

Bangladeshi Migrant Shipbuilders in Italy: Rethinking Precarity and their livelihood

Abstract

Since the 1990s the number of Bangladeshi migrant workers (BMWs) has increased in Italy. These migrants, with or without regular status, have emerged as one of the most vulnerable groups in Italy due to their living and working conditions. The study aims to comprehend the pre- and post-migration experiences and working conditions from everyday narratives of the BMWs. It also explores how these experiences shape the well-being of their families in Italy and Bangladesh. Current study involved 63 in-depth interviews, daily observations, and ethnographic fieldwork in Monfalcone and Marghera, with BMWs in the Italian Fincantieri shipyards. The precarious lives of BMWs commence with their journey to Italy and continue in the host country, as migration laws require job contracts to allow migrants obtaining a permit to stay, making them vulnerable to exploitation. BMWs engage in precarious work with lower wages, long working hours, Sunday work, temporary jobs without social contributions, and often remain unemployed. Precarious work and life experiences of BMWs shape family well-being and everyday life in Italy and Bangladesh.

Keywords: shipyards, working conditions, struggle, accommodation.

Introduction:

The concept of 'precarity' has garnered significant attention in theoretical discourses of capitalism, class dynamics, migration, and employment relations to address neoliberal hegemony at both the global and local levels (Senses, 2016). Precarity refers to working conditions lacking security and stability, lower income, limited social benefits, and rights (Alberti, et.al., 2018; Choonara, et al., 2022; Standing, 2011; Vosko, 2010). Some scholars stress how the relationship between employment status, labour market insecurity, and social positioning of individual shapes precarity (Strauss and McGrath; 2017). Although precariousness is a condition that involves various aspects of life, most attention concentrates to work-related issues (Kalleberg, 2009). However, it is necessary to consider precarity beyond the workplace, such as family well-being, accommodations, and welfare, as well as labour and migration policies adopted by the state in question.

This chapter aims to analyse the configurations of precarity experienced by Bangladeshi migrant workers, and their coping strategies to avoid such situations. In addition, it explores how precarity involves not only everyday life and accommodation in Italy, but cross borders

to the country of origin. The discussion centres on Bangladeshi migrant workers (BMWs hereafter) employed in Italian Fincantieri shipyards by examining their migratory journey and working and living experiences in Italy. First, we discuss the theoretical framework, and subsequently, present the data collection process. In the empirical findings we analyse BMWs' work and life between Italy and Bangladesh. In the final section we conclude that by and large BMWs face various forms of precarity throughout their journey and in multiple aspects of their lives in the receiving as well as in the sending country.

Precarity and Migration

The concept of precarity in the European and North American debate gained popularity after the seminal work '*The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*' by Guy Standing (2011). He defined 'precariat' as someone who lacks basic safeguards for guaranteed employment, lack of training and upward mobility, no protection against job losses, restriction on union membership, and income insecurity (Standing, 2011). Standing's (2011) idea of the precariat as a 'new dangerous class' potentially threatening the capitalist class has been largely criticised. Betti (2018) and Breman (2013) among the many underlines how Standing's concept is bogus, ambiguous, north-centred, and maintains an a-historical perspective. Indeed, the idea of '*précarité*' originated from Bourdieu's writings on Algerian workers during the 1960s (Bourdieu, 1998). Precarious work refers to 'the uncertainty, instability, and insecurity of work in which employees accept the perils of work and having inadequate social benefits and legal rights' (Branch & Hanley, 2017, p. 569). Though since 1980s, the concepts of "marginality" in Latin America in the 1960s, "informality" in Africa from the 1970s, and "social exclusion" in Europe have been used to identify precarious working and living conditions of the workers both in the global South and North (Munck, 2013, pp. 748–50). Further, the precarious job has been linked with neo-liberal globalisation that treats workers as commodities with limited social protection (Burawoy, 2015). Butler (2004: 20) emphasises the vulnerability related to "being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by that exposure". Precarity can take many forms, including working under the control of gang-master using interpersonal violence, inside workplace with authoritarian management, having to answer to abusive supervisor, and suffering control that can go beyond the workplace (Strauss, 2013).

