

**EDITED BY BINTI SINGH,
TANIA BERGER,
AND MANOJ PARMAR**

NEGOTIATING RESILIENCE WITH HARD AND SOFT CITY

URBAN FUTURES



“The expert-driven knowledge systems that have been dominating urban design and planning are increasingly falling short of providing sustainable solutions to the crises posed by climate change. The book *Negotiating Resilience with Hard and Soft City* captures the nerves of people’s knowledge that guides judgements and actions to cope with uncertainties in their everyday city lives. The book challenges the notion of a singular knowledge system in an urban ecosystem and staunchly advocates for the recognition of multiple micro-knowledge systems that cohabit and shape the city.”

Dr Rajesh Tandon, *Founder President, PRLA*

Dr Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay, *Director, PRLA*

“*Negotiating Resilience with Hard and Soft City* is cutting edge and is of high value for everyone who wants to gain more insight of some of the key frontiers of contemporary cities. Such a demarcation line is the book’s underlying proposition that we urgently need a better understanding of the ‘survival’ strategies of the most marginalised and poor to tackle our vast planetary challenges. In this vein the authors focus on the livelihoods and experiences of displacement of migrants and informal settlement dwellers from the global north and global south and expand urban concepts such as resilience, vulnerability, urban justice, and the ‘people as infrastructure’. The result is a timely, relevant and inspiring anthology.”

Peter Gotsch, *Professor in Sustainable Urban Development,
Norwegian University of Science and Technology*

“The book *Negotiating Resilience with Hard and Soft City* is a timely contribution to understanding why intangible aspects of city life, such as civil society activities and a sense of community, are as relevant as the ‘hard infrastructure’. The editors and authors of the book have extensive knowledge of how this duality affects the life of urban dwellers in the Global North and South. The book is a source of critical reflection for scholars and students of Urban Planning, Urban Geography, Urban Studies and disciplines engaged with understanding the problems of contemporary cities. It will also inform those questioning current narratives around the resilience concept, its complexity and challenges. To that knowledge, the book draws on several case studies and focuses on urban residents and the micro level, those spaces that shape the city. The different contributions

show how the ‘hard city’ conditions the livelihood of urban dwellers, the ‘soft city’, and how people, in turn, cope with those imposed challenges.”

Javier Martinez, *Associate Professor – Coordinator of the
Urban Planning and Management
Specialization, Department of Urban and Regional Planning and Geo-Information
Management, University of Twente*

NEGOTIATING RESILIENCE WITH HARD AND SOFT CITY

This book explores how cities are shaped by the lived experiences of inhabitants and examines the ways they develop strategies to cope with daily and unexpected challenges. It argues that migration, livelihood, and public health challenges result from inadequacies in the hard city—urban assets, such as land, infrastructure, and housing, and asserts that these challenges and escalating vulnerabilities are best negotiated using the soft city—social capital and community networks. In so doing, the authors criticise a singular knowledge system and argue for a granular, nuanced understanding of cities—of the interrelations between people in places, everyday urbanisms, social relationships, cultural practices, and histories. The volume presents perspectives from the Global South and the Global North and engages with city-specific cases from Africa, India, and Europe for a deeper understanding of resilience.

Part of the Urban Futures series, it will be of great interest to students and researchers of urban studies, urban planning, urban management, architecture, urban sociology, urban design, ecology, conservation, and urban sustainability. It will also be useful for urbanists, architects, urban sociologists, city and town planners, policy makers, and those interested in a deeper understanding of the contemporary and future city.

