



VOLUNTARY WORK AS A NEW FRONTIER IN THE PRECARISATION  
OF MIGRANT WORKERS: THE CASE OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ITALY

[ESP] *EL VOLUNTARIADO COMO UNA NUEVA FRONTERA EN LA PRECARIZACIÓN  
DE LOS TRABAJADORES MIGRANTES: EL CASO DE LOS SOLICITANTES DE ASILO  
EN ITALIA*

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*Abstract:* Within the deep work transformations that have taken place in recent decades, the European labour market has been affected by a process of structural precarisation which has created unprecedented forms of precarious work. Among such, unpaid work is an expression of extreme precarity due to the complete separation between work and wage. For several causes, migrant workers are one of the categories most affected by work casualisation and live a condition of double precarity (work and legal), mainly produced by migration policies. At the same time, immigration is involuntary a test bench for new forms of flexible work. This article examines the link between work casualisation and migration through the analysis of a specific form of unpaid work, i.e. the voluntary work by asylum seekers in Italy - institutionalised as a public policy in 2014. Considered as a mechanism of “public atonement” for the guilt of migration through activities of public interest, the article highlights how it constitutes an extreme form of precarisation of a vulnerable category. In merging elements questioning the unconditionality of the right of asylum and acquaintance with permanent precarity, it creates an unprecedented “grey area” of labour exploitation and cultural inferiorisation.

*Keywords:* asylum seekers; migration; precarity; voluntary work.

*Resumen:* En el marco de las transformaciones del trabajo, el mercado del trabajo europeo ha asistido a un proceso de precarización estructural que ha conllevado formas de trabajo precario inéditas. Entre ellas, el trabajo no remunerado es una



expresión de precariedad extrema por su separación total entre prestación y salario. Por distintas causas, los trabajadores migrantes son una de las categorías más afectadas por la precarización y viven una condición de doble precariedad (laboral y legal), causada principalmente por las políticas migratorias. Al mismo tiempo, la inmigración es involuntariamente el laboratorio donde se experimentan nuevas formas de trabajo flexible. Este artículo examina la conexión entre precarización laboral y migración a través del análisis del trabajo voluntario de los solicitantes de asilo en Italia - institucionalizado como política pública en 2014. Interpretado como mecanismo de “expiación pública” de la culpa de la migración a través del trabajo voluntario de utilidad pública, el artículo hace hincapié en el hecho que ese constituye una forma extrema de precarización de una categoría vulnerable. Mezclando elementos que ponen en entredicho la incondicionalidad del derecho al asilo y la socialización hacia la precariedad permanente, pone de manifiesto una “zona gris” de explotación laboral y inferiorización cultural.

*Palabras claves:* migración; precariedad; solicitantes de asilo; trabajo voluntario.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This article\* aims at analyzing the link between work casualisation and migrations through the study of a specific form of unpaid work, the voluntary work by asylum seekers in Italy.

Among the great social issues of our time, special attention is attached to work transformations in the name of structural precarisation and the globalization of migrations (under the sign of stigmatization). Often these phenomena mingle, blend, and become embodied in the mass of migrant workers, who suffer hard life. As for work casualisation, since the rise of the economic crisis it has widened and deepened, with a leap in quantity and quality, going beyond precarity as it was known in the recent past. In the last decade new forms of extreme precarity have emerged alongside “first generation” precarious jobs themselves; the work transformations have been so dire that rather than describing this simply as commodification of labour, in extreme cases we should talk about nullification of labour and of the

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\* Pasqualetto: sec. 1, 2.1, 2.2, 4, 5; Perocco: sec. 1, 2, 3, 5.



worker, who doesn't have and doesn't have to have anything guaranteed. The public debate, which over the last few years saw a vivid opposition between the champions of flexibility and the critics of precarity, seems weaker now, as if the future of precarity was considered something obvious, or irreversible.

As for migrations, over the last two decades in many countries of the world there was a surge in the roles of reserve army and social buffer for the crisis which have been historically allocated to immigration. In the neo-liberal era, "migratory utilitarianism" has grown fairly everywhere, while migrations have become a fully-fledged crime and are constantly criminalized. The globalisation of selective, restrictive and repressive migration policies - with States and governments competing in the harshening of conditions of migration and worsening of immigrants' conditions - has been functional to the systematic use by several countries of an exploited and stigmatised migrant workforce, kept in a condition of social inferiority and with half the rights of the rest of the population, to lower the cost of labour and compete on global markets.

Several contexts witnessed the convergence of work casualisation and precarisation of migration on immigrant workers, that live a condition of double precarity (at work level and at legal level) and that are the first to experiment the shift to precarious work and to the most extreme forms of precarity. A noteworthy example of the new forms of work precarity, as well as of the convergence of these processes, is the voluntary work of asylum seekers in Italy. In spite of being a confined phenomenon, both geographically and numerically, it is an interesting case as it may indicate a few trends in the new ways of labour regulation and in the migration policies. It is linked to the growth of unpaid work, a multiform phenomenon related to the workfare policies and to the work transformations (digitalization, robotization). Simultaneously, it shows how the category of asylum seekers, especially those more legally vulnerable, is a testing ground where new forms of precarity are trialled, taking advantage of the uncertainty of their status



and of their need to be accepted in an increasingly intolerant Europe. In this case it abstracts from purely economic logics to encroach in the field of the public image of immigrants and migration policies, creating a “grey area” of labour exploitation and cultural inferiorization.

This article analyses the public policy of voluntary work by asylum seekers in Italy, in relation with the aforementioned processes. The next chapter analyses unpaid work and its institutionalization in Italy, within a broader process of structural casualisation of work. The third chapter considers the precarity of immigrants and asylum seekers in Italy, within the global process of precarisation of migrations. The fourth chapter examines the policy of voluntary work by asylum seekers as a new frontier in precarity and a new way to discipline labour.

## 2. THE CASUALISATION OF WORK, A STRUCTURAL PHENOMENON OF NEOLIBERAL ECONOMY

The structural precarisation of work<sup>1</sup>, one of the core tenets of neoliberal economy, is broader and deeper than a mere reduction of guaranteed work spaces. The fracture in the unity of the labour contract, the destructuring of labour law, the introduction of a plethora of contract types with different conditions and rights - shared, on call, subcontracted, freelancing, formally independent, formally cooperative work - are elements of a radical and extreme process of *commodification of labour*, which has closed a break between the 1950s and the 1970s characterized by the attainment of relatively stable and secure jobs.

