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The necropolitics of expendability: migrant farm workers during COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has made visible and deepened inequalities globally, while also manifesting the vital role of functional food, health, and care systems in a context of strong socio-ecological interdependencies. We here mobilize bio– and necro–politics to problematize the declaration of agricultural workers as 'essential' and the accompanying policies during the early months of the pandemic, focusing on the region of Lleida, Spain. We show how this proclaimed indispensibility was aiming mostly at securing cheap labor to agri-business while workers continued to be treated as expendable. An intersectionality lens allows us to understand discrimination and racism as health determinants, operating within and defining 'glocal' food necropolitics and COVID-19 biopolitics.

1. Introduction

One of the most acute concerns during the first months of the Coronavirus pandemic in Europe was related to food security and the agricultural sector. Under the threat of food shortage, and as part of measures to support agriculture amid Coronavirus, the EU proposed seasonal workers be qualified as 'critical' for the sector (European Comission 2020). As demand for fresh fruit and vegetables was rising, borders closure and lockdowns meant a shortage of workers to pick, collect, and transport food goods (Carroll et al. 2020). Key food commodities in a number of EU countries were at risk of being – and indeed repeatedly were – left to rot (Jadhav, Thukral, and Hunt 2020). In North America, too, growers exerted pressure on the government claiming that without migrant workers there would not be 'enough food to eat' (George and Basok 2020). In response, national governments were bending their immigration and border policies, making exceptions for non-nationals that were willing to work in the agricultural facilities and slaughterhouses. In Germany and the UK, Romanian and Polish workers were given permission to enter the countries during April 2020, in a mission to save key agricultural commodities like asparagus and hops (Schneider and Gugganig 2021; Yapici 2020) – products whose annual

harvest depends on the work of thousands of seasonal workers (BBC News 2020 Rogozanu and Gabor 2020a). In Southern Europe, the risk of falling short on food supply for internal consumption and for national economy-supporting exports led left-inclined governments to adopt measures that would allow for the temporary legalization or legal protection of migrant agricultural workers (Mitaritonna and Ragot 2020). These shifts were celebrated as positive signs of change, with a potential for more progressive immigration policy in the EU, including 'regularizing irregular migrants who live at the margins of society and the economy' (Blasi 2020; Shields and Abu Alrob 2020), and 'advancing safe and inclusive mobility' (United Nations 2020).

However, this exceptional 'freedom' of migrant farmworkers to cross borders was not unconditional but rather bound to the wishes of agricultural lobbies. Often, workers could be 'sent home' whenever their employers decided, including in case of illness, risking losing access to social security and healthcare and shifting costs to healthcare systems back home (Neef 2020; Rogozanu and Gabor 2020b Zografos 2020;). Similar trends of rapidly spreading COVID-19 cases among migrants in agricultural regions dependent on migrant labor in Canada and the U.S. were observed during 2020 (Shields and Abu Alrob 2020). In the same year, Arundati Roy noted, 'now, in the era of the virus, a poor person's sickness can affect a wealthy society's health' (Roy 2020). However, the classed, racialized and gendered patterns that have marked the spread and indirect impacts of COVID-19 since (e.g. mental health, homelessness, insecurity, loss of income), reflect deep intersectional inequities and systemic marginalizations that pre-existed the virus' emergence (Bowleg 2020; Sultana 2021) and indeed demonstrate that we have *not* been 'all in this together' (Nolan 2021).

But despite the extra thickness that COVID-19 added to ongoing multiple crises and injustice, it also presented progressive and feminist circles the opportunity to advance demands on social, environmental and gender justice, seeing how COVID-19 made explicit the interdependence of human, social and ecological health and centered discussions on the importance of (formal and informal) care work for collective survival (e.g. Altieri and Nicholls 2020; Blay-Palmer et al. 2020; Gliessman 2020). But was the spread of the virus, and the fact that it has shaken economies globally, enough to challenge the exclusionary systems at place that produce sickness for racialized 'others' while securing better health for the privileged? During 2020, artist and activist Aida Gomez[1] produced small stickers resembling agricultural brands which read 'necropolitica' [necropolitics] and placed them on mass-produced fruit in shops around Spain, to raise awareness about the arduous conditions under which migrant farmworkers work to allow for the cheap production of such fruit (Figure 1). Inspired by her work, we ask: How did COVID-19 shape or exacerbate the pre-existing necropolitics of agricultural labor?

We situate our work within feminist political ecologies, expanding critiques of extractivist agricultural systems (Ojeda 2021) as not only damaging to land and surrounding ecologies, but dispossessing people of their right to dignified work and to health. We show how power operates through the governing of such systems, to define dynamics of labor and everyday life with direct and embodied consequences of health, along intersectional lines of oppression. Centering on the experiences of migrant farmworkers, urges us

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[1]See her campaign on the necropolitics of fruit production in Spain, here: https://www.aidagomez.info/post/629412527817850880/necropolitica

Figure 1. Artwork by Aida Gomez (used with permit by the artist).

to question the biopolitics of pandemic control at play, paying attention to the drivers of exclusions and injustices operating locally, but treated as the 'necessary evil' in the greater picture of capitalist food economies. We focus on the measures that were taken and the overall discourses reproduced that further enabled farmworkers' marginalization and exposure to COVID-19. We ground our analysis in Lleida, one of the main large-scale agricultural areas in Spain and Europe to show how, despite the declared indispensibility of farmworkers, governmental policies have rather exacerbated their expendability. We collected and analyzed textual data mostly consisting of newspaper articles, policy documents, government websites, and grey literature, and conducted in-depth interviews with six key actors from the region to contrast the text-based analysis.

For the analysis of media news, we systematically revised more than 100 news items from two main national newspapers of progressive orientation (ElDiario.es, El País) and several local ones from the region under study (e.g. La Vanguardia, El Periódico, Segre.-com). We initially looked for news containing the words *agricultura* (agriculture), *temporeros* (seasonal farmworkers), and *trabajadores de camp* (farmwokers) on the archives, for the period March to October 2020. We were interested on articles documenting the events of the time and place-based stories around the nexus of agriculture, COVID-19 and immigration, as well as those reproducing or commenting on dominant discourses around COVID-19 and migrant agricultural workers circulated by political representatives, academics, social movements, and local agricultural societies, among others. To expand relevant information, we were also directed to different newspapers, blogs, and magazines, or to older news. Our qualitative interviews, conducted online between November 2021 and July 2022, were with two NGOs members (both of which were dedicated to

helping migrants, one through actions empowering them while denouncing their hardships, while the other more providing direct aid), a high-level representative of the public health regional administration, a public health technician, and two local journalists who had researched agricultural labor dynamics in the region. The aim of these interviews was to contrast secondary data with individual perceptions of how the pandemic impacted the region during the study period in question. Our procedures, in full compliance with research ethics norms, were approved by the Ethics Committee on Animal and Human Experimentation (CEEAH) of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona with reference number CEEAH6273.

