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The multiple facets of (im)mobility. A multisited ethnography on territorialisation experiences and mobility trajectories of asylum seekers and refugees outside the Italian reception system

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses the forms of mobility and (im)mobility of migrants and asylum seekers who are outside the institutional reception system. Through the narration of two ethnographic cases placed in northern and southern Italy, the authors retrace the biographical and geographic trajectories of migrants, and compare them with territorial policies. By analysing two very different contexts from the economic and social point of view, we highlight the similarities between these territories, the mobility and immobility they generate and through which they are crossed, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RIASSUNTO

L'articolo analizza le forme di mobilità e (im)mobilità di rifugiati e richiedenti asilo che si trovano al di fuori del sistema di accoglienza istituzionale. Attraverso la narrazione di due casi etnografici, collocati nell'Italia settentrionale e meridionale, gli autori ripercorrono le traiettorie biografiche e geografiche degli emigranti rifugiati e richiedenti asilo e le mettono a confronto con le politiche territoriali. Analizzando due contesti tra loro molto diversi, dal punto di vista economico e sociale, il contributo mette in evidenza le somiglianze tra questi territori, la mobilità e l'immobilità che essi generano e da cui sono stati attraversati, prima e durante la pandemia di COVID-19.

Introduction

Paying particular attention to the results produced by the so-called *mobility turn* (Sheller and Urry 2006; Faist 2013; Urry 2007) – which shall be acknowledged for having disarticulated and disintegrated the image of a fundamentally sedentary society – some works have shown how this turning point has, paradoxically,

contributed to increase a paradigmatic idea of mobility and convey a rather optimistic image of it (Glick-Schiller and Salazar 2013; Heil et al. 2017).

However, it would seem that both approaches do not sufficiently take into account the range of options and possibilities that co-exist within each mobility experience (Bjarnesen and Vigh 2016; Priori 2017; Steiner 2019). This is largely demonstrated, for instance, by the epidemic. Indeed, the way in which COVID-19 pandemic interact with the category of mobility actually allow us to show how this latter can take different forms and trace different trajectories.

Therefore, in this article, we will discuss the geographical, social and biographical (im)mobility trajectories of asylum seekers and refugees, outside the reception system, in the Italian migration context, during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

1. Mobility and its opposite

The idea of mobility is mainly based on the analysis of trajectories determined by space-time compression. However, this idea cannot compress and understand, in turn, the whole range of experiences and reasons of those who move. For this reason, Glick-Schiller and Salazar (2013) speak of 'mobility regimes', to highlight the multiple aspects that underlie the choice to move from one place to another and diversify the conditions of treatment and the multiple forms of conditioning to which those who move are exposed – the result of devices applied (or not) based on the geographical area of origin, nationality, passport, and the reasons that push people to leave their countries.

The notion of 'mobility regimes' also includes the possibility of non-movement, in particular for cases of migrants and refugees who are confined to border territories or within administrative detention centres. However, immobility can also manifest itself according to other regimes and through other devices: for example, when the loss of a fundamental right such as residence leads to the non-renewal of the residence permit (Shuss 2020) and, consequently, to administrative irregularity (Gargiulo 2020). This is the case of the so called 'Security Decrees' (Law Decree 113/2018 and Law 132/2018) which, in this historical phase, activate processes of irregularization and mechanisms of marginalization of migrants (Della Puppa et al. 2020), and which, despite what the public and media debate affirmed, not even the recent Law Decree 130/2021 has cancelled (Della Puppa and Sanò 2020). This also proves to be a crucial factor for the freedom of movement of the 'irregularized' themselves, who in many cases are forced to remain in the territories waiting for the outcome of an appeal or, worse, are unable to leave because they do not have a residence and travel permit allowing them to do so (Schuster 2005; Sigona 2012).

