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TRACING THE FUTURE OF MIGRANTS' LABOUR RELATIONS. EXPERIENCES OF INSTITUTIONALISED MIGRANT PRECARIETY IN DENMARK AND GREECE

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ABSTRACT

Restrictive migration laws, fracturing of citizenship and neoliberal labour markets intertwine with persistent migration flows to produce migrant precarity in the European context. This article examines the institutionalisation of precarious and unfree labour conditions for migrants in Denmark and Greece, through the enactment of laws and policy initiatives. The article situates itself in a literature regarding migrant precarity and its institutionalisation, unfree and informal labour and the production of immobility, which points to their interrelation as a constitutive element of modern European economies. In both cases, we can identify a retrenchment of rights and likewise the cases indicate that a fractured citizenship is instrumentalised in producing various types of immobility. The article concludes that despite differences between the European North and South we can identify a situation of unfree labour characterised by a lack of real or acceptable alternatives, within a setting of coercive geographies.

INTRODUCTION

The post-2014 migration influx to Europe has raised widespread social concern and academic debate, with one of the most crucial issues being migrants' and refugees' integration in the labour market. In order to contain and regulate this influx the EU has adopted a preventive migration policy. At the same time and given the predicted skill shortages, policymakers have called for an optimisation of the existing migrant labour force (Martín et al. 2015). Within this setting, we see different forms of unfree labour relations and increased precarisation of work. Be this in agricultural enclaves of the European South or high-tech metropolitan regions of the North, European governance tends not just to facilitate but rather institutionalise the shaping of coercive geographies for migrants, through policymaking that actively reinforces migrants' precarity. Marcel Paret and Shannon Gleeson argue that migrant experiences, due to being marked by various forms of exclusion, "provide a crucial window into the origins and institutionalization of precarity" (2016: 277). This is a useful argument which points to the potential added value of this article when it comes to discussing and theorising precarity and migration. Further than just examining migrant experiences we argue that focusing on institutionalisation of precarity goes beyond solely depicting precarity as an outcome of the removal of government protections and corporate restructuring to achieve flexibility (Kalleberg 2009). We rather want to stress that institutionalisation shows an active turn of labour market policies towards a broader

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restructuring of labour characterised by generalised insecurity (Strauss & McGrath 2017). This perspective expands our understanding of (migrant) precarity as an empirical phenomenon to a focus on the drivers of the institutionalisation of precarity.

Against this background this article raises general questions about the entanglement of migration policy and the institutionalisation of precarity and unfree labour in two different socio-economic contexts, namely the Danish and the Greek one. Although Denmark and Greece are at the antipodes of the EU and have commenced different policy approaches, risks of precarisation and institutionalisation of inequality within the labour market are imminent in both cases. In Denmark, specialised schemes for highly skilled workers such as the Green Card render migrants susceptible to precarisation. A recent policy initiative, the integration basic education programme (IGU) targeting newly arrived refugees, has introduced a low phase-in salary. This makes it less costly for employers to employ refugees and risks causing prolonged precarity within an institutional framework. In Greece, the concept of 'para-legality' (Kapsalis 2018) has recently been introduced to describe a new law that officially promotes the formal employment of irregularly residing, deportable migrants. It has been criticised for entrapping migrants to certain sectors and geographical areas, thus increasing their dependency on their employers, while merely providing them with a deportation postponement.

What links the two cases – in spite of different labour law traditions and labour market frameworks – is the constant spread of neoliberal practices within the respective labour markets. “Emphasizing the centrality of markets and market-driven solutions, privatization of government resources, and removal of government protections” is what Kalleberg (2009: 3) has described as the globally spread “neoliberal revolution”. The consequences of neoliberal globalisation have been characterised in different ways emphasising the various emerging forms of precarity. Precarity, as a concept, is used to describe the growth of flexible, temporary, sub-contracted, insecure and contingent work in a global neoliberal economy (Lewis & Waite 2015). By analysing the relations between neoliberal globalisation and migrant precarity in two distinct coercive geographies through the intersections of political economy (of economy, labour regulations and migration policies) and political geography (of North and South of Europe) we seek to contribute to a discussion on the possible patterns of transformation of migrants’ labour relations in a European context.

In the present article, we aim to answer the following research questions: What kinds of labour market and immigration policy frameworks enable the institutionalisation of precarious and unfree labour in the Danish and Greek cases? How do these particular immigration regimes finally produce immobility, despite EU discourse (European Commission 2015) on achieving labour mobility? Our intention is not to produce an analysis that covers the extent of migrant precarity in Greece or Denmark. Already existing research on the matter has investigated migrant precarity and labour exploitation in the agricultural context (Papadopoulos et al. 2018; Kasimis et al. 2015), as well as in temporary agency

employment, the hospitality sector (Maroukis 2016) and care sector (Maroukis 2017). In the Danish case, there is a more limited literature (Rasmussen et al. 2016; Refslund & Thörnquist 2016). Rather, by bringing to the fore and juxtaposing two distinct socio-economic paradigms (the Danish and the Greek) co-existing within the political geography of the European Union and EU border regime, our article aspires to contribute to the ongoing public and policy debates regarding labour and migration in a period of continuing polarisation regarding migration issues and xenophobic rhetoric in the EU. We also want to add to the existing literature by identifying patterns of institutionalisation of precarity and unfree labour in coercive geographies in Denmark and Greece.

The first section of the article draws on the existing literature on the concepts of migrant precarity and unfree labour (Lewis et al. 2015; Schierup, Ålund & Likić-Brborić 2014) in order to set up our theoretical framework regarding their institutionalisation. Examples of migrant precarity in a European context are presented in order to highlight the way migrants' immobility is produced by neoliberal labour markets coupled with restrictive immigration regimes (Anderson 2010). Next, we continue to explore these issues by providing a nuanced map of labour market characteristics and policymaking rationales which establish migrants' precarity in the Greek and the Danish cases. In the conclusion, we discuss our findings, discerning tendencies in contemporary policymaking regarding migration and labour and stressing the need for further research on the institutionalisation of precarity.

METHOD AND DATA

The methodological approach differed in the selection of empirical material for the two cases, since the existing relevant data on the Danish case was already available, whereas available information on the implementation of the recent Greek legislation was scarce. Therefore, we conducted a mixed methods investigation (Creswell & Clark 2017). In Denmark the data collection mainly consisted of desk-based research; drawing on official reports, existing relevant research, news articles, accessible statistical data, analysis of the respective arrangements and policy initiatives. This material both allows for analysing the policy developments within the schemes for highly skilled migrants coming to Denmark as well as the policy approach to integrating newly arrived refugees on the labour market. We include migrants' experiences of the policy framework and of precarious working lives through interviews made for different media sources. This material also counts interviews with and statements from political stakeholders. The main focus of our analysis is on the institutionalisation of precarity through an analysis of policy arrangement, so we have not included participant observation or found it necessary to conduct our own interviews for the Danish case.