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Urban Futures

Series Editor: **Binti Singh**, PhD, *Dean, Research and Academic Development, KRVIA, Mumbai, India*

Uncertainty is the “new normal” for cities of the future. At this juncture our cities (both in the developed global North and in the developing and rapidly urbanizing Global South) are at the crossroads of unprecedented challenges and cautious choices. Cities worldwide are also bound by the general guidelines of the Sustainable Development Goals guiding our collective urban futures. No matter how much we think of our urban futures as a “collective”, questions of structural inequalities in economic opportunities, access to basic services, escalating vulnerabilities to climate change risks and justice compel us to look for grassroots, local responses and solutions. **Somewhere, cities seemed to have lost the plot while traversing their soft and hard boundaries.** The *Urban Futures* series attempts to draw the contours of our collective urban futures, identifies and articulates the pressing challenges cities face globally. It provides a starting point to some of the responses that we could adopt for a better and a more inclusive future.

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*Edited by Binti Singh, Tania Berger,
and Manoj Parmar*

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FOREWORD

Adapt or Die

*Sheela Patel*¹

Just before the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 in Glasgow, there circulated a clarion call saying “adapt or die.” Those of us who set our focus on adaptation, resilience and the loss and damage elements of the climate change debate believe that every choice made by each of us, our families, our neighbourhoods and our nations will determine if we can maintain the earth’s temperature to 1.5 degrees centigrade. These choices can and must drive what we do in research, science and mitigation and adaptation actions.

First, we must acknowledge that climate change does not operate in many different silos and has to do with every consumption choice we make. Every aspect of your day-to-day life comes from our voluntary or involuntary choices. The other side of this coin is the reality that many conditions and frameworks and policies and resource structures compel us to make choices, and they often do not align with what is good for the planet and good for our habitat and ourselves. So how do we develop a universal knowledge of the cause and effect of our choices that will help heal the planet?

Concept of the Climate Lens in Day-to-Day Life

All of us refrain from examining our choices and treat climate change and all its elements as having nothing to do with us. Both globally and locally, modern life teaches us to create different sections and systems to address decisions made globally by our governments and us. Our education and our research, on the basis of which we justify choices, are all similarly segmented. However, these last few years, global reflections are advancing the assertion that climate change, the impact of a carbon-driven economic growth model, is raising the earth’s temperature beyond sustainable limits. As we read this and other reflections on

climate change, our weather patterns are changing worldwide, causing violent storms, hurricanes, incessant rain, extreme heat and cold.

In the discussions on the adaptation aspect of development, the ability to put a climate lens on every action that is taken is for me the most powerful and valuable perspective. It helps us in every aspect of our day-to-day life by making us conscious of the links between what we choose and its impact and outcome on us and the planet.

As global and local actors, it can also compel us to make choices in whatever we do. We look at the climate implication of our decisions because we are making a huge transition from an economy based on carbon consumption to a reduction of carbon emissions to change the health of our planet. So how we work; what we eat; how it is produced, packaged, and transported; and how the economy works, all must make the transition.

All nations of the United Nations have agreed to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Climate Compact. Yet both are two sides of the same coin: seeking a universal commitment to social justice and those who are vulnerable and seeking change in the ways we achieve planetary health and well-being with target years that match.

In the lives of poor people, these choices are very difficult, though, and often an ideal choice is unavailable, inaccessible, and financially not possible. Why is that? Most vulnerable urban and rural communities operate in an environment of survival within very scarce and narrow options. Most of the choices they make are choices they are compelled to take rather than choices that will improve the quality of their lives in ways that will impact the planet's health. The rationale for choosing to focus on these vulnerable communities, households and individuals is because they represent the real test of civilization. If all of us can take care of the ones in the worst conditions, the chances are that solutions for the better off become easier to undertake.

Today, we live in a world where wealth generation and access and growth work for only 15% of the world's population, the extremely wealthy, and the volume of people living in terrible conditions is growing exponentially. Therefore, keeping a focus on the most vulnerable is critical if you want to deal with universal solutions.