At the same time, mobility cannot be understood without its opposite: immobility (Salazar and Smart 2011). The biographical trajectories and geographical paths of migrants can be abruptly interrupted by chance or influenced by policy decisions that are adverse to their opportunities for regularization and freedom of movement (Belloni 2016; Borri 2017; Fontanari 2019; Wyss 2019), or, ultimately, by the measure adopted in order to contain the widespread of epidemic.

With the concept of trajectory, we do not want to take into account just spatial movements or biographies constituted by the linear succession of events, but we consider the intersection of placements, movements, stops and tactics in geographical and social space. That is, the trajectories would be built in the set of relationships between agents who, in the same field, face with a common horizon of possibilities (Bourdieu 1994). Therefore, the construct of trajectory, indicates the movement and agency of the actors in a social – and geographical – structured and structuring space, within which different forms of capital are given and change, habitus are built, expectations are outlined and shaped, and possibility reproduced. If, on the one hand, the tactics of immobility must be read within the strategies of mobility, at the same time, on the other hand, the trajectories of mobility and/or immobility are part of the biographical and social trajectories.

Using the notion of (im)mobility allows us to describe the condition shared by those who, although physically immobile, are nevertheless 'in motion'. This is particularly true if, when speaking of people in transit, we also consider movements inspired by imaginaries (Carling and Schewel 2018; de Haas 2014; degli Uberti 2019; Jackson 2008) or realized through the work of imaginary (Appadurai 2013). Thus, when we refer to (im)mobility, we are implicitly giving an image of the tension that occurs when physical immobilization and the mobilization of imaginaries (emotions, desires and willing) are at stake. In fact, as Nimführ and Sesay (2019, 16) underline:

> Mobility and immobility are not thought of in binary terms, but are intertwined, in that the logic of one is always present in the other. This relationship is both explicit and implicit, but always present in the life of non-deportable refugees.

Here, then, exactly like these authors do, we use the term (im)mobilities to describe this interdependence.

This contribution starts from these topics; from the need, that is, to reason around the analytical category of mobility, in an attempt to grasp the facets of what we can define a *prism*, that is the complex set of experiences that give rise and body to the mobility of people and that can, from time to time, take the form of a forward movement, a setback or, again, a return to the starting point (Schapendonk and Steel 2014; Pettit and Ruijtenberg 2019).

To do this we will focus on the forms of mobility and immobility of asylum seekers and refugees in Italy, but outside the institutional reception system.

The analytical category of mobility allows us to observe how migrants try and sometimes manage to escape strategically from the conditioning and impositions that they gradually encounter along the way, highlighting the presence of networks and relationships that allow individuals to anchor themselves to one territory instead of another (Schapendonk 2017; Nimführ and Sesay 2019).

Based on these premises and through some ethnographic cases, the result of research work conducted in northern and southern Italy and aimed at understanding the geographical and biographical trajectories of refugees and asylum seekers outside the reception system, the article presents debates and studies on mobility and offers an analysis of the experiences that describe immobility, 'backwardness', forms of rootedness and 'territorialization'. Starting from the comparison of two ethnographic case-studies, this contribution aims to understand how mobility and immobility affect the living conditions of migrants, by answering the following questions: how do mobility and immobility occur? What are they? What effects do they have in turn?

The first case describes the mobility of people who have left the reception projects in the Autonomous Province of Trento (PAT) or who have never managed to enter them. The second case focuses, instead, on the mobility routes that affect the Plain of Gioia Tauro, in Calabria.

This comparison is the result of a dual multi-sited ethnography, aimed at studying and analysing the housing and work pathways of migrants who have left the institutional reception system. Specifically, a period of participatory observation was carried out in informal settlements, meeting places and spaces for the care of homeless migrants. In addition, 40 in-depth interviews and informal conversations were collected with: activists, migrants, workers in the reception system, employers, trade unionists. The names of respondents reported are aliases.

2. The fragility of common sense

The socio-economic gap between northern and southern Italy is the basis from which we started to reflect on the biographical, social and geographical paths of the people who have emerged from the institutional reception circuits.