Conversely, interviews were essential in order to complement data on the Greek case, since available information consisted only of legal texts, parliamentary debate and minimum

existing research, whereas statistical data (revealing the scope) on the recent law remains inaccessible to the public. After collecting and analysing existing material through desk-based research we composed an interview guide formulated to encourage interviewees to express their professional assessments on the migrant/labour policymaking and “provide responses in their own terms” (Qu & Dumay 2011). Five officials currently and formerly employed in Ministries and Agencies involved in the lawmaking procedure and implementation of the recent law were chosen for expert interviews (Flick 2009) so as to obtain basic statistical figures and insight into interpretation of governmental decision-making. A sixth expert interview – facilitated through one of the interviewees – was conducted with one of the composers of the law. Given the restricted access to data, in-depth interviewing was indispensable (Taylor & Bogdan 1998). Before every interview we clearly stated the centrality of precarity and the way it is institutionalised in our common research in both countries and identified the recent law as our main focal point in Greece. The controversial character of the law was highlighted by the unwillingness of four out of six officials to be recorded, since they were skeptical of the type of questions they would have to answer. One of them asked for their anonymity to be respected if they were to provide insight and straightforward answers rather than a spokesperson’s account. A deep analysis of many aspects of the law (preparatory procedures, lawmaking, implementation, gaps, evaluation) was achieved. All interviews were conducted in Greek, and participants were assured that they could choose to keep off the record any delicate information disclosed during the interview. This is the reason why several details on how this law was finally enacted are not exposed in this article. In the present article we have anonymized the informants, respected all information that was asked to be kept off the record and have not used any material against people’s wishes. Nevertheless, substantial information provided by the officials guides the empirical discussion. Also, quotes and opinions have been used in the article in a reflective way, respecting and presenting the points of view and general considerations of participants and combining them where possible with other available data.

INSTITUTIONALISING PRECARITY

Precarity has gained importance in labour market, citizenship and migration studies (Schierup et al. 2014; Jørgensen 2016). Precarity is connected to governmentality, since “precarization in neoliberalism is no longer perceived as a phenomenon of ‘exception’, but instead as positioned in the midst of a process of normalization, which enables governing through insecurity” (Lorey 2011: 1). As argued by Harald Bauder, the political economy of neoliberal globalisation creates a condition where the excluded are unsafe and vulnerable, but not superfluous – they are indeed valuable due to their vulnerable position and thus particularly exploitable (Bauder 2006). The concepts ‘precariat’, ‘precarity’ and ‘precarisation’ have been outlined in different ways. In this article, precarity designates a condition, precariat the identity formation, and precarisation the processual aspects

(Jørgensen 2016). Their various conceptualisations have raised criticism for a number of reasons, amongst others for lacking coherent class analysis or having Western-centric normative dimensions (for a thorough review, see also Strauss & McGrath 2017). In the article we focus mainly on the concept of institutionalised precarity within employment relations (cf. Lewis & Waite 2015), rather than referring to precarity as ontological vulnerability or insecurity (Butler 2004). The argument we put forth is that precarity emerges in particular geographical and historical contexts which are decisive for how it is shaped (cf. Gill & Kasmir 2016). Precarity thus is spatialised and situated in particular political geographies, which we describe as coercive geographies.

The figure of the 'migrant' is often seen as an epitome of precarity, with irregular and circulant migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers being among the most disadvantaged. In line with this the management of global migration has been described as a privileged tool in the creation of a political economy merging new forms of globalised labour force management with a fragmentation, depreciation and profound remoulding of established frameworks of citizenship (Bauder 2006). Bridget Anderson claims that the methodical making of 'institutional uncertainty', in particular connected with irregular migration, "help[s] produce 'precarious workers' over whom employers and labour users have particular mechanisms of control" (2010: 300). In this context immigration controls function both as "a tap regulating the flow of labour" and as "a mould shaping certain forms of labour" (ibid. 301). There is an interplay of entrant categories, employment relations and construction of institutionalised uncertainty steered by immigration controls to form particular types of labours and relations to the employers and labour market (ibid.; see also Goldring & Landolt 2011). The legal status of the migrant is produced by immigration control, which at the same time produces different types of illegality.

This discussion leads us towards an understanding of the drivers of the institutionalisation of precarity. In 1998 Pierre Bourdieu followed up upon his previous work on precarity and wrote about the spread of precariousness and the reason for this taking place. He claimed that precariousness is not the product of an economic fatality identified with the effects of globalisation, and that we should rather regard it as a "political will" (1998). The deepening of flexibility underpinning the development of labour markets deliberately exploits a situation of insecurity that it helps to reinforce (ibid.). In this sense, neoliberalism is not an empty signifier but a governmental technology (Lazzarato 2009). Workers are treated as commodities, rather than humans in need of social protection (Paret & Gleeson 2016). Lorey continues her argument mentioned above by stating that: "Understanding precarization as governmental makes it possible to problematize the complex interactions of an instrument of governing with conditions of economic exploitation and modes of subjectivation in their ambivalence between subjugation and empowerment" (2011: 2). In regards to migrants a main driver of this development is the intersection between migration control and flexible labour market policies (cf. Anderson; Kalleberg).

The Becoming-Migrant of Labour

Empirical examples of migrants' precarious labour conditions are numerous, depending on regional and national context. In the context of the United Kingdom there are the Chinese migrants drowning while cockle-picking in Morecambe Bay (Lewis et al. 2015a), Lithuanian migrants on poultry farms working 120-hour weeks, Polish workers in fields and warehouses first working 'illegally', then becoming regular (after the EU enlargement) and now redundant alongside their British colleagues (Lawrence 2015). In the tomato fields of Puglia in Italy undocumented or "precariously documented" African migrants work under exploitative conditions in crews led by gangmasters. Despite widespread and well-known illegality in almost every aspect of their employment, the Italian state displays no will for institutional intervention (Gambino 2017). Seasonal berry pickers in Sweden are one more example of precarious labour conditions for migrants and also of how, even in a country with relatively high labour regulation, coercive labour abuse reigns in informal labour regimes (Mesic & Woolfson 2015). The system set up to manage migration in a given context (be it country or region) can produce its own type of precarity (Parreñas et al. 2018). There is a difference between the arrangements in Denmark, Greece and Italy. Nevertheless, we see arrangements as the zero-hours agency habits pioneered in the food and agriculture sector spreading across the economy. Sandro Mezzadra (2007) has argued that migrant conditions in this way prefigure the conditions of the precariat because migration tests the limits of capitalist control and managed migration, and because the precariousness of migrant labour can spread to the entire workforce (Jørgensen 2016). Precarity activists have referred to this process as "the becoming-migrant of labour" (Casas-Cortés 2014) – Javier Toret and Nicolás Sguiglia (2006: 108) argue about

the centrality that mobility (both in a geographical or functional sense) has in labour today. Working conditions suffered by migrants today (such as informality in the contract, vulnerability, intense links between territory and employment, low salaries, lack of union rights, temporality, total availability, etc.) are spreading today to the rest of workers.