Migrants are frequently depicted as 'precariat' due to their poor working conditions, long working hours, informal employment relations and other forms of exploitation with few legal

protections (Jørgensen, 2016; Betti, 2018). This situation can be precarious due to their limited access to work, residence permits, and the right to family reunion (Goldring et al., 2009). Nation-states hold the power to monitor, imprison, and leaving them susceptible to being considered illegal and subject to deportation (Menjivar & Kanstroom, 2013; De Genova, 2010). For instance, in Italy, researchers (Perrotta & Sacchetto, 2014) indicates that migrants are engaged in seasonal work, erratic employment, do part-time jobs, get jobs through intermediaries, receive low wages, and work in unhealthy conditions. Similarly, Williams (2014) and Anderson and Rogaly (2005) in the UK show that migrants often work in subcontract firms being recruited through employment agencies and gang-masters where they suffer from irregular payment and bad working conditions. Migrant workers are less likely to access trade unions, social security, and citizenship rights, which puts them in insecure and possibly exploitative employment conditions (Hammer & Plugar, 2019). However, some migrants can join precarious work for social factors such as self-determination and freedom from uneven power relationships that can be shaped by financial need, gender, class, and community social relationships through which individuals live everyday life (Whitson, 2007; Sacchetto & Vianello, 2016). It is crucial to recognise that migrants are not just mere labourers but human beings whose experiences of "hyper-flexibility" are intertwined with the host society's social inequality and power structure (Anderson, 2010; Alberti et al., 2013). Precarious works, labour relations, and migration regimes are interrelated in the context of the organisation of labour by capital and the state (Arnold & Pickles, 2011). The association between migration and precarious work is evident in various countries despite high- and low-skill jobs (Alberti, 2014; Sardar, 2012; Lewis et al., 2015;). Scholars studying precarity, e.g. Alberti et al. (2018), suggest addressing both objective and subjective dimensions of precarity. Our empirical contribution in this chapter understands precarity following both aspects from individual workers' narratives. We highlight the lived experiences of migrants as precarious that can be explored beyond the workplace to everyday life that across borders to the country of origin.

Research Context and Method

Since 1990s, Italy became one of the main destinations for Bangladeshi migrants in Europe. In 2022, there are 150,692 Bangladeshi citizens living regularly in Italy, with 84,700 holding long-term permits (ISTAT, 2022). These migrants get settled in Italy through various amnesties provided by the government in the 1980s-1990s on humanitarian grounds, sponsored visas, and family reunions (Morad & Sacchetto, 2020). However, their initial work placements were in

the informal economy, such as catering, tourism, and small businesses; without a valid permit, they had to mimic the activities of fellow citizens within social networks (Moard & Gombac, 2018). After their regularisation, these migrants started working in manufacturing sector, particularly in the North of Italy (Morad & Sacchetto, 2020). Since 1990s some of them were recruited in Fincantieri shipyards where the first cruise ships needed a large amount of labour in a tight time frame.

Fincantieri is an Italian state-owned shipbuilding company making extensive use of subcontracting for recruiting migrant workers (Cillo & Perocco, 2015). Most of the work is done by outsourcing and subcontracting to reduce the production cost. In 2022, considering all Fincantieri's shipyards in Italy, 2397 companies were engaged in the outsourcing process, employing 44976 workers. Among all Fincantieri workers, 45.3% were Italians, 16.3% EUs and 38.2% non-EUs (Bangladeshi 24%) (Fincantieri, 2022). In Marghera shipyard, there are nearly 1100 permanent workers and about 3500-4000 workers in subcontracting firms, whereas, in Monfalcone, there are nearly 1600 permanent workers and 4000-4500 subcontracting workers (KII¹-2 Date 20-09-2021). Fincantieri is a relevant case study about BMW's precarious conditions as they mostly work in subcontracting firms with harsh working conditions.

