

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN SOUTH OF ITALY DISPLACEMENT, RESISTANCE AND SOLIDARITY

A n n a E l i a *

Abstract

The article focuses on a case study of Resettlement Programme in a southern Italian region, aimed at a group of Palestinian refugees from the Al-TANF camp, between Syria and Iraq. Within a year, the programme had failed as a number of the Palestinians took flight towards Scandinavia. In the article the established/outside representation of Elias and Scotson, was used to interpret the processes of settlement in the territory and the network of relationships which developed between refugees and locals, but also in the attempt to understand what caused the mechanism of alienation of the resettled Palestinians. The survey aimed to highlight how the feeling of belonging to a place is reproduced and the processes by which social networks are reconstructed by people who have undergone forced migration and wish to recover political and social capital, so creating opportunities for a new and shared territorial identity based upon diversity as a value.

Key words resettlement, refugees, indigenous, belonging, forced migration

Résumé

L'article présente un cas d'étude sur un Programme de Réinstallation dans une région du sud de l'Italie destiné à une collectivité de réfugiés palestiniens provenant du camp de TANF entre la Syrie et l'Irak. Le Programme qui s'avère être l'une des premières expériences de réinstallation réalisées en Italie, échoue après près d'un an suite à la fuite vers les pays scandinaves des membres de la communauté palestinienne réinstallée. Dans l'article la représentation enracinée/externe de Elias et Scotson, a été utilisée pour interpréter les processus d'installation au territoire et le réseau des relations qui se sont développées entre des réfugiés et les autochtones, mais aussi dans la tentative de comprendre ce qui a causé le mécanisme d'aliénation des Palestiniens réinstallés. La recherche entendait mettre en relief la reproduction du sentiment d'appartenance aux lieux et les processus de reconstruction des network sociaux par les protagonistes des migrations forcées, lesquels, outrepassant la dimension ethnique, mettent en œuvre des pratiques afin de récupérer un capital social et politique, créant des

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opportunités quant à une identité territoriale partagée et nouvelle, articulée autour de la diversité en tant que valeur.

Mots-cle réinstallation, réfugiés, autochtones, appartenance, migration forcée

Rezumat

Articolul prezintă un studiu de caz privind un program de reinstalare într-o regiune din sudul Italiei a unei comunități de refugiați palestinieni proveniți din tabăra TANF dintre Siria și Irak. Programul se dovedește a fi una dintre primele experiențe de relocare în Italia, la aproape un an după plecarea spre Scandinavia a membrilor comunității palestiniene reinstalate. În articolul acesta a fost folosită teoria reprezentării înrădăcinate (Elias și Scotson) pentru a interpreta procesul de instalare pe teritoriu și rețeaua de relații între refugiați și indigeni, dar și pentru a înțelege ceea ce care a provocat plecare palestinienilor instalați în tabără. Cercetarea subliniază reproducerea sentimentului de apartenență la un anumit loc și procesul de reconstrucție a rețelei sociale a protagoniștilor migrației forțate, care, dincolo de dimensiunea etnică, pun în aplicare practici de recuperare a unui capital social și politic pentru crearea de oportunități cu o identitate teritorială comună și nouă, construită în jurul diversității ca valoare.

Cuvinte-cheie Reinstalare, refugiați, apartenență, autohtoni, migrație forțată

Introduction

In 2010, the Italian government chose the area of the Locride, in Calabria, a southern Italian region, for the establishing of a Resettlement Programme aimed at a group of Palestinian refugees from the Al-TANF camp, between Syria and Iraq. Within a year, the programme had failed as a number of the Palestinians took flight towards Scandinavia. The international media focused its attention on the management of the Italian government's resettlement programme, especially on problems that the area chosen already had and the responsibility of local people. This paper aims to look in detail at effects of this strategy of blame regarding those institutional and social actors who do not adopt adequate strategies for the limiting of refugee mobility (Bauman 2005). The basic assumption is that the territory can be seen as a positioning camp in relation to the "other", but also a no-man's land where locals and migrants often build an ideal collective "us" (Elias and Scotson 2004). The observation point is the area of the Locride, a socio-spatial microcosm where two small municipalities on the hills above the Ionian coast, Riace and Caulonia, have acquired great experience in the territorial reception of refugees (women and families).

