

**ESREA NETWORK ON MIGRATION, TRANSNATIONALISM AND RACISMS**

**'BUILDING SOLIDARITIES FOR ANTI-RACIST ADULT EDUCATION'**

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**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

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## Abstract 1

### **Co-producing a toolkit for volunteers involved in the initial assessment of migrants' prior non-formal and informal learning and skills**

**Rita Bencivenga**

Keywords: adult education and training, non-formal and informal education, RPL, migration. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a very diverse arena of practice, operating across the public, private and non-profit sectors. In formal RPL processes addressing formal learning, non-formal and informal learning and skills are seldom addressed. When the persons involved are migrants, their specific knowledge and experience is recognised to an even lesser extent by the professionals and volunteers working in the numerous organisations that evaluate migrants' competences and learning. The lack of attention is a matter of concern for policy-makers and organisational managers, as well as the practitioners and volunteers themselves, who recognise the need to give value to non-formal and informal skills and knowledge to help the migrants' integration paths. One way of addressing this situation is through training courses which help practitioners and volunteers acquire competences in the first two of the four steps in the validation process for prior learning: identification of prior learning and documentation of learning.

This paper reports on an empirical experience, the work of the Synergies Project co-financed by the Erasmus + EU program. The project aims to link the competences and validation-related needs of disadvantaged learners with the European and National Qualifications Frameworks. A number of activities were introduced, including a Toolkit designed to train adult education professionals and volunteers on how to validate disadvantaged learners' competences. This paper focuses on Italy, one of the four Countries involved in the project. The initial phase of the project, that facilitated later on the co-production of the Toolkit, followed a sociology of translation perspective. In the following phase of the project, the methodology involved co-production of the toolkit alongside civil servants, professionals and volunteers, in the form of meeting-based educational training activities followed by workshops. In this paper we examine some of the issues which arose when co-producing the Italian Toolkit. This includes changes made to the toolkit following interactions with the other EU partners in Austria, Germany and Spain, and an analysis of their Toolkits. We reflect also on how non-formal and informal education practices may shape NGOs and public organisations' activities and agendas, and their impact on migrants' future.

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## Abstract 2

### **A Critical Examination of Anti-Racist Initiatives Taking Place with Young Adults and Adult Association Football Fans in Contemporary Scotland**

**Luke Campbell & Nicola Hay**

March 1881: Andrew Watson, a black British Guiana-born, privately educated, amateur association football player captained a Scottish national men’s side in a 5-1 victory over England. The national press were more concerned with the colour of his boots than that of his skin. April 2017: Celtic Football Club and England youth international Scott Sinclair was subjected to monkey gestures from an opposition fan after scoring against Rangers FC. Days later, Sinclair was again targeted - this time by a parent posting a photograph on Twitter of her daughter at Edinburgh Zoo with a mural of monkeys. In the 136 years between Andrew Watson taking to the field and fan gestures towards Scott Sinclair, Indian-born midfielder Paul Wilson endured racial slurs (mid-1970s); bananas were thrown at winger Mark Walters (January 1988); and Motherwell FC Chairman John Boyle issued a public apology to St Johnstone FC and Trinidad international striker Jason Scotland (February 2007) for the chants he was subjected to during a Scottish Cup tie. Further incidents of a racist or sectarian nature have occurred both before and since.

Within contemporary Scotland, a diverse body of community activists, organisations, and former players have sought to utilise association football as a medium and indeed educational tool for engaging communities through anti-

racism initiatives on a local and national scale. Teams, campaigns, and alliances have been established within Scottish men's and women's amateur, junior, and professional football, and anti-racist education has been an established part of the national curriculum in Scottish classrooms, youth prisons, and football stadiums. Organisations such as Show Racism the Red Card Scotland and Kick It Out! have become established educational authorities in UK football with work centring around inclusivity, anti-racism, and a human rights approach to education, high visibility activities, and pitchside sponsorship facilitating wider engagement.

In addition to historicising and contextualising the need for and founding of the sport-centric anti-racist initiatives currently operating within Scottish association football, this co-authored article will draw on a diverse body of literature including Cleland and Cashmore (2014), Van der Valk (2003), and Van Tuyckom & Scheerder (2008) as it assesses the effectiveness and practice of organisations (including Show Racism the Red Card Scotland, United Glasgow Football Club, and the Homeless World Cup) in utilising this high profile sport in a collective effort to foster an inclusive and accepting culture within 'the beautiful game'.

#### Themes addressed

- Strategic alliance building and the development of anti-racist initiatives
- The challenges and learning processes in grass-root social movements and migrant organisations
- How models of integration, resettlement and education policies shape activities and agendas of organisations, and the future which can be imagined for refugees and migrants
- The strategies and pathways forged by transnational migrants as they confront everyday exclusions and racism in increasingly hostile environments
- The contribution of adult education research and practice to building solidarities, anti-racism and learning for democracy
- The gendered, classed and racialized nature of migration

### **Abstract 3**

## **Marketizing Newcomers: Adult Education, Resettlement Work, and 'The Agency of the Future'**

**Sara Carpenter**

Newcomer resettlement has constituted a significant site of adult education in North America since the late 19th century. Beginning with early experiments in 'Americanization,' key areas of adult education, including language, literacy, workplace and vocational training, and 'cultural integration' have developed as part of the nation-building project associated with resettlement. Extensive research in adult education has problematized the role of adult educators in this process, highlighting key examples of the ways in which adult education has played a role in not only nation building, but settler colonialism. In line with this history, interdisciplinary research from adult education, social work, sociology, and women's studies has established the resettlement sector as an ongoing site for the reproduction of discrimination and marginalization for newcomers. At the same time, adult educators continue to highlight the ways in which education is a key component of resettlement and often illuminates the ways in which resettlement services can be developed in line with more humanist and critical orientations.

