

Leonardo SCHIOCCHET (ISA & ROR-n)

Outcasts Among Undesirables: 117 Palestinian Refugees in Brazil In-Between Humanitarianism and Nationalism

Tuesday, 29th May 2018, 3 pm

Institute for Social Anthropology (ISA)
Hollandstraße 11, 2nd floor, 1020 Vienna

This talk discusses the resettlement plan of a group of 117 Palestinian refugees coming from Iraq to Brazil, highlighting the experiences of Palestinian refugees and established diaspora. This plan involved the UNHCR, the Brazilian government, and the so-called civil society, including international NGOs. In the Rwayshed refugee camp, these Palestinian refugees had already developed a reputation for being “undesirable” and unfit for refuge elsewhere, even in comparison to other local refugees. Through this double rejection, this talk discusses the principles of integration and tutelage, putting into perspective the supposed apolitical character of humanitarianism and showing how mythical-ideological notions of Brazilianness also helped to reinforce and reproduce stereotypes associated with Palestinians.

Leonard Schiocchet holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Boston University. Until recently he has been a Lise Meitner senior postdoctoral researcher. Currently he is a researcher in the Innovation Funds Programme of the Austrian Academy of Sciences at ISA in Vienna. His main areas of research are: Palestine Anthropology; Refugee Studies; Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies; Nationalism, Ethnicity & Religion; Rituals & Belonging Processes; Suspicion and Trust

ROR-N brings together researchers affiliated with the Austrian Academy of Sciences – namely, Institute for Social Anthropology, Institute for Urban and Regional Studies, Institute for Iranian Studies, Institute for Cultural Studies and Theatre History, Institute for Audiovisual Research and Documentation – and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Vienna.