Power and the “Everyday Politics” of Refugee Protection in the Case Study of
Gioiosa-Ionica, Italy.

By

Krystyna Wojnarowicz

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Political Science

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

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Abstract

The way in which a norm is legally codified in laws and treaties can differ from what that norm actually accomplishes in practice. Norm implementation interrogates how global norms are put into practice at the local level. This thesis analyzes the “everyday politics” of protection implementation through the case study of the SPRAR refugee protection project in Gioiosa-Ionica, Italy. I illustrate how productive and structural power work through the intimate relationship between frontline workers who are formally mandated to implement protection, and the refugees who are the beneficiaries of protection. Frontline workers create new local norms through patterned behaviour and practices that condition legal protection, the provision of basic services and integration measures, on the acquiescent behaviour of refugees. This perpetuates a stereotypical refugee subjectivity based on passiveness and “victimhood”. Refugees resist these practices and the way their protection is received in commonplace and concerted ways. Local actors who are not officially mandated condition the arena in which frontline workers do their work by infiltrating implementing organizations; and placing barriers on how they are able to do and accomplish their work. As such the “everyday politics” of refugee protection in Gioiosa-Ionica is fertile ground for how power, resistance and contestation play into norm implementation.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my Supervisor, Professor Martin Geiger, for strongly encouraging me to pursue this research project and embarking on the journey of empirical fieldwork, and Professor James Milner for his patient guidance and enthusiastic support. I would also like to thank my family for their endless encouragement and support; Kathleen for her keen eye and attention to detail; Caitlin for her kind words of wisdom; Kevin for always listening throughout the many challenges; and HS for his inspirational force, and for teaching me resilience.

Most importantly, I would like to give a big thanks to all of my research participants in Gioiosa-Ionica for participating in this research project and helping me along the way. This thesis is grounded in their insights and I am very deeply grateful for their honesty and generosity in sharing their personal life stories, experiences, and impressions.

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Introduction

“Trasite, Favorite” was a saying that I heard a lot while I was in Calabria-the toe of Italy. It was a saying in a Southern Italian dialect that translates to “welcome, make yourself at home” and it was often used by locals when describing the culture of hospitality in the Mezzogiorno, and the sacredness of welcoming the stranger. Among the winding cobble stone roads, and the picturesque underpasses of the medieval town of Gioiosa-Ionica, this hospitality was extended to 75 refugees being hosted in the town. At the surface one could conclude that the small town with a population of only 6,000 inhabitants was playing its part in the international “burden-sharing” of refugees, or that the local community was upholding the international norm of refugee protection when so many other communities and European states were closing their doors, and erecting barriers. But when we engage closer, look past these romanticized surface impressions, and observe how the norm of refugee protection is actually *implemented*, the town becomes a site of contestation. Manifestations of control and resistance seep to the surface in the encounter of those actors who do refugee protection, and the receiving subjects. The focus of this thesis is the testimony of this encounter.

International norms are often conceived in their legalized form where values and principles are codified, formalised, and institutionalised through various treaties and laws among states (Weiner, 2009). Beyond this limited legal definition, norms are also conceived as “dominant practices and behaviours” (Crawford, 2002). But how does a norm go from being a legal text to an actual practice? Betts and Orchard (2014) describe this process as norm implementation- “a parallel process to institutionalization which draws attention to the steps necessary to introduce the international norm’s precepts into

formal legal and policy mechanisms within a state or organization in order to routinize compliance” (p.3) In other words, particularly in the case of person-centred norms, implementation is the way in which norms are actually applied and experienced in people’s lives. It is in the space between the legal formalization and the application of the norm where the “implementation gap” lies- the chasm between the aspiration of the norm and what it actually achieves in practice.

The exact meaning of the norm of “refugee protection” has been open to much contestation and debate since its inception over 60 years ago due to ambiguity over how to define “protection” (Kneebone et al 2014, Helton 2003). Protection in its legal form is codified in the 1951 Convention on the Protection of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol as a series of legal rights and entitlements to those claiming to be refugees. These include legal and physical protection such as the right to seek asylum, the right to *non-refoulement*, and freedom from arbitrary detention (UNHCR, protection). Refugee protection also includes humanitarian protection through material assistance such as shelter, food, water, and medical care, which guarantees the basic right to life (Helton 2003, p.26). Other sociological scholars demonstrate how protection can also come in the form of integration or incorporation into a host society during the asylum process (Bjornberg, 2014) or even as a method of “self-protection” to remain discrete when legal protection from the state is not granted (Ambrosini, 2014). This thesis uses a broad definition of protection as encompassing: legal protection, humanitarian protection, as well as state and community initiated integration measures. The implementation of “refugee protection” is directly operational and relevant only in what it actually accomplishes in the lives of refugees.

In Italy, the state has delegated the implementation of refugee protection to various organizations such as associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), charities, and religious organizations. Two main streams exist through which protection is implemented. The first are large reception structures called Centres for the Reception of Asylum-Seekers (CARA), and the second are community hosting projects part of the “System for the Protection of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers” (SPRAR). In this thesis they will be referred to as SPRAR projects. There have been many ethnographies conducted on CARA centres in Italy (Campesi, 2015) however, few have been conducted on SPRARs, and even fewer available in the English language. As such, this thesis uses the RECOSOL SPRAR project in the town of Gioiosa-Ionica, Calabria as a case study; however, I do not claim that it is representative of all SPRAR projects in Calabria, or Italy.

The guiding research questions that this thesis seeks to explore are: *How is power exerted in the “everyday” implementation of refugee protection in the case study of Gioiosa-Ionica? What forms of resistance and contestation are at play?*

In order to address this question the objectives of the study are to:

- i. Investigate how power is expressed at the grassroots in the implementation of protection through the provision of services (housing, health care, asylum case management, language learning, skills-training) to refugees.
- ii. Investigate how refugees feel about the way their protection is implemented and how they resist.
- iii. Examine the micro-level dynamics in Gioiosa-Ionica and how institutional, cultural, and informal norms in the locality condition the context in which protection is implemented.

Using the case study of the SPRAR project in Gioiosa-Ionica, this thesis argues that power is expressed in “the everyday” implementation of refugee protection through

rules and practices that control how basic needs and services are provided to refugees. Protection becomes conditional on compliant behaviour. Productive power works through these practices to encourage a “stereotypical” refugee subjectivity based on passiveness and victim-hood. Refugees resist these practices and take political subjectivity through commonplace and concerted expressions of resistance. Furthermore, local institutional norms and local power configurations have an effect on how protection is implemented and experienced in the lives of refugees. Power is important to account for in the theory and practice of norm implementation. Theoretically, norm implementation speaks to the actors involved in implementation but it does not engage with power relations and how actors have varying levels of power and influence in the implementation process. In the practice of norm implementation, particularly in person-centred norms, it is important to ask: who has power and what are the effects of that power? How do the interests of actors condition the *doing* of refugee protection?

This thesis focuses on norm implementation in “the everyday”. In the context of peace building, Autesserre (2014) describes the everyday as the identities of actors and their relationships (p.5) and the practices, habits, and narratives of individuals that shape the peace building process (p.1). Hilhorst and Janses (2010) approach the everyday in “humanitarian space” as an arena comprised of both a physical space such as a refugee camp and the multiple actors who shape and negotiate the way “phenomena acquire meaning in their everyday realities” (p.1122). They describe that “everyday politics” consists of an “interface where aid providers and aid seekers meet each other” (ibid, p. 1122) and how “certain people become eligible to receive aid and others do not” (ibid, p.1136) which accounts for power and resistance in the delivery of humanitarian services.

This thesis uses the term “everyday politics” to refer to both *actors* and *actions* within a particular *context*. Thus, “everyday politics” is a site of power relations within a local context and an analytical entry point into practices of domination, resistance, and contestation.

Rather than observing refugee protection at the domestic level, this thesis delves deeper into the implementation of refugee protection at a town level. By engaging in the “everyday” practices we can begin to unpack how international norms interact with local norms and how power, control and contestation work through the relationship between street-level bureaucrats and refugees. These local level empirical observations allow us to speak back to larger discussion about norm implementation as a concept as well as norm implementation as a practice. By “local” I mean the individuals and context of one particular town, and I use this interchangeably with “the grassroots” to communicate the micro characteristic.

“Street-level bureaucrats” are defined as those individuals who are at the front-line of governmental policy and have important roles as decision-makers in the day-to-day implementation of public programs (Lipsky, 1980). I use Lipsky’s term of “street-level bureaucrats” to refer to those individuals who have been *formally mandated* to implement the SPRAR program in Gioiosa-Ionica. This includes: language teachers, social workers, nurses, cultural mediators, administrative staff, coordinators, and managers. Although other street-level bureaucrats such as police officers, lawyers, business owners, and landlords shape how protection is implemented and may even informally implement protection, these actors will be used only in the context of shaping how SPRAR operators are able to conduct their work. Power is defined as the

“production in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their own circumstances and fate” (Barnett and Duvall, 2005, p.8)

This thesis uses Gibney’s (2015) broad definition of a refugee as someone who “has been displaced from communities, associations, relationships and the cultural context that have shaped one’s identity and around which one’s life span has hitherto been organized”(p.13).¹ Recognizing “refugeehood” as a social category allows for a broader understanding of how displacement disrupts social worlds and it broadens the category of “refugee” to individuals who have not been granted formal refugee status. All refugees in the SPRAR in Gioiosa-Ionica were either in the process of seeking legal protection, or had been granted refugee, subsidiary, or humanitarian protection. As such, this thesis uses the term “refugee” to refer to individuals who were in the process or had been granted some form of protection. None of the research participant had been denied a form of legal protection; as such, the use of the term “refugee” excludes those who have had their refugee claims denied by Italian authorities.

The results of this thesis are organized as follows. The theoretical grounding is in IR constructivist literature on norm implementation. The first chapter outlines the theoretical background of norm implementation as a concept and accounts for how power needs to be more fully incorporated in norm implementation. Because refugee protection is a person-centred norm, implementation is contextualized within intimate relationships and refugees can directly speak back to how their protection is being implemented. Broader discussions from literature on power are employed to explore how power and resistance work through social relationships. “Humanitarianism” is used to define the

¹ During interviews, most NGO operators use the term migrant, or “ragazzi” which translates to “guys” when referring to refugees.

² More modern research on policy implementation has focussed on regional contexts such as ASEAN, the

subordinate position of refugees with protection providers and the productive power that works through this relationship. Chapter two describes the legal context of asylum including the various legal forms of protection that are provided to refugees, the various programs through which the state implements protection, as well as the local norms in Calabria and the case study of Gioiosa-Ionica. The third chapter explains the methodology and the use of “everyday politics” in interrogating protection. The fourth chapter describes empirical data. This is broken down into four sections. The first explains the way in which refugees are controlled and how RECOSOL serves as a gatekeeper to local authorities and services. The second describes how productive activities such as internships and workshops are provided, and how refugees resisted and negotiate them. The third describes a protest in Gioiosa-Ionica and how refugees responded to the way protection was being implemented and took subjectivity in a productive way. The final highlights the local manifestations of *mafiosi* power and how other local actors condition the context in which protection implementation is pursued. The fifth chapter speaks back to norm implementation as a concept and practice.

This thesis argues that power and resistance are at play in the implementation of refugee protection in the case study of Gioiosa-Ionica. The “everyday politics” of refugee protection is played out in a power relationship between formal protection implementers and beneficiaries. In the “everyday politics” of protection provision, the practices and narratives of RECOSOL operators contest the norm of legal refugee protection by creating rules and expectations around the norm; and they contest the provision of services and basic needs by making it conditional on acquiescent behaviour. Local actors and power configuration shape and condition the arena in which RECOSOL operators

implement protection. Refugees resist how their protection is implemented in commonplace and concerted ways.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

1.1 Norm Implementation

Norms are defined as shared understandings of appropriate behaviour for actors within a particular identity (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998, p.891). Norms can be local, regional, national, or international and they cover a variety of different social, political and economic issues. They can be more formal through legal standards, or they can be informally based on customs, principles and practices. International norms function on a global scale. They are defined as “ideas of varying abstraction and specification with respect to fundamental values, organizing principles or standardized procedures that resonate across many states and global actors, having gained support in multiple forums including policies, laws, treaties or agreements” (Krook and True, 2010, p.104). Early constructivist approaches to norms focussed on institutionalization through international treaty signatures and ratification by individual member states as the end-state of a norm’s life cycle (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, Keck and Sikkink 1998). Norms emerge through the agency and support of norm entrepreneurs, they then gain the support of a “critical mass” of states, pass through a threshold or tipping point and the norms finally diffuse across the international community causing convergence around the norm’s principles (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998, p.906). The final step is internalization through institutionalization where the norm becomes an uncontested feature of domestic and international politics (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998).

Rather than seeing norms as fixed and the norm life cycle as linear, Krook and True (2008) move beyond a one-way trajectory and instead see norms as “processes” rather than “things”, that are subject to ongoing attempts to reconstitute their meanings (p.124). Rather than norms having fixed content they argue that norms have an “internal” dynamism wherein conflicts over definition may lead to revisions of existing norms and even the emergence of new norms. Norms are flexible and their content can “expand, deepen or reverse” (ibid, p.127). Norms also interact with their already existing external normative environment where they can be attached to pre-existing cultural values or they can be associated with other widely accepted normative ideas (ibid, p.110). Due to the fact that norms are never fixed, Krook and True argue that norms are always going to be open to contestation which means that norms are accretive; they can be “stretched” to incorporate broader meanings (Betts, 2014, p.31) and they can also be disputed. Although Krook and True (2008) provide us with a useful framework of norms as *processes* they still largely focus on the institutionalization of norms by states and/or international organizations rather than providing an account for how norms are actually put into practice in a domestic context.

Betts and Orchard (2014) fill this gap in literature by distinguishing between the processes of institutionalization and implementation. They argue that institutionalization is an international process that takes place among states while implementation is a parallel process that takes place at the domestic and/or organizational level (ibid, p. 5). Implementation “draws attention to the steps necessary to introduce the new international norm’s precepts into formal legal and policy mechanisms within a state or organization in order to routinize compliance. It is only once these parallel processes are successfully

completed that a norm can be considered to be internalized or settled” (ibid, p.3). This is where they argue that the “implementation gap” lies, or where the intention of the norm is different from reality. They argue that implementation is particularly important for person-centred norms such as human rights, development and humanitarian aid, since they only have significance once they are translated into practice and actually make a difference in people’s lives (ibid, p.2).

Although I will be focussing on IR constructivist literature on norm implementation, since the 1970s, scholars in political science have given much attention to this idea of implementation as separate from policy. These scholars turned to explaining factors that cause government policies to fail to achieve their intended impact (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973). The concept of the “implementation gap” was coined to describe the difference between the intentions and the outcome of policy (Williamson and Stringer, 1987). Wildavsky argued that “the attempt to study implementation raises the most basic question about the relation between thought and action: How can ideas manifest themselves in a world of behaviour?” (Wildavsky, 1978, p.103). He described that the policy is the end and the mean, and the implementation is the use of the means to achieve the ends. By the early 1980s political scientist were having rich debates on whether policies should be conceptualized as fixed and whether domestic factors could explain divergent outcomes in reality (Barrett and Hill 1984, Rein 1983).² As such, it is important to acknowledge that discussions on implementation are not new in literature on

² More modern research on policy implementation has focussed on regional contexts such as ASEAN, the African Union, and the EU, as well as policy implementation within a domestic context. Critical scholars writing on the Europeanization of asylum policies in the EU have pointed to the “levelling down” of standards through harmonized EU directives on asylum procedures and reception (Fekete 2005, da Lomba 2006). Rogers (2002) writes that there is a wide discrepancy between EU Member States and the standards and rights that they grant to refugees.

policy implementation and literature on norm implementation has largely pulled from these already existing discussions and arguments.

Speaking to divergent outcomes in norm implementation in domestic settings Betts and Orchard (2014) explain that domestic cultural understandings, the political environment, and political institutions all have an effect on the way that a norm is implemented (p.273). Writing about norms on women's rights Levitt and Merry (2009) describe the process of "translation" or "vernacularization" where international norms and ideas are adapted to local contexts. Amitav Acharya (2004) coined the concept of "localization" to describe the "complex process and outcome by which norm-takers build congruence between transnational norms and local beliefs and practices" (p.241). She argues that at the domestic level actors take international norms and select certain aspects, and borrow and modify them in accordance with their pre-constructed beliefs and practices (ibid, p.269). Acharya (2004) uses the region of Southeast Asia and the norms of common security and humanitarian intervention to demonstrate that the former gained greater acceptance due to compatible domestic factors rather than the latter. Regional variation in models of society, politics, and economy can affect the way that a norm is implemented. Domestic or sub-state regions within a country have their own formal and informal norms and practices and these interact with and shape the implementation of international norms.

But who are the actors that play a role in norm-implementation? Speaking to the importance of non-state actors Betts and Orchard (2014) do express that implementation is not solely a state-based activity but that INGOs, transnational civil society, rebel groups, or elites within a state play a role in the negotiation and contestation of norms at

the domestic level (p.279). International relations scholars have written extensively about the role of non-state actors at the international and domestic level. Keck and Sikkink (1998) pointed to the lack of attention to transnational advocacy networks in domestic and international politics. This includes international and domestic NGOs, local social movements, churches, local governments and media who are bound together by “shared values, a common discourse and dense exchanges of information and services” (ibid, p.89). They work together to address issues of violence against vulnerable people and gross inequality of legal opportunity by influencing issue creation, discursive positioning, institutional procedures, and state behaviour (ibid, p.100).

