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SOCIOLOGIA, PEDAGOGIA E PSICOLOGIA APPLICATE

***Testing EU Citizenship as Labour Citizenship:  
From Cases of Labour Rights Violations to a Strengthened Labour-Rights Regime***

**Report on preparatory activities**

**University of Padua**

***Summary***

As part of the “*Testing EU Citizenship as Labour Citizenship: From Cases of Labour Rights Violations to a Strengthened Labour-Rights Regime*” project, sponsored by Europe for All Citizens Programme, the University of Padua has carried out several preparatory activities. In particular meetings with migrants (both EU and non-EU citizens) employed in the hospitality industry of the so-called “Riviera Romagnola” and in warehouses in the city of Padua were organized. The aim of the meetings was not only to map the widespread abuses in the workplace but also to understand which strategies and practices workers put in place to contrast such violations, and which support they receive from institutions and other social organizations. Privileged witnesses such as trade unionists, activists of solidarity associations, health inspectors, and other key informants have also been met. The focus of the interviews concerned their work and life conditions, cases of severe labour exploitation, the type of migration and the means of access to justice and citizenship rights.

Both sectors are characterized by an high number of migrant workers and by a strong internal stratification. In the first case, we have deepened the role of international recruitment agencies. This agencies are an important factor that determines the degree of “workers' freedom” and the level of exploitation. In the second case, the logistics sector, we analyzed the role of cooperatives and outsourcing process. The subcontracting of services allows to the parent company to shift its risks on a third one, taking advantage of a low labour cost and, as the workers argued, making difficult to identify the workers' counterpart.

The interviewed workers reported serious cases of exploitation and labour-rights violations. The most common are: excessive working hours, unavoidable and unpaid overtime, wage theft, non-application of the collective bargaining agreements, threats and psychological harassment at work, wages below the legal minimum. In Hearing II, we plan to discuss those issues together with workers and labour rights experts, with the main objective to outline good practices and potential solutions.

## ***Introduction and methodology***

As part of the “*Testing EU Citizenship as Labour Citizenship: From Cases of Labour Rights Violations to a Strengthened Labour-Rights Regime*” project sponsored by Europe for All Citizens Programme, the University of Padua has promoted a Hearing with 2 groups of migrants (both EU and non-EU citizens) who work in the hospitality industry of the so-called “Riviera Romagnola”, and in warehouses in the city of Padua.

Privileged witnesses such as trade unionists, activists of solidarity associations, health inspectors, and other key informants have also been met. The focus of the hearings concerned their work and life conditions, cases of severe labour exploitation, the type of migration and the means of access to justice and citizenship rights. The aim of the meetings was not only to map the widespread abuses in the workplace but also to understand which strategies and practices workers put in place to contrast such violations, and which support they receive from institutions and other social organizations.

### ***Hearing with hospitality industry workers, Rimini, May-June 2015***

#### **The tourism sector in Rimini**

The meetings have been held during the months of May and June 2015 in Rimini, the most popular place of the area. Migrant workers and key informants as trade unionists, activists of Ngos, and health inspectors have been met. The focus of the hearings concerned the work and life conditions of workers, cases of severe labour exploitation, the model of migration and the means of access to justice and citizenship rights.

In all, we met 8 migrant workers (whereof 5 from Romania, 2 from Senegal and 1 from Morocco), 3 unionists, 1 activist of a solidarity association involved in the contrast of the migrant exploitation and, finally, a health inspector.

#### **The context**

The tourism sector in Rimini is by far the most important economic sector of the area with a history which dates from the second half of the 19th century. In the 1970s it has registered an exponential growth becoming the largest tourist seaside district in Italy. For a long time, the hard working conditions – which have always characterized the sector – were balanced with a strategy based on high salaries and easy access to some social benefits, as seasonal unemployment benefit. High wages and the chance to obtain unemployment benefits were able to attract workers from other Italian regions, especially from the South.