Thus, when in this article we seek to trace and analyse migrants' labour relations, we see analysis as embedded in a larger framework discussing the future of labour relations on a more general level. From a Marxist perspective, unfree labour relates to "wage labour under capitalism, in which the worker is both free and compelled to sell his/her labour" (Strauss 2013: 185). A worker prevented (e.g. by mobility restriction, by threats of violence) from commodifying his/her labour power is by this definition unfree. Different configurations of im/mobility are a crucial factor in producing varied dynamics of migrants' precarity. Vickers et al. offer a typology of such dynamics as 'surplus', 'rooted' and 'hyper-flexible workers' (2019: 8), all of which can contain unfreedom on a certain degree, regardless of geographical or job mobility. Unfreedom also takes other forms, as migrant workers for different reasons

can end up in relations they may have entered voluntarily, but then slip into forced, coercive relationships (e.g. due to debt). When terming an employment as unfree we do not wish to engage in dichotomising assumptions revolving around the binary freedom/unfreedom, since such binaries blur our political and geographical understanding of labour relations (cf. Lerche 2011). In line with critical studies of unfree labour (Strauss & McGrath 2017), we argue that moving beyond these binaries allows us to investigate levels of unfreedom in labour relations which according to e.g. the ILO framework or even some Marxist theorists would not be termed unfree (McGrath 2016).

Unfreedom, in the case of migrant labour, differs from precarity and precarious labour. The intersection of a particular political economy (labour regulations and immigration policies) and political geography (of the national and European border regimes) creates forms of immobility and unfreedom. Investigating the interconnection between neoliberal work and welfare regimes, asylum and immigration controls and the exploitation of workers, Hannah Lewis and colleagues coin the notion of ‘hyper-precariety’ to interrogate both the binaries such as free/forced labour within dominant conceptualisations of migrant work and to highlight variations and continua in migrant labour experiences (Lewis et al. 2015b). Hyper-precariety emerges from the same bases as the ones mentioned by Bridget Anderson, a complex interplay between neoliberal labour markets, global capitalism and restrictive immigration regimes. The notion of hyper-precariety is useful for our two cases as it opens up for the diversity within particular institutional settings. Rather than modern-day slavery (Fudge 2018), we can identify various forms and types of ‘unfreedom’, ‘stuckness’ and immobility formed by the control mechanisms (e.g. Parreñas et al. 2018). More than symbolising exploitation in the form of forced labour, hyper-precariety thus symbolises exploitative unfree labour characterised by a lack of real or acceptable alternatives –deriving also from transnational social reproduction and gender relations- (Lewis et al. 2015b) or when a labour relationship entered into freely becomes coercive (Strauss 2013). Lewis et al. (2015a) show how asylum seekers and refugees are susceptible to forced labour not only in the informal but also the formal sector of the UK labour market. Hence, the issue also revolves around the formal/informal binary. This becomes very evident in the two cases we work with in this article. In neither case are we focusing on exploitation on a clandestine labour market but rather various forms and degrees of exploitation in a regularised labour market and migration-regime, i.e. institutionalisation of precarity. Such labour conditions fill a need in contemporary European economies for cheap flexible labour without offering easy access to citizenship. This argument goes beyond the often used argument that borders advance neoliberal ideals by performing a filtering function which enables certain forms of mobility while excluding others (e.g. McNevin 2006). On the contrary, migrants in this context are desired exactly for the labour they offer host countries’ economies, even if they remain excluded from political belonging (Loong 2019). Through the institutionalisation of precarity the job is done on neoliberal-flexible conditions, and at the same time full

citizenship is denied so pull factors are minimised and social/political right-wing claims are appeased.

Institutionalising unfreedom

As we argue above following Lewis et al., we cannot delimit irregular and precarious labour as something solely located in the informal sector and clandestine labour market, as forms of precarious labour and conditions are also located and emerge in the formal sector as well as in in-between grey areas. While the formal sector traditionally refers to the economic zone which is legally sanctioned, regulated by state interventions and marked by regular employment, the informal sector refers to irregular work, outside legal sanctions and state regulations (Olmedo & Murray 2002). However, gradual degradation of formal labour relations within several countries in the EU has led researchers to challenge the belief that governmental regulation of informal labour is actually in the interest of workers (Shapland & Heyes 2017). Rather than a progressive development of labour rights and conditions, we see a retrenchment of rights and even more so when it comes to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Anderson rightly argues that immigration restriction and enforcement not only are insufficient in reducing precarity but also on the contrary actively produce and reinforce it (2010: 314). The construction of different categories of migrant workers (or lack of possibility for formally becoming so, e.g. the asylum seeker in a Danish context) with different rights tied to the particular status has, as Aziz Choudry and Mondli Hlatshwayo argue, become a standard component of policies and “a capitalist strategy which is fundamental to the functioning of many economies” (Choudry and Hlatshwayo 2016: 5). As we see with the retrenchment of labour rights due to the pressure from neoliberal globalisation and the last decade of austerity policies, we likewise witness a retrenchment of migrants’ rights resulting in a hierarchy of differential statuses and a fracturing of citizenship (Goldring and Landolt 2011). In regards to the latter a main characteristic of the institutionalisation of precarity is preventing easy access to citizenship. Migration controls shape the context in which conditions and terms of employment are being restructured to assure flexibility for employers where the costs are instability and insecurity for workers (Goldring, Berinstein & Bernhard 2009). Citizenship, permanent or even temporary residence permits (with the embedded rights following from these statuses) become increasingly hard to access, and migrant workers are stuck in a position as potential deportable labour (De Genova 2010).