The considerations come from interviews with the organizers of the project, social workers, social educators and interns, and local people (the elderly and local emigrants to northern Europe who return for their holidays). During the survey, the refugees were interviewed, with a distinction made between those assigned to the Central System of the System of Protection for Asylum Seeker

and Refugees¹ (especially single mothers and large families) and the Palestinian refugees assigned by the Italian Government through the Resettlement programme. The period examined runs from 2010 to 2013 when refugees were housed in the village of Riace (partner leader of the project). The field survey involved participation in different phases of community life which the arrival of the refugees helped revitalise: summer, when supportive tourists and returning emigrants arrive; patronal festivals (for the village patron saint) and festivals on migration; the isolation of the winter months.

The analysis availed itself of the theoretical contribution of the 1965 ethnographic study by Elias and Scotson of the community of Winston Parva. In analysing the coexistence of different social groups, the study looked particularly at the differences between an established group (workers resident in the area for some time) and an outsider group (workers who arrived more recently). The authors found that the groups which are given this configuration have distinctive elements which are not the consequence of class or racial differences, but derive from a specific relationship of interdependence. To be specific, a different order of residential settlement leads to the establishing of mechanisms of social stigmatisation of the newer residents on the part of the older ones, so consolidating established patterns of community life.

The established/outside representation within the analysis of a socio-spatial microcosm was used to interpret the processes of settlement in the territory and the network of relationships which developed between refugees and locals, but also in the attempt to understand what caused the mechanism of alienation (Simmel, 2003) of the resettled Palestinians. Therefore, the survey aimed to highlight how the feeling of belonging to a place is reproduced and the processes by which social networks are reconstructed by people who have undergone forced migration and wish to recover political and social capital, so creating opportunities for a new and shared territorial identity based upon diversity as a value.

The arrival of the refugee in a land of emigrants

The Locride, like other inland areas of Calabria, has been deeply marked by the exodus of peasants and artisans whose labour went to support the industrial development in the of north-eastern regions of Italy. The overbuilding on the coast and violations of public concessions, planning permission and landscape constraints have produced in many a sense of not belonging to the

¹ Law 189 of 2002 set up the system of protection for asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR) in the Department of Civil Immigration and Asylum Services at the Ministero dell'Interno. This is a coordination, consultancy and monitoring system for territorial reception projects aimed at asylum seekers and refugees which is run by Italian municipal councils in partnership with the third sector.

area. A kind of “resignation” towards the Mafia hegemony and domination of the territory.

The arrival of a boat full of Kurdish refugees in 1998 – 300 people from Iraq and Afghanistan – gave rise to forms of hospitality based on the recovery of houses in the old town of Riace. The population was 1600 inhabitants and, what is more, the 600 inhabitants of the old town were mostly elderly.

This operation of rescue and settlement has led to a daily life that has a new form of communication between refugees and those Italians who are involved in the so-called “diffused hospitality”, which hinges around the combination of refugee reception and sustainable territorial development. The project volunteers overcame resistance to change and unlocked the refugees sensibility at various “humanizing” meetings, such as religious ceremonies and encounters of intercultural learning at a repopulated elementary school, where they re-found cultural elements of their lives, their native country and their experience. These practises were activated on the arrival of the Kurdish refugees and have continued over the following years creating a feeling of belonging, both for in native population and the newly arrived. Local tradition such as patronal festivals and the festival of Emigrants are proposed and reconsidered when the village is repopulated by visiting emigrants and supportive tourists. Such actions are to be added to the distinctive aspects of a new form of community living: the inauguration of squares restored with public funds and with the help of supportive networks; the festival of Migration. The presence of refugee families and families of supportive tourists in the restored houses of the village has radically changed the image of the Locride villages, which in national and international news are associated with the 'ndrangheta, and rendered them “The villages of hospitality”.