The current study is based on ethnographic research with Bangladeshi migrant workers in Italy conducted from July 2021 to August 2023 in Monfalcone and Marghera, where many BMWs are engaged at Fincantieri. The study includes 63 in-depth interviews with BMWs, five Italian union leaders, three Bangladeshi community leaders, and daily interactions with the BMWs. Twenty-five out of sixty-three BMWs came through Libya with the help of brokers (*Dalal*²). The age range of the BMWs is 20-56 years. The duration of these migrants staying in Italy is five to twenty-two years. Their migration expense to get to Italy ranges from 5000 to 15000 Euros depending on their entrance nature. Most BMWs have multiple migration and work experiences before to arrive to Italy being employed in cultivation, small business, construction, and factory work in Libya, the Middle East, and Bangladesh. Forty-nine BMWs had temporary contracts in subcontracting firms inside Fincantieri shipyards owned by Italian, Romanian and Bangladeshi. We preserve the ethical procedures with informed consent and maintain privacy and anonymity (Hennink *et al.*, 2011). The respondents were selected through purposive sampling using personal connections. The interviews were done in Bengali, the

¹ Key informants interview (KII) with union leaders

² Dalal or Adam Bepari is a Bengali term synonymous with brokers or intermediaries. We used this term synonymously.

mother language of both the first researcher and migrants. The interviews were transcribed into English (Temple & Young, 2004). Following Braun and Clarke (2006), steps of thematic analysis have been applied to comprehend the data with codes such as migration experiences, job contracts, wages, employment and living conditions.

Precarious Journey to Reach Italy

Bangladesh is a small land hosting 170 million people with a high-density population, and a high unemployment rate among the youth, and faces natural calamities each year (Islam et al., 2022). Extensive research has been conducted in Bangladesh about the positive effects of remittances on poverty, income inequality, and socioeconomic well-being (Mannan & Farhana, 2014). Some scholars depict that precarious conditions in Bangladesh force people to leave the country (Roy & Verdun, 2019; Del Franco, 2010). We revealed that most of the migrants left Bangladesh because they felt an uncertain future, as they were not able to find a good job and had low-income family conditions. Others depicted political unrest as a cause of their departure. The presence of local brokers who tantalized them to take the risk to reach Italy is significant. One of our respondents described:

"I looked for a job in Bangladesh but became hopeless [...]. From my locality, Shariatpur, my friends frequently travelled to Libya and then to Italy with the assistance of *Dalals*. The Dalal arranged my passport and visa for Dubai and Libya. I started from Dhaka, and after staying 15 days in Dubai, I reached Libya. From Benghazi, our misfortune started. We were waiting for our trip without proper food or water. The previous broker had sold us to a new group that kept us in a dark house for 25 to 30 days. The group demanded an additional \$5000 to transport us to Italy; after payment, they took us to a chicken farm and made us wait. We walked nearly 10-12 kilometres while it was dark. No, it was not a walk; it was a type of race. If someone lagged, they were kicked and hit with an iron rod. We ran and ran until reaching the coastline. Then, we were instructed to lie down. Later, we spotted a small fishing trawler, but there were nearly 120 people. We were afraid and unwilling to go on that boat. However, the group showed us their guns and said: "If someone refuses to get on the boat, we will shoot". Being threatened, we were on board, and they provided diesel and a compass and showed one of us how to drive the boat. They told us we could easily reach Lampedusa, Italy, within a few hours. We started in the name of Allah (Almighty) at nearly midnight... We were feeling very cold, and most were vomiting. I remember one guy from my district died. I also thought I would die... (Interview-08, Date 17-07-2021).

Local brokers in Bangladesh describe an easy journey to Italy and that BMWs can work with handsome wages in Libya pushing BMWs to sell lands or take loans from relatives and friends to manage the migration expenses. Some BMWs worked there from several months to years before their journey to Italy (IOM, 2017). Interviewees affirm that reaching Italy from Libya involved life risk, exposure to physical violence, and abusive behaviour by the brokers. Some BMWs could get rid of by paying ransom, while others could not pay and were sent back home or died in Libya.