Due to the conditions of limited mobility (lockdowns were repeatedly and unpredictably imposed in different provinces and regions depending on the reported number of cases), and ongoing rolling out of vaccination programs in Spain at the time of research, we did not plan any travel to the case study province. We have grappled with the desire to do relevant social science research that is direct, involved and situated in the experiences of people on the ground, especially those whose voices and realities are typically excluded, while caring to not compromise public health through our research practices, and balancing our work with caring for dependents; something particularly hard for women in science (Clark 2023). We address this by including journalistic work that includes direct interviews with migrants, held during the period of study, and through the testimonies of NGOs and health workers that have been in close contact, and in some cases in solidarity, with them.

2. Intersectional embodiments of bio-/necro – politics of expendability in times of COVID-19

Feminist Political Ecologies increasingly place emphasis on issues of intersectionality, embodiment, and socio-ecological care (Sultana 2021), which we see as crucial foci for understanding how COVID-19 shaped a necropolitics of agricultural labor. Intersectionality allows us to see 'where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects' (Crenshaw 2017) and how many social justice issues like racism, sexism, and classism, are often overlapping, creating intersectional injustices for socially marginalized subjects. By looking at race, class, immigration status and country of origin as intersecting loci of discrimination and oppression, we inform recent work on how health inequalities are created by mutually constituting processes in the context of converging systems and structures of power (Devakumar et al. 2022; Shannon et al. 2022). We also align with critiques of dominant, intensive, and extractive agricultural systems which (re)produce socio-environmental injustice in the form of vulnerable embodiments – injustice embedded into normalized forms of migration governance and organization of migrant labor and embodied by workers who systematically experience and inhabit precarious livelihoods and risky environments (Guthman and Brown 2016; Kotsila and Kallis 2019). We thus problematize dominant agricultural systems as bio-/necro-political systems whose governance – including through a proclaimed indispensibility of farmworkers during the first year of the pandemic – is permeated by racial and capitalist ethics, and whose impacts have been destructive not only for land and ecosystems but also for the bodily ecologies (also always political) of the most vulnerable and marginalized people (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2015).

2.1 Bio-/necro-politics as a double lens to examine the nexus of COVID-19, migrant labor and agricultural systems

Biopolitics is widely understood as the political rationality, based on a new form of power (biopower) that seeks to administer, secure, develop and foster life. It is this measuring and controlling of vitality that is productive and positive, involving the calculation, management and prevention of risks for the population. And it is this claim on vitality that discursively connects individual life and collective wellbeing in biopolitics (Rose 2001), normalizing and controlling characteristics of the population (Foucault 2003b, 249). This takes place not only through the function of biomedicine or punitive and mental health institutions, but also in defining and regulating things such as 'adequate food and water supply, sanitary shelter, and education' (Foucault 1989 as cited in Darier 1996). Although in his theorization of biopolitics, Foucault did stress that it is no longer epidemics but endemics that is the concern of power (243), we here argue that a biopolitical analysis remains relevant when looking at the political and economic management of infectious disease and pandemics such as COVID-19.

First, in neoliberal societies, the discourse on health has been almost entirely shifted from combating disease itself (external biological threat) to combating disease *factors* and, in continuation, the behaviors that enable such factors to emerge (internal threats) (Guthman 2009; Kotsila and Saravanan 2017; Mansfield 2012). The risk of disease is detected within the population, fractions of which – often racialized, defined by class, sexuality, or other aspects of identity, culture, or politics – are held accountable for public health failures (Ayo 2012). We understand racism as 'the state-sanctioned and/ or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death' (Gilmore 2007, 28), which aligns with Foucault's thinking where he speaks of state racism, as 'a racism that society will direct against itself, against its own elements and its own products […] the internal racism of permanent purification, and it will become one of the basic dimensions of social normalization' (Foucault 2003a, 62).

Second, in the very definition of 'the population' there is an inherent racism at play which distinguishes those whose bodies (and health) matter, from those that fall outside this recognized/legal socio-political realm of the 'caring' umbrella of government (Guthman and Brown 2016). In other words, public health and the management of disease can be discussed as a 'make live' field which defines a population as a target for normalization and at the same time excluding others who don't enter this population, with both processes presupposing an element of 'letting die'. Mbembe (2020) describes how this exclusion and legitimized 'exposure to death' is a phenomenon that has operated also at the population level, mobilizing *necropolitics* as a theory of power that concerns the management of populations through their direct exposure to death. He denotes how there are distinct lines and a matrix of rules that define 'those human bodies deemed either in excess, unwanted, illegal, dispensable, or superfluous […] those whose mere existence or proximity is deemed to represent a physical or biological threat to our own life' (Mbembe 2020, 96).

Food production systems are part and parcel of bio- and necro- politics. They are biopolitical sites of regulation and decision-making to guarantee food access, as a way of safeguarding the vitality of the population, and because in many countries food production and export constitute important economic sectors and thus support a 'healthy'

economy. They are also necropolitical places, where migrant populations are fueled into, managed, moved and often sacrificed, both politically and literally. This irregularity and vulnerability of many migrant farmworkers worldwide, has been described as the inhabitation of a 'fourth world' (Castillero Quesada 2021). This is, arguably, not just a biopolitical failure of the 'caring state', but an explicit necropolitical, political-economic strategy which requires an important portion of migrant farmworkers to be invisible and exploitable, as long as they remain available and dispensable. Whereas labor market regulations and practices around migrant farmworkers vary at national state levels, a common trait is that authorities consistently overlook the extremely precarious working and living conditions that migrant farmworkers face in the European countryside (Rye and O'Reilly 2021).