Coercive geographies

In the former sections, we have discussed how precarity becomes institutionalised and appears as hyper-precarity and how this institutionalisation revolves around different

binaries such as freedom/unfreedom and formal/informal. Focusing on the institutionalisation of precarity and not only on precarisation emphasises how institutions and policy frameworks can be considered main drivers in this development and create conditions with protracted precarity. The institutionalisation of precarity is situated and shaped by particular political geographies which constitute different coercive geographies. We understand the latter as confined, restricted spaces defined by regulative and institutionalised precarity which create unfreedom, stuckness and immobility. As such, coercive geographies are localised and spatialised intersections between labour regulations and migration policies which become detrimental to existing mobility frameworks. When referring to spatialised intersections we do not wish to depict coercive geographies exclusively as closed spaces. Consequently, the coercive geographies we discuss in this article have different characteristics. In Greece the provisions of recent legislation apply mainly to the agricultural sector, paving the way for uneven labour relations and both spatial and sectoral confinement of migrants. In the Danish case our examples of how precarity is institutionalised through coercive geographies are defined in terms of the political geography – firstly, of the migration policy framework for highly skilled workers operating through functions and demarcations which have implications of unfreedom and immobility, and secondly, of a regulation (IGU) for newly arrived refugees allowing employers to employ them under conditions which put the refugees in potentially precarious conditions. These moreover have the potential of spreading to the regulations for the unemployed (and thus are a potential example of becoming-migrant of labour).

In sum we argue that the value of investigating migrant precarity through the lens of institutionalisation is the ability to connect both micro and macro levels and situate experiences of precarity in specific coercive geographies (Kapsalis, Floros & Jørgensen forthcoming), but also to identify political and economic mechanisms facilitating these conditions and how they reshape between workers, capital and state (Paret & Gleeson 2016). Such mechanisms –among other reasons- build upon migrants' vulnerability due to deportability, transnational family commitments, indebtedness and gender related issues (Lewis et al. 2015b). In the next part of the article, we move to the analysis of the Danish and Greek cases. We investigate the underlying logics behind policy responses in the labour market policy frameworks and immigration regimes which risk institutionalising or already have institutionalised precarity.

MIGRANT PRECARITY IN THE GREEK AND DANISH LABOUR MARKETS

New Greek Realities – The Introduction of Migrant Para-legality

Since the beginning of the ongoing financial crisis in 2009, the Greek labour market has undergone significant structural changes in almost every aspect. A varied set of factors contributed to these changes, but the predominant force was the neoliberal policies

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imposed through the Memoranda of Agreement between successive Greek governments and the creditors of the Greek state. Direct results of these policies were – amongst others – the rise of flexible employment contracts – 55% of all new recruitments (GSEE Labour Institute 2018), the minimisation of collective agreements, which now cover less than 10% of the private sector and their replacement by enterprise agreements (ibid.) and the facilitation of dismissals, with less or no compensation. Undeclared labour remains a steady feature of the labour market in the past thirty years, with employers taking advantage of the understaffed control mechanisms in order to reduce labour costs. The official unemployment rate is 20.7%; with real unemployment above 27% (ibid.). Coupled with a substantial decrease in wages and a rise in taxation, a big part of the labour force in Greece faces impoverishment. At the same time, union density stands at a record-low; 15% in the private and 39% in the public sector (former Secretary of the Labour Inspectorate Body, 25/4/2018).

The interplay between the financial and debt crisis and the “refugee crisis” has had multifaceted consequences for the legal status of migrants residing in Greek territory and their participation in the labour market. Of course, the precarisation of migrant labour is not a simple outcome of these crises, but rather a process which pertains to a series of policy provisions and deliberate omissions on behalf of the Greek state. Since the early 1990s, Greek governments have shaped a fragmentary and inefficient migration policy, dealing with migration in “purely instrumental terms” (Triandafyllidou 2014: 122); a migration policy complemented by “seemingly unrelated state policies on matters of welfare, employment and punishment”, which “whether by design or coincidence [...] bolster[ed] [...] migrants’ exploitability in the labour market” (Cheliotis 2017: 1-2).

In the past three decades, an enduring characteristic of the Greek migration policy and its ‘legalisation programmes’, which were composed to regulate the status of irregular migrants, was a direct connection of residence permits and of their renewal with a certain amount of declared labour performed by migrants. This dependency on formal employment in order to obtain and preserve a temporary legal status, which enabled access to a variety of benefits and civil rights, consequently increased the level of migrants’ dependency on their employers. Labour market segmentation among ethnic lines (Maroukis 2016), geographical and occupational limitations that often apply to migrant labour (Kapsalis 2018) and a stratification of different legal statuses for respective categories of migrants have also been factors that reinforced migrant precarity. Rising unemployment – 31,5% for non-EU-born migrants compared to 22,7% for natives in 2016 (Eurostat 2017) – and the proliferation of the informal sector in the Greek economy throughout the years of the crisis further forced migrants into accepting precarious employment relations.

A common finding in the literature on precarity and migration is the entrapment of migrants in specific –administrative or production-related- regions of Greece or occupational sectors (e.g. agriculture or the care sector), due to particularities of both the labour market and the

migrants' legal status (Kasimis et al. 2015; Cheliotis 2017). Whether imposed by law or by social restrictions a number of coercive geographies define the livelihoods of migrants residing in Greek territory and especially of those without residence permits. Our main focus here is the way in which migrant precarity and immobility are being institutionalised by the Greek state and – more precisely – how this is taking place through the enactment of a controversial law. Although previous legislation and administrative omissions have strongly assisted in creating insecurity for migrants, this law actively imposes a number of features that we argue construct a straightforward institutionalisation of precarity.

In 2016, an amendment to the Immigration Code 4251/2014 was put in force, which under special circumstances grants irregularly residing migrants access to the labour market, without giving them a residence permit (Official Government Gazette 2016). Migrants, who once possessed a residence permit or whose deportation has been suspended due to humanitarian or technical reasons, can acquire a six-month work permit only for three specific sectors, namely agriculture, domestic care and textile clothing and only within a certain region, with geographical limitations applied. The permit is valid only within the prefecture where it has been issued, thus geographically circumscribing the possibility of legal work and actively promoting immobility. During this six-month period deportation is postponed. Undocumented migrants can acquire the same permit, but only to work in specific agricultural employments. In their case, first they have to register with the Police, where they get a deportation confirmation, followed by a postponement order. Unless the permit is timely renewed by the employer for another six months, the migrant becomes deportable again. Labour is declared only through the *ergosimo*, a payment voucher introduced in 2010 allowing employers to contract migrant workers solely in the agricultural and domestic care sectors. (Interestingly enough the use of the *ergosimo* has lately been spreading in employment sectors without a dominant presence of migrants, thus reinforcing the claim that the precarisation of migrant labour spreads to the entire workforce (Mezzadra 2007; Jørgensen 2016)). The *ergosimo* helps minimise social security costs and facilitates employers' arbitrary behaviour, given the fact that this kind of employment relation is almost inaccessible to labour inspections. As argued by Kapsalis (2018: 78), migrants working under the provisions of this new law could be termed 'para-legal', since their category:

cannot be placed in between *legality* and *semi-legality*, as it appears that the residence status remains irregular throughout the duration of the work permit. By combining features of both *semi-legality* and *illegality*, *para-legality* (*παρانونιμότητα*) constitutes a parallel state of tolerance (of labour) into illegality (of residence).

