



# Turbulences in the encampment archipelago: conflicting mobilities between migration, labour and logistics in Italian agri-food enclaves

Irene Peano

To cite this article: Irene Peano (2021) Turbulences in the encampment archipelago: conflicting mobilities between migration, labour and logistics in Italian agri-food enclaves, *Mobilities*, 16:2, 212-223, DOI: [10.1080/17450101.2021.1885843](https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2021.1885843)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2021.1885843>



Published online: 25 Feb 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 67



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



# Turbulences in the encampment archipelago: conflicting mobilities between migration, labour and logistics in Italian agri-food enclaves

Irene Peano 

Instituto De Ciências Sociais, Universidade De Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

## ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the proliferation of different but intersecting regimes of mobility, and resistance against them, at the point of articulation of agricultural production with migration flows in contemporary Italy. The development of agri-food districts responds to a rationality of spatial zoning that in turn derives from the logistical re-organisation of supply chains. Such dynamics are shown to interact in complex ways with specific migration routes and their control, which also bear the effects of an encroaching logistical rationality. At times, these feed into the demand for cheap, *just-in-time* labour in agribusiness, whilst at others they clash with the needs of this sector. Racialisation represents a crucial tool of containment, together with a sexualised division of labour. The analysis is based on over eight years of participant, engaged research in several agro-industrial districts and migration hubs in Italy, among its migrant-worker populations, as well as in the countries of origins of some such workers (Nigeria, Romania and Bulgaria).

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 December 2019  
Accepted 11 November 2020

## KEYWORDS

Containment; logistics; migration; zoning; racialisation; turbulence

Since the beginnings of large-scale, transnational migration flows into Italy, in the mid-1980s, a constellation of what may be defined as *encampments* has proliferated across the country. The term draws on the work of Michel Agier (2013), who labelled ‘urban encampments’<sup>1</sup> those spaces of refuge and relegation, such as the so-called ‘Calais jungle’: survival communities, a world of remainders and waste. In Agier’s formulation, these are the places of the sovereign ban in the Agambenian sense (1995), or of *heterotopia*, and thus of deviation, in Foucault’s language (2009) – where the former, it is argued, engenders the latter. In Italy, slums made of wooden, plastic, asbestos and cardboard shacks and, increasingly, of brickwork and corrugated-iron structures, together with abandoned and then re-occupied, derelict buildings (often with no facilities) and state-sponsored tent and container camps, have grown steadily in number and extension, especially in the last decade. They are populated by trans-national migrants, separated along multiple, ethno-racialised lines.

Agier’s model has the merit of keeping within the same analytical framework spaces that are formally different (ranging as they do from self-constructed shantytowns to government-sponsored camps of various kinds), but that display structural and compositional similarities, without erasing their specificities or discounting their inhabitants’ subjectivities. He identifies refuge (i.e. the autonomous search for protection against violence), asylum (the institutional operationalisation of hospitality, which also displays a governmental dimension) and imprisonment as the three main figures of heterotopia today, which shade into one another on a continuum from openness and relation to

sheer confinement. By reference to this conceptual scheme, the settlements with which I am concerned may at first appear to emerge unambiguously as, and from, makeshift spaces of refuge from war, violence, racist or xenophobic refusal, or to respond to the formalised functions of asylum, that might in turn morph into plain imprisonment.

Yet, however insightful, such analysis proves overly static, and blind to the multi-dimensionality of the places it purports to describe. In the context at hand, the functions of refuge, asylum and imprisonment are sometimes absolved simultaneously by hybrid spaces, which are inherently mobile and shifting in themselves. Furthermore, as this paper will show, their mobile character relates to multiple, wider dynamics. On the one hand, intersecting and multi-scalar 'regimes of mobility' (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) produce spaces of flow and stasis, in which several dimensions of power operate (at local, state, trans- and supra-national levels) to control the movement of people and things. On the other, resistance against them also creates its own geographies. Seen from the perspective of their role in channelling mobility, and in the light of their interconnect-edness – both in the sense that they are structurally analogous, and that the same people often circulate between them – different encampments can indeed be placed on a continuum, outlining a sort of 'archipelago'.<sup>2</sup> Here, spatiotemporal suspension alternates with moments of acceleration, dispersal and forced mobility, and thus delineates dispositifs of *containment* (cf. Esposito et al. 2020; Tazzioli 2018; Garelli and Tazzioli 2018).

Moreover, such regimes operate not just in terms of exclusion but rather of 'differential inclusion' (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; cf. Fischer, this issue) within spheres of re/production and circulation that are not reducible to a national sovereign framework. Thus, this range of encampments must be put in relation to the effects not only of the sovereign ban, but of complex infrastructures of migration management which are enforced through multiple layers of governance, and, in connection to those, with the operations of labour markets and more generally of capital and its supply chains. Indeed, all of the encampments I am concerned with also function as recruitment hubs for the farming sector, and as spaces of reproduction for its workforce.

Thus, the encampment archipelago is here considered in its role of 'decompression chamber' (Mezzadra and Neilson 2003, 5) regulating the pressures and availabilities of labour supply, and the opportunities for profit extraction – by disciplining, sorting, neutralising, and, crucially, *containing*, *channelling* and *pacing* – often along the fine line separating the upholding of a right to life from a form of abandonment and more or less 'slow' death. Racialisation, as a series of cataloguing operations based on supposedly biological criteria, that enables forms of 'accumulation by dispossession' (Mullings 2005, 673, after Harvey), is one of the crucial tools for the regulation of mobility<sup>3</sup>, and unfolds in such contexts by various means. Spatial segregation, differential access to rights and entitlements, cultural, affective and social deprivation as well as sheer physical violence are enforced according to subjects' origins and/or physical appearance, and result from intersecting legal, symbolic-affective and economic dispositifs ranging from immigration laws to labour-management practices and protocols, blended in with utter prejudice.