The structural precarisation of work has had several consequences on the world of work. Occasional, intermittent, for rent work contracts and all other forms of precarious work (with its leader: irregular work, and its extreme: forced labour)

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<sup>1</sup> ANTUNES, R., *The Meanings of Work*, Leiden-Boston 2013; HUWS, U., *Labor in the Global Digital Economy*, New York 2014.



have fragmented and disconnected the labour force, enabling the general devaluation of labour and denying the role of workers in the process of production.

With the recent economic crisis and the consequent radicalisation of neoliberal policies<sup>2</sup>, work precarisation has further expanded and deepened. Now, precarity 2.0 - vouchers, meal tickets instead of wages, serial internships, unpaid work, zero-hour contracts, posted workers - has replaced a part of the “first generation” precarious jobs themselves. The structural precarisation of work, both in its old and new version, has been unleashed on workers unevenly: the first, most affected, were immigrants, young people, low educated female workers with children, older workers affected by company restructuring, and low-skilled workers.

## 2.1. VOLUNTARY UNPAID WORK IN THE SOCIETY OF PRECARIAT

Within the structural casualisation of work, voluntary unpaid work has increased significantly. Unpaid work services have multiplied, and now constitute clear and observable phenomena. The separation between work and wage has progressively normalized in an increasingly competitive and unregulated labour market, which marks a radical change: work may be exchanged not for a wage in the present, but rather oriented towards other matters, usually immaterial and in the future.

Voluntary work differs from volunteering as an activity intentionally carried out for free and willingly for the benefit of someone, as the former usually is not “for free” nor “willingly”: most of the times it is compulsory, forced, imposed; usually it is carried out for the benefit or advantage of the voluntary worker. This is the case, for instance, of those who offer voluntary work as a professional investment, to

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<sup>2</sup> BAUMAN, Z., *Does the Richness of the Few Benefit Us All?*, Cambridge 2013; CROUCH, C., *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*, London 2011.



improve their CV, to find a job, to get a job in the organization where they provided voluntary work based on the promise they would be hired.

Furthermore, volunteering is conscious, whereas unpaid voluntary work may even be unconscious. It is unconscious when it concerns “(potentially) *productive work offered in several social, relational and recreational activities - as participating in a social network or leaving their data on the internet - which create adequate value without an appropriate return corresponding to the generated value [...]*”<sup>3</sup>. It is conscious when the workers “*know they are working without compensation. It is forced unpaid work, fed by the provisions of the Workfare State, the so-called administrative barter and training entailing compulsory internships [...]* It is voluntary unpaid work, where the wage return is postponed indefinitely and remains a promise”<sup>4</sup>. Voluntary work by asylum seekers falls within the latter category: conscious forced unpaid voluntary work, imposed by workfare policies, carried out with a view to a compensation (granting asylum, integration within the labour market, etc.).

Over the last two decades, voluntary work has spread in several ways in different economic sectors, though affecting some more. For instance, in the world of education, where unpaid internships and traineeships have increased considerably<sup>5</sup>. The debate between those considering them a form of unpaid work and those considering them an educational instrument is still open; their legitimation

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<sup>3</sup> GREPPI, S. ET AL., *Lavoro gratuito o poco remunerato nella nuova grande trasformazione*, Manno 2017, p. 14 (author’s translation).

<sup>4</sup> Ivi, p. 15 (author’s translation). In the same page they underline that: “*In this sense, conscious unpaid work, thus defined, is different from «traditional» domestic work*”.

<sup>5</sup> CILLO, R., *Nuove frontiere della precarietà del lavoro*, Venice 2017; PERLIN, R., *Intern Nation*, London 2012; HOLMES, K., «Experiential learning or exploitation?», in *Museum Management and Curatorship* 21 (2006), pp. 240-253; HOPE, S., FIGIEL, J., «Interning and Investing: Rethinking Unpaid Work, Social Capital and the “Human Capital Regime”», in *TripleC* 13 (2015), pp. 361-374; RODINO-COLOCINO, M., BEBERICK, S., «“You Kind of Have to Bite the Bullet and do Bitch Work”: How Internships Teach Students to Unthink Exploitation in Public Relations», in *TripleC* 13 (2015), pp. 486-500.



lies in making an investment aimed at a future professional stability, but as of today no research confirms the relevance of an internship in reaching professional stability.

In the sector of culture voluntary work is expressed in terms of extra hours worked without remuneration to keep a high productivity within an extremely deregulated market<sup>6</sup>. This is the case for freelance journalists, who live their profession as a “*liberating*” alternative compared to ordinary work, but who end up working many hours for free to “*stay in the market*”, deep in the rhetoric where the line between “work” and “leisure” is dangerously blurry<sup>7</sup>.

In the non-profit sector an increasing number of young and less young people provides unpaid services as a strategy to access a workplace and not only for solidarity reasons. Such services are presented as “*volunteering*”, though they have all the features of standard employment in terms of time, place, tasks and hierarchical organization. In this case the line between unpaid work and solidarity is blurry, as studies have identified the creation of a “*post-modern volunteering*” in which non-profit organizations promote unpaid or barely paid work as a contribution to a noble cause, and the salary should be considered a secondary element<sup>8</sup>.

For many workers, mainly young or unemployed, voluntary work may be a strategy to face unemployment, underemployment, deskilling, through an investment in time, professionalism and energy to reach a stable and paid job. Research highlights that it is justified in view of the creation of a human capital made of professional experiences building a profile which is appealing for the labour market, and of a social capital giving visibility to the worker. Such elements may be summed up by the term *employability*<sup>9</sup>, which in neo-liberal language means the constant

<sup>6</sup> SIEBERT, S., WILSON, F., «All work and no pay: consequences of unpaid work in the creative industries», in *Work, Employment and Society* 27 (2013), pp. 711-721.

<sup>7</sup> COHEN, N., «Cultural Work as a Site of Struggle: Freelance and Exploitation», in *TripleC* 10 (2012), pp. 141-155.

<sup>8</sup> MAES, K., «Volunteering or Labor Exploitation?», in *Human Organization* 71 (2012), pp. 54-64.