In addition, migrants can opt for the Balkan route to reach Italy. These people started from Bangladesh and reached their first destination, usually by plane, with a student or tourist visa to Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, or former Yugoslavia. After a few days or months, they attempted to reach their second destination through public transport and walking also for long distance. Subsequently, they took several paths from jungles to hills and mountains and other remote areas to avoid local people or police. Sometimes, they wait in various houses or shelters to spend the daytime and start walking during night-time. Md. Heron Mia, who reached Italy in 1998, explained that:

"I came to Russia with a student visa at the end of 1996. In 1997, I reached Ukraine by train with five men from Bangladesh. Then, we stayed somewhere for a few months and worked in an agricultural company. After staying for 3/4 months, we started again by walking through various forests and hills with a local broker to Hungary. Another Dalal took us to the Austrian border. After walking through big hills and forests for several days, we reached Udine in Italy (Interview- 40, Date: 26-09-2021).

In recent years, it took nearly €12000-15000 to arrange a sponsored visa allowing Bangladeshi citizens to reach Italy directly, €10000-12000 to reach Italy through the Balkans routes, whereas the Libyan, the most dangerous route, cost less, about €5000-7000. The roles of intermediaries who eases the migration are abusive and exploitative (Rahman & Kabir, 2012). BMWs use several brokers to arrange transportation to their destination country. BMWs highlighted the importance of *esthanio* (local community) and *attiyo* (family relatives) in the context of the migration from Bangladesh (Rahman, 2017). Similar to previous studies, our findings indicate that BMWs are young and mostly male and risk life to reach Italy (Moard & Gombac, 2018). Opting for safer migration incurs greater expenses, but utilizing illegal routes poses a significant threat to human life into a precarious journey to Italy. After reaching Italy,

their life struggle and precarious condition does not fade away; rather, they struggle for a regularisation and to find a job.

Precarious Working Experience in Italy

The irregularity of migration status compelled BMWs to engage in informal employment similar to their hosts and relatives (Morad & Sacchetto, 2020). One of the migrants who came through the illegal route described:

"Upon my arrival in 2012, I could not secure employment due to lack of documentation but started as a street hawker on the beach. I went to Ancona because someone from my village was living there who could support me in finding accommodation and a job. In February 2016, I received my papers and started working at a motor factory. After working for one month, the employer decided to stop hiring BMWs due to some labour conflicts. I was forced to resign from the job. In the summer of 2016, I started working jointly with a small vendor at the beach to sell tourist items. (Interview-13, Date 29-07-2021).

Having irregular status, BMWs can work only without labour contracts receiving lower wages and thus remain insecure in the Italian labour market. One of them described:

I joined work in the agriculture sector with a wage of 5 euros/hour... Later, another acquaintance invited me to join a restaurant in Naples. They offered a salary of 1200 euros with accommodation. My friend wanted to quit the job after four months because there were no holidays; we worked seven days for 12-14 hours daily. So, I also resigned and returned to Pesaro in December 2016. I looked for a job and joined a Chinese wholesale shop in Civitanova for 700 Euros per-month with accommodation. The agreement was to complete 12-14 hours of work per day. I was employed at that organisation for three months without pay slips" (Interview-31, Date 23-08-2021).

After achieving legal documents, BMWs start looking for a formal labour contract to renew their permit to stay and thus achieve long-term or permanent residence in Italy. During the 1990s, the BMWs started to work in Fincantieri, which continued to increase in the 2000s, thanks to some subcontracting firms owned by Bangladeshi, who recruited from co-ethnic through social networks and transnational connections. However, some BMWs pay the boss or supervisor bribes to be recruited. Md. Bahar Mia narrated:

"Individuals without connections can secure employment at the shipyard by offering bribes to Bangladeshi, Romanian, or Italian bosses engaged in the recruitment process at Fincantieri shipyards. The owners of the firms may or may not be aware of such procedures (Interview-3, Date: 15-07-21).