In accounting for these operations of containment, I aim to show how their intersections themselves are by no means always smooth. Rather, they emanate from 'turbulences' (Cresswell and Martin 2012), understood as disruptions intrinsic to mobility regimes, which defy expectation and prediction. Thus, not only is the lens of mobility crucial in order to understand forms of control and resistance, but it is also necessary to consider these dynamics as deriving from conflicting agendas within a field of multiple forces.

My analysis draws on over eight years of engaged, participant research with those who inhabit these spaces. More specifically, throughout this period I have maintained a sustained presence in the encampments that dot the agro-industrial districts of Foggia and of the Plain of Gioia Tauro. Their population constitutes a significant portion of the extremely precarious farm-labour force,<sup>4</sup> and, especially in the case of women, of the care (and particularly sex) labour that goes into the workers' reproduction. At the same time, I am also drawing on fieldwork in Nigeria, Romania and Bulgaria, the countries of origin of significant portions of the labour force (if dwindling in the case of Eastern

Europeans). Whilst outside the archipelago, in migrants' countries of origin, I engaged in forms of long-term fieldwork and participant observation (particularly in Nigeria and, to a lesser extent, in Romania) that also relied on more formalised interviews, in the encampments themselves I mostly kept to mutualistic and militant forms of research. Also given the high exposure of many such spaces to what their inhabitants perceive as the extractive operations of a range of subjects (from journalists to politicians, academics, third-sector workers and volunteers), and the ensuing scepticism towards any outsider, I sought to establish relationships of trust by engaging in forms of collective solidarity (cf. e.g. Collettivo RicercAzione 2013a, 2013b, 2016). In what follows, I focus mostly on the Industrial Zone adjacent to the Port of Gioia Tauro, in the district of Reggio Calabria, in order to illustrate the play of juxtapositions and conflicts of mobility in exemplary fashion. Yet, my reflections may be seen to carry general value for the analysis of the archipelago in its entirety, and more broadly of racialised forms of mobility containment.

### **Turbulence at the intersection of nodes and knots**

Since the fall of 2011, in the Industrial Zone sprawling between the municipalities of Rosarno and San Ferdinando (located in the Plain of Gioia Tauro, at the southernmost tip of the Italian peninsula), an archipelago of slum-camps has been developing – expanding, morphing and contracting at rather intensive speed. At the time, a container camp was first erected as the Italian government's response to the revolt that had erupted in Rosarno more than one year earlier, on 7 January 2010, against the violent physical attacks West-African migrants had endured at the hands of some locals. The heavily mediated event led to the detention and deportation of dozens of migrants from the area, and to a sudden farm-labour shortage, soon filled by other, mainly West-African workers who had flocked to the Plain from other parts of the country, drawn by the promise of employment. At the same time, it also spurred a series of state- and local-government projects for the housing of the seasonal farm workers employed every winter in the citrus harvest, of which camps were to be only a temporary, intermediary stage towards more durable solutions. Previously, seasonal farm workers had lived scattered in self-sourced derelict buildings around the Plain, some of which are still inhabited today, whilst others were evacuated following the riots and the torching of some such premises. Indeed, it was (and still is) quite rare for employers to provide seasonal workers with accommodation, whilst renting a room or an apartment is very hard for migrants, and most especially for West-African people, on account of racial prejudice (which also inflates rents) and of their lack of social and financial guarantees.

With an estimated 6500 migrant farm labourers from both Eastern Europe and West Africa, and an undefined number of women providing sexual and other services for the male component of the workforce, the district ranks among the 15 that register the highest percentage of migrant farm workers in Italy. Erected in November 2012, a second camp made of tents soon overflowed its capacity, and due to the fact that it was built on unsuitable terrain, some months after its opening it was moved to an adjacent site, located a few hundred metres away. All the informal constructions that had sprung up around the tents were razed to the ground, and, despite money having been allocated for their disposal, months later the rubble was simply set on fire. Dwellers' protests against what they claimed was a corrupt and greedy management, contracted by the local municipality and the central government to a local Evangelical association, avoided the imposition of fees for entering the new camp and *de facto* got rid of any stable form of civilian control and supervision.

Through the years, and until the present, charities and unions have maintained a presence and secured a minimum of funding for the provision of some basic services (such as residency registration), that camp inhabitants always complained of being gravely lacking when not wholly unnecessary or totally ineffective, as in the case of language training or union support. The municipality equally failed to provide any real infrastructural maintenance, leading to an almost complete lack of water, sanitation and electricity supply.

Just as with the previous government-sponsored tent camp, the second one soon turned into a hybrid camp-slum site, on account of the many shacks residents built over time with scrap materials fetched from the surroundings. These served not only as extra living space for a growing population, exceeding 1000 people – especially at the peak of the harvest season, between November and March –, but also to accommodate convenience stores, brothels, bars, eating stalls and dancehalls, praying spaces (both Muslim and Christian) and cycle repair stores. In the years following the construction and expansion of the settlement, the national government mandated the mowing down of the informal constructions several times. However, each time they were erected anew soon after, and kept growing in size and number, whilst the surrounding, empty warehouses were also progressively occupied.

