieldwork and thus only to the province of Foggia, and information that relates to the Southern region as a whole.

Terminology

During our fieldwork and after reading a variety of books and articles, we could verify that different words can be used to denote the same (or a similar) thing\concept\idea. We have also realized this when discussing among ourselves and when talking with various actors we met in Foggia. For this reason, this section aims to illustrate some of our lexical choices, as well as the reasons behind them. With this, we intend to make our text clearer for the reader.

Primarily, throughout our thesis, the word *migrant* will designate “a person who moves from one place to another” (Oxford online dictionary, 2019). This simple definition is pertinent for our research, once it encompasses different groups of people, such as asylum-seekers, refugees, people with humanitarian protection or work permit, EU migrants, undocumented migrants, among others. During our fieldwork, it became clear that foreign farm workers in Southern Italy comprise all the aforementioned status. For this reason, using the word *migrant* seemed to better fit our thematic focus. Moreover, we will use the word *foreign* as a synonym in order to reduce lexical repetition.

Secondly, during this paper we will refer to migrants “who violate the rules of admission of the receiving country and are deportable, as well as foreign persons attempting to seek asylum but who are not allowed to file an application and are not permitted to stay in the receiving country on any other grounds” (UN 1998, p.23) mainly as *undocumented* or as foreigners in an *irregular situation*. The choice of these words is due to the fact that people cannot, *per se*, be considered *illegal*. This is so because, in democratic states, illegality refers to activities that fall outside of a country’s provisions of the penal, administrative or civil codes (Paspalanova, 2007). However, will refer to migrants as being *illegal* insofar as it refers to what is written in specific articles, laws or legal documents.

Thirdly, we will use both the terms *labourer* and *worker* as synonyms when referring to migrants involved in the agricultural field. Labourer refer to workers that use body strength as their main tool to work; while worker can be defined as a person that do labour for living, mainly manual labour (WikiDiff, 2019). Thus, both words correspond to the type of work developed by migrant farm workers in the province of Foggia.

Fourthly, it is necessary to elaborate upon the terms that will be used to describe the places where foreign farm workers live. We decided to both use the words *settlement* and *ghetto* to refer to those spaces once they bring complementary and yet pertinent meanings. A *settlement* can be defined as “A place, typically one which has previously been uninhabited, where people establish a community.” (Oxford online dictionary, 2019). Although people have

already lived in one of the settlements, we will refer to¹, this definition is important to our paper insofar as it highlights the fact that a new community is formed within these spaces. This is the case for both Borgo Mezzanone and Tre Titoli where migrants have developed different communities among their countrymen. Although we cannot say that these communities are completely unified and that their cohabitation is peaceful, they surely provide individuals with a sense of protection and familiarity (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014). A *settlement* can also designate a place that is developed under irregular conditions (Chimienti, 2012), which is the case of the places we visited during our research. Furthermore, the word *ghetto* reminds us of a place where a group lives separated from the rest of the local society and under marginalized conditions (Jaffe, 2012). These elements are relevant to our thesis, once we argue that migrant farm workers are indeed marginalized and live in a precarious situation. Finally, during our study, we will use the term *gang-master* as a synonym for *caporale* (*caporali* for plural), as it was already done by different scholars (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014).

1. Methods

Our fieldwork took place in the province of Foggia, Italy, for a period of 10 days. All the while, we were based in the city of Cerignola, hosted by local people. The city of Cerignola seemed like a good place to base our research because of its location close to a great variety of agricultural fields as well as different *ghettos*, such as Borgo Mezzanone and Tre Titoli. Before our arrival, we had in mind to explore the living and working conditions of migrant workers in the agricultural field, but no specific and well-defined research question was chosen. This is so because we decided to adopt an inductive approach to our analysis. In such approach, raw data is used in order to derive concepts and theories (Thomas, 2006). According to the sociologists Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, when using an inductive approach “The researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (Strauss & Corbin 1998, p.12). This method seemed relevant to our thesis once it allows us to stay open to different perspectives and thus to go beyond established ideas. We waited for the field to “reveal and infer the issues to be pursued and the theoretical analyzes to be used” (Musselin 2005, p. 54).

¹ This is so because in Tre Titoli people live in abandoned farm houses that once were inhabited by Italians.

While we were doing fieldwork, we used qualitative methods as our primary data source. The reason why we chose a qualitative approach is its ability to describe lifeworlds ‘from the inside out’, from the point of view of the people who participate (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). A qualitative approach must also take into account the views of those involved, and the subjective and social constructs of their world. For this reason, “(...) qualitative research can be open to what is new in the material being studied, to the unknown in the apparently familiar” (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke 2004, p.5). By doing so, we seek to contribute to a better understanding of the social realities present in the Province of Foggia and to draw attention to processes, meaning patterns and structural features. This type of data became useful not only to answer the research question, but also to access important sources of unexpected knowledge.

Although the use of qualitative methods was relevant and brought some advantages throughout our field work, they also present some limitations. One of them is that findings tend to be very context-related, which makes it more difficult to replicate and apply them to other situations. In addition, the validity of qualitative data is harder to demonstrate once individual perspectives are usually the base of such methods, as it was the case for our research (Achieno 2009). To better cope with these limitations, we used quantitative methods as our secondary source of data, such as reports, graphics and statistics that related to our research topic. As we will later address, the analysis of policy and legal documents was a fundamental part of the development of our paper, and it became an important part of our analysis. In this regard, it has to be noted that the majority of the legal and policy documents, as well as graphics that we examined were in Italian. This required an extensive work of translation, which was facilitated by the fact that one of us is Italian mother tongue.

1.1 Research Methods and Data gathering

As we already said, during our fieldwork, we used methods of data collection that are mostly considered qualitative. The practice of qualitative research is generally characterized by the fact that there is not a single data collection method, but a spectrum of methods belonging to different approaches that may be selected (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). In this section we will present the techniques that we have used during our fieldwork: semi-structured interviews, observations, narrative walks and field notes.

Semi-structured interviews

During our fieldwork we did ten semi-structured interviews. Of these, five interviews were with selected organizations, one with a trade unionist, three with migrants, and one with the social services and the Immigration Office of the city of Cerignola. Besides the informal conversations, the semi-structured interviews were a major source when gathering our empirical data, which are not observable, that allowed us to enter our interlocutors' perspectives (Merriam, 2009). Our starting point was a preconceived interview guide, which means that standard questions were asked in each separate interview, allowing comparison and maintaining data quality, and then we asked additional questions if an interesting or new line of enquiry developed during the interview (Rose, Brotherton, Owens & Pryke, 2016). In order to design such guides, we aimed to develop similar questions, but with different formulations that would take into account the distinctive features of each actor. To better achieve this goal, we made four different interview guides: one for migrants, a second for international organizations and NGOs, a third for public sector institutions and labour unions, and a fourth for farmers and farmers' associations². Each of these guides contained four headings that represented distinct interview topics, such as migration laws and foreign farm labourers' working and living conditions. In addition, each heading had four questions, plus around twelve prompts (three for each question). We chose to conduct semi-structured interviews in order to collect different perspectives on different manifestations of labour exploitation in the Province of Foggia, at the time of the research and compare it to one another (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke, 2004).

Our data gathering begun with the identification of interviewees. We knew we wanted to interview different actors that relate to migrant farm workers in order to better understand the intersection, overlaps and contradictions of their different viewpoints and thus develop a more comprehensive analysis. We contacted NGOs, international organizations, the municipality of Cerignola, trade unions, migrants themselves, farmers and farmers' unions. Our sampling strategy can be considered *snowball sampling*, where initial informants are identified and the subsequent sample is built by asking for key recommendations from these informants (Newton, 2010). The first sample was made by the informants that we contacted before leaving for the fieldwork, informants that we chose because we considered them as representatives of a specific category of people, such as trade unions rather than international organizations. The

² This last interview guide was not used, once farmers and farmers associations were not willing to participate in our research

second sample was composed by the informants that did not answer when we first contacted them, the ones whose personal information we could not find at the beginning, and were later provided to us by the first sample group of informants. It was fortunate that there are not many people and organizations working in this specific field in the province of Foggia, because most of the people knew each other and this allowed us to obtain a lot of contacts. Unfortunately, even after we contacted them, both farmers and farmers' associations were not willing to participate in our research. This may be so because they are part of the exploitation system that so greatly affects migrant farm workers. Thus, they could feel uncomfortable to participate in our research. However, we cannot be sure about their reasons not to participate. Furthermore, we tried to contact associations that work with an alternative agrarian model, where workers have an official contract and receive a fair wage, but they never replied to our emails and calls. The fact that we could not contact these actors has repercussions to our data. Firstly, without talking to farmers and farmers' cooperative it becomes impossible to know their own opinion on the matter of labour exploitation, as well as to listen to their reasons for hiring workers irregularly and under poor conditions. Secondly, not being able to talk to associations that promote an alternative agrarian model, also leaves us with little information about how their work is developed and about their opinion on the current labour exploitation system found in Southern Italy.

All the interviews have been carried out face-to-face. In some cases, we interviewed more than one person at the time, such as when we interviewed the volunteers from Caritas, but most of the time, it was just us and the interviewees. Some of the interviews were carried out in English, others in Italian and one in French. We let the interviewees choose which language they preferred, because we were aware that, with a complicated topic, language barriers could have been a strong limitation. However, by giving them the possibility to choose the language of the interview, within the scope of the languages we can speak, aimed to assure that they were at least confident (language wise) and more precise in their choice of words.

While interviews are a popular method, several critiques have been raised in response to their use (Rose, Brotherton, Owens & Pryke, 2016). Denscombe (2007) has researched how people respond differently depending on how they perceive the interviewer: "In particular, the sex, the age, and the ethnic origins of the interviewer have a bearing on the amount of information people are willing to divulge and their honesty about what they reveal" (Denscombe 2007, p.184). Gomm argues that there is a risk that the interviewee's responses are influenced by what they think the situation requires and describes the cooperative nature

of the interview as a “fact-producing interaction” (Gomm, 2004). However, from a different perspective it could be argued that facts are always socially produced and the influence of a responsibly engaged researcher helps interviewees describe perceptions they would otherwise think irrelevant or in their normal social context feel inhibited from mentioning (Newton, 2010). Moreover, whenever individuals are questioned, it cannot be certain they have told us their real viewpoint, or what they consider to be their truth. Especially if we consider the possibility that interviewees may say what they think the interviewer wants to hear or the opposite (ibid). Nevertheless, it is our responsibility as researchers to pull evidence from the data that we consider to be convincing, when interpreting the transcriptions of the interviews.

Narrative walks

During our fieldwork, we went to two different migrants’ settlements: Borgo Mezzanone and Tre Titoli. Because we did not have a car and these sites were far away from the city center, with no public transport connections, we only went there accompanied by someone else. When we went to Tre Titoli, we were accompanied by two Caritas’ operators, and when we visited Borgo Mezzanone, we were together with a CGIL employee, Raffaele. Furthermore, many people we crossed throughout our field work advised us not to go there by ourselves mainly for two reasons: the first reason was that these were places essentially inhabited by men and where illegal activities, such as prostitution and drug-selling took place. The second reason was that migrants were seemingly tired of answering questions and engaging in interviews with researchers and journalists (Appendix 5). Thus, going there by ourselves could make establishing connections more difficult. Since the beginning, Caritas’ operators clearly told us not to ask questions to migrants during our visits. This meant that our exchanges with the people living in Tre Titoli were quite limited, as well as the possibility of conducting interviews. We were also not allowed to be there while the operators did their work. At the same time, during our visits to both migrants’ settlements, we were dependent on Caritas’ operators or on Raffaele to bring us back to town. Therefore, we could not stay there as long as we wanted to, but just during the amount of time they were there.

All these constraints made us think about using mobile methods of research which could allow us to analyse those sites while walking around them. In addition, being based in Cerignola, we walked many times around the city which made us develop different thoughts and impressions. Therefore, this was a way of using the act of “walking as a means and a method, a way of getting to know the research site and gathering qualitative data through the

process.” (Moles 2008, p.1). It is a way of engaging with the space and with the people who inhabit it. Our walks around the settlements were used in order to better understand its dynamics, its geography, its limits, its activities, as well as the cultural and social interactions occurring within its boundaries. Walking leads to a distinctive understanding of one’s surroundings. The physical stand of the researcher, be it walking, cycling or just standing still, change the way the world is experienced (ibid). In this context, walking contributes to produce more dynamic understandings of a place and to grasp multiple and sensory everyday realities (Law & Urry, 2003).

According to Tim Ingold, a British anthropologist, a place’s character is indissociable of the experiences of those who live and have lived within it. Everything, the sounds, the smells and the sights, creates an unique atmosphere, which directly relates to people’s engagement with the world. Space is here conceived as a living process (Ingold, 1993) and thus walking is a way of producing meanings while experiencing this process (Moles, 2008).

During our fieldwork, we experienced different atmospheres. In Borgo Mezzanone, our walks showed a place with a lot of life, with loud African music being heard at different spots. People were coming and going or just sitting in front of a bar, talking. Borgo is a large ghetto with little or no infrastructure. Thus, as an inconvenient consequence, the smell is strong and not always pleasant. In Tre Titoli, the living conditions of migrants are also quite precarious. However, there, they live in scattered, abandoned farm houses in the middle of beautiful agricultural fields. Because there is no big concentration of dwellings and there is a lot of grass and other plants around it, the view is impressive and the atmosphere is mainly calm. Outside of the ghettos, in Cerignola, we could see a lot of older people gathering in the afternoon. The city is small and mostly quiet, except in moments when we hear some people, here and there, laughing or speaking loudly to each other.

Walking allowed us to engage with the settlements, the city and with some of the cultural practices that produce them (Moles, 2008). We could thus better connect with the sites, - given our methodological limitations -, by experiencing different elements, such as its topography, its smells, its composition, its divisions and its social activities. It also allowed us to observe, make notes, take (a few) pictures and to link what we have heard with what we were seeing. In conclusion, to adopt such a method means to produce knowledge out of immediate experience, “by privileging the understandings that people derive from their lived, everyday involvement in the world” (Ingold 1993, p. 152).

Observations

Before leaving for the fieldwork, we had planned to do participant observation. Participant observation is the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities (DeWALT & DeWALT, 2002). Our plan was to use participant observations as a tool to gather data to explore narratives, discourses, and attitudes to gain access to both reflected and unreflected opinions about the relevant actors in the field, especially the migrant workers (ibid). When we arrived, it became clear that going daily to the ghettos would not have been possible. As we already mentioned, it was not recommended to us to go there alone and the organizations which were available to take us with them during the fieldwork, such as Caritas, went just twice a week and did not want us with them while they worked. Because of the limited time that we spent doing participant observation, it is more correct to say that we actually did ‘observations’, which involves observing without interacting with the objects or people under study in the setting (Kawulich, 2012). Observations can help you to identify and guide relationships with informants, to learn how people in the setting interact and how things are organized and prioritized in that setting, to learn what is important to the people in the social setting under study, to become known to participants, and to learn what constitutes appropriate questions and how to ask them (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999). The stance that we took when conducting observations was of the ‘observer as participant’: we participated in the social setting under study, but not as a group member. In this stance group members are aware of the purpose of the research and act accordingly (Gold, 1958). We noticed that in some situations being involved in the activity, participant observation, would have enabled us to better understand what was going on; but unfortunately, it was not possible to do to it. However, we kept some of the aspects which characterize participant observation; such as having an open, non-judgmental attitude, being interested in learning more about others, being aware of the propensity for feeling culture shock and for making mistakes, being a careful observer and a good listener, and being open to the unexpected in what is learned (Bernard, 1994).

There are also disadvantages in using observations. Interpretations of what researchers observe risked to be obstructed when key informants only admit you into situations to observe that are already familiar to you, when key informants are marginal participants in the culture, or when key informants are community leaders (DeMunck & Sobo, 1998). As we will further address, another limitation is that males and females may have access to different information, based on the access that they have to various groups of participants, settings, and bodies of

knowledge in certain cultures (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). Another consideration and potential limitation of a study using observations is researcher bias. It is important to acknowledge your own biases and put aside those biases as much as possible to be able to view the data neutrally and make accurate interpretations (Kawulich, 2012). Moreover, even in prolonged fieldwork, and especially on shorter ones, as our fieldwork was, it is impossible to observe everything. Hence, observations are not enough in itself, and therefore it needs to be combined with other methods, which in our case is semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, field notes, and narrative walks (Davies, 2008). By combining observations and semi-structured interviews thereby secures a more nuanced and in-depth data collection that becomes valuable for our analysis.

Field Notes

Field notes are the record of what researchers observe (Kawulich, 2012). Emerson noted that observations involved, not only gaining access and entering in the field, but also producing “written accounts and descriptions that bring versions of these worlds to others” (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 2014, p.352). Moreover, when writing down field notes the researcher: “(...) turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscription and can be reconsulted” (ibid, p.353). Field notes have been extremely important in our data analysis because a relevant part of the talks we had with informants were informal rather than interviews, and thus the information gathered from here were subsequently scribbled down as field notes. During our field work, we experienced this variance as well. In some cases, such as when we had a longer conversation with a person, it made sense to do it shortly after leaving the scene in order to remember as much as possible. Since the beginning of our fieldwork we begun to record in our notes everything that we saw, paying particular attention to those aspects of the social setting that would have provided information related to our topic under study (Kawulich, 2012). We paid close attention to conversations between participants, always with their consent, recording as much of the conversations as we could. We wrote down as much details as possible about the social setting, the people, the conversation between them, and the information that they provided to us.

1.2 Positioning and Ethical considerations

On the first part of the methodology, we presented the main qualitative and quantitative methods used to develop our research. On the second part, we will critically discuss our

positioning within the field in relation to different actors. From this, we will discuss ethical considerations, as well as some of the limitations encountered. We consider important to clarify the limits of our analysis in order to not create a wrong impression that may become highly problematic (Jacobsen & B. Landau, 2003).

Donna Haraway, a human sciences researcher and feminist, argues that all knowledge is “situated” and “located” depending on “the position and the context from which the researcher speaks” (Pope 2003, p.568). She states that objectivity is about recognizing one’s particular embodiments instead of developing a false vision where knowledge is seen as transcendent and unlimited (Haraway, 1988). In her own words: “(...) all eyes, including our own organic ones, are active perceptual systems, building on translations and specific ways of seeing, that is, ways of life” (ibid, p. 583). A researcher cannot claim to be everywhere. Only by acknowledging one’s partial perspective it is possible to get closer to an objective vision. In addition, Haraway argues that each individual possesses different identities which directly influence one’s positioning. A person cannot be either a women, worker, European, etc., “if one intends to see from these positions critically. "Being" is much more problematic and contingent” (ibid, p. 585). Thus, in order to reflect upon one’s positioning it is essential to take all one’s identities into consideration.

Furthermore, Haraway discusses the fact that the “object of knowledge” (ibid, p.592) is not a passive resource or a static screen, but an agent that directly influences the field. Thus, a researcher’s account cannot be perceived as a “discovery”. Instead, it must be understood as a “power-charged social relation of ‘conversation’” (ibid, p.593). In the same way, it can be argued that the researcher is a research tool that greatly influence the development of the fieldwork, as well as the way the data is analysed.