Refugees and Italians share a minority status and the discovery of a common, pre-shared knowledge. The experience was coordinated by the social co-operative “*il Borgo e il cielo*” whose aim was to combine the reception of the Kurdish refugees and the recovery of local arts and crafts: the art of weaving, embroidery, and ceramic and glass craftwork. There are mainly women in the workplaces, those from Riace (young graduates in Fine Arts, mothers who are skilled in artisan work) and the refugee women (young single mothers and their very young daughters engaged in a learning-training path). Creativity occurs (and “the soul is revealed”) within these new social spaces, to then be shown to the world through the supportive tourists, journalists and scholars. Such processes elaborate a form of communication which is an alternative to “the exchange of signs with modernity”, a return to reciprocity within the «*rediscovery of cultural differences with regard to a dominant model of globalization*», so giving life back to what “*was censored as infantile or primitive by the technical civilisation, or labelled as utopian by dominant groups*» (Touraine 2009, p. 71).

These new forms of ethical work, which emerge from an “urge for reciprocity”, have become the manifestation of a “common sense”, that is the sense of a shared world (Giaccardi and Magatti 2003). The paths of participation have included new political subjects, local institutions and new reception projects in the Locride in a process of collective and public awareness of a problematic situation.

The institutionalising of the practise of reception

In 2001, the municipality of Riace joined the Piano Nazionale Asilo (today known as the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR)) together with the Città Futura Association, so becoming one of the first projects of integrated reception to be funded². The new residents of Riace are young single mothers who were previously beneficiaries, but are now operators within the project, and whose children, now teenagers, have repopulated the secondary school. Moreover, there are the so-called vulnerable cases that are “assigned” to the Central System of the SPRAR, women and families from the most varied of origins who are being helped to adapt to the impact with “another Africa”.

«The first time I arrived here on a bus...We were going up and up the mountain and I asked myself: where am I? This is another Africa!! Where is the technology? Where are the cars? But then I discovered that Riace is beautiful...my son grows...goes to school...he can also speak dialect...» [Zena, 26 years, from Sudan]

Winter in the reception villages passes in the wait for the return of emigrants and tourists who offer solidarity and an openness to new relationships. This network of relationships is formed and renewed in the summer, from year to year, and only partly compensates for institutional negligence towards the combination of reception and sustainable territorial development³.

² The actions and practices of economic support which have emerged from the Riace experience led to the passing of Regional Law n. 18/2009 to support the reception of refugees involved unsustainable development activities in the rural areas which suffer from depopulation. The key principles of this law, which has never been executed, were adapted in the orientation of expenditure of POR Calabria FESR 2007/2013 through a specific action aimed at attracting new inhabitants, including migrants, to marginal territories, introduced in the PISR (Plan for Integrated Rural Development) Countering hinterland depopulation

³ The solidarity banknotes, annulled by the project coordinator's signature, were accepted by small farmers and owners of local economic activities while waiting for ministerial funds. Once these arrived, the notes were exchanged for the money they represented at the Città Futura office. These solidarity notes are in line with the project's objectives of social and economic sustainability. A resource redistribution system that permits a small community like Riace to continue its activities in the wait for finance and which

The forms of reception found in the villages of the Locride, – institutionalised within the practice of integrated reception – are not considered very meritorious when it comes to gaining access to the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services. This is due to their inefficiency in supporting processes for the (re)construction of beneficiaries’ autonomy (holders and seekers of international protection) within a limited time frame of their having obtained a residence permit. The market trend (*pas de prestation, sans contre-prestation [no benefits, without counter-benefits* (Castel 2009, p. 10), demands that beneficiaries collaborate with the methods which are proposed. In the meantime, the social actors become responsible for the success of the “socio-economic integration” path by showing the tangible results achieved in the search for a job and a house for the beneficiaries.