In the summer of 2017, a high-security tent camp was set up, again just a few yards away, with a view to empty out the camp-slum and other informal settlements. Unlike its predecessors, the new installation was surrounded by a two-metre tall metal fence. Regulations required that its inhabitants have regular residency status (something which applied to the majority of the camp-slum population, but by no means to all), and conditioned entrance also upon the issuing of a personalised electronic *badge* which, just as residence permits, contains biometric data. Time restrictions for entrance and exit and a ban upon any form of autonomous cooking or visits from unregistered non-residents were also enforced by the camp's statutory regulations, until residents managed to find (partial) ways around them. Up till now, in any case, police patrol the entrance and the surrounding part of the Zone, 24/7. Despite dwellers' protests against what they perceived as a carceral regime, through the mediation of unions and local associations and the threat of irregularisation for those who refused to move, the new camp became operational. Yet, the old camp-slum was not destroyed as initially planned. Many dwellers, whether or not they agreed to move, kept a shack in the old settlement, which they used both for sleeping and especially to prepare and eat food and more generally to maintain sociality and intimacies.

The container camp, located in another segment of the Zone, continues to be inhabited, albeit hardly any maintenance has been provided in years, whilst the housing projects that were built with EU funding are kept off-limits for the migrants, and promised to local residents instead. In one case, the construction of what was named 'Solidarity Village' (*Villaggio della Solidarietà*) was interrupted twice by the judiciary, after investigations into mafia 'infiltrations' into the company that secured the building contract. In the end the project was never completed but the prefabricated houses were nevertheless squatted by ostensibly homeless Italian families, who were said to have been manipulated by local politicians, and later dilapidated and abandoned. A banner placed at the entrance of the premises recited '*Prima i rosarnesi*' (local dwellers first). In another case, five buildings were erected for a total of 350 sleeping places, purposefully designed for seasonal farm workers and built with EU money to that end. Yet, for their allocation the mayor of Rosarno declared at the beginning of 2019 he wanted to give priority to the town's residents. Such move froze pending structural works, that were needed to make the buildings inhabitable, and despite an agreement being finally reached to allocate half the available slots to migrants and the other to locals, they remain empty to this day (again, mafia 'infiltrations' in the contractor company were also ascertained). In January 2021, the mayor himself was destituted after a judicial inquiry indicted him for having earned his votes through agreements with some of the local 'ndrangheta gangs. Wiretaps of some of his conversations were published by the media, in which he can be heard saying, with reference to such housing project, 'I don't give a fuck about blacks' (me ne fotto dei niri).

Several fires plagued the camp-slum over the years, which resulted in the death of three migrants (a woman and two men) in as many incidents since early January 2018 alone, while other two dwellers were shot dead, and many more wounded, in the hands of law enforcement agents and locals. Three dead black bodies were also found in the streets of Rosarno since the beginning of 2019, without any explanation from investigators as to what or who might have taken their lives. Street attacks on black migrants, who are beaten, run over, hit by objects thrown from cars or shot at by people driving by are commonplace in camp dwellers' own narratives, but they seldom make news. Migrants also complain of police abuse on a regular basis.

Finally, on 6 March 2019, by order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the last camp-slum was razed to the ground once and for all, in an operation that employed about 900 law enforcement agents, several bulldozers, water cannons, helicopters and dozens of riot police vans. In the preceding weeks, denizens had been subjected to a census which returned a population of over 1000. Local-government officials, third-sector workers and police officers had tried to persuade some to move to one or the other of the many temporary reception facilities for asylum seekers and refugees scattered across the country, with very little positive response. Not only few among the slum-camp inhabitants had agreed to move, but in most cases those who did returned in a matter of days, whether because they ended up in remote locations, hundreds of kilometres away, where they could not find work and were not attended to, or because they were rejected by the centres themselves on the grounds that their immigration status did not entitle them to residence there. On the day of the eviction, a minority agreed to be sent to other centres (in localities unknown to them) and were boarded on buses with numbers pinned to their clothes. Among those, some were once again made undocumented and expelled from the reception facilities. The majority decided to leave and autonomously seek alternative accommodation elsewhere, also since the harvest season was drawing to an end, whilst a few hundred were lodged in the high-security camp, where the number of tents was doubled for the purpose. It is there that on 22 March 2019 another fire broke out, sparked by a short-circuit, which killed yet another dweller. The following November, at the start of the new citrus-harvest season, local authorities heavily restricted access as a strategy of dissuasion and in order not to create overcrowding and possible turmoil, letting migrants in at a slow pace. In November 2020, after the high-security camp had been partly dismantled, taking advantage of the fact that many of its habitual dwellers have temporarily left for other districts to find employment in summer harvesting jobs, it was cordoned off as a heavily militarised 'red zone' on account of the outbreak of several cases of COVID-19. Yet, despite much institutional rhetoric advocating for 'structural living solutions' for a decade, no such provisions have yet been granted, not even to isolate infected people, and the protests of those who remained throughout the year have averted any final eviction.

Whilst ostensibly meant to accommodate, in emergency form, a seasonal population of farm workers attracted by the perspective of employment in the local citrus farms, the camp-slums that emerged in the Plain of Gioia Tauro have been fostered also by an immigration regime which keeps people forcibly still, waiting for their papers to be issued or renewed. Since the first camp was set up and until the fall of 2018, the local police headquarters in charge of the procedures always behaved in a more 'lax' way if compared to other districts, provided migrants had registered with the camp and thus drawing more dwellers in. At the same time, innumerable exceptions are often found to one's application, always threatening to withdraw legal status and leading to lengthy, stressful and expensive bureaucratic tussles with always uncertain outcomes.