Under such conditions, and without denying migrants the agency and power of reacting to, challenging and resisting them (O'Reilly 2019, 193), we believe it is important to highlight that immigration itself can act as a social determinant of health (Benach et al. 2010; Castañeda et al. 2015), especially so for racialized collectives (Devakumar et al. 2022) and those working in the agricultural sector (Fiałkowska and Matuszczyk 2021). In Italy, for example, hundreds of thousands of migrant farmworkers, mostly from sub-Saharan Africa, often live in shanty-houses and are exposed to extreme weather almost all year long (Purdy 2020). Similar is the case of Marroquin strawberry pickers in Huelva, Spain, and Pakistani orange pickers in Southern Greece (Kotsila and Kallis 2019; Rye and O'Reilly 2021). In the US too, vulnerabilities that might have become more visible due to the pandemic, are conditional to migrant farmworkers' position of being both indispensable and disposable (Guthman 2017) – a condition in turn entrenched in racialized labor regimes of 'imported colonialism', operating long before COVID-19 emerged (Xiuhtecutli and Shattuck 2021).

In this context, the relevance of bio- and necro- politics in the study of migrant agricultural labor and health during a global pandemic is pivotal. We observe a multiscale and globalized biopolitics of COVID-19 becoming entangled with pre-existing necropolitical practices engrained in global food supply systems, unfolding in policies, practices and discourses, and impacting on the bodies and lives of migrant agricultural workers.

2.2 Expendability and the 'essential' status of agricultural workers as an ongoing bio-/necro-politics of crisis

The response to COVID-19 by governments, public health institutions and international health organizations has had a strong biopolitical character. The question of managing life – or better, managing the risk of illness and death – has permeated, now perhaps more than ever, all aspects of politics. Unlike other pandemics that have affected the food sector globally (e.g. swine flu, bird flu), COVID-19 did not affect food products per se. However, it has spread with unprecedented speed both locally and globally, impacting fiercely on food production systems that depend on workers' mobility across borders. COVID-19 meant that food security in several countries was temporarily under threat, but also that food production and export were at risk of big economic losses. States have been walking a thin line, trying to balance often contradictory targets of protecting life by controlling the spread of the disease, and protecting the economy without re-considering its neoliberal premises. COVID-19 allowed for multiple 'states of exception' to

arise within and beyond states, as new rules and regulations were being invented and renegotiated to address the pandemic. This included proclaiming agricultural work as essential to guarantee the population's wellbeing and facilitate the recruitment of farm-workers to keep food supplies flowing. The major health risks that this implied for workers were rarely addressed by state authorities or private employers, especially in the first phase of the pandemic (IPES FOOD 2020).

As Mbembe notes, states of exception both create and feed from fictional enemies, justifying thus the implementation of 'the right to kill' (Mbembe 2020, 70). Whereas COVID-19 can hardly be seen as a 'fictional' enemy, and the biopolitical measures taken to protect from its spread at times did seem to prioritize human life over economic profits in an equalizing manner (e.g. freezing economic processes, production, mobility etc.), this was not freed from historical patterns of injustice, with some of the most vulnerable collectives suffering grave consequences (e.g. the homeless, those depending on informal markets, those who lost their jobs or incomes overnight, and those who had to continue working and putting their lives at risk). These injustices, we claim, constitute a type of necropolitics that heavily impacted on migrant and predominantly racialized agricultural workers. Sandset (2021) sees such necropolitical underpinnings of racial and classed-based health disparities and vulnerabilities as based on a 'state of *chronic acceptance*' that takes for granted that some people have poorer health than others. They point to the accompanying processes of privatization, neoliberalism, and fragmentation of state welfare, as a form of slow violence where 'slow death' is an omnipresent danger, and which impacted heavily upon racialized and poor minorities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Sandset 2021).

Analyzing the specific necropolitics unfolding during the pandemic towards migrant workers, helps problematize the expectations around COVID-19's equalizing potential (through its impact and related measures that affected everyone) and the supposed opportunity it provided for Western societies to reconsider what is valued as reproductive socio-ecological care, essential to life and well-being, through declared indispensibility of certain professions and practices.

3. Lleida: a major production region in Spain and Europe

The province of Lleida (Catalonia, Spain) hosts one of the main agricultural regions in Spain and in Europe. This area comprises land around the fertile Ebro riverbed and is part of a wider agricultural area composed by agricultural land in the provinces of Huesca and Zaragoza. While we limit our focus on Lleida for methodological reasons, most of the results of this paper apply to the broader agricultural area around *La Franja* (occupying the border between Catalonia and Aragón). This area was historically an olive, almond, and cereal growing region. Since the 1960s, most of the land is dedicated to fruit production specifically stone fruit (i.e. peach, nectarine, cherries), pears, and apples. The change of crops in the second half of the twentieth century was accompanied by changes in the production structures, with more land concentration, irrigation, and mechanization, that is, an increasing intensification of its agricultural sector (Díaz Diego et al. 2013). In parallel, large retail chains and exporting companies became the only viable market for small-medium fruit farmers, leading to a dependency between producers and large retail chains that has been detrimental to farmers (who

missed the power to negotiate prices or control varietes, calendars, or processes of pro-duction) (Gascón, Solà, and Larrea-Killinger 2022). Lleida's extractive or 'corporate food regime' (McMichael 2009) has only consolidated since then by securing one of the most important input: cheap labor.

Major fruit crops in the region are peaches and nectarines. Indeed, the area accounts for one third of the annual production of these fruits in Spain. Most of this stone fruit is coming from Lleida, with more than 15,700 ha. dedicated to these crops, producing around 313,000 tons (Instituto de Estadística de Catalunya 2022a). Lleida also accounts for about a third of the Spanish pear and cherry production (Ibid.). Major production counties within Lleida are, for example, Seròs, Alcarràs, and Torres del Segre. It is esti-mated that between 25,000 and 30,000 temporary workers are currently employed in the fruit harvesting season in Lleida (Güell and Garcés-Mascareñas 2020; Mata and Gon-zález 2017). In 1991 this number was estimated to be around 5,000 or 6,000 (Balcells 1991). This increase in labor needs is due, on the one hand, to the partial shift from small-scale farming to a more intensified and productive agro-food systems. Impor-tantly, in the latter system, agricultural work not only involves work on the fields (work mostly performed by men), but also at the warehouses, classifying, labeling, and packing fruit (tasks mostly done by women) (Díaz Diego et al. 2013). On the other hand, the massive abandonment of the agricultural sector by much of the Spanish population to other sectors that offered better working conditions and social status (e.g. service, industry, construction), increased the need for external labor force (Mata and González 2017).