The PAT is characterized by the widespread presence of social services aimed at individual persons and is sufficiently equipped in terms of low-threshold services. Moreover, in this context there is a very low rate of unemployment and cases of labour informality do not reach the figures and structural characteristics present in other regions – first and foremost the southern ones – although there are and have been documented cases of labour exploitation in the primary sector, catering and personal services.

The context of the Plain of Gioia Tauro, on the contrary, is characterized by the lack and malfunctioning of social policies. Low-threshold services are insufficient and unemployment rates are very high, among the highest in the national context. The segments of the labour market in which foreign labour is mostly employed rely on the typical mechanisms of informality and labour exploitation.

Despite the fact, therefore, that the conditions are very different from one territory to another, especially if we take into account the classic indicators – which can be traced back to economic well-being, the efficiency of the welfare and health system and the level of employment – however, what emerges from the ethnographic results and the examination of the point of view of the people we have met allows us to establish a lowest common denominator between the different contexts and, as a consequence, to disrupt the common sense that generally provides that, in all cases, the regions of northern Italy would be more attractive and far preferable to those of southern Italy.

If, indeed, these reflections are, all things considered, plausible regarding the natives, it is not certain that they can be taken for granted when one questions the material conditions of existence of migrants. For example, analysing the position of migrants leaving the reception projects, we dis-cover that determining the choice of a place to settle, among the first and most important evaluation factors, is the possibility of acquiring and main-taining a stable legal position. But the choice to settle in one context and not in another may also be determined by the degree of familiarity achieved by the person with the territory and with the services available, regardless of whether this principle of familiarity can then, actually, be translated into the best possible conditions from the material and substan-tial point of view.

By this we mean that familiarity with a territory also develops through the actions, practices and routine activities carried out in the territory itself and made possible by the presence of social networks, often with compatriots, but also with other types of subjects (services, volunteers, etc.), as in the case of Diabatè that we will describe in the next paragraph (Sanò et al. forth-coming; Pasian, Storato and Toffanin 2020). Such networks can also facilitate access to the labour market – often informal and exploited labour – to which migrants are forced in a specific biographical and migratory phase, such as that outside reception (Cordova forthcoming; Pasian et al. 2020).

Among the people who enter Italy by crossing the Brenner land border to reach the PAT, many have already passed through the Schengen area and, for this reason, once they arrive in Italy they are labelled 'Dublined' and 'out of quota'. 'Dublined' because according to the Dublin Regulation, which gov-erns the procedure for applying for international protection, the asylum application must be taken charge of and processed by the first State into

which the applicant has entered and then, in this case, by the Member State which first identified the individuals in transit. 'Out of quota' because these persons are not among those who arrived in the national territory by sea and, therefore, do not belong to the ministerial quotas through which the applicants are distributed in the individual territories after the landing and identification procedures.

Given these specific circumstances, it appears that, since the first months of 2018, people who arrived in the PAT have been denied entry to first and second reception centres and that, only in some cases, the institutions have made efforts to provide them with assistance, activating the channels of the so-called low-threshold centres.

For those who, on the other hand, arrive in Italy by sea, crossing the Central Mediterranean route, the route to be taken is the one established for the so-called 'ministerial quotas' and provides, therefore, identification at landing and transfer to reception centres or Hotspots.

What we want to highlight most of all about this reconstruction is the fragility shown by common sense, especially when it is deployed to build discourses and narratives about migration, mobility and territories. Indeed, even though the economic conditions and social welfare are certainly better in the PAT, if we stick to the paths and trajectories that must be followed by migrants once they have arrived in these territories, it is quite clear that they cannot access the possibility of integrating and benefitting from the economic and social policies in favour of the local population.