Following the early-2010 riots, furthermore, a struggle for the legalisation of many of the migrants who lived in the enclave area eventually led to hundreds of humanitarian permits being released on the ground of claimants having undergone heavy forms of exploitation. Since then, waves of slum-camp dwellers have taken to the streets on several occasions, protesting racism as well as immigration, housing, labour and health policies (and demanding the respect of systematically disattended laws favouring them), supported by some allies. Among their tactics, the interruption of commodity circulation, in the form of blockades of key road arteries and of the Zone's harbour, has been prominent.

In this light, the encampment archipelago represents not only a convenient containment device for the discipline and supply of cheap and docile farm labour, but also a space of autonomy and support along migration routes originating from West Africa. People move within it according, on the one hand, to the seasonality of farm labour, along the corridors drawn between different agribusiness districts (nationally and transnationally) by labour supply chains. On the other hand, in many cases, the encampments are 'arrival infrastructures' (Meeus, Arnaut, and van Heur 2019) in migratory projects, which may aspire to Northern European countries as the 'final' destination. If on

the one hand the management of migrant mobility facilitates the recruitment of just-in-time, disposable workers, the latter's autonomous movements represent a threat that needs to be contained through legal, spatial and other devices, including violent aggression and the fostering of racist prejudice.

Speaking of roads and corridors, Zinganel (2019) has proposed to differentiate between 'knots', which he defines as established by 'the tactics of individuals to fulfil their everyday needs in transit' (15), and 'nodes', the results of powerful institutional strategies within logistics and infrastructural networks. Here, not only does mobility take centre stage, but also one function (the tactical knot) may overlap with the other (the strategic nodes) in the same place. For Zinganel, 'these nodes and knots can be perceived as "polyrhythmic" ensembles of (post-)urban architecture, mobile objects, and individuals that are dependent on rhythmic flows [...] that fluctuate on a daily, weekly, or seasonal basis, only to contract again' (Ibid.). The Zone in which the encampment archipelago has been morphing, thus, can be understood in terms of turbulent intersections between nodes and knots. At the same time, other conflicts surface, between different forms of mobility management (cf. Grappi 2018) and thus within and between nodes themselves. Thus it is that various municipal, regional, state and EU governing bodies are seen to take uncoordinated and potentially conflicting actions in their management of mobility within and outside the Zone.

Yet other turbulences and conflicts, moreover, make themselves manifest.

### **Commodity chains, logistics and migration at crisis points**

The current clampdown on immigration through the central Mediterranean route, which started in 2017, has compounded with the Italian government's suspension of its quota-system for extra-EU labour migration since 2011 and with international migrants' progressive flight from Italy towards other European destinations, determining what farmers, among others, decry as a labour shortage since at least early 2019.<sup>5</sup> West-African migrants' increasing frustration with what are perceived as especially cruel and racist policies led many to seek their fortune elsewhere in the EU, whilst Eastern-European workers have progressively withdrawn their labour force from the Italian agro-industrial sector due to their countries' economic growth and the greater range of choices afforded to them by this fact, and by their greater chances of mobility within the EU space if compared to non-EU migrants. Such shortage was only exacerbated by the lockdown measures adopted in March 2020 to contain the COVID-19 pandemic (cf. Peano 2020a). Thus, different regimes of mobility management conflict openly: whilst migration is economically functional in a number of ways (not only as labour supply, but also for the military-humanitarian complex that manages it), its control might respond to logics that partly undermine such economic regimes, or at least threaten to do so.

Furthermore, another conflict also emerged in the Industrial Zone of San Ferdinando. The latter was originally part of a project developed in the first half of the 1990s, after a 20-year gestation period and alternating fortunes, as an industrial stocking and processing area for the adjacent port of Gioia Tauro.<sup>6</sup> The port itself was designed in the early 1970s with significant amounts of public funding, first from the state and subsequently from the then European Community. It should have accompanied the construction of a steel plant that never saw the light of day, as the response to another revolt, known as 'the Reggio uprisings', staged by the slum dwellers of the city of Reggio Calabria in the wake of the central government's decision to allocate the capital of the newly instituted regional government to the city of Catanzaro. The protests, which lasted for several months and involved many bloody incidents, were quickly hijacked by the post-fascist far right. In response, the state sent army tanks, and several deaths occurred among the civilian population as a result of police intervention. The port, conceived as a sort of reparation for the impoverished population of the district, is strategically located along the Suez-Gibraltar route. It reached its peak of traffic volumes (especially for transshipment, for which it detained first place in the Mediterranean) in earlier decades, to then march towards a progressive decline from which it is only now starting to



recover.<sup>7</sup> In 2017, laid-off workers from the port were employed as staff to manage the high-security migrant labour camp. Currently, some such workers are protesting the purported closure of the camp facility, which whilst on hold has inexplicably determined a change of management, also leading to the termination of workers' contracts.

At the same time, the Industrial Zone never set off, as it was mostly used as an opportunity by entrepreneurs to profit from state incentives without effectively establishing any productive activity, leaving several empty warehouses (some of which were seized by the judiciary within investigations against the local mafia cartels) to haunt the plain, together with an illegal airstrip. For the realisation of such complex, an entire village was wiped out of existence. Evidently, labour camps became a further source of profit predated on the ruins of previous projects, and yet another outlet for the surplus local workforce.