Non-state actors do not only influence the emergence of a norm but they also implement norms. Sorensen and Hansen (2013) adopt the phenomenon of the “rescue industry”, which they describe as consisting of NGOs, social movements, faith-based organizations and migrant networks who work in collaboration with governments to provide services to migrants (p.10).³At a more micro-level, businesses, organizations, cooperatives, associations, and activist groups also play a role in norm implementation. In Italy, the state has outsourced refugee protection to towns and cities, who then outsource management to various associations, NGOs, faith based organizations, charities etc.

In domestic settings the context as well as the actors matter for implementation. However, once a norm is translated into a domestic setting, it continues to go through a process where new events or crises can open up space for domestic actors to continue to negotiate and interpret the norm. Norms continue to be re-interpreted, stretched,

³ Scholars writing on the issue of sex-trafficking in particular have long before written about the “rescue industry” and the role of NGOs in saving women from “sex slavery” (Agustin 2007).

hollowed, and debated throughout their life cycle, and they are never completely settled. New periods of contestation may emerge that continually reinterpret the norm (Milner and Keohane, 1996, p.16). On a more micro-level there need not be a “crises” or “event” to open up normative contestation. It can happen in the everyday, banal social interactions and the effects that they cause. Writing on policy implementation Lipsky (1980) takes a bottom-up (although linear) approach and considers the role of power that street-level bureaucrats have when implementing a policy program.

Lipsky (1980) argues that “street-level bureaucrats” who are at the front-line of government policy have a considerable amount of discretionary power and play an important role as decision-makers in the delivering and managing of public programs. He defines street-level bureaucrats as “public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs” (ibid, p.3). This includes legal aid workers, administrative staff, program managers, social workers, translators and all those at the frontline of policy programs. Lipsky (1980) argues that street-level bureaucrats have the discretionary power to fully enforce, partially enforce, or ignore policies put forth by high-level bureaucrats. Speaking to Lipsky (1980) in the context of asylum policy in Italy, Giudici (2013) argues that “street-level bureaucrats” may even conceive of rights violations that are abusive as “normal praxis and therefore unlikely to be disputed or contested” (p.80). We can pull from literature on policy implementation to demonstrate how certain actors have power in the implementation of programs and policies and how patterns of contestation can eventually become local behavioural norms at the street-level. Norms are conceived elsewhere, and how frontline workers interpret norms, contest

them, and choose to manage their implementation can lead to varying levels of “successful” implementation at local domestic levels.

Most importantly, person-centred norms have human subjects as their object of intervention. Unlike norms around the environment or trade whose subjects can speak back through signals and reactions (climate change, environmental degradation, growth or shrinking of economies), the norm of refugee protection has individuals who are recipients and they can directly resist *how* refugee protection is implemented through various programs, procedures, and policies. The significance of these contestations from the subjects of intervention has been omitted in norm implementation literature, as has a discussion of whether norm implementation needs to engage with the subjects of a norm in general. If norms only gain significance once they achieve what they intend to in practice should refugees be involved in how their protection is being implemented? What if they are not happy with how their protection is being implemented? As a practice, do they have a voice in their own protection, and if they do not, do they resist and challenge this exclusion?

Anthropologist Ilana Feldman (2016) uses the Palestinian refugee experience of living with humanitarianism in a long-term situation to explore the various ways in which refugees resist UNRWA. She argues that this occurs in three main ways: by refusing to receive aid through rejecting registration; by skirting the rules of acceptance through policy protects; and by experimenting with different engagements in situations of need. She argues that Palestinian refugees perceived UNRWA humanitarian aid programs as “deeply paternalistic and deeply hierarchical” (p.2).

Drawing on the experiences of female Burmese refugees on the Thai-Burma border, political scientist Elisabeth Olivius (2013) explores how participatory community-based approaches meant to “empower” refugees were often criticized for allowing female refugees to participate too much. Their political activism through women’s organizations was represented as “problematic, illegitimate and unruly” in interviews with humanitarian aid workers. She argues that even when refugees are encouraged to participate, it is still a particular de-politicized type of participation, and it is still within an unequal power relationship as aid workers set the parameters of acceptable participation.

Finally, Betts and Orchard admittedly argue that there is a need to study norms from the bottom-up using anthropological methods. Feminist geographers (Hyndman, 2000) and anthropologists (Harrell-Bond, 1986) have been engaging in the “studying-up” of international institutions, organizations and refugee policy. In *Managing Displacement* (2000) Hyndman evaluates the “on the ground” practices of the UNHCR in Kenya as ordering and disciplining disordered populations. In *Imposing Aid* (1986) Harrell-Bond offers a historical and critical account of how government and humanitarian organizations failed to achieve their intended objectives in south Sudan through humanitarian programs. She attributes this to constantly changing circumstances, insufficient resources, extreme uncertainty, as well as unequal power characteristics between aid providers and those receiving aid.

As such, an ethnographic approach to studying policies and programs, and the effects they have on subject populations is not new to other disciplines that have historically used anthropological qualitative methods. An exploration of the micro-level

“everyday” processes of norm implementation at the domestic level can speak back to macro-level theory and it can also inform practice. Tracing processes can explain variation in what norms actually do in practice, and how they are continuously being negotiated and contested by different actors. Although there have been many bottom-up studies in policy implementation, they are still lacking in norm implementation.

1.2 Power

An account of power is missing in constructivist IR literature on norm implementation. Betts and Orchard (2014) allude to the importance of power by stating that “ideas, interests and power all matter” as norms move from the global, to the national, and local levels (p.284) but there is a need for a more robust account for how power factors into norm implementation, particularly at the local level. Who has power at the local level? How is power manifested in the “everyday politics” of norm implementation? Refugee protection is a norm that is implemented through relations between individuals. As such, this thesis endeavours to shed light on the way power works through these relations.

It is perhaps because power has various expressions and forms that we cannot conceptualize power in one simple formulation. Foucault uses the concept of governmentality to describe power as the “conduct of conduct” or the everyday practices that aim to control the actions and behaviour of people (Lemke, 2002, p.2) through social relations, social institutions or exercising political sovereignty (Macleod and Durkheim 2002, p.45). Although Barnett and Duvall (2005) draw from Foucault for their

conceptualization of power and resistance, they differ in their greater attention to the social relations in which power works through (direct or diffuse) and how power is expressed (whether it's an attribute that is possessed or whether actors are socially constituted by it). This thesis uses Barnett and Duvall's definition of power as "the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their own circumstances and fate" (ibid, p.3). They define four different types of power; however, this thesis focuses on productive and structural power as they both work through social relations of constitution.⁴

Structural power is defined as "the constitution of social capacities and interests of actors in direct relation to one another"(ibid, p.3). Structural power works through direct structural relations of domination and subordination such as the master-slave relationship. Structure here is defined as an internal relation where the structural position of one exists only by virtue of its relation to the structural position of another (ibid, p.18). Structures allocate different capacities to different actors within the binary relationship and the structure also shapes actors' self-understandings and subjective interests (ibid, p.18). This hierarchical relationship can also be understood within the context of those who implement refugee protection and those who are receiving the protection.

Productive power is defined as "the socially diffuse production of subjectivity in systems of meaning and signification"(ibid, p.3). Productive power is post-structure and is diffuse in the sense that it concerns how knowledge is created and how meaning is "produced, fixed, lived, experienced, and transformed" (quoting Macdonell, 1986, Barnett and Duvall, 2005, p.20). This power is concerned with how subjects are produced through power relations and how power relations can perpetuate and validate certain

⁴ Compulsory and institutional power are the other two forms of power in Barnett and Duvall's taxonomy.

subjectivities. Productive power “concerns the boundaries of all social identity, and the capacity and inclination for action of the socially advantaged and disadvantaged alike, as well as the myriad social subjects that are not constituted in binary hierarchical relations” (ibid, p.21). Therefore, as Walters (2012) argues, we must “shift from the study of objects to the practices that produce those objects as effects” (p.18). Power does not just suppress, is also produces certain subjectivities-“complex structures of thought, feeling and reflection”(Ortner, 2006, p.115).

In the context of refugee studies, many scholars have theorized how practices produce a certain refugee subjectivity that is based on a universal experience of “refugeehood” associated with trauma, loss, and statelessness, and how these depictions depoliticize and decontextualize the process that leads to forced displacement (Malkki 1992, Biehl, 2015, p.70). Harrell-Bond (1999) cautions that to emphasize the perception of refugees as weak, dependent and deficient has serious consequences because it reinforces simplistic images of refugees as passive, vulnerable, and powerless, and therefore overlooks the complex socio-economic and political relations that result from their displacement (p.150). Practices can re-produce stereotypical refugee subjectivities based on passivity and powerlessness.

As the focus of this thesis is on the “everyday politics” of protection, I seek to explore the local face-to-face politics and how structural and productive power work through the relations between street-level-bureaucrats and refugees. Structural and productive power are overlapping and they similarly affect the social capacities of actors, their self-understandings and perceived interests (Barnett and Duvall, 2005, p.20). They do differ in the sense that structural power operates through direct relations of

constitution whereas productive power operates through socially diffuse relations, or from a distance (ibid, p.12). Although discussions of every day and every day practices have been plentiful in anthropological and feminist geography disciplines, this turn to the everyday is particularly new in IR literature on norm implementation.

1.3 Resistance

Power and resistance exist in symbiosis. An account for power must also include an account for resistance. Foucault's insights were that power is always accompanied by a certain element of resistance and that one cannot exist without the other. Barnett and Duvall (2005) describe that actors are not continuously engaging in resistance to become what Foucault calls "fully sovereign subjects" but Barnett and Duvall (2005) draw heavily on Foucault to describe how individuals resist power and "seek greater capacity to influence the social forces that define them and their parameters of action" (p.22). Resistance can manifest itself in many forms depending on the type of power it is confronting, and resistance is constantly changing to adapt to changes in power. This does not mean that actors are continuously engaging in resistance, but it does mean that this tension between power and resistance is enduring and that neither will permanently "win".

Like power, there are various conceptualizations of resistance. Barnett and Duvall (2005) explain that the expression resistance takes is going to depend on the type of power that it is resisting (p.23). According to them, resistance to structural power involves actors who are in subordinate structural position attempting to reduce the inequality that is inherent to a hierarchical relationship by trying to change the structure

that sustains it (ibid, p.23). Resistance manifests in the form of solidaristic actions by individuals who are in subordinate structural positions. There are many examples in reality as well as in academic literature of refugees staging protests and sit-ins whether in detention centres (Hall, 2012), or in refugee camps (Moulin and Nyers, 2007) in order to resist their subordinate structural positioning.

James Scott (1985) argues that the resistance of those in subordinate positions does not have to be solidaristic but can take the form of patterned actions, which he calls “everyday forms of resistance”. Although there can be a collective struggle, that does not mean that individuals cannot also resist individually. This includes “foot-dragging, evasion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander and sabotage”(p.xvi). Scott (1990) argues that banal under the breath remarks and subversions are “neither empty posturing nor substitute for real resistance” (p.20) but that these minor acts of critique nonetheless add up to what he calls “weapons of the weak”; strategies chosen to resist the order in a sometimes more personal and intimate way.

Resistance to productive power involves attempts by actors to “destabilize, even remake, their subjectivities and to transform or disrupt the broader practices through which subjectivities are produced, normalized and naturalized” (Barnett and Duvall, 2005, p.23). Resistance to productive power involves a re-making or re-claiming of identities. Nyers (2013) utilizes the concept of “refugee warriors” to demonstrate how refugees contest the categorization of their identities as passive, victim-like, non-violent and compliant. Taking political subjectivity for the refugee subverts the binary of the speaking, visible citizen and the invisible and victim-like refugee (Hall, 2011, p.111).

1.4 Humanitarianism

Humanitarianism builds on notions of productive and structural power by providing a more detailed account for how relationships of domination emerge as a by-product of practices of care. Care providers not only provide care, but they also control and dominate the lives of the individuals they are caring for, creating a convoluted ethical arena where a structured relationship of domination exists and a productive relationship perpetuates subjectivities based on victimhood and passivity. Because the norm of refugee protection is implemented through social relations, and all social relations are constituted by power, it is only natural that power is going to play a role in the implementation of the person-centred norm of refugee protection. Scholars have investigated the particular way in which care and relief is administered to vulnerable populations. They have warned us of the “paradoxes of humanitarian action”, where care and protection become fused with control and domination (Terry 2002, Agier 2011).

Didier Fassin explains that humanitarian government is the expression of a governmental rationality in which the administration of human beings is carried out “in the name of a higher moral principle which sees the preservation of life and the alleviation of suffering as the highest value of action” (Fassin, 2007, p.151). Our shared common condition (mankind) gives us certain rights, and the movement that draws us closer together (humanness) places obligations on us towards our fellow man. This has created a politics of compassion, which is fundamentally based on an inequality as it focuses on those who are more vulnerable and unfortunate, and a solidarity of recognizing others as fellows. This tension between inequality and solidarity creates a relationship of domination that co-exists with a relationship of assistance.

Feldman writes that humanitarianism consists of hierarchical relations that are mediated through the language and practice of care (Feldman, 2015, p.3). A by-product of humanitarian action is the reduction of individuals to their victim status by requiring them to appear victim-like in order to receive aid, and by restricting their ability to act in contradicting ways (ibid, p.3). Although providers may be sensitive and well intentioned they are fused in a close and sometimes uncomfortable relationship with recipients because of their resources, expertise, and perceived capacity for better judgement (ibid, p.4). It is this hierarchical relationship that most concerns refugees (ibid, p.4). Productive power is also implicated within humanitarianism because in practice humanitarianism produces a certain subjectivity that prevents individuals from “exercising political subjectivity by holding them in spaces of existential, social, political and legal limbo” (Isin and Rygiel, 2007, p.189). As such, humanitarianism is de-politicizing to refugees and reaffirms a subjectivity based on passivity, pure victimhood and helplessness (Hall, 2012, p.24).

1.5 Conclusion

Anthropologists and geographers have been studying policies, programs and institutions from the bottom-up as well as how power works through the intimate relationship between care provider and care receives and how refugees resist practices (Hyndman 2000, Malkki 1995, Fassin 2007, Harrell-Bond 1986). These discussions are now starting to make their way into norm implementation literature. If norm implementation is to be theorised from the grassroots there is a need to engage in the role of power in providing protection and the effects that it has.

Power is present in all levels of norm implementation and institutionalization; however, the focus of this thesis is on the role of power in the relationship between street-level bureaucrats and refugees. Power structures relationships, works through them, and perpetuates certain subjectivities. Frontline workers manage the provision of services such as health care, legal counsel, language training, and basic needs and their everyday practices constitute how protection is delivered. Subsequently, there must also be an account for how refugees resist the way in which protection is delivered. Resistance can be understood as contestation. What practices do refugees use on an everyday basis to resist the structural relationship, and to resist the subjectivity that is being imposed on them through these practices. This study's choice of a constructivist framework allows for us to engage with how power works through structures, but also how productive power produces, maintains and perpetuates diffuse refugee subjectivities.

Chapter 2: Legal Framework on Asylum, Protection, and Case Study

Chapter 1 explored the question of norm implementation and the particular role that power and humanitarianism can play in the process of implementing person-centred norms. Chapter 2 highlights the norms that are being implemented in the case study of Gioiosa-Ionica. First I describe the framework of legal protection in Italy and the various forms of legal protection that are offered by the State (refugee, humanitarian, subsidiary). Second, I outline the history of basic needs and service provision to refugees and how local communities served as norm-entrepreneurs in inspiring the institutionalization of the System for the Protection of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers (SPRAR). Thirdly, I describe how SPRAR implements protection in its broader definition as comprising of: access to legal protection; basic needs and services; and integration measures. Finally, I describe the case study of Gioiosa-Ionica and provide an account for how local institutional norms and local actors condition and shape the context within which protection implementation is pursued.

Italy ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention in 1954, which is the key legal document that defines a refugee, their rights, and the legal obligations of signatory states. The Convention defines a refugee as someone who:

“owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (Article 1 A (2), 1951 Convention).

The Convention is at the core of the refugee protection regime and demands that states respect the principle of *non-refoulement* and refrain from returning those applying for international protection to the country where they claim to be experiencing persecution (Stephen Castles, 2002, p.178). Italy ratified the 1967 Protocol in 1972, keeping the “geographical reservation clause” which restricted the responsibility of the Italian government only to refugees within Europe (UNHCR, States Parties to the 1951 Convention). It was not until Italy passed the Immigration Act of 1989 (the Martelli Law) that the clause was dropped.⁵ Prior to that, the UNHCR had assumed responsibility for non-European refugees arriving in Italy (Hamilton and Jachimowicz, p.1).

The Italian Constitution (Article 10, paragraph 3) states that “*the foreigner who is denied in his own country the real exercise of the democratic liberties guaranteed by the Italian Constitution, has the right of asylum in the territory of the Republic, in accordance with the conditions established by law*” (Constitution of the Italian Republic, 1948, p.6). Despite this legal right, Italy still lacks a domestic law on asylum. Much of Italian legislation on providing international protection has largely been adopted through EU Directives. As a European Union Member State Italy is party to EU law including: *the Qualification Directive 2004/83/EC* on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection, as well as *the Reception Conditions Directive 2003/9/EC* which lays down the minimum standards of reception for asylum seekers and refugees.⁶

⁵ The Act had no specific provisions relating to refugees.