<sup>9</sup> SMITH, V., «Enhancing employability: human, cultural, and social capital in an era of turbulent unpredictability», in *Human Relations* 63 (2010), pp. 279-303; COSTEA, B. ET AL., «What killed



effort to increase your human and social capital to cope with, in an individualistic approach, the increased precarity of the labour market - taken as granted and natural. The responsibility of employment falls exclusively on the worker, who is asked to adjust to given conditions and to “stand out” with an appealing professional profile, starting from available tools, including unpaid work. Within this framework, voluntary work qualifies as *hope labour*<sup>10</sup>, in which the time dimension is important: in today’s effort lies tomorrow’s income, the worker *hopes* that voluntary work has positive effects on his future. Hope takes the shape of a *promise*, able to employ a worker without necessarily giving him a salary: hence the “*promise economy*”<sup>11</sup>, in which the labour market acquires the worker without purchasing his workforce, leveraging on the level of feelings, requiring dedication and commitment with a view to future benefits.

Such hope for the future shadows the exploitation in the present. This ideology of the voluntary work gives rise to workers turned into their own entrepreneurs, led by an individualized ethos and aimed at risk management, facing the turbulences of the labour market by focusing on their employability. With a critical stance, this ideology boils down to the fact that unpaid voluntary work is an imposed condition with detrimental effects on work conditions at individual and collective level.

At individual level, a “*pedagogy of unpaid work*” emerges, affecting both the worker and the concept of work. On the former, unpaid work affects the self-image of the worker as a non-worker, and at the same time shapes his expectations: after experimenting unpaid work, any salary will be considered an improvement in his

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Moritz Erhardt? Internships and the cultural danger of “positive” ideas», in *TripleC* 13 (2015), pp. 375-389; MOORE, P., «UK education, employability, and everyday life», in *Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies* 7 (2009), pp. 453-473.

<sup>10</sup> KUEHN, K., CORRIGAN, T., «Hope Labour: The Role of Employment Prospects in Online Social Production», in *The Political Economy of Communication* 1 (2011), pp. 9-25.

<sup>11</sup> BASCETTA, M. (ed.), *Economia politica della promessa*, Roma 2015.





conditions. This pedagogy downsizes the expectations of worker, pushing him to untie his skills from the working conditions offered; it accustoms the worker to exploitation and to a general non-recognition of collective rights in the labour world<sup>12</sup>. As for the concept of work, calling forms of unpaid work “*internship*”, “*traineeship*” etc., leads worker to not conceive his services as work, to not be aware of the exploitation implied by gratuitousness<sup>13</sup>.

At collective level, it favours the impoverishment of workers, contributing to the decrease in wages. The presence of unpaid workers in an economic sector applies pressure on paid workers and determines replacement and de-skilling. Research shows that unpaid work does not promote the professional improvement of workers, rather it is a filter on the access to the labour market selecting those workers with cultural and social capital<sup>14</sup>. Unpaid voluntary work as a “*filter*” selects those who, thanks to their social origins and economic conditions, may afford to live without a salary for some time.

Voluntary work is one of the new forms of extreme precarity emerged in the world of work in the last decade and is a full part of the two-fold process of space subtraction to decent work and of labour devaluation. Often, it is not perceived and presented as an anomaly, but rather as something common and a useful experience to find a job. In this sense, it has become a mechanism of acquaintance with the permanent precarity affecting some layers of the population excluded from the market, specific professional roles ending up in the spiral of traineeships and freelancing (young lawyers, architects, nurses, etc.). Such

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<sup>12</sup> HOPE, S., FIGIEL, J., «Interning and Investing: Rethinking Unpaid Work, Social Capital and the “Human Capital Regime”», in *TripleC* 13 (2015), pp. 361-374; SMITH, V., «Enhancing employability: human, cultural, and social capital in an era of turbulent unpredictability», in *Human Relations* 63 (2010), pp. 279-303.

<sup>13</sup> POSTIGO, H., «America Online Volunteers», in *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 12 (2009), pp. 451-469; RODINO-COLOCINO, M., BEBERICK, S., «“You Kind of Have», cit., pp. 486-500.

<sup>14</sup> MOORE, P., «UK education, employability, and everyday life», in *Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies* 7 (2009), pp. 453-473; SMITH, V., «Enhancing employability: human, cultural, and social capital in an era of turbulent unpredictability», in *Human Relations* 63 (2010), pp. 279-303; SIEBERT, S., WILSON, F., «All work and no pay: consequences of unpaid work in the creative industries», in *Work, Employment and Society* 27 (2013), pp. 711-721.



acquaintance with precarious and unpaid/barely paid work is a tool of discipline of workers which educates, prepares and accustoms them to be flexible, adjustable, preparing them to give the most sought-after element in the labour market: full availability. But as the labour market is a system of communicating vessels, the spreading of voluntary work is in itself a factor enlarging precarity to wider layers of workers, and it should be considered within the global process of restructuring work relations. Such processes are visible in the Italian context.

## 2.2. THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF VOLUNTARY WORK IN ITALY

In the Italian context there are several forms of voluntary work, both in the private and in the public sector. In the former, together with the crumbling of labour law typical of neoliberal policies, the liberalization and mass spreading of internships has permeated all economic sectors; in the public sector the spreading of voluntary work has had a more limited impact, but still significant.

A first observation of such phenomenon in the public sector comes from active labour market policies: unemployed workers are asked to offer the public administration some hours of unpaid voluntary work in exchange for an economic support and a training program. The most recent legislative measure on such policies is the “citizenship income” (decree law 28/1/2019). For a monthly check for households where no member has a labour income, unpaid “*activities for the community*” are required, i.e. “*The participation to projects by the municipalities, for the community, in the cultural, social, artistic and training sector to protect common goods, to be carried out in the municipality of residence, granting a number of hours [...] not exceeding eight hours a week*” (art. 4.15). Such measures are related to the stop of the transfer of State resources to Municipalities after austerity policies, to the stop in recruitments in public administration, to the general economic crisis, which are putting Municipalities under financial pressure. It is not a surprise, thus, that the State is equipping Municipalities with legislative tools “encouraging” citizens to