In this frame of the narratives and representations on the territories, it must be added that with the beginning of the epidemic the new concept of 'south-working' was introduced to describe the return home of many Italian migrants – i.e. students and employees who took advantage of smart working to resettle in their places or cities of origin. But, in a different way, this is also what has happened to foreign migrants. With the closure of many activities and factories due to the epidemic, they decided to leave for the southern regions. The pandemic has, in fact, reversed the reasons for attraction, pushing migrants to move to where the cost of living is lower and the possibility of working in an informal sector such as agriculture is now much more attractive.

3. (Im)mobility as a struggle of survival and the 'migration battleground' of Trento

At the basis of the policies implemented by the PAT and aimed at preventing migrants and asylum seekers from settling in the territory, there is the belief that a good welfare and service system can encourage the arrival of other migrants, according to ideological rhetoric on so-called '*welfare shopping*'.

To this end, provincial administrators have in recent years drastically reduced reception measures for new arrivals outside the ministerial quotas, minimizing the procedures for entry and application for international protection.

In the face of these measures, there has been an increase in the number of people forced to live on the streets in recent years. This group is made up of both migrants who are unable to enter institutional reception centres and those who have completed their project but have not been able to stabilize in legal, employment and housing terms. In both cases, it happens, very often, that they prefer to stay on the territory either because they are convinced that sooner or later they will be able to enter the reception projects or because they are waiting for documents and cannot leave or, again, because they have reached a degree of familiarity with the territory and with the services present that, in a certain sense, does not allow them to move and take root in another context, unknown to them.

This is the case of Diabatè, a Malian asylum seeker who, after receiving a refusal, was granted subsidiary protection. Below is an excerpt from the ethnographic diary:

> I spend the morning with Diabatè. He tells me that since he finished the reception project two years ago, he alternates his life between the dormitories and the street. During these years he has not been able to find a stable job and for about two months he has not been able to get in touch with his family. Over time he built his homeless routine: the 'Punto d'incontro' service for breakfast, shower and lunch, the Capuchin friars for dinner. The documents are not a problem for him; in fact, he is convinced that everything is OK. He tells me that he has applied for his passport, that he went to Rome to the embassy, slept secretly in a centre through another migrant he met when he arrived in the city and that the next day he left for Trento. Trento is the only place he knows and also the only place where he has thought of living until he gets his passport, with which he can finally go abroad. He has no destination, he'll go where the work is, he says. So far he has not moved from Trento because, in another city, he explains to me: 'I don't know where there are canteens, dormitories, showers. Here I know, somewhere else I don't. Without money, I can't go anywhere else, with money I can.' He obsessively repeats that his problem is work. Every once in a while he does some work, I ask him which one, and he just mentions the one at 'Ricicla', where he tells me he worked for a week. . . . He shows me all the documents issued by the dormitories and canteens, with the periods in which he was a guest, and I understand that he leaves one place and after a few days enters another. He only lives on the street when he's waiting to get into one of the dorms. When he lives on the street, he prefers to be under the bridge. He doesn't like to be in the square, because he feels exposed there and in the morning the noise wakes him up early. Instead, under the bridge it is quiet, there are no noises and he can sleep even until 8:00. Sometimes the police go there, but only for those 'who don't do good things and they know who they are'. And they leave you alone? I ask him. 'Sure, what should they say, where should we go? . . . The Capuchins hand out blankets. We put three blankets

under the back to act as a mattress and one on top to cover us. At Punto d'incontro, they give clothes. But I don't ask for them, because my friends give them to me', he tells me. Diabatè has never moved from Trento, he has never been to another city because he doesn't know anybody and he wouldn't know how to move between the services of another city he doesn't know. (Ethnographic diary of Author A, Trento, 22 May 2018)

It is clear from Diabatè's account that in some cases immobility is produced by the failure to obtain a document and, in this specific case, by the double refusal received by the applicant. However, this condition of immobility due to administrative and legal issues does not correspond to Diabatè's perception of a constraint attributable to his legal position, so much so that he reiterates, in more than one passage, that for him and his mobility the problem is not the documents, but, instead, the absence of work and the lack of knowledge of other territories in which to settle. These two aspects are the real reason why he chose to take root in the city of Trento, because, as he explains, it is here that he knows how to move and where to shelter in the absence of economic conditions that make him completely independent and self-sufficient, and not elsewhere. In the words of Karlsen (2021, 121), who intersects the temporal dimension with the spatial one:

Although the asylum system continued importantly to shape their future horizon, I suggest that it was a combination of 'waiting for' and 'waiting out' that together formed a continuing imperative to stay.