BMWs are familiar with the process of obtaining employment through bribes (Mense-Petermann, 2020; Refslund, 2021; Skupnjak-Kapić, 2005; Rahman, 2019). Moreover, precarious conditions push migrants to accept wage misappropriation (Fussell, 2011). Some BMWs at Fincantieri receive their wages through 'global pay' (Paga Globale). Most subcontractors use it as a legal strategy to avoid paying fair wages and exploit workers by subjecting them to unstable employment conditions and potential coercion. One BMW depicted:

"The supervisor will agree with you verbally. They will say 'I will pay you 5 euro an hour'. Thus, you need 200 hours of work to have 1000 euros at the end of the month. The firms technically use 'such agreements' with BMWs and do not provide additional hourly compensation. BMWs believe working more will yield greater rewards but compromise pension or benefits. In global pay, you only get paid an average flat hourly rate, nothing for extra work. (Interview-49, Date 18-10-2021).

The firms require employees to sign an employment contract committing to 160 hours of labour per month, regardless of the actual working hours. Such wage agreements available for BMWs at Fincantieri entail partial informality (Benedetti, 2022). ILO (2023) revealed that migrant workers in Italy receive a wage 30% lower than the Italians. BMWs face violations of the standard wage, unpaid work and overtime, non-recognition of tiffin breaks, and fining workers for damaging equipment (Vosko et al., 2017; Macdonald, 2018). The BMWs holding a shorter permit to stay are often desperate to have jobs and are available to pay bribes and give back a part of the wage to the owners and supervisors after receiving their monthly wages. Recent judicial investigations have uncovered situations in the shipbuilding sector where BMWs are paid only €3 to €4 per hour (Benedetti, 2022). The BMWs are required to work long shifts, up to 12 hours and weekly six days to earn from €1,000 to €1,100 per month. Most of the newcomers employed in the Fincantieri shipyards do day and night shifts with unpaid overtime and no possibility to refuse it. The working conditions at Fincantieri are physically demanding, involving heavy and repetitive tasks that require physical stamina and often leave them fatigued. However, permanent contract holders can avoid working on Sundays. Most BMWs

remain disciplined and obedient to secure the renewal of their job contracts. Employers are aware of the constraints related to the migration status of workers. One of the workers described:

"If the worker is obedient and loyal to the supervisors, they will renew the contract for another three months. After these three months, they might ask that worker to wait if there is no work. The firms make shorter contracts as they might have different work orders afterwards, or the worker might be unable to work accordingly. The firm must give them work if that worker has a longer or indefinite contract. Otherwise, they must give wages without work. But most of the firms don't pay if you are at home even if you have a contract (Interview 63, Date: 06-08-22).

Concerning the work agreement at Fincantieri, BMWs usually start with a temporary contract. However, signing temporary contracts one after another always does not lead to permanent contracts. Irregularities of payments and employment oscillate with workers' demand at Fincantieri shipyards. Thus, the BMWs face instability and insecurity of employment in a state-owned giant shipyard like Fincantieri.

Precarious Everyday life

The temporary jobs contracts, irregular payments and lower wages affect BMWs accommodations in Italy. The single male workers usually rent beds in Bangladeshi owners' houses with three to four workers in one room. As the rooms are fully occupied with beds without space and privacy, BMWs commonly describes such living arrangements as *Murghir khacha* (Chicken cages), and those living in these accommodations are known as *Murghi*. For instance, Rezaul Mia, who is sharing a room with three other workers in a flat with nine people depicted as:

"workers can't afford renting house or buy houses. As they need longer contract to rent or buy houses. Sometimes, workers visit Bangladesh for couple of months, in that case owner or renter have to shoulder the increased rental expenses on his own" (Interview-56, Date 29-10-21).

Bangladeshi houseowners sublet their rooms to co-national workers and sometimes are available to postpone the payment of the rent as not all subcontracting firms pay wages regularly. Most houseowners in both cities need money to maintain the cost of living in Italy, pay bank mortgages, send money to Bangladesh, or save for the future. Some of these

houseowners have a good relationship with firms, and other works as supervisors at shipyards. So, renting a bed workers can also find a job in shipbuilding. As one of the BMWs depicted:

"Before joining Fincantieri, I had to shift into this house. With the supervisor's assistance, the homeowner arranged a job for me... He informed me that if I follow the housekeeping rules and be obedient and gentleman (*valo manush*), I may continue to have the employment opportunity in the shipyard (Interview-24, Date 16-08-21).