Since the 2000s there has been a worsening of working conditions and a strong compression of wages. At the same time the industry started to attract workers from other countries, both EU and non-EU. Workers are mainly employed with seasonal contract from June to September. Currently,

the workforce is composed of Italian – local and internal migrants -, European migrants (mainly Romanians) and non-EU migrant workers (Albanians, Senegalese, Moroccans, but is growing the Ukrainian and Moldovan component).

In 2014 the number of hotels in Rimini area is about 2,200 and the workforce is about 34,000. The foreign workforce employed reaches just under 40% of the total. However, according to data provided by the local employment centre, there is a strong internal stratification in the labour market based on four elements: gender, age, nationality and race.

### **The segmentation of labour market**

The division of labour is based on the intersection of some social characteristics such as:

**Gender:** the workforce is predominantly female (60%). Despite this incidence, women are mainly employed in low-skilled jobs. It is also necessary to point out that the percentage of women is even higher for some nationalities as Romanians, Ukrainians and Moldovans. Conversely, it is lower for nationalities like Moroccans and Senegalese.

**Age:** Although in recent years there has been a gradual but significant "return" of older workers – due to the economic crises -, the sector is characterized by the massive use of workers who have no more than 40 years of age.

**Migratory status:** The high proportion of foreigners in this sector is employed mainly in low skilled jobs and, as a consequence, by low wage. By contrast, the Italian workers continues to fill better working positions, as chefs and managers.

**Race/nationality:** Institutional data on recruitment in the sector in 2014 and meetings with workers support a clear division of labour: African workers (Senegal and Morocco) carried out tasks characterized by having no direct contact with customers. They work mainly in the kitchen as dishwashers or chef's assistants; Romanians work as maid, waitress with more contact with tourist; Italians work on more qualified and front office place.

The intersection of these workforce social features determines a fairly specific result with regard to both the dynamics of recruitment of the workforce and their labour contract. For example, migrant women coming from eastern Europe work as maids, cleaners and waitresses, while male workers, who come from Africa, work as a dishwasher, cook's assistant and handyman. By contrast, the Italian work in high skilled positions as cooks, secretaries, receptionists and managers.

## **The severe labour exploitation**

During the hearings, participants highlighted that that workers employed in the sector undergoes to different forms of severe labour exploitation. This situation was recognized by the Rimini's City Council, that approved a memorandum aimed to contrast the phenomenon. The intensity of these devices determines, consequently, also the different degree of workplace coercion. The labour abuses within the industry are several:

**Contract work:** Some of Romanian migrant workers reported that they have been hired in recent years by international agencies. In some cases the agencies employed people with a Romanian contracts while in other cases they were only an intermediary and workers were employed with an Italian contract directly by hotels. Most of them paid a fee to the recruiting agency. At the same time, in the local context the temporary agencies work have no role in the recruitment process. Undeclared work is not widespread in this sector, nevertheless we note a wide grey area: diffusion of part-time contract that hides a full-time job; not full compliance with the contract terms such as work shifts abundantly over the legal limit (up to 80 hours per week), with lack of breaks infra-shift and not observance of the weekly rest period, non-payment of overtime, restrictions of unions' right, piece work (illegal in Italy).

**Salary:** The salary is almost always discussed informally between employer and employee. It varies from EUR 700 for several migrant workers recruited through international employment agencies to 1800 Euros for workers with a higher bargaining power recruited directly by the owner. In some cases, workers earn about € 2.50 per hour. Some hotel managers pay only partially the wage to the workers, deducting money for food and accommodation.

**Accommodation:** the practice of hosting workers in the workplace is very widespread in the touristic industry. However, as it emerged from the hearings, the availability of dormitories is functional to discipline and control workers because, if workers are fired or decide to resign they lose immediately the accommodation in the hotels. Moreover, the accommodation allows employers to grab even part of the break time – usually between 3 and 5 pm. In fact workers complain that when you are living in hotels you are always available for the employer. As for the accommodation, they are often quite inadequate. Spaces adjacent to hotels, often obtained from warehouses or cellars, unhealthy, no toilets, badly ventilated, used to house many workers in a few square meters.