The Culture of Conventional Practices and New Scientific Information

When people talk about the challenges of cultural practices both in SDGs and in climate change, the value and focus of cultural impacts, what we do daily, is important. Many traditional practices that are good for the community are also good for the climate and can promote the SDGs. At the same time, some practices expand carbon emissions that are harmful to people's lives and livelihood. How do we balance the assessment of cultural practices to focus on enhancing

actions that improve the quality of climate change? How do we look at scientific advancements and the pursuit of knowledge and science that contradict the traditions and cultures? And how do we assist and inform community practices to enable a constant dialogue between research and practice, both locally and globally?

The capacity and ability of global and local stakeholders to weigh the value of practices and explore how to balance these aspects that inform our choices are critical before any serious scalable transformation can occur. Not all cultural practices are good, and not all scientific advancement benefits everybody. So how do you assign a value to each? Science and research that seeks to see science in local cultural practices is vital in this fast-changing world. Today's scientists do not communicate to communities in the sense that ordinary people can read scientific papers, and their practices are reviewed by research and science.

How Can You Be the Change That You Want to Need

As educational institutions and researchers, the role of producing knowledge that examines your scientific understanding and the practices on the ground that can make a difference is very important for researchers and universities and educational institutions to play. In this context, the research that has been done as part of the BREUCOM project is important and the contribution must be seen from this framework. The best city-environment reduces the challenges of climate and carbon emissions in the city itself and the city's consumption and its systems: be it for water, be it for energy, be it for construction, be it for the consumption of food. These things impact the locations in rural areas where these things are produced. Therefore, understanding the science of climate change is important, and its implications for the educational curriculum, the practice of planners and architects and the consumers are critical for the transition that we are looking for. When we learn to deal with existing and anticipated disasters, we will not allow vulnerable people to be harmed or destroyed. We learn more about ways by which we can produce solutions that reduce the loss and damage and increase the resilience to the devastation which we know will happen before we truly put into action the challenge of transforming our habits and practices.

So, in the end, whether you are a vulnerable community of poor people or are an NGO and an activist working to link the challenges of the poor with policies and resource providers, whether you are an educator, a researcher, or a scientist, each of us in our world that is changing so fast. Whether in a formal setting or informal, as educators or students or practitioners, it is our collective individual aspiration for change that will help us enter this new space where we review what we do, how we do it and the knowledge base on which we make choices look at them from a climate lens.

Note

- 1 Sheela Patel is the founder and Director of the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) since 1984 to support community organisations of the urban poor in their efforts to access secure housing, basic amenities, and seek their right to the city. She is widely recognised—nationally and internationally—for seeking urgent attention to the issues of urban poverty, housing and infrastructure onto the radar of governments, bilateral and international agencies, foundations, and other organisations. SPARC works closely with two community-based organisations—National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan (women’s collectives in slums)—that are active in 70 cities in India. Sheela is a founder member of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI), an international network of poor people’s organisations that support them in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Sheela was a Commissioner of the Commission for Adaptation to Climate Change between 2018 and 2020 and is currently a trustee of the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) and a Global Ambassador for Race to Zero and Race to Resilience.

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- Building Resilient Urban Communities (BReUCom; <https://www.breucom.eu/>)
- Social Inclusion and Energy Management for Informal Urban Settlements (SES; <https://mdl.donau-uni.ac.at/ses/>)

While BInUCom and BReUCom projects brought together universities and NGOs from Europe and India, SES joined partners from Ethiopia. The enthusiastic and wholehearted engagement of scholars in all these partner institutions formed the crucial cornerstone of these projects as well as that of this book. We therefore would like to extend our deeply felt gratitude to all of them.

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4

INFORMAL HOUSING OF MIGRANTS IN ITALY

*Flavia Albanese, Giovanna Marconi,
and Michela Semprebon*

Introduction

This chapter explores some of the main forms of informal housing that migrants experience in Italy, resulting from multiple barriers in accessing the formal public/private housing sector or else in the asylum seeker and refugee reception system.