'Para-legality' constitutes a new category of the migrant labour force and the vast majority working under the provisions of the new law (colloquially referred to as "13a" among Greek Ministries' personnel – from the number of the amended article) are in the agricultural sector, a sector where nearly the total of wage labour – formal or informal – is provided by

migrants (Kasimis et al. 2015). The number of migrants employed through 13a is rapidly rising; from fewer than 1,500 by the end of 2017 (Kapsalis 2018) to 9,436 by the end of 2018 (Kapsalis, Floros & Jørgensen forthcoming). The political context in which 13a was enacted and the underlying political rationale for its creation are remarkable.

After the elections of January 2015, a new governmental coalition was formed by SYRIZA, a radical-left party, and ANEL, a right-wing anti-austerity party, which remained in power after the new elections in September 2015. The political programme of SYRIZA at first had a radical anti-capitalist direction (Miliotis et al. 2017) but soon diverged to the implementation of non-radical policies, masked with radical rhetoric (Mudde 2017). The enactment of 13a has been widely presented by the governmental political discourse as a “way to secure migrants’ labour rights” (Ministry of Rural Development and Food 2017), as a weapon against employers’ arbitrary behaviour and as proof that the government will not tolerate incidents like “Manolada”ⁱ (syria.gr 2017). Nevertheless, the aforementioned sources pinpoint tax deductions for farmers and a crackdown on undeclared labour as equally important factors for this legislation (ibid.). The initiative for composing the new law came from the Ministry of Rural Development and Food; with the former assistant to the Minister clearly exposing its origins:

From 1/1/2014 the taxation system for farmers changed and they were obliged to declare labour costs in order to get a tax deduction. [...] The farmers turned to the Ministry for help [...]. They kept coming to the Minister’s office looking for a solution. These visits date back to 2014 (former advisor to the Minister of Rural Development and Food, 2/5/2018).

The paramount importance of securing tax-deductible migrant labour cost has also been stressed in other interviews (legal advisor to the Minister of Rural Development and Food, 25/4/2018; official at the department for the Employment of Foreign Workers, Ministry of Labour, 3/4/2018), thus indicating a pragmatic approach, which mostly favours domestic agricultural producers, as the underlying political rationale for legislation 13a. Further consolidation of migrant precarity through the provisions of 13a is depicted as creating additional dependence on the employer (official at the department for the Employment of Foreign Workers, Ministry of Labour, 3/4/2018) or constituting unequal treatment regarding social security issues, since there is a lack of an official procedure for their insurance (official at the department for Foreigners’ Insurance, Agricultural Insurance Organisation, 17/4/2018). Even so, sources from the Ministry of Rural Development and Food accentuate the pragmatic approach, in insisting that:

13a came to solve important problems and [...] if we attempt a balance between these two facts (uneven employment relations and declared, tax-deductible labour) we should evaluate this law positively (legal advisor to the Minister of Rural Development and Food, 25/4/2018).

Another interesting fact regarding the new legislation is its incompatibility with the EU framework. Officials' approaches on this matter are almost unanimous; either expressed in a moderate manner "raising questions of compatibility both with European Law as well as with other international conventions" (legal advisor to the Minister of Rural Development and Food, 25/4/2018) or in more explicit terms, claiming that "it will be abolished once the EU brings Greece before the European Court, since it breaches 4 different EU Directives" (official at the Ministry for Migration Policy, 4/4/2018). The reluctance of European institutions to agree with the creation of such a law was also clearly stated during the consultation that preceded its enactment (former advisor to the Minister of Rural Development and Food, 2/5/2018).

The implementation of 13a institutionalises immobility through linking the contingency of legal work to confinement in a certain geographical setting. It also provides a legal framework which formalises labour characterised by various unfreedoms, since the way in which labour is officially declared does not guarantee the respect of labour legislation from employers. Although the legislator's intention is to create a pathway to formal employment, what is the value of formality for migrants whose payment and working hours are hyper-flexible, and who are confined to specific geographical limits, with no prospect of social security and fully dependent on their employer – or a set of local employers usually within the same agricultural industry – for the renewal of their deportation postponement? As argued in the theoretical section, the value of such formality is dubious for migrant workers (cf. Shapland & Heyes 2017). The absence of a proper residence permit coupled with the use of the *ergosimo* voucher – "which is used to lawfully bypass labour law" (former Secretary of the Labour Inspectorate Body, 25/4/2018) – does not provide migrants with any new rights; it simply inserts them in "a constant race [...] to successively renew their work permit, with the fear of deportation continuously hanging over their heads" (official at the department for the Employment of Foreign Workers, Ministry of Labour, 3/4/2018). This is the result of a restrictive immigration policy based on creating a sense of immobility, where regional and occupational limitations are combined with the 'para-legal' status to entrap irregularly residing migrants in coercive geographies. Put in one official's words:

If the state would properly legalise the status of these Bangladeshi workers (in Manolada), then they would all leave for Athens the next day, to look for a more decent job (official at the Ministry for Migration Policy, 4/4/2018).

Institutionalisation of precarity is not just an outcome of governmental policies but also of deliberate omissions in such policies. The lack of a comprehensive policy for the inspection of the agricultural migrant labour market highlights the unwillingness of all actors to regulate the labour environment in which migrant precarity flourishes. In the words of the former Director of the Greek Labour Inspectorate Body:

I could say that there is a broad societal alliance between the state, employers, unions, official migrant communities and maybe even NGOs involved in protecting migrants' rights, a silent agreement and an informal societal alliance on the fact that... well, that this type of labour will remain as it is: Uncontrolled, disorderly, unregulated and left at the employers' disposition (former Secretary of the Labour Inspectorate Body, 25/4/2018).