In 1999 the first ever 'recruitment in origin' agreement in Spain brought 35 Colombian workers to Lleida in the agricultural sector (Molinero Gerbeau 2020). This type of contract-ing increased considerably between 2004 and 2008 when thousands of workers, mostly from Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria, were contracted to work in Spanish agriculture (Gordo Márquez 2008; Molinero Gerbeau 2020), Lleida became the second region with more recruitments in origin, after Huelva. In 2009 this type of workers dropped dramati-cally as, coinciding with the global economic crisis, the contracting of Spanish residents was prioritized and subsidized. In addition, during the last three decades, sub-Saharan and Maghreb migrants became the predominant agricultural labor force (Hoggart and Mendoza 1999). While recruitments in origin still occur, most of the labor nowadays is contracted through temping agencies working for farmers' trade unions or agricultural business associations (Güell and Garcés-Mascareñas 2020). A portion of the seasonal migrant workers searching for jobs in the region are irregular, lacking legal documents that allow them to be hired or even reside in Spain. They cannot be hired formally and therefore work without a contract. The numbers fluctuate and are not open, but irregular workers can be as many as 40% of the seasonal workers housed in the Lleida municipal shelter during harvesting season (Interview, NGO worker).

Workforce demands also fluctuate according to weather conditions. In 2021 and 2022, late freezes in mid-March affected the fruits' flowering phase. Consequently, the demand for farmworkers might have dropped by 30% or 40% during those years (Segre.com 2021). On top of that, the regional agricultural sector is seeing an unprecedented crisis during the last 5–10 years as the result of the drop in fruit prices. This decrease in price is related to increases in productivity. In turn, when the surplus fruit being produced cannot be sold, it ends up 'flooding' the market and diminishing the negotiation capacity

of farmers. From 2015 to 2020, 2000 ha. of stone fruit trees have been abandoned or re-planted with other kinds of crops, such as pears, kiwis or almonds (Matas 2020). The gov-ernment subsidized the uprooting of these trees as a measure to control market prices. The harvesting of stone fruit in this area starts in mid-April. In 2020, regular rainfalls in winter and mild temperatures in spring led to the expectation of a good year for stone fruit. When COVID-19 hit Europe and mobility restrictions were set all around, this region was in the spotlight of a hypothetical labor scarcity. But in contrast to other major fruit regions in Spain, (such as Huelva's strawberry industry which harvest starts in February), most of the workers needed in Lleida for the harvesting had not yet arrived when travel restrictions started to be implemented.

It is in this context that Lleida faced an unprecedented social and epidemiological crisis during the first months of the COVID-19 outbreak in the EU. During the study period, Lleida reported a lot of infection cases linked to the agri-food industry, what led to a wide media coverage on the topic. It has being argued that two outbreaks among agri-cultural workers in the region led to the spread of a new variant of the virus, which impacted on infection rates across Europe (Hodcroft et al. 2021). In the next section we examine the 'emergency' measures taken around public health and migrant agricultural labor during the pandemic and how those shaped or exacerbated the pre-existing necro-politcs of farm labor.

4. Essential jobs, expendable workers

We have argued that the COVID-19 pandemic added and amplified thickness to the already operating necropolitics of public health, food production and immigration. In order to better understand how this unfolded in context, we focus on three dimensions of agricultural labor necropolitics, which the COVID-19 pandemic encountered, amplified or re-defined through specific policies, decisions, and narratives: border control and immi-gration regulation, socio-economic welfare and health protection, and discourses and practices of social exclusion.

4.1. Border control and immigration regulations

An important layer of necro-politics operating in the realm of farm labor is the regulation, through economic, social and political means and mechanisms, of who is allowed to legally live and work in a country as a migrant. Since the 1970s, Western European countries have relied on migrants for agricultural labor. The outsourcing of reproduction of exploitable labor to poorer countries is facilitated by a combination of economic (e.g. global hegemony of capitalist markets, North–South colonial relationships) and social conditions (e.g. nationalist ideologies naturalizing the exclusion of migrants from host societies) (Lawrence 2005). These factors are regulated on the ground through labor pol-icies and agreements, many of which start at the borders as an important site of necro-politics (Montenegro, Pujol, and Posocco 2017). Even beyond the borders, the right to work and live in Spain as an migrant arriving in the country without a visa is only awarded after years of complex bureaucratic processes.[2] Almost forced into working without a permit, workers' labor rights are not recognized, which exposes them to abuse and exploitation. All these conditions set a tremendous barrier for migrants to

work legally in Spain, despite them constituting a core workforce in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, or care.

In early April 2020 the idea that a possible labor scarcity could follow mobility restrictions became dominant across Europe, including in Spain. On April 3rd, 2020, the European Parliament Research Service released a report forecasting that the closure of borders could lead to labor scarcity, transportation difficulties, and a likely rise in (food) prices (Rossi 2020) – something that was broadly reproduced by the media, helping to spread the narrative of a possible labor shortage. In Spain, alarming headings followed the release of such report, such as: 'Labor scarcity will increase food prices in the EU' (ElDiario.es 2020a). Farmers' associations and unions also reinforced this narrative adopting a similar discourse: 'No produce can remain in the fields if we are to guarantee adequate food supply in the current COVID-19 crisis' (La Vanguardia 2020a). The idea of a possible lack of labor force permeated and was backed up by public institutions and governments at different scales. The Ministry of Agriculture estimated on April 1st a deficit of agricultural workers in Spain between 100,000–150,000 (Europa Press 2020a) – about a third of which might account for La Franja region broadly, given that the hiring requirements are usually around 40,000 workers at that time of the year. Later in April, however, the Ministry decreased the estimation to 80,000 workers (Spanish Government 2020) and by June it was clear that there was no actual case of labor scarcity. The estimations proved to be speculative and not based on the actual situation on the ground, but rather on calculations assuming high economic risk outcomes for the agricultural sector, seen as the main challenge to overcome. On April 7th, when Spain had the second highest infection rate in Europe and hospitals were collapsed, the Ministry of Agriculture declared: 'We must continue feeding the export market, as they are a very important income source for the agricultural sector and the Spanish society broadly' (Spanish Government 2020).