As of January 2021, there were broadly 5 million migrant residents in Italy, representing 8.5% of the country's population (ISTAT, 2021). This number does not include migrants with irregular legal status, whose number can only be estimated. According to recent studies, they are estimated to be more than 600,000 (Villa, 2020). By “migrants,” we refer to all non-nationals settled in the country, including both documented and undocumented migrants, regardless of the reasons underpinning their decision to migrate—economic migrants versus forced migrants. This is because boundaries among categories are always blurred, and informal housing practices are enacted by migrants who may have different legal statuses but experience similar difficulties in accessing adequate housing. Nevertheless, we will show that some dimensions of informality mainly involve long-term residents, while others primarily affect refugees, asylum seekers, newcomers, and/or undocumented people.

Migrants' access to housing in Italy and their settlement conditions are complex and multifaceted. At the outset, it is determined by their legal status. It must be stressed that migrants risk falling into irregularity whenever their residence permit expires. Most residence permits are strictly connected with regular employment, and losing a job often means losing one's regular status.

Moreover, people with foreign origins are generally part of the weakest groups in society. Their social, political, and legal status classifies them as second-class citizens. From a socio-economic point of view, they are widely

recognised as more disadvantaged than other segments of the population (Tosi, 2017). According to 2018 ISTAT data, the incidence of relative poverty is higher within families with members of migrant origins (23.9%) or foreign members only (34.5%), compared to family units including only Italian members (10.5%).

Other factors undermining access to proper and adequate housing are lack of citizens' rights, even for those owning residence permits; limited awareness of one's rights; lack of family—or other kinds of—networks of support; racism and discrimination; and inadequacy of housing policies.

When faced with the impossibility of entering formal housing, migrants are thus forced to rely on DIY (do-it-yourself) solutions (Cremaschi et al., 2020)—informal, illegal, or at the edge of legality. The following sections give an overview of some forms of informal housing experienced by migrants in Italy when public policies and the private real-estate market do not meet their housing needs. These are by no means the only types of informal housing present in the country and must be considered only as an example, pointing at the precarious conditions migrants have been facing in the Italian context. These conditions, in turn, amplify vulnerabilities to environmental disasters and long-term climate risks. Here again, we are faced with a situation when the hard city fails to address questions of environmental justice. Migrants are left to fend for themselves with their own limited resources. This chapter points to yet another case, from the developed North, where soft city is negotiated with the hard city to build on resilience by a particular group of citizens; in this case, migrants.

The examples provided draw from different pieces of research undertaken, including in the most recent years by the SSIIM UNESCO Chair Research Group to which the authors are associated. They also draw from examples building on secondary desktop research. In particular, the authors explore the following forms of informality: informal rent, squatting, encampments, and rural ghettos—all discussed in the sections below.

Informal Rent—How Do Migrants Experience the Rental Market?

The first type of informal housing the authors focus on are the informal practices put in place by migrants in real-estate markets, particularly in rental ones.

It has to be noted that the Italian housing markets fit into the so-called Mediterranean model characterised, not only by high levels of home ownership but also by a structural weakness of the public and social housing sector (Agustoni, 2013). Italy is a country in which ownership has been prevailing over rent. In 2020, only 20% of the population lived in rented apartments, while 80% lived in their own home. For foreigners, the situation is reversed: in 2020, 64% lived in rented apartments, 7.4% in the workplace, and 7.6% lived with relatives or other nationals, while 21% lived in a house they owned (Scenari Immobiliari, 2020).

It must be noted that the conditions of the foreign population in Italy in the first decade of 2000 were very different from what they are today. In those years, some foreign families were in a phase of more permanent settlement in the territory that favoured their access to the real-estate market for purchase. The growth in rents was underway, and it was first halted by the 2008 crisis and then again experienced an ascending phase between 2015 and 2019. In general, however, foreigners who buy are workers who have resided in Italy for at least ten years and have permanent jobs.