Although resounding a personal opinion, such a comment is indicative of the hyper-precarious conditions faced by migrants in the Greek agricultural labour market. The alleged upcoming creation of an Agency that will inspect labour conditions in the agricultural sector (legal advisor to the Minister of Rural Development and Food, 25/4/2018), as well as the facilitation of access to the labour market for asylum applicants of the post-2015 migration influx (official at the department for the Employment of Foreign Workers, Ministry of Labour, 3/4/2018), could signal an improvement in labour conditions for migrants. Interestingly enough, 13a targets mainly the already existing migrant labour force, namely declined asylum seekers and workers who lost their residence status due to prolonged unemployment. In this sense it is adjusted to EU's calls for the optimisation of the existing migrant labour force (Martín et al. 2015), although none of the six officials interviewed claimed that there was any pressure from the EU institutions towards the enactment of such legislation. Nevertheless, 13a is for the time being the only pathway to formal employment for approximately half a million irregularly residing migrants in Greece. According to officials' opinions (legal advisor to the Minister of Rural Development and Food, 25/4/2018; former advisor to the Minister of Rural Development and Food, 2/5/2018) it secures minimum rights for migrants. However, we argue that 13a beneficiaries remain within a continuum of unfreedom, even if slightly better off than migrants with zero rights. The rapid rise of the number of workers employed under the provisions of 13a calls for further research on the implementation of the law that introduces 'para-legality', in order to better assess this new link in the chain of differential legal statuses for migrants and also its role in consolidating coercive geographies in Greek rural areas.

Precarity in the Regularised Danish Labour Market

Moving our focus to the European North, the Danish economy was from the mid-1990s to the economic crisis of 2008 characterised by an economic boom with low unemployment rates and high growth rates. In early 2008, the unemployment rate reached its lowest level. It was 2.3% before increasing to 6% in 2010. The crisis led to a fall in GNP, which spurred neoliberal austerity policies and economic reforms aimed at reducing the costs of the public sector by lowering public expenses. In 2010, the unemployment rate of immigrants from non-Western countries increased from 9.8% to 16% (Eurostat 2010). Today the gap has become much smaller, and labour market integration has in general been much more

successful than how it is presented in the political discourse (Andersen 2018). Nevertheless, this situation has had consequences for the debates regarding access to the welfare state model.

The Danish immigration and integration policy framework following since the millennium has been characterised as restrictive and, in several ways, has served as a paradigm for a “new style integration” which has been inspirational for other European countries during the 2000s. The main goal of the immigration and integration policy of the 2000s was to change the composition of the immigrant population, implying a ‘managed migration’ (i.e. a controlled system with circular and temporary labour migration), making it difficult to obtain family reunification and asylum but making it less difficult to enter as a labour migrant and/or as a student, for instance. The control mechanisms here set up opportunity structures for both mobility and immobility. Since the 1980s and especially in the late 2000s and today, both access to citizenship and permanent residence have become more restrictive and less accessible. Up until the mid-2000s there was consensus in the research literature that the regularised Danish labour market offered few opportunities for irregular migrants to find employment. The late Jan Hjernø, for instance, argued as late as 2003 that illegal migration (Hjernø’s term) can only take place if there is a market for the labour qualifications offered by the illegal migrants and if there are employers who estimate risks inferior to the economic advantages of illegal migration (Hjernø 2003: 4). The combination of highly regulated labour markets and strong unions makes employers face higher risks if they hire irregular migrants (Jørgensen & Meret 2012). Hjernø argued “there are hardly any illegal immigrants in the labour markets in Denmark, Sweden and Finland” (ibid.). Later studies (see again Jørgensen & Meret 2012 for an overview) have problematised this belief and estimate that there are between 19,000-25,000 irregular migrants in Denmark (Skaksen & Glæsner 2017). These immigrants most often find jobs in the agricultural, building and service sectors and face different degrees of precarity and exploitation.

In this article we are interested in how precarity is ‘normalised’ and institutionalised for migrants who arrived under formal labour market schemes or are included in existent programmes aiming at integrating refugees in the labour market. Recent tendencies show that the neoliberal model has eroded rights and reduced social welfare, causing growing inequalities and poverty, and point towards a dualised labour market (Rasmussen et al. 2016; Refslund & Thörnquist 2016). In the following two case examples, the specialised skills arrangements and the integration basic education programme (IGU), we discuss how precarity has been institutionalised. The aim here is to identify and discuss examples where migrants are subjected to precarity within the formal and regularised labour market and basically where the immigration policies intersect with the labour market policies to produce ‘institutional uncertainty’ (cf. Anderson 2010). The Green Card arrangement was one out of a number of specialised labour market schemes offering migrants access to the Danish labour market. Currently there are 17 such different schemes.ⁱⁱ The integration basic education programme, conversely, is a programme targeting people who have received

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asylum in Denmark and thus directs refugees into the labour market under certain conditions. Both examples will be discussed below.

The first example of institutionalisation of precarity, through the creation of 'stuckness' and immobility, is the effort made to attract and permit highly skilled foreigners access to the Danish labour market. This effort is organised through the specialised labour market schemes (see New to Denmark 2018; also Jørgensen & Thomsen 2016). The mechanisms for managing labour migration are essential for understanding the balance between an open society and a closed society. Labour migrants on the one hand come to Denmark to work and thus contribute to the welfare state. On the other hand, they compete in the national job market, which creates contentions between protectionists and liberalists. Politicians and policymakers have responded to this challenge in different ways. Common for these specialised schemes is that they contain an underlying rationale of this type of labour force as 'wanted' and beneficial (Jørgensen & Thomsen 2016). The paradox is, however, that access through such arrangements, such as the Green Card, does not imply that immigrants actually find a job requiring high qualifications. Instead of working on equal conditions, there have been several examples of how these schemes have been exploited or applied in ways which may be legitimate but also detrimental to rights and equal conditions.

The most contested of these schemes has been the Green Card arrangement. The inspiration came from the US version bearing the same name and the EU Blue Card arrangement. The scheme, which was abolished in the summer of 2016, allowed non-EU citizens to apply for access to the labour market due to formal qualifications (ibid.). The reality for many Green Card holders was employment in precarious conditions characterised by unfreedom to change job or leave and thus profound immobility, which was the exact opposite of the purpose of the scheme. An investigation conducted among workers under this scheme revealed that 80% of the foreign workers had ended up in unskilled jobs primarily within the service sector in cleaning and at restaurants (Dalsgaard et al. 2014a). It is a coercive geography which is highly present in the capital and the larger cities. People reported 12-hour workdays, seven days a week and a salary just above 2 EUR per hour (16 DKK), which was far below the average pay for most workers. A fourth of the people spoke of salaries below 8 EUR per hour (60 DKK), which also is far from the average and much below the salary agreed upon in the collective agreements. Many of the Green Card holders had to borrow money to get to Denmark and ended up in a vulnerable, precarious situation where they had no right to social benefits as unemployment revoked the permit and would mean that they would have to leave the country (ibid.).

