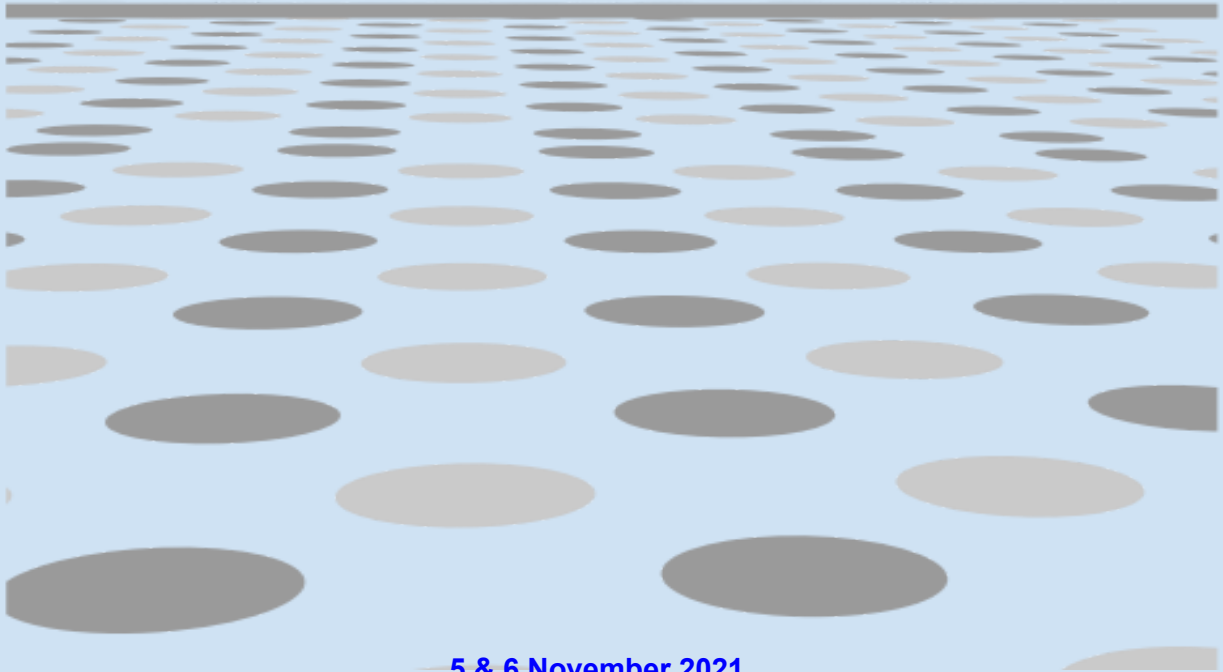


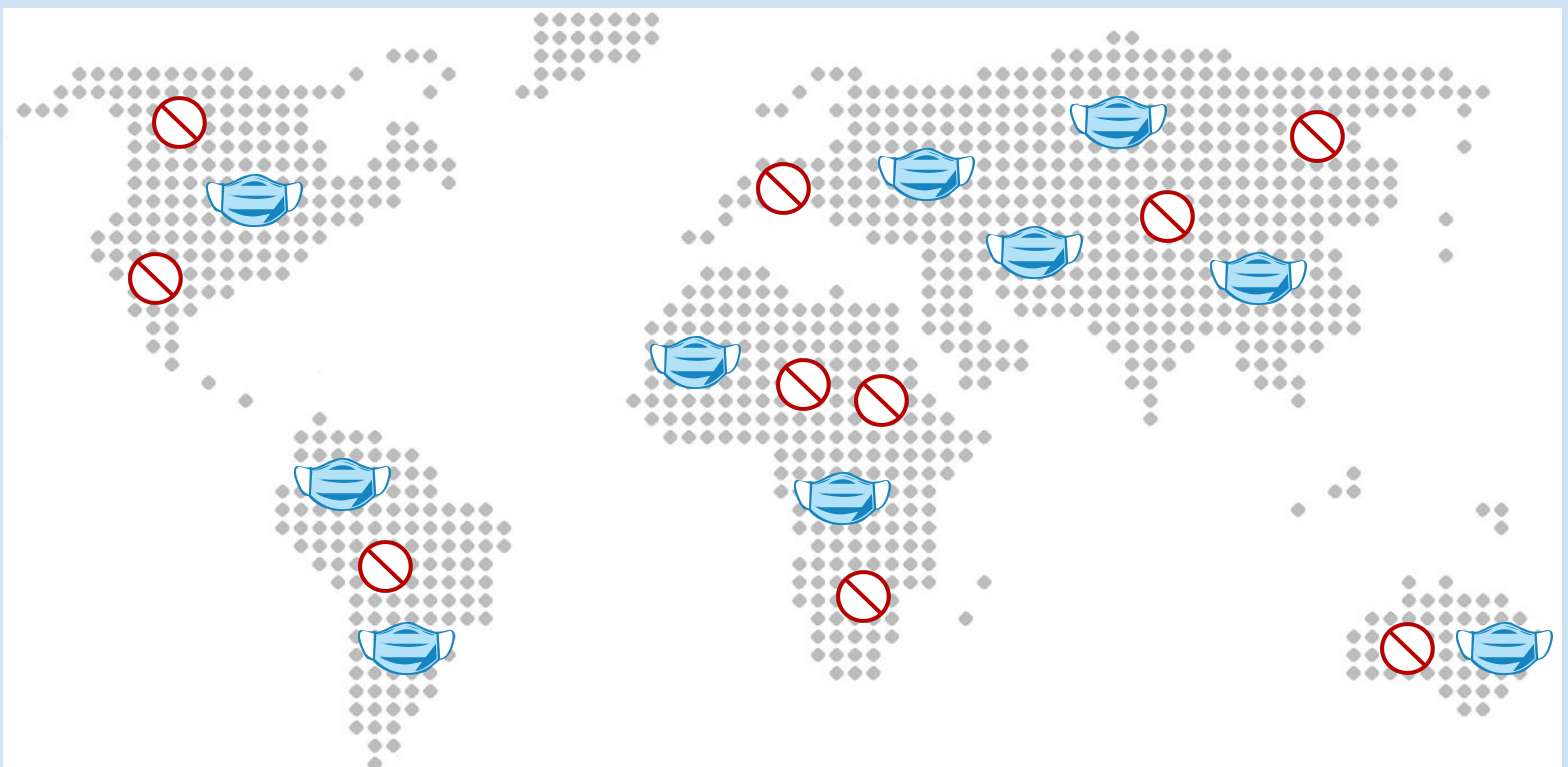
International Workshop

# The Politics of Sanitizing Space and (Im)Mobility



5 & 6 November 2021

Online via Zoom



# International Workshop

## The Politics of Sanitizing Space and (Im)Mobility

5 & 6 November 2021

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**The workshop is co-organized by:**