However, most of the foreigners present in Italy have little (if any) purchasing power. All those who do not have family savings behind them—migrants in the first place but not only them—are indeed experiencing growing difficulties in housing access and affordability. At the same time, relying on public policies is not an option. Since the late 1990s, public investment in housing policies—especially public housing—has drastically reduced (Baldini & Poggio, 2014). Moreover, a large number of public housing units have been sold during the past few decades, and part of the remaining stock is not assignable because it is out of standard.

Many migrants participate in tenders to allocate public housing, but—contrary to what is often reported in the media—the percentage of housing assigned to people of foreign origin is almost always lower (Nomisma, 2017). In addition, some Regions have introduced ad hoc criteria, formally neutral but with the implicit (publicly touted) aim of excluding migrants from the waiting lists for public housing. The only option that often remains is thus the private rental market.

Even whereby rent options are accessible, there are critical issues. The liberalisation and deregulation of the private rental market that took place at the end of the 1990s has led to extraordinary growth in the amounts requested for rents, especially in large cities, weighing on the most disadvantaged families and triggering a significant increase in evictions for arrears.

In addition to the barriers also encountered by Italian families, foreigners experience limited social protection and a series of discrimination and racism processes including institutional ones (Sunia, 2016).

First, we should emphasise that the apartments rented to migrants often have very low-quality standards, both in size and structural characteristics. Unscrupulous owners, indeed, often exploit the needs and precariousness of migrants to make money with poor apartments that otherwise could not be placed on the market (Nomisma, 2016). As in many workplaces, where migrants do the so-called 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous, and difficult), also housing conditions can include dirty and dangerous places (ActionAid, 2019)

Furthermore, rents are often increased for foreigners. According to a 2009 survey, migrants (in addition to being more subject to illegal rents or contracts registered for amounts lower than the one paid) pay a rent increase by 30/50% compared to Italians (Sunia, 2009).

To be able to pay the requested rent, migrants are therefore forced to resort to a DIY solution in conditions of informality and instability.

Cases of forced cohabitation and coexistence in overcrowded apartments with poor sanitary conditions are well known. The pandemic since 2020 has added to the already poor existing conditions. As challenging as it is to measure and report quantitative information on overcrowding in privately owned apartments, the home overcrowding rate, which measures people's perception, highlights a gap between foreigners and Italians, going from 21% for the former to 7.2% for the latter (ISTAT, 2018).

Often "imposed" directly by the owners, overcrowding is sometimes a strategy implemented by migrants themselves to divide the too onerous costs and make them affordable. Often, rental contracts are registered to someone with a valid residence permit to which many speculative sub-rentals are then connected. In fact, not only are single rooms or single beds rented, but sometimes even the same bed is rented to different people, taking advantage of the various work shifts.

These informal housing solutions take hold mainly in decaying neighbourhoods located in peripheral urban areas or the outskirts of metropolitan cities—often along infrastructural axes of public transport.

Nevertheless, housing precariousness for migrants is not only an urban issue. As pointed out by many authors (see research project "Small-Size Cities and Social Cohesion: Policies and Practices for the Social and Spatial Inclusion of International Migrants"; Balbo, 2015), there is an ongoing process of suburbanisation and "ruralisation" that pushes a slice of the foreign population towards the smaller centres in Italy. Regarding DIY practices, it is thus interesting to mention a phenomenon observed in the historical centres of some small municipalities which are experiencing a process of depopulation (Albanese, 2016; Fioretti, 2016). The buildings of historical centres are then occupied (sometimes with regular contracts, but also in an informal way) by immigrant families who are satisfied with dilapidated apartments but often work on them to make improvements, effectively renovating (and revitalising) a housing stock in a state of neglect.

Migrants Squatting

Migrants squatting in vacant buildings—like former residential buildings, disused public ones, and former factories—is now common practice in Italy.

For the reasons already mentioned, like clearance of the public housing stock and growing rental rates, many people in Italy are experiencing housing precariousness. One of the most common strategies to overcome these conditions is to occupy empty or abandoned buildings.