Just as in the heydays of the Port and Industrial-Zone project, today the conflicts between different interests and governmental plans can be seen to bear upon the area, continuously creating rubble and the spectres of dwellings and people that are no longer. The crisis of the container terminal led to several layoffs, within the wider economic and social decline experienced by the Plain area. Here, the agricultural sector has been suffering due to the increasing international competition that went hand-in-hand with the EU's so-called decoupling of agricultural subsidies from specific crops in 2003. Such policies had sustained local citrus production in previous decades, also through fraudulent practices on farmers' part. The parallel concentration of distribution channels in the hands of fewer and ever larger multinational chains led to the squeezing of farmers' profit margins further and further (cf. Peano 2020b for a more in-depth analysis of such processes). Endemic unemployment, ensuing high rates of emigration and crime, as well as the racialisation of conflicts and the sway of organised crime cartels compound and feed into infrastructural deficiency and decay. It is in such context that the 2010 riots erupted, fuelled by increasing competition between different sectors of the workforce and shrinking resources, exacerbated by the effects of the 2008 global financial crisis. Resentment was and still is channelled onto the most vulnerable: black migrants, the compression of whose wages, also predicated on a regime of racialised terror and segregation, has allowed some farmers to keep in the business despite the gloomy scenario, and Italian workers to scrape a living together. The extension of supply chains in agroindustrial production, the externalisation of the re-production of the labour force by capital and the state by reliance on a trans-national, rightless migrant workforce, the control of production and circulation by retail chains that increasingly push for a transgression of legal standards (whereby the pressure on costs is dumped on salaries, on environmental security etc.) all impinge upon the formation of the labour camps and the slums.

Allegedly a solution to the structural 'underdevelopment' of the area, since 2012 several voices raised to sponsor the institution of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in the Port area and its hinterland, where a specialised logistical hub should also be set up to process, in particular, agricultural produce from the district. According to its supporters, the SEZ is meant to attract foreign investment and favour employment. In such project, a change of orientation is markedly evident within the discursive apparatus that bears also upon the settlements with which this article is concerned. In June 2017, a bill was approved which on the one hand instituted special economic zones in this and other areas – which by definition must be 'less developed and transition regions' – and on the other appointed three extraordinary commissioners 'to face situations of social marginality', in order 'to overcome situations of particular decay in the areas of the following municipalities: Manfredonia in the district of Foggia, San Ferdinando in the district of Reggio Calabria and Castel Volturno in the district of Caserta, characterized by a massive concentration of foreign citizens' (*Gazzetta Ufficiale*, L. 3 agosto 2017, n. 123). It is no coincidence that these are the areas where the highest concentration of settlements of African workers employed in agricultural labour are to be found.

In the final formulation of the bill, to these 'urgent measures' correspond also financial contributions and other norms pertaining to the reinforcement and restructuring of mobility infrastructures (road networks, automated systems for the management of commodity flows, car servicing), and to



the management of post-disaster emergency actions related to earthquakes. In short, the management of migrants is increasingly associated with policies characterized by a logistical and emergency rationality.

Tellingly, during institutional talks concerning the situation of the tent camp in San Ferdinando, held in November 2017, besides the Prefect, the newly appointed extraordinary commissioner, representatives of local authorities and law enforcement, and the Regional minister for the logistical system, the port system and the 'Gioia Tauro system' were in attendance. The meeting's agenda included 'ongoing interventions mandated in relation to the logistical accommodation of migrants in San Ferdinando', 'in order to ensure the compatibility of the SEZ with the reception areas'.<sup>8</sup> The strategic development plan attached to the approval of the Calabrian SEZ, in the spring of 2018, equally refers to the 'presence of migrant communities and the latter's stationing' in terms of 'security issues' (Chap. 6, p. 78) that must be adequately managed (through, for example, CCTV surveillance systems) to ensure the project's success. Here, logistical projects of different sorts – the ones pertaining to the SEZ and those concerning the containment of the migrant-worker population of the camp-slums – are pitted as potentially incompatible and in need of 'harmonisation' through security measures. The logistical rationality that increasingly permeates not only agri-food production, but also migration management (Tazzioli 2018; Mezzadra 2019; Pollozek and Passoth 2019; Peano 2020b), meets the military-humanitarian complex that has been in charge of handling the mobility of people from outside the EU (Garelli and Tazzioli 2019; Garelli, Sciurba, and Tazzioli 2018; Walters 2011). Such rationality must be considered for its capacity to function as an ordering principle for complex territorial configurations (zones, corridors, enclaves, infrastructure spaces; cf. Grappi 2016; Easterling 2014; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 2019). Not only does it operate within a strongly extractive dimension that leaves ruins in its wake (cf. Tsing 2012), but it also introduces extra-legal practices and a proliferation of different legal regimes that saturate the space of agro-industrial districts. It is within, or at any rate in relation to, these zones and their logics that slums and labour camps mushroom, as well as in connection with the constellation of spaces for migration management and migrant flight.

### Typing knots together: conflicts and convergences in mobility regimes

Neither completely autonomous nor totally subsumed by logics of control, in the dwellings with which I am concerned here refuge, asylum and imprisonment often coexist in the same space. Periodic or simultaneous oscillations between the ghetto, the camp and the city, from the non-place to the place and back again (in Agier's conceptual scheme), characterise the encampments of Italian agri-food enclaves. Slums are turned into institutionalised camps and vice-versa, often in the space of a few months. To violent operations of eviction, evacuation, bulldozing – sometimes resulting from (or into) deadly fires – correspond equally swift moments of (re)construction, (re)settlement, (re)adjustment. The frequent displacements and periodic destruction and reconstruction of the slums, and more generally the ever-incomplete attempts at their institutionalisation, can be seen as spatio-temporal tactics of deferral that promise an elusive 'closure' (Casid 2017), which in turn allows dispositifs of containment to multiply *ad infinitum*. At the same time, attempts at containment and securitisation conflict with forms of self-organisation, resistance and flight.