**Department of Asian and International Studies, City University of Hong Kong  
School of Law, Queen Mary University of London**

Convenors:

Yuk Wah Chan,

Department of Asian and International Studies, City University of Hong Kong

Nicola Piper,

School of Law, Queen Mary University of London

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**DAY ONE: Friday, 5 November 2021**

<p><b>PANEL 1</b></p> <p>Time: UK 7:30-9:05 / Europe 8:30-10:05 / Hong Kong &amp; Taiwan 14:30-16:05</p> <p><u>Panel Chair:</u> Yuk Wah Chan (City University of Hong Kong)</p> <p><u>Discussant:</u> Xiang Biao (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology)</p>	
5 mins	<p><b>Short Welcome</b></p> <p>Yuk Wah Chan, Nicola Piper</p>
15 mins	<p><b>Migrant 24h-Carers Working in Private Households in Austria: (How) Has Their Situation Changed with the Pandemic?</b></p> <p>Ursula Trummer, Center for Health and Migration, Austria</p>
15 mins	<p><b>Migrant Workers' Im/Mobility under Taiwan's Border Control for Covid-19</b></p> <p>Pei-Chia Lan, National Taiwan University Yu-Ting Huang, National Taiwan University Yu-Wen Wang, National Taiwan University</p>
15 mins	<p><b>Disease, Mobility and Temporality: Migrant Workers' Health and Border Control in Taiwan's Guest Worker System</b></p> <p>Isabelle Cheng, University of Portsmouth</p>
10 mins	<p><b>Discussant</b></p>
35 mins	<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
10 mins	<p><b>Break</b></p>

**PANEL 2**

Time: UK 9:15-10:45 / Europe & South Africa 10:15-11:45 / Hong Kong 16:15-17:45

Panel Chair: Yuk Wah Chan

Discussant: Nicola Piper (Queen Mary University of London)

15 mins	<b>COVID-19 and Working-Class Migrants in South Africa: Essential Workers and Miasmic Deviants</b>  Faisal Garba, University of Cape Town
15 mins	<b>The Voiceless Political Victim - ‘Refugee Protesters’: Repatriate, Reintegrate and Quotidian Struggles with ‘Ambivalent’ Relation with Citizenship in South Africa</b>  Samuel Umoh Uwem, University of KwaZulu–Natal, South Africa Oyewo Adetola Elizabeth, University of KwaZulu–Natal, South Africa
15 mins	<b>Pandemic Borders: “Othering” Forced Migrants as Anti-life Towards a Post-biopolitical Paradigm</b>  Violeta Moreno-Lax, Queen Mary University of London
10 mins	<b>Discussant</b>
35 mins	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
	<b>Break</b>

**PANEL 3**

Time: Chicago 8:00-9:45 / West Africa 13:00-14:45 / UK 14:00-15:45 / Germany 15:00-16:45 / Hong Kong 21:00-22:45

Panel Chair: David Haines (George Mason University)

Discussant: Xiang Biao

15 mins	<b>COVID-19 and the Revival of Japan’s “Closed Country” Strategy</b> Gabriele Vogt, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich
15 mins	<b>Vulnerable Migrants’ Access to Healthcare in the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the UK</b> Lin Fu, University of Birmingham
15 mins	<b>“What I Can Control”: Migration, Vaccine Hesitancy, and Existential Threat</b> Lisa M. Simeone, University of Chicago
15 mins	<b>To Move or Not to Move: COVID-19 Reduces Migration Decisions among Ghanaian Young Adults Only in the Short Term</b> Mary Setrana, University of Ghana Charles Asabere, University of Ghana Didier Ruedin, University of Neuchâtel
10 mins	<b>Discussant</b>
35 mins	<b>Q&amp;A</b>

**DAY TWO: Saturday, 6 November 2021**

<p><b>PANEL 4</b> Time: UK 9:00-10:45 / Malaysia &amp; Hong Kong 16:00-17:45 / Korea 17:00-18:45  <u>Panel Chair:</u> Nicola Piper <u>Discussants:</u> Yuk Wah Chan and David Haines</p>	
15 mins	<p><b>The Construction of Migrant Illegality during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case of Cambodian Migrant Farmworkers in South Korea</b></p> <p>Choon Hee Woo, University of Massachusetts Amherst</p>
15 mins	<p><b>‘Runaway’ Foreign Agricultural Workers: Regulating Mobility Policy for Foreign Workers and Its Effects in South Korea</b></p> <p>Minkyung Koh, Kyungpook National University</p>
15 mins	<p><b>The COVID-19 Pandemic and (Im)Mobility of Low-waged Migrant Workers in South Korea</b></p> <p>Seonyoung Seo, Chungbuk National University Chulhyo Kim, Jeonbuk National University Jaehun Ko, Jeonbuk National University</p>
15 mins	<p><b>COVID-19 Outbreak and the Protracted Precarity Under Lockdown: A Reflection from Indonesian Workers in Oil Palm Estates in East Malaysia (Sabah)</b></p> <p>Andika Wahab, National University of Malaysia</p>
10 mins	<p><b>Discussant</b></p>
35 mins	<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
	<p><b>Break</b></p>

**PANEL 5 Advancing the Rights of “Essential” Migrant Agricultural Workers Under COVID-19:  
Migrant Activists, Grassroots Supporters, and Engaged Scholars**  
[Special Panel organized by Tanya Basok, University of Windsor, Canada]

Time: Canada 8:00-9:30 / UK 13:00-14:30 / Europe 14:00-15:30 / Hong Kong 20:00-21:30

Panel Chair: Nicola Piper

Discussants: David Haines and Nicola Piper

15 mins	<p><b>Voices From the Fields: Migrant Agriculture Workers During Covid-19 in Spain and New Forms of Activisms for Dignity</b></p> <p>Ana López-Sala, Institute of Economics, Geography and Demography, Spain Yoan Molinero-Gerbeau, University Institute of Studies on Migration, Comillas University, Spain</p>
15 mins	<p><b>Missed Opportunity: The Debate on the Regularization of Undocumented Immigrants during the Pandemic in Italy</b></p> <p>Gennaro Avallone, Università degli Studi di Salerno</p>
15 mins	<p><b>Immobilized and Unprotected: Advocating for Secure Status for Temporary Migrant Farm Workers in Canada.</b></p> <p>Tanya Basok, University of Windsor, Canada</p>
10 mins	<b>Discussant</b>
35 mins	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
15 mins	<b>FINAL: Wrap-Up, Way Forward</b>

## Abstracts and bios

### Panels on Day 1 (5 November 2021)

#### Panel 1

#### **Migrant 24h-Carers Working in Private Households in Austria – (How) Has Their Situation Changed with the Pandemic?**

Ursula Trummer, Center for Health and Migration, Austria

Like other rich and ageing countries, Austria is depending on a migrant workforce to meet the increasing demand of elderly care. The big wage gap between the rich and the poor EU member states makes it attractive enough for people – predominantly women – from poorer EU regions to leave their own families and work in a highly demanding environment – the home of the elderly, as live-in care workers or so called “24h carers”.

