

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A
20/01/2026) - IRSA 34 - DIVERSE TRANSITIONS OF FARMING AND
PEASANTRIES

**MULTI-SCALAR LABOUR REGIMES: SEASONAL MIGRANT FARMWORK IN
AUSTRALIA**

Rafael Azeredo (r.deazeredo@griffith.edu.au)

Zoe Wang (zoewang1980@gmail.com)

Neil Coe (neil.coe@sydney.edu.au)

In high-income countries, labour-intensive food production is increasingly dependent on migrant workers recruited through seasonal and temporary migration programs designed to address chronic agricultural labour shortages. While the concept of labour regimes has been widely used to analyse the institutional and political organisation of work, it has rarely been examined in conjunction with migration regimes. This article addresses this gap by analysing the labour regimes underpinning seasonal migrant farm work in the horticultural sector of north-east Australia. We extend labour regime analysis by incorporating migration regimes, conceptualising them as multi-scalar formations operating across global mobility frameworks, national visa and labour policies, regional labour markets, and local employment practices. Drawing on qualitative

research, the article examines how these interlocking regimes shape workers' mobility, legal status, bargaining power, and everyday labour relations. We show that migration regimes do not simply channel labour into existing labour regimes but actively constitute them by producing differentiated and spatially uneven forms of labour discipline, precarity, and control. Seasonal migrant labour regimes are shown to emerge through the strategic alignment of state migration governance, employer practices, and intermediary actors, generating a workforce that is simultaneously flexible and highly regulated. By foregrounding the multi-scalar intersections of labour and migration regimes, the article contributes to economic geographic debates on labour, mobility, and agri-food production, and advances a relational framework for analysing migrant work in contemporary food systems.

Palavras-chave: horticulture; farm labour; migrants; pacific islanders; backpackers.