

Project title: *Freedom to move; freedom to Stay: Exploring Restanza in rural peripheralized regions and building a community*

Department: Human Geography and Planning

Research group: International Development Studies

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Project description

In our project, we explore “the other side of the coin” of migration (Teti, 2020) by examining the lived experiences of people in economically and demographically declining Italian rural regions who do not wish to migrate, yet for whom migration is often considered the norm or even inevitable. In recent years, we have observed a growing number of NGOs and local initiatives seeking to develop social, cultural, and economic projects that make staying possible. In the Italian context, this phenomenon has been conceptualized by anthropologist Vito Teti (2020) as *restanza*: staying as an act of resistance. The opportunities of such local initiatives are closely intertwined with broader societal developments, which can sometimes enhance, but also complicate, the conditions for local forms of resistance to flourish. This project aims to explore how “active staying” emerges and evolves in relation to broader societal developments and policies while challenging dominant narratives of ‘left-behind’ regions.

Within this project context, we offer the following research activities as part of the BMA:

- **Desk research:** Mapping im/mobilities, translocal connections and local development in rural peripheralised regions in Italy, and specifically the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria (former province of Reggio Calabria) and the municipality Riace located in that area . The task consists of collection and analysis of qualitative (e.g. IOM, UN, OECD, reports from NGOs, news reports and other outputs) and quantitative data (statistics/variables on in- and out-migration, population characteristics, GDP etc.).
- **Literature review:** exploring the scientific literature on how “active staying” in peripheralised and rural areas emerges and evolves, and how this relates to broader societal developments (e.g. refugee flows, labour mobilities, developments in remote work) and policies (e.g. on local revitalisation, EU rural pact) while challenging dominant narratives of ‘left-behind’ regions.
- **Network building:** Identifying stakeholders in the municipality of Riace and other small municipalities in the broader Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, such as local NGOs, making an overview of potential partners as part of community building.
- **Online visual data research and analysis:** Based on the previously mentioned desk research, create a collage of visuals that represents examples of *Restanza*; followed by an analysis/categorisation of the visuals.

Job requirements

- Interest in the overarching topic of migration and development in rural, peripheralised regions across Europe;
- Skills in qualitative and quantitative research – literature review, content analysis, developing datasets and descriptive analysis/context description;
- Knowledge of the Italian language is an advantage but not a must;
- Positive and open-minded attitude.