At a national level, and directly targeting the case study region as the harvesting season was starting, the main response by the Spanish government to tackle this proclaimed scarcity was the approval of the *Real Decreto* (Royal Decree) 13/2020 (Boletín Oficial del Estado 2020), which created temporary exceptions to contracting rules, in order to increase the labor force available for an immediate incorporation in the fields. The decree opened the possibility of getting temporary working permits to three groups: (i) People receiving unemployment wage, by making such wage compatible with the income coming from working in a farm; (ii) Seasonal migrant workers who were already in Spain with a work permit (e.g. harvesting in the southern regions); (iii) Young migrants (18-21 years old) who were in a regular situation (i.e. with residency permit) but who lacked a working permit (addressing a contradiction of immigration policies that has received major critiques in the last years).

However, this decree turned significantly ineffective in increasing labor force availability. First, because there were not many Spanish people on unemployment benefits who turned to the fields, nor did the employers preferred to hire them, as they would demand higher salaries higher than those paid to migrants (Vadillo 2019). Second, interregional travel was restricted due to COVID-19, so there was limited mobility between

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[2]To obtain permission to stay and work through what is called 'arraigo social' (social ties), requires 3 years of previous stay in the country without working, something practically impossible for most people in this situation, most of which migrate from countries of the Global South, without savings or other resources to survive on.

regions for any of the above three collectives to legally travel to labor-seeking regions. Third, and most importantly, as every year, there were plenty of both documented and undocumented workers (for which the Decree did not apply) who did travel, despite the restrictions, to harvesting regions in Lleida. This flux decreased dramatically the labor needs in the study region. Overall, beyond its limited impact and actual need, the Decree failed to address the tremendous difficulties undocumented workers face in obtaining work permits, despite it being well-known that they have been illegally hired in a systematic way.

In Lleida, many migrant workers, unemployed after the shutdown of tourism and dining sectors, arrived to the area looking for work. The massive arrival of migrants to the area also seemed to be a consequence of news coming from other European countries, where the regularization – albeit temporary- of all migrant workers was promoted to reduce their vulnerability and the risk of labor shortage (Interview 2021, NGO worker). Even though one of the two coalition parties of the government was in favor of regularization measures also in Spain, and there was social mobilization around the issue by groups such as 'Regularización Ya' (Sánchez 2020), such requests were not met. Ultimately, as any other year in Lleida's fruit campaign, there were not enough jobs for everybody. The agricultural industry got the workers it needed and rejected the rest, leaving some in very difficult positions, where they had spent money to travel to the region but could not find a job. For example, a migrant describes how he came to Lleida 'because it was announced on television and social media that workers were needed for the harvest, even without a working permit (…) Every morning I go with hope to the squares were the vans [that pick up workers to take them to the fields] are, but I come back at night disappointed. It is painful to share all this' (Abril 2020). Those with stable jobs rely on informal search strategies such as waiting in places where farmers choose a few workers early in the morning based on the daily needs. Those unemployed are also more likely to end up living in informal housing settlements in the outskirts of villages and being in situations of distress and extreme poverty (Barbal and Rogero 2020). Referring to the inability of finding work, another migrant declared: '[The lack of work] affects us way more than COVID-19' (Abril 2020). Ultimately, in a pronounced 'workers scarcity' and 'restricted' situation, there was still a surplus of workers guaranteeing the rule of the labor market.

Acting through a biopolitics of protecting internal food production and export, these measures continued to 'let die' and indeed expose undocumented migrant farmworkers to a liminal zone of existence, a necropolitics of non-citizenship. Despite the opportunity presented to take advantage of the 'cracks' opened by the pandemic to change the rules and regularize workers, the measures taken during COVID-19 were mostly oriented to support the agricultural sector's economy and to avoid problems in the food chain, and did not protect essential workers, an issue to which we turn to in the next subsection.

4.2. Lack of socio-economic welfare and health protection

Another necropolitical layer operating in agriculture relates to migrants' working conditions, including their socio-economic and health protection as workers. The everyday life and work of migrant farmworkers such as those that work in Lleida is characterized by a constant struggle and hope for finding proper accommodation, decent working

conditions, and peaceful co-existence with local societies. In this section we describe how this form of slow violence acts as an additional site of necropolitics, which defines who and how could survive while performing work deemed essential.

The irregular status of many migrant agricultural workers (living or working without a permit) hinders their capacity to negotiate working conditions and excludes them from legal labor frameworks. For example, work in the agricultural sector systematically pays below the legal minimum despite being very physically demanding (e.g. long working days, short breaks, working at the hottest hours under the sun, requirement to perform hazardous tasks). Some unregulated migrants end up using illegal methods for being able to work, such as 'renting' fake documents that allow them to work sporadically. Their situation also constraints their access to health and social services. In addition, they cannot travel back to their countries to visit family. This time can be as long as 12 years (Abril 2020).

Workers' vulnerability to labor exploitation is exacerbated by factors such as limited access to local networks of support and language barriers. This adds to an overall grim picture of health protection and healthcare access for migrant workers (Hennebry, McLaughlin, and Preibisch 2016; Preibisch and Otero 2014). Although organizations like the Red Cross would set up ad-hoc units seasonally to assist in cases of disease breakouts (i.e. tuberculosis) or other health-related needs, access to all-year-long public healthcare is not a given (Interview 2021, NGO worker). Although universal basic health care is the norm in Spain, access to the public healthcare system is often hindered by socio-cultural factors. In areas with high population of undocumented migrants, health centers might choose not to accept or treat them. For example, in Alcarràs, one of the agricultural counties in the province of Lleida, the local health center used to have a big sign on the front door reading 'Sin papeles no os aceptamos', translating 'we don't accept you without papers' (Interview 2022, local journalist).

Finally, one of the most challenging issues for migrant farmworkers, particularly in the study region, concerns housing (Güell and Garcés-Mascareñas 2020; López-Sala and Molinero-Gerbeau 2022; Rodríguez 2004). Whereas local governments at times offer temporary accommodation in public facilities, these are of small capacity, not enough for everyone, and have a maximum stay ranging from a few nights to a couple of weeks. Despite the legal requirement for the employee to provide accommodation when the place of work is more than 75 km away from the place of residence, this is rarely ever implemented and does not apply for undocumented migrants. Many end up homeless, living in informal settlements, or sharing small flats among more than 10 people (Interviews 2022, local journalist; 2021, NGO worker; see also (Barbal and Rogero (Directors) 2020). All this testifies to the structural barriers (policy, legal frameworks) and socio-cultural factors (attitudes, behaviors, informal institutions within local societies) that shape migrants' increased health vulnerabilities, exposing them to unsafe environments and rough living and working conditions, while also lacking real access to public health care.