Actually, although the intention is to take into consideration any territorial disparity with regards refugees’ access to social citizenship (Zincone 2001), an evaluation of the system’s infrastructural limits is appropriate, as is highlighted by the Central System reports: access to limited resources and structural delays in the arrival of ministerial funding. There is also the planning uncertainty inherent in the project’s dependence upon the good will of local policy makers and the still incomplete structuring of an emergency logic in the allocation of beneficiaries⁴.

Social operators and coordinators of the SPRAR projects in the Locride and the Region produce considerations regarding both the contexts in which it is possible to work given the situation of funding uncertainty and the difficulty of ensuring the circulation of people while respecting social operator ethics. With a view to re-designing the systems of integrated reception governance, the implemented practices concern the redistribution of ministerial funds among refugees and Italians: the creation of socio-educational services for children of both refugees and locals; the use of work bursaries to define areas of socio-economic integration for Italians and former beneficiaries in their interchangeable role of operator/educator/trainer.

The autonomy of the beneficiary project is not, then, a unilateral path, but finds its space in the building of an alternative system of relations between refugees and locals which involves the recognition of a shared situation of social disparity.

In order to deal with the uncertainty which comes with the wait for ministerial funds, a solidarity-based currency was adopted to allow both some

is made possible by by the structured relationships of reciprocity between refugees and Italians.

⁴ A term coined by Rumbaut which describes the complex system of government services and the criteria that regulate the forced migrants’ access to welfare (Rumbaut 1989).

area of autonomy for the humanitarian regime⁵ and a space for the strengthening of social practices based on each and everyone's social responsibility (Giaccardi and Magatti 2003).

«the funding doesn't go to the GDO, but stays in the village supporting a form of collective life. We use this system to stimulate the local economy and, in doing so, also make the refugees independent... this is also important for the human relationships in the village, moreover our expenditure is clear and verifiable... The refugees are granted 200 euros a week for food, meaning that a family of 4 people has 800 euros to live on and doesn't pay rent. » [Domenico Lucano, Mayor of Riace]

The spontaneous offer of the empty houses in the village to the refugees was made again after adhesion to the SPRAR, becoming an instrument of social and political recognition for the outgoing beneficiaries, those who, being entitled to international protection, did not fall within the *refugee structure* as defined by Rumbaut (1989). Single mothers who also completed the socio-economic integration programme in other projects, but had not achieved autonomy, had access to these houses; the *dubliners* (refugees returning from North Europe), who claimed their right to mobility and equality, after various experiences of "border violation" (Beck 2011).

The Resettlement Programme

The principles of the Programme, as shown in the statute of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), indicate relocation of the "particularly vulnerable" refugees from the country of first asylum to a State which accepts them, using a "long term solution" for the processes of settlement. The Italian government does not carry out "permanent resettlement programmes". Following a feasibility study co-funded by the European Union, *F.A.R.E. - Feasibility Study for an Italian Resettlement Programme*, the government intended initiating a future Programme in Italy, beginning the first project of *emergency resettlement* in 2007⁶.

The UNHCR started a series of consultations with the aim of encouraging EU governments to undertake this programme (UNHCR 2012). Some research on the cases of Resettlement in countries traditionally involved in the Programme, like United States, Australia, Canada, focus mainly on the responsibility of the local administrative authorities in carrying out processes of integration; on the

⁵ To be specific, the Programme looked at the province of Rieti where 69 Eritreans from the camp in Misratah, Lybia were sent under an International mandate of the UNHCR (cfr. Di Giacomo 2007).

⁶ cfr. Torre Transnational Research, *A report on the implementation of resettlement programmes in favour of refugees in six EU Member States*, Transnational Observatory for Refugee's Resettlement in Europe, 2013, site: http://www.resettlement-observatory.eu/images/transnational/TRANSNATIONAL_REPORT.pdf.

role of NGOs in defining networks to support the settlement processes which, often, have an ethnic-religious connotation (Nawyn, 2006; Johnston 2009).