**Recruitment agencies:** According to our testimonies, a part of Romanian workers employed in the sector is recruited through international agencies of recruitment. The agencies offer a service composed by recruitment, selection and transfer of the workers to the hotels. They operate mainly in two ways: in the first case they employ by themselves the workers with a Romanian labour

contract; in the second case they act as intermediaries. In both cases, the employee must pay a fee for their services as well as for the costs of transportation from Romania to Italy and return.

**Frauds:** Workers may be victims of frauds and deception by employers and intermediaries. In addition to the non-payment or the partially payment of wages (which happens to be one of the most common practices) workers experience the non-payment of social security contributions. Social security contributions permits to workers to benefit the unemployment benefits.

The most famed case of severe labour exploitation is that of the hotel “Le Conchiglie”, a large hotel (now abandoned) on the border between Rimini and Riccione. The hotel, owned by a famous family of local hoteliers, had been rented to the company “Mediterranea Gestioni”. The company, after having fired the historical employees, had recruited Romanian workers through international labour agencies. Workers with Romanian labour contracts and hourly wages of 2-2.5 euro, 80 working hours for week, no other security contributions, and no day off.

After several months of unpaid wages, the workers began to put in place various forms of protest with the support of some Ngo’s and unions. The failure of the “Mediterranea Gestioni” company prevented the full recovery of wages and many workers have been forced to rely on different devices to pay for their return trip.

**Threats, violence and health consequences:** One of the most important aspects of the severe labour exploitation in tourism is the episodic presence of violence (psychological, physical, and in some cases even sexual) acted on workers, particularly women. Finally, cases of mental and physical exhaustion, fainting, weakness, fever, weight loss and joint pains are some of the symptoms and diseases related to working conditions. These conditions may be aggravated by the lack day off, by the absence of prevention and staying in contact with working environments unhealthy. Access to health services is severely limited, especially for workers who live in the workplace. For example, workers often cannot follow medical prescriptions (rest and sick days) because they live in hotels.

Seasonal work: Tourism in Rimini is mainly seasonal. When workers go to the Riviera for the tourist season only, especially for those who are at their first experience, they are more vulnerable. For this reason, employers always prefer new workers, thereby encouraging labour turnover.

Seasonal work allow to access at seasonal unemployment benefit. However, in recent years, this benefit has been reduced due to the recent reforms of labour market and due to the diffusion of the atypical employment contracts (job on-call and voucher). Workers with a Romanian labour contract cannot access to this benefit.

### **The contrast of the severe labour exploitation**

There are many factors that influence, positively or negatively, the deployment of measures which aim to fight the working abuses. The fragmentation of the production structure, the segmentation of the labour market, the seasonality and the various types and aims of the migration are some of the elements that determine the possibility for workers to undertake measures against working abuses. Even the political climate has encouraged the spread of discrimination against immigrants. As became clear by the meetings with migrant workers, the degree of abuse is primarily related to the role of recruitment agencies and to the accommodation of workers in hotels. Many workers, however, are able to use the first period of residence and work functionally to the knowledge of the territory and so they can, later, to find job independently without the support of the agencies. The self-enabling for finding a job not only allows them to experiment new job opportunities, but also to free up economic resources otherwise allocated to agencies and to hotel managers. In addition, workers are sometimes able to refuse accommodation offered by the hotels, preferring rent a room with other workers. A waiver of the sleeping accommodation in the dormitory can enable them to limit one of the instruments of control and discipline used by hoteliers and take back, therefore, their free and rest time. Meetings have shown that the presence of NGOs and trade unions is fundamental to help and support them. In fact, the contrast is easier when the state structures (inspection controls) and the associative structures are more sensitive.