⁶ In the study of norm implementation, EU Directives are important as they filter international norms and create more concrete standards and rules around the provision of protection. An account for EU legislation is beyond the scope of this thesis but it is important to acknowledge that many of the practices discussed in

Since August 2015 Italy has made significant changes to its various protection statuses with the Legislative Decree n.142 by increasing the duration and rights associated with each. Italy has three types of protection:

1. **Refugee Status** is granted to a person who fits the Convention definition of a refugee. Refugee Status is given for the duration of 5 years, after which it is renewable, and with work can be converted to a residence permit based on employment. Individuals have the right to family-reunification, the right to maintaining their nuclear family, the right to travel documents, the right to health care, social assistance, and public housing, and access to employment as the same conditions as Italian citizens.
2. **Subsidiary Protection** is granted to an individual who is believed to be at risk of serious harm if they were to return to their home country, or the country in which they normally reside. It must be renewed every 5 years and the rights are the same as that of Refugee Status. Previously the permit to stay was only for 2 years.
3. **Humanitarian Protection** is granted to an individual on humanitarian grounds of “serious justifications of humanitarian nature”. The permit to stay is for two year and individuals are given the right to reunification of family member in Italian reception structures, maintaining nuclear family, and the right to the same treatment as Italian citizens in social assistance, health and access to public housing (Ministero Dell’Interno, p.12-13).

2.1 Local and National Reception Responses to Refugees in Italy

In the 1990s when refugees from the former Yugoslavia started arriving in Italy, their protection was largely provided through decentralized and autonomous interventions by faith-based organizations, NGOs, and associations, without any real coordination or centralized oversight. The activities of these organizations were based on charity and consisted of the provision of basic necessities such as clothing, shelter and food (ICS, 2005, p.1). In 1999, a consortium of organizations that were providing these services to refugees decided to form a more coordinated effort through the creation of the

“Azione Comune”⁷ project, which was officially launched July 2nd 1999. Azione Comune received its funding from the European Commission and the Ministry of Interior, and although the project only lasted for two years, the UNHCR describes it as the first coordinated effort in Italy based on a non-emergency type of reception for refugees (UNHCR cited in Sigona 2002, p.145). With funding from the EU and the Ministry of Interior, organizations hosted refugees in towns and cities; helped them through the asylum procedure; and trained operators working for the project (Sura, p.104).

The precariousness of funding led members of Azione Comune to pressure the Italian state to adopt a more centrally coordinated and managed effort at the state-level where organizations would gain more secure funding, as well as access to resources and support. The Italian state recognized that a more centrally managed response was needed for the management and protection of forced migrants, and in 2000, the UNHCR, the Ministry of Interior, and the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) signed a memorandum of understanding creating the “National Asylum Programme” (PNA). This was the first centrally coordinated reception effort in Italy that standardized protection interventions and integration efforts for forced migrants (ICS, 2005, p. 132). The PNA also established a voluntary repatriation program with the collaboration of the IOM. The PNA was centrally managed through three NGO’s (Caritas, Italian Consortium of Solidarity, The Italian Council for Refugees) and had a hierarchical governing structure that incorporated the UNHCR, the Italian Ministry of Interior, and the National Association for Italian Municipalities (ANCI). All levels of governmental, and state and non-state actors were involved in the management and implementation of the PNA.

⁷ English translation: “Joint Action Plan”.

Two years later, the Italian government expanded the scope and reach of the PNA and it officially became the System for the Protection of Asylum-Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR) through the Bossi-Fini law n.189/2002. The central governance was moved under the purview of the state and became the SPRAR Central Service under the Ministry of Interior. The Central Service's responsibilities consist of monitoring the presence of refugees on the territory; coordinating the placement of refugees across various SPRAR's; maintaining a centralized database; providing training and information to implementing organizations; as well as providing technical support and oversight (SPRAR, The Central Service). However, like the PNA, the implementation of SPRAR projects remains decentralised and dependent on local authorities and networks. Municipalities are responsible for the oversight of SPRAR projects on their territory and they can be as involved as they choose. The day-to-day management and provision of services is usually outsourced to local NGOs, associations, or charities who are active in the locality. Frontline workers are usually from the municipalities as well. ANCI perform a coordinating and communications role between municipalities (Ambrosini p.238).

Alongside the historical development of the SPRAR program the state also developed a variety of reception structures that are directly managed by the Ministry of Interior in partnership with the *carabinieri* (the national military police in Italy) as well humanitarian organizations, cooperatives, and consortiums (Italian Red Cross, CARITAS). These consist of four reception structures established by the Italian Ministry of Interior in Decree no.25/2008:

1. Centres for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (CARA). These centres were established in 2008 and they replaced previous identification centres (CIE).

2. Reception Centres (CDA) were created in 1995 for the general purposes of accommodation of asylum-seekers.⁸
3. First Aid and Reception Centres (CPSA) were created in 2006 for first aid and identification before a person is transferred to another centre.
4. Emergency Reception Centres (CAS) were introduced in 2013 upon the launch of the Mare Nostrum Operation in response to the increasing arrival of asylum-seekers by sea (CIR, p.1).

CARA Reception Centers are the most numerous of the reception structures. CARA's can accommodate anywhere from 109 to 3,422 individual (ANCI, p.90). In 2015 there were 10,000 individuals formally hosted in the CARA centres; dispersed in 6 of the regions in Italy (AIDA, Types of Accommodation). Mandatory services that CARA centres must provide are accommodation, sustenance, health services, Italian classes and legal aid (Legislative Decree no.25/2008). Due to the fact that a different body manages each CARA there is a high degree of variability in the standards of reception centres in practice (CIR, Conditions in Reception Facilities, p.1). In a 2013 report on refugee protection in Italy, the UNHCR noted that reception conditions in CARA were deteriorating due to overcrowding because of large numbers of asylum-applicants and longer wait times for asylum procedures (UNHCR, p.9). Furthermore, a report published in 2012 by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights criticized the CARA centres for lacking "an integration framework for refugees and other

⁸ Although CDA and CARA are listed as two separate reception structures they are actually always managed as one CDA/CARA reception structure where asylum-seekers are identified and after provided with accommodation in the same structure. As such, in this paper they will just be referred to as CARA structures.

beneficiaries of international protection which is causing a serious human rights problem in Italy” with regards to the quality of language classes, cultural mediation, and preparation for socio-economic inclusion (Commissioner for Human Rights, p.4). Further criticism has been directed at the locations of the centres; most are in rural areas, in large structures such as former airports and military camps, where there is no opportunity for integration or contact with local populations (NOAS, p.20).

2.2 The System for the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (SPRAR)

The Bossi-Fini law n.189/2002 created SPRAR but it also classified SPRAR projects as a “second level of reception”. A new trajectory was created wherein asylum-seekers arriving on the coasts of Southern Italy would first have to pass through a reception identification center (CDA/CARA), and only once their identity was confirmed and the asylum applications was made could they be moved to a SPRAR project. In practice, because of the insufficient spaces available in SPRAR, only a small number of refugees receive a placement in a project (CIR, p.2).

Unlike first reception centres SPRARs are small scale hosting projects that are based on an “integrated reception.”⁹ The hosting projects can consist of smaller houses, hotels, or even apartments where individuals receive accommodation. There are three main types of hosting projects that cater to individual protection needs: ordinary projects, projects for unaccompanied minors, and projects for people with physical and mental disabilities. In 2015 there were 450 SPRAR projects across Italy- 348 ordinary projects,

⁹ Translated from “accoglienza integrata”. SPRAR defines an integrated reception as going beyond material aid (room and board) to providing aid in social and legal pathways to socio-economic inclusion into the host society (SPRAR, 2015, p. 6-7).

52 projects for unaccompanied minors and 30 projects for individuals with physical and mental disabilities, providing a total of 21, 449 places for refugees (SPRAR, 2015, p.18).

Municipalities are responsible for contributing 20% of the financing to SPRAR projects, which can come as in-kind contributions, and the remaining funds are dispersed from the Italian government's National Fund for Asylum Policy and Services (SPRAR, The Central Service), and the European Commission's European Refugee Fund which grants funding to Member States to support access to fair and effective asylum procedures, and guaranteeing refugee protection.

SPRAR's main objective is to "take responsibility for those individuals accepted into the scheme and provide them with personalised programmes to help them (re) acquire self-autonomy and to take part in and integrate effectively into Italian society, in terms of finding employment and housing, access to social services, social life, and education" (Servizio Centrale SPRAR p.4). As such, the SPRAR hosting program is aimed to begin the incorporation process of refugees during their asylum claim so that once they receive asylum individuals will be more prepared to live an "autonomous" life in Italian society. Some of the "interventions" that SPRAR provides refugees are: accommodation and basic needs; Italian language learning; aiding asylum seekers in accessing social services; and aiding in the bureaucratic processes of seeking asylum (Servizio Centrale SPRAR, p.11). Refugees are dispersed to SPRAR's on a no-choice basis and projects are often in small towns and villages. SPRAR writes that incorporation is better facilitated when smaller groups of international protection seekers are distributed to smaller municipalities that will allow for more opportunities for social inclusion rather than being placed in larger metropolitan areas or urban cities (SPRAR, 2010, p. 59-69).

2.3 Case Study: Gioiosa-Ionica and RECOSOL

In October 2013, the Region of Calabria was experiencing an increase in refugees arriving by sea and municipalities were being pressured by the regional government to set up temporary hosting projects until more long-term spaces could be found in CARA reception centres and SPRAR projects. It was at this time that Gioiosa was asked by the town of Riace to partake in a short-term hosting scheme. The Mayor at the time agreed and Gioiosa-Ionica hosted approximately 50 refugees as part of Riace's SPRAR hosting project. Gioiosa decided to formally adopt its own SPRAR hosting project in January 2014. The town is currently hosting 75 male refugees.

Gioiosa-Ionica is located in the province of Reggio Calabria in the South of Italy. It has a population of approximately 7,000 inhabitants. The town's history dates back to the sixth Century when Greeks established colonies in what is known as Calabria and Sicily today; however, much of the town's infrastructure, particularly in the old town, dates back to the Renaissance period in the 14th and 17th Century. Like all of Southern Italy, Gioiosa's economy is largely dependent on agriculture and tourism. Unemployment has historically been high in Italy; however, it has grown since 2011 and the EU financial crisis. The region of Calabria has one of the highest general unemployment rates in Italy at 23.4%. The region has the seventh highest youth unemployment rate out of all EU regions, and the highest youth unemployment rate in Italy at 59.7% (EUROSTAT, 2015, p.2).

The SPRAR project in Gioiosa-Ionica is managed by the NGO RECOSOL (The Solidarity Network of Commons).¹⁰ The organization was founded in 2003 in Turin, Italy, in partnership with municipalities all across Italy on the premise of promoting decentralized cooperation in developing countries on common issues such as peace, solidarity, civil rights, development, anti-mafia efforts, and immigration. Although the organization originally worked in the Global South, in 2011 RECOSOL started working with SPRAR hosting projects due to the increasing need to provide support to refugee arriving in Italy.

There are approximately 20 staff working for RECOSOL in Gioiosa-Ionica, and most are young adults who are also from Gioiosa. Staff positions include cultural mediators, translators, psychologists, nurses, administrative staff, Italian language teachers, project coordinators, and project managers. RECOSOL also manages additional SPRAR projects in the towns of Riace, Caulonia, Bivongi and Locri.

¹⁰ Italian translation: Rete dei Comuni Solidali. In English literature RECOSOL translates their name to “The Solidarity Network of Commons” however a more accurate English translation would be “The Solidarity Network of Municipalities.”

2.4 Local Norms in Calabria

Since the unification of Italy in 1860 “la questione meridionale” has marked Italian politics as Southern Italy has remained a distinct and separate region. After the Second World War, Italians held growing resentment and distrust towards the central government. Pressures from national political parties towards decentralization lead Italy to recognize regions, provinces and municipalities in the Constitution of 1948, and in 1970 Italy became a republic of twenty regions (Putnam, 1993, p.14). Historically, Italy has lacked a unified culture, and the vast differences between the North and the South, have been a problem that the central government has attempted to address. In spite of efforts, *la mezzogiorno* has preserved a distinct social and political functioning that is specific to most of Southern Europe.¹¹

Political scientists have argued that the South of Italy is characterized as a region with a weak-state. Robert Jackson (2000) argues that weak states are not necessarily undemocratic or underdeveloped but that they are:

“states that cannot or will not safeguard minimal civic conditions for their population: domestic peace, law and order, and good governance. [...] juridical shells that shroud an insecure and even dangerous condition domestically. Such states have an international legal existence but very little domestic political existence” (p.46).

In Robert Putnam’s seminal piece on regionalism and civic identity in Italy, he writes the poor performance of democratic institutions and the weak economic development in the South of Italy is explained by a lack of social capital and weak mutual understanding among individuals (Putnam, 1993). He explains that Calabria has dysfunctional political institutions and a weak civic culture marred with distrust in all

¹¹ Italy, Spain and Greece have similar socio-political configurations (Gonzalez-Enriquez and Triandafyllidou, 2009).

levels of government as well as among individuals (ibid, p.114). At the local level, clientalism and political party networks play an important part in political life, and membership in these networks often entails favouritism and economic privileges (ibid, p.113). Putnam argues that the lack of local institutions and social norms that inspire mutuality, trust, and a common good has proliferated the strong foothold of patronage relationships with family and political elite.

These social and cultural norms have also played an important role in shaping the working of administration and bureaucracies. This is particularly important in the realm of protection as asylum-seekers are “vulnerable subjects in dealing with public administrations” (Triandafyllidou and Gonzales-Enriques, 2009, p.113). Slow bureaucratic procedures marred by “hurdles, delays, inaccuracies, disorganization, lack of information, guidance, and requirements that were impossible to fulfill” all characterize the Italian bureaucracy, particularly in the southern regions (ibid, p.113). This is important since Italy has a strong differentiation at the local level (Zincone, 1998, p.61). Since 2008, the Italian asylum evaluation system became decentralized and heterogeneous as the National Commission for the Right of Asylum was replaced with ten local Commissions to speed up the refugee status determination process (Giudici, 2014, p.75). Furthermore, the timely dispersal of documents such as residence permits also depends on the efficacy of the local *Questura* and the efficacy of local administrations in providing the needed declarations and certificates (Zincone, 1998, p.63).

The South of Italy also has a history of a strong mafia presence. The rise of the mafia and *mafiosi* power has its roots in traditional patron-client relationships (Putnam,

1993, p.145). Following the disintegration of the feudal system in the 19th century and the transition towards the market and modern state, the *mafioso* emerged “at a time when traditional relationships of economic and political power were breaking down but not fully replaced by the impersonal structures of market and the state” (Dunnage, 2014, p.17). As such, the *mafiosi* became powerful actors in local power configuration. The weakness of the state in the South of Italy proliferated this informal institution and solidified local cultural norms based on clientage, the importance of family ties, and *mafiosi* positions (Putnam, 1993, p.146). *Mafiosi* intimidation methods such as poisoning pets, slashing tires, and leaving bullet holes in cars are also used by individuals who may not have direct linkages to the mafia, but are trying to exercise influence or control of a particular activity taking place on their territory.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

Recently, international relations (IR) scholars have begun to draw on traditionally bottom-up anthropological methods to study topics such as state-building and peace processes (Autesserre, 2014). Rather than focussing on macro-level discourses and policies at the state and international level, IR scholars are increasingly using ethnographic methods to investigate how micro-level dynamics are crucial to conversations that have traditionally privileged high-level actors such as institutions, organizations, and states. Betts and Orchard (2014) express that there is a particular need for IR scholars studying norm implementation to use ethnographic methods to help explain the chasm between the norm or policy, and the corresponding action in the field. In other words, to demonstrate why there is a rift between intention and actual reality.

Studying micro-level dynamics involves an investigation of the “everyday”. “Everyday politics” consists of the “arena” in which actions are situated in contexts and undertaken by individuals to further their own interests and objectives (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010, p. 1136). Within this arena actors engage with and respond to their surroundings (ibid, p.1137). According to Severine Auttessere (2014), the everyday” consists of the practices, habits and narratives of peoples’ lives that are so ordinary that they are often taken for granted—so much so that their enactors sometimes cannot even identify them (Appendix, p.1). Quoting Pierre Bourdieu, Autessere describes practices as the “routine activities (rather than consciously chosen actions) notable for their unconscious, automatic, un-thought character” (ibid, p.29). They can be individual habits or embedded in an organizations culture. Furthermore, practices rely on narratives—“stories people tell themselves to make sense of their lives and environments” (ibid,

p.33). Narratives consist of socially constructed frames that are embedded in social routines, practices, discourses, technologies and institutions (ibid, p.34). As such, this study sheds light on the “everyday politics” of refugee protection through a consideration of the protection arena in Gioiosa-Ionica; the relationship between RECOSOL operators and refugees; how power works through the quotidian practices and narratives of RECOSOL operators; and how refugees resist how their protection is implemented.