Squatter housing—just like other forms of bottom-up strategies of (re) appropriation of spaces—is often understood as a form of socio-political protest (Cellamare, 2014) and as a practical attempt to fill the gaps of national public policies and local government, in other words, soft city in practice in a situation where hard city fails to deliver.

The phenomenon is widespread in Italy, especially in big cities, first and foremost the Italian capital of Rome (Mudu, 2014). According to a Parliamentary interrogation inquiry, in 2015, there were around 105 housing squats in Rome (reaching up to 500 residents per building). They are in empty and disused buildings; they may be privately or publicly owned, occupied by organised groups of family or individuals (both Italians and migrants), often in cooperation with housing rights movements.

Two examples in the city of Rome underline the peculiarity and the criticality of migrants squatting for housing purposes in Italy and highlight how they have been the first victims of the housing crisis.

One is the so-called “Metropoliz,” a former factory squatted in 2009 by housing deprived households with the cooperation of a housing rights movement. In this multiethnic squat located in peripheral neighbourhoods of the city, different realities (Roma people, Italians, and migrants with different origins and legal statuses) coexist, showing strong and horizontal forms of self-management (Grazioli 2021; Grazioli & Caciagli, 2018).

Another interesting case, which highlights the refugees’ high precariousness in Italy, is the squatting of a disused public building located in Rome’s city centre (Via Curtatone). The building was squatted by refugees from the Horn of Africa (mainly Eritreans) with the support of the Roman Housing Movement in 2013, and roughly evicted in 2017 without adequate accommodation alternatives proposed to the evictees (Annunziata, 2020; Medici Senza Frontiere (MSF), 2016; MSF 2018).

What is important to stress is that the phenomenon of the occupation of buildings for residential purposes deeply intersects with the housing needs of migrants. There is a long history of squatting for housing-related to migration in Europe (Cattaneo & Martinez, 2014). For migrants, squatting has also been thought of as an alternative to dominant anti-immigrant policies (Mudu & Chattopadhyay, 2017).

A quota of migrants—often a significant proportion—can thus be found in many squats. Yet, some buildings are occupied by migrants only.

The high rate of migrants in squats is a sign of their poverty and social disadvantage; however, it also shows that the reception system for refugees and asylum seekers has severe deficiencies.

Informal settlements of refugees and asylum seekers, either squatter buildings or makeshift encampments, are in fact widespread across Italian territory, many of which arose around 2013, right after the closure of the “Emergenza Nord Africa,” extraordinary reception project started in 2011.

Camps and Encampments

In this section, makeshift camps and temporary encampments of refugees, asylum seekers, and transit migrants will be described and discussed.

Two typologies of encampments can be distinguished partly based on migrants' status. On the one hand, there are tent camps, barracks, container encampments, populated by people with foreign origins who have lived in Italy for many years, but have never accessed the reception system, or have been expelled without completing their social inclusion path, or have been experiencing difficulties in finding a regular job. We will come back to the specific example of so-called "rural ghettos" in Southern Italy, in the next section.

Alongside there are makeshift settlements where migrants who just arrived in Italy can be found. These are migrants who transit in the attempt to reach North European countries; who arrive by land from the Balkan route and are not "dispersed" through the quotas defined by the EU migrant relocation scheme; asylum seekers who are waiting for the procedure to be processed or whose asylum application is rejected and even refugees exited from reception centres at the end of the asylum process.

For them, to be *de facto* excluded or run a high risk of being excluded from the institutional reception system, encampments are often the only available solution. The very existence of spontaneous camps is thus a direct consequence of the dysfunctionality of the Italian and European refugee reception systems.

While migrants arriving by sea on Southern Italian shores enter the reception system through the system of dispersal (unless they refuse to do so or flee), migrants arriving by land can face more obstacles in accessing any form of protection.