These phenomena are similar to those already described by Fontanari (2019) who defines the experience of those who have made the city their home, in the absence of documents and a stable job that allows them to settle down and rent an apartment, in terms of *open-air home*. A phrase that translates a very peculiar aspect of (im)mobility, that is what all those who move within the same city or the same territory experience, orienting themselves between the absence and the presence of services – also implemented by various local subjects, such as associations, NGOs, parishes, volunteers, who co-construct local migration policies and form what Ambrosini (2021) has defined as a 'Migration battleground' (see also Campomori and Ambrosini 2020) – useful to their homeless needs.

These *open-air home* experiences also reveal the level of familiarity reached by the protagonists with the context in which they live, especially in urban contexts. On the one hand, the fragmentation of services means that people have to constantly move from one urban space to another; on the other hand, however, this (im)mobility allows them to become familiar with the territory, to get to know it, to take possession of it and to 'inhabit' it.

4. Stuck in the Plain? (Im)mobility as an 'unrooted rootedness'

Among the rhetoric that accompanied the speeches on the internal mobility of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants without a residence permit mention should be made of the one according to which they would move to the south of Italy and the internal areas of the regions of southern Italy, because there is, for them, the concrete possibility of living without documents and working illegally, exploiting the illegality and informality that would be, so to speak, structural conditions of these territories.[1] Puccio, an independent trade union activist, adds some more interesting details to the juridical condition shared by migrants employed in this agricultural district:

> In my opinion, there is a peculiarity of the shantytown – I consider the shantytown as the period of the greatest migrant presence: many had a permit for work reasons, because maybe they were people who worked in the North, worked around, and then because of the closure of the various factories they found themselves in San Ferdinando. Indeed, I often say that besides being a babel of African languages, it was also a babel of Italian dialects. Some spoke dialects from Palermo, Naples, Veneto, even quite markedly. Many had work permit, many had humanitarian protection and did not come to San Ferdinando to work, but only to renew their permits. (Puccio, independent trade union activist, Plain of Gioia Tauro, January 2020)

It thus emerges that the people who arrived in the territory of the Plain of Gioia Tauro and lived in the former shantytown, now replaced by a tent city a few hundred meters from it, were mostly in possession of a residence permit.

As we have already mentioned, mobility is in many cases due to the possibility of regularizing one's administrative position and, therefore, the choice to settle in one place can also be traced back to individual local administrative situations. According to Puccio and Giulia – respectively independent trade union activist, and Siproimi[2] social worker – unlike many other contexts, the position of the Police Headquarters of Reggio Calabria guaranteed people to renew their residence permit:

> Puccio: This was a peculiarity due to the police headquarters in Reggio Calabria, because while most of the police headquarters began a tightening of the humanitarian protection renewals, asking for residence.

> Giulia: some even asked for the employment contract.

> Puccio: while the police headquarters in Reggio Calabria continued to ask for self-certification. So all you had to do was say you were in St. Ferdinand's and the police station would renew you. Not because the police station was abnormal, but because, paradoxically, it continued to respect the law, while all the other police stations began to ask for residence. So many people came to San Ferdinando because it was easier to have their permits renewed.