The supervisors control workers inside the factory and everyday behaviour in their houses. If someone violates housekeeping rules, he must leave the house immediately. It can also have detrimentally effect on the job in the non-renewal of the labour contract. For most BMWs the wages from Fincantieri are insufficient to maintain the cost of living for families in Italy and in Bangladesh. So, they are bound to share rooms with BMWs. Hosting 9-12 people in one apartment with three rooms, one toilet, and a kitchen makes living conditions precarious. This condition of precarity in the living arrangements worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic when people could not move outside, and the shipyards were close for some weeks.

Nevertheless, the BMWs emphasised that their working conditions were satisfactory and, in fact, much better than what they had experienced in Libya, the Middle East, and Bangladesh before coming to Italy. The information about working and living conditions are widespread not only by workers, but also by some subcontractors' owners so that BMWs know before to arrive the situation. Therefore, subjectively, not all workers feel precarious; rather, they in some case they are grateful to have jobs and thus can earn money for their families left behind and survive in Italy. One of the BMWs described:

"with my income in the last 5 years, I built a 2 storey building in Bangladesh and repaid loans. I also bought some lands for future. I think without having job, I could not help my family and buy the properties. So I am happy what I achieved so far...(Interview-38, Date-15-09-21)."

However, some BMWs experience joblessness or irregularity of payments and often cannot manage their everyday expenses in Italy and cannot send money back home. One of the BMWs described:

"I am yet to receive my wages for the last three months. Our firm keeps us waiting. They say tomorrow tomorrow, they are yet to pay the wages. Here, I can't pay rent and

meal cost and cannot send money back home. I am going crazy now. How to manage all these costs, I don't know" (Interview-51, Date- 24-10-21)

As this interviewee explains, the precariousness of working condition not only affect the workers lives and accommodation in Italy but also the family lives in Bangladesh. They are unable to send money back home for family expenses and to repay the loan they took during the migration. However, large part of these BMWs remain working with the same firms as a labour contract is a prerequisite for renewing their permit to stay.

Precarious Forms of Agency?

Smith (2010) and Alberti (2014) demonstrate how migrants utilise precarious jobs strategically and develop mobility power. As we have explained, BMWs need a job contract to fulfil the renewal requirement of a permit to stay. If any worker is bargaining to get better working conditions, the supervisors may terminate employment contracts without notice, or non-renewal it. Indeed, some workers were compelled to remain jobless for several months after complaining about wages. The newly arrived need employment opportunities to secure basic requirements such as foodstuff and accommodation for survival. Being eager for an employment contract, some BMWS with restricted civil rights are stuck and exploited (Rabby,2022). The employees usually do not look for a high wage, as they first need a job contract to obtain or renew their permit to stay in Italy. BMWs remaining working in the same firm for an extended period can learn skills, familiarise with the local community, and establish meaningful relationships through family formation. These workers can establish a sense of community and after some years purchase a house. Precarious working conditions, lower wages, excessive obligations and burdens, the requirement to pay bribes, and the non-renewal of contracts push BMWs to engage in cyclical mobility, moving between multiple sectors, firms, and shipyards, actively utilising mobility strategy to modify their demands and increase their wages (Vickers et al., 2019). BMWs move between sectors and geographic areas such as agriculture, tourist, and hospitality as well as Chinese stores and Bangladeshi groceries to avoid precarious employment. Migrant trajectories often do not follow a step-by-step plan; instead, they include periods of mobility and immobility (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014) due to the nature of skills and labour market demand. The mobility of BMWs within different subcontractors working in Fincantieri as well as to other sectors does not mean to evade precarious working conditions. Mobility serves as a temporary respite for individuals seeking to improv their working conditions based on the information they can find in the community and also outside

it. Mobility among different firms and sectors is the main strategy of BMWs, as they are reluctant to join a union because the firm owners and supervisors dislike workers who are union members. One of the union members described:

"We are scared that the owner may take action against us for joining unions. As a result, they will not renew our job contracts. Owners will tactfully and gradually fire workers for joining unions. The firms will blacklist workers for joining unions. Afterwards supervisors will say that these workers have a lower workload now. We know some firms are wage thefts, not providing wages regularly and not giving adequate protective equipment or gloves. We remain silent. However, if we could be united and demand our rights, the owner would be compelled to follow laws" (Interview-14, Date 30-07-2021).