In Austria, approximately 460,000 persons are registered as in need of care. They belong to the high-risk group concerning COVID-19, with a risk 50-80 times higher to die from COVID-19 compared to people under 50 of age. Austria found a solution to legalise the grey economy of home care by gradual and complex legislative changes spanning the years 2006, 2007, and 2008 considering the regulation of work permit, employment, and long-term care-provision, turning carers into entrepreneurs delivering 24-hour care under the existing regulations for self-employment. This entails allowing working hours far beyond those in regular employment and lower social security contributions. Despite their self-employment-status most 24h carers are brokered by agencies, which take a considerable amount of money for their services both from the cared person and from the caregiver. The rather poor command of the local language makes it practically impossible for 24h carers to master the complexity of regulations and administrative demands connected to their self-employed status. This puts most of them in a state of dependency from their brokers.

In 2020, Romania is the leading source country of 24-hour care providers in Austria. Around 40,000 of the 60,000 carers working on self-employed contracts are Romanian. They work on fortnightly and four-week alternating shifts, usually staying in Austria for two to four weeks, then travelling home, and coming back for the next shift. During lock down, the chamber of commerce organised transit routes for Rumanian carers to travel to and from Austria.

With and during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the essential role of those migrant 24-hour carers became visible. A most noted case reported in the newspaper was that of a man, who had acted as informal carer for his mother and his wife for many years with the support of a 24h carer. He shot both his mother and wife in desperation after the 24h carer left and he could not get any support for his caring duties. This paper interrogates the fatal impacts that COVID-imposed immobility has on the crossborder essential care workers in Austria and the various effects it has on the elderly care infrastructure and health system.

#### Bio

Ursula Trummer, Ph.D Sociology, MSc Organisational Development and Counselling, Mag.rer.soc.oec. Political Science, is Head of the Center for Health and Migration and Executive



Partner of Trummer & Novak-Zezula OG. Her research focus is on the interfaces of Public Health and Health Promotion, Migration, and socio-economic determinants of health. She has built up her expertise in developing and conducting interdisciplinary projects on health, migration, and social inclusion over more than 20 years. She lectures at different Austrian universities and acts as independent expert to the European Commission, DG SANTE and DG Research, as well as to the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA). She is active member of the European Public Health Association (<https://eupha.org/>) and the Global Migration Health and Development Research Initiative (MHADRI <https://mhadri.org/>). For a list of publications see <http://c-hm.com/publications/>  
Email: [ursula.trummer@c-hm.com](mailto:ursula.trummer@c-hm.com)

### **Migrant Workers' Im/mobility under Taiwan's Border Control for Covid-19**

Pei-Chia Lan, Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University

Yu-Ting Huang, National Taiwan University

Yu-Wen Wang, National Taiwan University

Many countries have implemented strict border control to curb the spread of Covid-19. Taiwan has closed its borders since March 2020 and successfully contained the virus until recently. In this paper, I broaden the discussion of border control to include *the external borders* (visa regulation and quarantine requirement) and *the internal borders* (hierarchical access to civil rights and social securities within the country) and examine its impact on migrant workers in Taiwan. Because new hires were difficult to enter under border control, migrant workers in residency gained increased bargaining power and many asked to transfer employers and even sectors (from carework to factory). Their labor market mobility, however, was short-lived after the government imposed a three-month Level 3 lockdown in May 2021. Migrant workers became the target of movement restrictions after an outbreak at chip plants in Miaoli. I argue that we need to examine the construction of multi-layered borders in the unsettled time and how mobility and immobility intersect on different scales in a dynamic manner.

#### Bio

Pei-Chia Lan is Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Director of Global Asia Research Center at National Taiwan University. She was a visiting scholar at Harvard (Yenching-Radcliffe fellow), UC Berkeley, Kyoto, Tübingen, Waseda, and New York University. Her major publications include *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domesticity and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan* (Duke 2006) and *Raising Global Families: Parenting, Immigration, and Class in Taiwan and the US* (Stanford 2018)

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Yu-Ting Huang is a MA student of Sociology at National Taiwan University

Yu-Wen Wang is a MA student of Building and Planning at National Taiwan University

### **Disease, Mobility and Temporality: Migrant Workers' Health and Border Control in Taiwan's Guest Worker System**

Isabelle Cheng, School of Area Studies, History, Politics and Literature, University of Portsmouth

The pandemic of COVID-19 made the relationship between health and mobility a global headline when its suppression heavily relied on the confinement of human mobility. However, the relationship between health and mobility has already been established in border control regimes prior to its unexpected outbreak and prolongation. As part of the institutionalisation of quarantine, certified medical clearance

is required by the destination state for the issuance of a visa, work permit or residency to foreign nationals. Whilst this relationship between health and mobility in regard to border control is well studied, less attention is given to the time aspect of this control regime built on the premise of migrant workers' health. The 'guest worker' system of Taiwan is a case in point where 'low-skilled' workers are required to submit their medical examinations prior to, upon and post their entry to Taiwan, a frequency much higher than required of professional workers. Such regularity and frequency punctuate the advance of the former's migration with the effect that failing to prove one's health results in deportation, the end of one's migration. Examining this health- and time-sensitive border control regime, this paper argues that it manifests the biases of class and ethnicity towards foreign workers and perpetuates instability in 'low-skilled' workers' migration. This paper shows that applying a temporal perspective to the study of labour migration will open a new inroad to our understanding of inequality embedded in labour migration.

### Bio

Isabelle Cheng is Senior Lecturer in East Asian and International Development Studies at the University of Portsmouth. Her research focuses on marriage and labour migration in East Asia with reference to citizenship, activism and inequality. Her other research interest is the use of women's voices for psychological warfare during the Cold War in East Asia. She is currently the Secretary-General of European Association of Taiwan Studies.