That is why many makeshift encampments are found in border cities close to the Balkan route, including Northwestern Italian cities such as Trieste, Gorizia, and Udine. They can also be found in the area of Foggia and Crotona, in Southern Italy, where centres of first reception are located, as well as in Trento, Bolzano and Ventimiglia, in Northern Italy (Semprebón & Pelacani, 2020). Informal settlements are widespread throughout the Italian territory. Some temporary encampments are in bigger cities too, such as Rome and Milan, where the largest train stations are located, at relevant crossroads for migrants in transit towards Northern Europe.

However, due to EU internal borders being closed, mid-size cities like Bolzano or even small towns like Ventimiglia have become a sort of hotspot.

Migrants stopped at Brenner Pass, on the border with Austria, are forced to return to Bolzano, the last large city before the frontier. Having no right to a place in a reception facility of the city, they live in extremely precarious conditions, sleeping along the riverbanks and under bridges, from where local police repeatedly turn them out using the excuse of the city's decorum.

The same conditions can be found in the westernmost borders, between Italy and France, where Ventimiglia is located. Here, the closure of the borders resulted in a growth in the number of people stuck in the area, living in informal reception centres and makeshift open-air settlements. There was for a while a reception centre (managed by the Italian Red Cross), but it has been reported to be overcrowded and unhealthy. Moreover, for different reasons (reaching capacity,

exclusion of some categories such as specific nationalities, women, and children), many migrants were refused entry to this centre. For the many people stranded at the border, the only alternative left is sleeping near the railway station or under the overpass at the mouth of a river. There, they rest before their next attempt to cross the borders, hidden in a train or through the mountains. Throughout 2017, the number of migrants at the mouth of the Roja River has rarely been less than 50 people, with peaks of 400 migrants living in inhumane and unsafe conditions, particularly for the most vulnerable, women and minors (MSF, 2018).

Even if the number of migrants who lived in makeshift encampments in Italy is hard to define, according to MSF, in 2017 (right after the pick of arrivals), there were at least 10,000 people excluded from the reception system. Those migrants are thus forced to live in informal settlements with scarce contact with local services and limited access to basic needs and healthcare.

Rural Ghettos¹

Several scholarly works have looked at the workforce reproduction and workers' housing conditions (Gadea et al., 2014; Torres Perez, 2011) to illustrate how the complexity and variability of migration models and trajectories can be associated with different housing strategies and settlement forms. With reference to the most segregated and ghettoised forms of settlement (Wacquant, 2007), some authors (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2013) have shown how they constitute the "natural" physical continuum of the agricultural field, whereby work and reproduction activities overlap to concentrate in one place. In such spaces, migrant workers are spatially isolated from native resident areas; hence, they are physically invisible. They are invisible from a temporal perspective, too, as they move across Italy, from one rural area to another, for different seasonal harvests. These settlements are functional to the flexible organisation of labour and are more easily tolerated by natives, who perceive them as temporary arrangements, although they often become cyclical or even permanent (Hellio, 2013; Lara et al., 2014).

In Rosarno, working and living conditions are stratified by geographic origin: EU migrants, particularly Bulgarians and Romanians, both male and female, are employed semi-informally for more extended periods, thanks also to European citizenship (preventing any "legal nuisances" for employers in case of inspections). On the other hand, sub-Saharan Africans, mainly male, primarily work for small farms on an informal basis, often for a few days of the peak season. At present, sub-Saharan Africans live in the most (visibly) difficult conditions, in rural and suburban ghettos. Housing is poor and lacks basic facilities, and it includes an official camp with tents and a shanty town in the nearby industrial area of San Ferdinando; many old overcrowded tumbledown farm buildings, far from the city centre; a container camp in Rosarno; old derelict overcrowded buildings in the town centre, frequently rented out informally. Migrants coming from other countries, mainly North Africans and East Europeans, generally live in equally

difficult conditions but are hidden within the walls of their dwellings—hence they are hardly visible to the native population, especially when they are trapped in the “caporali” system. In Sermide, interviewees did not report working and living conditions as severe as those in Rosarno. However, they explained that migrants work for long hours, with only very short breaks, primarily in greenhouses with temperatures above 40 degrees. Often, they are employed for a few days in the peak season only and with partial contracts, as in the case of Rosarno. Housing conditions are also precarious: available solutions involve emergency accommodation in old, abandoned, overcrowded farmhouses, a few kilometres from the town centre, out of sight of the native residents. Over time, Moroccan families have managed to rent apartments in towns and nearby villages and settle there.