Furthermore, neither slum nor camp ever exist as pure forms: they always morph into hybrids of institutional ordering and spontaneous place-making. Not only do slums sometimes proliferate at the edges of institutional camps, as it was the case with earlier incarnations of the tent-camp in San Ferdinando, and with many other camps across Italy. In several instances, such as the tent-cities built by the government in San Ferdinando, labour (or even asylum-seeker) camps set up by local authorities, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and/or farmers' organisations, often in partnership, themselves quickly revert to slums. Conversely, slums are in many cases provided with a modicum of basic (and at any rate insufficient, and usually intermittent) infrastructure – such as drinking water supply, sanitation and garbage collection – by those same agencies. Thus, these are

inherently mobile spaces, in more ways than one. Finally, such slum-camps are part of a wider archipelago of containment, related to other spaces of confinement, survival and resistance along and around migrant trajectories, inside and outside Italian borders.

Slum-camps are indeed contiguous to other powerful nodes of mobility containment: asylum seekers' and refugees' reception centres, including *hubs* and *hotspots* (some of the latest incarnations of the EU's border politics); undocumented migrants' detention centres; as well as prisons proper, in Europe and in other transit countries, most notably Libya. The connections that can be drawn between these different camp forms are not only abstracted from their (partially) containing effects on mobility. These spaces are all crossed, traversed and inhabited, one after the other, by the same subjects. Clearly, these different spatial formations all act as *dispositifs* of containment, and impinge upon the pace and trajectory of migrant flows – whether in an overt and deliberate way (such as in the case of asylum seekers' reception centres, migrant detention centres, and also prisons), or more indirectly as in the case of labour camps and slums, where the latter are the by-products of migration-management policies that create undocumented subjects and therefore the need for refuge. Through such spaces, people's movements are in any case restricted and subjected to tight regulation. The feeling of being incarcerated is widespread among slum-camp dwellers, and more generally imprisonment is a metaphor often employed by migrants to signal their condition in Europe, where immigration laws severely limit their freedom of movement.

And yet, the slum-camps dotting Italian agro-industrial enclaves are also knots within wider mobile networks. Migrants' trajectories are organised around a counter-logistics, or 'logisticality' (Harney and Moten 2013) of (partly) informal dwellings, which act as places of refuge and transit, and as points of connection for the organisation of the next leg of trans-national and trans-continental journeys. Whilst these spaces are by no means free of hierarchies and of more or less violent, extractive relations, and are in tension with policies of mobility management, they also display a degree of solidarity and mutualism.

Further, whilst from the legal and symbolic point of view these are often spaces of exception and exclusion, they cannot be understood only as such. The restructuring of global supply chains, and its effects on the organisation of production and reproduction, are central to capture the dynamics that animate them. These spaces are inserted not only into *dispositifs* of migration management and their gaps, but, by this same token, they also serve, in more or less direct ways, as tools for the reproduction of a cheap, disposable labour force. They are not the effect of a sovereign ban, so much as of governmental forms of 'differential inclusion' (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) that allow for the extraction of cheap, or in some cases free, surplus labour – in the asylum seekers' reception centres as much as in the slums, for all their differences.

Finally, whilst containment and its excess through resistance and flight are evident within the regimes of mobility I analysed, conflicts and turbulences also emerge between the management of labour, of migration and of wider logistical projects of restructuring supply chains and their infrastructure. Overall, these sketch a complex geography of flows and stoppages along several intersecting layers, for whose analysis the perspective of mobility appears to yield important insights.

## Notes

1. '*Campements*' in the French original, in turn drawing from the English.
2. Foucault's seminal text on the prison (1977, 297- segg.) constitutes a reference point for the notion of archipelago, indicating a network of disciplinary institutions beyond jails proper, whose common feature are carceral and punitive elements (but cf. also Petti 2007; Weizman 2007). In the archipelago this paper deals with, carceral and punitive elements coexist side by side with what Agier has called the functions of refuge and asylum. As other authors have argued (e.g. Philo 2014; Turner and Peters 2017), in carceral archipelagos techniques of mobility management are at play, that cannot be reduced to mere forms of immobilisation – and yet, they are circumscribed within the confines of an institution, whereas here I am concerned, among others, with an induced hyper-mobility between different places, that engenders its own spaces of transit, its

corridors and its zones, and alternates with forced stasis. The carceral continuum examined by Foucault already contained elements of governmental, biopolitical power, that have only grown in importance in the present according to a 'mobilitarian' ideology (Mincke and Lemonne 2014).