Discussing our positioning is also necessary in order to develop a reflexive approach. Reflexivity can be defined as the process of a critical self-evaluation of the researcher’s position, as well as the recognition that this position affects the research from the beginning until the end (Berger, 2015). Reflexibility helps to keep the research process ethical, once it allows for a more considerate understanding of the research’s subjects and because it compels the researcher to develop a self-critical approach (ibid).

Our nationalities, gender, race, age and professional status surely interfered in the development of our fieldwork. The fact that one of us is Italian, for example, greatly helped us to get access to people and to conduct interviews in a region where few individuals speak English. Moreover, the fact that we are two female students also influenced the way different

actors, such as NGO operators and the municipality's staff, regarded our presence. The fact that we were students doing a research made Caritas' workers be careful in relation our visits to the ghettos. This is so because they worried that our presence might be detrimental to the trust they have built with migrants over the past years. Seemingly, migrants were tired of talking to journalists and researchers that came and went over the years without bringing a real change to their situation (Appendix 5). Being two young women also alarmed different actors that became concerned with our security. As aforementioned, we were told many times not to go to the migrants' settlements by ourselves, especially at night, and not to openly talk about mafia and caporali with people we did not know.

Working with marginalized groups can be especially sensitive and raise more complex ethical considerations. Going to the ghettos and trying to interact with migrants in a time frame of 10 days was not easy. This is so because the settlements were placed in locations that were difficult to access and NGOs did not go there everyday, but only twice or three times a week. Furthermore, we had to think about our safety. Although the dangerousness of such places may be discussed, it is true that illegal activities take place there, especially prostitution. When going to both Tre Titoli and Borgo Mezzanone it was quite clear where the brothels were: they were the only places with a concentration of women. The fact that most women found in the ghettos were prostitutes, likely victims of human trafficking, made us feel uncomfortable about our position. Besides, our position as white women surely affected the way migrants living in the settlements perceived us and thus the information, they were willing to share (Kacen & Chaitin, 2006). We were clearly "outsiders" and to be able to build a trustworthy relationship with them in such a context would have taken a long period of time.

There is also the problem of "doing no harm" (Jacobsen & B. Landau, 2003) when conducting a research that includes vulnerable groups. There is the need to anticipate possible damage that our presence and our questions can create in such conditions. Migrants may be reluctant or afraid to tell us their real opinions, once talking openly about their views may bring actual consequences. Once the caporali control the access migrants have to work and, sometimes, to housing, talking about the former might target the later. Migrants could find themselves without a place to live and without a job. Thus, "the simple act of asking questions becomes loaded" (ibid, p.10) of implications in conflictual and tense contexts. For this reason, one of the interviews we conducted with migrants, the one with Kofi, could not be recorded. Kofi lives in Tre Titoli and he is the guard of the Caritas center that was built within the

settlement. Therefore, when referring to Kofi's interview we will solely state "Interview Kofi", once no interview transcription could be done and this reference is based only on notes.

Taking all these limitations into consideration, we decided to conduct interviews with migrants that worked with NGOs and/or with public actors. These migrants had worked or still worked in the agricultural field and had direct and continuous contact with migrants living in the ghettos. As mentioned above, one of them still lived in Tre Titoli, but inside Caritas' welcoming center working as a guard. Thus, the migrants with whom we had more contact found themselves in a different situation than the majority of migrant farm workers living in the settlements. They had a closer relationship with NGOs, trade unions and/or the public sector, better living and working conditions and thus can be considered less vulnerable. In this context, they are not representative of the inhabitants of the ghettos, although they can give us an idea about the difficulties found by migrants when arriving in Italy and when working in the agricultural field. It is also important to point out that, although the majority of foreign farm workers in Southern Italy are East-Europeans and that around 40% of the total migrant workforce in the sector of agriculture correspond to women (especially from East Europe) (Corrado, 2018), our informants were all African men. This is so because all the foreign people we got in contact with from NGOs and public institutions, were Africans. Also, the great majority of people living in both Borgo Mezzanone and Tre Titoli were Africans. Thus, it was very hard for us to contact and interview East Europeans within this time frame and from the places we visited. As a result, part of our analysis and most of our data will focus on African workers, especially men.

Moreover, once many of the migrants living inside the ghettos are seasonal workers, they are not there all year. Although some individuals choose to stay in the province of Foggia throughout the year, others leave to go to other regions where it might be easier to find work during certain months. This combined with the fact that these migrants live in "illegal" settlements makes it hard to find the precise numbers of inhabitants, their countries of origin and their migration status (Jacobsen & B. Landau, 2003). What we find are rough estimates given by NGO workers and trade unionists.

To conclude, during this part of the analysis we discussed our positioning in the field and raised some questions regarding our limitations, as well as ethical considerations. We aimed to make the reader better understand the effects our positioning had in our research and the choices we made when facing such limitations. Surely, we did not manage to discuss all these effects, but the ones that we considered more relevant to our analysis' outcome.

2. Theoretical Framework

Throughout our fieldwork in Foggia, the extent of migrants' labour exploitation caught our attention. Although many blame farmers and caporali for this situation, our research pointed to a more complex reality. When talking to different actors and reading about the subject, we noted that farmers and caporali have indeed their share of responsibility. However, there are other factors contributing to the exploitation of foreign farm workers, such as EU and Italian migration laws and the high concentration in agriculture's distribution and commercialization levels of production (Oliveri, 2015c). To further examine these factors and the processes that facilitate their appearance and development, we decided to use different theories and concepts that relate to a macro, systemic approach, and thus could help us to better understand structural dynamics. We consider that looking at migrants' labour exploitation through the lens of neoliberalism, globalization, securitization, humanitarianism and irregularity allow for a deeper and wider understanding of the underlying causes that sustain the current agricultural structure in Southern Italy. In our analysis, neoliberalism and globalization will, many times, merge together as "neoliberal globalization". This is so because both are closely related to each other (Oliveri, 2015b) and because it makes sense for our analysis to investigate both theories at the same time. Then, some concepts, such as deportability and precarity, will be used to illustrate some of the main consequences of labour exploitation in migrants' lives. During our paper, irregularity will be considered both a cause and a consequence of labour exploitation.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is not to be seen as a homogeneous phenomenon. Different scholars have argued that there are different compositions of neoliberalism that directly relate to locally defined historical, institutional and socio-political elements (Larner, 2000; Peck & Tickell, 2007). From this perspective, diverse configurations of neoliberalism emerge out of several, and sometimes contradictory, political forces which generate unexpected outcomes and alignments (Larner, 2000). However, neoliberalism has some distinct features that allow us to differentiate it from other "projects" (Peck & Tickell 2007, p.27). Neoliberalism has developed through and in opposition to the Keynesian welfarism model. It has also emerged by contesting anti privatization policies and public-sector workers, to name a few. According to Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, two researchers of political economy, neoliberalism can be defined as a specific political-economic philosophy devoted to the expansion of the market, to market forms of

governance, rule and control that encompass every aspect of social life (Peck & Tickell, 2007). Neoliberalism is a political discourse “about the nature of rule and a set of practices that facilitate the governing of individuals from a distance” (Larner 2000, p.6). This definition of neoliberalism as a capital-centric regime, built in opposition to the Keynesian welfarism model help us to analyse how irregularity may be advantageous in terms of neoliberal globalization. We will argue that it allows for the precarization of migrant workforce and thus to accelerate the accumulation of capital (Oliveri, 2015).

In order to increase competitive forces, nationalized industries were privatized and other sectors were deregulated (Peck & Tickell 2007). Neoliberals consider that there is a need for laws and institutions insofar as they uphold economic dynamics. Therefore, deregulation must be understood as the rejection of rules that interfere (negatively) with market forces (Scholte, 2005*b*). In addition, the rise of competitive relations in the labour market was based on the loss of social rights and workplace protections. This perspective is relevant to our analysis once we will argue that free-market competition and a growing market-concentration affect the Italian agricultural production and contribute to consolidate the demand for irregular, cheap labour. Neoliberalism is also associated with contradictory actions. This is so because privatization and deregularization, among others, require important extensions of state power, as well as the development of new bureaucracies and “modalities of government” (Peck & Tickell 2007, p.33). Therefore, only theoretically can it be considered as a phenomenon that demands less state intervention (*ibid*).

Globalization

For the purpose of this paper, we will use Scholte’s definition of globalization because it allows us to analyse and better understand different dynamics between globalization and the production of goods, as well as between globalization and human mobility. Scholte’s core thesis about globalization states that it must be understood as a transformation of social geography “marked by the growth of transplanetary and supraterritorial connections between people” (Scholte 2005, p.8). Transplanetary can be understood as the flows and connections that exist across borders, be them economic, social political, cultural or environmental (Betts, 2009). The author recognizes that transplanetary interconnectivity is not something new in itself, but he argues that it has greatly increased over the past decades. Supra-territoriality represents the social relations that go beyond territorial boundaries, such as the internet (*ibid*). For Scholte, this is a new aspect brought up by globalization (Scholte, 2005).

Based on Scholte's definition, globalization is deeply interconnected with current developments in the domains of production, governance, identity and knowledge. He states that all of these areas should be seen as both causes and consequences of globalization. In a globalized world, production processes are no longer restrained by state boundaries (Scholte, 2005). Because of different factors, such as outsourcing and increased market concentration, nowadays production processes transcend territorial borders (Betts, 2009). Scholte believes that changes brought by globalization, including an increase in financial capital, have fortified capitalism. Furthermore, with the advent of globalization, diverse levels of governance appeared, which go beyond the nation-state. The author argues that, currently, globalization does not threaten the existence of the state itself, but that it brought changes in its functions. He also highlights that nowadays states subordinate their social policies to market demands, such as the demand for labour flexibility (Scholte, 2005). Finally, he considers that the development of different technologies has altered social organization. It has brought different social changes, for example the possibility of a global distribution of goods (Betts, 2009).

Furthermore, globalization can also be used as a way to understand migrant flows. Globalization may affect human mobility in many different ways. Better transportation and communication tools, for instance, have allowed people to move more easily across the globe. Also, it has been argued that international trade already contributed to create conflicts that led to mass migration. The possibilities are many because "globalization may affect production, governance, knowledge, or identity. A change in any of these areas may then have an impact on conflict, persecution, environmental change, economic distress or land use, changing patterns of forced migration" (Betts 2009, p.154). In this document, we will consider some of the main consequences brought to the Italian agricultural field by globalization and how they might have affected the living and working conditions of migrant workers.

Insecurity and Securitization

During this paper, we will analyse how different Italian migration policies portray migrants as a security threat that must be contained. This framing of migration is also connected with political discourses, especially since the right wing and populist coalition formed by the Five Star Movement and the North League came into power. We will argue that this framing of mobility has real consequences to migrant farm workers once it pushes them to a condition of irregularity. In order to develop this analysis, we will rely on Huysmans approach to securitization. To understand his view on the matter, it is first necessary to understand his idea

of insecurity: for Huysmans, insecurity is a phenomenon that is socially and politically constructed, once the way a situation is defined and governed depends on social and political processes. Insecurities do not belong to one specific sector, but can be part of a variety of them, such as the military and the societal sectors (Huysmans, 2006).

Furthermore, Huysmans moves away from a threat-focused interpretation of securitization and insecurities. He argues that for a topic - such as asylum and migration -, to be considered a security issue it does not have to be openly defined as a threat. Rather, it suffices that the topic is inserted in a security problematique. In his own words, different matters can be perceived as a security issue just “by being institutionally and discursively integrated in policy frameworks that emphasizes policing and defence” (Huysman 2006, p.4). These political and institutional framing of policy matters are defined as “domains of insecurity”. Through these domains, different topics, such as migration, can be connected to more traditional security matters, such as terrorism, which ease the transfer of insecurity from one to the other (ibid).

According to Huysmans, processes of securitization are embedded in the implementation of routines and administrative instruments. The history of the agencies implicated in these processes and the competition between them also contribute to frame security issues. This occurs through the introduction of uninterrupted and ordinary practices in knowledge and politics that highlight exceptionality and crisis (Huysman, 2006). In addition, Huysmans also develops an approach towards securitization that goes beyond discourse to a more technocratic analysis of security framing. He considers security as a “technique of government” (Huysmans 2006, p.6). The author does not deny the importance of discourse in processes of securitization. On the contrary, as the Copenhagen School, he considers that the political significance of events is greatly achieved through discourse. However, Huysmans moves beyond this interpretation to state that the framing of insecurity domains are necessarily linked to technological and technocratic processes. For him, the solutions and technologies applied are also part of what define the problem. In line with Foucault, Huysmans considers technology and expert knowledge as “central to the formation of modern society and its governance of social conduct.” (Huysmans 2006, p.9).

Finally, Huysmans argue that practices of security and the disagreements it engenders articulate and provide social relations with certain ideas of the political. Here, he highlights how the notion of insecurity is connected to historical events and concepts of “the political organization of human relations” (ibid, p.13).

Humanitarianism

Humanitarianism also concerns logics developed to both effectively manage disaster and to secure imminently mobile populations for the maintenance of liberal order alongside and through the securing of life (Pallister-Wilkins 2018, p.3). Humanitarian approach has been used for the past years in relation to the management of migration flows, and has been strongly linked to the increasingly exclusive nature of Europe's borders. What William Walters (2011) has called the 'humanitarian border' where, as the risks of border crossing grow, the need for saving lives also grows. Meanwhile wider work in critical humanitarianism studies is keen to highlight what appears to be a paradox, or contradiction between care and control in the practicing of humanitarianism (Pallister-Wilkins, 2018).

The humanitarian arguments, which has been used instrumentally by European policymakers to justify restrictive migration controls, also include human rights concerns. Bigo (2002, p79) suggests that 'discourses concerning human rights of asylum seekers are de facto part of a securitization process if they play the game of differentiating between genuine asylum seekers and illegal migrants.' By differentiating in two categories, European states invoke humanitarian reasons to justify border control. Humanitarianism applied to policies and practices highlights and increases the asymmetry between those helping and the beneficiaries, while preventing the latter from enjoying their rights by forcing them to remain in country of origin (Cutitta 2018). More specifically, dominant human rights concerns are focused on the right to life (to be protected against the threat of smugglers), while other fundamental rights are either ignored (e.g. the right to leave any country) or, again, considered only in relation to violations committed by the smugglers or to the lack of human rights capacities in third countries. This ends up supporting restrictive border policies and limiting the freedom of movement (Cutitta, 2018).

Irregularity

During this paper we will refer to the notion of irregularity as the state or quality of not being able and/or willing to conform to administrative and legal rules (Reyneri, 1998). Moreover, we will consider the notion of irregularity as a social construct that changes through time. What is considered "regular" or "irregular" within a given society is closely connected to social and cultural values that may change from one period to another (Agier, 2008). According to Michel Agier, the construction of categories such as "irregular migrant" and "refugee" are not rigid, but change in space and time to better adapt to the interest of established powers. These

categories are part of a wider political and economic context in which states have different levels of decision-making power within international relations (ibid).

Furthermore, when using the notion of irregularity, we will not only refer to migrants that find themselves without the necessary permits in order to be considered “regular” by Italian authorities. We will also use it to discuss activities and social practices that ignore administrative and legal rules (Reyneri, 1998), such as informal economies and negotiations that occur outside of the legal framework. These elements must also be considered as socially constructed, once they are deeply related to cultural codes and dominant ideas (Betts, 2009). In this paper we will analyse how past and current social practices found in the province of Foggia contribute to maintain a widespread irregularity that also affects migrants and the agricultural field.

Precarity

Of the vast literature on precarity that has accumulated in recent years, precarity had been fundamentally defined economically or existentially (Millar, 2017). Guy Standing defines precarity as a social class, the “precariat”, a class formed by people suffering from precarity, which is a condition of existence without predictability or security, affecting material and/or psychological welfare (Standing, 2011). According to him, this condition develops from job insecurity, including intermittent employment or underemployment. In addition, Standing affirms that there are different kinds of migrants, with different grades of vulnerability, and that migrants make up a large share of world’ precariat (ibid). In his book, he affirms that undocumented migrants both fuel the neoliberal engine and are its primary victims: they provide cheap labour and can be fired and deported if necessary or if they prove recalcitrant (Banki, 2013). According to his arguments, legalized temporary residents are slightly more secure; they have some social rights (entitlement to state benefits and to a trade unions) but they too do not have full economic or political rights, giving them little opportunity to integrate into local society. In both cases they try to survive by living a precariat existence.

In this text, we will combine these two perspectives of the concept of precarity. Thus we will refer to precarity as both a socio-economic condition and an ontological experience which affect all people. We are interested in the theorization of precarity in the analysis of a specific labour regime and political - economic structure. At the same time, we are also interested in how these conditions influence the lived experience of the people that are affected by it. This approach to precarity provides us a method of inquiry, opening up the question of

how precarious labour and precarious life (living in *ghettos*, not having regular documents) intersect in a particular time a place.

Deportability

Deportation studies have increased in the last decade, bringing attention to the operations of a “global deportation regime” demarcated by increasing national and international migrant surveillance and control (Fassin, 2011; Peutz & De Genova, 2010). Critical scholars study deportation as “a disciplinary practice while also an instrument of state sovereignty that renders certain populations ‘deportable,’ regardless of their practical connections or affective ties to the ‘host’ society” (Peutz & De Genova 2010, p.6). In Italy, and all around the world, deportation is becoming the migration policy of choice, a response to a world overcome by growing numbers of migrants, asylum seekers, and international security threats (Pratt, 2005). However, more restrictive laws do not actually remove migrants from nation states but, turning them ‘illegal’ and deportable, keep them circulating, as vulnerable and disposable.

Analysing Italian migration history from a state/illegal practices framework exposes how ‘illegal’ migrants are neither undesirable nor unexpected; policies are not failing nor ineffective, but, insofar as they systematically produce a precarious class of workers suited for a changing global context, they are actually very effective. De Genova argues that the entire disciplinary apparatus that produces migrant ‘illegality’ “is never simply intended to achieve the putative goal of deportation. It is deportability, and not deportation per se, that has historically rendered undocumented migrant labour a distinctly disposable commodity” (ibid, p.438). Most importantly, it is because most ‘illegal’ migrants are not deported but made deportable that they are forced to live in the shadows of society, to work in low-level jobs, to accept below average wages, and to resist complaining about their precarious working conditions. The entire process of ‘illegalization’ is thus aimed at producing in migrants a constant sense of being potentially removed from the space of the nation-state (ibid). We will argue that within the governance of migration irregularity is not a failure, instead it is continuously produced and reproduced by immigration laws (ibid). Consequently, irregularity and deportability increase the risk of severe labour exploitation, for regular and undocumented migrants as well (Olivieri 2015b)

3. Contextualizing the field

3.1 Historical Background and Current Context

Topographically, the Italian territory is mainly composed of hills and mountains, which accounts for as much as 80 percent of the country's total area. The soil is mostly poor, and productive lands are only found in parts of major valleys. Rain is sparse and soil erosion frequent, especially in the South (Vanzetti & Meissner, 1953). For this reason, since ancient times, farming and agriculture have been a great concern for most inhabitants of these lands. In addition to poor weather and soil conditions, the Italian territory has long been a place with high levels of land concentration. Since the Roman Empire, legislation has tried to control ownership, aiming to limit the amount and size of large-states, but with little success (Kish, 1966). Furthermore, due to its feudal past, southern lands were kept in the hands of few for a long period of time (Vanzetti & Meissner, 1953). According to Carlos Vanzetti and Frank Meissner, two land economists of the 20th century, "The South witnessed great landowners taking the place of feudal lords, thus limiting the property owned by smallholders who, on account of capital shortage, were prevented from acquiring sufficient land." (ibid, p. 144).