> (Puccio, independent trade union activist, and Giulia, social activist and Siproimi social worker, Plain of Gioia Tauro, January 2020)

Unfortunately, however, the policies already mentioned (Law Decree 113/2018 and Law 132/2018) were hampering the continuity of administrative regularity and the possibility of regularization for many who find themselves in a kind of limbo. Im-mobility is then preparing to become a condition of harnessing rather than a legitimate and free choice of rootedness. In the words of a local activist that guided our gaze towards the meaning of what we identify as 'unrooted rootedness':

> Precisely so as not to allow conditions of rootedness, territorialisation, which would avoid suffering that vulnerability. Because obviously if these people take root in a territorial, national, legal context that becomes more hospitable, no way certain conditions. (Giuseppe, social activist and Siproimi social worker, Plain of Gioia Tauro, April 2020)

Thus, Giuseppe's observations lead us to think about what (im)mobility generates and the effects it produces. Comparing the current working and living conditions in the Plain to those experienced ten years ago by migrants – referring to the so-called 'Rosarno uprising' that broke out in 2010 after some local people injured migrant labourers – he says:

> We rightly wonder: 'Has Rosarno changed in the last 10 years? Has the system of exploitation changed? Has the economy changed?' But we should also ask ourselves, has the State changed in these 10 years? I am convinced that the first interface, the first issue, with which people that also have to deal with corporals, godfathers, masters, is the State and its agencies, its actors, its territorial ramifications. All these issues we are talking about, the need for residence, to prevent people from coming back here who would just like to renew and then go somewhere else and, therefore, paradoxically, it would be even better to decrease their presence on the territory. (Giuseppe, social activist and Siproimi social worker, Plain of Gioia Tauro, April 2020)

This would disprove the idea that it is informality and illegality that drives people to move there. However, it should also be pointed out that what previously could have taken the form of voluntary integration by migrants who had to renew their document and who thus decided to move to this territory for reasons of mere opportunity, now appears more in terms of the impossibility of taking root or moving elsewhere. In this sense, we referred to the meaning of an 'unrooted rootedness', imagining that, despite appearances, what matters is that the hostility and inhospitality of this territory do not allow those who live in it to 'inhabit' it for real but to stay there indefinitely for the sole purpose of being put to work.

5. The complexifying effects of the pandemic

Although the reduction of human mobility is one of the main consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the observation of the geographic and biographical trajectories of migrants outside of the reception system gives us the

opportunity to problematize this assumption which often provides an excessively deterministic and mechanical key to understanding.

In this analysis, it must be taken into account, on the one hand, that the economic and social policies adopted in order to prevent and control the risk of a spread of the virus have contributed to further modifying the concrete plan for the mobility of refugees and asylum seekers beyond outside the Italian reception system; on the other hand, that the epidemic has exacerbated inequalities and disparities – strictly connected to the possibilities or needs of mobility – which were already widely present in society. In fact, the consequences related to measures to combat the spread of the virus, as well as, obviously, those of the presence of the virus itself, take on a different value in the life of those who live on the street and, perhaps, those who work within an informal economic and without guarantees sector of the labour market, leading to a further complexification of mobility trajectories.

With regard to the two social context analysed, Trentino and Calabria, the measures adopted to contain the pandemic have pushed those asylum seekers and refugees that are outside the reception system to undertake different mobility trajectories from time to time, based on their socio-economic conditions and the factor of time. If we take into consideration the first phase of confinement, which took place between February and May 2020, in fact, the ethnographic results show a substantial difference between what occurred in the two contexts analysed.

As a Siproimi project worker in Trento tells us, in the immediate beginning of the pandemic, in winter, most of the refugees had to leave the mountain areas and valleys, where they had moved in search of work in the tourism and agricultural sectors, to re-move to the city. It is configured, as well as a form of immobility on a national scale, but, at the same time, a form of mobility at the local level:

> In general, COVID-19 pandemic began in the winter season. The hotels closed and people had to come down from the mountains and find support. Fortunately, the dormitories were open and they upgraded them even during the day. Several people saw the contracts that had to go on until April interrupted and then from the valleys they went down to Trento. (Francesca, Siproimi social worker, Trento; February 2021)