3. My reflections on these matters have developed in dialogues with colleagues and fellow members of the project 'The colour of labour: The racialized lives of migrants' (see acknowledgements). Cf. Bastos (2018a, 2018b, 2020); Le Petitcorps and Desille (2020); Macedo (forthcoming); Miller (forthcoming).
4. Given the high rates of irregularity characterising labour patterns and rights of residence, statistical data is highly unreliable. Recorded, non-citizen farm labourers in Italy are currently around 370,000 (out of a total of about 1.06 million workers in the farming sector), of which roughly 5.8% in the district of Foggia and 1.9% in that of Reggio Calabria (Magrini 2020). Between 12,500 and 17,500 are deemed to live in 'informal' settlements (Ciniero 2019), although, as I argue, the boundary between the institutional and the informal is often hard to draw.
5. Cf. F.Baraggino 'Industriali al governo: servono più migranti', *Il Fatto Quotidiano* 23 September 2019, available online at <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/in-edicola/articoli/2019/09/23/industriali-al-governo-servono-piu-migranti/5470330/>, accessed 6 November 2019.
6. For a comprehensive reconstruction of the dynamics and interlockings between politics and business that have accompanied the project and its management, see Forgione (2012).
7. On the evolution of traffic in the port of Gioia Tauro, and on the institution of the Special Economic Zone to which I refer below, see the report accompanying the 'Proposal of administrative provision n. 46/10<sup>Λ</sup> on initiative of the Regional Council bearing 'Extraordinary measures for the development of the area of Gioia Tauro – draft bill for the institution of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ)' adopted by the regional administration concomitantly with the definitive approval of SEZ projects at national level, available online at <http://www.regione.calabria.it/website/portaltemplates/view/view.cfm?7341>, accessed on 13 September 2018; cf. also Genco, Mario; Sirtori, Emanuela; Vignetti, Silvia (2013). Long term impact of a major infrastructure project: the port of Gioia Tauro, 53<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the European Regional Science Association: 'Regional Integration: Europe, the Mediterranean and the World Economy', 27–31 August 2013, Palermo, Italy, available online [https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/124097/1/ERSA2013\\_01003.pdf](https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/124097/1/ERSA2013_01003.pdf), retrieved on 28/01/2018.
8. <http://www.strill.it/primo-piano/2017/11/al-setaccio-vecchia-tendopoli-san-ferdinando-foto/>, accessed 7 November 2019.

## Acknowledgments

This article was written under the aegis of the ERC-funded project "The Colour of Labour: The Racialised lives of Migrants," (Advanced Grant 695573, PI Cristiana Bastos), within which I have worked since March 2017. I have greatly benefited from exchanges with all the team members, whom I wish to thank for sharing comments and ideas. Previously, my research on the topic was funded by a Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship, held at the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Bologna, and by the Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (ICUB). None of this work would have been possible without all those who participated in and contributed to the struggles, small and large, that obtained in the spaces I deal with here. My deepest thanks to all of them.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## ORCID

Irene Peano  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7085-0911>

## References

- Agamben, G. 1995. *Homo Sacer: Il Potere Sovrano e la Nuda Vita*. Turin: Einaudi.
- Agier, M. 2013. *Campement Urbain: Du Refuge Naît le Ghetto*. Paris: Payot.
- Bastos, C. 2018a. "Migrants Inequalities and Social Research in the 1920s: The Story of Two Portuguese Communities in New England." *History and Anthropology* 29 (2): 163–183.
- Bastos, C. 2018b. "Portuguese in the Cane: The Racialization of Labour in Hawaiian Plantations." In *Changing Societies: Legacies and Challenges*, vol. 1. *Ambiguous Inclusions: Inside Out, Inside In*, edited by S. Aboim, P. Granjo and A. Ramos, 65–96. Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
- Bastos, C. 2020. "Plantation Memories, Labor Identities, and the Celebration of Heritage: The Case of Hawaii's Plantation Village". *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research* 8: 25–45.