### **The difficulties of activating forms of contrast**

Migrant workers victims of abuse may encounter several difficulties to activate pathways of emergence and complaint. The production structure that is composed of many small companies does not help in the implementation of pathways of unionization, so the workers strategies often turn out to be individual. Even as regards the availability of institutions, workers have repeatedly reported both the lack of controls by the labour inspectors (also due to insufficient staff and financial resources), and the uselessness to report to the police. One of the complaints is resolved with the instrument of conciliation between workers and employers. In this case, times are shorter, in other cases it is necessary to initiate a legal action with a substantial increase of waiting times. A plausible index of difficulty to contrast is the complete absence of prevention activities that should have followed the plan against severe labour exploitation approved by City Council of Rimini.

### **Recommendations**

Meetings and many journalistic investigations point out that the abuses seem to widespread. Nevertheless the seriousness of the abuses is very different from case to case. The increase in the exploitation of the workers over the last few 15 years seems to be, in the first instance, caused by the decrease of the tourist prices as the main strategy to hotel competition. A dynamic that, in addition to being confirmed by the City Council of Rimini, is also supported from our fieldwork. The solution should be traced in a series of activities and initiatives of different nature but complementary to each other. Workers and key informants have in fact suggested:

- An increase of the controls and prevention of severe labour exploitation through the synergistic activation of the institutions (strengthen inspector resources).
- The establishment of a multiple task force controlling for example health (physical and psychological conditions), labour condition (contract, time shift, wage), accommodation.
- An increase of reception services offered to migrant workers by local institutions, in order to withdraw the workers to the control exercised by employers within the dormitory.
- The establishment of a commission to certify the respect of workers' rights for each hotel through the granting of "quality stamp" to promote a quality tourism and a greater sensitivity by tourists.
- Greater investment of resources by the unions.
- The creation of a guarantee fund to which workers who suffer fraud or non-payment of wages.
- Encouraging the activities of NGOs that promote the rights of migrants and that organize recreational and socialization activities
- Inclusion of cultural mediators coming from the same countries of workers who can help them to fight severe labour exploitation.

Main themes	Aims	Issues	Case
<b>Status - Segmented work in the EU</b>	- acknowledge different categories of workers and locations (see definition of precarious employment above) throughout the whole process	- hierarchies in a segmented labour market: age, gender, citizenship, legal status, ethnicity, "race" - non-EU workers differently affected by immigration law (temporary, permanent residence, irregular), which may be in conflict with labour law and rights that derive from it - time dimension (temporality, seasonality,	- The Romanian workers are generally paid less than Italian workers and perform work tasks characterized by low wages. - The majority of them work seasonally and they migrate as a function of seasonal work

		etc.)	
<b>Conditions in the “country of origin”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand citizenship as it is created in the country/region of “origin” and how it contributes to the overall EU fragmented citizenship</li> <li>- understand strategies of exit (labour migration) and/or voice (improving conditions e.g. through trade unions)</li> <li>- how can we understand “free” labour mobility? In case of circular migration: is this “forced” or “voluntary” circularity migration?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- economic situation (poverty, inequality, etc.), wage and working conditions (how does the situation compare with the country of destination?)</li> <li>- existence/absence of social protection</li> <li>- where does reproductive work happen</li> <li>- possibilities for improvement of economic, political, social conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High unemployment</li> <li>- Low wages</li> <li>- Extreme poverty</li> </ul> <p>When the majority of them return in their country cannot find another job until the following season</p>
<b>Migration process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand process of migration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- process of recruitment (informal, formal)</li> <li>- promises before coming to X country and reality</li> <li>- experience with intermediaries (possibilities of working directly?)</li> <li>- what does EU citizenship mean to you in your work and everyday life (comparison of migration experience before the country X of “origin” joined the EU?) (this question relevant for STEP II)</li> </ul>	<p>The recruitment occurs in three different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Romanian recruitment agencies that employ workers with a Romanian labour contract</li> <li>- agencies act as Intermediaries</li> </ul> <p>In all the cases, the employee must pay a fee for their services as well as for the costs of transportation from Romania to Italy and return.</p> <p>Other ways to find work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Autonomously: workers find independently a job mainly by going directly into the structures</li> <li>- Confirmation: workers confirm the workplace of the previous seasons</li> </ul> <p>The public and private channels for employment do not have an important role in recruiting</p>
<b>Labor rights - labor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- collect cases and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- working hours (too many,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- no payments</li> </ul>