However, another operator of the Siproimi project, which operates, in Villa San Giovanni, in Calabria, reports that, in the first spring, many of the exiles from the reception system arrived in the Plain of Gioia Tauro to work or to renew their documents, with the beginning of confinement, they no longer had the opportunity to move, remaining in many cases forced to live inside the ministerial tent city or informal camps, thus revealing a form of immobility:

People have been stuck in the pandemic and are unable to move to renew their documents. Instead, the people who returned here because they have open practices in Calabria have been blocked because the police headquarters have stopped, so they are waiting here and waiting to be able to conclude the practice to start again. The difficulty of the institutions to govern labor mobility now translates into people stuck in the Plain. The tent city at this time does not formally welcome, but informally it does. And now there are more people than usual. A month ago, many of the people without a contract could not go to work because the police stopped them and without a contract blocked them and prevented them from continuing. At this stage, those who were not contracted were unable to go to work. (Giuseppe, Siproimi social worker, Villa San Giovanni, April 2020)

These two interviews show how the mobility and immobility of these subjects were differently conditioned by the intersection of several factors. For example, the beginning of the epidemic coincided with the winter season is an element to be taken into consideration in relation to the most active working sectors in that particular period of the year. That is to say, the closure of the Trentino hotels and restaurants during the winter season has meant that most of the migrants employed in this sector have moved to the city, determining, among other things, the opening of services to low threshold able to accommodate all the people left without work in the valleys.

On the contrary, in the Plain of Gioia Tauro, the slowdown in production was not determined by a general closure of agricultural activities, but, mainly, by the fact that, at the beginning of the pandemic, a good part of the labourers present were without regular contract and thus could not go to the workplace. That is to say, this impossibility generated a block on the mobility of workers to other territories and from the places (formal and informal) in which they lived at that time.

With the end of the first confinement, in the summer months, this impossibility meant that the national government took the decision to regularize, by means of the amnesty, the migrants employed in the sectors considered 'essential'. These measures have certainly shown how much immigration policies are labour policies and how much the government is primarily interested in protecting economic and productive activities and not in safeguarding people's human and social rights. However, here, it should be highlighted how the mobility of refugees and asylum seekers outside of the reception system was further conditioned by the government provision issued during the summer season and, therefore, before the autumn resumption of agricultural harvesting. In fact, in autumn, the mobility of migrants outside the reception system was shaped by the country's economic and migration policies, according to which the agricultural sector was configured as an essential sector. Thus, many of those who, in the previous two years, had lost their residence documents due to the so-called 'Salvini Decrees' (Law 132/2018) (Della Puppa et al. 2020; Della Puppa and Sanò 2020) or who had

been made redundant due to the pandemic have turned back to the agricultural sector and moved to the main contexts of seasonal agriculture.

The (im)mobility generated by the first pandemic phase has been followed, during the autumn months, by a double mobility: geographical and working. In this regard, it is interesting what happened in the Trentino agricultural sector, where the apple harvest and the grape harvest are usually entrusted to teams of workers from Eastern Europe, as a key informant reports:

> With the agricultural season everyone knew that there would be great demand because all the seasonal workers in the East Europe, that usually come for this seasonal work, were missing as they were blocked for COVID-19 pandemic. Especially in the apple harvest period, September, there was a shortage of workers. The farmers and the employers could not find people, because not everyone wants to do it and because they have the countryside in faraway places and without a car, you can't get there. Usually, in Val di Non, the workers arrive by train, then the owner of the company goes to retrieve them by bus, but due to COVID-19 pandemic regulations they cannot do so anymore. And they couldn't even accommodate that many in the lodgings. These are small and family businesses. There are no big companies here. Me too, personally ... some companies called me to send them people, they need people, but there weren't many. (Fabrizia, social worker of a Reception Center, Trento, February 2021)

Therefore, the block of seasonal workers from Romania has turned into a job opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers who were in the Trentino area and who lost their work. So, it is possible to speak of a double mobility within immobility: during the autumn months, when the agricultural sector is particularly active in some areas, many people have made a movement both in territorial terms and in terms of work, passing, therefore, from a working sector to another one, while remaining within the PAT.