“Everyday politics” as a scale of inquiry offers a rich account for the encounter between aid providers and aid seekers within a particular context (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010, p.1122). Practices and narratives often reflect, reproduce, and perpetuate power relations; they can also challenge them. As such “everyday politics” is a site of resistance and contestation.

3.1 Why Calabria, Italy?

Southern Italy was chosen as a region for important and particular reasons. In the 1990s the number of refugee landings in the South of Italy, particularly in Sicily and Calabria began to increase due to the Albanian government’s collapse in 1997 and the war in former Yugoslavia. At this point in history, although Italy was signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, there was no formal national policy for the implementation of protection for individuals fleeing for humanitarian reasons (Sigona, 2005, p.141). Up until this point, national policies treated refugees as economic migrants. Refugees integrated into the labour market and regularized through national policies of regularization based on employment (Sigona, 2005). In 1997, when a boat landed on the beach of the town of Riace, the inhabitants of the town welcomed the refugees, gave

them housing in abandoned houses due to the towns de-population, and created a grassroots protection program with funding from the European Union. Riace became a hospitality eco-village and it received much international media attention displaying the grassroots responses to the welcoming of refugees.

In 1999, the state transformed an old military airport in Calabria into a reception centre for refugees called CARA di S. Anna Capo Rizzuto. Today, it remains the largest reception centre for the administration of individuals seeking asylum. As such, a duality of approaches to refugees emerged in Calabria—one that was based on local community hosting projects, and another state based reception that was largely securitized and segregated refugees away from local populations.¹²

In response to the state's approach, Domenico Lucano, Mayor and founder of the community hosting project in Riace, and Gianfranco Schiavone, the President of the Italian Consortium on Solidarity (ICS) at the office for Refugees in Trieste during this time, emerged as “norm entrepreneurs” meaning they pushed the state to adopt a new policy for refugee protection based on community-hosting projects rather than large scale accommodation centres. With the support of the UNHCR, Lucano and Schiavone began pressuring the state to institutionalize community-hosting projects for refugees. In 2002, what became known as the “Riace model” was institutionalized as the System for the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (SPRAR). Subsequently, other towns across Calabria and within Italy began to implement their own SPRAR projects. The Ionian Coast, also known as the Locride region in Calabria, became known as “the land of welcoming” due to the large number of towns adopting these community-hosting models for refugee protection (D'Agostino, 2009).

¹² Many local research participants described this as the schizophrenic approach to reception in Italy.

Following state and EU policies of pushbacks at sea, and the increasing amount of drownings in the Mediterranean, the region of Calabria adopted a regional law called “The reception of asylum-seekers and refugees and the social, economic and cultural development of local communities.”¹³ This law was unanimously approved by the regional government and it re-affirmed the region of Calabria’s commitment to upholding the 1951 Refugee Convention and the protection and reception of refugees. This law also encouraged towns to adopt SPRAR projects as a form of development for de-populating localities. Hence, the region of Calabria has always contested state policies towards refugee protection, and it was the experience of Riace that inspired the institutionalization of the SPRAR program.

3.2 The case study of Gioiosa-Ionica: theory development

Although this thesis draws from an ethnographic methodology, because of the insufficient amount of time spent living in the town¹⁴, it cannot claim to present a complete “portrait of a people” (Harris and Orna, 2000, p.18), or offer a “thick description” of all the forms of power that are present in one locality. Instead, this single case-study serves as a plausibility-probe into theory to determine whether a theoretical construct is worth considering based on empirical findings, and whether theory testing is worth pursuing through shadow cases (Eckstein, 1991, p.148). Therefore, this case study examines the presence of productive and structural power in the relationship between street-level bureaucrats, who implement protection, and the refugees, who are the beneficiaries. This paper asks the following questions: How do refugees feel about the

¹³ Legge R.18/09 “Accoglienze dei richiedenti asilo, dei rifugiatie e sviluppo sociale, economica e culturale delle comunita locali”

¹⁴ 6 weeks

way in which protection is implemented and how refugees contest the way in which their protection is implemented? Who has the privilege of power? How is power exerted in the implementation of protection? How is this power received and contested?

Initially, I intended to use Riace and Gioiosa-Ionica as two separate case studies through which to draw more generalizable comparisons of the presence of power in how protection is delivered to refugees. Riace was the original SPRAR project, and Gioiosa-Ionica only joined the SPRAR network in 2013. The comparisons between a more established projects, as well as a relatively new one, may have shed light on different dynamics.

I initially made contact with a SPRAR operator from Gioiosa-Ionica who had communicated that both the SPRAR in Riace and Gioiosa-Ionica would support my research. When I arrived I began conducting interviews in Gioiosa-Ionica. When I expressed interest in beginning interviews in Riace, I experienced a lot of pushback from the managers of the Riace SPRAR and the Gioiosa SPRAR. SPRAR employees recommended that I drop Riace as a case-study but did not provide an explanation as to why. Regardless, I decided to go on my own with my translator after encouragement from my host mother and my translator. When I arrived the Riace SPRAR was not very receptive, nor willing to speak with me. I walked around the town with my translator and many of the refugees were very hesitant about being seen with us in public and were hesitant about participating in an interview. As soon as I pulled my recorder out, or started jotting things down in my notebook many of the refugees would immediately end the conversation. When we inquired into why, many refugees expressed that “there would

be problems” for them.¹⁵ Many of the locals we spoke to were not forthcoming about the refugee situation and getting information required a lot of cajoling. One local did explain that although the hosting project had originally started off with good intentions, it has slowly become more of a “business” where refugees became a source of job creation. Another local expressed that she was upset with the Riace SPRAR because she had been asking for a job for years, and was not give the opportunity of employment in the SPRAR.

Riace receives a large amount of national, European, and international press; its reputation as a welcoming town for refugees positively contributes to its tourism industry. As journalists and tourists are outsiders who are transient passers-by in Riace, their observations of the town are more superficial, and thus external observations are more easily controlled and censored. As I intended to stay for a longer period of time in Riace than most tourists and journalists, the implementing organization was suspicious of my research. As such, conducting primary research was a challenge, because refugees were hesitant to be seen speaking with me without the permission from the Riace SPRAR. The strict time constraints of my research period, as well as my limited Italian, impeded my ability to conduct research. Had I a longer time period to conduct my research and greater fluency in Italian, I am confident that I would have been able to be more persistent and successful in pursuing communication with SPRAR employees, locals, and refugees in both formal and informal encounters. As an outsider, I was not given the permission and access to conduct interviews. This meant that ethnographic fieldwork, which I intended to pursue by living in Riace and shadowing SPRAR employees for three weeks, would have been impossible.

¹⁵ Field Notes, Riace, April 1st 2015.

Nevertheless, the RECOSOL SPRAR in Gioiosa-Ionica was extremely welcoming, receptive and open to my presence and research. Although the town has a newer hosting project, they have much of the same political, cultural and economic configuration as Riace, and have modelled their hosting project off of the practices of Riace. Many of the operators in Gioiosa-Ionica started off working in the SPRAR in Riace, and the two hosting projects are very connected and cooperative with one another.

3.3. Material

3.3.1 Interviews

I used interviews as my main method for data collection. In order to understand and represent the reality of the refugees' life worlds, I saw it as a moral requisite to gather an individual's personal perspective and testimony. I opted for semi-structured interview questions that were open-ended enough to allow for informants (n=16 formal, and n=5 informal) to provide rambling responses that facilitated rich description. Levy and Hollan (1988) describe the "person-centred approach" as involving open-ended questions that invite participants to elaborate during the interview in ways that they see fit rather than being too heavily directed by the research questions. This approach also afforded me the flexibility to modify the order and content of questions and to redirect conversations into productive and relevant themes. These interviews were held between March and April of 2015, and each interview lasted between 45min to an hour and a half. NGO workers and municipal representatives were purposively sampled as I targeted information-rich individuals based on the professional positions that they held. Certain refugees were

purposively sampled based on ethnicity and religion, and others were recruited using the snowball approach.¹⁶

I interviewed two cultural mediators, and the project coordinators (n=3) of the SPRAR in Gioiosa-Ionica.¹⁷ I also interviewed the mayor of Gioiosa-Ionica, as the municipality is technically responsible for overseeing the project, and I interviewed the Social and Economic Councillor. In addition, four locals were interviewed. I also interviewed a priest and imam whose interviews were not used in this study. I opted for individual rather than group interviews to offer interviewees more privacy. Interviews with municipal representatives and NGO workers were conducted in their respective offices, and interviews with locals and refugees were conducted in the town square, or in cafés. All interviews were recorded using an electronic recording device, and I also took short-hand notes during the interviews themselves. Prior to beginning the interview, participants were required to sign a consent form explaining the following items: the purpose of the research projects; how the information from the interview would be used; and the possible risks associated with participation. Individuals were informed that they were given the option to end the interview or skip a question at any time. They were also given the option to not have the interview recorded.

There is always an enhanced risk when doing research on sensitive topics with “vulnerable” populations that methods or outcomes will cause social, economic, and/or psychological harm. In order to limit these risks, the anonymity of all participants is ensured and protected through the use of pseudonyms in field notes, interview

¹⁶ I tried to include refugee participants from various racial, ethnic and religious identities.

¹⁷ It is interesting to note that the mayor and one of the coordinators were close childhood friends, two of the coordinators were childhood friends, and two of the coordinators were also in a serious relationship.

transcriptions, and in this thesis. Nevertheless, fieldwork did take place in public settings where NGO workers, locals, municipal representatives, and refugees were well aware that I was involved in a research project about the SPRAR project in Gioiosa-Ionica. As such, it was easy for individuals to identify who had partaken in the research, and at times, conversations may have been audible to those near to where the interviews were being conducted.

Interviews with refugees were conducted in either English or French and did not require the help of an interpreter. Interviews with NGO workers were carried out in English and Italian where participants would switch between the two languages when they felt they could not express the essence of what they were trying to say in English. All of my interviews with the local populations, including municipal representatives, were carried out in Italian, and required the aid of an interpreter. Levy and Holland (1998) warns that “it is deeply distorting not to work in the respondent’s core language” because social and cultural nuances embedded in the language will be omitted (p.338). As such, it is important to acknowledge that these interviews were refracted through my interpreter’s subjectivity, and information may have been communicated differently, omitted, or embellished. Capturing the interviewees’ narrative in their native tongues could have provided a fuller ethnographic picture and a more nuanced analysis of their accounts. Interviews were transcribed without adjustments and corrections to grammar in order to keep interview data as authentic as possible.

I was introduced to my interpreter, John, through a local barrista. I had expressed to my usual barrista that I was looking for someone who had good knowledge of English in order to help interpret my interviews, and he introduced me to John. While John’s

mother is from Gioiosa-Ionica, John was born and raised in Toronto, but moved back to Gioiosa when he was a young adult. My relationship with John served as an inter-play between theory and method, demonstrating how the two are closely linked and intertwined. John's family has a lot of social and economic capital in the town, which enabled him to facilitate access to certain individuals whom I otherwise would not have had access to. John also had an interesting *positionality* because he had previously worked for SPRAR as a cultural mediator before leaving the organization due to personal differences. As such, in post-interview debriefings, John would often point to certain theoretical concepts and illustrate how they emerged and connected through empirical research. Furthermore, during interviews John would sometimes interject and support what a participant was saying with his own empirical experiences and observations formed whilst working at RECOSOL. Most importantly, John was tremendously supportive, both personally and professionally, throughout my research. I would not have been able to accomplish what I did in seven weeks without his invaluable help and support.

3.3.2 Participant Observation

To support my interviews, participant observation was also a key component of my methodology, and one that I drew on to deepen my understanding of the complex relationships and power characteristics between refugees and RECOSOL staff, as well as the instances of contestation that was expressed in the banal everyday interactions. My main form of participation was shadowing refugees and RECOSOL staff throughout their daily routines. This included Italian language classes in the mornings and afternoons (9-

1130am and 3-4pm), doing groceries in the afternoon, and spending time in the town square in the evenings. Not only was this important for creating a good rapport with individuals, but by meandering through the rhythms of everyday life, I was able to gain personal insight into the biographies and every day concerns, of these individuals, as well as their impressions of the community-hosting project in Gioiosa and their ideas and beliefs on the Italian, EU, and global refugee regime. Rodgers (2002) explains how “‘hanging out’ may reveal, perhaps disturbingly, how political struggles of everyday life are linked to relationships and processes of global significance” (p.49). It was through observations in the town square, as well as at the RECOSOL office, where micro-instances of power that characterize all social relationships were displayed in their thickness and different individuals’ social positionality was most expressed.

3.3.3 Document Analysis

Throughout the duration of my stay, I collected local and regional newspaper articles from Gioiosa-Ionica and Calabria, and blog posts written by RECOSOL to aid my understanding of discussions on refugee protection and asylum policy. These written texts provided insight into local narratives and rationalizations, and shed light on the debates and tensions surrounding the presence of refugees in the locality. Formal press releases by the municipality and the Consortium of Organizations in Gioiosa were used particularly after a refugee protest, which is discussed in Chapter 4

3.4. Data Analysis

Once I returned to Ottawa, I spent the summer of 2015 transcribing all my interviews as well as typing out formal field note entries based off of raw notes compiled from the field. Due to the fact that I was in the field for less than two months, I did not have a sufficient amount of time to write out formal field notes at the end of each day. I recognize the limitations of individual memory, and accept that the specific details of certain events and interactions may be impacted. However, with the understanding of the limitations of memory, I tried to minimize its effects by not speaking about the observations with anyone. The schema that I used to organize my data was based on chronology, type of data, and source (NGO representatives, municipal representatives, asylum-seekers, recognized refugees, and locals). I had seven piles, five based on interview source, and one pile solely for field notes. I favoured the manual approach to coding and began by picking out larger themes in my data and coding it with sticky-notes. This was a reflexive process wherein I re-visited the data and re-coded the interviews many times based on emerging insights and new interpretations (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009, p.77).

3.5 Limitations

Like all research, there are some limitations in this thesis that must be addressed. Due to the small sample size this research cannot claim to speak to the experiences of all refugees in Europe, in Italy, or even in Gioiosa-Ionica. The Syrian refugee crisis intensified after I left my field-research in Italy; therefore, this thesis cannot account for how reception and protection may have changed since my time there. All refugees in Gioiosa were male, which means that I cannot speak for the specific experiences that

women and families in other hosting communities may encounter due to their specific vulnerabilities. Additionally, hosting projects are implemented differently in each community depending on the organization that manages each project, as well as the specific needs of the refugees in the community. Furthermore, there were many other types of power dynamics and relationships that affects refugees, such as power struggles emerging as a result of gender and race relations, that I will not be able to address in this thesis due to space constraints. As a plausibility probe using one case study this thesis highlights the importance of supplementing the study of norm implementation with an account for how power, contestation and resistance play in the everyday politics of norm implementation.

3.6 Towards an intersectional positionality

Entering the field I was aware of my own racial and socio-economic privilege, and during fieldwork I was very conscious of my own reflexivity-“how one is socially positioned in the world (Gouldner, 1970, p.489). Mullings (1999) defines positionality as the “unique mix of race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality, and other identities” that shift depending on time and place, each of which can intersect and interact with various identities that other individuals have in the field (p.337). Literature on ethnographic methods emphasise the importance of creating trusting relationships for robust and successful “immersion in community” (Schatz, 2009). To facilitate immersion the importance of navigating power imbalances is recommended by playing down expertise and knowledge (Bogdewic, 1999). What is largely missing in academic literature on methodology and study design, is the particular gendered positionality that I experienced

as a female researcher (albeit, white and Western) and the gendered risks that came along with this.

While conducting research, my positionality as a woman led to a number of uncomfortable situations in the field. The severity of these situations ranged from inappropriate comments and aggressive remarks, and escalated to instances that involved more physical altercations where I was physically grabbed and groped—consequently, these instances compromised my sense of personal safety and security. As my research involved interviewing refugees in the town square, many of whom are racially black, I was often approached by locals and asked what “I was doing with the black people” (Field notes, March 22 2015). I heard rumours that certain individuals in the town assumed that I was “the black people’s prostitute”, and that other individuals thought that I was their teacher (Field notes, March 25 2015). In order to help establish connection with the locals, I played up my Polish identity to help foster a sense of a common “Europeaness” that would help with my immersion in the town. I later learnt from my translator that Eastern European women work as care workers in the South of Italy and the stereotype persists that they also engage in sex-work with clients. The unintended consequence of playing up my Polish identity was that individuals assumed that I was engaging in sex-work.

In response to various encounters that ranged from uncomfortable remarks to more physical altercations I adopted differing strategies that run counter to what feminist methodologies encourage with trust, reciprocity, closeness and connection with research participants. I responded by playing-up my economic and cultural positioning (Ross, 2015) as a researcher and student from North America in order to minimize my gender

identity. I deliberately chose to wear obviously modest clothing that would signify to people that I was in town for professional and academic purposes. When uncomfortable sexist and aggressive remarks were made, I often chose to ignore them, and avoided contact with those individuals. As such, my experience doing field-research may serve as a caution to other female researchers to be aware of the gender specific risks when conducting research. These considerations may require females to be cautious when immersing themselves in the environment of their research, and encourage them to establish clear and defined boundaries between themselves and others in order to ensure their safety. Frances B Henderson (2009) writes, “in the field one is continuously negotiating one’s whole self not only with locals, but with oneself, in a manner that is conducive to conducting research (p.292). Identities are not fixed in the field, but they change based on shifting networks of relationships and differing experiences.