Although the North and the South of Italy share some topographic characteristics, such as a poor soil, the northern part of the country has milder weather conditions. Rain falls more often and the temperatures are not so extreme in summer. These elements contribute to keep the soil humid and thus diminishes the possibility of land degradation (Niedertscheider & Erb, 2014). Also, the two regions were determined by different socio-economic realities until the 20th century. In the North, feudal privileges gave away faster because of a strong drive of the population, despite the resistance of princes. The land could thus be better distributed and a movement towards the creation of small holding started early on (Vanzetti & Meissner, 1953). Moreover, during the 19th and the 20th centuries, the North tended to follow market driven ideas with the aim of increasing land profits, which led to higher levels of industrialization. In the South, however, land tenure was more restrictive and the majority of the region's population was employed in big land plots concentrated in the hands of few (Niedertscheider & Erb, 2014).

In the beginning of the 20th century, Italy saw the rise of farm workers' unions and a growth in the number of strikes demanding better working conditions for agricultural labourers. This increased political organization had several consequences: During World War I, the Italian Prime Minister at the time, Salandra, assured peasants fighting the war that the state would give them land, so that they could become economically independent. Nevertheless, the political

environment started to change drastically by 1922. The advance of parties intending to bring about social change and, at the same time, the growth of labour movements were a threat to upper classes and to established powers. The answer given by them was fascism (Kish, 1966).

During the fascist period, there was little room for dividing large estates or to support workers cooperatives. The fascist government promoted the “ruralization” of Italy, exalting the values of the countryside lifestyle. Nonetheless, this decision brought several unexpected consequences: The flow of workers coming to rural areas benefited large landowners who needed extra labour force. At the same time, many small landowners felt pressured by family members coming back to the countryside, as the latter’s economic contribution was usually smaller than their consumption, and therefore contributed to the precarization of farm workers living conditions (S. Cohen, 1979). Finally, already during the fascist period, industrialists had significant political influence within the Italian government and could thus determine prices and establish selling conditions. According to the economist Jon S. Cohen, “Most industrial firms with which farmers had to deal were virtual monopolies; Fiat in farm equipment, Montecatini in chemical fertilizers, a three-firm cartel in sugar production, and so on. No attempt was made to check the monopoly power of these companies” (ibid, p. 79).

The Italian agriculture, mainly based in areas with difficult weather conditions for planting and growing food, was also highly affected by economic depressions during the 19th and the 20th centuries. It went through a critical period from the 1870s to around 1913. Then again, during the interwar period, “agriculture was the sector hardest hit by depression” (ibid, p.71). In addition, during the fascist period, industrialists were the ones establishing prices, as well as commercial conditions, and farm workers cooperatives lost support. Therefore, the working and living conditions of farm labourers throughout history was often hard and precarious. This is especially true for Southern workers because the region’s land and weather conditions are tougher than those found in the North. Under these circumstances, it was easier for northern farmers to attract funds, once the investments were considered less risky. The northern part of Italy “tended to be more dominated by market driven decisions (...) aimed at optimizing economic returns of their lands” (Niedertscheider & Erb 2014, p. 367)

In this context, notably until the end of World War II, the majority of the Southern region’s population was employed under one of three main regimes: Sharecropping, rental agreements or wage labour. Sharecropping occurs when large plots of land are divided into smaller, but complete farm units which are then rented to a family for a share of the harvesting. Rental arrangement occurs when small plots of land are rented to a family for a short period of

time in exchange of a cash payment (S. Cohen, 1979). Finally, the wage labour system refers to day workers that were paid in cash by farmers that directly cultivated their estates, usually under a low intensity regime (Niedertscheider & Erb 2014, p. 367). The landowner was the one who decided which of the aforementioned systems he wanted to use and the worker could only accept or deny the offer. But given the high level of poverty, unemployment and the few alternative opportunities available, farm workers usually found themselves obliged to accept the employer's proposal. In the case of sharecropping, landowners could determine the crops, planting techniques and force the cropper to share a great amount of production costs. Rental agreements were also established by the landowner and labour wages were low (S. Cohen, 1979). The above-mentioned elements, combined with a growing population, made it difficult for some people to secure good living conditions during the 19th and the 20th centuries (Vanzetti & Meissner, 1953). Many southern Italians thus left their country in search of better opportunities in the “New World” or in Northern Europe from 1880 to 1920 (Filhol, 2013). After World War II, important emigration flows started again, generally to countries in South America (Vanzetti & Meissner, 1953).

Due to Italy's substantial socio-economic problems related to the country's agricultural production and land use, the government decided to establish an agrarian reform, in 1950. This reform aimed to counter poverty and to increase production through land distribution and by enabling intensive crop cultivation. In order to put this reform into practice, the government also committed itself to bring new technologies to the fields, such as irrigation and drainage (Meissner, 1953). The 1950 Agrarian Reform, accompanied by other economic measures, secured Italy an impressive growth in agricultural productivity. Moreover, Italy's rapid industrialization during the 1950s and 1960s had repercussions in the role played by agriculture within the Italian society. On 1884, 60 % of Italians worked within the field of agriculture, but by 1970 this number fell to only 17% (Niedertscheider & Erb, 2014).

The arrival of migrant workers in the region started in 1970, when many Tunisiens came to work in Sicily. During the 80s, migrants from sub-Saharan Africa arrived, followed by East Europeans (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014). Since then, a growing number of migrants have been working in seasonal harvesting and today they have become an integral part of Mediterranean agricultural sector (Reyneri, 1998). Despite the fact that the South of Italy remains a region that faces considerable economic difficulties, there is a high demand for migrant labour in the field of agriculture nowadays. According to some researchers, this is so because today there is a disparity between the work that is available and the aspirations of the local population (Filhol,

2013). The labour market of the Mezzogiorno would be characterized by a "qualitative insufficiency resulting from the particularly high increase in the level of education of the new generations, which could be difficult to reconcile with the necessities of a productive system in which an important part of the activities is still concentrated in traditional sectors such as agriculture" (Cangiano & Strozza, 2005, p. 51). Due to new generations' increased access to higher education, their professional ambitions have changed, what caused them to refuse certain jobs judged unsuitable for their careers (Filhol, 2013).

Intensive agriculture requires seasonal work, which means that the amount of work needed in the field vary throughout the year. It is hard for farmers to know in advance how many employees they will need and the exact date of the harvest because they depend greatly on weather conditions and on market prices. In addition, Italian farmers have seen an increase in both national and international competition over the last decades, as well as a decrease in the subsidies given by the European Union (ibid).

The pressure by retailers and the lack of investment have also contributed to the precarization of southern Italy agriculture, which directly affects labour conditions (Corrado, 2017). Under these circumstances, hiring migrants has been an effective way to cut costs and thus increase profits (Filhol, 2013). This is so because many migrants, due to their marginalised situation, tend to accept lower salaries and precarious working conditions more easily (Corrado, 2017). In this context, migrant workers' situation is defined by:

Seasonality, long periods of unemployment, irregular employment conditions, hiring through the illegal mediation of gang-masters, wages lower than those established by collective bargaining agreements, piece-rate payment, long working hours, high physical exertion, unhealthy working conditions and exposure to occupational hazards. (Perrotta & Sacchetto 2014, p.76).

Following the harvest of a variety of crops, many migrants travel from region to region trying to find work. It is an integrated system that, following seasons and productions, pushes workers to migrate from a region to another, from Apulia for tomatoes to Calabria for watermelons and to Sicily for oranges (Corrado, 2017; Map 2 - Appendix).

Nowadays, the use of migrant labour force is an indispensable part of Southern Italy agriculture. Nevertheless, it is also important to notice that Italy has a long history of

underground economy. As already mentioned, during the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, an important amount of the Italian society worked as day workers in agricultural fields. By 1988, unregistered labour represented 20% of Italian labour force (Reyneri, 1998). For these informal arrangements, being part of a network is essential, with recruitment being made mainly through a “mouth to mouth” system - which makes the gang-master a crucial actor to establish connections. (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014).

Although many migrants rely on the caporali in order to find work, it does not always mean that they are satisfied with the way they are treated both by gang-masters and farmers. For instance, in 2011, a strike started when a gang-master required migrant to execute additional work by removing and discarding the green tomatoes for the same price. Nonetheless, the migrants were aware that they should be paid extra to perform that task. Once the caporale did not agree to their terms, the workers left the field. Afterwards, they joined forces with other farm workers and coordinated a roadblock (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014). Before that, in 2010, African migrants also organized themselves and rebelled against racist attacks that occurred in the city of Rosarno.

Many factors contribute to maintain migrants farm workers in a precarious situation. It can be argued that farmers and gang-masters have their share of responsibility by paying them poorly, making them work long hours and, sometimes, under unhealthy conditions. Nevertheless, to fully understand what indirectly allows and supports this local socio-economic structure, the following section will look at EU and Italian agriculture and migration legislations.

3.2 Legal Background

In this section we will provide a brief description of the legal context for migrants working in the agricultural field in Italy. To do so, we have to both analyse the current legislation regarding immigration and caporalato. We will start from the legislative provisions on immigration, because starting from the new century, these are the laws that define the legal status of the agricultural workers, and therefore their greater or lesser vulnerability to blackmail. Later in the analysis, we will further examine the impact of the Italian and European legislations on the conditions of the migrants in the agricultural sector.

Migration and Asylum

Italy has been, for much of its history, a land of emigration, and up until the mid-1980s the entry of foreigners into Italy was regulated by laws dating back to the fascist period (Aboubakar, 2019). In 1998, the law 40/1998, the so-called Turco - Napolitano law, was approved by a centre left government. The law was considered a synthesis between security and reception, but was abrogated 2002 by the Law Bossi Fini. However, a great merit of the new law was certainly the introduction within the Italian regulatory system of the *Testo Unico sull'Immigrazione*, (Legislative Decree 286/98), from here on called *Testo Unico*, a Unified Text on Immigration, repeatedly amended, which concentrate all the national rules concerning this sector, helping to simplify and to make Italian legislation on the matter more streamlined and orderly. One of the most important aspect is Article 18, which provides and regulates the issue of a residence permits, for the purpose of social protection, to non-EU foreign citizens victims of trafficking, offering them the possibility to escape from criminal organizations, by participating in assistance and social integration programs (Legislative Decree 286/98, art. 18). The provision was later extended to labour migrants victims of exploitation, through the 2016 Caporalato Law.

In 2002, the law 189/2002, the so called Bossi Fini, was approved by a right-centre government and amended *Testo Unico*. It moves in the direction of further tightening measures against migrants. The first element is the work contract which makes the migrant's stay in Italy dependent on an regular employment contract, with the consequence that if a migrant loses its job, at the same time he would lose the possibility of staying Italy. Moreover, the law included a tightening of the expulsion discipline: it was denied to the migrant the possibility to wait the outcome of a sentence for an expulsion order which was challenged by the migrant himself in court.

In 2009 a center right government issued the law 94/2009, the so-called "Security Package". The first of these provisions affirms the existence of a correlation between migration and security, by inserting the theme of immigration is moved to a section that deals with combining measures against migrants and the crime of terrorism. The second provision is granting powers to the mayors. Through this tool, the mayors, transformed into sheriffs, can adopt anti-immigrant measures in the name of the security of the cities they manage. The third provision is the introduction of the "crime of illegal immigration". Entry without of a visa or

the stay without a residence permit become a crime punishable by a fine from 5,000 to 10,000 euros.

The fifth immigration law is the decree 13/2017, the so-called Minniti-Orlando, later converted into a law passed by a center-left parliamentary majority in 2017. One of the main provisions is the abolishment of the second level of judgment for those seeking international protection after a the rejection. After the rejection they are denied the possibility to defend themselves in the third degree of judgment. When the expulsion cannot be immediate, the foreigners must be held in special detention centers (CPR).

The last legislative step is the one of 2018, with the approval of the so-called Security Decree or Salvini Decree, by the 5-Star Movement-Lega government. There are three main provisions. First of all, for migrants whose asylum request is pending, the decree stipulates that social services such as Italian language courses, vocational training and legal assistance will be withheld until the end of the asylum process, except if the applicant is an unaccompanied minor. The decree also stipulates that people whose asylum process is being examined cannot obtain an identification document, which in Italy is a precondition for signing an employment contract, renting a house, opening a bank account, accessing public housing, enrolling to public health care, and applying for welfare benefits. Secondly, the decree extends from three to six months the period of time Italian authorities can hold back new arrivals while their identities and nationalities are being verified, and allows for the revocation of protection status for those convicted of certain crimes. Thirly, the aspect that most affected migrants was the abolishment of the humanitarian protection permits, which had been granted to vulnerable people, families or single women with children, and people who had suffered trauma during their journey to Italy. Instead of humanitarian protection status, the Salvini decree introduces “special permits” for specific foreigners who prove to be victims of a limited set of circumstances or have serious health issues. The 19th of February 2019, the Italian Cassation Court established that the Salvini decree is not retroactively applicable before October 5 2018, when the new law went into effect (Mixed Migration Center 2019). However, the restrictive measures will still apply to new arrivals and, more importantly, to those who will have to renew their permits, estimated at approximately 40.000 people over the next two years, whose humanitarian permits will now not be extended (ISPI 2018).

Labour and exploitation

The first time in which caporalato was prohibited was in the art 27, of the law 264/1949, which punished such violations with a fine and with the seizure of the means of transport used for the purpose of the illegal activity. But the first time in which the crime of "Illicit intermediation and exploitation of labour" has been introduced in the Italian legislative system, inside the art. 603 of the penal code, was with the law 148/2011.

Law 190/2012, the so-called Rosarno Law, with which the European Directive 2009/52/EC (so-called Sanctions Directive) has been implemented, has tightened the sanctions against employers who hire workers irregularly, foreseeing aggravating penalties, in cases of particular labour exploitation. Moreover, this decree, in the case of particular labour exploitation, foresees that the foreigner, who reports or cooperates in the criminal proceedings against the employer, can obtain the issue of a residence permit, upon proposal or with the favorable opinion of the judge (pursuant to Article 22, paragraph 12, of Legislative Decree n. 286/1998, as last amended by Law No. 132 of 1 December 2018).

In 2014, with the law 116/2014, there was the attempt to empower agricultural production companies by creating an ethically oriented production chain, through the creation of a Quality Agricultural Work Network, to which agricultural companies without criminal convictions, ongoing criminal proceedings for violations of labour, social legislation and income and value added taxes, can register. The establishment of the Quality Agricultural Work Network proposed to base the demand for agricultural products on the ethics of production methods through the publication, by INPS (the Italian National Social Security Institute), of a list of agricultural companies that join the Network.

Finally, law 199/2016, the so-called Caporalato Law, has provided specific measures for seasonal workers in agriculture and extended the responsibilities and penalties for caporali and farmers who employ them. The main lines of intervention of the law concern: the rewriting of the crime of caporalato, as illicit intermediation and exploitation of labour, which introduces the sanctionability also for the employer; the application of a mitigating factor in the event of collaboration with the authorities; the obligatory arrest in *flagrante delicto*; the strengthening of the confiscation institute; the adoption of precautionary measures relating to the company in which the crime is committed; the extension to the victims of illegal employment of the provisions of the Anti-trafficking Fund; and the gradual realignment of wages in the agricultural sector. Specifically, this law reformulates, updates and strengthens the provisions of art. 603-bis of the Criminal Code which provides the sanctions in the presence of illicit

intermediation and exploitation of labour. The responsibility and the sanctions are therefore extended both to the caporali and to the farmers who resort to their intermediation.

Regional Laws: Apulia Region

The problems of the exploitation of workers in agriculture and the extremely poor conditions in which these people often live are very felt in the Puglia region, which acted through several interventions, during the years. In 2014 with DGR n. 627, the Region established a Task Force for Seasonal Work, which made it possible to tackle the problems of seasonal workers for the first time at the regional level. In 2016, in order to solve the problem of the numerous illegal settlements, a “Protocol against caporalato and labour exploitation in agriculture” was signed by various Ministries, in which the creation of new hospitality settlements for seasonal migrant workers was planned (resolution 929/2016). Moreover, in 2016 it was also approved by the Region the project *La Puglia non tratta*, a program of emergence, assistance and social integration of the victims of trafficking (Comune di Bari, 2016)

3.3. Presentation of different actors and migrants’ ghettos

Presentation of different actors

There are currently many different actors working with migrant farm labourers in the province of Foggia with the purpose of providing a variety of services, such as legal rights awareness, material and food aid. During our fieldwork we were primarily in contact with the following NGOs: Caritas, Oasi 2 and Intersos. Furthermore, we also contacted the trade union CGIL, IOM Italy, the Municipality of Cerignola, as well as the *Sportello di Immigrazione*, the Immigration Office of Cerignola.

Caritas International is a catholic organization founded in 1951 with the intent of supporting poor and marginalized people around the world (Caritas official website). Nowadays, Caritas has one main project in the province of Foggia: Presidio. This project aims to fight labour exploitation by providing a permanent structure that can ensure migrant farm workers a place of listening and guidance. The aid given by Caritas include material and food aid, but also legal rights awareness (Caritas Italy official website), with volunteers that help migrants to solve different sorts of issues, such as complications they might face in order to get

documents or problems they might have regarding rental or working contracts. Furthermore, Caritas operators go to ghettos many times a week to provide what they call “proximity service”.

Founded in 1992, Intersos is the largest Italian humanitarian organization. The NGO aims to bring relief to people affected by emergency situations through the provision of health care, shelter, education, as well as food and material aid (Intersos official website). In the province of Foggia, Intersos is one of the main organizations that work with migrant farm labourers. They provide mainly medical assistance, but also collaborate with local public institutions in order to defend migrants’ rights. Furthermore, they give migrants information about their legal rights, as well as orientation to social and legal services (Appendix 6).

Founded in 1994, Oasi 2 intends to promote people’s wellbeing by advocating for the right to health care, work, participation and citizenship, as well as by fighting marginalization. In the province of Foggia, they work mainly with victims of human trafficking, providing them with food and information. Furthermore, Oasi has a territorial service, which is closely linked with local public services. They implemented what they call “street units”, which are teams of operators that go around different cities in order to fight sexual and working exploitation. Their work is done in collaboration with the Apulia Region, for the already mentioned project, *La Puglia non tratta*.