offer their unpaid work services for the benefit of the community. A similar experiment has taken place through the promotion of “*active citizenship policies*”, aimed at bringing citizens closer to a democratic management of public affairs based on a new discourse of “active participation” or as a replacement for debts with the public administration. Among such, the “*administrative barter*” (art. 24 in Decree law 133/2014) has appeared, which launched the penetration of voluntary work within the public policies of Municipalities. It enables the Municipalities to involve citizens in the maintenance and recovery of unused public areas or buildings, in exchange for tax incentives (reductions or exemptions). Such measure was welcomed favourably by Municipalities’ administrators, but it also raised controversies among administrative law experts. In its most updated form, it is a “social support” measure, in favour of citizens with debts towards the public administration, who may pay them off with unpaid work hours. This entails an asymmetric relationship between the public administration and citizens: as debtors, they will probably have economic problems. Opting for “administrative barter” cannot be considered a solidarity-driven choice, but rather a necessity. Therefore, the rhetoric of “active participation” is no longer viable, and these services may again be analysed under the point of view of unpaid work. One result is the rise in the public administration of forms of unpaid work involving the poorest layers of the population: be they services within active work or active citizenship policies, the beneficiaries of economic aid or those having trouble honouring their debt with the State are offered the solution of unpaid work services.

### 3. IMMIGRANTS AS PRECARIOUS WORKERS

In the majority of Europe, the structural casualisation of labour has affected markedly immigrants. The precarisation of immigrant workers is not anything new in the history of Europe, but in the last two decades this process has clearly



radicalised<sup>15</sup>. It has affected both resident immigrants and incoming migrants: the former have seen sharper and increasing mechanisms of discrimination and exclusion, the latter were welcomed by increasingly harsher selection and restrictive mechanisms.

This process has taken place through several modes, among which the combination of restrictive migration policies with deregulation of labour, the surge of temporary migrations, the attribution to immigration of a specific role in the labour market and within European economies.

Migration policies of European countries have incorporated the need of the economic system for flexible workers - not too rooted, who may be used according to the needs of production - worsening the conditions of migration. In several countries they have subjected immigrant workers to a *double precarity*, both in the work and legal sphere: while the former is included in the aforementioned casualisation, the latter is linked to migration policies of many countries which subordinate the immigrants' right of abode to the existence of a work contract, and also tie their social rights to their migratory status (stratifying social rights)<sup>16</sup>.

Torn between the *rigidity* determined by migration laws and the *flexibility* produced by labour laws, immigrants workers have found themselves as new guestworkers attempting to navigate a context of economic stagnation, surge of atypical contracts and weakening of the workers' movement. If for the 1960s and 1970s we may talk about a relatively stable work insertion, in the following decades the reality is that of a precarisation of the very process of work insertion, and, on the

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<sup>15</sup> EUROSTAT, *Migrant integration statistics*, 2019

[[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant_integration_statistics)

[explained/index.php?title=Migrant\\_integration\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant_integration_statistics), accessed 23 March 2019]; SCHIERUP, C.-U., JØRGENSEN, M.B. (ed.), *Politics of Precarity. Migrant Conditions, Struggles and Experiences*, Leiden 2016.

<sup>16</sup> MORRIS, L., *Managing Migration. Civic Stratification and Migrants Rights*, London 2002; SCHIERUP, C.A. ET AL. (ed.), *Migration, Citizenship, and the European Welfare State*, Oxford 2006.



social level, the enhancement of exclusion or segregation factors<sup>17</sup>. The generalisation of the bond between the residence permit and the work contract have contributed to the return of the *Gastarbeiter* (guestworker)<sup>18</sup> in a context of structural economic crisis, flexible capitalism with all its fragmentation and polarization; it puts immigrants in a perilous and blackmail position, forcing them to accept any work conditions.

Migration policies have turned to precarity also new arrivals, especially through the support to temporary migrations (seasonal, contract-based, circular, spontaneous and regulated migration). Through temporary migrations, receiving countries use hyper-mobile migrant labour without the social implications deriving from the rooting of immigrant populations and the social transformations brought about by immigration; they have low-cost flexible workforce reducing the social and political costs of immigration. The policies supporting temporary migration offer the labour market and production system a mass of temporary people, without their family, with few links to the hosting society, with a poor knowledge of the area they're working in; such policies create a mass of workers forced to compress their social needs and demands due to their temporary presence.

In the last 15 years, a proliferation of public discourses, communications and official declarations, measures and bilateral agreements aimed at supporting or carrying out temporary migrations took place<sup>19</sup>. A political, institutional and

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<sup>17</sup> BASSO, P., «Cittadinanza sociale e politiche migratorie in Europa», in *Trasformazione e crisi della cittadinanza sociale*, ed. COSTANTINI, D., Venice 2014, pp. 55-91; SCHIERUP, C.-U. ET AL. (ed.), *Migration, Precarity and Global Governance*, Oxford 2015.

<sup>18</sup> CASTLES, S., «Guestworkers in Europe: A Resurrection?», in *International Migration Review* 40 (2006), pp. 741-766; SAMERS, M., «New Guest Worker Regimes?», in *An Anthology of Migration and Social Transformation*, ed. AMELINA, A. ET AL., Cham 2015, pp. 121-134.

<sup>19</sup> BOSWELL, C., GEDDES, A., *Migration and Mobility in the European Union*, London 2010; CASSARINO, J.P., *Patterns of circular migration in the Euro-Mediterranean area*, 2008 [<http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/8350>, accessed 5 Nov. 2018]; CASTLES, S., OZKUL, D., «Circular Migration: Triple Win or a New Label for Temporary Migration?» in *Global and Asian Perspectives on International Migration*, ed. BATTISTELLA, G., New York 2014, pp. 27-36; WICKRAMASEKARA, P., *Circular Migration: a triple win or a dead end?*, 2011



administrative process was started, and it created several bilateral agreements, projects, mobility partnerships, memorandum on temporary, circular, seasonal migrations, which implies the only legal entry route is temporary migration, and the institutionalization of precarity among migrant workers<sup>20</sup>.