It is too simplistic, and in itself patriarchal, to assume that researchers have more power tipped in their favour. These conceptions are based not only on a “white-male” researcher who may not necessarily face the same gendered risks as a female researcher, but also on a generalized *vulnerability* of research participants.¹⁸ As researchers, we need to further develop these conversations of shifting power relations and how female ethnographers will have a unique experience of having to navigate perceptions and risks based on their gender. We can never be fully prepared for what happens in the field, but there must be a balance between personal safety and rich data collection. Although female researchers may have many privileges in relation to their participants, they are not removed from the global phenomenon of gender-based violence and harassment.

¹⁸ Vulnerability is difficult to define, and although I acknowledge that certain populations who have been through certain experiences may be vulnerable, basing the definition of vulnerability solely on this experience is not taking into account an entire individuals’ personhood.

Chapter 4: Empirical Findings: Implementation and Power in the “Everyday”

This research project examines the presence of power in the “everyday politics” of refugee protection. To achieve this objective, this paper uses the case study of the RECOSOL SPRAR in Gioiosa-Ionica as a plausibility probe to examine the manifestations of structural and productive power. As a result of the decentralized nature of the implementation of protection, and the intimate nature of person-centred norm implementation, the SPRAR Central Service grants street-level bureaucrats flexibility in determining how services, basic needs, and integration measures are provided to refugees. Accessing services such as the asylum procedure, health care, and basic needs are a right that refugees are entitled to in Italy. Protection in SPRAR also provides integration measures such as language learning, workshops, and work placements.¹⁹ As the following chapter will indicate, frontline workers are directly involved in enforcing rules and creating new rules and practices surrounding the provision of protection to refugees; consequently, as these rules and practices are repeated by frontline workers, they become local norms on protection implementation.²⁰ These local norms have the ability to create parameters around protection; even contest protection as a right by making it contingent on behaviour. Along with the influence of frontline workers, local institutional and cultural norms also create structures affecting how protection is implemented.

¹⁹ As explained in the introduction, this thesis uses the term “protection” as consisting of: legal protection; accommodation and basic needs; access to services; and integration measures.

²⁰ Similar to Finnemore and Sikkink’s (1998) argument that norms emerge through a critical mass of states and then diffuse across the international community causing convergence, this chapter adapts the norm diffusion argument, but rather than at the international state level I utilize it at the street-level to examine how patterned practices become normalized and eventually emerge as local norms of behaviour.

In order to properly assess the practices of *formally mandated* street-level bureaucrats working with refugees, this relationship must be contextualized and examined within the parameters of the inherent power relationship that exists at the structural and productive level between those providing protection and refugees seeking protection. This overlapping of productive and structural power as examined by Barnett and Duvall's taxonomy of power can be expressed through the concept of humanitarianism. The relationship dynamic between street-level bureaucrats and refugees is unequally structured as a by-product of the practice of care, as well as the precarious legal status of refugees seeking legal protection. As such, the beneficiary is relegated to a subordinate position. Productive power, as power that is diffuse, forms; reinforces; and perpetuates subjectivities. This chapter interrogates how patterned practices of protection provision work through this hierarchical relationship, and how particular refugee subjectivities based on passivity are perpetuated.

When power is encountered there can be acts of resistance disputing the effects of that power. This resistance against the imposition of power can be examined through the commonplace and concerted actions of refugees against the practices of street-level bureaucrats and the subjectivities that are imposed through them. This resistance is read as "norm contestation". To be clear, this is not to be understood as contesting the norm of "legal" refugee protection, but rather contesting the *way* protection, in its broader definition, is implemented by street-level bureaucrats.

The empirical findings below describe how power works through the relationship between street-level bureaucrats and refugees during the implementation of protection. The chapter is structured into the following four parts: Firstly, I describe the services

RECOSOL SPRAR provides to refugees, and the various practices that control the provision of these services; Secondly, I describe how “productive” opportunities such as workshops and internships are used to “empower” refugees and change their subjectivity from one of passiveness to active participation; Thirdly, I provide an example of a refugee protest in Gioiosa-Ionica and contextualize it within a butterfly effect of protests happening in Calabria. This example serves to demonstrate how refugees contest the way in which their protection is implemented and assert themselves as political actors; Fourthly, I provide an account for *mafiosi* power to describe how local forms of power have an effect during implementation, and how they are localized within local cultural and political norms.

4.1 SPRAR Rules and Responsibilities

Upon entering the RECOSOL SPRAR project in Gioiosa refugees are required to sign a contract between themselves, RECOSOL, and the municipality of Gioiosa, stipulating the rules they are obligated to follow; as well as the services they have a right to receive from the SPRAR implementing partner (RECOSOL). The SPRAR Central Service drafts this contract template and all implementing organizations are required to use them. Organizations are required to ensure that refugees understand their responsibilities, as well as understand the services they are entitled to. These services include:

1. Housing
2. Food
3. Provision of linens (bed sheets, towels)
4. Orientation and accompaniment to services on the territory (health, legal, education)
5. Personal hygiene kits
6. Italian Language lessons
7. Pocket Money
8. Legal help, social and intercultural mediation, support in finding housing and work

(SPRAR RECOSOL, Contract of Accommodation)

The contract includes a code of conduct, which refugees are obligated to respect for the duration of their stay in a SPRAR. The SPRAR code of conduct reads as follows:

- Physical and verbal violence towards other hosted person in the project and operators is prohibited
 - The use of drugs is prohibited
 - The consumption of alcohol is prohibited
 - Listening to the radio or TV at a high volume is prohibited
 - Owning animals is prohibited
 - Offering personal beds to persons from outside of the hosting project is prohibited
 - Hosting friends or family members without the authorization from the project is prohibited
 - Leaving the project for more than 1 day without authorization is prohibited
 - Washing and drying clothes outside of private lodgings is prohibited
- (SPRAR RECOSOL, Contract of Accommodation)

4.1.1 Services and Pocket Money

One of the protection measures that SPRAR implementing organizations are obligated to provide to refugees is pocket money. For every refugee, SPRAR projects receive 35 EUR per day in funding for the provision of services to that one individual. SPRAR projects have the choice to provide food to refugees or to provide the ability for refugees to purchase their own food. SPRAR provides a minimum sustenance of 2 EUR/day²¹ and it must be paid directly to the refugee in the form of cash, prepaid cards, or ticket money. If refugees are to purchase their own sustenance this amount is increased. SPRAR projects have the autonomy to decide how pocket money is distributed, and how much is given. This pocket money is also for the purchasing of phone credit, clothing, and basic necessities. RECOSOL grants refugees 200 EUR in spending money per month. The pocket money includes 140 EUR in ticket money and 60

²¹ This is based on implementing organizations providing refugees with food. If food is not provided for, that expense is incurred by refugees and provided for with a higher allocation of pocket money.

EUR in actual money. RECOSOL operators explained that the decision to utilize a combination of ticket and real monies was to promote autonomy while also controlling what refugees were able to purchase. Ticket money was also a way of ensuring that the money was invested in local businesses and it mitigated funding delays from the Italian Government. The ticket money could only be used at particular local stores. In Gioiosa, this included: one clothing and shoe store, one grocery store, one drug store, and two vegetable stores.

RECOSOL operators took pride in the greater autonomy they afforded refugees in terms of spending money, in contrast to CARA reception centres. As one RECOSOL operator stated: *“In SPRAR migrants are totally free and independent. They can cook what they want, and buy the food they like, we think that this is very important for them to have this independence. Here they are free.”* In contrast, refugees in the RECOSOL SPRAR often expressed dissatisfaction with the ticket money and voiced their desire for the 200 EUR to be given in real monies. An inability to economize was the main concern for refugees. Certain products were cheaper at larger grocery stores but they could not use their pocket money there, which meant spending more of their ticket money for the same products at designated establishments. Although pocket money gave refugees some economic autonomy, ticket money also served as a form of control. Nevertheless, refugees adopted practices to by-pass this constraint. Many described that they would sell each other ticket money in exchange for real monies. One shop owner who was described as a *“very good man”* by one refugee participant would trade refugee’s real monies for ticket monies.

RECOSOL disbursed a higher monetary amount in order to be able to make reductions as a disciplining mechanism. Pocket money was taken away if refugees consumed more electricity per household than the allocated and used more than the two cylinders of gas provided per house/per month for cooking and heating. Pocket money was also removed if private accommodations were deemed “unclean”. Unexpected visits were conducted to the houses provided to refugees and 2 EUR were taken away if lodgings were not kept to standard. Operators implemented this practice on behalf of landlords to monitor the condition houses were being kept in. Refugees often expressed that this was not only an invasion of their privacy, but that it was also infantilizing and de-humanizing as their personal cleanliness was being evaluated.

Furthermore, as part of their mandate to provide an “integrated reception”, SPRARs are required to provide Italian language lessons to refugees. RECOSOL provided refugees with an hour and a half of Italian language lessons daily and decided to make attendance obligatory.²² Refugees were divided into four groups based on ethnicity²³ and language proficiency; two groups would come in the morning, and two groups would come in the early afternoon. Operators took 2 EUR away for every Italian class that refugees missed. In explaining why this was an additional rule that RECOSOL created operators explained that: *“we take money away so that they come to school. If we do not do this they will sleep all day and not learn to speak Italian.”* The practice of taking away money was to incentivize attendance, as well as discipline those who did not attend. As one refugee expressed *“I do not need Italian, my brother lives in Germany,*

²² Language classes also served as a form of attendance taking where refugees were required to sign in after every lesson. At the end of every month this attendance was kept as an official document and updated to the SPRAR Central Service database to account for expenses as well as monitoring refugee mobility (Servizio Centrale SPRAR, p.15).

²³ This was to avoid conflict between refugees from different ethnicities.

once I get my documents I go there, I need to learn German, not Italian.” Individual refugees had various reasons for not attending language classes, or for not participating, and for many it was an unnecessary skill to acquire since they did not plan on residing in Italy.²⁴

Once refugees are granted a form of protection they are only permitted to stay in the SPRAR for an additional six months. In order to help with the exit from the projects, RECOSOL decided to use a monetary gift of goodwill called a *buonoscita* that refugees could use for transportation or rent. Although the SPRAR Central Service gives implementing organizations this option, they have the freedom to choose the monetary amount and its governance. As one RECOSOL operator stated: *“This is not their right. This is an option for each project to decide. We decided to give 250 EUR but for migrants that give us problems, you do not follow rules, you do not respect workers, you do not go to school, we cut some of the money. If you are good, follow the rules, respect us, we will help you, if not we will cut from this money.”* The *buonoscita* served as an incentive that “privileged” refugees who acquiesced and remained compliant. Due to an inability to economize and save pocket money refugees were largely reliant on this *buonoscita* to help with expenses and transportation once their stay in the project had come to an end.

4.1.2 Bureaucratic Disciplines and Asylum

When serious behavioural infringements occur (as in the case of physical violence, violent language, or leaving the project without authorization for more than 7 days), the SPRAR Central Service gives implementing partners the flexibility to use

²⁴ Under the Dublin Convention refugees are required to apply for asylum in their first country of entry. This is a larger EU structural problem where individuals are forced to reside and begin incorporation into a country where they have no diaspora networks, and no plans of staying once they receive protection.

bureaucratic disciplines through behavioural warnings. The ability to use behavioural warnings is exercised discretionarily and based on the decision of the implementing organization. This is mainly done through a letter of reprimand in which a warning is given to the refugee stipulating that a project rule from the contract was broken. After a discretionary amount of warnings, and the nature of the transgression(s), a refugee can be expelled from the project by the regional Prefect and transferred to another SPRAR or a CARA reception centre. RECOSOL operators always use the setting of the *carabinieri* police station in order to administer the disciplinary letter due to the “officiality” and “seriousness” it adds to the transgression. A project coordinator, who was described as the “project cop”, because of his desire for order, encapsulates his relationship with the *carabinieri*:

“The whole carabinieri know me because I go to their station to reprimand. When a migrant is bad I give them to the police and I say “he has been bad!” to the carabinieri. If I give a paper to the migrants they will take the paper and throw it out. If I give it in the carabinieri it is a very important paper. They cannot refuse this. It’s an official decision and they have to respect me and the police give them this paper. It’s more strong.”

These behavioural warnings are then sent to all of the institutions involved in managing the SPRAR: the SPRAR Central Service, the *carabinieri*, the Prefectura, and the municipality. RECOSOL Operators expressed that when the project first began they would also send the behavioural letter to the Territorial Commission in Crotone, which is responsible for hearing refugee claims and making refugee status determination decisions for all claimants in the region of Calabria. One RECOSOL operator stated: *“When we first started out we were wrong, we also sent it to the Commission, but now we you do not send it because this is not their work.”* Although the Territorial Commission is not

supposed to make asylum decisions based on the behaviour of refugees in the SPRAR project, this practice represented an attempt to influence the asylum process.²⁵ Particularly when renewing subsidiary and humanitarian protection the *comportamento* (behaviour) of a refugee can be taken into consideration in the decision to renew. Although RECOSOL put an end to this practice, it represents a contestation of legal protection by attempting to inform decision-makers of the behaviour of refugees in a SPRAR project. Importantly, when renewing subsidiary and humanitarian protection the *comportamento* (behaviour) of a refugee can be taken into consideration in the decision to renew.

It is important to note, that RECOSOL operators also used informal practices to positively influence asylum hearings by pointing out discrepancies in refugees' stories and warning that inconsistent facts pose red flags for the Territorial Commission. As one cultural mediator expressed:

“For the Commission the dates are very important. They will ask you what date you left your country, what date you arrived in Italy, what date you were born. So I always tell them, no, you’re supposed to tell the same story when you go to the Commission, if you do not you will not get a good response. If they give a different story than they give in C3 when they come, they will not get a good response. I tell them to practice this information. This year we are lucky because most of the boys received their permits and we are very happy.”

The RECOSOL operators who were in contact with refugees on a daily basis had relationships characterized by a high degree of informality. Through candid conversations, they informally advised refugees and ensured preparedness for best possible outcomes by communicating the Commission’s criteria for granting protection

²⁵ Campesi (2015) also describes the use of letters of reprimand in CARA reception centers and their potential to influence refugee status determination decisions (p.6).

and the importance of dates and consistency. The “Modello C3” is the formalized asylum request that refugees give to the regional police when they first enter Italy. The Territorial Commission compares the verbal story presented at the asylum hearing with information recorded in the C3. Although this may not have necessarily been new information for refugees, communicating the importance of dates and consistency reflects an attempt to prepare refugees and positively influence the asylum hearing.

4.1.3. Feedback and Grievances

There is no official mechanism or tool in SPRAR projects that grants refugees the ability to formally communicate grievances and concerns with implementing organization about the provision of their protection. Nevertheless, refugees often expressed grievances to RECOSOL in more atomized ways. During interviews, refugees communicated their desire for RECOSOL to be accountable to them. Refugees expressed that their consent should have been sought for additional rules around the provision of services, and that they never agreed to these additional rules and regulations. As one refugee explained:

“When you try and talk to them and express your feelings they will tell you if you have a problem pack your things and leave. They will say you are disrespecting them or disobeying them. Before you make a law, when you are a lawmaker, you need to seek the consent of the beneficiary of this law. The beneficiary must consent to this law. But here, they will just go ahead and make a law and they say if you like you stay, if you do not like you go out of the project. If you ask them why a law is like this, they will never give you a good and complete answer. They will say “I do not know, if you care about it pack your luggage and leave the project”. This is the answer they give to you. This is not encouraging because where do you want the person to go? Some of us do not have money here, where do they want us to go? One brother he was here, he left and now he is sleeping at the train station. Someone saw him there and told us that he is staying there.”

The reasoning behind specific practices was never adequately explained to refugees or rationalized. Explanations are wanted for practices such as: why ticket-money was given and not real money; why ticket-money was used as a disciplinary mechanism; why Italian language classes were mandatory; and why the *buonoscita* was conditional. These are all practices that RECOSOL used to control the behaviour of refugees and “prepare” them for a life in Italy they did not necessarily want. When refugees did express their grievances through informal atomized communication, the responses they received from RECOSOL project managers were perceived as heavy-handed.

4.1.4. Encountering local authorities

In addition to creating new rules and practices surrounding the provision of services, RECOSOL also served as an intermediary between refugees and local authorities. The SPRAR Operating Manual describes the main role of the operator as accompanying and assisting “beneficiaries” in resolving every-day-matters regarding service provision, as well as serving as a basic bridge in understanding the territory and local community (SPRAR, Operators Manual, p.12). As such, frontline workers are responsible for accompanying refugees to various institutions such as the police, the doctors, and the Territorial Commission; as well as interpreting communication. RECOSOL Operators adopted various practices that controlled access and communications to local authorities personifying the role of gatekeepers rather than intermediaries.