- Casid, J. 2017. "A State of Foreclosure: The Guantánamo Prison." In *The Philosophical Salon: Twenty-First Century Speculations, Reflections, Interventions*, edited by P. Vieira and M. Marder, 226–228. London: Open Humanities Press.
- Ciniero, A. 2019. "Il Lavoro Agricolo Gravemente Sfruttato". In *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione*, edited by Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS, 289–295. Rome: Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS.
- Cresswell, T., and C. Martin. 2012. "On Turbulence: Entanglements of Disorder and Order on a Devon Beach." *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 103 (5): 516–529. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9663.2012.00734.x.
- Easterling, K. 2014. *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space*. London: Verso.
- Esposito, F., A. Murtaza, I. Peano, and F. Vacchiano. 2020. "Fragmented Citizenship: Contemporary Infrastructures of Mobility Containment along Two Migratory Routes." *Citizenship Studies* 24 (5): 625–641. doi:10.1080/13621025.2020.1784642.
- Forgione, F. 2012. *Porto Franco: Politici, Manager, Spioni nella Repubblica della 'Ndrangheta*. Milan: Dalai.
- Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. 2009. *Le Corps Utopique, Suivi de les Hétérotopies*. Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Lignes.
- Garelli, G., A. Sciruba, and M. Tazzioli. 2018. "Introduction: Mediterranean Movements and the Reconfiguration of the Military-Humanitarian Border in 2015." *Antipode* 50 (3): 662–672. doi:10.1111/anti.12385.
- Garelli, G., and M. Tazzioli. 2018. "Containment beyond Detention: The Hotspot System and Disrupted Migration Movements across Europe." *Environment and Planning, D, Society & Space*. doi:10.1177/0263775818759335.
- Garelli, G., and M. Tazzioli. 2019. "Military-humanitarianism." In *Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration*, edited by K. Mitchell, R. Jones and J. Fluri, 182–191. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Glick Schiller, N., and N. Salazar. 2013. "Regimes of Mobility across the Globe." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39 (2): 183–200. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2013.723253.
- Grappi, G. 2016. *Logistica*. Rome: Ediesse.
- Grappi, G. 2018. "Contro la Trappola Logistica." *Zapruder* 46: 8–26.
- Harney, S., and F. Moten. 2013. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. New York: Minor Compositions.
- Le Petitcorps, C., and A. Desille. 2020. "Special issue: La colonialité du pouvoir en migration(s)." *Migrations Société* 182 (4).
- Macedo, M. Forthcoming. "Displacement, Work and Confinement: Plantation Workers in São Tomé." In *Slave Subjectivities in the Iberian World*, edited by Â. Barreto Xavier, C. Nogueira da Silva, and M. Cahen. London: Brill.
- Magrini, R. 2020. "I Lavoratori Stranieri nel Settore Agricolo". *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2020*, edited by Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS 282–287 Rome Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS
- Meeus, B., K. Arnaut, and B. van Heur, 2019. *Arrival Infrastructures: Migration and Urban Social Mobilities*. London: Springer.
- Mezzadra, S., and B. Neilson. 2019. *The Politics of Operations: Excavating Contemporary Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mezzadra, S. 2019. "Logistica, Mobilità e Migrazioni: Un'agenda Emergente per la Ricerca sulle Migrazioni?" In *Un Mondo Logistico: Sguardi Critici su Lavoro, Migrazioni, Politica e Globalizzazione*, edited by N. Cuppini and I. Peano, 45–62. Milan: Ledizioni.
- Mezzadra, S., and B. Neilson. 2003. "Né qui, né altrove—Migration, Detention, Desertion: A Dialogue." *Borderlands E-journal* 2 (1). <http://www.borderlands.net.au/issues/v012n01.html>
- Mezzadra, S., and B. Neilson. 2013. *Border as Method: Or, the Multiplication of Labour*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Miller, N. Forthcoming. "Crossing Seas and Labels: British Vessels, Hawaiian Contracts and Portuguese Labour Migrants, 1878–1911." *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies*.
- Mincke, C., and A. Lemonne. 2014. "Prison and (Im)mobility. What about Foucault?" *Mobilities* 9 (4): 528–549. doi:10.1080/17450101.2014.961258.
- Mullings, L. 2005. "Interrogating Racism: Toward an Antiracist Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 667–693. doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.32.061002.093435.
- Peano, I. 2020a. "Missing Farm Workers in Pandemic Times: Is It Really "The Virus's Fault"? the View from Italy." *LeftEast*. [http://www.criticatac.ro/lefeast/missing-farm-workers-in-pandemic-times-is-it-really-the-virus-fault-the-view-from-italy%EF%BB%BF/?fbclid=IwAR35N15j\\_YmE\\_Y63PpUgz\\_nIEhgbTbyBIXHKREuA9g7URWIAgLHXkBrog](http://www.criticatac.ro/lefeast/missing-farm-workers-in-pandemic-times-is-it-really-the-virus-fault-the-view-from-italy%EF%BB%BF/?fbclid=IwAR35N15j_YmE_Y63PpUgz_nIEhgbTbyBIXHKREuA9g7URWIAgLHXkBrog)
- Peano, I. 2020b. "Conflitti e Sinergie della Logistica: Enclavi Agro-industriali, Migrazioni e ZES." *Quaderni Di Scienza & Politica* 11: 135–154.
- Petti, A. 2007. *Arcipelaghi e Enclave: Architettura dell'ordinamento Spaziale Contemporaneo*. Milan: Mondadori.
- Philo, C. 2014. "'One Must Eliminate the Effects of ... Diffuse Circulation [And] Their Unstable and Dangerous Coagulation': Foucault and beyond the Stopping of Mobilities." *Mobilities* 9 (4): 493–511. doi:10.1080/17450101.2014.961261.
- Pollozek, S., and J. Passoth. 2019. "Infrastructuring European Migration and Border Control: The Logistics of Registration and Identification at Moria Hotspot." *Environment and Planning, D, Society & Space* 37 (4): 606–624. doi:10.1177/0263775819835819.
- RicercAzione, C., 2013a. "Migrant Workers' Struggles, Their Composition and Facilitation in Italy". <http://collettivoricercazione.noblogs.org/post/2013/11/27/migrant-workers-struggles-their-composition-and-facilitation-in-italy/>

- RicercAzione, C., 2013b. "Collective Militant Research: Building on the Experience of a Volunteer Camp with Migrant Workers in southernItaly"<http://collettivoricercazione.noblogs.org/post/2013/01/30/collective-militant-r-collective-militant-research-building-on-the-experience-of-a-volunteer-camp-with-migrant-workers-in-southern-italy/>
- RicercAzione, C. 2016. "A European Answer? of Continents, Containers and Un/domesticated Movements". *UniConflicts in Spaces of Crisis: Critical Approaches In, against and beyond the University*, edited by Encounters and conflicts in the city group. Ebook. Available at.<https://urbanconflicts.wordpress.com>
- Tazzioli, M. 2018. "Containment through Mobility: Migrants' Spatial Disobediences and the Reshaping of Control through the Hotspot System." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44 (16): 2764–2779. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2017.1401514.
- Tsing, A. 2012. "On Nonscalability: The Living World Is Not Amenable to Precision-Nested Scales." *Common Knowledge* 18 (3): 505–524. doi:10.1215/0961754X-1630424.
- Turner, J., and K. Peters. 2017. *Carceral Mobilities: Interrogating Movement in Incarceration*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Walters, W. 2011. "Foucault and Frontiers: Notes on the Birth of the Humanitarian Border." In *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*, edited by U. Bröckling, S. Krasmann, and T. Lemke, 138–164. New York: Routledge.
- Weizman, E. 2007. *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. London: Verso.
- Zinganel, M. 2019. "Rhythms of Post-Urbanity: Road-Corridors, Nodes, and Networked Archipelagos." *Lo Squaderno* 51: 13–16.