Nevertheless, they have recently faced obstacles in accessing the private housing market due to rising unemployment and the difficulty of covering the rent and discriminatory practices by property owners. With reference to employment, some forms of stratification are evident, based on national origins and legal status: competition has grown between Moroccan and Eastern European workers, and the economic crisis has exacerbated it. Migrants who are officially recruited through transnational seasonal contracts can “cover” foreseeable requirements, while undocumented migrants can become useful for unforeseen circumstances.

First, both municipalities made efforts to control the presence of migrants, limit their visibility and contain escalating tensions to respond to (native) residents’ perceptions of unsafety. Nonetheless, it must be stressed that while in Sermide, tensions largely kept the shape of complaints, in Rosarno, they grew stronger and were further echoed by the local, national, and international media to burst out into violent episodes.

Second, both municipalities have failed to effectively address migrants’ needs in terms of living conditions and labour rights. Interventions in Sermide and Rosarno have been limited in time and intensity and merely translated into partial quick-fix solutions to immediate problems while overlooking ongoing, un-addressed, and un-resolved long-term accommodation needs, labour exploitation, and social exclusion. Arguably, such actions have contributed to transforming a rising temporary emergency into a permanent one; hence the emergency management of migrant seasonal workers has become chronic. Rural ghettos have gradually lost their character as seasonal settlements linked to the agricultural harvest (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2013) and have become permanent living solutions. In Rosarno, migrants have been settling in camps and shantytowns—occupied mainly by sub-Saharan Africans—beyond the seasonal harvesting period (Campagne in Lotta, 2013). Growing unemployment, alongside the reduction of labour demand for citrus harvesting, has further resulted in the extended precarious permanence of migrants in the area of Rosarno. In Sermide, seasonal migrant workers have continued living in precarious conditions, largely with the mediation of local cooperatives. This has contributed to their isolation and has prevented them from taking legal action against exploitation. Similarly,

the scope for action of the two municipalities can be linked to the fact that they both lack a long-term strategic vision for migrants' integration, with no reflection nor any actual arrangements to deal with seasonal migrants who have settled more permanently. The idea of immigration as a circular and temporary phenomenon is surviving, particularly as far as seasonal workers are concerned, despite rising evidence that workers often do not go back to their country but settle with their families.

Unlike public actors, non-institutional ones have proved decisive in addressing temporary migrants' needs (Ambrosini & Van der Leun, 2015). In Rosarno, sovra-local NGOs have been of pivotal importance in granting access to medical services, and many non-institutional actors have operated to assist migrants (food distribution, provision of blankets, and basic furnishings). As in Rosarno, non-institutional actors in Sermide have played a crucial role in providing "first assistance services" to migrants.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the housing conditions of migrants in present-day Italy have been discussed in detail. The poor conditions of the five different typologies of migrant housing described above present another case when the hard city fails to address questions of environmental justice. This, in turn, amplifies the vulnerabilities of those sections of the populace to environmental disasters and long-term climate risks. Migrants are often left to fend for themselves with their limited resources.

Migration is a major challenge faced by many countries in Europe today. This chapter points to yet another case, from the developed North, where soft city is negotiated with the hard city to build on resilience by a certain group of citizens; in this case, migrants.

Note

- 1 This section is based on a partial extract of a paper written by one of the authors. See Sempregon et al. (2017).

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