Founded in 1951, IOM is the main organization that works in the field of migration. In the province of Foggia, IOM works mainly with human trafficking through the ADITUS project. Funded by the Italian Ministry of Interior, this project aims to provide legal information at landing sights, to identify victims of human trafficking, to train the staff of reception centers, as well as public institutions, - such as prefectures and police offices, - regarding family reunification, protection mechanisms and how to proceed when facing a victim of human trafficking (IOM Italy official website). Although working with migrant farm workers is not the main goal of their project, IOM Italy also works with this target group by providing information about the working conditions in the region, as well as legal rights counseling (Appendix 5).

CGIL, the Italian General Confederation of Labour, was founded in 1906 with the aim of providing assistance to workers in the event of accident, unemployment, illness or old age. CGIL is the oldest Italian trade union organization and the one that counts more members. Currently, it intends to build a network of solidarity among workers by assuring their representation in public institutions and by straightening workers’ bargaining power in order to

assure individual and collective rights (CGIL official website). In the province of Foggia, CGIL aims to help migrants to achieve better working conditions by providing legal rights awareness, orientation towards relevant legal services and also by acting as mediators in case of conflict between migrants and employers (Appendix 3).

Municipalities have limited power when it comes to migration, since migration is reserved exclusively to the legislative, regulatory and administrative competence of the State, and cannot be the object of Municipalities' intervention (Italian Constitution, art.17, comma 2). As a consequence, just the Ministry of Interiors and Prefectures have the competence to exercise the functions regarding migration. The coordination and management of refugee and asylum seekers is headed by the Prefecture and the assignments to private structures are carried out through calls for applications issued by the Prefecture itself. For this reason, the Municipalities are not an active part of these choices, but they are informed later, at the time of assigning the refugees to their respective territory.

The Immigration Office of Cerignola (Sportello Immigrazione) is responsible for the procedures of admission when a migrant worker first arrives in the Italian territory. It is also responsible for asylum demands, family reunification and to provide the test of Italian language proficiency (Immigrazione e cittadinanza). It consists on rights information activities, trainings for social and health workers, orientation for the migrants and their families in accessing the network of social services, healthcare, and education.

Presentation of the Settlements

During our fieldwork, we could visit two different settlements: Borgo Mezzanone and Tre Titoli. They are two among 10 settlements that exist currently in the province of Foggia (Gambino, 2017). Although the two largest groups of foreign farm workers in Italy are Romanians and Albanians (Corrado, 2018), the majority of people that inhabit both Borgo and Tre Titoli are African men. In addition, both settlements present high levels of precarity, with few dwellings having access to water, electricity and heating. Garbage collection and sewage systems are non-existent. It is also important to state that due to the seasonality of agricultural work, the number of people living in each settlement vary throughout the year. Also, people that inhabit these ghettos have different legal status and can be refugees, possess a humanitarian protection, have a work visa or be "irregular" (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014). Although these two ghettos present some similarities, they also have some particular features, which will be exposed in the following.

Borgo Mezzanone, also known as *La Pista*, was built in an ancient air base dating from 1934 which was active during the fascist period (Goffredo & Meret, 2017). There, the dwellings follow the path of the air base runway, with different habitations, such as containers and barracks, being present on both of its sides. There are also a few and small masonry houses, especially close to the entry of the settlement. Borgo Mezzanone is big - during informal talks, we were told that around 1000 people were living there and that this number could get way higher during the summer. In addition, in Borgo there are lots of commerces, such as restaurants, bars, barber shops and stores selling clothes, food products, etc. Although Borgo is mainly inhabited by African men, there are also Pakistani and Afghans living there, mainly developing commercial activities. Moreover, the brothel is easily identified, once it is the only place with a big concentration of women. During our walks around Borgo, we saw a church managed by Caritas and a mosque, apparently made by migrants themselves.

Borgo Mezzanone is a settlement where many nationalities cohabitate. Nevertheless, they are separated in different areas within the ghetto. So there is the Sudanese area, the Nigerian area, the Gambian area, the Pakistani area and so forth. Francophones tend to live closer to each other and the same can be said about the anglophones. Seemingly, this cohabitation is not always pacific. During different interviews and informal talks, we have heard that conflicts occur between nationalities or between anglophones and francophones (Appendix 1; Appendix 6; Appendix 7). However, we cannot confirm the veracity of those statements. Finally, Borgo has been the scenario of many evictions over the last months - The evictions have increased since the current government came into power (Foggia Today, 2019a).

Tre Titoli developed right in the middle of agricultural fields where brocolis, wheat, aspargos, olives and grapes are cultivated. The settlement is composed of scattered, abandoned brick houses that have no access to electricity, running water or heating. In addition, the dwellings are overcrowded and the number of people living in each house can get bigger during the summer, just like in Borgo Mezzanone. Nevertheless, Tre Titoli is a smaller settlement. From informal talks, we were told that there were around 300 people living there by the time of our field work. This settlement got our attention because its surroundings are beautiful, with fields and hills going as far as one can see. Besides, once the houses are scattered, the dirt that inevitably comes when living in such conditions is not so shocking. In addition, this year, Caritas inaugurated a center in Tre Titoli. Close by the Caritas center, there are some commerces, such as a barber shop and a bar, an open kitchen and a brothel. As in Borgo, the

brothel was the only place where there was a concentration of women. Finally, Tre Titoli is mainly inhabited by Ghanaians and for this it is also known as *Ghana House*.

Analytical Discussion

In this section, we will try to answer to the research question, by analysing the main factors that we believe contribute to maintain the system of labour exploitation of migrant farm workers through three different perspectives: historical and social, legislative and political; and economical. During the historical and social part, we will argue that ancient exploratory practices in the field of agriculture still persist and contribute to the exploitation of migrant farm works. In addition, we will analyse how a context of widespread irregularity and poverty, which are characteristics of the province of Foggia, may contribute to maintain this system of labour exploitation; During the legal section, we will argue that Italian migration laws are mainly based on a combination of securitization and humanitarianism. The former, tend to develop control and security measures in order to manage human mobility; while the later justify the development of emergency measures and tend to portray migrants as victims; we argue that both approaches, although in different ways, contribute to maintain the exploitation of migrant farm workers. The third section of the analysis will focus on how a neoliberal globalization regime affects the way the agricultural sector is structured in Southern Italy and the consequences it brings to both farmers and migrant workers.

4. Historical continuities and the current context of widespread irregularity in the province of Foggia

In this part of the analysis we will argue that the exploitation of farm workers in the region of Foggia is not new, but that it follows a pattern already in place during the 19th century. Making this parallel allow for a better understanding of foreign farm workers' situation today, once it shows the continuities of social and economic practices that are long rooted in Southern Italian agriculture. From this historicized perspective, we will analyse some current irregular practices in the field of agriculture, as well as in other domains. Our aim is to illustrate how these practices may affect migrant farm workers and contribute to their continuous exploitation. Finally, we will discuss how poverty, and its connection to the informal economy may influence migrants' working and living conditions.

4.1 Historical perspective and current trends of irregularity in the agricultural field

As it was highlighted in section 3.1, the South of Italy is a region that has shown high levels of poverty for a long period of time. Since the 19th century, Italian farm labourers faced harsh working and living conditions. Until the Agrarian Reform (1950), the majority of Italian farm workers lived with their families in houses containing one or two rooms, with no electricity, running water and indoor plumbing (Kish, 1966). Once the Southern peasant was dependent on the prevailing land tenure system, their houses were usually located near marketplaces where they went "early in the morning hoping to be hired for the day by the managers of nearby landed estates" (ibid, p.46). Their villages expressed a strong need of companionship in times of difficulty. Peasants had low nutrition and income levels, with agricultural workers getting an average of one dollar per day and working only around 150 days per year. Furthermore, the agricultural field presented high rates of unemployment, which made job security a great concern for labourers (Cohen, 1979; Kish, 1966).

In addition, the caporalato system is not new in Southern agriculture. The estate managers of past agriculture land plots that used to go to marketplaces in order to hire and regroup workers are the first version of today's gang-masters. Back then, the caporali were Italians workers, former workers or a person that was known in the community. The caporali used to go to the same place everyday in order to tell labourers if there was work and to hire the ones he needed. Stefano, the regional coordinator of project Presidio and a criminal lawyer, told us during an interview: "(...) further down there is Piazza Mercadante, where the theater is

situated, - it was historically the place where the Cerignola labourers - when they returned from the countryside, at 5h30/6h in the afternoon - they stopped and waited for the passage of the caporali to know if the next day there was work.” (Appendix 2, p.30). A 1905 investigation by the Labour Office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce noted that the plain of Foggia had employed, in the May-July period for wheat harvest, 68,000 workers. This survey estimated that almost three quarters of the harvesters of the region had been recruited by caporali, noting that the cost of the mediation sometimes amounted to the 10% of the workers’ salary (Perrotta, 2014).

In this context, it is inaccurate to say that the exploitation of farm workers in the South of Italy, including the province of Foggia, started with the arrival of migrants in the 1970s (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014). According to Rafaella, a lawyer that works for CGIL trade union: “This is a territory in which exploitation has always existed, where caporalato has always existed. (...) this is a system that stands as it is, and if you take something out of it, it falls.” (Appendix 3, p.35). Thus, we argue that these past exploratory practices in the agricultural field contributes to maintain the exploitation of migrant farm workers nowadays, once all the socio-economic arrangements were already in place for this system to perpetuate. There is a clear continuity between the working and living conditions faced by farm workers in the past and the ones found today. Italy’s high level of industrial development during the 1950s and 1960s made it possible for many Italians to leave agricultural labour and look for better life standards (Niedertscheider & Erb, 2014). At the same time, although Southern Italy is still a region that faces extensive economic problems, young people started to get access to better education and thus did not want to work in the agricultural field. Working in agriculture did not seem to fit their professional ambitions and they started to refuse some jobs judged incompatible with their studies (Filhol, 2013). When possible, families would financially support their newly graduated members until they found a more suitable job, instead of letting them accept a work that was perceived as unsuitable for their careers. This social practice is still common in the South, including the province of Foggia (ibid).

Under these circumstances, migrants started to arrive and to replace Italians in agricultural work (Reyneri, 1998). This was well summarized by Pap, a Senegalese cultural mediator, during an interview:

It's an old system. In the fields where I worked recently, I spoke with an [Italian] old man who was there. (...). He worked his whole life in

the fields. So yesterday's Italians have become today's migrants. Yesterday, they were exploited by the caporali - Italians like them. And now, the system has changed. And they were replaced by the migrants. (Appendix 7, p.105).

Migrant farm workers now face poor working and living conditions. In the province of Foggia, today's ghettos can be compared, to a certain degree, to yesterday's "peasants' town" (Kish, 1966). This is so because, as before, the majority of migrant houses do not have electricity, running water and indoor plumbing. Until today, the dwellings of farm workers are overcrowded, just like the houses of past Italian peasants (ibid). Furthermore, the location of migrant settlements is also directly related to the work of the caporali (or yesterday's land managers). The ghettos are placed where the caporali go everyday in order to hire and transport labourers to agricultural fields. It is almost impossible for migrants to find work in agriculture if they are not in the settlements (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014). Today's settlements also seem to work as places that represent a need of companionship. In both Borgo Mezzanone and Tre Titoli, migrants divide themselves between nationalities and/or mother language, building a sense of community and mutual help among their members (Appendix 6; Appendix 7; Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014). Finally, today's farm workers are still poorly paid and are employed as day workers, which provides weak job security (Corrado, 2017).

As before, in the province of Foggia, many migrants continue to be employed without a contract, especially the ones in an irregular situation. For those who do have documents, however, there is a new modality of contracts that offer employers more security against controls - they are called *grey contracts* (Dines & Rigo, 2015). These contracts are regular, once what is written in them is accepted by the Italian Law. On paper, it follows what is established in the national legislation. Nevertheless, in reality, what is written in it is not followed (Appendix 5). Employers' aim is only to show the authorities, on paper, that their workers are regularly employed. Isah, a Ghanaian cultural mediator working for Caritas, gives us a good example: "The contract that they give us and the things that we do are no good... They give us three hours contracts and we are working the whole day. From morning to evening" (Appendix 1, p.9). While the contract says the person is hired as a part time worker, he/she is actually working full time - or even extra hours. Furthermore, the grey contracts will usually state that the worker is gaining a fair wage, which is not what actually happens. This means that the employer does not pay all the taxes and social benefits he/she should pay and

that he\she does not pay the worker the amount established in the contract. If authorities come to control conditions at the farm, the employers can show them the grey contracts and easily get away from punishment. This is so because controllers do not know for how many hours labourers actually work nor how much they actually get. They just go to the farms, unattended, in order to see if there are people working without contracts. In such conditions, local authorities may easily think that workers are hired under working standards established by Italian legislation. As stated by Stefano: “the grey labour is right now the real problem. Because black labour is too big of a risk even for the farmer” (Appendix 2, p.25)

Furthermore, it can be argued that the way labour contracts are made in the field of agriculture contributes to the exploitation of foreign workers, especially in a region where irregular activities are recurrent. In Italy, agricultural contracts are quite flexible. This is so because if a person is, for example, hired from January 2019 until December 2019, it does not mean that he/she will work from Monday to Friday every week. Although you are hired for that period of time, it is the employer who decides when he/she needs you to come to work. Otherwise you do not work and thus you do not get paid. This is based on the principle that agricultural work cannot be predicted: It is impossible to know when fruits and vegetables will mature, for instance (Appendix 2). In addition, according to the Italian legislation, the employer has to report the days in which each farm labourer has come to work, but only in the next trimester. This means that if a person worked 10 days from January to March, it is only around April or May that the employer will report the correspondent working days. This was well summarized by Stefano during his interview:

So, basically I hired you - from January 2019 to December 2019 - but from January to March, I called you for just three working days. I will report these three working days in April, in the following trimester, in respect to January-March. So the work is by necessity day labour (...) the fact that the work is daily is due to how the contract is structured in agriculture (...). Paradoxically, I can open your job position from January to December and not even call you for a day - as a consequence, I didn't even pay you a day and you won't be entitled to unemployment [benefits]. But this is legal. (Appendix 2, p.30).

This is legal and works the same for both migrants and Italians. This can become highly problematic for foreign workers if farmers do not always report the correct amount of days each migrant has worked (Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 5). On their side, many migrants don't know the Italian system well and do not usually make notes stating the exact days they have worked during a given period of time and in which farm. Many times, they don't even know their employer's name (Appendix 1; Appendix 5; Appendix 7). As a result, many don't get paid as they should and it becomes quite hard to prove how much the employer owes them once, after one or two months, many don't remember the specific days they have worked and for which employer. About this, IOM Italy told us during an interview: "How can you prove which days you have worked to calculate how much money they owe you? So we say, sit down and write the number of days and hours, but also try to find out the names of the people you are working for" (Appendix 5, p.7).

During informal talks and by conducting interviews, we realized that many other irregular activities are connected with the exploitation of migrant workers in the province of Foggia. From what we heard, different employers and some locals try to benefit from migrants' labour. According to Raffaele, in 2006, Apulia regional law 28 passed stating that farmers have to declare a minimum number of workers per hectare of tomato plantation. This law calculates, in average, how many people you need to work in one hectare of tomato fields and for how many days. If you do not declare the minimum number of employees and the minimum amount of working days, the EU could stop given the farmer subsidies (Apulia regional law 28/2006). His argument was that thus, sometimes, employers regularly declare their workers in order to get the financial aid. Nevertheless, the taxes and social benefits that are regularly paid do not always go to foreign workers, but to locals that buy them from the employers. This works in directly connection with grey labour (Appendix 3). It can happen that the working days of migrants that are not reported by their employers will be, instead, declared to Italians, who pay for it, in order to be able to apply for unemployment benefits. In reality, the migrant is the one working, but an Italian may get some of his/her social benefits. Although we cannot confirm the veracity of this information, different actors repeatedly told us the same thing (Appendix 1; Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 5).

4.2 The caporali

Currently, many of the Italian caporali were replaced by migrants. From the informal talks and the interviews we conducted, it seems that Italian caporali still exist, but they are less in number and usually manage Italian workers (Appendix 5). A caporale can be defined as a person who illegally intermediates labour relations in a variety of sectors, such as agriculture and construction. The caporale “acts as a social mediator” (Perrotta & Sacchetto 2014, p. 82), connecting migrants with local farmers. Today, their activities consist in negotiating wages with landowners, finding the workers needed in the plantations, transporting them to the fields and supervising their work. Workers and farmers rarely know each other, the caporale try to make sure that this connection does not take place, once it would make part of their work - negotiating salaries and finding labourers - useless. Isah, working for Caritas as a cultural mediator, explained it well during an interview:

You can work two or three months, but you don't know the Italian people that own the farms. Because of the caporale. He will go to the Italian, go and talk with the Italians. (...). When you go home [after work], you wait for the caporale to come and pay you. You [the worker] don't know any Italians. So if the caporale didn't give your money... The Italian people won't directly give you money. (Appendix 1, p.4)

In exchange for their work, the caporale take a portion of the farm workers' pay and, additionally, they charge 5 euros from each person per day for transporting them to the fields. Sometimes, these “social mediators” manages every aspect of the migrants' life, providing them with housing and food (Dines & Rigo, 2015).

Nevertheless, this arrangement is also quite convenient for farmers as well. Italy is the largest producer of tomatoes in Europe and around one third of this production is based in the province of Foggia (Corrado, 2017). Tomato production requires a lot of manpower during few and specific days, depending on the maturation of the fruit. The harvest cannot wait because if the tomatoes stay too long under the Southern summer heat they easily rot (Ercolano, Carli & Soria, 2008; Appendix 3; Appendix 8). In this context, the caporali are very useful to the farmers because they can go to the ghettos and gather a big group of workers when the landowner needs it. As Raffaele, the representative from CGIL, puts it: “It is much more complicated to call 40 people, one by one, to tell them: come to work tomorrow. (...) another

issue is how to take people directly to the fields. Many migrants cannot rent a place [in town], because they do not gain enough, (...) and it is hard to transport them around the region. This is why the caporale intervenes.” (Appendix 3, p.37-38). Moreover, the caporali supervise the workers while they are in the field, which is also helpful for the farmers (Appendix 1; Appendix 3; Appendix 7).

Although many say that the caporali exploit migrant workers and get paid without working (Appendix 1; Appendix 7), there also is another side of the situation that must be considered. It is hard to say that the caporali do not work once they negotiate wages, find and regroup workers, transport them to the field and supervise their work. What can be questioned is why they charge farm labourers for their work instead of charging the farmers. According to the viewpoint of Pap, the cultural mediator working for *Cerignola Sportello di Migrazione*, the caporali are also exploited by landowners: “Because his [caporale] work is not regular, he does not have a contract of employment. (...). It's always like this, it's a chain ... But the most exploited are always the migrant workers.” (Appendix 7, p.97). In this way, it can be argued that, although migrant farm labourers are the ones who find themselves in the most precarious situation and that they are indeed exploited by both farmers and caporali, gang-masters are also exploited within the agro-business production chain.

