



Ca' Foscari University of Venice

PROJECT ACRONYM AND TITLE: LabEcolnt - Labour & Ecology in an International Perspective: Porto Marghera in the Phosphates Archipelago

FUNDING PROGRAMME: HORIZON EUROPE

CALL: HORIZON-MSCA-2022-PF-01 (MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2022)

KEYWORDS: *Deindustrialisation, Extractivism, Environmental Justice, Decolonial Studies, Environmental Labour Studies*

HOST DEPARTMENT: Department of Humanities

SCIENTIFIC RESPONSIBLE: Francesco Vacchiano

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| Project total costs | Overall funding assigned to UNIVE |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| € 320.924,16 | € 320.924,16 |

ABSTRACT:

This research, hosted by Ca' Foscari University of Venice in partnership with the Geneva Graduate Institute, investigates the making and unmaking of Europe's historical industrial areas uncovering the intersections between labour and ecological transformations from an international perspective. It does so by deploying theories of extractivism to the case study of the major industrial cluster of Porto Marghera (Venice, Italy), using the production of phosphate-based fertilisers as an entry point. Porto Marghera's "super-phosphate" plants were established in the 1920s, in the context of rising fascism. They integrated Porto Marghera with the "green factories" of expanding modern agriculture – downstream –, and with the "Phosphate Archipelago", a network of extractive and industrial spaces on the two shores of the Mediterranean – upstream. Phosphates thus invisibly and contradictorily connected Porto Marghera's labour mobilisations with North Africa's anticolonial struggles. This link was also ecological, as shown by the noxious health and environmental effects of phosphates. The closure of Porto Marghera's fertiliser plants in the 1990s was in fact accelerated by environmental campaigns against the dumping of phosphate waste into the Adriatic Sea. Meanwhile, restructuring in the extractive areas of Morocco and Tunisia (Khouribga and Gafsa respectively) turned them into important points of departure for working-class migration to Italy. While deindustrial studies focus on the history of industrial areas from a local or national perspective, less attention has been paid to the insertion of such industries in global hierarchies of labour and environmental degradation. By analysing Porto Marghera's place in the Phosphate Archipelago, this research generates insights for today's ecological transitions in mining, industry, and agriculture, at a time when fertilisers are once again in the spotlight due to concerns over sustainability and instability in food supply chains.

| Planned Start date | Planned End date |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 01/09/2024 | 31/08/2027 |

PARTNERSHIP

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| 1. Ca' Foscari University of Venice | Italy | Beneficiary |
| 2. Geneva Graduate Institute | Switzerland | Associated Partner |