BMW's member of union revealed several obstacles to unionisation as job security, the nature of the job contract. Further, most BMWs scare that their owners or supervisors will know if someone is unionised. In fact, when supervisors know about the unionisation, they start threatening workers. Such a problem is widespread among all subcontracting firms in both shipyards. However, some BMWs usually go to the unions at the end of their employment relationship. Although Italian unions are trying to organise migrant workers, they suffer several difficulties and limitations. The secretary of Italian largest union³ described:

"Organising migrant workers... is very difficult. First, the active threats of job loss that can come from the side of firms. Second, there are linguistic and cultural barriers, as most workers are not Italian and need help understanding Italian properly. Even explaining what a trade union is and what the rights they have is difficult. Moreover, the migration law binds the residence permit to the job contract, which means workers can be threatened with firing and expulsion from the country (KII-3, Date: 22-10-2021).

To overcome such barriers, the unions approach various strategies to incorporate migrant workers. In such cases, smaller grassroots unions are taking initiatives to socialise workers about unions and keeping regular interactions with them. Similarly, some community-based NGOs are taking initiatives to support migrant workers who need to learn the local language. As we have explained BMWs face precarity of migration, precarity of labour and precarity of

³ The Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL) is one of the most prominent trade unions in Italy.

future in the host country (Silvey & Parreñas, 2019). However, after receiving permanent residence, some BMWs join union to safeguard jobs and social rights. Further, some BMWs leave shipyards looking for better working conditions, while others plan to open shops and small businesses in Italy. Finally, a few BMWs want to return after achieving a target income to secure a livelihood in Bangladesh for the future.

Conclusion

BMWs' working experiences and migratory status are intertwined with everyday lives. Migration status can result in precarity, exploitation, and immobility, leaving individuals stuck until they receive a permit to stay and experienced precarity for longer periods beyond borders. Studies about the working conditions of the migrants highlighted significant variations between documented and undocumented migrants in Italy and their level of precarity (Piro, 2021). We highlighted the complex links between precarious migration, precarious work, and precarious everyday life. Similar to Deshingkar et al. (2019), we also argue that precarious conditions are supported by intermediaries, firm owners, and the Italian host state. BMW's accounts of everyday lives offer insight into how the interactions between different spheres of life may extend beyond the workplace to the country of origin. First, the BMWs were initially engaged in precarious work due to their irregular migration status. After obtaining a permit to stay, these migrants join industries such as Fincantieri for a job contract. Second, some remain underpaid and exploited and face irregular wages and uncertainty regarding the renewal of their job contracts. Most of them are paid through the so called 'global pay' that do not include social contributions, holidays, and so on. Lower wages and harsh working conditions are accepted by migrants due both to the constraints of migration and labour policy of the host country, and the poor labour standards in their home country (Waldinger & Michele, 2003). Not surprising that most of the BMWs revealed that they are satisfied with their work experience even if the experience sporadic unemployment period. Many cited the need to support their families in Italy and Bangladesh as a motivating factor for such work. Finally, the precarious working experiences extend beyond the workplace to everyday life and accommodations (Hunter & Meers, 2018) and across the border to Bangladesh. BMWs live in cramped conditions, known as *Murghi*, due to their precarious employment conditions with lower wages. For workers, renting a single room or a bed is an option to save money and send money back home. Furthermore, workers need regular jobs to afford the expenses associated with family reunification. As a result, they may become more compliant to secure longer contracts from their employers, thus remaining silent and avoiding joining unions. Similar to Anner (2015),

we pointed out that these conditions include temporary contracts, low wages, and limited opportunities for collective bargaining (Bauder, 2006; Lillie & Wagner, 2015). Our reflexive understanding highlights how the 'precarious labour and life' experiences of migrants shape a family's well-being and everyday life (Strauss, 2018), which not only goes beyond the workplace to everyday life in Italy but also crosses the border to the everyday life of their families in Bangladesh.

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