Migrant farm workers live in ghettos for both social and economic reasons. Firstly, they rarely get enough money to be able to pay a rent in the city (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014). If, for one reason or another, they manage to earn enough to leave the settlements, it can still be hard to find a place to stay. Our informants gave us quite different answers when asked if they thought it was hard for African farm workers to live in the city. Isah told us many people were racist and, for this reason, it was difficult for him to find a house in the beginning. After getting to know some locals, he now lives in the city with another friend, also from Ghana (Appendix 1). Stefano told us that it is not because locals are racist that they prefer not to rent to Africans. This would be because migrant workers are usually single, young men and thus owners might be afraid of how they would treat the apartment (Appendix 2). Raffaele, in contrast, said it is not true that it is hard for African migrants to find housing in the city if they have the conditions to pay the rent. He said Foggia is a poor region, where many properties are empty, so owners would rent them to anyone willing to pay (Appendix 3). It is hard to say which of these answers better portray the reality of Foggia, maybe they all partially illustrate the situation. However, given the great concentration of migrants living in ghettos, it is hard to imagine that they can easily get access to dwellings in cities. Besides, other scholars studying migrant farm workers

agree that the local population tends to be racist, making it harder for migrants to leave the ghettos (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014; Oliveri, 2015c).

Secondly, there is another important reason that keeps migrants inside the settlements: the caporali. Migrants also live in ghettos because that is where the caporali are. For the former to find work day after day, they need to be in the ghettos because that is where workers are hired, regrouped and transported to the fields (ibid). In the region of Foggia, fields are vast and great distances can be traversed between them. Furthermore, there is usually no public transport connecting ghettos to the cities and, even in the rare cases where public transport is not that far away, it would represent an extra daily cost for migrants. And it does not matter if a person lives in the city or in the ghettos, going from one's dwelling directly to the fields is not allowed by the caporali. Migrants must go to work with them and pay for the transport (Interview Kofi). It is also important to state that, since the caporali do not let migrants contact landowners, farm workers don't necessarily know where they will work for the day. They just get inside the caporale's vehicle and wait to be transported (Appendix 1; Appendix 5). All of the aforementioned elements contribute to the exploitation of migrant farm workers in the region. This spatial seclusion, facilitates the control of the caporali, once it keeps migrants tied to them in order to find and go to work (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014).

To conclude, the exploitation of farm workers is not new in Foggia. Since the 19th century peasants' working and living conditions were hard and poverty levels among them were high. Over time, this system of exploitation has continued, but it has also developed some new features, such as the grey contract and the figure of the migrant caporale. New irregularities have developed, which bring direct consequences to foreign farm workers, increasing the level of labour exploitation and thus increasing the precarity and marginalization of this group. In the next section, we will analyse how some accepted social practices and the high levels of criminality in Southern Italy may affect migrant workers.

4.3 A context of diffuse irregularity in the province of Foggia

The aforementioned elements illustrate a context of widespread irregularity in the agricultural field within the province of Foggia, which contributes to the exploitation of migrant workers. However, it can be argued that this diffuse irregularity can also be found in other domains and that these domains, sometimes, permeate the agricultural sector and/or affect migrant workers. Firstly, this can be exemplified by the high levels of criminality found in the province of Foggia. The region of Apulia has a widespread criminality. Within Apulia, Foggia is the province that

presents the greatest levels of criminality (Pasculli, 2011). This contributes to further increase irregular practices, once criminal associations permeate different sectors of social life, from family and individual relations to institutional organizations. A typical crime in the province of Foggia is called “Cavalli di ritorno” which happens when a car is stolen and afterwards the criminals ask the car’s owner for money in order to give back the vehicle (ibid). Alessandro, representative of Intersos, told us during an interview that “Here [province of Foggia], there is the biggest market of stolen cars in Italy. There is this beautiful joke panel that says “welcome to Cerignola” and after this, it is written “your car is already here” (Appendix 6, p.79).

However, criminal offenses are not limited to the theft of cars. They are also an integral part of the region’s agriculture. The mafia takes part in activities encompassing the production, processing and transport of food goods as long as they can generate illicit profits or allow for money laundering.

Agriculture allows for laundering proceeds from drug trafficking, racketeering and usury, which are also the tools organised crime resorts in order to exercise control over these regions, alongside new methods which blur the boundaries between criminals, on the one hand, and political and economic actors, on the other, heavily influencing public and economic policies. (Corrado 2018, p.12)

The informal sector in Italy is worth around 190 billion euros and agriculture is the second sector in terms of added value. With this amount of money involved, the agricultural field presents multiple opportunities for criminal activities, ranging from human trafficking to distribution and logistics. In a context highly penetrated by criminal organizations, irregular practices become even more common. This surely contribute to the exploitation of migrant farm workers once criminal organizations influence agricultural business with the aim of increasing profits regardless of working standards and human rights (ibid).

Another example of how irregular practices found in different levels of Southern society may affect agricultural business and migrant workers is the practice of *bustarella*. *Bustarella* is a term that can literally be translated as “little envelope” and it refers to an envelope where money is hidden in order to assure favours or facilitate different processes. It is thus a synonym for bribe. Italy is a country where corrupt practices are current and *bustarella* has become a common term to represent this kind of favours exchange. It has been depicted as a widespread

practice in land development and contracts and as a way used to describe a large system of bribes involving party officials. Parties can then enter the bureaucratic system and assure their interested will be followed (Guerra, 2018). In 2013, the Prime Minister at the time, Silvio Berlusconi, stated during a television interview that: “Bribes are a phenomenon that exists and it is useless to deny the existence of these necessary situations (...). These are not crimes. We are talking about paying a commission to someone (...)” (Transparency international, 2013).

Nevertheless, this practice is not only used among politicians, but is also prevalent in society. Frequently, the practice of *bustarella* is used to accelerate processes, such as the exchange of services, or as a way to achieve work (Guerra, 2018). While we were doing our field work, there was an open inquiry in the municipality of Cerignola to investigate a bribery case involving the mayor and an entrepreneur that provided construction services for the city (Foggia Today, 2019b). In addition, it seems that many farmers use to pay controllers in order to know beforehand when controls will occur. Controls happen when public servants, controllers, go to farms in order to check if the people working there have regular contracts. According to Alessandro, the medical coordinator from Intersos:

Sometimes, the farmers know that there will be a control. They know it beforehand. So, sometimes, it is a beautiful sunny day and you do not expect to find anyone in the ghettos and then you find somebody and you ask “why are you here and not at work?” “well, today, the employer told me not to go because there is a control again (Appendix 6, p.78)

Last year, in the province of Foggia, three controllers and two labour consultants were arrested for falsifying the result of eight controls carried out in different farms and for violating the obligation to communicate the judicial authorities about crimes they have witnessed (Foggia Today, 2018).

Furthermore, Southern Italy has a common social practice that is called *Omertà*. *Omertà* is a code of honour that requires people to keep silence about crimes and other irregular activities they might have seen or came to know about. A person must protect the identity of the perpetrator from the authorities even if he\she is the victim of the crime. *Omertà* makes it possible that criminal organizations rely on the silence of entire communities to protect themselves against the authorities (Sergi, 2018). Commonly, there is no explicit prohibition for a person to keep silent - instead, what is demanded is a voluntary omission. In this context,

many Southern communities consider silence the best practice when it comes to situations unconnected with oneself or with one's family. This behavior "entrenched as it is in popular culture, may or may not have anything to do with the mafia protection rackets" (ibid, p.299). This comes in line with our own experience in the field. While in the province of Foggia, many people were unwilling to talk about the mafia and/or the caporali with us and told us not to mention it when talking to strangers. In addition, two actors with whom we conducted interviews had the impression that local people tended to keep silent about irregular activities they knew about. Both of them, one coming from the North of Italy and the other from Ghana, discussed this with us. Alessandro, from Intersos, told us that "coming here [province of Foggia], I understood that whatever happens here that is very serious, stays here." (Appendix 6, p.78). Isah said something similar to us when asked if migrants use to go to trade unions and to the police asking for help: "The problem is, you know... Especially in Cerignola... People know each other. So if you go talk to someone about what is happening to you, they will never do something against that person... Because they know each other." (Appendix 1, p11).

The above mentioned elements illustrate a context where irregularity is found in different domains. We argue that this widespread irregularity jeopardize migrant workers in different ways. Firstly, once people are less willing to get involved and to discuss matters that don't directly relate to them, irregularities and crimes that concern farm workers' may easily go unpunished. Secondly, the diffuse practice of using bribe as a mean to protect one's interests also affects migrants. Controllers accepting money from farmers clearly contributes to maintain migrants in conditions of exploitation and precarity, once laws and regulations made to insure better working conditions are not followed. During an interview, Raffaele told us that, sometimes, even if controllers go to the farms and find irregularities regarding the working conditions of farm works, an investigation won't be open because it can cause them problems and he continues: "Because they [police officers] were soft, they did some agreements with the companies, or prevented magistrates to go on with the investigations" (Appendix 3, p.35). This was actually confirmed by the arrest of three controllers and two labour consultants last year.

Furthermore, in a context where irregularity is found in a variety of domains, it may become difficult to work within the boundaries of regularity. Alessandro explained to us how trade unions, in some situation, work outside the frame of the law. At a given moment, Intersos got in touch with a trade union (the name of the union was not mentioned) saying that thirty farm workers were willing to file a lawsuit against their employer and asked if the union could work with their case. According to Alessandro, the answer was that instead of suing the

employer, they could try to directly negotiate with the farmer for better wages. Once workers were getting an average of 3.50 euros per hour, the union was proposing to negotiate and try to increase it to 4.50 or 5 euros (Appendix 6). Curiously, when we conducted an interview with Raffaele, from CGIL, he told us something similar. According to Raffaele, after CGIL intervention and “awareness building” (Appendix 3, p.37) in cases involving migrant farm workers, some labourers started to get 4 or 4.50 euros an hour instead of 3 or 3.50 euros. He also mentions the informal negotiations that are done directly with employers (Appendix 3). Nevertheless, this situation may be quite problematic since 4.50 euros is below the minimum wage established for the field of agriculture. In Italy, minimum wages are established through collective bargaining agreements, which are signed by trade unions. Different sectors have different minimum wages and agriculture already has the lowest one when compared to other sectors, around 874.65 euros per month (Money Italia, 2019). Thus CGIL was negotiating wages below the levels established by the wage agreements they have signed. Although Alessandro did not agree with the way trade unions proceeded in cases like this, he felt that it was hard to judge which was the right procedure to adopt:

The matter of that conversation, of that trade union, was related to the fact that, in the opinion of this person of the trade union, the [regular] process was so long that there would have been no change. And getting one euro per hour more, would be a more interesting change for both the community of workers, the employer and even for the trade union. (...). It is not so easy. I mean, I dislike this way of thinking, but you have to understand that if you look at all the variables, it is very hard to understand what is good and what is not good. (Appendix 6, p.85).

All the aforementioned elements show how a context widespread irregularity may jeopardize migrant farm workers. The role played by criminal organizations in the field of agriculture contributes to increase irregular practices that pay little or no attention to foreign labourers working conditions and to expand profits regardless of human rights. Some social practices, such as *omertà* and *bustarella*, also have direct consequences in the lives of migrants. Keeping silent about those that contribute to maintain the exploitation of migrant farm workers surely does not help to improve their situation. Furthermore, the current practice of accepting bribes among public servants also affects migrants, once workers rights are forgotten in the pursuit of

personal interests. In this context, it can be hard for trade unions to always work within the frame of regularity. Lawsuits can last long and protect the interest of those with more power, thus acting outside the frame of law may be considered as a better solution. In any case, those who end up losing more than anyone else are the farm workers who rarely see their rights upheld and are continuously exploited.

4.4 Poverty and Precarity

Historically, the Mezzogiorno has presented high levels of poverty (Kish, 1966). Nowadays, it is still the poorest area in Italy, when compared to the center and the north, and poverty levels have even increased over the past years. According to Italy's National Institute of Statistics, absolute poverty levels have increased from 8.6% in 2014 to 10.3% in 2017 (Instat 2018). In Apulia, region that encompasses the province of Foggia, poverty levels are even higher, going up to 21.6% in 2017 (ibid). As Raffaele told us during an interview: "There are two things [in the province of Foggia]. One is a context of irregularity, and the other one is a context of poverty, a widespread poverty" (Appendix 3, p.35). When walking around the city of Cerignola, we predominantly saw simple houses/buildings and different abandoned commerces. The city is small and quiet, with many old people meeting up during the afternoon. The young still leave looking for better working opportunities elsewhere (Cangiano & Strozza, 2005).

Under these circumstances, the informal economy has flourished. During this paper, we will refer to informal economy as economical activities developed in "independence from the state's rules" (Hart 2006, p.3). In the South of Italy, the informal economy is historically linked with a wide range of self-employed workers, micro-enterprises and subsistence economy. In the 1980s, this phenomenon greatly increased because of high unemployment rates, which allowed for the development of work flexibility and informal arrangements (Quassoli, 1999). Conforming to a report by the European Commission, already in 1988, irregular labour represented more than 20% of the total workforce in Italy and most of it was found in the Southern region (Reyneri, 1998). The informal economy in Southern Italy is connected with few opportunities for regular jobs and with high levels of labour exploitation. Informal activities are not only developed by migrants, but also by Italian women and young people (Quassoli, 1999), who face the highest levels of unemployment (Reyneri, 1998). Nowadays, it is a structural part of the economy and it encompasses a variety of sectors, such as agriculture

and construction. Against this background, irregular employment represents a first inclusion in the labour market for many migrants (Corrado, 2018).

In this sense, it can be argued that irregular work at least provides many migrants with the bare minimum in order to live, as stated by Pap: “What is good is that it gives the minimum. Even though the work is not good, if he is exploited, he can always find a job to gain some money in order to solve his little problems. (...). It prevents people from stealing or doing other things. He can work, he can manage to work a little.” (Appendix 7, p.98). This is important to notice because, according to Pap and Isah, earning some money is the main objective of many African migrants that arrive in Europe: “But you know that some of us, Africans, if we come to Europe, the only thing we think about is money first” (Appendix 1, p.13). In addition, Pap told us: “When I came here, the first thing I had in my head was how to get money. Not to get to know my rights... This does not interest many migrants.” (Appendix 7, p.104). Irregularity is part of human societies and it can bring resilience and stability. Working irregularly may be a way of subverting constraints (Ledeneva, 2018). Under these circumstances, the informal economy can be considered as a way marginalized people find to make a living when other options are not available (Hart, 2006).

Nevertheless, the unregulated labour market found in the province of Foggia is strongly connected with the poverty and precarity of those that work within it. Therefore, it makes migrant farm labourers more vulnerable to exploitation (Hansen, 2010). Christian M. Rogerson, a South African geographer, call some informal activities “survivalist”. According to him, this type of work is done when individuals are unable to find regular wage employment or when they do not have access to an economic sector of their preference. The income generated from this kind of activity is not enough to secure minimum living standards. Poverty and the attempt to survive are the main characteristics behind survivalist work (Rogerson, 1996). This was well exemplified by both Pap and Isah. They said that even if some migrants try to get a better payment by refusing to work for less, others will come and accept whatever price is offered because they consider it better than nothing (Appendix 1; Appendix 7).

When walking around Borgo Mezzanone and Tre Titoli the precarity of migrants’ living conditions was noticeable. Trash was everywhere around the barracks\houses, people were living in tiny barracks\containers or in overcrowded abandoned houses with no access to toilets, running water, heating or electricity. In Borgo Mezzanone, there were a strong smell of dirt mixed up with a smell of trash. We met people with serious addiction and health issues. As

stated by Alessandro, from Intersos, “in a condition of need you just try to survive” (Appendix 6, p.87).

There is no doubt that migrant farm workers face very precarious working and living conditions in the province of Foggia. In this part of the analysis, we have argued that this situation is not new. Rather, it represents the continuity of a system that was already in place during the 19th century. Poverty in Southern Italy was widespread and peasants’ lives were filled with precarity and socio-economic limitations. Surely, some elements have changed over the years, such as the figure of the caporale and the presence of migrants that greatly replaced Italian farm workers. In addition, nowadays, a widespread context of irregularity also contributes to maintain the exploitation of migrant workers, once laws are not always followed as they should and personal interests often prevail. It is also important to consider the high levels of poverty in the province of Foggia, which contribute to the development of the informal economy. This phenomenon allows migrants to find a job more easily. Nevertheless, the informal economy is poorly regulated and thus migrants are easily subjected to a great level of exploitation and precarity, having little choice but to comply with terrible working conditions (Filhol, 2013). In the following part, we will analyse how EU and Italian migration policies contribute to support a system of labour exploitation and thus to maintain migrants in a precarious and marginalized situation.

5. Juridical vulnerability: between securitization and humanitarianism

In the previous section we have analysed to what extent migrants are vulnerable to exploitation in the light of the social and historical context in which they find themselves - under conditions of poverty and irregularity. In this section, we analyse in which ways migrants are affected by their legal status. This chapter is structured as follows: the first part is devoted to the failure of the Italian quota system, the so-called *decreti flussi*, and the lack of legal routes for migrants to come to Italy for working reasons. We will argue that the management of the migrant workforce is parallel to the approach used by the EU to manage migration flows and the protection of borders: a strategy characterized by a mixture of securitization and humanitarianism. In the following parts, we will analyse how both the securitization approach and the humanitarian approach impacted on the policies made by the Italian state. We will use the notion of *deportability*, in correlation to the security measures that criminalize and marginalize

undocumented migrants. And we will debate how the humanitarian approach privileges policies that protect migrants just when they are found to be in a slave-like conditions of extreme exploitation. From here, we will argue that the Italian policies aimed at fighting labour exploitation are repressive policies that, even though they do punish caporali and farmers, fail to address the structural conditions that make migrant labour particularly weak and liable to the exploitation. In the last part, we will analyse some of the attempts that have been made in Italy to understand and solve the situations that make labour migrants vulnerable.

5.1 EU migration approach and the failure of the Italian Quota system

Italian policies on labour migration are based on an entry system for non-EU citizens into Italian territory which relies on an employer-driven mechanism requiring a specific request from a resident employer. In Italy, the quota system, based on the yearly *decreti flussi*, constitutes the main source of regulation of labour migration, setting quotas for different categories of workers (Law No. 40/1998, *Testo Unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero*). Each year the Government adopts a special decree that determines the maximum number of visas issued to third-country nationals for the purpose of dependent and autonomous work (Staiano, 2016).