One important theme that many refugees brought up is the fact that RECOSOL workers would often speak for them when encountering any authority official and/or

completely exclude them from discussions. In encountering administrative authorities, refugees were often perceived as being “organizationally illiterate” and not understanding of “how things work” at the institutional level (Darville 1995). As such, the management of documents, asylum hearings and bureaucratic processes was coordinated between RECOSOL and the various local institutions. Although translation and interpretation are necessary to some extent due to language proficiency, many refugees are able to have basic conversations in Italian and express themselves. The following two quotes are excerpts from interviews, articulating grievances around these practices:

“They will take you to the doctor but you will never see your results. They will not let you express yourself. You cannot speak the language like they can and you will not know what they are explaining to the doctor. Maybe they are telling the doctor that you are not even sick. Maybe they will take you back to your house and they will not even give you any medication. One time I told them I was sick. I want some medication. They will give you just one tablet, when we say we need more they will say “basta, basta”

“When we were at the police Julia was speaking by herself with the police for 30min and she told us to wait outside. I do not know what she told to them.....For the permesso soggiorno we all went inside and discussed the situation together. I need to speak to the carabinieri. I need to discuss my documents with them but if you tell them you want to speak to the police they will not let you.”

In terms of health care, operators described that refugees would often take advantage of free health care, or overcompensate for the lack of it in their countries of origin by being hypervigilant of any ailment they were feeling (Field notes, April 2 2015). Many operators expressed that refugees would constantly “complain” about ailments: *“This work is much difficult. Sometimes it feels like you have 75 sons that come to you and say “ah, I am sick” “ah, I have difficulty.”* Although access to health care is a service provided to refugees for their protection, perceptions of over-compensating due to

lack of health care in their countries of origin led operators to control the provision of medication, as well as participate in conversations about the health of refugees when encountering health care professionals to express the minor characteristic of the health concern.

Speaking for refugees and controlling access to local authorities unintentionally created a culture of insecurity and distrust. Refugees expressed feelings of anxiety that their cases were not being processed or managed properly; or that RECOSOL was even preventing refugees from receiving their residence permits and health care. As will be shown in Section 4.3 of this chapter, tensions and insecurities such as those resulting from these practices contributed to larger concerted resistance demonstrations against the RECOSOL SPRAR.

4.1.5 Local Authorities and Structural Constraints

In the role as intermediary, RECOSOL experienced structural constraints and the acceptance of these constraints functioned as a local cultural and institutional norm. When refugees would inquire about their late documents RECOSOL Operators would either call the *Questura* (regional police) to follow-up on case progress, or they were told to be patient and keep waiting. The acceptance of these bureaucratic delays and the state not respecting its own laws on asylum, was an institutional and cultural norm in the South of Italy, which the Italians accepted as a norm, whilst the refugees did not. Italian law states that refugee status determination (RSD) interviews must be carried out within 30 calendar days after the appropriate Territorial Commission receives the asylum application from the Questura (regional police) and the Territorial Commission's decision

should then be sent to the Questura three days following the asylum decision was made (Article 27(2) LD 25/2008). It also states that an asylum-seeker should have a decision made no longer than six months after applying for international protection. The respective institutions did not respect laws and bureaucratic delays were a solidified cultural and institutional norm for RECOSOL operators. As one operator expressed:

In Italy to make a document you have to wait too much time, but not because you are African, even me, I have to wait! Boys do not understand this. Every day the boys come here and ask me “but what about my document?”, “what about my permesso di soggiorno?” They do not understand in any mode to explain him, it’s not me to decide, there are many boss more important than Vincenzo and Anthony, the boss up the scale decide, it depends on the police, and Commission, not her or me.”

The Territorial Commission of Crotone is responsible for asylum hearings from the regions of Calabria and Basilicata and it was often expressed by RECOSOL staff that the Commission was overwhelmed with the increasing amount of cases. Delays in the sharing of information between the Questura and the Commission, as well as lost or misplaced applications exacerbated wait times. There were refugees living in Gioiosa who had been there for 10 months and had not even had their Commission interview hearing dates set; many had been waiting more than a year for their residence permits.

Operators explained that due to the institutional absence of the state they felt extremely alone in mitigating documentation delays. They were caught in-between increasingly frustrated refugees and an inefficient bureaucracy. As one Operators explained “*There is a total delegation of SPRAR’s to organizations and we just do not have the capabilities of managing these asylum delays. Migrants get angry because they*

think we are causing these delays. You have these bureaucrats up there making decisions and they have no social knowledge of what is happening in the projects when the documents are delayed. This is our biggest problem.”

4.2 The Provision of Productive Activities: Internships and Workshops

The focus of this section is on productive activities that were encouraged to “empower” and refashion refugees into productive and active subjects. The SPRAR Central Service gives organizations the option to implement activities that offer work-experience in order to ease the transition into the labour market once the SPRAR project ends. Ambrosini (2014) writes that one of the goals of SPRAR is to “free refugees from dependence on welfare, without abandoning them to themselves” which requires “insisting on the acquisition of knowledge and tools that can help the beneficiaries make progress in redesigning and rebuilding their lives” (p.240). The SPRAR Operating Manual states incorporation in local labour markets “is important especially for young individuals for the possibility of acquiring professional experiences through temporary placements through which more long-term work relationships can be formed” (SPRAR, Operating Manual, p.35). There are no formal incorporation programs once refugees receive a form of protection; therefore SPRARs have the agency to choose to implement these opportunities. As one operator stated: *“if you are a good manager, you will also work for integration for the beneficiaries”*.

In 2014, RECOSOL organized 10 internships, for 10 refugees out of the 45 refugees that they were being hosted. These internships were based at various local organizations and businesses and the positions consisted of food preparation, sign

printing, landscaping, and agricultural work. Internships lasted for about six months and functioned as full-time jobs exempting refugees from attending Italian classes. RECOSOL decided that rather than receiving the 200EUR stipend per month, refugees would be given a stipend of 550EUR that consisted of ticket pocket money as well as real monies. Because not all refugees could participate in an internship, RECOSOL developed an evaluation based on behaviour, attendance in class, Italian language proficiency (written and oral), and house cleanliness where refugees were ranked based on each category and those who scored the highest were given the opportunity to participate. Although internships were treated as a privilege for those who scored the highest, RECOSOL Operators articulated their disappointment in the scarce willingness to participate:

“The migrants didn’t want to do the borso lavoro because if you do the borso you get 550EUR/month, it’s how much young people get for working here, and if you are doing the borso you shouldn’t be getting the bonus, right? They said they still wanted the 200EUR/month. This is the wrong attitude! For some of them, it’s normal to just be passive and dependent.”

One refugee who was offered a borso lavoro at a local pizza shop as a dishwasher rejected the opportunity because of his evaluation of the poor daily wage:

“I was offered a borso lavoro at Santa Tereza for 4 months, but that man is not a good person. That man, 8 hours of work each day, late into the night, for 15EUR! I told him that is not possible, that is too small! Make it 20EUR. He said no. Then I told him I will reduce my work time. He said no. I told him to find someone else who can do it.”

What emerges from these accounts is that whilst internships create opportunities, refugees resist the rules surrounding them. This particular refugee negotiated with

RECOSOL to receive both the stipend and month wage, and he negotiated with the employment establishment with regards to the daily wage. However, internship refusals are problematic for refugees as it can be interpreted as passivity and dependency on charity when in fact, it is really a form of resistance. Refusing internships is refusing to comply with the terms and conditions of these opportunities.

In addition to internships, RECOSOL also organized various workshops with local artisans and musicians that encouraged artistic self-expression and productive leisurely activities. In 2015, RECOSOL organized a djembe drum playing workshops, a stained glass making, and a painting workshop. The workshops lasted a couple of days and refugees who participated would receive a “training certificate” that stated they had completed their participation in the workshop. As one RECOSOL operator explained about his experience with workshops in nearby SPRAR’s as well as the SPRAR in Gioiosa:

“In Gioiosa nobody go. When I worked in Caulonia we made two laboratory workshops. One to work with food, and another for sewing for girls. Nobody go. In Riace they have workshops and only one migrant goes in each workshop because they pay the migrants to go! So we are thinking what we have to do to make participation because we can make one beautiful idea but people do not go.”

In Riace, the workshops functioned as economically productive activities where refugees were given wages for making various goods such as chocolate, stained glass, and tablecloths that were then sold to tourists passing through the small village. Tourists could also visit the workshops, which functioned as a sort of tourist attraction. Caulonia and Gioiosa did not use the workshops as economically productive activities, but they

were meant more as creative outlets for refugees. Drawing from an observation from field notes, during an Italian language class a teacher had proposed a painting workshop for refugees where they would learn how to do artistic painting as a form of self-expression. Many refugees snickered at the idea and expressed that the workshop and certificate would not help in acquiring work, and that they would not participate, because they did not deem it to be useful to them: *“Will this help me get work? No. Yes, I will get a certificate but will this certificate help me find work? That is why I did not participate.”*

Many operators expressed their frustrations with the perceived lack of effort from refugees in actively participating in productive activities and refusals were framed as a dependence on charity and passivity. Operators pathologized refugee dependency and attributed it to individual characteristics. Zetter (2007) describes the dispersal of asylum-seekers in the UK as a transformative process that marginalizes refugees from their own social and cultural milieu and “forcibly disperses into already deprived communities, and compels claimants to live in controlled poverty” (p.182). The SPRAR system itself was never attributed to creating dependency. As one operator explained:

“We have to help them because asylum is a human right, but at the same time they have to demonstrate they merit the aid that my country gives. It’s not good to have a system that helps everyone. It’s not right to act like a child and wait for someone to give you milk, socks, and food. You have to study, work, try to be more independent. For some of the migrants, they are grown adults and for them it is normal to sit and wait for things to be given to them. For other migrants this isn’t acceptable. They want to be more autonomous from RECOSOL and they are well integrated. But this depends on every individual.”

Similar to making pocket money contingent on behaviour and following the rules, the above excerpt demonstrates that this particular RECOSOL operator felt protection

should be conditional and earned by participating in productive activities. Having the opportunity to participate in an internship, and then rejecting this opportunity is perceived as being ungrateful and misguided, and effectively, de-legitimizes the individuals right to protection in the eyes of the care-providers and host country. Refugees are forced to prove their deservingness of protection by participating in productive activities that they had no choice over and say in the conditions surrounding it. Refusing to be “empowered” demonstrated passivity and dependence, which only heightened the need to further “empower” refugees.

4.3 Concerted Resistance: Political Subjectivity and Being Reduced Anew

There were several coordinated *acts of resistance* that occurred in nearby towns and SPRAR hosting communities that occurred during my fieldwork in Gioiosa-Ionica. These acts ranged from more peaceful demonstrations to more physical altercations between refugees and the SPRAR implementing body in each community. In all demonstrations, the relevant SPRAR implementing organizations in each locality were the “target” of the protests, and were framed as the source of grievances for refugees. These protests created an incredibly strained environment in Gioiosa-Ionica as RECOSOL operators were apprehensive that refugees who were labelled as “ringleaders” or “troublemakers” were also in the process of planning to stage a similar “revolt”. In this section, I investigate how refugees substantiate themselves as actors by “taking” political subjectivity and making claims on the way protection is implemented. In coordinating public acts of resistance and voicing common grievances, refugees assert themselves as a political identity group based on a common experience. These acts of resistance end up

buttressing the power of the humanitarian regime to discipline refugees and reduce them anew via discourses of ingratitude.

4.3.1. Marches and Sit-Ins

In April 2015, approximately twenty refugees staged a peaceful protest marching in the streets of Gioiosa-Ionica with signs reading, “We want to transfer”, “our documents are late” and “we demand changes”. Disrupting the routinized regime of daily Italian classes, refugees marched up and down the streets of the Gioiosan town square with their luggage and bags demanding to be transferred to another SPRAR project. The protest was peacefully dissolved through the use of local police because of the inconvenience it was causing to traffic. The following day refugees occupied the town square, *La Piazza Vittorio Veneto*, where they held a daylong sit-in. A pile of suitcases, school bags and plastic bags filled with belongings. lay in the town square and the approximate twenty refugees occupied the square’s fountain, a popular evening meeting and socializing for refugees. The local police (*polizia*), as well as the state police (*carabineiri*), were both present, demonstrating the perceived seriousness of the security concern that the demonstration posed to the town. The police placed themselves across from the refugees and monitored the situation. Town locals sat on the town square’s benches observing the unfolding event, as the local media arrived to cover the story.

The refugees had a list of grievances against the RECOSOL SPRAR in Gioiosa-Ionica and they were demanding to be transferred to other SPRAR projects in the North of Italy. The grievances presented by the refugees mainly pertained to bureaucratic delays such as: the issuing of refugee, humanitarian, and subsidiary protection residence permits,

delays in the setting of asylum-hearing dates; unaddressed health problems; and a general dis-satisfaction with Gioiosa and the management of the project by RECOSOL. One refugee, unexpectedly transferred from a SPRAR in Milan to the SPRAR in Gioiosa, expressed to the local media: *“I do not find this project good here. I have been here for 10 months. No asylum hearing, no residence permit. When I was in Milan I had my Commission hearing date, but since I have been transferred here...nothing”*(Telemia, April 20 2015). This particular individual already had a Commission hearing date set in Milan, but in being transferred to the region of Calabria he had to start the bureaucratic process anew with the appropriate Territorial Commission. Due to these types of delays and slow management of asylum cases, refugees were demanding to be transferred to SPRAR projects in Milan, Rome, and Bologna, where the process of documentation and asylum-hearings was perceived as more timely and efficient.

Further grievances raised by refugees related to the lack of job opportunities in Gioiosa for asylum-seekers who had been granted a form of protection, as well as concerns that the project was not addressing health issues. One asylum-seeker had a health evaluation form that diagnosed him with Hepatitis B, and he was claiming that the project had not given him any medication. RECOSOL renounced this claim, explaining that everyone was subject to health screenings when entering the project and that the Hepatitis B positivity was due to a Hepatitis B vaccine that was administered to all refugees. These grievances indicate a more general dissatisfaction in the management of the RECOSOL SPRAR.

This protest demonstration, that occurred in the streets of Gioiosa-Ionica, was a part of a larger coordinated effort across various SPRAR towns on the Ionian Coast of Calabria occurring during March and April 2015.²⁶ As one RECOSOL operator said about these demonstrations: *“They all communicate and they know what’s going on in other projects in Calabria.”* The demonstration in Gioiosa was particularly sparked by events that had developed in the neighbouring town of Caulonia. On March 28th 2015 a group of asylum-seekers in Caulonia blocked access to the street where the GOEL SPRAR, the implementing organization in the town, was located. They laid their bodies on the street blocking traffic flow to the GOEL office. Grievances pertained to bureaucratic delays in the asylum process that were directed towards the organization. The protest was dispersed by locals, GOEL operators, and local police.

The following day in Caulonia, a group of six refugees responded more acutely by locking a few of the GOEL operators in their office for a couple of hours. The operators were eventually freed, but the responsible refugees were taken away by the police. These “troublemakers” were transferred to a CARA detention centre as punishment for breaking the rules of the project where they would experience a worsening of reception standards and a greater restriction on the freedom of every-day life. This was decided after GOEL operators staged a “counter-protest” in their office demanding that the refugees be expelled from the project by Calabria’s regional Prefect. SPRAR implementing organizations in Calabria released statements supporting the GOEL operators, denouncing the actions of the refugees, and criticizing the Italian state for being too

²⁶ The nearby towns of Bivongi, Stignano and Caulonia were all experiencing varying public demonstrations by refugees against the SPRAR implementing organizations.

absent in the management and overseeing of the SPRAR hosting projects. The demonstration in Gioiosa occurred a day after the notification by the Prefect of the Region of Calabria that these four refugees would be expelled from the GOEL SPRAR. As one of the refugees in Gioiosa expressed in speaking about his decision to participate in the protest in Gioiosa: *“We will support our brothers who are not being treated well.”*

Following the second day of demonstrations in Gioiosa, the protesting refugees were invited to discuss their grievances with the Mayor of Gioiosa, the Vice-Major, the Social and Economic Councillor and the RECOSOL operators. The meeting lasted for approximately an hour after which the refugees returned to the town square to continue the sit-in. Italian language classes were cancelled and the RECOSOL office was closed for the week to avoid similar conflicts between operators and refugees, like that which had developed in Caulonia, as well as to avoid large numbers of asylum-seekers congregating at the RECOSOL NGO office.

4.3.2 Reactionary Discourse and Reducing Refugees Anew

Although acts of resistance by collectives in subordinate positions challenge the effects of domination and the practices within the hierarchical relationship, they also present an opportunity for the humanitarian order to re-establish its power over refugees. Following the protests The Council of Associations of Gioiosa Ionica, which RECOSOL is a member of, released a statement wherein four main points were made. Firstly, an acknowledgement that the bureaucratic delays created by state (police) and regional authorities (Territorial Commission) exist and although they cause much suffering for asylum-seekers, this is not the fault nor responsibility of RECOSOL but of the respective

authorities (Lagozzo, 2015). Second, a disappointment in the “lack of gratitude” from asylum-seekers towards RECOSOL who *“treated them with care and hospitality and gave them everything needed for a pleasant stay in Gioiosa”*(Lagozzo 2015). Third, an acknowledgement that *“it is not right to penalize the majority of migrants who respect the rules, remain disciplined/governed, and did not agree with the grievances (some even opposed) of those migrants expressing their discontent and dissatisfaction with the project or with their reception”*(Lagozzo 2015) Fourth, that although the demonstrators were peaceful, they *“did not take into consideration the unease this would create in the community”* (Lagozzo 2015). Finally, The Council of Associations urged the Italian state and the European Union to do more, in lieu of increasing landings on the Calabrian coast (Lagozzo, 2015). It was not specified what was meant by “doing more”.