Conclusion

It is quite clear that the link between mobility and living is based on a concept of mobility that does not merely describe the movements of individuals, but simultaneously translates a set of possible conditions.

If mobility is read in the light of the geographical and biographical trajectories of migrants, the circumstances that occur may take on a different shape and value from time to time. So, while, in some cases, mobility may turn into a sort of 'flypaper' from where you may only observe the carcasses of the insects that, attracted by the smelling properties that it sends back, have leaned on it remaining stuck. In other cases, on the other hand, mobility or immobility may be the result of wise and personal choices, which have, in the first place, to do with the possibilities offered by a city or a territory and only

in part appear to be conditioned by devices for controlling and limiting personal freedoms.

In this sense, mobility acquires an ambivalent, even multiple, value, given that it can contain both the experiences of immobility – or reduced mobility – caused by the stiffening of migration policies, and the trajectories redrawn by migrants, to go beyond the limits imposed by institutional and bureaucratic geography.

Both perspectives suggest, however, that mobility should be observed from the link it has with the dimension of living since this combination makes it possible to examine mobility by stripping it of judgements and common sense. Housing conditions inform the reasoning on mobility and embellish with personal and individual elements a notion that, very often, runs the risk of flattening and homologation.

The pandemic has brought about a complexification of territorialization practices and mobility trajectories (more or less pursued, more or less suffered) of refugees and asylum seekers outside the reception system. In the interweaving of its effects on labour market, job opportunities, regulatory and bureaucratic needs, on the one hand, it has led to the emergence of forms of local and work mobility, albeit within a national immobility (this is the case of the Trentino context); on the other hand, it has imposed forms of forced immobility and impossibility to work (the Calabrian case) – in both cases making a linear and deterministic categorization impossible.

Through this article we set out to provide an original take on mobilities perspective, disclosing the inner ambivalences of mobility and, especially, immobility dynamics that inform the existential trajectories of refugees and asylum seekers, living aside the institutional reception system. In particular, while exploring the ambiguities and social practices of 'differential inclusion', prompted by multilevel (im)mobility regimes (especially with respect to the Italian migration and reception policies), we shed light also on the interstices and the creative practices through which migrants reframe their experience of immobility, concurrently with the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

In particular, we tried to problematize the broadly recognized reading of the relationships between mobility and immobility (Nimführ and Sesay 2019; Schapendonk and Steel 2014; Pettit and Ruijtenberg 2019), disclosing how the geographical and biographical trajectories of migrants and their interactions with socio-economically diversified Italian territories may become a fruitful analytical lens to dismantle some simplistic and over widespread public discourses about migration – what we called 'fragile common sense' – as well as social representations on northern and southern Italian territories.

The ethnographic cases we described show the need to rethink the conceptual categories with which we usually analyse mobility, illuminating the links it has with national policies, with territorial administrative provisions,

with the economic and social fabric of an area, with individual and not necessarily 'rational' choices of individuals. Observed in these terms and based on these links, one of the distinctive features of contemporaneity, namely mobility, reveals all its political nature, the disempowering character that accompanies it, as well as the economic interests connected to the productive function of those who find themselves imprisoned in the multiplicity facets of the *prism* of (im)mobility.

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Notes

1. In addition to the stories of those who work closely with migrants in this territory, reported in the article, the fragility of this belief has been demonstrated by several works. Among these, we refer to the reports available at the following links: http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Documenti-e-ricerche/CampaniaDossier%20Radici%20Rosarno%202012%20FondazioneIntegrazione.pdf; http://mediciperidirittiumani.org/tag/rosarno/ Accessed 13 April forthcoming.
2. Protection system for holders of international protection and for unaccompanied foreign minors. This acronym has now been replaced by Sai, which stands for: Reception and Integration System.

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