This type of operating necropolitics was further manifested and strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic, when access to health care, harsh working conditions, and the inaccessibility of non-congested living spaces defined COVID-19 morbidity and mortality for migrant collectives globally (Van Hout et al. 2022). As we have explained, in Lleida, the idea of a labor shortage during the first months of the pandemic in Europe, created a pull effect and attracted a lot of undocumented migrants to the region as the fruit harvesting

season started. Those workers, who were hired to 'save the harvests' (and supply healthy food for the country while also guarantee its exports), were very poorly protected. Their working conditions, which typically take place in crowded spaces (those working on warehouses), would require protective gear (masks, gloves, alcoholic hand-gel) but migrants repeatedly reported the lack of it, both in Lleida as elsewhere (Montenegro de Wit 2021; Pareja 2020; Xiuhtecutli and Shattuck 2021). Transportation from recruiting points to the fields was also in crowded buses, and migrants' accommodation, as we described above, continued to be precarious and substandard, often meaning sharing small spaces between many. In the region, some agricultural businesses were denounced for not closing despite having workers infected (ElDiario.es 2020d).

In this regard, the lack of housing for farmworkers was a major point of dispute between social organizations and governments in the spring 2020, when such shortage was exacerbated by local farmers being more reluctant to offer accommodation inside their properties due to their fear of COVID-19 transmission. This is how a migrant worker expresses his frustration in social media, recording a video of the encampment where he and others sleep in Lleida city center: 'Look where we sleep. We sleep on the streets, on a rainy day. We are waiting for somebody to come help us and give us a place to sleep in. If you remember farmers said they needed workers, so we came, but they close their houses to us (…) When we get up, we don't have water to wash ourselves, we don't have a warm meal, we have nothing. But we are also those who wake up at 6am to go work on their fields (…). We want to sleep. We want to rent a house. Nobody rents a house to us' (Serigne 2020). Hotels and apartment owners repeatedly refused to rent empty rooms to agricultural workers, even after a famous football player of sub-Saharan origin offered to pay the associated costs. After this experience he denounced the xenophobic dynamics in the region (ElDiario.es 2020b). In the city center of Lleida, an estimate of 200 farmworkers were sleeping in the street that year (Interview 2021, NGO worker). This was not the first time this happened, but the context of COVID-19 and the related epidemiological risk amplified fears over infection and made the issue more prominent in public debates.

Responses from public authorities and the government involved employing screening campaigns in the region, but many of the seasonal workers did not feel comfortable to get themselves tested for several reasons, including the fear to state institutions (Interviews 2022, regional government official; 2022 public health technician). Media was called to cover one of these screenings in Lleida, directed to homeless migrants, partly to show that the city was acting to stop the outbreaks (Pareja and Calvó 2020). This can be seen as a breach of privacy rights of migrants, who are often ashamed of their homelessness and were in fear of being stigmatized for having COVID-19, facing further social exclusion in the local society as well as from their employers (Interview 2021, NGO worker).

Moreover, the broader risk communication campaign around COVID-19 and protection measures was mostly delegated to the local police, which did not inspire trust to migrants as they had often been vilified and persecuted by these same state bodies (Interview 2021, NGO worker). Municipal hostels for migrant workers installed cameras with heat sensors. This rather impersonal procedure was perceived more as a prosecution than a protection strategy especially by migrants facing trauma and fear to state bodies: 'On Thursday I was walking all day looking for work. When I entered in the municipal

hostel the alarm went off. I truly fear that sound. They told me that the cameras detected that I had fever. It was only heat. I had to walk to the hospital to get tested. Nobody took me there' (Congostrina 2020b). As one interviewee told us, risk communication around COVID-19 to migrant farmworkers was characterized by 'paternalistic and authoritarian discourse, instead of one that focuses on social integration and support' (Interview 2021, NGO worker). The public health technician interviewed, however, did not acknowledge socio-cultural factors hindering access to information, arguing that 'if workers wanted, they could access the information' (Interview 2022, public health technician).

Meanwhile, migrants' problematic access to public healthcare translated in less ability to get treated in case of illness. It also meant that data concerning COVID-19 morbidity or mortality in these collectives escaped reporting, or were never disaggregated according to country of origin or race in official reports. They often had to choose between working (and earning) or staying safe (and keeping others safe) by isolating. In a situation of economic need, many chose to continue working. As this worker put it: 'I am not afraid of coronavirus. What scares me is not being able to feed my children' (Congostrina 2020a). In a similar line, another jobless and homeless worker from the region argued: '[The management of COVID-19] is one more excuse to go against us (…) Of course there are sick folks, but we are poor, we are not afraid of dying or being sick, we are afraid of misery' (Congostrina 2020b). Those without labor contracts were in a particular risky situation because of the impossibility of getting paid quarantine or sick leave. Even those hired legally would earn less money when on sick leave. The regional government official, however, did not recognize these structural barriers to following official public health advice, which would reproduce unjust outcomes on the well-being of workers, stating that workers 'got upset when you told them they had to take sick leave to isolate' (Interview 2022, regional government official). Moreover, past traumatic experiences with state institutions (the police, national authorities, healthcare services) are likely to provoke negative reactions towards disease control protocols coming from those same institutions, as the latter represent power abuse, exclusion, and control for migrants.

Another way in which the local government responded to the interrelated health emergency and housing crisis in the region, was to increase accommodation places in public facilities such as sports centers or pavilions (yet the maximum stay of 10 or 14 days continued to be the norm). However, this was met with controversy, as the agglomeration of migrants and their families inside and around the pavilions was considered as a hotspot for COVID-19 transmission (Interview 2022, local journalist). Later, municipalities also organized the provision of spaces for asymptomatic and/or quarantined workers, in rented hotels or public facilities. According to a public health official, some hired mediators for communication issues (Interview 2022), while in other municipalities police or private security guards were controlling these spaces (Europa Press 2020b).