<p><b>rights violations and the labor process</b></p>	<p>patterns of “severe” exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on e.g. agency work, posted work, cooperatives, etc.</li> <li>- agency of workers</li> </ul>	<p>too little, etc.?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adequate wage</li> <li>- stability of employment</li> <li>- paid on time?</li> <li>- work intensity</li> <li>- existence of contract</li> <li>- (un)freedom to change employer</li> <li>- injuries or risk of injuries</li> <li>- harassment, afraid at work, violence, - threats of violence, sexual harassment</li> <li>- knowing your rights, information about work, residence, etc.</li> <li>- accommodation conditions</li> <li>- access to social benefits</li> <li>- health issues at work</li> <li>- medical insurance</li> <li>- difference in treatment among the workers (gender, ethnicity, citizenship, “race”, age, etc.)</li> <li>- reaction to labour rights violations</li> <li>- protests, work stoppages, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- scams</li> <li>- delays in payments</li> <li>- wages below the legal minimum</li> <li>- Excessive working hours</li> <li>- unpaid overtime</li> <li>- Non-recognition of the disease</li> <li>- workers employed by agencies suffer form a limited freedom to change jobs</li> <li>- Presence of physical and psychological threats.</li> <li>- Physical, sexual and psychological violences</li> <li>- Accommodations: many workers in small rooms, cramped conditions, dirty, hot, unhealthy environments, no toilets</li> <li>- Increasing difficulties of access to seasonal unemployment benefit (for employees of the Romanian agencies the opportunity to access the seasonal unemployment is inhibited)</li> <li>- The contrast to the violation of the workers' rights is influenced by the availability of trade unions and NGOs</li> <li>- Protests and strikes take place only in the cases of non-payment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Labour rights – Institutions and regulation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand enforcement of labour rights</li> <li>- find out about possibilities for collective action/solidarity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what works / what does not work if labour rights are violated</li> <li>- practices of the labour inspection</li> <li>- practices of the courts</li> <li>- practices of the police</li> <li>- experiences with other mechanisms (e.g. informal) of getting what your owed, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complaints to the inspection authorities are few and they are almost always individual. In general, the justice is slow and jumbled. However, where workers are supported by trade unions or by NGOs (which also have a legal department) they can access to justice more easily.</li> <li>- the sanctions for employers are almost always monetary.</li> <li>- Only in certain cases, where they have been glimpsed</li> </ul>

			hypothesis of criminal offenses, the lawyers have proceeded with the complaint to the judiciary.
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### *Hearing with logistics workers, Padua, June 2015*

During our hearings we met 8 male workers from different warehouses in the city of Padova, and 3 key informants, an occupational doctor and 2 union members (one from the rank-and file union ADL Cobas and the other from CGL-FILT). We met workers of different nationalities: 3 of them were Romanians, 2 Moroccans, 1 Italian, 1 Algerian and 1 Nigerian. They aged between 26 and 50 years, and since several years (at least 10) they work in logistic sector as working-members of cooperatives.

#### **The context**

Situated on the back of the port of Venice, at the heart of one of the most important manufacturing areas in Italy, Padua is by its nature a logistic hub, essential for the Northeast of Italy and his connections with Central and Eastern Europe.