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### Panel 2

#### **COVID-19 and Working-Class Migrants in South Africa: Essential Workers and Miasmatic Deviants**

Faisal Garba, Department of Sociology, University of Cape Town

A nationalist response by the South African state to COVID-19 ignores the full range of vulnerability posed by the virus. Across South Africa local economies integrate people, irrespective of nationality and residency status. In rolling out COVID support to households and small businesses, the state was only able to adopt an exclusionary citizenship-based criterion (that excludes small enterprises whose employees, customers and creditors are made up of locals and migrants), by categorising the vulnerable into those deserving of social support and the undeserving. This action of the State is daily shown to be wrong-headed by the lives of dispatch riders who crisscross urban South Africa delivering critical sources of survival, from food to medication. Bracing the risk that comes with meeting numerous persons whose Covid-19 status they do not know. These underpaid and vulnerable migrants, excluded from state support, keep many people fed and safe while they expose themselves on regular delivery trips. Another dimension of the exposure of poor and working-class migrants is obvious in the shadows of the economy. Migrant small business owners are forced to operate clandestinely or sell goods like alcohol that are banned in moments of surges in infection rates. Without relief packages these businesses are likely to keep operating clandestinely, creating the condition for easy transmission of the Virus but also other ailments. When this happens, the old trope of migrants as conveyor belts of disease as happened with HIV/AIDS in South Africa will be unearthed. Data for the paper was obtained through a combination of interviews, observations and focus group discussions with individual migrants, families, and migrant communities between April 2020 to August 2021 in Cape Town, Hermanus and Port Elizabeth. Some of the interviews and observations was carried out during the national lockdown, using the waiting time during the daily shopping window to interact with delivery workers and migrant

small business operators. Online interviews and in-person conversations (observing the necessary COVID protocols) were used as at when possible.

#### Bio

Dr Faisal Garba is in the Department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town (UCT) where he convenes the Global Studies Programme (GSP). He works on migration and mobility, social movements and working-class forms of organising, social theory, and historical sociology. He was educated at the Universities of Ghana, Legon, Cape Town South Africa, and Freiburg, Germany. He contributes articles to academic and popular outlets. His most recent book *Masons and Maids: Class, Gender and Ethnicity in Migrant Experiences* (edited with Bruno Monteiro) was published in November 2019 as part of the UNESCO Chair on Inequality's Special Series. He is active in working struggles for alternative sociality.

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#### **The Voiceless Political Victim - 'Refugee Protesters': Repatriate, Reintegrate and Quotidian Struggles with 'Ambivalent' Relation with Citizenship in South Africa**

Samuel Umoh Uwem, Department of International Affairs & Public Cluster, University of KwaZulu–Natal Howard College Campus, Durban, South Africa

Oyewo Adetola Elizabeth, Department of Education, University of KwaZulu–Natal Pinetown Campus, South Africa

In October 2019, hundreds of asylum-seekers and refugees in South Africa staged months of sit-in protest and demonstration at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office, Pretoria. The protest alludes to xenophobia, backlog, asylum renewal process, discrimination, and insecurity in South Africa. The protesters urged the UNHCR to resettle them in other third countries like Canada. However, the protest ended when the South African Police Service (SAPS) forcibly removed protesters. In the aftermath of the protest, the protest ringleader and some protesters were deported. At the same time, some settled in make-shift refugee camps at Bellville and Kensington, Wingfield Military Base outside Cape Town. The overview of the protest mirrors some of the challenges asylum seekers face accessing social services such as appropriate housing, the right to work, education, health care, and social security." With this background, the paper discusses how the procedure to acquire asylum in South Africa exacerbates problems experienced by refugees and asylum seekers, hindering them from integrating into the South African community. The article analyzes South Africa's refugee resettlement policies, integration policies and how the asylum determination policy is an exclusionary tool. The paper also unpacks how COVID-19 amplified draconian policies on citizenship and progress towards permanent residency. The paper is underpinned by Iris Marion Young's (1990) 'Justice and the Politics of Difference' (1990) to unpack why seemingly nice institutions favor some groups while pushing others aside. The research is based triangulated data sources such as media reports, interviews, observations and policy documents.

#### Bio

Dr Samuel Umoh Umoh holds PhD International Relations from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He is a member of the Emerging Scholars Network, Australia. His research area democracy, governance, social change and migration. He lectures at University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban South Africa.

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Oyewo Adetola Elizabeth wears many hats as an undergraduate Writing instructor, research consultant, student mentor and freelance journalist. She is a PhD candidate in Education Social Science at the University at KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. She has educational background in History, Educational management and Early Childhood Development [Montessori specialization]. She also volunteers at the Dennis Hurley community centre as a computer instructor working with migrants, asylum seekers and the homeless. Her research interest intersects with the experiences of international students in host countries/universities, migration, and persons of concern to UNHCR.

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### **Pandemic Borders: “Othering” Forced Migrants as Anti-life towards a Post-biopolitical Paradigm**

Violeta Moreno-Lax, Queen Mary University of London

Covid-19 has accelerated new migration governance dynamics that translate into a novel post-biopolitical form of “othering” that not only negates the rights forced migrants derive from the 1951 Convention and related instruments, but their very personhood too. Forced migrants are facing heightened brutality at the new “pandemic borders”, through indiscriminate pushbacks, deleterious quarantine arrangements, and lethal force by vigilante mobs. While violence as a migration management tool is not new, what is unprecedented is the way in which responses to the virus have normalized not only the deprivation of full legal protection of forced migrants, but their complete dehumanisation as well, beyond the point of Agambenian “bare life”. The measures adopted for Covid19 control have tended to identify the virus, and the mortal threat that it represents, with the migrants themselves. Quarantine measures have not been taken to spare forced migrants from the dangers of the disease; they have rather aimed at their containment, isolation and exclusion to protect “us” from “them”, as if they and the virus were one and the same. This assimilation has led to a new form of depersonification, in a process that has reduced them not to “mere human existence”, in Arendtian terms, but to a sort of anti-life to be neutralized and eliminated. This paper takes issue with this development and the way in which it has been justified. It will expose how pandemic borders negate the humanness of forced migrants. The process is not one of mere reduction to homines sacri or semi-persons, but one of weaponized and aggressive reification that equates forced migrants to the virus, rendering the fight against both not only legitimate but necessary as well. In this process, forced migrants do not just suffer from the “abstract nakedness of being human and nothing but human”, in Arendt’s words, but are re-presented as a kind of hostile non-life, threatening “us”, to be proactively sanitized and eradicated. This pathologisation of migrants’ subjectivities creates the conditions of possibility for new anti-migrant modes of bordering that can crystallize in a new paradigm in the post-pandemic world, undoing the already precarious legal protections they used to be accorded in pre-pandemic times. On this basis, this paper proposes to harness the resources of Foucaultian biopolitics and Agambenian thanatopolitics to formulate a new theoretical approach that adequately captures and confronts this phenomenon.