A report by the European Commission, UNHCR and CIR (Italian Council for Refugees) highlights the integration problems which concern “the good refugees” (refugees on the resettlement programme) as opposed to the spontaneous asylum seekers (UNHCR 2012, p. 66). The reasons lie in the rapid process of putting down roots (rooting), a process which is, though, further accelerated by governments’ need to render the refugees independent of the welfare system. To be specific, *short term integration*⁷, that is the search for a job and a house within two years, is a response to this objective.

Just as it is for reception interventions, the role of local actors is, then, crucial in the case of resettlement. What emerges is what Jossep defined as the structuring of a complex multilevel system of forced migration governance. This system is structured on networks of social actors and institutions which act locally, making the weaker levels of the national welfare accessible to refugees (Jessop 1999), often within the absence of national policies of intervention.

Since the 1990s, various NGOs and the UNHCR have put great effort into both motivating the governments already involved in the Resettlement programme to organise services, as well as supportive policies, for national welfare and encouraging participation in the Programme, which is still looked at as just another burden with respect to the national systems of asylum.

After the FARE project, the Italian Government continued to conceive of resettlement programmes as emergency measures. The second Resettlement Programme was carried out in Italy in 2009 and involved 179 Palestinian refugees who were resettled from the Al-Tanf camp on the border between Syria and Iraq within the “Resettlement in the South” project (2009-2011). In the Programme, there was a project for integrated reception in Riace Marina and Caulonia, another Locride municipality. The Palestinians’ arrival in the area of the Locride took place in the absence of a political debate and of a legislation of reference. The local actors (municipal councils and territorial reception associations) arranged Pro Palestine manifestations in the attempt to recreate norms and

⁷ The countries which adopted a Resettlement Programme in the early 1990s were the United States, Canada and Australia. New Zealand also has a great tradition, while, of the European countries, Sweden is in fourth place in the world with regard to the number of refugees accepted for resettlement. Other European countries involved include Finland, Norway, Holland, Denmark, Great Britain, Ireland and Iceland, while Spain and Italy are emerging. The 2007/573/CE decision to establish the European Fund for Refugees for 2008-2013 introduced the need for a common resettlement plan in Europe. Within the reciprocal relationships, there are no boundaries between close and loose relationships, but there is a process of integration between the forms of binding solidarity and reconstructed trust relationships which leads to the activation of a set of ties which, unlike the tightly cohesive relationships based on ethnicity.

behaviour around the new refugee community which are shared from a cultural and organisational point of view. A cultural heritage, a wealth of experience and divulged knowledge which, within the strategies of diversity governance, can be used to generate a valuable communal asset, a social identity and, therefore, a sense of community belonging (Bolzman and Manço 2009).

The dynamics of new refugees' estrangement

In 2010, almost a year after the project started and less than half-way through the short term integration, the first criticisms regarding the delay in the arrival of the already allocated funding emerged. The "normal" uncertainty became no longer manageable within the communal forms of Italian and refugee social responsibility. The situation emerging from interviews revealed elements of social distance which gave a social form to the figure of the foreigner. The commonly held sense of positivity towards the presence of refugees in the area started to show some limits the moment that attention was given to the newer arrivals. The people of Riace referred to the Palestinians who arrived as part of the Resettlement project as being "*different from the others*", "*those that arrived by plane*" and that did not "*understand the 'sacrifice'*".

These new arrivals were commonly considered to be inferior because of a condition of cultural closure in their relationships with their neighbours, and in general. Disapproving gossip can give rise to social stigmatisation and, from what was reported by the project's Italian social workers and refugee beneficiary/operators, the image emerges of the already present refugee families as being better than the Palestinian new arrivals because they were more prepared for dialogue and participation.