In the inland port, who mainly collects containers in the Venetian market, there are about 90 logistic companies. The largest one is Bartolini Corriere Espresso, with 4 warehouses, the second in order of size is the TNT Global Express. About 3000 people are working there (low-skilled jobs represent more than the 70%) and traffic in 2014 exceeded 269,000 TEUs (20-foot equivalent units).

Despite being a major logistic area, the region is characterized by a high fragmentation: warehousing and other operations are outsourced by firms to a wide number of small companies and cooperatives. Small dimensions determine low technology investments and pressure on working conditions to increase profits. The research of strategies to cut down the cost of labour is the reason to look for cheap labour in poor communities and the preponderance of migrant workers in this sector.

Despite the heterogeneity from the point of view both of the labour process (especially among food retailers and delivery companies) and wage levels, a common feature in warehouses is outsourcing. Generally in Italy, express delivery companies (like TNT and Bartolini) and supermarkets, subcontract labour to cooperatives. In this way the client company can enjoy a low cost service, shift the risks on a third party, and make more difficult for workers, as they argued, to identify a counterpart for their claims. In fact, in many cases of labour disputes and strikes, companies and cooperatives try to shift the responsibility to each other: client companies say that the labour management is the responsible of subcontractors whereas cooperatives put the blame on the economic conditions imposed by the client firm.

Usually, cooperatives employ “working-members”. Although the ideology of participation, migrants employed as working-members do not have any decisional power within the cooperative.

Even when they pay a membership fee and they take part to the annual assembly, they do not even have access to many information about the activities of the cooperatives. Furthermore, despite the fact that often they have open-ended contracts with the cooperative, it doesn't protect them in any way from precariousness. They participate to the business risk without any security in exchange: when the agreement between the cooperative and the client company ends, the latter can award the contract to another cooperative, so that workers may suddenly lose their job.

Worker-members complain that the hours they do not work as holidays, pauses and festivities, are not included in their payroll. They seem to be used as temporary agency workers, as the cooperative can ask them to stay at home if production go down; and this is one reason why there are significant variations among wage levels and working hours. The aim of this system is to reach quantitative flexibility and adapt to peak goods-movement and fluctuations in demand in a just-in-time system, maintaining a labour pool readily available: labour turnover seems to be low as all the workers we met have worked several years in the same warehouse, despite really hard working conditions.

During the last few years a series of struggles arose in the retail logistic sector in Italy. Workers identified the weak points of the chain of distribution, and organized strikes and blockades, asking for better conditions of work. Migrant workers joined in large number the rank-and-file union Cobas, considering traditional Trade unions (Cgil, Cisl, Uil) too much implicated in the governance of cooperatives.

### **Process of recruitment**

Recruitment of workers is supported by family and community ties. For instance, our interviewees reported that they came to Italy very young using networks of compatriots. Some of them found their first job through a private school, an institute based in Trieste supposed to do vocational education but whose real aim seems to provide cheap labour for different sectors (logistics, construction, hospitality industry). When they came to Italy, before that Romania joined the EU, the school provided them a resident permit and a job. One of them worked during several years in the hospitality industry before entering in the logistic sector. He told us about really long working hours in hotel's kitchens and, as student-workers are strictly limited in the number of hours they can work each week, that he had to hide from inspections. Once, after a police control, he was expelled to Romania and he came back only three years later, as an European citizen.

Romanian workers started working in logistics through the school, that send them to work for a cooperative managed by a Romanian. In this warehouse the common practice was to recruit young Romanian workers both through the school and directly in Romania; they were used often as a labour pool for weekends and peak goods-movement. As workers explained, this management method ensured the "reliability" of the workforce through a dual control on labour, in the workplace and in the community/family.

Ethnic recruitment seems also to enforce divisions and internal hierarchies in a highly racialized sector. Workers spoke about racism in workplaces, and about the way in which management put workers against each others. Racial segmentation is used as an instrument of labour organisation

and management, who exploits differences to create competition between workers (Romanians against Moldavians, Italians against foreigners).