#### Bio

Dr Violeta Moreno-Lax is Professor of Law, founder of the Immigration Law programme, and cofounder and inaugural co-Director (2014-18) of the Centre for European and International Legal Affairs (CEILA) at Queen Mary University of London. She has just completed a Fernand Braudel Senior Research Fellowship at the European University Institute (2020-21) and is Visiting Professor at the College of Europe (Bruges). She is also Legal Adviser of the Global Legal Action Network (GLAN), leading on strategic litigation in the area of border violence and migration; and PI of the Search and

Rescue Observatory for the Mediterranean (SAROBMED). Prof Moreno-Lax serves as Co-Chair of The Refugee Law Observatory and as member of the Steering Committee of the EU-wide Migration Law Network, and has been Senior Research Associate of the Refugee Law Initiative since 2018. As an internationally renowned expert in EU and international refugee and migration law, she regularly consults for the EU institutions and other organisations worldwide. She has previously held academic positions at the Universities of Liverpool and Oxford and visiting positions at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law and The Hague Academy of International Law as well as at the Universities of Ghent, Macquarie, New South Wales, Oxford, and Nijmegen. She has published widely in the areas of international and European refugee and migration law, including her monograph: *Accessing Asylum in Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2017).  
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### **Panel 3**

#### **COVID-19 and the Revival of Japan’s “Closed Country” Strategy**

Gabriele Vogt, Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) Munich

In early 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic reached the shores of Japan, the country quickly closed its borders to any international travel of non-Japanese. Not only did international tourism and short-term business trips come to an abrupt halt, but also non-Japanese residents of Japan in some occasions found themselves stranded overseas as Japan became the only G7 country to ban their non-national residents from returning home. For more than half a year, taxpaying residents of Japan were temporarily cut off from their lives – their jobs, flats, friends and in some cases families – in Japan on the grounds of their non-Japanese citizenship. Meanwhile, they have been granted the same travel privileges as Japanese citizens. For everybody else (with the notable exception of Olympic athletes and the international press corps) Japan to this day remains a closed country. In stark contrast, within Japan mobility has never been restricted during the pandemic. Residents have never had to deal with curfews or restrictions on outings. Moreover, the government has even initiated, and subsidised travel campaigns to boost the domestic tourism industry which has been hard hit by the absence of international travelers. This means that the international travel ban was not supposed to limit non-necessary travel to and in Japan altogether, but much more to terminate the influx of non-Japanese.

This paper studies Japan’s “closed country” strategy, which resembles the nation’s historic *sakoku* (closed country) period of 250 years that ended only in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Historically this strategy was implemented to keep out Western influences such as Christianity and fire weapons, both of which had previously triggered social upheavals in Japan. As we have seen in more recent times, e.g., in Japan’s foreigner crime discourses in the 1990s or in the frequent scandals around maltreatment of asylum seekers in Japan’s detention centers, in times of crisis Japanese policymakers tend to follow a strategy of segregating the “foreign” from the “Japanese” to fend off real or perceived danger. Drawing on government documents and statements by policymakers and civic activists, this paper shall detangle the framings of the current closed-door strategy that Japan continues to follow, contextualize it in Japan’s border control policies and highlight some of its current implications on business sectors in Japan.

#### **Bio**

Gabriele Vogt (PhD, 2002) is Chair of Japanese Studies and Director of the Department of Asian Studies at Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) Munich. She serves as a member to the Scientific Advisory

Boards of the Berlin Institute for Population and Development, and the German Association for Asian Studies, and is the Europe Representative of the Social Science Japan Journal. Gabriele was trained as a political scientist in Germany (LMU Munich and University of Hamburg), in Japan (Kyūshū University and University of the Ryūkyūs), and in the US (Cornell University). Before assuming her current position, she was Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Hamburg (2009-2019), and senior research fellow at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) based in Tokyo (2005-2009), while also teaching at Sophia University in Tokyo. Over the years she held guest professorships at Chūō and Waseda Universities (both in Tokyo), and Kyūshū University in Fukuoka. Having lived and worked in Japan for many years, her research focuses on contemporary Japan. Two of the main themes she is interested in are structures of governance and citizens' political participation, as well as international labor migration in the context of population aging. She has been researching health-caregiver migration from Southeast Asian nations to Japan for some fifteen years, and recently published *Population Aging and International Health-Caregiver Migration to Japan* (Springer, 2018). She has also (co-)edited several special issues (*Contemporary Japan* 26/2, 2014; *Asien. The German Journal on Contemporary Asia* 124, 2012) and a book (*Migration and Integration – Japan in Comparative Perspective*, Iudicium, 2011, w/ Glenda S. Roberts) on international migration to Japan and authored numerous journals papers and book chapters on the topic, e.g., “Multiculturalism and trust in Japan: educational policies and schooling practices” In: *Japan Forum*, 29/1 (2017), pp. 77-99; and “When the leading goose gets lost: Japan’s demographic change and the non-reform of its migration policy” In: *Asian Studies. Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia*, 49/2 (2013), pp. 14-44. <https://www.japan.uni-muenchen.de/personal/professoren/vogt/index.html>

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## **Vulnerable Migrants’ Access to Healthcare in the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the UK**

Lin Fu, Department of Social Policy, Sociology and Criminology, University of Birmingham

**Objectives:** To understand the needs of vulnerable migrants trying to access healthcare in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Study design:** Mixed methods study; using quantitative questionnaire data collected from migrant service users of Doctors of the World (DoTW) with qualitative data from clinical notes.

**Methods:** DoTW provides drop-in clinics to vulnerable migrants. Consultations switched to remote in the UK’s first lockdown. We compared patient profile, wellbeing, healthcare access, and reason for consultations of individuals attending the virtual clinic to the same pre-pandemic periods between 2011 and 2018.

**Results:** During the pandemic, consultations dropped to under half of pre-pandemic numbers, with the shift to remote consultations attracting more users outside of London. DoTW’s user base changed to include a greater proportion of asylum seekers, younger adults (18-34s), and individuals reporting good health. Socio-economic conditions and housing stability deteriorated for the majority of users. Those in the greatest need of healthcare appeared to be less able to access remote services. GP registration remained the most common reason for contacting the virtual clinic with a lack of knowledge of the healthcare system the main barrier to access healthcare.

**Conclusion:** The shift to virtual consultations may have exacerbated existing inequalities in healthcare access for vulnerable migrants. Given that many clinical services continue to operate remotely it is important to consider the impact such actions have on vulnerable migrants and find ways to support them to access services.