These conditions created a situation of hyper-precarity where the immigrant worker was left without any choices and stuck in a position that by any definition was unfree as their personal debts in reality made it impossible to leave a job. The permit was valid for three years and contrary to its US counterpart it did not lead to access to permanent residence. The presentation on the official portal Workindenmark.dk describes Denmark as a lovely

country to work and live in and calls for highly skilled foreign workers to apply, but reality is often very different. The investigation was done by the public service broadcaster DR but corresponds to a report done by Rambøll in 2010 showing that seven out of 10 Green Card holders ended up in unskilled low-paid precarious jobs (Rambøll 2010). DR's investigation showed several examples of people arriving with PhDs and ending up in corner-shops, arcades, etc. One interview featured a Pakistani Green Card holder who had arrived with a PhD in Philosophy, with former job experiences at universities in Australia and the UK, ending up in debt and with threats working in a corner-shop for 2 EUR per hour (Dalsgaard et al. 2014b). The conditions faced by the migrants who arrived under this arrangement not only have to do with exploitative employers and issues of debt. The politicians were warned about the risks of this programme and the situation of migrants becoming protracted. The lack of rights and security puts the migrants in an insecure position where they have no bargaining power and get stuck. We see this as a clear example of institutionalisation of precarity. The Green Card arrangement was introduced in 2008 and was abolished in 2016. Over the years it faced a lot of critique from both trade unions and some politicians, all of it ignored until 2016. Abolishing the Green Card agreement has not solved this problem, though.

The other specialised schemes likewise contain gaps which can be exploited, e.g. The Pay Limit Scheme and Positive List (New to Denmark 2018). The Pay Limit Scheme stipulates an annual salary level which must be met to apply via this scheme. It has been raised over the years but is in 2018 approximately 56,000 EUR. A high salary, but examples show that employers have used creative means to reach that level. In 2010 the history of the IT company CSC hit the news as it turned out that the contracted Indian IT workers received only 1,100 EUR plus additional benefits such as shared housing (often many persons sleeping in one apartment), as well as their Indian salary (typically around 400-700 EUR) on top (Kildebogaard 2010). Their contracts lasted for two years – if breached, the contract holder had to pay a penalty of 4,700 EUR. Like the problems institutionalised in the Green Card arrangement, the consequence is the risk of a formalised institutionalised precarity rendering the immigrants under this scheme without choices of mobility, as the situation is that they are stuck in the contracts they signed themselves. Obviously, the conditions faced by the Indian IT workers are different than the ones faced by Chinese cockle-pickers in the UK or West African tomato pickers in Italy (Gambino 2017; Lewis et al. 2015). What is striking, however, is the normalisation of the conditions by the authorities who did respond to the critique and warnings against the gaps in this scheme. It was also a reason for being laid off if the worker talked to the press. The responsible HR manager at the time said to press: “it is overall a sensible package” (Kildebogaard 2010). As with the Green Card arrangement, the implications go beyond considering this as a mere form of politics of labour and citizenship. These labour market schemes show how labour relations and conditions are racialised, normalised and promoted by the political establishment in the form of institutionalised precarity.

The last example, here only mentioned in brief, is the introduction of the so-called integration basic education programme (IGU) (*Integrationsgrunduddannelsen*) implemented after an agreement in the tripartite negotiations in 2016. It is a policy tool targeting the newly arrived refugees meant to increase the number of refugees in paid employment (Regeringen 2016). The main discussion during the negotiations was the issue of a 'phase-in' salary (*indslusningsløn*). This was criticised heavily by the trade union confederation and by the confederation of Danish employers. The IGU has to be seen in relation to the general approach to unemployment in Denmark. Since the early 1990s work-fare policies have been the policy norm. This applies both to Danish citizens and foreigners under the social security system. However, there has been much criticism of the policies not leading to paid employment but only to non-paid work for companies and the public sector whose employers then have refrained from creating actual paid positions. Many of the jobs in the cultural sector are non-paid internships where one intern is replaced by the next one. With the restrictions put forth in the asylum procedures, refugees are expected to engage in job-internships after four weeks based on their formal skills. This is believed to ensure that they get acquainted with both Danish labour market culture, expand their social capital and learn so-called labour-market Danish. Refugees tend to get trapped in these unpaid internships for years, though. Doing interviews with newly arrived refugees for another research project led one of the authors to talk to people who had been working unpaid for up to two years – very often in jobs which seemed pointless. The IGU is meant to improve this situation.

The logic behind the entrance wage was to overcome the barriers of the high collectively agreed minimum wages. The IGU is not a real education as it does not stipulate specific educational plans and goals and is not an educational policy but is grounded in an employment- and active labour market policy. In short the two year programme allows companies and the public sector to employ refugees at a statutory minimum wage of 6,50 EUR per hour within the public sector and slightly more in the private (depending on the particular collective agreements), if the employer during the two years makes agreements of 20 weeks of language and vocational course participation (*ibid.*). Hence, educated doctors, engineers, nurses and other skilled workers risk employment at an hourly rate of 6.50 EUR. There are no possibilities in place for intervention from an educational programme, the municipality or trade union representative to assess if a given refugee would benefit from the IGU or in principle could be employed on equal terms. Some refugees (single providers) stand to lose approximately 300 EUR a month if they sign up for the IGU, as their current integration benefit will be replaced by benefit of the IGU which does not offer supplementary benefits if a worker is the only person employed in a family.. In January 2019, around 1,900 people with refugee status had signed up for the IGU.ⁱⁱⁱ No one has yet completed the programme. Numbers show that at least every tenth refugee who had entered the programme had dropped out again. Although the IGU might not be a Trojan horse as it was first feared, the agreement nevertheless institutionalises an opportunity for low-paid labour. Entering the labour market with a reduced salary is not a unique situation

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for the refugees. The salary for apprenticeships is also lower than regular salaries. But where a Danish educated carpenter after his/her education can expect to find a job on regular conditions there is nothing indicating that a refugee having gone through the IGU will be able to do the same. Thus the programme can end up being a two-year low-paid job. Politicians on the left and critical voices from the unions fear that the programme opens up for wage dumping and puts pressure on the minimum wages. The programme allows for employers making agreements with refugees around the unions and authorities and without any stipulated and binding agreements with employers on competences in relation to integration. There is no demand for inspection. Employees at the workplace have no influence on the employment of a refugee under the IGU. The refugee has no rights to speak of, there are no demands regarding the educational components of the programme, and 20 weeks of education out of 104 weeks are not a guarantee for obtaining a proper education which can be used to secure employment afterwards. Although the number of refugees currently enrolled in the IGU is low, there is a risk that the programme could lead to a displacement of ordinary employees and wage pressure. Moreover, the programme risks creating antagonism between native and foreign workers as workers who feel pushed out of the labour market could blame refugees (Jørgensen & Thomsen 2016).