Two main narratives can be pulled out of this response. The first pertains to gratitude and the second to the worthiness of an “asylum-seeker”. In equating the protest and the grievances with a “lack of gratitude”, refugees were labelled as “ungrateful” and unappreciative of the “protection” they were being given. The narrative of gratefulness was two-fold. Firstly, refugees should have been grateful that they were in a SPRAR and not a CARA. As one Operator expressed:

“The Government thinks it is better to keep migrants out of cities in these big structures with carabinieri, but this is shit. And think about it, 2000 people, that is 25 million EUR a year. It is a business. A big, big business. There are certain economic advantages that people are getting from these CARAs, I’m sure of it. SPRAR is not like this, we offer a different way, little groups of migrants, and they are free to live a free life. Our little projects are against this mafia.”

Furthermore, refugees should have been grateful that the town of Gioiosa-Ionica had agreed to become a part of the SPRAR network and offer the locality as one in which refugees would be given protection. As a member of the municipality explained: “ *We went to Rosarno to avoid problems. We took them (the refugees) to visit the camp there (in Rosarno) to see look how bad it is and we said “look, how fortunate you are”. The migrants were shocked to see the conditions they (migrants) lived in there (Rosarno).”*

Finally in interviews, operators often expressed frustrations that refugees never thanked them for their work, or never expressed gratitude for the organization. As one operator explained: “*When I started doing this work in 2008 I thought we were helping these people. We help them with house, food, lawyer, clothes, documents, school, everything. Maybe they say thanks. From what I say, I was not their friend. It was like me against the African. They shout with me because they need something more. If I give them something they need something more too. All the years I work in these projects it is the same.”*

This brings us to the second narrative of in-authenticity. The excerpt from the Council of Associations of Gioiosa-Ionica differentiated participating refugees from those who did not participate. The majority “remained disciplined, and followed the rules” while the participating refugees subverted the norm of how a “proper” refugee should behave: passive and victim-like. In taking political subjectivity and making claims on their protection, refugees were violating the “gift” of protection and as such, they were demonstrating their inauthenticity as proper “refugees”. In creating an active vs. passive/

good vs. bad/ disciplined vs. undisciplined binary, the authenticity of refugee claims was placed into question. As one RECOSOL SPRAR operator expressed in his interview:

“I think that 90% of whole migrants are economic migrants but they know that to stay in Italy, in a regular way for 1 year the only way is to ask for protection.....everybody knows this.... I’m sure a lot of them especially in the last years arrived in Italy because they know that in Italy they can have house, food and other things and this is an incentive to come in Italy. The first migrants who came they called Africa and said “oh man come here because in Italy they give us food, house, Italy, health, come here, come here. So this is the reason people come.”

Protesting, displaying political subjectivity, and making claims on the provision of protection became synonymous with “inauthenticity” and with “economic migrant”. Those who did not participate were genuine refugees, and those who did participate were exploiting the generous protection scheme in Italy. The undeserving “economic migrant” became the misguided individual making claims on their protection, whilst the “deserving refugee” became he who disagreed with the protest. This simplistic narrative also failed to consider varying individual choices for participation, and how non-participation may have also been a strategic decision based on fears that asylum decisions would be negatively affected.

On April 3rd, the manager of the RECOSOL SPRAR in Gioiosa released a statement after one of the refugees who was transferred from the GOEL SPRAR to a CARA detention centre asked the GOEL SPRAR if they would allow him to come back to the hosting project. The RECOSOL SPRAR statement reads as follows:

“He has realized a little too late that he has wasted the opportunity he was given that would have put him in very different conditions. (An opportunity) that would have allowed him to study Italian and to do a work placement in a company in

Caulonia. That (sic) would accompany him to obtain a residence permit. That (sic) would give him that box of useful tools for integrating into Italian society. Now he has his head down, he is alone, and without any help” (Ciavula, 3rd April 2015).

In asking to be transferred back into the GOEL SPRAR in Caulonia, SPRAR operators used this as an opportunity to make an example out of the “refugee warrior”. The benevolence of the GOEL SPRAR was established and the mistaken behaviour of the refugee was re-affirmed. The threat of being transferred to a CARA suppresses more acute forms of resistance among refugees, and these two streams of reception allow SPRARs to use CARA as a way of disciplining refugees for more acute political expressions.

Coordinated and planned forms of resistance are few because of the general sense of insecurity, a fear of punishment, ethnic/racial tensions amongst refugees, as well as different experiences and judgements on the provision of care and services in the RECOSOL project. Not all refugees held these same grievances towards RECOSOL, and some did but did not participate as a form of risk-management and being seen in a negative light. There is a general fear that participating in demonstrations will jeopardize the refugee status determination result. Ethnic tensions between refugees prohibit more coordinated action. As one Pakistani refugee expressed: “*RECOSOL people are mad at us. All these black guys are putting (holding) their banners up on the road. You know these black guys are not good. Us Pakistani’s we do not get involved.*” More frequent forms of resistance appear in more atomized and individual ways, but from time to time an incident or situation will spark unrest and asylum-seekers will collectively demonstrate and air their grievances.

4.4 Mafiosi Power

Specifically, local forms of power also have an effect on the ability of organizations to implement protection. After starting the SPRAR project in Gioiosa-Ionica, RECOSOL attempted to replicate the project in Locri, a nearby town of 13,000 inhabitants, approximately 20km away. The Mayor of Gioiosa-Ionica, the Mayor of Locri, and RECOSOL signed an agreement wherein the project in Locri would be an extension of the project in Gioiosa-Ionica. In January of 2015, after two months of operations, RECOSOL decided to close the SPRAR project in Locri following “repeated threats” from unknown individuals the most serious consisting of a staff member having his car tires slashed.

In explaining why RECOSOL ultimately decided to close the project in Locri, a RECOSOL Operator stated that it came down to issues they were having with operators from Locri. The Mayor and the local administration had “recommended” certain individuals to RECOSOL to work in the SPRAR. *Raccomandazione* (character references), were traditionally given by parish priests or police chiefs to possible employers, attesting that an individual was of good moral character and had no criminal record (Hooper, 2015, p.244) Today, politicians emerge as key *raccomandatori* (those giving character references), but rather than being based on moral rectitude or good standing, they dole out patronage based on loyalty to a political party and votes. This gives politicians an immense amount of power in providing individuals with jobs as a favour or a reward, and it also leads to individuals being placed in positions for which they are unqualified.

When the “recommended” Locri Operators failed to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of their position, the SPRAR project manager for Locri and Gioiosa-Ionica threatened to terminate their work-contracts. After repeated intimidation techniques that were assumed to be coming from the Locri operators, RECOSOL decided to close their activities on Locri’s territory. “*The mafia is stronger in Locri*” expressed a local from Gioiosa. Although individuals using intimidation techniques may not have necessarily been members of the Calabrian mafia, Ndrangheta; *mafiosi* methods such as poisoning pets, slashing tires, and leaving bullet holes in cars are often used by “ordinary” individuals when trying to send a message or access the opportunity structure of a particular initiative taking place on their territory. Although a police report was filed by RECOSOL there is only speculation surrounding who the individuals were behind the “messages”. Nevertheless, the message was received and the manager of the RECOSOL project decided to leave, moving the refugees to Gioiosa-Ionica. As such, local power configurations in the South of Italy have the ability infiltrate SPRAR projects and control employment in the project.

Furthermore, one of the RECOSOL coordinators in Gioiosa who was involved in starting the SPRAR in Locri explained that from the onset, locals in Locri were distrustful and exploitative of RECOSOL by overcharging for offices, furniture, and rent on houses. She expressed: “*They were asking for 500 EUR/month just for furniture. It was unbelievable! This isn’t Milan.*” It was also expressed that local places of business refused to sign a contract with RECOSOL on the use of ticket money from refugees because they didn’t trust that RECOSOL would reimburse them the exact ticket amount at the end of the month. They believed they were going to be “ripped off”. The presence

of mafia power in Gioiosa was undisclosed and speaking about the topic required much cajoling. Many operators explained that I would never understand the complex realities in Calabria as I was not a Calabrian native; and therefore an “outsider”.

During an interview with a local in Gioiosa, it was stated that the Mayor of Gioiosa had placed particular people in the RECOSOL SPRAR in order to ensure the project did not encounter any “difficulties”. One RECOSOL operator who was described as having “un occhio lungho” which translates to a “long eye” was described as being placed in the SPRAR because of his privileged knowledge of activities on the territory, and an ability to influence these activities. This local stated that: *“everything is calm in Gioiosa because with certain operators in the project, I won’t give you any names, but no one would dare try anything with them working there (RECOSOL SPRAR).”* When speaking to the presence of power in the implementation of protection in Gioiosa local power configurations and gatekeepers of the local territory are going to consider who works for the SPRAR, as well as whether it is able to conduct activities on the territory. As an outsider, I was not privy to this “insider” information, and even my translator, while we had a good working relationship, expressed that he would not share this information with me. As such, it was impossible to investigate the presence and effects of this locally specific power on the RECOSOL SPRAR in Gioiosa and how it may have effected the implementation of refugee protection.

Nevertheless, the documentation of mafia infiltration in public contracts securing services to refugees in accommodation centers; migrant smuggling from Africa to southern Italy; and in utilizing failed asylum-seekers for the agricultural production in Calabria and Sicily is ample (Reguly 2016, Mangano 2015). As one local expressed:

“wherever there is money, there is also the mafia.” Based on the experience of Locri, *mafiosi* power does filter into SPRAR’s, and individuals matter a great deal in resisting this infiltration or being complicit in it.

This empirical chapter raised various issues and themes pertaining to structural power, productive power, and resistance in the implementation of protection that will be unpacked in the following analytical chapter. This chapter described how formally mandated street-level bureaucrats control the provision of basic needs and services to refugees as well as integration measures such as internships. Commonplace and concerted forms of resistance are used by refugees to resist how protection is implemented, and the subjectivities that are perpetuated through the practices and decisions of RECOSOL operators. Finally, the potential of *mafiosi* power was described as other actors have the ability to shape the context within which protection is provided.

Chapter 5: Analysis: Gioiosa-Ionica and the Practice of Power Through Implementation

Using the case study of the RECOSOL SPRAR in Gioiosa-Ionica as a plausibility probe, this project sheds light on the presence of productive and structural power in the implementation of refugee protection. Using “everyday politics” as a level of analysis, this study describes the quotidian, banal, and commonplace practices and narratives that perpetuate power relations and subjectivities within the arena of protection and the practice of care. As a person-centred norm, the implementation of protection relies on interactions, which are often intimate relationships, between refugees and street-level bureaucrats. These interactions manifest through a structured relationship between providers and recipients. While various practices and narratives within this hierarchical relationship (re) produce and perpetuate stereotypical “refugee” subjectivities based on passivity and victimhood, they also encourage agency and participation through productive activities such as internships, and workshops. This paper also reveals that implementing organizations, and street-level bureaucrats working for them, have a large amount of flexibility and discretion in creating various rules and local-level practices that effectively become local norms in controlling protection as a norm, and protection as a practice. Significantly, empirics illustrate how refugees resist the way in which their protection is implemented in commonplace everyday ways as well as in more concerted and organized ways as in the example of the refugee march and sit-in.²⁷

Chapter Five outlines important empirical findings which are organized into four sub-sections: Firstly, the provision of basic needs and services; Secondly, the provision of integration measures; Thirdly, the concerted resistance of refugees through the use of

²⁷ Section 4.3.1 of this thesis.

protest; And fourthly, the presence of local level *mafiosi* power and its potential to infiltrate SPRAR projects. This chapter demonstrates the significance of the findings and illustrates how their connections offer a holistic analysis of the structural and productive power effects on the implementation of refugee protection in Gioiosa-Ionica.

It is important to note that Betts and Orchard's (2014) theory of norm implementation from the literature review is revisited in this chapter using empirics and key concepts such as: power, humanitarianism, and resistance. The objective of this chapter is to reflect and further the discussion in IR constructivist literature on norm implementation as a theory and as a practice. I conclude the chapter with a discussion on that importance and necessity of considering power and resistance as significant factors in constructivist IR norm implementation literature. I offer a discussion in the relevance of the chapter's findings and provide compelling reasons as to why these findings are deserving of further exploration and research.

4.1. Structural Power, Productive Power, and Resistance

The goal of this thesis has been to consider how understandings of power can contribute to our understanding of the factors conditioning the process of implementing person-centred norms. Based on empirical findings, it can be concluded that norm implementation without the concept of power remains sterile and deficient because it does not account for the how power plays into the “everyday politics” of frontline workers when making decision and judgements about the lived of refugees. Betts and Orchard (2014) assert that states, elites, non-governmental actors, and individuals, effect and contest norms during the implementation process; however, this is presupposing that

everyone has the *privilege* to participate in the implementation process and that the voices of all involved are considered. Norm implementation does not capture how power structures create dynamics within social relations that prevent individuals from being self-determining and able to exercise agency by making active decisions about their own lives. Feldman (2016) describes humanitarian interventions as “a space of hierarchical relations mediated through the language and practice of care” (p.3), wherein “subjects are formed through these practices (they do not simply enact them), relations are structured by them, and political engagements are produced through these dynamics”(p.1). As such, the implementation of refugee protection does far more than just provide refugees with legal protection and humanitarian assistance. In considering productive and structural power in extension to the case study of the RECOSL SPRAR in Gioiosa, this study demonstrates how the practices and narratives in the everyday provision of services controlled the ability of refugees to make decisions about their own lives. As such, this effectively (re) creates and perpetuates stereotypical refugee subjectivities based on characteristics of passivity and victimhood. Most importantly, like humanitarian action, the provision of protection also served as a space for refugees to “act politically”, make claims, and participate in conversations about their protection.

Structurally, RECOSOL operators function as gatekeepers to protection. They control access and provision to services; basic needs; and “productive” opportunities. Hence, each individual receiving protection will have different experiences as a result of not everyone having the same opportunities. These practices reinforce the hierarchically structured relationship between “providers” and “recipients”, and thus, encourage dependency and acquiescent behaviour. For example, refugees were dependant on

RECOSOL for pocket money, communications with local authorities, and for work opportunities. RECOSOL operators also had a large amount of discretion in rule enforcement, and bureaucratic discipline, which could foster a sense of unease amongst refugees and strain their relationship with RECOSOL operators. Harrell-Bond's (1986) seminal piece entitled "Imposing Aid" argues that the role of organizations is to not only take care of the needs of refugees, but to also identify what those needs are, and more importantly, determine which solutions are in the best interest of refugees. Although many of these practices create dependency, Ambrosini (2014) writes that one of the goals of SPRAR is to "free refugees from dependence on welfare, without abandoning them to themselves", which requires "insisting on the acquisition of knowledge and tools that can help the beneficiaries make progress in redesigning and rebuilding their lives" (p.240). Internships and workshops were examples of activities that aimed to make refugees more autonomous and productive. Barbara Cruikshank (1999) writes about the use of "empowerment" by various governmental and non-governmental actors, post-1960s, in the United States. She argues that through pedagogic programs, social services, and various social movements, individuals who are excluded or marginalized in society are fashioned into active, self-managing "citizens". Empowerment involved transforming subjectivity from powerlessness to active citizenship (Dean, 2009, p.93). Although refugees became dependent on SPRAR and interactions with local authorities were often silencing, RECOSOL also encouraged participation and active subjectivity in terms of labour and skills training opportunities through workshops and internships.

Protection was implemented through power relations, and it was also resisted through these same power relations. Although refugees are in this structure of power,

they are not constantly engaged in act of resistance, and this power dynamic does not define their lives. Nevertheless, everyday empirics are filled with ways in which refugees resisted power and domination in commonplace and concerted ways. Refusing internships, exchanging pocket money for real money, and voicing concerns during interviews were all ways in which refugees resisted in everyday ways. Although these micro-manifestations did not change the relational power structure, they imposed limitations on domination and demanded a more meaningful and equitable power relationship.

The refugee protest in Gioiosa was a more acute form of resistance to the implementation of protection. Although refugees did not contest their legal protection, they contested the way in which their protection, in its broader definition (including integration measures, legal protection, and basic needs and services) was being implemented. By making claims on the provision of care and slow bureaucratic procedures, refugees asserted themselves as political actors by making judgements and demands. The protest was a struggle “first to be recognized as a subject capable of action and speech” (Ortner, 2006, p.92). Participating in a protest stepped outside the boundaries of permissible activities as refugees enacted political capacities (Hall, 2012, p.11). Not only did refugees “take political subjectivity”, they also demonstrated a solidarity with other refugees based on a common political identity and general dissatisfaction with local institutional norms of inefficient and slow bureaucracies. Refugees demanded to be transferred to a SPRAR in the North of Italy, wherein the bureaucracy was perceived as more efficient, and there were more economic opportunities and wider personal diaspora networks. For refugees in Gioiosa, the events in Caulonia and nearby towns served as a

catalyst and opportunity for collective identity formation, claims-making, and town-wide solidarity.