### Bio

Dr Lin Fu is a Research Fellow in the Department of Social Policy, Sociology and Criminology and a member of the Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRiS) at University of Birmingham. She conducts quantitative research on the ‘Vulnerability, migration, and wellbeing: investigating experiences, perceptions, and barriers’ project. The project studies the groups of people who are at risk of vulnerability and tries to solve the welfare problems for them through a mixed methods approach. Lin’s research interests lie in the fields of migration, vulnerability, wellbeing, and healthcare.

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### **“What I Can Control”: Migration, Vaccine Hesitancy, and Existential Threat**

Lisa M. Simeone, University of Chicago

“I can’t control what they put into my body,” a friend told me. He associated Western biomedicine with both its colonial legacy in his African country of origin and racial disparities in the United States, where he had been living for decades. Despite his heart condition, he chose the risk of severe illness from Covid-19 over a vaccine. Meanwhile, in the United States and elsewhere, the vaccination campaign was being sabotaged by popular politicians who blamed migrants for spreading the disease. Conspiracy, viral infection, and human mobility are constellations of images and ideas that describe their own mimetic operation, mirroring each other in ways that look like reasons. For pattern-seeking minds, the “family resemblances” across these tropes of contagion draw their authority from intuition rather than evidence. This paper suggests that vaccine hesitancy and xenophobia intuit a global state of insecurity that cannot be understood in terms of conventional politics. As financial capital has come to dominate both the public decisions of states and the private necessity of individuals, the volatility produced by crises at every level of governance has become a source of wealth in itself. This negative feedback loop of “double securitization” - in which the security risks calculated by the state are converted into financial securities – has undermined the viability of human and nonhuman systems worldwide. As I argue, claims of personal and national self-control amidst resurgent Covid outbreaks, labor shortages and climate-related disasters express doubt in the power of public and private institutions to “sanitize” the future from the contagion of crisis.

### Bio

Lisa Simeone will be completing her PhD in anthropology at the University of Chicago in December 2021. Her dissertation, *Making Do in the Promised Land: Ethics of Ambivalence among Chicago’s New Africans*, considers the sociolegal, economic, and political dimensions of migration between francophone Africa and the United States. Since the 1990s, she has been an educator, organizer, and policy specialist in the field of migration. In recent years, she has been involved in civil society advocacy with the United Nations and advises community-based activists on global issues. Her current research investigates the impact of global financialization and the politics of systemic crisis on migrant social formation.

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## **To Move or Not to Move: COVID-19 Reduces Migration Decisions among Ghanaian Young Adults Only in the Short Term**

Mary Setrana, University of Ghana

Charles Asabere, University of Ghana

Didier Ruedin, University of Neuchâtel

We examine if the COVID-19 pandemic changed migration decisions trends among Ghanaian young adults. The dream of the average Ghanaian young adult is to migrate to Europe or North America to find better opportunities. However, because Ghana recorded its first cases of COVID-19 through people travelling from Europe and North America, COVID-19 cases were called ‘migration’ disease early in the pandemic. Here, we examine to what extent this association between COVID-19 and migration affected whether Ghanaian young adults continue to have ambitions to migrate, or whether they plan to wait or abandon their migration dream. Using an online questionnaire with N=514 Ghanaian young adults and 10 qualitative interviews, we show that the COVID-19 pandemic reduced plans to emigrate in the short term, but ambitions to leave in the medium and long-term are not affected.

### Bio

Mary B. Setrana (Ph.D) is a Senior lecturer at the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS), University of Ghana (UG), Legon; and a Research Associate, Department of Sociology, University of Johannesburg, South Africa. She is a researcher on several national and internationally funded projects including the South-South Migration, Inequality and Development (MIDEQ) Hub. Mary has published on a range of migration issues including migration conflict and peacebuilding, migration decisions of youth to Europe, gender and migration, migration and development in Africa, transnational migration and diasporas and return migration and reintegration among others. For further details and publications, see <https://ug-gh.academia.edu/marysetrana> and Twitter: @mbsetrana

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Charles Agyei-Asabere is a Ph.D candidate in Population Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana. He is a data analyst proficient in managing as well as analyzing data. With a decade’s experience in designing, deploying and troubleshooting data management systems, he has managed and analyzed data in the areas of sexual reproductive health, migration, civil registration systems cause of death and mortality. His research interest include completeness in death registration and spatial variation in mortality in Greater Accra region in Ghana and migration decisions.

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Didier Ruedin (DPhil, Oxford) is a senior researcher at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland. He uses experiments and quantitative analysis to examine discrimination and political reactions in policies and political debates. From 2015 to 2018, he has been a visiting research fellow and from 2018 to 2021 an affiliated research fellow at the African Centre for Migration & Society at the University of the Witwatersrand.

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## Panels on Day 2 (6 November 2021)

### **Panel 4**

#### **The Construction of Migrant Illegality during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case of Cambodian Migrant Farmworkers in South Korea**

Choon Hee Woo, Department of Sociology, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Implemented in 2004, the Employment Permit System (EPS), as a South Korean temporary labor immigration policy, per se is designed not only to use “deportability” as a systematic tool, but also to prevent from producing a route of illegalization. Migrant workers will face arrest, detention, and deportation once they do not meet the requirements—changing their workplace without the consent of their employers; transferring other workplaces more than four times during a period of three years; and being unable to find a new job within a three-month period. Forcing migrant workers to obey these regulations, thereby the EPS operates based on the threat of deportation and the production of illegality. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of labor force in the agriculture, leading to a severe labor shortage. Using ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews conducted in South Korea, this article argues that the COVID-19 pandemic has both increased the number of overstaying migrant workers who are unable to return to their countries for various reasons, and alleviate their marginalization to a certain extent. Even though being faced to deportation, undocumented migrants, categorized as illegals who are outside of the protection of laws, thereby are not confined to the EPS requirements, but paradoxically have freedom to pursue a freely chosen occupation and negotiate wages.

Bio: Choon Hee Woo is a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her interests are migration, gender, and illegality. She explores the critical significance of South Korea-Southeast Asia migration, as well as the importance of developing a methodology that focuses not only on the realities of migrant lives, but particularly on the day-to-day interactions and contestations among migrant workers, civil organization, and the states.