The Palestinians became recognised as "outsiders", to use the terminology of Elias and Scotson (2009). They were a community that had descended upon the area without integrating into the reciprocally open system of relationships that overcame any form of ethnic belonging. The "rooted" older refugees had become the inhabitants of the village, the locals were the project operators, refugees and locals who obtained training grants were educators, and then there were the refugees who had arrived through the Central Service of the SPRAR. A community built around the success of a project upon which the livelihoods of refugees and Italians depend.

In order to reach an explanation for the different treatment given to the "new refugees" by the "old residents", it is necessary to reflect upon the nature of the relationships between the groups and upon the way in which they had developed a collective ideal *we*. This means identifying both the elements of cohesion within the groups and the elements of differentiation which led to estranged behaviour.

Elias and Scotson analysed the processes involved in settling into a small suburban working-class community and showed that the more recent families to

arrive in the area were categorised as being socially inferior by the older residents, albeit they were no different in terms of social class or race. It was the term “old” which expressed a concept of distinction based upon rules and regulations of community life which were imposed upon new residents. The strategy of social stigmatisation, the negative gossip regarding new arrivals, allowed the group of “old residents” to close ranks against any eventual dynamics of challenge and maintain a deep-rooted way of life (Elias and Scotson 2009, p. 160).

According to this, the social stigmatisation of the “group” of Palestinian refugees was, then, the result of the outsiders’ incapacity to adapt to the “charm of the dominant group” (Elias and Scotson 2009) and to develop a capacity to adapt to certain rules and duties such as the reciprocal distribution of resources.

The demand for social equality – for the welfare benefits which, presumably, were due from the Resettlement Programme – on the part of the “outsiders” (the Palestinians) was, for the “rooted” (the “old residents”), a sign of ingratitude and a threat to their “rooted” way of life (Elias and Scotson 2009, p. 23), even for those who had the same origins and life experiences as the new arrivals.

“Here, I feel that the people of Riace are so friendly that they don’t see me as a refugee... I have been here for four years and have been working as an interpreter for fourteen months...Some Palestinian refugees arrived...they call me for everything, to arrange a dental appointment or because a shower hose is broken... They (the Palestinian refugees) think that Italy is like Europe, but Riace isn’t Europe...Here there are lots of people who spend a lot of money to study and can not find work...” [Aamaal, Palestinian refugee, cultural mediator, Association Città Futura, 27 years of age]

On the other hand, the Palestinian refugees who were subjected to what Elias and Scotson say constitutes a “power relationship” (Elias and Scotson 2004), rejected relations with the locals and other refugees in an act of self-exclusion. The autonomy of certain parameters of the humanitarian control permitted the “resettled” Palestinians in the Locride to move around in line with general, objective guidelines without ties that might have prejudiced their perception, comprehension and evaluation of reality (Simmel 2003). What was most surprising were the criticisms of how the Programme was run, of the refugee “selection” practices, of the Italian Government’s responsibility during the planning phase of the operation and of the practice of economic support.

“When we arrived in Riace, we realised immediately that there was a big difference from what had been proposed to us. First of all, they had told us that we would have gone to live in a big city where we would have found work and lots of people. A normal city. Then though, we arrived here and realised that it was a place with no young people...and the work: none! I

worked in the workshops for a year and the only people who came were tourists. But the tourist season here only lasts for the month of August...Everything here we have gained through meetings between us and the mayor. But nothing comes from the government and this does not allow us to plan our futures... [Muhammed, 27, spokesperson for the Palestinian community in the Locride up until 2011]

With respect to other arrivals of refugees, on this occasion, the impact with a “marginal area of the centre” produced a phenomenon of estrangement from the practices of putting down roots in the territory. The Palestinian refugees reactivated relationships of binding solidarity (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993) and community relations were opened to international networks, which allowed them to acquire information about other Palestinian families who had been accepted by the Swedish government. A comparison that permitted them to put forward “normal” requests on the basis of the guarantees of socio-economic integration offered in the *Resettlement*.