Within European economies, there was a surge in the roles of reserve army and social buffer for the crisis<sup>21</sup>, so that immigrant workers are the first to experiment the shift to precarious work and to the most extreme forms of precarity. In the meantime, the functioning mechanisms of the labour market - selection, concentration, specialization - have continued to channel a good share of immigrant workers in the most precarious, heavier, less paid sectors, so that in Europe their working conditions - from access to work to unemployment, from tasks to wages, from classification to mobility - present, though with varying shapes and degrees according to the context, impressive disparities compared to national workers. There are also wide layers of unemployment, under-employment, over-education, under-classification, contract precarity, higher in percentage and longer in time compared to the majority of population<sup>22</sup>, which have grown with the crisis. Such worsening is mainly linked to the shift from full-time contracts to (formally) part-time contracts, to the marked increase in temporary contracts and intermittent work, to the fall, or risk thereof, in irregular work or unemployment forcing them to accept any condition in order to keep their residence permit.

At the same time, migration has been involuntary a carrier of precarisation, an agent of spreading precarisation - often a testing ground where new forms of precarity are trialled before being extended to other groups of workers. The labour

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[<http://www.migration4development.org/sites/m4d.emakina-eu.net/files/no15-mar11-circular-migration-a-triple-win-or-a-dead-end.pdf>, accessed 2 Nov. 2018].

<sup>20</sup> GJERGJI, I., *SULLA GOVERNANCE DELLE MIGRAZIONI*, MILAN 2016.

<sup>21</sup> CASTLES, S., *Ethnicity and Globalization: From Migrant Worker to Transnational Citizen*, London 2000; SCHIERUP, C.-U. ET AL. (ed.), *Migration, Precarity and Global Governance*, Oxford 2015.

<sup>22</sup> OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2015*, 2015 [<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/ess/-/international-migration-outlook-2015>, accessed 23 Nov. 2018].



market is segmented, but the spreading of precarity among immigrant workers has been a factor of multiplication and enlargement of precarity which has affected a remarkable share of workers; in this framework, migration policies have had an important general role in paving the way and anticipating comparable labour laws.

The process of downward convergence of migration policies, started slowly in the 1970s and 1980s, and which gained momentum in the 1990s and 2000s, has affected a good share of European states and has seen the confluence of the different European migration policies into one single migration policy, which is selective, restrictive and repressive, which balances regular migration according to the increase in flexibility necessary to the labour market.

In this context, where migration is encouraged by the market and discouraged by state institutions - according to a role play aimed at the social and political exploitation and crushing of migrants - the real purpose of this downward migration policy is not a complete stop to immigration or a tight closing of borders, but rather an unstable, vulnerable immigration, poorly rooted and low-maintenance, with a worsening of the conditions of migration. This specific condition has turned migration into an ambit where the productive system has experimented new forms of division and organization of work, and an element of restructuring and re-stratification of the labour market through processes which have led to replacing secure jobs with precarious ones.

The creation of an institutionally weak and precarious labour area, of an underclass of temporary workers replacing each other in constant rotation and circulation, has not only allowed the experimentation of new forms of labour exploitation to spread (and creating a sort of on-site delocalization), but also it has favored a new global regulation of work relations and contracts in the name of stable precarity.





### 3.1. CASUALISATION AND IMMIGRATION IN ITALY

In Italy, throughout the 1990s immigrant workers have been channelled into the worst jobs, especially in labour-intensive sectors, with a high rate of irregular work<sup>23</sup>. The shift to the industrial sector of the 2000s has entailed an improvement of their condition, yet they still take up proportionally more low-skilled and low-paid jobs<sup>24</sup>. Immigrants participation in the official labour market has increased, but the racial segmentation of the labour market has grown, and is matched by labour segregation and ethnicisation in the manufacturing processes<sup>25</sup>.

The working experience of immigrant workers - with regard to tasks, classification, wages, accidents, and social security - presents today severe disparities in comparison with national workers. Among them, we encounter the highest rates of unemployment (16.2 percent for immigrants versus 11.4 percent for national workers), underemployment (11.7 percent versus 4.2 percent), over-education (40.9 percent versus 21.6 percent), contract precarity and intermittent work (also of longer duration)<sup>26</sup>. Within this situation, we find *mass socialisation to precarity*: as immigrant workers enter the labour force, running the gauntlet of irregular work and undocumented migration before reaching a minimally stable situation, they often spend a long period experiencing the most exploitative labour practices in the country.

This period is a sort of “warming-up” phase for permanent uncertainty and social inferiority; it, which affects immigrants differently according to various factors, prepares them for a lifetime of precarious work. Structural precarity is the

<sup>23</sup> CARITAS-MIGRANTES, *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2004*, Rome 2004.

<sup>24</sup> FULLIN, G., REYNERI, E., «Low unemployment and bad jobs for new immigrants in Italy», in *International Migration* 49 (2011), pp. 118-147.

<sup>25</sup> FONDAZIONE MORESSA, *Rapporto annuale sull'economia dell'immigrazione 2018*, Bologna 2018, p. 72.

<sup>26</sup> UNAR, *Dossier statistico immigrazione 2016*, Rome 2016, p. 262.





cornerstone of Italy's labour migration regime<sup>27</sup>, and the *pedagogy of precarity* is a pillar of the history of immigration in Italy that began in the 1980s and 1990s, and was institutionalized in the 2000s through immigration laws.

### 3.2. THE PRECARISATION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

Within the double precarity of immigrants, mention shall be made of specific interventions by the Italian State on asylum seekers over the last two years. This category is affected by an intrinsic vulnerability due to its legal status: asylum seekers are waiting for the response to their asylum application, which may even take 2 years, and is often rejected. Moreover, due to the emergency context in which the “refugee crisis” is handled and the incessant media propaganda with marked elements of hate speech, this category experiences harsh conditions of exclusion and popular intolerance. This context was worsened by recent legislation measures approved in 2017 and in 2018.

Law No. 46/2017 “*Urgent provisions to accelerate procedures on international protection*” - born together with the law on the security and decorum of cities (No. 48/2017) - introduces a generalization of the Hotspot approach of the new European migration policy<sup>28</sup>, entailing several procedural and substantial changes of a restrictive nature. This law was the first phase of limitation to the right of asylum carried out by Italy; for example, it entails the abolition of the second degree of judgement: migrants won't be able to appeal against a judicial decision when their asylum claim is rejected.

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<sup>27</sup> BASSO, P., «Politiche migratorie e precarizzazione del lavoro», in *Gli immigrati, il lavoro, la casa*, ed. COIN, F., Milan 2004, pp. 71-100; CINIERO, A., *Economia flessibile e vite precarie*, Naples 2013.