### **Labour-rights violations**

Workers have reported repeated labour-rights violations. First of all the non-full application of the collective bargaining agreements in many warehouses, and frequent frauds in wages. As workers pointed out, migrant's poor language skills and their lack of knowledge of Italian laws are used by cooperatives in order to do not respect rules.

On several occasions, analysing payrolls they noted deduction of bonuses, severance pay and overtime. This led workers to lawsuit against cooperatives for wage theft and in some cases workers won thousands of euros in back pay.

### **Work intensity and health**

Prevailing long working hours and widespread compulsory overtime, workers suffer of serious consequences on health, in particular in warehouses where the introduction of a productivity bonus dresses up forms of piece rate work. Even if the pace and intensity of work is related to the size of the company and to the level of the technological investments, the most common work-related illnesses, suffered by all the workers we met, are backache and sometimes herniated disc.

### **An “anti-union” policy**

The relationships between the client company and the cooperative can be easily dissolved. The cooperative may close suddenly, change name, making it impossible for workers to enjoy rights previously acquired, sometimes without paying part of the wages and social security contributions. Additionally, the fact that when an agreement ends between the client and the cooperative the re-hiring of workers is not assured. This system is often used as an instrument to remove “undesirables” workers from the warehouse, generally those who have participated to protests and work stoppages. This process of replacement can also be based on nationalities: workers explained that in recent years after a cycle of struggles in the sector, cooperatives hire more Indian and Bangladeshi than Italians, Romanians and North African workers. Enterprises and cooperative assume that Indian and Bangladeshi accept to bear hard working condition without conflict easily than North African workers, who are highly unionized.

One of the form of discipline implemented by cooperative is to remove workers from a warehouse and sending them to another far away from their home. Moreover, workers reported threats and pressures on members of unions, shop stewards, in particular of rank-and-file unions, and forms of psychological harassment at work.

### **Reactions to labour-rights violations**

The struggles in logistics hubs during the last few years asked for better wage, lower pace of work, and regular labour contracts. In some cases workers obtained indeed better condition of work

through strikes, sit-in and other conflict strategies to stop the movement of goods. The connection with rank-and-file trade unions and other groups of Ngo activists who supported the protests enforced the capacity of workers to recognize labour rights violations, access to law and justice, and fight for their rights.

**Reflections/ recommendations**

- Meeting both EU and non-EU citizens allowed to better understand labour relations in a high racialized sector where there are workers of different nationalities. In this way it was possible to note as EU citizenship doesn't necessarily guarantee against labour-rights violations in particular working situations.
- From the point of view of mobility (from an employer to another, but also from a country or a region to another) the lack of unemployment benefits for workers-members and of labour opportunities in a context of austerity and crisis, make them vulnerable and reduces their agency.
- The implementation of labour inspections could be certainly an important resource (and rank-and-file unions are working to do that).
- Workers argue that to enforce labour-rights in this sector it should be reduced the chain of subcontracting and change the rules about cooperatives.
- As the meeting with the occupational doctor showed, occupational medicine could play a greater role. In a context where diseases seem to be related above all to stress and pace of work (above all musculoskeletal disorders), reduction in accidents (like preventing explosions) and engineering solutions proposed, do not seem to be satisfying.
- There is a need for a greater clarity and transparency of rules and workers rights. An instrument could be the introduction of employment contracts in a language known by migrant workers.