Both cases within the Danish context show how the intersection between immigration policies and labour market regulations has led to the institutionalisation of precarity. The framework constitutes a political geography characterised by precarity, uncertainty and lack of rights. Although applying for both the specialised labour market schemes and the IGU is voluntary, the entrance into these reveals how free labour is met with different degrees of coercion and becomes unfree. There is not a single trajectory here, but the examples show that we can overall depict the conditions as a coercive geography.

CONCLUSION

What we have been interested in throughout this article has been the interrelation of labour and migration laws in respectively Denmark and Greece. The EU framework contains ideals of equality and has launched initiatives to improve workers' conditions. In May 2018, a majority of the European Parliament voted in favour of revising rules for workers posted temporarily to another EU country, who now must receive equal pay for equal work in the same place (European Parliament 2018). French MP Elisabeth Morin-Chartier states that "[i]t sets a clear course towards a more social Europe with a fairer competition between companies and better rights for workers" which is supported by the Dutch MP Agnes Jongerius arguing that "[c]olleagues can be colleagues again, rather than competitors. This is an important step towards creating a social Europe that protects workers and stops companies from engaging in a race to the bottom" (ibid.). The revised rules could indeed

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affect the future conditions of the intra-European labour migration. However, it will not affect the conditions of non-European workers, the so-called third-country nationals, or people with different migratory statuses across the EU. These people, migrants and refugees, are still within the framework of what Anderson terms 'institutional uncertainty' (2010). Their particular status may limit their choices and commodification of individual labour due to structural restrictions in the work permit system. Limitations in obtaining free labour become even more profound when it comes to irregularly residing migrants. Here policy responses have not been to regularise conditions but on the contrary to normalise and institutionalise various forms of informal labour and precarity.

In the article we argue that there are common patterns in the two cases despite the different labour market structures and labour law traditions, parties in government and financial situations. In both cases – and the broader EU context, we will argue – we see how the institutionalisation of precarity solves a need for flexible labour force which is expendable and without any easy access to citizenship or other status categories offering economic, political or social security. Governmental precarisation is based on maintaining insecurity (cf. Lorey).

As shown in our empirical cases, European governments implement policies aiming to integrate both regularly and irregularly residing migrants in the formal labour market. However, this formalisation does not guarantee equal labour rights or the elimination of a series of unfreedoms faced by migrants in their employment relations. On the contrary, these policies enforce occupational and geographical limitations, creating what we term coercive geographies, which end up promoting situations of hyper-precarity and thus institutionalise migrant precarity within the EU. Although the examples provided in this article mainly refer to male labour, coercive geographies very often have gendered implications, as in the case of the Greek care sector (Maroukis 2017). Europe is facing skill shortages and bases its reproductive labour and agricultural production on migrants, yet imposes a restriction of residence statuses and enforces a preventive policy on migration. This 'need' for migrants coupled with unwillingness to provide them with a full set of rights is obvious in the cases we have analysed in this article. Moreover, it seems that the visas and legal pathways that facilitate these temporary work schemes direct migrants to low-end jobs, while at the same time satisfying governmental narratives on managed migration.

We have shown how precarious/unfree labour emerges in Greek and Danish coercive geographies and the ways in which immobility is produced. In both cases we can identify a retrenchment of migrants' rights. It is obvious both in the Danish schemes and arrangements (visa not leading to permanent residence for the Green Card, secondary contracts for migrants working under the Pay Limit Scheme which even limit their right to speak freely, IGU low-paid jobs without prospects for migrants) and in Greece where unequal treatment on social security issues, lack of proper residence permit and sectoral plus geographical

immobility institutionalised through the enactment of 13a have led to the conceptualisation of the para-legal migrant.

In Greece there are 17 different types of residence permits, which entail different statuses for migrants (let aside of course the irregularly residing). Likewise it has become increasingly difficult to obtain permanent residence in Denmark and even more so to obtain citizenship. Both cases indicate that a fractured citizenship is instrumentalised in producing various types of immobility, which is a crucial element for the formation and preservation of what we have termed coercive geographies. As we have stated in our theoretical part this is a situation of unfree labour characterised by a lack of real or acceptable alternatives (Lewis et al. 2015b: 594). ‘Hyper-precarity’ exists before its institutionalisation, to a different extent in the respective cases. In the Greek case almost half a million irregular migrants live and work along a continuum of precarity, in a worse situation than native precarious workers, due to deportability, indebtedness and lack of alternatives. Regulatory attempts (e.g. 13a) of the Greek state in order to deal with this issue are balancing between exposing undeclared employment and keeping the labour cost low by not providing full labour rights and an inspected labour environment. In Denmark low-waged jobs on the clandestine labour market (cleaning, restaurants, etc.) have been replaced with low-paid jobs formalised through the IGU. As distinct as these two coercive geographies are, what they share in common are policy-making trends which shape the legal frameworks enabling their existence.

In conclusion we argue that a timely research on the direction that the future of migrants’ labour relations is taking within the EU is of great importance; not only for the information of social actors and policymaking reasons, but also as an indication of a possible deterioration of European labour relations more generally, since the situation of labour relations that shape coercive geographies for migrants today could possibly spread tomorrow to the entire workforce.

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ⁱ Manolada is a strawberry-producing village in the Peloponnese, where a lot of irregularly residing migrants work. In 2013, it captured the headlines because of an incident where an employer shot and injured Bangladeshi workers who protested for not getting paid. Ever since, Manolada symbolises undeclared migrant labour coupled with violence and coercion on behalf of the employers. The Greek State has been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights in 2017 for not offering effective protection to the Bangladeshi workers (Papadopoulos et al. 2018).

ⁱⁱ <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/da/Du-vil-ans%C3%B8ge/Arbejde>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/aktuelt/6>