Given their knowledge of English, the younger Palestinians formed a delegation to hold communications with the mayor. Collectively it was decided to begin actions of resistance including the adults’ deserting of the literacy courses, boycotting the work of the social workers and exasperating them by continually making requests, and abandoning training in the craft workshops. As a consequence, a ministerial commission came to Riace to discuss things with the Palestinian delegation. The arrival of the functionaries was met with a strategy of blaming the project management. The ministerial organs assumed management of the locally fixed processes of social inclusion, but only succeeded in further increasing the process of separation.

“There should be a specific programme for our old folk. It is foreseen that after 10 years in Italy, they can have citizenship, and then a pension. But it is possible that the old folks will die before obtaining any benefit. Therefore, we asked the mayor to help us talk to someone from the ministry, the Prefect...Now they tell us to attend a school of Italian, 150 hours and then, we will see...They are only interested in finishing the project on time...” [Muhammed, 27, spokesperson for the Palestinian community in the Locride up until 2011]

“After more than a year since the start of the project, the ministry has now decided to establish a list of priorities...so the school programmes are sent from outside... they send us specialised personnel for the training courses ...” [Educator on the Città Futura project, native of Riace]

In June 2011, the Palestinian refugees abandoned Riace and took flight towards Sweden. Meanwhile, a heated discussion started in the international media on the Italian government’s management of the programme. This media debate also involved the Qatari television broadcaster Al Jazeera and nearly

caused a diplomatic dispute between Italy and the Arab countries. Focus was placed upon the overly optimistic nature of the reception project in a territory of high mafia risk. After a couple of months in Sweden, the Palestinian families were forcibly sent back to Italy to be “assigned” to the various projects of the communities participating in the SPRAR network, these included Calabria and, once again, the Locride.

Conclusion

Ulrich Beck argued that “*the legitimisation of global inequality*” (Beck 2011, p. 14), has become instrumental to western democracies so as to distract attention from their internal inequalities. In the case we are looking at, refugees and locals reinterpret their own “social”, rather than “geographical”, subalternity in the context of the globalised economy (Castel 2002) through a process of reciprocal recognition of each other’s inequality. Touraine writes that relationships of proximity derive from recognition of the refugee as a person who is not serving causes, values or laws beyond his needs and wish to declare his right to an individual existence (Touraine 2009). Therefore, rather than becoming a place to contain the refugees, the territory becomes a space where new relationships are elaborated that go beyond the categories of disadvantaged populations and vulnerable subjects.

Furthermore, by using the work of Elias and Scotson (2009), it has been made clear that the arrival of the Palestinian refugees (the “outsiders”) through the *Resettlement* programme did not succeed in activating the same processes of communication as had evolved before. The settled refugees and Italians are considered “rooted” not only on the basis of the chronology of their settling in the area, but also their participation in the rules and regulations of shared lives.

In order to find an explanation for the different forms of behaviour adopted towards the “new refugees” by the “old residents”, it was necessary to reflect upon the nature of the relationships between the groups and, therefore, upon the manner in which “new” and “old” residents created a collective ideal *we*. It is within this process of “diversity” recomposition that we find the forms of ethical work that revalue skills and knowledge of the past and place Italians and refugees on the same level in their roles as teachers/learners. To this, we should add the conditions of reciprocal redistribution of public resources which derive from the Programme and guarantee rights of social citizenship to both new and old residents.

In self-excluding themselves from these processes, the Palestinian refugees expressed a form of resistance to the multilevel governance system of forced migration (Zetter 2009), also with respect to those support actions which are aimed at opening spaces of autonomy in the humanitarian regime. In reality, both the “rooted” and the “outsiders” – the locals and initial arrivals, and the Palestinian refugees – exhibit a form of appropriation of the territory which is

independent of duration of their stay. From this point of view, a peripheral area in the South of Italy like the one in question is not necessarily a place of transit, but it also becomes a socio-spatial entity in which networks of relationships develop which outline new forms of belonging and territorial identity.

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