6.2 Gratitude and Authenticity

The empirical chapter illustrated how after the protest in Gioiosa the “humanitarian order” re-established its power over refugees. A statement made by the Council of Association in Gioiosa-Ionica reveals a powerful narrative relating to gratitude and the ingratitude of refugees, and their corresponding authenticity or inauthenticity of need for protection. The statement implied that not only should refugees be grateful to RECOSOL operators for providing them with protection, but that they should also be grateful to the RECOSOL operators for welcoming them into their town. This was a doubly structured relationship wherein not only were RECOSOL operators providing refugees with protection, they were also the “hosts” and refugees were the “guests”. Herzfeld (1992) describes that hospitality consists of a hierarchical position between the host and the guest wherein the guest is in a moral debt and inferior position to the host. Guests are obligated to comply with the rules and accepted forms of behaviour specified by the host. This narrative of gratitude is threaded throughout the empirical chapter in the way that refugees were expected to be grateful to RECOSOL for providing protection; grateful that they were in a SPRAR and not a CARA reception centre; grateful for productive opportunities such as internships and workshops; and grateful to the community of Gioiosa-Ionica for hosting them.

Furthermore, refugees who were perceived as “ungrateful” due to their refusals of productive activities, or participation in political claims making, were also perceived as

“bogus” asylum-seekers. They acted contradictory to the idealized refugee figure often characterized by passivity, helplessness, and victimhood (Malkki, 1992). In his seminal piece on refugee labelling Zetter (1991) argues that the bureaucratic labelling of refugees is done through stereotyping “which involves disaggregation, standardization and the formulation of clear cut categories” (p.44). Delineating from the genuine refugee creates the “bogus” asylum-seekers who are abusing the system (Zetter, 2007). As was shown in the narrative presented in the statement released by the Council of Gioiosa Ionica, refugees who participated in the protest were “ungrateful” as a result of taking political subjectivity and displaying their inauthenticity. Those refugees who did not participate demonstrated their “authentic” refugee identity by behaving like “proper” refugees.

The question of refugee “authenticity” is further discussed in empirics. RECOSOL operators describe their impressions that many refugees, not only in the RECOSOL SPRAR, but all of Italy, were not genuine refugees. This belief is explained by virtue of Italy’s generous reception conditions and not the actual need of the refugees. During the process of providing protection, operators make judgements about the behaviour of refugees and evaluate their “worthiness” of the refugee label. These local narratives of authenticity also reveal broader global narratives on refugee “worthiness”, and the institutional power the asylum regime has in creating bureaucratic identities. Street-level bureaucrats perceived commonplace and concerted resistance as a breach of how proper “refugees” should behave, and also how proper “guests” should behave.

6.3 Revisiting Theoretical Framework

This study supports Krook and True's argument that norms are "processes" rather than "things", and as such, are subject to ongoing attempts to reconstitute their meanings (Krook and True, 2008, p.124). Betts and Orchard (2014) also support these claims by stating that implementation is the "political process of contestation in which a range of structure and actors shape and channel what norms do in practice" (p.281). Contestation and resistance does not only occur in "new periods" after a "crisis event" (Milner and Keohane 1996), but rather, it occurs routinely in the mundane everyday interactions, decisions, and practices of street-level bureaucrats and refugees. As a result of the large amount of discretion and flexibility by the SPRAR Central Service, and the intimate nature of protection implementation, street-level bureaucrats have the power to re-interpret the meaning of protection, and thus, place limitations on protection. The routinized nature of everyday practices eventually become normal praxis creating local norms on the provision of protection, and they can continue to change through contestation, and resistance. Similar to Finnemore and Sikkink's (1998) claim that "norms diffuse" once they gain the support of a "critical mass" of states, and diffuse across the international community, street-level practices also become local norms once they gain the mass support of individuals implementing protection at the street level. The RECOSOL SPRAR in Gioiosa made certain services, basic needs, and "productive" opportunities conditional on compliance and used them as leverage to control the behaviour of refugees. As illustrated in Chapter 4, in the patterned and settled use of these practices, street-level bureaucrats in Gioiosa-Ionica acted as gate-keepers turning protection into something that was earned through acquiescent behaviour, rather than a

right that was due to refugees. This belief became a local norm in the provision of protection.

The main method used by street-level bureaucrats to contest protection was by using pocket money as leverage. In increasing the amount of pocket money provided to refugees to 200 EUR, pocket money became a mechanism used to discipline behaviour. Money used to purchase food, clothing, and basic necessities became open to discretion and evaluation. The discretionary allocation of the *buonoscita* at the end of the project, and the granting of internships to those refugees who scored the highest in linguistic and behavioural assessment, represent other ways in which opportunities were conditional. Furthermore, street-level bureaucrats contested legal protection by sending behavioural letters to the Territorial Commission as an attempt to influence the outcome of asylum requests because of more serious behaviour such as physical violence, the use of violence language and leaving the project for more than 7 days. The reversal of this contestation further supports the conception of norms are “processes” as everyday practices that are normal praxis can change.²⁸ Street-level bureaucrats have the power to function as “norm entrepreneurs” by enacting new practices, and they can also choose to reverse practices.

Not only do domestic cultural understandings, political environments and political institutions have an effect on the way a norm is implemented (Betts and Orchard, 2014, p.273), but on a more micro scale, regions within a state, and even towns and cities, may differ in their local contexts. The slow and inefficient bureaucratic functioning in Southern Italy created a state where the breaking of its own legislation on asylum decision timelines was accepted by street-level bureaucrats as an institutional norm. This

²⁸ RECOSOL operators did not fully explain why this practice was reversed. As written in the empirics the justification given was this it was “not the work” of the Territorial Commission.

inefficiency frustrated refugees as they felt RECSOL was not taking their jobs and the refugees uncertain legal status seriously. RECSOL operators expressed that they felt torn between the inefficient bureaucracy and refugees as there was nothing that they could do because of larger institutional structural constraints. Local social power hierarchies also infiltrated the RECSOL SPRAR attempting to influence who worked within the opportunity-structure.

Also essential to the implementation process are non-state actors. States and mandated individuals or organizations do not exclusively implement protection, but rather, entire communities and the individuals within them do. Although this thesis focussed on the practices of *formally mandated* street-level bureaucrats, the empirics have shed light on how other actors condition the space within which protection is implemented. To illustrate, it is the business owners who provide internships; the shops that accept ticket money; the landlords who provide accommodation; and the local social and political power configurations who allow this activity on their territory from the onset. As was shown in the failed attempt to create a SPRAR project in Locri, business owners were reluctant to participate in the ticket money scheme, and landlords were overcharging RECSOL for housing once they realized it was for refugees. Local cultural and political informal norms effected how the SPRAR functioned as local power configurations ensured that certain individuals were placed as operators in the SPRAR in Locri, infiltrating the implementing organizations. When their position was threatened, they lashed out through intimidation techniques. The infiltration of *mafiosi* power was also eluded to in the Gioiosa SPRAR by one local. Local communities also contest norms. Locals decide whether to rent their houses to the SPRAR project to accommodate

refugees, and locals decide whether to participate in the ticket money scheme. Entire towns can decide not to participate in the SPRAR network from the onset (contesting protection completely), and individuals within towns can also force SPRAR projects to close activities on the territory (contesting *how* protection is implemented). As such, entire communities must be supportive of SPRAR projects and cooperate with formally mandated street-level bureaucrats on their territory.

Finally, norm implementation needs to engage with the recipients of the norm to inform both theory and practice. How do recipients of people-centred norms contest and effect the implementation process? Why are they excluded from theoretical discussions about actors and norm contestation? Theoretically, the omission of recipients in IR constructivist literature on norm implementation leaves a gaping hole in the literature and presupposes that refugees do not have a role in the implementation of their own protection. Refugees took issue with how their protection was being implemented and the lack of control over their own lives. Expressing their emotions during interviews with me, arguing with RECOSOL operators, refusing to participate in internships and workshops, or staging protests and sit-ins in the town square, are all examples of refugees speaking back to the effects of implementation.

Putting recipients and their grievances at the front and centre of protection implementation can open up a discussion about how implementing organizations should consult with refugees, seek their consent and understanding, and provide formal mechanisms through which feedback and grievances can be made. Accountability must rest with refugees as they are the subjects of protection and the purpose of implementing protection is to have an effect on their lives. Organizations should be accountable to

refugees, and refugees should participate in their own protection. Scholars have warned that “too much” political participation is often discouraged by NGOs (Olivius, 2012), or that participation is an effect of neoliberal government wherein refugees are responsibalized and encouraged to adapt and survive in case care and aid is retracted (Ilcan and Rygiel. 2015). It is important to keep these lessons at the forefront. Refugees are asking and demanding to be included in the decision-making of their protection at the local level and implementing organizations must create new social and political abilities for them to do so.

The strongest contribution this study makes is the important role that street-level bureaucrats have in interpreting, shaping and contesting the way in which people-centred norms are implemented. Betts and Orchard (2014) describe that the personality, values, talents and leadership of individuals matters a great deal in effecting implementation, although implementers also face structural conditions which impede their agency (p.283). The SPRAR Central Service gives mandated implementing organizations guidelines on the services that must be provided to refugees and the flexibility and discretion to decide *how*. This means that every SPRAR is different to some extent based on the decisions and practices of individuals; not only those who are mandated but members of the community as well(who structure the environment). As one RECOSOL operator expressed: *“The operators are very important. The success of the SPRAR depends on the people. They are the ones who make the project. We are given tools by the SPRAR Central Service but how do you use the tools you are given?”*

The norm of refugee protection is not experienced in its institutionalized form, or in its legal texts and treaties, but rather in the sum of everyday practices and encounters

of street-level bureaucrats and local authorities. Refugees offer a feedback loop to street-level bureaucrats and these commonplace and coordinated manifestations speak to street-level bureaucrats. Since leaving fieldwork and with the heightening of the Syrian refugee crisis, RECOSOL SPRAR operators have organized various demonstrations and marches in solidarity with refugees calling for communities and governments to act. These manifestations can be a way of mitigating domination and reworking local norms on refugee implementation. Everyday creative action can microscopically disrupt routine practices and reinvent new local norms on how protection is implemented. These changes in relationships and practices often happen incrementally before we are able to produce knowledge about them or even consciously observe that a deviation to normative behaviour and thinking has taken place.

Conclusion

Constructivist IR literature on norm implementation gives little prominence to the place of power in the implementation process and engages with notions of power in very limited ways. Probing into the case study of the RECOSOL SPRAR in Gioiosa-Ionica through “everyday politics”, the implementation of refugee protection emerges as a site of contestation and resistance. Structural and productive power effects the way in which protection is received and refugees resist the various practices and narratives that together form *how* their protection is implemented. This thesis has demonstrated how frontline workers contest protection as a norm, and contest protection as a practice. In trying to influence the asylum procedure, and through narratives discussing the “worthiness” and “authenticity” of refugees RECOSOL operators contested legal protection as a right, by making it conditional on acquiescent behaviour that portrayed the deservingness and “vulnerability” of “proper” refugees. RECOSOL workers contested the practice of refugee protection by creating rules and disciplinary mechanisms around how basic needs which refugees are entitled to are provided for. Additional opportunities such as internships were rewarded to a select few who displayed “deservingness” through their desire to participate in the correct way by keeping lodgings clean, attending and participating in Italian language classes, and respecting the SPRAR project rules. Nevertheless, refugee recognized the intentions of these practices, perceived them as oppressive, and resisted their practice in commonplace and concerted ways.

The interests and motivations of *non-mandated* street-level bureaucrats shape the arena in which refugee protection is implemented and condition the context in which *formally* mandated street-level bureaucrats operate. The expression of *mafiosi* power demonstrated in the “messages” left to RECOSOL operators in Locri, and the comments of locals in Riace wanting to access the opportunity structure, illustrate how the motivations of individuals based on economic and political interests shape how implementing organizations are able to do their work. Furthermore, other non-mandated actors such as landlords and business owners also shaped the work of RECOSOL operators by making the process more easy or difficult. Future research on the “everyday politics” of norm implementation should engage with these other actors more rigorously, not just as shaping the work of mandated organizations, but in the context of implementing protection as well. These actors engage with refugee directly and their relationships with refugees are also structured by power. Therefore, future research needs to be done in merging mandated and non-mandated actors and their everyday practices and intentions.

The “everyday politics” of refugee protection has served as a scale of inquiry that is fertile ground for the expressions of everyday practices and actions of domination and resistance. Further research could illuminate the concept of “everyday resistance” more fully by connecting resistance to the identities, intentions, motivations, and resources of actors within relations of domination. Did the resistance of refugees have any effects? Do the effects matter? The region of Calabria is currently in the process of receiving its own Territorial Commission for the hearing of asylum claims. This will alleviate the wait times and frustrations that refugees and frontline workers feel with the bureaucracy.

These concerted manifestations of refugees through sit-ins and marches, and the media attention that it received, most certainly brought the issue to the forefront and may have impacted the decision to create a Territorial Commission just for Calabria.

Although what happens in “everyday” practices matters greatly in the daily lives of refugees, street-level bureaucrats do not hold political “high cards”. Larger structural constraints exist that international norms are filtered through such as the European Union (EU) asylum regime. For example, the Dublin Regulation forces refugees to claim asylum and begin incorporation in the first country of entry. Refugees have diaspora and familial connections in other countries and if we are to take their participations seriously, refugees should not be forced to claim asylum and begin inclusion in a country that they do not intend to reside in. Many refugees had no intention or desire to stay in Italy, and the SPRAR project was just a temporary stop along the journey. RECOSOL operators were also fused in this structural constraint and they could not do anything to change it. Local institutional norms such as slow and inefficient bureaucracies are challenges for frontline workers and implementing organizations are often the targets of subjects of frustrations and anxieties that refugees feel.

Future areas of study should also account for how power works through gender and race relations. More acute forms of resistance, raised voices, and expressions of frustration, and anger, were associated with a “black masculine performance” by RECOSOL operators, and this need to control and discipline refugees could be attributed to keeping manifestations attributed to “black masculine performance” in-check. Hall (2012) describes how the “work” of detention centre officers consisted of a masculine performance of keeping order and control and the base animal-like “emotionality” of

detainees was associated with the intersection of their race and gender which signified an inability to control their emotions (p.56 and 94). Because all refugees were male, and most were from Sub-Saharan Africa this begs the question whether resistance from female refugees, or resistance from non-black refugees would have been deemed as legitimate and worthy of engagement. Was the resistance of black-male refugees delegitimized because it was expected as a performance of their particular racialized masculinity? Because power works through social relations, racism, prejudice and the ingrained stereotypes of individuals will most certainly factor into the decisions and practices of frontline workers (see Autesserre, 2014).

In the future “doing” of refugee protection, as communities, individuals, or protection implementers, we must be self-critical of the way in which our actions may silence, control, perpetuate stereotypical refugee identities; and how our use of labels such as “asylum-seeker” are used in narratives to create hostility and exclusion. We must also be cognizant of the way in which our activities are *unintentionally* contesting norms, and muddying legal entitlement that refugees have a right to receive. *Listening* to the voices of refugees is not the same as actually *hearing*. Refugees offer a feedback loop in protection implementation and implementing organizations, communities, and high-level actors involved in the creation and institutionalization of norms should engage with the recipients of norms to inform best practices and form more equitable and reciprocal relationships. Many of these communities in the South of Calabria rely on SPRAR projects as a major source of income for individuals who otherwise would have been employed, and business who otherwise would not have as many customers. There must

be a greater engagement with how refugees bring resources and opportunities to economically suffering communities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Question Guide

Interview Questions for RECOSOL SPRAR staff

1. Can you describe some of the reasons why other townships/municipalities are wanting to replicate this project that was initiated in Riace? Was it a grassroots initiative?
2. Do you receive any conditions from the region or national government on these SPRAR projects?
3. How involved is the region of Calabria and the National Government in the project? Is it mainly a local initiative?
4. Are there benefits for the local municipalities?
5. What are the local populations' perceptions of these hosting projects? Have there been any public demonstrations against them? Have there been public demonstrations of racism such as the one in Rosarno?
6. Are there tensions between staff working for the projects, the migrants, and the local police?
7. How is SPRAR (System for the Protection for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) funded? Where do you receive your funding from? Are there ever issues with funding?
8. Does the Italian national government support the SPRAR system? Are there politicians (local and national) who do not support it?
9. How do you secure housing, language classes and legal aid for the migrants?
10. Do you help migrants prepare for their asylum interviews with the Commission?

Interview Questions for Migrants

First I would like to ask questions about your experience as an asylum-seeker in Riace, Italy?

1. How long have you been living in Riace as part of the hosting program? How long ago did you apply for asylum?
2. Can you describe your life in Riace?
3. Can you describe the hosting program in Riace? What social services do you have access to? Do you have access to employment? Are there any associations that migrants have created amongst themselves?
4. Are there any rules or restrictions that you must follow to be a part of the hosting program?
5. Have you had any experiences with the police? If so, can you describe what they were like?
6. Can you describe your experiences with the local population in Riace?
7. Do you have any plans for when you finish the hosting program? Do you wish to stay in Riace or Italy, or travel to another European Member State?
8. What is your opinion on the treatment of migrants in Riace and/or in Italy in general?
9. Do you feel like the hosting project in Riace is a good way of integrating migrants into Italy?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about or add?

11. Next, I would like to ask questions about your reasons for migrating from your home country and your journey to Italy.

1. Can you describe your journey to Italy?
2. Can you describe why you left your home country?
3. Can you describe your life in your home country?
4. Are there any specific reasons you chose to come to Italy?