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#### **‘Runaway’ Foreign Agricultural Workers: Regulating Mobility Policy for Foreign Workers and Its Effects in South Korea**

Minkyung Koh, Kyungpook National University, South Korea

This study explores the recent increase in runaway foreign workers in the agricultural industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the Employment Permit System (EPS), the Korean government administers the management of foreign workers. The system limits foreign workers’ right to move and workers are not allowed to change their places of employment. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase of runaway workers in rural agricultural areas. They leave their workplaces even though in doing so, they know that they will become illegal migrants. This preliminary research examines the background of workers fleeing from workplaces and its effects on rural agricultural areas. By conceptualizing runaway as a negotiation between freedom of movement guaranteeing higher economic benefits and/or a safe, comfortable home and being illegal migrants, this study discusses the precarious status of foreign workers. Specifically, this paper investigates three questions: 1) How and why do foreign workers run away from their workplaces? 2) Who intervenes or mediates in the runaway

process? and 3) How does the farmer who hired the runaway worker manage the remaining farming? Relying on the ethnographic research method, this study problematizes human rights violations and discrimination underlying EPS regulations, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Bio

Minkyung Koh is an Assistant Professor in Geography Education at Kyungpook National University, Daegu, South Korea. Her research interests revolve around migrant subjectivity, everyday lives, precarious labor, and mobility. She is currently developing an article manuscript about the precarious lives of foreign students in South Korea.

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#### **The COVID-19 Pandemic and (Im)Mobility of Low-waged Migrant Workers in South Korea**

Seonyoung Seo, Department of Sociology, Chungbuk National University

Chulhyo Kim, School of International Studies, Jeonbuk National University

Jaehun Ko, Social Science Research Institute, Jeonbuk National University

The multiple disruptions of mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted on South Korea's temporary labour migration scheme. The restrictions on the entry into the destination country precluded the arrivals of prospective migrants, which in turn led to labour shortages in manufacturing and agricultural industries. The entry restrictions in the home countries have driven many present temporary migrant workers to face the risk of becoming undocumented as their visas expired. In response to this, the Korean government extended the length of stay or gave a tacit permission for the temporary workers and other types of migrants, addressing ongoing labour shortage. With this background, our paper aims to explore the ways in which temporary labour migration scheme, which had operated on the basis of constant transnational mobility of migrants and maintained low-wages, has been impacted by the abrupt halt of mobility in times of COVID-19. We will examine how the Korean government's response reveals the entrenched issues of the temporary labour migration regime and how (im)mobility of low-waged migrant workers including temporary labour migration visa holders, refugees and the undocumented in the labour market represents the precarity and uncertainty they face during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Bio

Seonyoung Seo is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the Chungbuk National University, Korea. She completed her Ph.D. with the Department of Geography in the National University of Singapore. She obtained her B.A. in Sociology from Yonsei University and M.A. in Migration Studies from the University of Sussex. Before beginning her PhD, she worked for migrant support NGOs and a migrant trade union in Korea for several years. Her current research interests include transnational migration in and from Asia, urban space, labour geography, class identity, critical development studies, and migrant community organisation. She has published articles "Regulatory migration regimes and the production of spaces: the case of Nepalese workers in South Korea" (co-authored, 2017) in *Geoforum*, and "Temporalities of class in Nepalese labour migration to South Korea" in *Current Sociology* (2019).

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Chulhyo Kim is Research Fellow at Social Science Research Institute and Lecturer at the School of International Studies of Jeonbuk National University, Korea. He received his PhD from the University of Sydney with a thesis on temporary labour migration and social movements in neoliberal South Korea.

His research interest extends to non-citizen's rights, racism, the statelessness, and international human rights law. He holds MA degree in the Theory of Practice of Human Rights (the University of Essex) and BA degree in sociology (Seoul National University). He has extensive experiences of working with international and local organizations including International Organization for Migration, Amnesty International and MINBYUN-Lawyers for a Democratic Society. His recent publications include 'Migration and social transformation through the lens of locality: a mutli-sited study of experiences of neighbourhood transformation' in Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (co-authored, 2021), 'Can non-nationals and nationals of migration-background become the agent of South Korea social movements?: A reflection and a prospect of migrant movements' in Economy and Society (2021, in Korean), and 'Citizenship of people without a state: the stateless population and policy in Korea' in Locality and Globality (2021, in Korean).

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Jaehun Ko is a Research Fellow in the Social Science Research Institute at the Jeonbuk National University. He completed his Ph.D. with the Department of Sociology in the Jeonbuk National University. His current research interests include transnational migration and social networks.

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### **COVID-19 Outbreak and the Protracted Precarity Under Lockdown: A Reflection from Indonesian Workers in Oil Palm Estates in East Malaysia (Sabah)**

Andika Wahab, Institute of Malaysian & International Studies (IKMAS), National University of Malaysia (UKM)

Reflecting from a remote conversation with Indonesian migrant workers who are trapped in rural oil palm estates in East Malaysia (Sabah), this article argues that the spread of COVID-19 and the prolonged lockdown measures placed by both the government and employers have aggravated rights violations, neglect and abandonment among the temporarily contracted Indonesian workers. This article highlights three prominent features of protracted precarity among Indonesian workers. First, the remoteness of many oil palm estates, coupled with the enhanced surveillance and forced-isolation have severe consequences to workers' freedom of movement, and access to redress in case of abuses occurred. Second, workers remained in legal limbo due to a delayed '*rehiring*' programme administered by the government. Here, workers are at risk of a range of exploitations (e.g., unpaid wages), neglect and abandonment by their employers. Third, Indonesian workers in many oil palm estates are instructed to work in highly isolated and guarded working environments. Throughout the lockdown period, no external audit and labour inspection have taken place, which subsequently raises issues of labour standards violations taken place without appropriate remediation. These three features contribute to the evolution and reimagination of the concept of protracted precarity especially in times of unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak.

#### Bio

Andika Wahab is a senior lecturer and research fellow at the Institute of Malaysian & International Studies (IKMAS), The National University of Malaysia (UKM). His fields of research include forced and labour migration; corporate respect to human rights; and corporate anthropology which focuses on corporate disclosure, compliance and the politics of sustainability. He is currently a member of the Global Business and Human Rights Scholars Association (GBHRSA), Corridor Advisory Board Member to MIDEQ's Malaysia, and Technical Advisor, Supply Chain Innovation at the Fair Labor Association (FLA).

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**Panel 5: Advancing the Rights of “Essential” Migrant Agricultural Workers Under COVID-19: Migrant Activists, Grassroots Supporters, and Engaged Scholars**

[Special Panel organized by Tanya Basok, University of Windsor, Canada]

Panel abstract

Farm work is considered one of the most hazardous, back-breaking and poorly remunerated occupation. Labour shortages prevalent in agriculture are often filled by migrant workers on temporary contracts or non-status migrants. COVID-19 has impacted both labour supply and migrants’ working conditions. States and employers have adopted special measures to recruit and manage these “essential workers,” yet very little has been done to protect their health and safety during the context of the pandemic. Furthermore, migrant farm workers have faced intensified labour exploitation, mobility restrictions, and increased xenophobia during the pandemic. Responding to the deterioration in migrants’ living and working conditions during COVID-19, public scholars have engaged in activism to raise awareness about the dire conditions these precarious agricultural workers face and lobby the state to reduce the vulnerabilities of these migrants. This panel will reflect on the advocacy employed by scholars-activists in order to protect migrants’ health and rights, and improve their living and working conditions during the pandemic. Panelists will also evaluate the outcomes of these advocacy activities and reflect on opportunities and limitations of evidence-based scholarship and the efficacy of civil society engagement in advancing migrant rights.