The Italian quota system is not uncommon across Europe, where member states have planned their labour migration law and policy on the grounds of labour market demands for workers (ibid). This approach to third countries labour migrants can be linked to what Hansen and Jonsson call 'demographic colonialism', related to EU migration policies towards Africa. Hansen and Jonsson seek to relate current migration policies to those of the early phases of European integration arguing that, in the period from the 1920s and onward, the migration policies of the European countries have been largely shaped by demographic projections, regardless of whether these actors have promoted emigration from Europe, immigration into Europe, or so-called circular migration. Presumed demographic 'imbalances' (population surplus or deficit) have been used to justify a range of different migrant regimes. In the various Europe - Africa partnerships that have been promoted since the 1920s, power and agency have always been on the European side, while Africa has figured as a safety valve ensuring Europe's stability (Hansen & Jonsson, 2011). This can be related to our fieldwork. The precarious situation of migrant farm workers and, to a certain extent, even the situation of the African caporali who work without a contract and rely on the farmer in order to develop their labour, clearly illustrate that, nowadays, power continues to be on the European side. In Southern Italy,

African migrants continue to be used as a tool in order to bring stability and profit to the national agricultural sector. This is especially important to consider when, as already mentioned, around 50% of the workforce in Italian agriculture comes from foreign nationals (CREA, 2017) and that this flexible and cheap workforce allow farmers, big retailers and supermarkets to increase their profits (Corrado, 2018)

As it is shown in TABLE 1, since 2011 Italy has limited the annual quota system regulating entry for third-country national workers, maintaining a limited access for only those who have attended training programs in their countries of origin, high-skilled migrants, and seasonal workers (Dines & Rigo, 2015). At the same time, there have not been any regularization programmes (so called *sanatorie*) for undocumented migrants; the last amnesty was in 2012 (Corrado, 2018). This was also confirmed by IOM Italy, which in an interview commented on how these limitations may have a negative impact: “Although it was a very difficult system because, in theory, those avenues, those windows of opportunity were open only for people who were still in their country of origin [...]. But there hasn’t been any of these for the past few years. So even that small opportunity disappeared for the illegal migrants” (Appendix 5, p. 6).

TABLE 1: Programmed annual quotas (total and seasonal labour), 2010 - 2018

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
TOTAL	184,080	60,000	52,850	47,850	32,850	30,850	30,850	30,850	30,850
SEASONAL LABOUR	80,000	60,000	35,000	30,000	15,000	13,000	13,000	17,000	18,000

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In this scenario, the lack of an effective entry system for foreign workers in the agriculture sector has been compensated mainly by the growing number of Eastern EU migrants, non-EU asylum seekers and refugees, and migrants in an irregular situation (Dines & Rigo, 2015). These migrants’ different situations seem to translate into a variety of possibilities for their exploitation, depending on their legal status or nationality (Palumbo & Sciarba, 2018). EU migrant workers, who are the more consistent migratory group in Europe (more than 50% in all Western countries), are mainly employed in permanent and intensive cultivation, such as in greenhouses, in construction and service (ibid). They are more frequently utilised as a low-cost labour force, because the irregular employment of EU citizens is less dangerous for

employers since they do not risk of being accused of the offence of facilitation of illegal migration (Palumbo & Sciorba, 2015). Refugees and asylum seekers originating from third countries are instead mostly utilised in seasonal production, and move from one harvesting zone to another. Asylum seekers, in particular, live in an emergency-based and precarious system of reception while waiting for the definition of their legal status (Palumbo & Sciorba 2018).

The restriction of migrants quota is common in the rest of European countries, over the last decade, Member States have enacted a progressive closure of all legal entry channels for migrants, supported by the EU policy and legal framework, with an exception made for high-skilled migrants and seasonal workers, despite the fact migrants are mainly inserted within low-paid and low-prestige economic sectors (Palumbo & Sciorba, 2018). This phenomenon can be interpreted through the framework of the securitization approach that, especially since 2015 with the so-called migration crisis, has been put in place all over Europe, in particular inside the EU policy frames (Stępką, 2018).

Migration constitutes one of the most popular objects of securitization, as based on a security-centred narrative and institutional framework around migrants, framing them as a threat to national identity, economic security, or simply the cultural homogeneity of the State (ibid). In this respect, the security-oriented framing of migration, especially irregular migration, has been commonly applied in the EU policy discourse, becoming a normal and institutionalized form for managing migration-related challenges (Huysmans 2006). In the EU policy discourse, non-EU migrants are framed as objects of risk that need to be controlled in order to avoid breaches of security and flows that might take to a migratory invasion (de Haas, 2008). Under this optic, the EU has deployed a wide net of instruments devoted to coordinated risk management and threat identification. Border policing, migrant profiling and restrictive surveillance policies carried out or coordinated by the EU bodies such Frontex or Europol are commonly defined as “securitizing practices” or “moves” pertaining to the incorporation of migration into the EU security framework (Stępką, 2018). With regard to the European Agenda on migration of 2015, one of the main aims of the Agenda is to address the so-called “root causes of migration”. Yet throughout the document this purpose is mainly addressed in terms of border management, effective returns and actions against criminal networks of smugglers as the principal incentive for irregular migrations. Cooperation and partnerships with third countries of origin and transit finds a place only within this non-entry and return framework (Staino, 2016).

At the same time, it is important to notice that, in the last 15 years, European institutions have increasingly used humanitarian concerns to justify their migration and border policies (Cutitta, 2018). According to Pallister-Wilkins humanitarianism is understood as concerning logics developed to both effectively manage disaster and to secure imminently mobile populations for the maintenance of liberal order alongside and through the securing of life (Pallister-Wilkins 2018, p. 3). In the context of the Mediterranean and the spiralling fatalities among the migrants attempting to cross the sea into Europe (IOM, 2018), the humanitarian rhetoric has, together with securitization, structured the EU policy discourse, leading to a mainstreaming of humanitarian narratives on the “migration crisis” focusing the attention on human tragedy, tragic loss of lives, and tragic events in the Mediterranean (Stępką, 2018). This type of framing can generate a sense of extreme urgency, building on the narrative of the tragic loss of life, while on the other leaves little space for discussion on how to humanely handle, process and maintain the human security of those migrants who have been rescued at sea. Consequently, it opens the framing process to more securitized narratives, allowing for mobilization of extraordinary measures in the name of saving lives (Stępką, 2018). In other words: on the one hand, humanitarianism ends up enhancing and legitimizing policies and practices aimed at preventing migrants from embarking for Europe; on the other hand, in the context of border management, humanitarianism can enhance search and rescue operations, thus allowing migrants to reach European soil (Cutitta, 2018).

In the next pages, we will argue that the management of the migrant workforce in Italy can be linked to the European policy on migration, because of the same combination of securitization and humanitarianism can be found in the policies in regards to working migrants and exploitation.

5.2 Securitization and Deportability

As we have seen, the absence of an efficacious system of admission for third-country migrant workers has the effect of pushing migrants towards irregular channels, to the point of making the condition of ‘irregularity’ an inevitable phase towards the status of regularity (Caputo, 2010). As we have already said, official numbers showed that in 2015 around 48% of the workers employed in the field were migrants (CREA, 2017). Still according to official data, in 2015 50% of all farm workers were working without a contract; 80% of them were foreign nationals (OPR, 2018; Corrado, 2018). Moreover, the European Agenda on migration also promotes the so-called “hotspot approach”, in which migrants, immediately at their arrival, are

identified registered and fingerprinted (European Commission, 2015). Migrants claiming asylum are immediately channelled into an asylum procedure and the ones considered not in need of protection, are supposed to enter in a process of return. The improper consequence of the separation of migrants “in clear need of protection” from all others has resulted in a rough and dualistic categorisation between people to relocate and undocumented migrants. This division is implemented by the Directive 2013/32/EU which regularize the withdrawing of international protection, through the definition of “safe third countries” of origin and/or transit (Art. 38.). If an asylum seeker originates from, or has crossed, a country defined as safe, Member States may decide to consider his/her application as manifestly unfounded or inadmissible through an accelerated evaluation procedure. This, in turn, has resulted in the disappearance of the ordinary asylum seeker and in the creation of hundreds of “illegalised” migrants (Palumbo & Sciarba, 2018). Therefore, along with the increasing number of denied asylum seekers, they may enlarge the group of undocumented migrants, becoming an easy target for traffickers and exploiters (ibid).

During our interview with Pap, who has been in Italy since 2004, he told us about the process of finding a job when non-EU foreigners first arrive in Italy, and explained how easily you can become an undocumented migrant: “the process is long and hard because you first need the papers - because if you arrive here and your visa expires, you become a clandestine. So, you have to regularize yourself, this is the first thing you need to do to find a regular job. If you do not have the papers, you have to work in black in agriculture and expose yourself to being exploited” (Appendix 7, p. 95).

These measures can be interpreted through the securitization approach, which by fighting irregular migration establishes a distinction between regular migrants, as entitled to a set of rights, and “illegal,” as detainable and deportable (De Genova, 2002). In this case, their state of illegality is constituted and regimented by the law. In the Italian legislation, the crime of ‘illegal entry and stay within the territory of the state’ is introduced by the 2008 Security Package (Law n. 94. 15th of July, 2009). Given that ‘illegal entry and stay’ is a crime, irregular migration status automatically triggers the requirement for any public officer (including all civil servants, local authority employees, teachers and any other person in charge of a public service) to report all suspected criminal acts to the police or judicial authorities (Art. 361 & 362 of the Italian Criminal Code). As such, one of the main consequences of this ‘illegal’ status is the condition of *deportability* that comes with it. De Genova argues the disciplinary operation of an apparatus that produces migrant “illegality” is never simply intended to achieve the goal of

deportation. It is deportability, and not deportation per se, that has historically rendered undocumented migrant labour “a distinctly disposable commodity” (De Genova 2002, p. 438). Moreover, he argues, the continued presence of migrants with undocumented legal status has long been equated with the disposable character of the commodity that is their labour-power. Undocumented migrant labour has been criminalized as "illegal" and subjected to excessive and extraordinary forms of policing, which had made them extremely at risk of exploitation and a relevant source of cheap labour. Using the words of De Genova:

The undocumented have been denied fundamental human rights and many rudimentary social entitlements, consigned to an uncertain sociopolitical predicament, often with little or no recourse to any semblance of protection from the law. The category "illegal alien" profoundly useful and profitable one that effectively serves to create and sustain a legally vulnerable—and hence, relatively tractable and thus "cheap" — reserve of labour (De Genova 2002, p. 440).

In other words, irregular migrants have become what Marx referred to as “reserve army of labour” (Marx 1847, p. 415), a base of disposable labour power, which exceeds the effective labour demand and becomes its living measure, functional to keep the price of labour down and increase the exploitability of the few employed workers (Gambino, 2017). This will be further developed in the next part of the analysis. In Italy, this situation of vulnerability has been significantly exacerbated by the provisions of the new Law-Decree on immigration and security (“Decreto Salvini”) adopted in October 2018. The decree takes the name from the Italian politician that presented the law, who is the Minister of the Interior in the current government. One of the main goals of this government is fighting irregular immigration what could already be verified during their political campaign. The right-wing coalition constructed its campaign portraying migrants as a threat to nationals: once they obtained power, the government maintained this type of propaganda (Appendix 2). Security policies are then constructed not just through policy reactions to a threat but first of all by discourses of danger, speech acts of security, or language games of insecurity that build up a condition of danger and insecurity (Huysman, 2006).

The Salvini Decree abolishes residence permits for humanitarian reasons, which were rolled out by Legislative Decree No. 286 from 1998 (Consolidated Act of provisions concerning

immigration and the condition of the third country nationals) to protect people in situations of humanitarian need, including vulnerable migrant women and minors as well as victims of torture (Corrado, 2018). A social worker from Oasi 2 commented on this: “...with the new law, the Salvini Decree, people who were already vulnerable became even more vulnerable. Rights have been stolen, the situation of people who were already having it hard, now they are at the mercy of the destiny” (Appendix 4, p. 48).

Given that the humanitarian permit has been issued mainly where international protection has been rejected, the new provision will entail an increase in the number of rejected asylum requests as well as of migrants losing their current legal status, which, in turn, will boost the number of undocumented migrants, who are even more vulnerable to exploitation (Corrado, 2018). Stefano, from the Presidio Project, who is also a lawyer, said that with the application of the Decree, a series of migrants, such as Ghanaians, Malians, cannot aspire to subsidiary protection, much less to political asylum. Their only other option is to convert their residence permit for humanitarian reason into a residence permit for work reasons. However, this means to have a work contract and a lease contract (Appendix 2). But the fact that the issuance of the residence permit for work reasons is dependent on the existence of a contract of employment might put migrant workers in a condition of extreme vulnerability to blackmail once, afraid of losing their job and thus their residence permit, they may accept any working conditions (Amnesty International, 2012). Additionally, another problem arises when a migrant, with a regular work contract, does not have a lease, because he/she lives in a ghetto, or other forms of settlements. The humanitarian protection gave people the possibility to put their residency even in a fictitious street, a street that formally did not exist, but was anyway adopted by the registry office of the municipality, which happened in Cerignola: The Immigration Office allowed to put their address as the official place of residence of the migrants working in the area. The Salvini decree does not allow anymore the registration of irregular addresses (Appendix 2). In other words: before, if you had a residence permit for humanitarian reasons and even if you were living in a farmhouse, you could renew it. Now, instead, if you need to convert your old residence permit in a permit for work reasons, and you need to have both the employment contract and the lease contract. From the aforementioned elements it is possible to argue that having a securitized approach to migration contributes to the exploitation of migrant workers. This is so because portraying foreigners as a threat allow for the development of controlling and restrictive measures, such as the Salvini decree, which diminishes migrants rights (as the right to humanitarian protection). Once migrants’ rights and legal channels to regularity

decrease, more individuals tend to find themselves in an irregular situation where they can easily be exploited. According to Pap, the social mediator from the Sportello Immigrazione, although the Salvini decree aims to control and diminish migration flows within Italy, this is not what it entails in reality: “This is a very critical situation for migrants. It's a law [the Salvini decree] that does not even help the country. For this security he's talking about ... Because if you de-regularize 1000 people, if these 1000 people become clandestine, there is no security. So it's the opposite.” (Appendix 7, p.103)

All these laws and policies mentioned above, contributed to the criminalization of migrants and are a direct result of the securitization approach that view undocumented migrants (if not migrants in general) as threats.

5.3 The humanitarian approach to migrant workers

To use the words of Dines and Rigo: “the failure of the quota system to meet the agricultural demand has been offset by the growing number of asylum seekers making the decision to cross the Mediterranean Sea” (Dines & Rigo 2015, p. 16). This situation is also fostered by the interplay of the slowness of asylum procedures in Italy and the lack of adequate hosting and protection mechanisms for asylum seekers, which leads many migrants to accept any job opportunity they can find. This is also facilitated by the fact that accommodation centres hosting asylum seekers (such as CARA in Borgo Mezzanone) are located in rural and isolated areas, becoming a nest for the recruitment of an exploitable migrant labour force (Palumbo and Sciarba, 2018).

With the rising flow of asylum seekers, far greater emphasis has been placed on the “humanitarian” management of migration, which is not only present in the governing of emergencies associated with peak arrivals of asylum seekers, but it is also used ever more frequently in the management of sectors of the migrant labour force (Dines & Rigo, 2015). As we have already said, an aspect of the humanitarian approach is the use of terms and images that represent migrants as victims, framing a picture of emergency (Stepka, 2018). Slavery and the caporalato have increasingly become the key motifs with which Italy’s principal newspapers have addressed the issue of migrant agricultural labour. Migrant workers have generally been depicted as desperate, submissive, and lacking in collective agency (Rigo, 2015).

In his discussion of the humanitarian border, William Walters notes how humanitarianism tends to be operationalized in an attempt to neutralize the political

controversies associated with Europe's encounter with mass migration (Walters, 2011). In other words, it could be said that humanitarianism depoliticizes the question of migrant labour, by focusing on the exploitation, ghettos and gangmasters, without mentioning the responsibilities of the state, municipalities, employers and other key players involved in the production process (Dines & Rigo, 2015).

The preeminence accorded to human rights violations over labour relations is also confirmed by institutional measures that have largely failed to effectively confront the existing reality of agricultural production. As such, the institutional response to the exploitation of migrant workers in agriculture has been characterized by a repressive approach, focusing in particular on prosecuting *caporali*, who have been seen as the main actors responsible for exploitation in agriculture (Corrado, 2018). Notably, in 2011, Article 603 of the Criminal Code introduced the crime of "unlawful gang-mastering and labour exploitation (ibid).

Under this framework, we can find the Rosarno Law from 2012, which is the transposition of a EU directive in Italy, providing sanctions against employers of migrants in an irregular situation (Directive 2009/52/CE). The decree introduced the possibility of obtaining a resident permit for migrant workers who, subjected to a condition of particular exploitation at work, decide to denounce their employers. However, the Rosarno Law failed to establish 'safe channels' to allow undocumented migrant workers to report against their employers (Amnesty International, 2014). Therefore, by excluding undocumented migrants, it could only be applied to a very small proportion of agricultural workers, because a large number of workers do not have documents. Moreover, they provided a residence permit just in case of 'particularly exploitative working conditions', to undocumented migrant workers who have reported their employer and cooperate in the criminal proceedings against them (ibid). Rosarno Law is a good example to highlight the fact that labour rights are mostly recognized when migrants are perceived as victims of semi-slavery conditions and not just as workers.

Law No. 199/2016 on combating undeclared work and labour exploitation in agriculture is to some extent an important step forward. This law amended Article 603bis of the Criminal Code, targeting both abusive gang-masters and employers who take advantage of workers' neediness and insecurity. The amendment also provided for mandatory arrest in *flagrante delicto* and mandatory confiscation of proceeds and property, and introduced corporate criminal liability. Law 199/2016 established that victims of labour exploitation can have access to Article 18 of Consolidated Act on immigration (Legislative - Decree No. 286/98), which provides victims of violence or severe exploitation with a long-term programme of assistance

and social integration, as well as (in the case of non-EU migrants) with a residence permit for social protection, regardless of their cooperation with the competent authorities (through the so-called “social track”). However, a monitoring study was published in October 2018, reviewing 46 investigations conducted by 16 prosecutor’s offices into labour exploitation under Article 603 as amended by Law 199/2016. And this study found that most cases concerned agriculture and that the majority of the migrant victims were regular; many were EU-nationals, with some Italians and asylum seekers also involved. Unfortunately, there is no reference to Article 18 of the Consolidated Act on immigration, which should have provided a form of social protection also to undocumented migrant victims of labour exploitation (Santoro, 2018).

A simple reason why Article 18 was not applied for undocumented migrants in the agricultural sector was provided by some of the interviews that we had: “the need [migrants have] for profit, even if minimal” (Appendix 2; Appendix 4; Appendix 7). Pap also said that even if they are exploited, they still receive the minimum, and gain the money to resolve some problems: to be able to eat, drink (Appendix 7). While the organization Oasi 2 also confirmed that even when a protection program is proposed, many reject it, because they do not want to stop gaining money and do not want lose their freedom (Appendix 4).

Nonetheless, during our interviews, the Caporalato law was viewed positively. Raffaele, from CGIL, affirmed that since the application of the Caporalato Law, the controls on the companies started to increase, the situation improved, and exploitation decreased: “if you exploit people in the workplace, you go to prison. This is why, employers now are more afraid of exploiting workers a lot” (Appendix 3, p.35). However, he also says that controls are a tricky thing because sometimes they lack the political willingness: “This is a territory in which exploitation has always existed, where caporalato has always existed [...] But where they never did any controls. The political [level] did not want to do it, because this is a system that stands as it is, and if you take something out of it, it falls” (ibid, p.2). Moreover, it needs to be considered that, as we have already said, Apulia is a territory with high levels of corruption and irregularity, and from our interviews it came out that it could happen that inspectors tell in advance farmers and agricultural producers about imminent inspections:

The head of the Carabinieri operational team was caught - the Inspector of Labour warned the companies that they would come to inspect the following day. Then - it becomes clear that the whole system falls down - and organizing tables in the prefecture, planning all this system is

useless - if the companies are forewarned about the checks that will be done the next day (Appendix 2, p.33)

Even though the Caporalato law was found quite efficient regarding the punishment of caporali and employers, it could be argued that it did not really improve the life and working conditions of migrants. As we will analyse in the following section, policies that want to actually fight caporalato need to understand the structural conditions that make migrant labour particularly weak and liable to the exploitation by caporali and farmers, such as: legal vulnerability, housing segregation, and the lack of concrete alternatives to caporalato in finding a job.