Lockdown was progressively lifted in Spain throughout May 2020. At the end of June, some of the first registered local COVID-19 outbreaks occurred in the agricultural areas and agro-food industries in *La Franja*, comprising Lleida and Huesca fruit growing regions. Specific data about infection rates among agricultural workers in Lleida is not made available in any official published reports, and according to the regional government representative, they were never compiled (Interview 2022, regional government official). Yet, some numbers have been reported by the media. For example, in the city of Lleida's county (El Segrià), twelve out of the sixteen outbreaks from end of June to

July 8th were among agricultural workers (Tomàs 2020). The magnitude of outbreaks increased in July, leading to new lockdowns and mobility restrictions in many counties, including the city of Lleida (Puente 2020). These outbreaks, involving from a few up to dozens of workers confined, largely affected migrant agricultural workers who had no access to protective gear and healthcare, no guaranteed paid sick leaves, and no trusted interlocutors of health prevention and safety measures.

When analyzed under the critical lens of biopolitics, it becomes clearer that safeguarding the vitality of 'the population that matters' within an operating global capitalist food production system, involves the function of the agricultural field and local society, to act as necropolitical places, where migrant populations are fueled into, managed, moved, and sacrificed – both politically and literally. The increase in COVID-19 cases in the study areas was met by a discourse around migrants' habits and living conditions which tended to blame them for the vulnerabilities they were suffering, exacerbating dynamics of social exclusion already at work. This is what we review in the next section.

4.3. Discourses and everyday practices of social exclusion

Beyond the perhaps more tangible ways in which the necropolitics of immigration operate, creating exclusions, exploitation and vulnerability as a result of the legal framework surrounding immigration and the living and working conditions of migrant agricultural workers, there are also discursive and everyday practices that contribute to social-political exclusion and thus to keeping migrants in 'a state of exception' and slow violence. These more implicit expressions of racism, xenophobia or stigmatization pre-existed the pandemic but were strengthened during the first months of COVID-19 through narratives attached to public health and disease transmission.

In the city of Lleida there is a high percentage of population with migrant background, officially reaching up to 20% and exceeding 30% in some of the surrounding municipalities (Instituto de Estadística de Catalunya 2022b). A journalist and activist from the area highlights that while racial diversity is rather normalized in the region, with people of migrant background and of racial diversity working in many different sectors also outside of agriculture, local society and institutions often demonstrate racist and xenophobic behaviors. This is evident in many everyday interactions: landlords deny them housing, migrants thus tend to segregate in certain zones and form ghettos, migrants' children go to schools where locals avoid sending their own, (Interviews 2022, journalist; 2022, NGO worker), and bars that serve racialized collectives becoming stigmatized and unfrequented by white locals (Squadroni 2020).

Certainly, anti-immigration sentiments have been rising across Spain, Europe, and globally during the last decade, with right-wing governments taking hold in many countries and creating scapegoats to justify the economic crisis and austerity policies that many of them are implementing. In lack of meaningful social support and integration policies for migrants, local communities translate difference into threat, and do not manage to dismount and overcome racist narratives reproduced by many (extreme) right-wing media and politicians who often portray immigration as a 'wave', 'tsunami', 'invasion', a 'crisis' and a 'problem' (Chavez 2018; Molina 2014; see also Eberl et al. 2018).

Indeed, it was this kind of language combined with the public health emergency of COVID-19, which itself was characterized largely by mixed messages and false

understandings around transmissibility, that contributed to a further stigmatization and social exclusion of agricultural workers (Interview 2021, NGO worker, see for example, Plaza and Sánchez 2020). For example, even if it was politicians who proclaimed an assumed lack of farmworkers and thus the need to attract more, in Lleida it was migrants who were blamed for causing a so-called 'efecto llamada' (call-effect) and attracting an excessive number of fellow agricultural workers to the region (Interview 2021, local journalist, see also ElDiario.es 2020c). In addition, fake news was circulated in anti-immigration forums about how migrants exacerbated the spread of the disease, for example, showing pictures of a bus carrying some migrant COVID-19 patients to a temporary shelter, falsely circulated in social media as 'Andalucía sending infected migrants to Lleida' (Interview 2021, NGO worker). This racist stigmatization and tension in local society was exacerbated by the housing problem.

During those first months of COVID-19 in Spain, there was a strong narrative of blame regarding the reasons why the virus spread fast in agricultural regions highlighting the role of workers' housing/living conditions. Media reproduced statements by politicians and business associations where workers' housing was repeatedly portrayed as 'insalubrious', or 'overcrowded', where people 'sleep piled up' (Congostrina 2020a). A representative of a trade union argued that 'in those conditions, the coronavirus is there, at its maximum expression' (Heraldo de Aragón 2020). While there was evidence that in many cases farmworkers were not given enough protection gear at work (masks, gloves, etc.), dominant discourses, also by politicians, were focusing solely on their living conditions and their way of life, arguing that farmworkers 'are [at work] 8 hours, but in the remaining 16 they live their life' (major of El Zaidín, cited in Congostrina 2020a).

This unique focus risked resulting in further stigmatizing migrants as 'people who live in unhygienic ways'; as if this was their choice or part of their culture. Yet, as migrants testify in the documentary titled *El coste de la fruita*, filmed in the study region, 'nobody wants to live like this; nobody wants to sleep in the street or in crowded rooms' (Barbal and Rogero 2020). However, in a situation of crisis, much of the media used alarmist discourse to reproduce stigma, linking the rise of COVID-19 cases in the region as a result of the 'efecto temporeros' (seasonal farmworkers effect) (La Vanguardia 2020b), giving headlines such as 'The Virus re-conquers Spain through Binefar and Lleida' (Barber 2020), or referring to the study area as 'Ground Zero for COVID-19 Outbreaks' (Congostrina 2020a). Such war-like narratives might induce fear and anxiety and resemble racist discourses mobilized by the extreme right against immigration more generally.

While the living conditions which many migrant farmworkers are obliged to endure was indeed given more visibility, the structural conditions (legal, economic, social) that govern and define this situation from global to local levels, lacked in most of the reportages and analyzes. Only a few public officials, farmers, or businesses recognized that the state failed to provide adequate measures for protecting migrants during this period of crisis when agricultural work had to continue. And only few acknowledged that these conditions are tied to the wider dynamics of agri-business and the precarity of the agri-food system. As such, and with a few exceptions from critical progressive voices in academic outlets (Molinero-Gerbeau 2021), the public debate was reduced to temporarily addressing the (very real) accommodation problems of farmworkers. As such, the opportunity to discuss a reform of the agri-food system and of immigration policies, was entirely missed.