**Voices from the Fields: Migrant Agriculture Workers during Covid-19 in Spain and New Forms of Activisms for Dignity**

Ana López-Sala, Institute of Economics, Geography and Demography, Spain

Yoan Molinero-Gerbeau, University Institute of Studies on Migration, Comillas University, Spain

Over the last few decades, Spain's thriving agro-industry, which has made the country one of the main producers and exporters of fresh products in the European context, has relied on the exploitative and highly vulnerable labor of foreign workers from the African continent and Eastern European countries. This high dependence and the difficulties associated with the supply of workers was initially the focus of the public debate when the health and immobility crisis broke out in March 2020, leading the Spanish government to adopt a series of exceptional measures aimed at ensuring production and guaranteeing food safety. However, the covid-19 crisis has brought to the center of the public debate some of the structural problems of the sector such as the high presence of irregular workers, the extremely unhealthy conditions of the "lodgings" in which they are forced to reside and the physical and job insecurity of the work. This visibility has also been activated, in large part, by the emergence of new forms of mobilization around what we can call the right to dignity, including the right to health and physical integrity of workers, which has had its best expression in movements such as *Jornaleras en Lucha*, *Fruta con Justicia* or *#RegularizaciónYa*.

Bio

Ana López-Sala, PhD in Sociology. Tenured Research Fellow at the Institute of Economics, Geography and Demography. Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Madrid. Research interests: irregular immigration, immigration control and borders, temporary migration workers in the agriculture and migrant activisms.

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Yoan Molinero-Gerbeau, PhD in Political Science and International Relations. Research Fellow at the University Institute of Studies on Migration (IUEM), Comillas University. Editor of the journal *Relaciones Internacionales* and president of the Research Committee on International Studies at the Spanish Federation of Sociology. Research interests: migrant workers in agriculture, temporary programs, global commodity chains.

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### **Missed Opportunity: The Debate on the Regularization of Undocumented Immigrants during the Pandemic in Italy**

Gennaro Avallone, Dipartimento di Studi Politici e Sociali, Università degli Studi di Salerno

The first months of the pandemic in Italy were characterised by a public debate on the lack of farm workers, that has pushed to a partial amnesty law to regularise undocumented migrants. Some NGOs and organised groups of immigrants have sustained this law, promoting public manifestations to obtain a non-discriminatory law.

The outputs of this movement have been an array of lights and shadows. Lights were the passing of a law that allows to about 200,000 immigrants to obtain temporary documents linked to the possibility to asking for the regularisation. Shadow have especially been on the strong delay by public institution to respond to the requests of amnesty.

Some scholars have contributed to the public debate on the amnesty law, highlighting strengths and weaknesses of the law and its implementation. This communication aims to recognise the public function of scholars in the public debate, emphasizing both its important and limits, knowing that several social forces have contributed to the passage of the amnesty law, especially some political parties, NGOs and immigrant mobilization

#### Bio

Gennaro Avallone, PhD in sociology and social research, is associate professor in Sociology of environment and territory in the Department of Politics and Social Studies at the University of Salerno. His main research areas are the following: international migrations, agricultural work, socio-ecological relationships, urban social movements and conflicts. He collaborates with some international research networks, including "Agromig", active in research on migrant farm work, "World-ecology network", Etnocordoba, Red Migrantologos and "Cruce de saberes y prácticas para enfrentar la pobreza". He is responsible of the Erasmus + agreements for the University of Salerno with the Universidad de Murcia and the Universidad de Córdoba and is responsible for an international cooperation agreement with the Universidad Centroamericana de Nicaragua. He is a member of the Scientific Committee of the "Energy, Environment and Society series" for Aracne publisher in Rome and responsible, with Emanuele Leonardi and Salvo Torre, of the "Political ecology" series for Orthotes publisher of Naples-Salerno. He is part of the Consejo de Redacción de Sociología Histórica and is member of the editorial Committees of *Theomai* and *Relaciones Internacionales*.

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## **Immobilized and Unprotected: Advocating for Secure Status for Temporary Migrant Farm Workers in Canada**

Tanya Basok, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Windsor

Like other countries, Canada closed its borders to virtually all travel in mid-March 2020. Yet, under pressure from Canadian growers who warned that Canadian citizens would face food insecurities, Canadian authorities exempted migrant farm workers, admitted under two distinct streams of the Temporary Foreign Workers Program, from the travel ban. At the same time, once in Canada, many of these workers, deemed “essential,” were subjected to certain practices of “immobilization.” Even prior to the pandemic, many of these workers had been isolated in rural spaces. Placed in bunkhouses on remote farms without access to independent means of transportation, many of them experienced what some researchers have called “social quarantining.” This “social quarantining” has intensified during the pandemic. Some rural residents have become particularly concerned about the potential of migrant workers to spread the disease and avoided any contact with them. The isolation of migrant farm workers has been particularly severe on those farms where employers have prohibited “their” workers from leaving the farms or receiving visitors. While rural communities have become increasingly “sanitized,” migrants’ working and living environments have in many cases failed to meet health regulations. Widespread outbreaks on farms have been linked to many factors, including shortages of or improper use of PPE at work, overcrowded housing conditions, and the restricted access to testing. Infected workers required to stay in quarantine often experienced restricted access to nutritious food and medication, in addition to the loss of income. Thus, many problems endemic to this temporary migration program, were exacerbated in 2020-21. Responding to the health concerns, restrictions on mobility, and other violations of migrant farm workers rights, and connecting these programs to the workers’ insecure legal status, grassroots organizations have been organizing rallies and engaging in other forms of activism to demand that these “essential” workers be granted permanent residency in Canada.

### Bio

Tanya Basok is Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor. Her research focuses on migrant rights and pro-migrant advocacy, including labour rights and social integration of Mexican farmworkers in Canada, the role of labour organizations and other activists in advancing the rights of temporary migrants in Canada and female migrants in South and Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, and Central American refugees and labour migrants in Mexico. Currently, she is conducting a SSHRC-funded project on Status Regularization Programs for Irregular Migrants in South America, Costa Rica and Mexico.

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