5.4 Legal gaps: lack of alternatives

As we have already argued, in our opinion, a repressive approach it is not enough in the actual fight against caporalato. A political discussion that aims to address seriously caporalato should concern not just the repression of irregularity, but also on how to prevent situations in which migrant workers are vulnerable and dependent to the corporali (Rigo, 2015).

Important aspects to take into consideration are the segregation of migrants into secluded ghettos, where they find themselves far from electric lighting, running water, hospitals, labour unions and inhabited centers. In the absence of public transport services in the countryside, they must move on foot or pay caporali to be transported wherever necessary. Still, moving on foot is not always accepted by the caporale that seem to oblige migrants to be transported by them in order to receive their money (Interview Kofi). Consequently, it must be addressed that living in the ghettos is often a strategic choice for the migrants, because the ghettos are the places where the caporali arrive to take them to work. Especially in the area Capitanata, a very vast territory notably composed of very large estates counting thousands of hectares, where agricultural workers are dependent to the caporali to be transported from one field to another (Gambino 2017).

As such, the main issue is the lack of alternatives to the services that are provided by the caporali to migrant workers and agricultural producers: recruitment, organizing and transporting labourers in the fields. In this type of activity, they do not have competitors (Rigo, 2015). However, in some countries the activity of figures similar to Italian caporali has been regulated by the law and equated, to a certain extent, precisely with interim employment agencies, as in the case of farm labour contractors in the United States, of the gangmasters in

Great Britain and the *furgoneteros* in Spain (Krissman, 2002; Rogaly, 2008; Strauss, 2013; Rigo, 2015).

Over the past few years, in the attempt to address and prevent exploitation in supply chains, many governments in Europe have implemented transparency regulations and/or promoted instruments, including certifications of quality, aimed at incentivising companies to stay within the bounds of the law while protecting the rights of workers (Corrado, 2018). An attempt was also made by the Italian government inside the 2016 Caporalato Law (Law 199/2016) concerning the *Network of Quality Agricultural Work (Rete del Lavoro agricolo di Qualità)*, which was established with the aim of creating a list of agricultural companies that respect fair working and employment conditions providing them with a certification of quality. The Caporalato Law divides the network's articulation into 'territorial sections' (local branches) aimed at developing active labour market policies and promoting actions to address labour intermediation. However, the development of these territorial sections has been slow due to the low level of cooperation among the institutional bodies involved and from the businesses: out of a total of 740,000 agricultural firms in Italy, to date only some 1,300 have applied to become part of the network (Carchedi, 2018; Caruso, 2018).

At the local level, in 2014-2015, in Apulia, an attempt was made to counter the *caporalato* system by establishing a transparent certification system (with the label "*Equapulia, no black work*") to employers who hire workers regularly from specific booking lists, where workers voluntarily went to register themselves. However, the project failed because of a lack of participation by employers (Corrado, 2018). According to Stefano, an alternative to the agricultural system is a still standing conversation, but it depends on the political will. Stefano believes that the already existing *Network of Quality Agricultural Work*, should be coordinated with a housing network, guaranteed at the national level, and with the relocation of employment centers within settlements: "if you manage to put together this whole thing, you can guarantee a piece of ethical supply chain" (Appendix 2, p. 21).

In regards to labour protection, another important aspect remains housing and transports which are, as we have already seen, strongly intertwined together. The housing situation is quite dramatic because of the high numbers of settlements in the Province of Foggia, which at the moment are ten (Gambino, 2017). In its Three Years Plan on migration policies (2016-2018) the Apulia Region Puglia had planned different actions to combat irregular employment. The first action was the evacuation of the Grand Ghetto, the biggest settlement present in Capitanata, located between Rignano Garganico and San Severo, on the 1st of 2017. This was

followed by a relocation plan for the migrant workers present, which aimed to allocate 400 housing containers for hosting agricultural workers. 150 were transferred in the the Fortore farm in the territory of the San Severo municipality; and another 80 were added after the fire that broke out on February 7, 2017. Another 150 instead were put inside a different structure, always in San Severo. However, the Gran Ghetto returned to repopulate in a short time (Il Manifesto, 2018).

Most recently, another evacuation has been started in the settlement of Borgo Mezzanone, La Pista, focusing, for now, just on the illegal businesses, such as the brothel, with the final aim of complete dismantle in the next months. The action was conducted by the order of the Prefecture of Foggia (Il Giornale, 2019). According to Raffaele, to dismantle the ghettos does not mean to give any real alternatives, even if you then provide accomodations, because accommodations are not a real issue, the real issue is work and even transport, is still tied to work. If you do not give them a legal alternative to work, they won't leave the ghettos (Appendix 3). In his opinion, migrants need the ghettos because there is where the caporale goes to take them to work, thus the the system is based on work: "if you do not have a working alternative, you can dismantle all the ghettos you want, but everytime you dismantle once, another ghetto will be created somewhere else" (ibid, p. 12). This is what happened with the Gran Ghetto: it was dismantled two years ago, and then it was re-created just in front of the old one. In other words: accommodations are important, but the real alternative is a working alternative.

In this chapter, we have seen that policies regarding the management of labour migration have been influenced by a mixture of securitization and humanitarianism. On one hand, the security policies, such as the Salvini Decree, brought to the distinction between regular migrants, as entitled to a set of rights, and "illegal," as detainable and deportable. The latter are excluded from the legal forms of work and have to find 'back' jobs in order to survive, and are affected by a condition of *deportability*. This condition makes them more vulnerable to exploitation as they become a 'cheap' reserve of labour. On the other hand, the failure of the quota system to meet the agricultural demand, together with the slowness of Italian asylum procedures and inadequate hosting mechanisms, has contributed to the growing number of asylum seekers working in the fields. Asylum seekers are often portrayed in the media as victims, in slaves-like conditions, and the discourse around them focuses on exploitation, ghettos and gangmasters, without mentioning the responsibilities of the state or the role of agricultural producers and retailers. This media approach is also confirmed by institutional

measures to the exploitation of migrant workers in agriculture, which have been characterized by a repressive approach, focusing on the persecution of caporali and employers. As a consequence, institutional response have largely failed to effectively confront the existing reality of agricultural production, and to address the structural conditions keep migrants vulnerable to exploitation, specifically the lack of concrete alternatives to caporalato in finding a job. We argue that it is the duty of the state answer to the labour needs of migrants, to use the words of Stefano: “our country must guarantee a dignified form of reception to these people who contribute to the Italian GPA - in the same way the state provides emergency rooms or the tribunals for an Italian tax payers, must also provide a reception system for seasonal workers (Appendix 2, p.28).

6. Neoliberal globalization

In this section, we will analyse how a “neoliberal globalization” regime affects the structure of the agricultural field in Southern Italy and the consequences it brings to both farmers and migrants. Then, we will focus on how neoliberal globalization influences the working conditions of migrant farm labourers through what Zygmunt Bauman calls “global hierarchy of mobility” (1998, p.69). It is our argument that through human mobility management, Italy regulates not only migration flows, but also entire labour sectors. The production of irregularity is here seen as part of the neoliberal globalization rationality, once it provides the market with a cheap and precarious labour force (Oliveri, 2015*b*).

6.1 Neoliberal globalization and the impact on the agricultural sector

It is important to establish a definition of neoliberalism and globalization within this field. As indicated by Larner, neoliberalism is a complex phenomenon that extends beyond debates about economics and state intervention (Larner, 2000). Different views exist on the character of neoliberalism: it can be interpreted as a policy framework, an ideology or it can be conceptualized through the lens of governmentality, to mention a few (ibid). Consequently, different trends of this phenomenon take different shapes according to the context, and it would be more accurate to view neoliberalism as a “contextual and contingent process” (Lemberg-Pedersen 2013, p.160). During this paper, we use Peck and Tickell’s definition of neoliberalism as a: “‘new orthodoxy’ that seeks to liberalize, or to constitute, competitive relations between firms and between places; deploys supply side rather than demand-side measures in its attempts

to effect competitive restructuring; and embodies an explicit rejection of both social partnership and traditional forms of welfarism” (Peck & Tickell 1994, p. 318).

Neoliberalism and globalization are often considered the same, however the two are different: globalization is a transformation of the social space that occurs with the spread of transplanetary interconnectivity (Betts, 2009) and, in contemporary times, often also supraterritorial connections between people; while neoliberalism is a specific political-economic philosophy devoted to the expansion of the market, to market forms of governance, rule and control that encompass every aspect of social life (Peck & Tickell, 2007). Globalization and neoliberal policies have developed in a context of capitalism, a historical situation where production, exchange and consumption are predominantly geared toward surplus accumulation. In particular, the contemporary growth of global spaces has given capital greater mobility and thus power, compared to government and labour (Scholte, 2005). For the purposes of this project it is useful to focus on these globalization processes related to that of economic globalization, identified as encompassing the liberalization of international trade and the promotion of a global marketplace, the development of global commodity and value chains, and the concentration and consolidation of transnational corporations and alliances, amongst others (Woods, 2010).

Given this context, it is useful to consider the term ‘neoliberal globalization’ as a manner of capturing the way in which globalization transformed social geography, allowing production processes to not be longer restrained by state boundaries, whilst neoliberalism simultaneously has also brought a growing liberalization, privatization and reregulation of production that privilege corporate interests.

6.2 Global competition and the Common Agriculture Policy

In the context of neoliberal globalization, over the last three decades, the European agricultural sector has resulted mainly in the incorporation of farming in more capital-intensive production systems and in an increasingly competitive agri-food chains (Corrado, 2018). A largely liberalized trade regime and a financialized commodity market brought further international competition, making local farmers compete with faraway producers in countries with cheaper production costs (Oliveri, 2015c). Local responses to global competition are more likely to be about competing even harder rather than about co-operating more effectively (Peck & Tickell, 1994).

In Europe, these changes have taken place in the context of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), which has been regularly reformed to promote productivity through a modern and market-oriented agriculture, and providing subsidies to farmers. CAP was introduced in 1962, and for the first two decades mainly spurred agriculture productivism within a modernization framework (Corrado, 2018). This approach led to excess food supply and related market distortion effects. Overproduction, environmental problems, and consumer concerns for health and quality motivated subsequent CAP reforms through measures such as reduction of price supports (MacSharry reform, 1992), cross-compliance with environmental objectives and support to multifunctionality and rural development (Agenda, 2000), decoupling of direct payments from production through the single payment scheme (Fischler reform, 2003). The related distortive effects mostly favoured food processors, the agrochemical industry, and large farms, but also export-oriented food traders and large retailers, with a controversial impact on developing countries (Fritz, 2011). This process has contributed to widening pre-existing inequalities and polarizations within the European Union, enhancing cultural and territorial transformations of rural areas through socio economic differentiations (Corrado, 2018).

Following the same line, in Italy, such unequal CAP distribution favoured Northern regions, large farms, and the food industry. Quality certifications aimed at supporting rural development are widely used within national borders (Ibid). However, specific crops, territories, actors and companies have been more able than others in benefitting from such schemes, which nonetheless often favoured medium and large farms (Corrado, 2018). The smallest diversified farms with small environmental footprints receive little funding. Whereas large farms specialized in monocultures, whose impact on resources and biodiversity is maximal, are cashing in (Euroactive, 2019). Similarly, EU support for producer organisations (POs) has often favoured the cooperation of larger and more informed companies that act on "modern" markets and long commercial circuits, to the detriment of the small and/or artisanal businesses, non-professional, and located in marginal areas, for which the costs of adaptation, reconversion, non-compliance are higher and often unsustainable, in the face of obtaining irrelevant or zero benefits (Corrado 2018).

It could be argued that CAP contributes in consolidating sectorial, social, and territorial inequalities, oftentimes to the advantage of larger farms and companies, higher-potential areas, and specialized agricultural enclaves. As a consequence, family farming and agro-ecologically marginal areas have undergone dramatic processes of abandonment and depopulation (ibid).

6.3 Agri-food supply chain: the role of the retailers

During the last twenty years, the agri-food supply chain has been characterized by the rising concentration of retailers. As a result, thousands of farmers are now selling their products to millions of consumers via a small number of food processors and retailers. What happens is that global supermarkets, fast-food outlets, and other large food retailers, have come to exercise control through the organization and management of the agri-food supply chain (Burch, Dixon & Lawrence, 2012). In 2004, in the UK, for example, four firms controlled 75 % of all sales. In Sweden, the Netherlands and France the top three retail food firms held, respectively, 95, 83 and 64 % of the market (Lang, 2009).

Retail industry is also widespread in Italy, even though Italy is characterized by a lower market concentration and greater sector heterogeneity compared to the English and German or French and Spanish cases. Currently, there are six major players in this sector: Coop Italia, Conad, Selex, Esselunga, Auchan and Carrefour. They occupy 55,5% of the sector, with Coop Italia representing the first national retailer in 2012 with 14,7% (AGCM, 2013).

The retail sector has moved beyond its traditional responsibility for food distribution, and is now strongly influencing patterns of production and consumption (Burch, Dixon & Lawrence, 2012). As the number of retailer corporations started falling, the market power of the survivors has increased, enabling them to extract ever larger profits from the agri-food supply chain. In particular, large retailers can exert upward pressure on their selling prices and downward pressure on their buying prices, and on the costs, they pay for transportation and distribution of food (Olivieri, 2015c). It can be argued that food supply chains are today in many cases *retailer-driven* and no longer *producer-driven*. In other words, the big chains of supermarkets not only take care of the distribution, but they also condition food production (Rigo 2015). They succeed to exercise "enormous purchasing power" on producers, in a number of ways (Burch & Lawrence, 2005). These include developing a range of supermarket 'own brand' products and the setting of safety, quality and environmental sustainability standards for farmers and food manufacturers (Burch & Lawrence, 2005; Higgins, 2005; Higgins et al., 2008; Lockie & Higgins, 2007). With growing involvement in matters of quality and food safety, supermarkets are emerging as 'food authorities'. They now have a powerful new role as gatekeeper of food standards (Hattersley & Dixon, 2010).

Among the consequences of this transformation of the supply chains food, there is a need for retailers, at a global level, to access land and labour that are cheapest as possible

(McMichael & Friedmann, 2007). This leads, among other things, to a growing concentration in the food production and processing sector:

The imposition of private standards is marginalizing the small to medium-size 'family farmers' who have formerly been a significant force in agriculture. Many are unable to meet the stringent requirements of the supermarkets for unblemished, standardized, cheaply produced, high-volume products. Those who are able to meet supermarket requirements are the larger suppliers: they are becoming the only ones capable of meeting the costs of various quality assurance and other schemes and they have become the allies of the supermarkets in seeking returns to scale in agriculture (Burch, Dixon & Lawrence 2012, p.218)

With the establishment of international super buying centres, the largest distribution groups manage to obtain better contractual conditions through collective negotiation with suppliers (Corrado, 2018). This happens through the 'reverse auction', which is a commercial practice of meeting supply and demand: the auctioneer proposes a high selling price that gradually decreases until it meets the interests of a buyer. Some chains of the large-scale retail trade use this method through specific online platforms for managing supplies, but also activate a second level of bargaining based on the price identified after the first round of negotiations (ibid). Discount chains use this practice, called 'double auctions' for about 50 % of supplies, while a somewhat lower percentage concerns traditional supermarkets (Ibid).

6.4 The consequences to southern Italian farmers

As we have illustrated so far, neoliberal globalization (Oliveri, 2015a) directly affects the agricultural sector in Southern Italy. Industrial and global dynamics have concentrated the commercial and distribution levels of production in the hands of few, large companies thereby increasing their power to establish the selling prices of agricultural products. In addition, market liberalization has brought further international competition, making Italian farmers compete with faraway producers in countries with cheaper production costs, such as China. In this context, Southern farmers have been losing a considerable amount of profit. This becomes quite evident when we compare the farm share of an agricultural product final price: in 1950 the

farmer share corresponded to around 41% of the final price. Already in 2011, this share had fallen to around 15.5% (Oliveri, 2015c).

In this context, farmers are pressured to cut costs (Corrado, 2017) and the worker's wage is the only aspect of the production process that can be cut\controlled by farmers (Filhol, 2013). According to Alessandra Corrado: "Through an increasingly unfair distribution of risks, costs, and profits along the chain, food industries and retailers use their oligopolistic market power of negotiation to impose price and conditions on farmers, who have faced a dramatic economic squeeze since the 1970s" (Corrado 2018, p.2). Consequently, this directly affects migrants' working conditions, with farmers preferring to hire people with low bargaining power and ready to accept low salary and long working hours (Corrado, 2017).

6.5 The effects of neoliberal globalization for migrant farm workers in Southern Italy

With globalization and the financialization of capital, the integral relation (and, at the same time, tension) between capitalism and nation-state's sovereignty has been transformed (Mezzadra, 2011). While state sovereignty is still a current and important feature of today's world, "its institutional insertion and its capacity to legitimate and absorb all legitimating power, to be the source of the law, have become unstable" (Sassen 2006, p.415). Logics of sovereignty are blended with logics of neoliberal governance (Mezzadra, 2011). This neoliberal globalization (Oliveri, 2015a) has produced what Aihwa Ong called "gradual sovereignties" (Ong 2005, p.258) in which territories, communities and individuals are hierarchically and juridically differentiated (ibid). This is so because contemporary global capital is constitutively heterogeneous. Neoliberal globalization cannot be perceived as the production of a smooth and homogeneous global space (Mellino, 2012). As explained by Sandro Mezzadra:

It does not mean to affirm that the global space is a "smooth" space, that hierarchical organization criteria articulated on a territorial scale have ceased to be operative. On the contrary, the centrality attributed to the analysis of the global processes of multiplication of boundaries continually draws attention to the "striations" of global space, identifying in them devices essential to the redefinition of exploitation and domain relations (as well as privileged sites for analysis of persistent frictions between the capitalist command and the logic of sovereignty) (Mezzadra 2008, p.13)

Within this economic-political regime, the migration management in Western countries has been mainly based on a greatly selective, securitized and market-based approach, which constitute a “global hierarchy of mobility” (Bauman 1998, p.69). Within this frame, migrants’ rights are directly connected to legislations establishing who can enter and stay in a given country. Currently, the right to enter and stay in European countries is increasingly related to the level of employability and market usefulness of non-European migrants (Oliveri, 2015a). If a person does not fit the requirements established in the legislation, he/she risks staying in an irregular situation for a long period of time. Irregularity causes people to be more vulnerable, once they become deportable, existing in constant risk of being deported (De Genova, 2002) and only having access to irregular jobs, with no legally protected working standards. In this sense, human mobility is used to put individuals “with lower status into positions from which they can serve the needs and meet the demands of people with higher status more easily” (Gill 2009, p.117). Therefore, it can be argued that in a context of growing international competition with few barriers to prevent the accumulation of capital (Peck & Tickell, 2007), this way of governing migration intent to produce a precarious, disposable and flexible labour force that can serve the interest of market rules (De Genova, 2002).