Main themes	Aims	Issues	Case and recommendation
Status segmented work in EU:	acknowledge different categories of workers and locations (see definition of precarious employment) throughout the whole process	- hierarchies in a segmented labour market: age, gender, citizenship, legal status, ethnicity, "race" - non-EU workers differently affected by immigration law (temporary, permanent residence, irregular), which	- racial segmentation - italians are situated at the higher levels of the internal hierarchy (skilled employments)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may be in conflict with labour law and rights that derive from it</li> <li>- time dimension (temporality, seasonality, etc.)</li> </ul>	
<b>Conditions in the “country of origin”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand citizenship as it is created in the country/region of “origin” and how it contributes to the overall EU fragmented citizenship</li> <li>- understand strategies of exit (labour migration) and/or voice (improving conditions e.g. through trade unions)</li> <li>- how can we understand “free” labour mobility?</li> <li>In case of circular migration: is this “forced” or “voluntary” circularity migration?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- economic situation (poverty, inequality, etc.), wage and working conditions (how does the situation compare with the country of destination?)</li> <li>- existence/absence of social protection</li> <li>- where does reproductive work happen</li> <li>- possibilities for improvement of economic, political, social conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- low wages and high unemployment rate in the regions of origin</li> <li>- in many cases workers live in Italy with their family. Often they send money back to members of the family still living in the country of origin</li> </ul>
<b>Migration process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand process of migration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- process of recruitment (informal, formal)</li> <li>- promises before coming to X country and reality</li> <li>- experience with intermediaries (possibilities of working directly?)</li> <li>- what does EU citizenship mean to you in your work and everyday life (comparison of migration experience before the country X of “origin” joined the EU?) (this question relevant for STEP II)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- informal recruitment supported by family and community ties</li> <li>- intermediaries: Romanians workers found their first job in a warehouse through a private school supposed to do vocational education</li> <li>- EU citizenship doesn’t guarantee against labour-rights violations</li> </ul>
<b>Labor rights - labor rights violations and the labor process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- collect cases and patterns of “severe” exploitation</li> <li>- focus on e.g. agency work, posted work, cooperatives, etc.</li> <li>- agency of workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- working hours (too many, too little, etc.?)</li> <li>- adequate wage</li> <li>- stability of employment</li> <li>- paid on time?</li> <li>- work intensity</li> <li>- existence of contract</li> <li>- (un)freedom to change employer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- irregular working hours and forced overtime</li> <li>- frequent wage theft (deduction of bonuses, severance pay or overtime)</li> <li>- stability of employment: workers have open-ended contracts but when the agreement ends between the cooperative and the client</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- injuries or risk of injuries</li> <li>- harassment, afraid at work, violence, - threats of violence, sexual harassment</li> <li>- knowing your rights, information about work, residence, etc.</li> <li>- accommodation conditions</li> <li>- access to social benefits</li> <li>- health issues at work</li> <li>- medical insurance</li> <li>- difference in treatment among the workers (gender, ethnicity, citizenship, "race", age, etc.)</li> <li>- reaction to labour rights violations</li> <li>- protests, work stoppages, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>company, they can suddenly lose their job</li> <li>- frequent non-application of the collective bargaining agreements</li> <li>- diseases related to stress and pace of work: widespread backache and sometimes herniated disc</li> <li>- threats and pressures on members of unions</li> <li>- psychological harassment at work and racism</li> <li>- reactions to labour rights violations: strikes and blockades during the last few years with the support of activists and local rank-and-file unions. In some cases workers obtained better working conditions</li> </ul>
<b>labor rights - labor rights institutions and regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand enforcement of labour rights</li> <li>- find out about possibilities for collective action/solidarity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what works / what does not work if labour rights are violated</li> <li>- practices of the labour inspection</li> <li>- practices of the courts</li> <li>- practices of the police</li> <li>- experiences with other mechanisms (e.g. informal) of getting what you're owed, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- labour inspection: rank-and-file unions are trying to implement collaboration with labour inspection</li> <li>- courts: in some cases workers have lawsuit against cooperatives for wage theft or wrongful dismissal.</li> <li>- The union provides lawyers and legal services for union members and their families. Two of the workers we met are waiting for the result of a lawsuit for wage theft.</li> <li>- the meeting with the doctor showed that the role of occupational medicine should be improved and change approach.</li> </ul>

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