<sup>28</sup> The hotspot approach, one of the pillars of the European Agenda on Migration 2015, is based on the large-scale implementation of asylum-seekers and refugees centres. See [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/.../2\\_hotspots\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/.../2_hotspots_en.pdf).



Law 132/2018 places immigration in the field of security and worsens dramatically the conditions of incoming migrants and asylum seekers. It reduces the rights and guarantees for asylum seekers, it strongly limits the application of the right of asylum up to almost erasing it.

First, it introduces a remarkable worsening of custody and administrative detention. Second, it abolishes humanitarian protection: the previous legislation entailed the issuing of a residence permit for humanitarian reasons, which, in Italy, has been the main way to obtain a permit protecting people fleeing from countries ravaged by wars, natural disasters, political prosecutions. The elimination of this type of residence permit, which was the main and often last entry door to Italy through international protection, creates a mass of undocumented migrants who increase the number of workers who are liable to be blackmailed, cheap, exploited in the construction sector, in agriculture, in low-skilled services, in the underground economy.

Third, it introduces several obstacles to the issuing of international protection. Fourth, it worsens the conditions of refugees and asylum seekers in Italy through the disarticulation of the reception system. Basically, the national system for the protection of asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR) is partly erased, as it will only host the beneficiaries of international protection<sup>29</sup> and unaccompanied foreign minors, thus excluding asylum seekers and the beneficiaries of humanitarian protection. This law favours a reception model of asylum seekers based on emergencies, isolating and marginalizing them, built on large-sized centres (dormitory-centres) only providing some essential services. Asylum seekers may only be hosted in Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria (CAS) and in Centri di Prima Accoglienza (CPA), which were often already lacking social, language, training,

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<sup>29</sup> When they cannot access specific structures, the beneficiaries of a residence permit for reasons of health, social protection, domestic violence, work exploitation, natural disaster or civic value may also be hosted.



employment and legal protection services. Asylum seekers, distinguished by refugees and beneficiaries of international protection, are placed in a suspended context, in a limbo which does not entail nor start any process of social integration.

This condition of exclusion and suspension is symbolized by the provisions on the registration at the registry office<sup>30</sup>, which in Italy is compulsory for the issuing of the residence certificate and the ID, on the required documents to access public services (social services, public housing, aid and incentives) or to obtain services by private entities (employers for the work contract, landlords for a lease contract, driving schools to get a driving license, banks to open a bank account). Now, this law provides that the residence permit for asylum applications, though it is a valid document as a token of identity, cannot be used as such to apply for registration at the registry office; in theory the asylum seeker may obtain registration by presenting another document proving a regular stay on the Italian territory<sup>31</sup>, yet the registration becomes a matter of discretion of the Municipality and registry officers. The Italian legislation on immigration guarantees asylum seekers access to public services based on the residence declared in their application for international protection, but the lack of registration may entail the rejection by a part of the public administration and private entities to provide services. Within this context of institutional blackmail and social marginalization, in last years several atypical forms of work have multiplied, among which, voluntary work.

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<sup>30</sup> Foreigners, to obtain registration, shall prove their stable permanence in one place and have a residence permit.

<sup>31</sup> The law does not specify which other document.



#### 4. THE PUBLIC POLICY OF VOLUNTARY WORK BY ASYLUM SEEKERS

Within the workfare and active citizenship policies, recently a new form of unpaid voluntary work has emerged, a perfect example of the new frontiers of precarity involving immigrants: the policy of voluntary work by asylum seekers.

Officially launched in 2014 through administrative circular letter no. 14290 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and applied in several local contexts, such measure was spread and legitimized after the so-called “refugees crisis”. After a renewed political instability in some north-African countries, Libya and Tunisia in particular, the first phase of migratory events leading to the collapse of the embryonic Common European Asylum System<sup>32</sup> took place, together with the questioning of the Schengen system and of the European Union itself; this happened after the increase in the arrivals of people from third countries through the African and Balkan routes<sup>33</sup>. As for Italy, already in 2013 and 2014, the disorganization in reception system and the instrumentalization by the media led to perceive these arrivals as an invasion, as a national emergency, and started a set of controversies on the management of such phenomenon. One of such controversies was about the alleged “inactivity” of asylum seekers, arrived in large numbers in Italy<sup>34</sup>. According to a part of the public opinion and of political parties, the majority of asylum seekers were responsible for a passive attitude against the reception measures provided. Migrants waiting for a response to their asylum application, the majority of which

<sup>32</sup> ZAUN, N., *EU Asylum Policies*, London 2017; NIEMANN, A., ZAUN, N., «EU refugee policies and politics in time of crisis», in *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56 (2018), pp. 3-22; MENÉNDEZ, A.J., «The refugee crisis: between human tragedy and symptom of the structural crisis of European Integration», in *European Journal Law* 22 (2016), pp. 388-416; PASTORE, F., HENRY, G., «Explaining the crisis of the European Migration and Asylum Regime», in *The International Spectator* 51 (2016), pp. 44-57.

<sup>33</sup> IOM EUROPE, *Mixed Migration Flows to Europe. Yearly Overview*, 2015 [<http://migration.iom.int/reports/europe-%E2%80%94-mixed-migration-flows-europe-yearly-overview-2015?close=true>, accessed 23 March 2019].

<sup>34</sup> MIN. INTERNO, *Rapporto sull'accoglienza di migranti e rifugiati in Italia 2015*, [[https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/resources/ministry\\_of\\_interior\\_report\\_on\\_reception\\_of\\_migrants\\_and\\_refugees\\_in\\_italy\\_october\\_2015.pdf](https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/resources/ministry_of_interior_report_on_reception_of_migrants_and_refugees_in_italy_october_2015.pdf), accessed 23 Nov. 2018].



was and is rejected<sup>35</sup>, were described as *idle*, free riders on welfare services, a burden for Italian citizens already strained by the economic crisis and the reduction of social services due to austerity. Such debate has affected negatively the attitude of the Italian population vis-à-vis asylum seekers, already kindled by the shortcomings in the reception system and by a media discourse aimed at providing an alarming perception of immigration.