The production of a precarious labour force is interesting for neoliberalism once it allows different economic domains, such as agriculture and the distribution of goods, to cut-costs, exploit labour and thus further accelerate the accumulation of capital (Oliveri, 2015a). Since the 1980s, migrant’s precarious situation in Italy has been related to a context of ascending neoliberalism. Already back then, the pressure of a rising flexible global market, combined with local economic and social factors, made Italy enter into a period of internal restructuring, founded on deregulation, tertiarization, outsourcing, loss of social and labour protections and in the hierarchization of the labour market. Within this frame, migrant labour was concentrated in specific sectors, such as construction, agriculture and domestic work (Oliveri, 2015b).

In this context, people are seen as “flexible resources that can be selected and manipulated through entry quotas, points-based visas, administrative and penal detentions, expulsions.” (Oliveri 2015a, p.493). This is also the case in Southern Italy where migration laws oblige non-EU migrants to already have a work position in order to be able to apply for a visa permit. These jobs are limited by quotas, established according to the skills of the workers and to national citizenship. Furthermore, as already mentioned in section 3.2, the Bossi-Fini

law (2002) demands migrants to leave Italy if they stay unemployed for more than a year and allows undocumented migrants to be incarcerated for up to 18 months in Identification and Expulsion Centers (CIE). This situation gives great power to employers, once many labourers have few choices other than accepting whatever working conditions are proposed to them (ibid). The new Security Package (2018) that, among other things, abolishes migrants' humanitarian protection (European Website on Integration, 2018) served to further increase the precarity of migrant workers. This is particularly important if we consider that, in 2017, around 28% of permits granted to asylum seekers in Italy were issued for humanitarian protection (ibid). This vulnerability, that is perpetuated by law, limits migrants' possibilities for legal labour and makes migrants even more dependent on their employers will. In this context, "undocumented status became endemic, while deportability reinforced the risk of severe labour exploitation for all" (Oliveri 2015c, p.119).

Furthermore, the economic crisis of 2008 directly affected foreign workers in Italy. Until then, many migrants would work in agriculture for some years until an amnesty was issued, allowing them to be regularized. This amnesties occurred periodically for many years, as in 1990, 1995, 1998 and 2009. This would help migrants to move North and look for regular and better working opportunities. Nevertheless, the economic crisis of 2008 completely disrupted this trend (Corrado, 2018). With the crisis, Italian migration policies became even more restrictive. Once national unemployment rates were going up, the government wanted to show its citizens their willingness to defend Italian jobs from foreign competition (Oliveri, 2015b). This affected many regular migrant labourers that lost their jobs due the crisis and found themselves with less possibilities to regularize their situation (Corrado, 2018). From 2007 to 2012 the official unemployment rates of foreigners grew 7.4% among men and 3% among women. During the same period, the rate of foreigners employed in unskilled positions increased 6% among men and 3% among women. Furthermore, there was a great augmentation in the numbers of resident permits that expired and were not renewed. In order to cope with this situation, many migrants living in Northern Italy came (back) to the South looking for work opportunities. These opportunities were mainly available in the field of agriculture (Oliveri, 2015a).

Under these circumstances, it can be argued that within the neoliberal governance of migration (Oliveri 2015a, p.494) irregularity is not a failure or a hazard. Instead, it is continuously produced and reproduced by immigration laws (ibid). It is important to state that irregularity and deportability (De Genova, 2002) increase labour exploitation for

undocumented, as well as regular migrants. This is so because, in Italy, most non-EU migrants go through a period of irregularity to then get access to regular papers (Oliveri 2015a). This is the case of both Pap, Kofi and Isah, who were undocumented migrants for years before acquiring their permits. None of them could apply for asylum in Italy once, according to them, they came to Europe for economic or personal reasons. In this sense, the neoliberal governance of migration legitimize inequalities in the access of fundamental rights. According to Federico Oliveri:

Current migration governance is a key element of the neoliberal regime of citizenship. As soon as the market becomes the benchmark of any efficient governmental action, there is little or no room for taking care of the population as a whole: inclusive, egalitarian, and democratic citizenship tends therefore to be substituted by an exclusionary and stratified citizenship, designed for and by purely economic logic.” (Oliveri 2015a, p.494)

In this context, the constitution of undocumented migrants does not aim to physically exclude them from certain territories. Rather, it serves to socially include them under imposed and well-established conditions, which greatly contribute to maintain them in a precarious situation (De Genova, 2002). The main goal of migration policies institutionalized by governments of Western nations, including Italy, is to ensure an “hierarchical inclusion” of migrant workers within the national labour force (Mellino 2012, p.69). It is the “legal production of its illegality” (De Genova 2004, p. 192). In this sense, controlling migration flows means, until a certain extent, to control a sector of the labour market (Mellino, 2012).

In addition, neoliberalism presents itself as a regime that imposes little coercion, where individual freedoms are valued and highlighted. Under these circumstances, neoliberalism tends to portray individuals as autonomous actors of their own lives (Mazzadra, 2011) and responsible for their choices. This framing supposes that people are rationally assessing the costs and benefits of every choice and action they make, which are all based on free will. Thus, this shifts the responsibility of social risks, such as poverty and unemployment, to the person. Once choices and actions are the expression of self-determined decisions, their consequences are borne on the subject (Lemke, 2000). This situation hides power structures, inequalities and the “global hierarchy of mobility” (Bauman, 1998). Therefore, it becomes more difficult for

individuals to understand the underlying forces that cause and maintain migrant workers' precarity and labour exploitation. This can be connected to our fieldwork experience. Different actors with whom we spoke told us that they did not consider neoliberalism as one of the main factors that should be considered when talking about migrant labourer exploitation. When we asked Raffaele, from CGIL, if he thought a structural change should be made in order to improve migrants' working conditions in a relevant way - including a decrease in the profits of big retailers and supermarkets -, he answered: "This is false problem for me. Because we want to give the blame to something that doesn't exist. (...). The Big Distribution is an entity that we want to give the blame for all of this, in order to not actually face the problem." (Appendix 3, p.43). In this interview extract Raffaele says that, according to his opinion, capitalism and capitalists - here exemplified as *The Big Distribution* - are not one of the reasons behind the system of labour exploitation found in Southern Italy. He believes, instead, that Italian farmers and caporali are the ones that should be held responsible for the exploitation of migrant farm workers. This illustrates how it can be difficult to fully understand the underlying forces of labour exploitation in a neoliberal regime that tends to transfer the responsibility of such phenomenon to individuals (Lemke, 2000). Although the emphasis given to the role of farmers and caporale in the exploitation of migrant farm workers can be easily justified, it also conceals neoliberal and global dimensions that relate to the agricultural sector. It constitutes the image of a "detached agrarian world" (Corrado 2017, p.8).

Another interesting answer to the aforementioned question was given by Stefano, Caritas representative. Unlike Raffaele, Stefano considered capitalist forces as one of the reasons behind the labour exploitation of foreign workers. Nevertheless, although he agreed that there should be changes in the way big companies develop their work, he added:

However, there is no place, no table, no physical location where this responsibility can be enforced. The fight against corporale, the action against labour exploitation, I manage to concretize it -in the prefecture table, where the finance guard rather than the *carabiniere* is standing. I know there is [caporalato, labour exploitation] and I know how to act. But against large retailers - where do I go? It is like to go and knock at Mr. Mc Donald's door. Who is Mr. Mc Donald? (Appendix 2, p.26).

This shows that although people may be aware of power structures and the inequalities they engender, it is still hard to fight them from a local stand.

To conclude, logics of sovereignty are currently intertwined with logics of neoliberal governance in which territories and individuals are hierarchically differentiated (Mazzadra, 2011). Within this regime, migration management in many European countries, including Italy, has been mainly based in a security and market-based approach where the rights of non-EU migrants to enter and stay greatly depend on his\her usefulness to the market. If a person is considered “useless” according to market rules, he\she will likely stay in an irregular situation and thus will be easy to exploit. Furthermore, the production of irregularity is advantageous in terms of neoliberal rationality once it allows for the precarization of migrant workforce and thus to accelerate the accumulation of capital (Oliveri, 2015*a*). In this context, the constitution of undocumented migrants serves to include them in the host society under imposed conditions and thus to be exploited in specific sectors of the labour market (Mellino, 2012). Finally, the image of an autonomous and free individual portrayed by neoliberal rationality contributes to hide underlying structural causes of migration and agricultural worker exploitation (Lemke, 2000) which may make it even more difficult to organize relevant revindications. As it was well outlined by Franck Düvell, a migration scholar, the current regime:

Is based on a policy of differences: differences between genders, races and nations that are reflected in the division of labour, in the segmentation of labour markets and in price differences. These differences translate into a system of differentiation of rights (which includes the status of migrants), in easily exploitable salary and reproductive differences.” (Düvell 2004, p.30)

6.6 Contradictions between a securitized discourse and the need for foreign labour force

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), agriculture is the sector that contains the greater amount of irregular work. It is also one of the sectors that presents high levels of serious worker exploitation in Europe (OECD 2012). The great amount of migrant farm labourers working in precarious conditions relates to “socio-economic convenience for businessmen of recruiting docile manpower that is exploitable and cheap” (Corrado 2018, p.6). As aforementioned, the production of irregularity is useful in terms of a neoliberal rationality that considers capital as the main criterion for governmental action

(Oliveri, 2015a). This system is also advantageous for farmers and the caporali that are both able to increase their profits due to migrant workers' exploitation (Ambrosini, 2011). It can also be argued that the exploitation of migrant farm workers is in some ways advantageous for many consumers that can thus buy cheaper products at supermarkets. Furthermore, it is important to remember that foreign farm workers hardly represent labour market competition for Italian citizens. Nowadays, many low-paid activities are considered unattractive and unfit to fulfil the professional expectations of generations that had more access to education (Fargues, 2009).

Nevertheless, recurrent episodes of violence against migrants, as well as Italian political discourses that portray migrants as a threat emphasizes "the ambiguous coexistence of economic demand for migrant labour in the fields and social hostility to their presence in the streets" (Corrado 2018, p.24). When we asked IOM Italy how it thought Italian laws and political discourses might affect foreign farm workers, they answered that "it does affect it in the way that it guides the public's perception of migration. So there need to be as much information about how migrants are positively contributing to our society, including our food chain system. Because they are the ones that are now in charge of whole sectors of food production. How important is that? It is a very essential thing..." (Appendix 5, p.12-13).

The fact that migrants are an integral and important part of Italian workforce but they are still not recognized as legitimate members of society (Ambrosini, 2011) also contributes to the further exploitation of migrant workers. Once the benefits foreign labourers bring to the economy are rarely mentioned, migrants are continuously perceived as an economic burden by the Italian state and by part of the Italian society (Filhol, 2013). Under these circumstances, the national government can easily justify control and security measures that contribute to maintain migrants in an irregular and precarious situation. As stated by Maurizio Ambrosini, "Having received hands, Italy still has to receive people" (Ambrosini 2011, p.5).

Finally, foreign farm workers experience of high levels of exploitation and precarity can bring "side effects" to the Italian labour market more generally. It has been argued that this continuous and expanded precarity among migrant workers opens up a loophole for further exploitation within the field of agriculture. It contributes to the general deterioration of working standards in agriculture for the benefit of dominant agribusiness groups. This is so because once farmers, supermarkets and big retailers can profit from a cheaper and more flexible labour force, they will hardly employ people under better conditions. Moreover, the exploitation of migrant workers can also affect other Italian economic sectors in the future once "accepting to

see these workers work for a pittance without any legal protection, is to open a breach in the labour law” (Filhol 2013, p.147).

During the last section of the analysis, we aimed to explore the transformations brought by a neoliberal globalization regime to the agriculture sector of Southern Italy. the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been consolidating sectorial, social and territorial inequalities mainly to the advantage of large estates and companies (Corrado, 2018). The EU support to producers’ organizations has often favoured big farmers. Furthermore, Italy now presents an important concentration in the distribution and commercial levels of production. As a result, large retailers became stronger and can increasingly decide food products selling\buying prices. Being pressured by big retailers to cut costs, farmers, especially small and medium-sized ones, tend to diminish farm workers’ wage and make them work longer hours (Filhol, 2013).

In addition, during the last section of the analysis, we have argued that the Italian migration management, which is mainly based on securitized and market approaches, tend to grant non-EU foreigners the right to enter and stay in a given state according to their level of employability. Those migrants that are not considered useful according to market rules, will most likely remain undocumented. This irregularity, however, is beneficial to the neoliberal logic, once it allows for the precarization of the workforce and thus contribute to accelerate capital accumulation (Oliveri, 2015a). Although Italian agriculture greatly relies on migrant labour force, foreigners are frequently considered as a burden by the national society. This situation surely contributes to the further exploitation of migrant farm workers, once this perception of migrants justify the development of restrictive migration policies. Nevertheless, it has been argued that tolerating such working standards can also be prejudicial to other labour sectors in Italy. This is so because the exploitation of foreign farm workers opens a breach in the Italian labour law (Ambrosini, 2011).

Conclusion

As we have seen throughout this study, levels of labour exploitation are high in Southern Italian agricultural field. Foreign workers represent an important percentage of the workforce employed in agriculture (CREA, 2017). However, they are often poorly paid, work long hours and are exposed to toxic pesticides (Corrado, 2018). Their living conditions are also precarious, with many migrants living in places with no running water, electricity, heating, garbage collection sewage system. Within this system of labour exploitation, it is the farmers and the

caporale that are usually held responsible for foreign farm workers living and working conditions. However, after doing a 10 days fieldwork in the province of Foggia, our research pointed to a more complex reality. Our findings demonstrated that many and complex factors participate in the labour exploitation of migrant workers. For this reason, we decided to frame our research question in these terms:

What are the main factors that contribute to maintain a system of foreign labour exploitation in the agricultural field of Southern Italy, especially in the province of Foggia?

In order to answer this question, we decided to use qualitative methods as our primary source of data. During our fieldwork, we conducted 11 interviews with different actors that, in a way or another, were involved with migrant farm workers. In addition, we could develop field notes, do observations and visit two migrant's settlements. However, to cope with the limitations of such a method, we also relied on quantitative methods as our secondary source. This means that we relied on different graphics, statistics, policies and official documents in order to better develop our thesis.

Once the factors that maintain a system of labour exploitation in the agricultural sector are multiple and interconnected, we decided to divide the analysis in three main sections in order to better organize our arguments. During the first part, we argued that labour exploitation in the agriculture sector of Southern Italy is not new, but represents the continuity of a system that was already in place in the 19th century. As today migrants, past peasants were also poorly paid, had low job security and lived in precarious conditions (Kish, 1966). We consider that these ancient exploratory practices contribute to the labour exploitation of migrants nowadays since they provided the necessary socio-economic arrangements for the system to perpetuate. Surely, some aspects have changed over the years, such as the figure of the caporale and the development of grey contracts. Moreover, currently, a context of widespread irregularity also contributes to maintain the exploitation of farm workers. This is so because laws are not always followed and individual interests frequently prevail, as it was exemplified by the recurrent practice of *bustarella*. It is also important to consider the high levels of poverty in the province of Foggia, which contribute to the development of the informal economy. A diffuse informal economy allows migrants to find a job more easily. However, irregular work is also poorly regulated and thus migrants are often subjected to a considerable level of exploitation and precarity (Filhol, 2013).

In the second part, we have seen that policies regarding the management of labour migration have been influenced by a mixture of securitization and humanitarianism. On one

hand, the security policies, such as the Salvini Decree, brought to the distinction between regular migrants, as entitled to a set of rights, and “illegal,” as detainable and deportable. The latter are excluded from the legal forms of work and have to find ‘back’ jobs in order to survive, and are affected by a condition of *deportability*. This condition makes them more vulnerable to exploitation as they become a ‘cheap’ reserve of labour. On the other hand, the failure of the quota system to meet the agricultural demand has contributed to the growing number of asylum seekers working in the fields. The media discourse around asylum seekers focuses on exploitation, ghettos and gangmasters, without mentioning the responsibilities of the state or the role of agricultural producers and retailers. As a consequence, institutional measures have been characterized by a repressive approach, focusing on the persecution of caporali and employers. Thus, institutional response has largely failed to effectively confront the existing reality of agricultural production, and to address the structural conditions keep migrants vulnerable to exploitation, specifically the lack of concrete alternatives to caporalato in finding a job.

During the last section of the analysis, we aimed to explore the transformations brought by a neoliberal globalization regime to the agriculture sector of Southern Italy. There, the transformations brought by neoliberal globalization to the agricultural field were many. Since the 20th century, the EU agricultural sector has changed into a capital-intensive production, with increased competition (Corrado, 2018). At the same time, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been consolidating sectorial, social and territorial inequalities mainly to the advantage of large estates and companies (Corrado, 2018). In the same line, the EU support to producers’ organizations has often favoured big farmers. Furthermore, Italy now presents an important concentration in the distribution and commercial levels of production. As a result, large retailers became stronger and can increasingly decide food products selling\buying prices. Being pressured by big retailers to cut costs, farmers, especially small and medium-size ones, tend to diminish farm workers’ wage and make them work longer hours (Filhol, 2013).

In addition, during the last section of the analysis, we have argued that the Italian migration management, which is mainly based on securitized and market approaches, tend to grant non-EU foreigners the right to enter and stay in a given state according to their level of employability. Those migrants that are not considered useful according to market rules, will most likely remain undocumented. This irregularity, however, is beneficial to the neoliberal logic, once it allows for the precarization of the workforce and thus contribute to accelerate capital accumulation (Oliveri, 2015a). Although Italian agriculture greatly relies on migrant

labour force, foreigners are frequently considered as a burden by the national society. This situation surely contributes to the further exploitation of migrant farm workers, once this perception of migrants justifies the development of restrictive migration policies. Nevertheless, it has been argued that tolerating such working standards can also be prejudicial to other labour sectors in Italy. This is so because the exploitation of foreign farm workers opens a breach in the Italian labour law (Ambrosini, 2011).

To conclude, our research showed us how complex the system of foreign labour exploitation in Southern Italian agriculture really is. Many factors contribute to sustain such a system and, many times, these factors are connected and influence each other. In addition, it is hard to assign a single role to different actors within the exploitation chain. Small and medium size farmers, which are the majority in the province of Foggia, are both exploited by some and exploit others. The same can be said about the caporali. Although they earn a good amount of money with migrant workers, they still cannot receive unemployment benefits or be entitled to retirement. As for migrant workers, farmers and caporale field of action also is shaped by structural dynamics. In this context, looking to labour exploitation in agriculture only through a micro perspective does not allow to fully understand the situation. For this reason, this thesis has tried to understand this system of exploitation mainly through a macro perspective and thus to unveil the underlying factors that contribute to maintain the exploitation of migrant farm workers in the agriculture sector in Southern Italy.

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