To sum up, COVID-19 added layers to the social exclusion faced by agricultural workers, this being a key factor in the previous two dimensions, namely, the borders and labor regulation and the socio-economic and health protection of workers. Agricultural workers had to deal with their own vulnerability, exacerbated during a crisis, where their health and their lives were at stake, as well as with a rise in xenophobic and racist attitudes towards them as the carriers and propagators of the virus. Importantly, popular newspapers, even of progressive accent, had an important role in amplifying racist discourses, using war-like narratives in headlines, and reproducing racist comments made by politicians.

5. Discussion

There is growing evidence that COVID-19 has been the instigator of a particular kind of politics of crisis unfolding during 2020 across Europe, North America and beyond, targeting migrant workers in the agri-food industry (Dempsey, Zoller, and Hunt 2022; Mitaritonna and Ragot 2020), which have not protected or benefitted them, but instead proven risky, if not detrimental, for their health and overall well-being. We have shown how during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, 'exceptional measures' and declared indispensibility simply assured the sufficient performance of primary sectors of national economies in Europe. Such measures might have guaranteed the provision of food for some, but did not address the structural marginalization and exploitation of others, namely migrant farmworkers, which continued as usual. As others have reflected upon (Benson 2021), border policies during these first months of the pandemic became more flexible for migrants willing to work in key sectors, but this 'exceptional' openness did not come with re-valuing such work economically or in public discourse, nor providing surrounding protection and safety nets (e.g. healthcare, labor rights, better wages, adequate housing, etc.) to workers that were proclaimed as essential.

COVID-19 biopolitics continued to be drawn along racist lines of whose health matters. While this is not entirely new or specific to the COVID-19 context, a certain kind of necro-politics was engrained in the way COVID-19 was managed across Europe. Not only did COVID-19 disproportionately affected vulnerable people such as migrant workers, it also generated narratives against such groups – something not rare in times of crisis and political instability (Kotsila and Kallis 2019; Speed and Mannion 2020). This highlights how politics shape health and disease and also how (narratives and policies around) health and disease can become a political tool. These two crucial and interrelated processes, we argue, need to continue being asked in relation to the operation of racism especially so in a context such as the ongoing global pandemic.

Relatedly, it is crucial to reflect on the role that media played in disseminating but also shaping these embodied experiences of labor and health injustice during the pandemic (see also: Bauder 2008; Suárez-Navaz 2007). On the one hand, progressive media outlets started to report on the socio-economic and health conditions of farmworkers more than they normally do. This increased visibility might have inspired some social consciousness as news often included personal stories and testimonies by farmworkers and their struggles. On the other hand, media also played a role in amplifying a narrative that connected farmworkers to high infection rates and pictured their living habits as insalubrious, rather than pointing more consistently to their ongoing exploitation. Some of the

headlines and content, even of progressive outlets, sent erroneous and pernicious messages that related farmworkers to the epidemiological crisis. Hence, we see this gained visibility acting as a double-edged sword in relation to how it shaped public opinion.

Our observations make us question whether or to what extent COVID-19 has served to shift paradigms of social injustice and to challenge the common depreciation of essential and life-sustaining work as this is embedded in exploitative and extractive food systems (Xiuhtecutli and Shattuck 2021; Clark and Longo 2022; Prasse-Freeman 2022). As one interviewee put it: 'COVID-19 was not an inflection point, it did not reconfigure anything, it was just the continuation of a tendency by which farmworkers' conditions are harder every year' (Interview 2022, local journalist). Surely, politicizing ecological and human well-being and socio-ecological care side by side with agricultural work, would mean to question dominant systems of food production globally. Clapp and Moseley (2020) stress how past responses to crisis in the food sector have focused on expansive industrial farming methods, specialization, and international trade, but these established trends have now 'created vulnerabilities in the face of disruptions such as lockdowns, significant loss of employment, and illness among food system workers that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic' (Clapp and Moseley 2020). The system, in short, proves not only deleterious for workers and harmful environmentally, but also unsustainable in the face of new emerging challenges such as global pandemics.

COVID-19 highlighted the fragility of modern societies in late capitalism, and the connectedness of human and non-human life across the planet, while it also deepened pre-existing inequalities upon which current economic and political systems depend on. Migrant farmworkers have been at the margins of socio-political existence, while at the same time growing, picking, collecting, and transporting most of the food we consume. They are the racialized postcolonial subjects of oppression and exploitation that are 'oiling the machine' of food production in Europe and elsewhere. The seemingly progressive policies that opened the horizon of 'rights' for these groups (to cross boarders, to work, to access some form of healthcare), were not able to destabilize the necropolitical premise upon which their lives depend – that is, their expandability within farm labor dynamics and the related socio-political exclusion they face in local societies.

Diana Ojeda notices for the case of women in the context of oil plantations in Colombia: 'If it is through the dispossession of women's bodies, spaces, social ties, and reproductive labor that palm oil plantations are implemented and sustained, it is through them that they can be contained and subverted' (Ojeda 2021, 94). Similarly, the dependence of European food systems on the labor of migrant workers, might also hold a promise of insurgence and change. As women farmworkers movements, such as 'Jornaleras en Lucha'[3] in Huelva or even the claims of the group Regularización Ya![4] have shown through their struggles, that feminist socio-ecological visions of caring for people and planet must address the ongoing embodied injustices that this article has pointed to. If proposals to collectively recover COVID-19 are to be feminist and just, they need to not only focus on the ecological consequences of the agro-industrial complex versus of the so-called alternative agricultural practices, nor just to how farmers or consumers connect to the land and to food, but engage more with the issues here presented at

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[3]See: https://jornalerasenlucha.org/
[4]https://regularizacionya.com/

the interface of food production, agricultural labor and immigration, recognizing the 'radical intersectionality' of social, climatic, and health crises (Sultana 2021). While we do not engage with the issues concerning specifically female agricultural workers, we see a lot of room for further research that interrogates the socio-political invisibilization of women migrant farmworkers and the gendered embodiment of discrimination and violence they experience, as they tend to work more in warehouses, packaging facilities or in logistics, rather than in open farm fields which are typically dominating images and imaginaries of agricultural work represented by male workers. More questions also need to be asked regarding the necropolitics operating in spaces where migrant labor is prominent in relation to emerging climate risks and their impacts on health (e.g. heatwaves, cold spells, flooding, forest fires, among others), as well as how these are confronted and resisted by migrant collectives.

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