With the goal of offering a “rehabilitation” tool of asylum seekers in the eyes of the Italian population, the centre-left-wing Government promoted the public policy of voluntary work by asylum seekers. Such measure entails their involvement in activities of public interest, to facilitate their acceptance by the local population and to create social integration through their commitment in activities in favour of the local society. The pillar of this policy is the cooperation between Municipality and volunteer organizations, which act as a bridge between asylum seekers and the local society: the former have the task of planning projects matching the needs of the local society, while the latter support asylum seekers in the activities - usually cleaning public spaces, small road maintenance works, etc.

Five years after the enactment, institutional sources and local news indicate that several voluntary work projects were implemented by centre-left-wing local administrations –usually favourable to reception and integration within the so-called “refugees crisis”. The latest data are from 2016, with around a hundred Municipalities implementing this policy<sup>36</sup>; yet, local news often tell about the creation or renewal of local protocols to involve asylum seekers in voluntary work.

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<sup>35</sup> MIN. INTERNO, *I numeri dell’asilo*, [<http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it>, accessed 23 March 2019].

<sup>36</sup> MIN. INTERNO, *I numeri dell’asilo 2016*, [<http://www.interno.gov.it/it/sala-stampa/dati-e-statistiche/i-numeri-dellasilo>, accessed 23 March 2019].



A recent example among large cities is that of Bologna, which has involved around 2000 asylum seekers in last 3 years<sup>37</sup>, but also Turin<sup>38</sup> or Rome<sup>39</sup> may be mentioned.

As for the public discourse, this policy has been presented as a useful tool for asylum seekers to obtain “participation awareness” and “knowledge of the social fabric”, and to support their “maximum integration” through the educational and training potential of the activities. In theory, this policy’s aim is to provide asylum seekers with the possibility of being perceived differently by the Italian population and to be “*integrated also through activities and services offered as volunteers for the benefit of the hosting community*”<sup>40</sup>. Besides the creation of a positive and hardworking public image for asylum seekers, the intentions of the legislator indicate that voluntary work activities are aimed at learning skills to consolidate the human capital (through the learning of practical and language skills) and the social capital (through the relations created with members of NGOs and the population).

#### 4.1. A NEW FRONTIER OF PRECARIETY, A NEW WAY TO DISCIPLINE LABOUR

In line with the general goals of workfare and active citizenship policies, also the voluntary work by asylum seekers aims at creating community participation through activities of public interest, with the final goal of benefitting the local society through commitment. A critical analysis of this policy, based on the study of local protocols and local news, supported by a fieldwork carried out in 2017<sup>41</sup>, highlighted

<sup>37</sup> «Un esercito di 2mila migranti al lavoro volontario in Emilia», in *La Repubblica*, 25 July 2018 [<https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2018/07/25/un-esercito-di-2mila-migranti-al-lavoro-volontario-in-emiliaBologna03.html>, accessed 26 March 2019].

<sup>38</sup> «I profughi puliscono Torino», in *La Repubblica*, 23 April 2016 [[http://torino.repubblica.it/cronaca/2016/04/23/news/i\\_profughi\\_puliscono\\_torino\\_per\\_tre\\_mesi\\_27\\_rifugiati\\_spazzini\\_volontari-138276867](http://torino.repubblica.it/cronaca/2016/04/23/news/i_profughi_puliscono_torino_per_tre_mesi_27_rifugiati_spazzini_volontari-138276867), accessed 26 March 2019].

<sup>39</sup> «Roma, richiedenti asilo per ripulire i parchi», in *Adnkronos*, 2 July 2018, [[https://www.adnkronos.com/fatti/cronaca/2018/07/02/roma-richiedenti-asilo-per-ripulire-parchi\\_i5x7HtpJWxHBGa7GACwO.html](https://www.adnkronos.com/fatti/cronaca/2018/07/02/roma-richiedenti-asilo-per-ripulire-parchi_i5x7HtpJWxHBGa7GACwO.html), accessed 26 March 2019].

<sup>40</sup> Quoting from administrative circular letter 14290/2014.

<sup>41</sup> PASQUALETTO, M., «Il ‘volontariato’ dei richiedenti asilo in Italia», in *Remhu* 49 (2017), pp. 233-248.



that voluntary work may be a tool of precarisation: it works at the level of public imaginary and at the level of insertion within the labour market, preparing the conditions for a subordinate social inclusion.

First, an analysis of the political and media discourses on the voluntary work by asylum seekers shows a delegitimization of the right of asylum and its universality. Indeed, two key terms as *integration* and *reception* substantiate an ambiguous and controversial content. With the former, the structural elements hindering the integration of immigrants (institutional and popular racism, lack of adequate policies, work precarity) are hidden and integration is defined as the result of the good will of the asylum seeker. With the latter, reception is presented as a responsibility of the asylum seeker, who shall obtain it with personal commitment, and not a responsibility shouldered by the receiving society. Thus, there are misrepresentations tainting upstream the possibility for voluntary work to influence the cultural context in terms of more tolerance.

In concealing the actual causes hindering integration, a questionable, yet consistent with the solution offered, causal relationship is introduced: the commitment of asylum seekers in voluntary work, as the root of the problem lies in their behaviour and the solution is their responsibility. In the media and political discourses, the “good will” of the asylum seeker to be received and integrated through voluntary work is supported by the concept of *restitution*, highlighted in several news pieces and in the interviews with the mayors promoting this policy. Often, in an atmosphere of expectation questioning the *willingness* of their involvement, voluntary work is offered to asylum seekers as a mean to *pay back* the local society for the reception they were given. The introduction of such concept in the discourse and in the policies on international protection is a dangerous step pushing the latter from the paradigm of universal rights towards that of state concessions. Moreover, linking deserving reception and carrying out voluntary work implies an ideal division, based on non-legal criteria, within the category of asylum



seekers: on one hand “hardworking people” showing their “willingness” to be received and integrated; on the other hand, idle people living a lazy life<sup>42</sup>. At level of public imaginary, through these mechanisms the public opinion is led towards an idea of right of asylum where the concept of universality is undermined. The key principle for which assistance shall be provided to whoever applies for international protection, irrespective of deserving it through voluntary work or other ways, is questioned. Furthermore, as a tool to be received, restitution through voluntary work takes on a symbolic feature for which, more than other migrants, asylum seekers have to shoulder a further burden, a sort of guilt to atone, i.e. being received at the State’s expenses. Reception itself is thus associated to the need to *atone* a guilt, which will be compensated through voluntary work.

Again on the creation of a public imaginary, the voluntary work of asylum seekers brings about an inferiorised image for them. All the projects analysed through local news and fieldwork present activities which are irrelevant to the construction of human and social capital. They are always activities such as road cleaning, waste collection, small maintenance works on infrastructures, support to local festivals. The majority of these activities are decent tasks but quite distinguishing: the fact that asylum seekers are offered unpaid activities “showcasing” them in this way contributes to sediment a public imaginary where it is considered normal to assign automatically to migrants tasks related to the so-called 3D-jobs - “dirty, dangerous, demanding”. If all this is coupled with any of the controversies linked to the inactivity of asylum seekers, to their *loitering* during their free time (i.e. to stand in a public place without an obvious reason - at least from the locals’ point of view), voluntary work transforms the space of towns in a place they may attend, in the double meaning of an actual and socially accepted possibility, only

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<sup>42</sup> «Il Capo dell’Immigrazione Morcone: “Affidare ai profughi lavori utili”», in *Corriere della Sera*, 18 August 2016, [[http://www.corriere.it/cronache/16\\_agosto\\_17/capo-dell-immigrazione-morcone-affidare-profughi-lavori-utili-e732f624-64c4-11e6-8281-0851fdf23454.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/cronache/16_agosto_17/capo-dell-immigrazione-morcone-affidare-profughi-lavori-utili-e732f624-64c4-11e6-8281-0851fdf23454.shtml)], accessed 26 March 2019].





in ways which are strictly regulated under the point of view of time and activities of voluntary work. Indeed, the fieldwork shows that it is fundamental that the activities take place *outdoors*, so that asylum seekers may *prove* their good will.

As for the concepts of *restitution* and *atonement*, the ways in which voluntary work activities are carried out and their ineffectiveness in consolidating the human capital hint at the actual usefulness of this policy, lying in the relationship between municipalities and citizens and relegating asylum seekers to mere instruments in this mechanism. The analysis of political and media discourses highlights that usefulness of this policy is not conceived as real or material (asylum seekers are doing something for the community), but is rather played at the perception level: *they show they're doing something for the community*. Thus, the real political motivations of voluntary work for asylum seekers reside in the message aimed at consensus, which, on the concept of *restitution*, lastly implies a sort of *spectacularization of atonement* through which asylum seekers are given the chance to show their good will to deserve the reception, taking care materially of a community and his territory from which they are actually excluded.

Furthermore, in light of the concept of unpaid work this policy can be interpreted as a tool creating the conditions for the integration of asylum seekers in the labour market as precarious subjects. First of all, the services provided can be considered, in all respects, a form of unpaid work. The fieldwork indicates that, though with a large diversity in the activities, these are structured in the time and ways they are carried out, hierarchically organized, in blatant contradiction with the *personal* feature marking traditional volunteering. Secondly, the above-mentioned context of *expectation* on the choice of asylum seekers to participate or not to the programmes of voluntary work, casts shadows on the *spontaneity* of their decision. Third, this policy does not list among its goals those typical of volunteering (civic education, socialization towards participation) but rather those typical of work: the same administrative circular letter of the Ministry of Internal Affairs echoes the



concepts of human and social capital, and indeed this policy has the goal of increasing the employability of asylum seekers. Furthermore, like internships, voluntary work also is an investment in terms of time and energy aimed at a *future*, thus uncertain, integration within the labour market. It is also configured as a sort of *hope labour*, with which the asylum seeker provides for free an unpaid service *hoping* to have a benefit in the future.

Finally, the conditions to enter the labour market projected by asylum seekers' voluntary work provide the inputs to look at it as a carrier of work precarity. This policy repeats the pedagogical leverage of unpaid work: it acquaints asylum seekers with it, shaping their expectations on what awaits them once they leave reception centres to look for a job. With voluntary work, an unpaid and non-training activity is offered, which does not consider their individual skills and places them at the margins of society; in relation to the local society voluntary work is the extra commitment required to aim at (a subordinate and precarious) inclusion. The prospect of this policy in the labour market is that of a group of flexible and cheap workers, trained to accept unpaid or underpaid tasks to find a legitimate place in the receiving society.

Based on these considerations, voluntary work, in the forms and ways provided for by the Italian state, may be interpreted as a mean of precarisation of asylum seekers, both in terms of present and future life conditions. During the time of legal limbo while waiting for the response to the asylum application, it affects their presence, delegitimizing the right of asylum itself and presenting to the Italian population an inferiorised image; it jeopardizes their conditions of entry into the world of work, making them acquainted with life and work precarisation.



## 5. CONCLUSION

In a context of deep transformations of work and of the labour market, voluntary work is a new frontier in the two-fold process of precarisation and discipline of labour. In the specific case of asylum seekers, the institutionalization of precarity reserved for migrant workers shall also be included; it is an element in the obstacle course towards integration which offers the labour market a precarious workforce, liable to be blackmailed. Voluntary work by asylum seekers - forced migrants to forced voluntary work - falls within the processes of precarisation and devaluation of the immigrant workforce.

In this context, the public policy of voluntary work by asylum seekers works on multiple fronts and times. It affects the present of asylum seekers, where they live in the limbo of waiting for the response to the application for international protection, determining some of the conditions of their stay: it uses them as scapegoats for the chaotic management of the so-called “migrants emergency”; it inferiorizes them in the eyes of the public opinion, creating a *restitution show* for reception and contributing on the cultural level to the wipe-out of the right of asylum. It affects the future of the immigrants, acquainting them with underpaid work, with the false promise of stability and integration through unpaid work. Voluntary work takes place in a key moment within the migration experience of asylum seekers, that of the passage from a first reception phase to the search for a job within the labour market: this is where they apply the acquaintance with the underpaid work carried out in the second reception phase in labour-intensive sectors.

The policy of voluntary work by asylum seekers is thus one of the expressions of neoliberal precarisation to the detriment of workers, as a tool for the creation of a subordinate and vulnerable workforce. Within the global transformation of work, this policy paves the way for the institutional use of unpaid work, where the State and the public administration implement provisions reaching the maximum level of subordination for the worker, in one of the most vulnerable categories in today’s society: asylum seekers. They experiment advanced forms of work precarity



embodying the features of the “ideal” worker: instability, hyper-disposability, social pressure. In this framework, the category of immigrants is confirmed to be a laboratory to experiment unprecedented and acute forms of precarity.