Resettlement work, like many other sub-sectors of the not-for-profit sector, is currently under pressure to respond to a changing environment characterized by decreased public funding, increased demand, and diversification of communities in need. In 2012, the Canadian Immigration Settlement Sector Alliance commissioned research from the research group Pathways to Prosperity designed to understand existing best practices, current political and fiscal climates, and serious challenges to the viability and delivery of resettlement services. The resulting studies influenced the proposed 'Agency of the Future' model for resettlement services, which is specifically designed to respond to shifts in the landscape of migration to Canada including changes in Canada's labour markets, resettlement in areas of the country without extensive experience with inward migration, shifting composition of the population of migrants to Canada, and new stakeholders and competitors in the provision of resettlement services.

This paper examines the 'Agency of the Future' model as a case study of the re-imagined role of resettlement service in a neoliberal state. Drawing from literature review and textual analysis of the Agency of the Future policy recommendations, this paper considers the implications of new discourses around diversity and competition in the resettlement sector and their implications for the provision of adult education programs. This research argues that as resettlement services become increasingly marketized, adult education becomes not only a service these organizations must provide, but a practice they must take up in order to

remain 'innovative' and 'competitive' on the field of service provision thus shifting relationship between educators and adult learners. We explore the complicated elaboration of state, market, and civil society relations in the resettlement project and consider the implications of these relations for various groups of migrants, including those without legal status and refugees. Through this analysis, this paper makes contributions to discussions of the role of adult education in migration regimes and state practices, the role of resettlement agencies in knowledge production around migration, and the participation of adult educators in re-imagining their role in resettlement work.

#### **Abstract 4**

#### **Anti-Racism, refugees and critical pedagogy: a case study of social movement learning and campaigning in England and Ireland.**

**John Grayson**

In the UK and Ireland since 2000 political and power discourses have evidenced overtly discriminatory and racist attitudes towards refugees, and have underpinned a range of public policies and practices in the asylum system. This paper based on activist research (Choudry 2012) embedded in social movement organisations (Cox and Nilson 2014, and King 2016) alongside asylum housing tenants in England and residents, and former residents of direct provision centres in Ireland, is framed by the intensification of such 'toxic' contexts since 2014 as a result of political and media discourses around the 'refugee crisis'.

Analysing the Irish research, the paper will build on the insights of Ronit Lentin and her conceptualisation of "racism is a political system aiming to regulate bodies". She argues that in Ireland governmental "biopolitics" and technologies of regulating immigration and asylum dictate the discursive and practical construction of Irishness and of Ireland's racialised populations. (Lentin 2006 p.3). In England a similar context frames the research. Hampshire (2005) argues for a longer trajectory for the UK racist state, from the 1940's, with immigration policies used as tools in demographic governance, with policy debates surrounding immigration and demography thoroughly racialised (Hampshire p.4). Gurinder Bhambra (2016) argues the defining of British citizenship has been predicated on an explicit racial hierarchy. She points to "the current British polity as deeply structured by race such that the state itself – and all associated concepts, such as citizenship – are themselves racialized (Bhambra n.p.).

Since 2012 British governments have unapologetically proclaimed racist immigration policies with an official 'hostile environment' for 'illegal' migrants through a raft of laws and

restrictions (see Jones, Gunaratnam et al 2017) and a rigorous deterrent asylum policy (Squire 2009; Webber 2012; Tyler 2013), demonising and abjecting refugees. The UK wide hostile environment became even more toxic around the June 2016, referendum on EU membership, with linkages to ‘terror’ incidents and Islamophobia in what Jon Burnett has called the ‘Brexit state’ (Burnett 2016).

The paper will draw on embedded activist and solidarity research (Featherstone 2012) in, and alongside, social movement organisations : SYMAAG (South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group), Stand Up to Racism, Black Lives Matter UK and MASI (Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland), interrogating the relevance of Lentin’s concept of “self-organising antiracism” where “the lived experience of the protagonists informs the struggle and names the state as the main culprit rather than stress individual prejudice, a way of depoliticising racism and antiracism” (Lentin 2009 n.p.).

The paper will discuss Giroux’s notion of critical pedagogy (Giroux 2011) whilst considering the pedagogic practice and social movement learning in the various organisations. It will also draw on recent UK based work deploying Critical Race Theory (CRT) examining structural racism (Eddo-Lodge 2017) and new distinctions between political Blackness and Blackness as a collective struggle (Andrews p.37) resisting racism.

#### Themes addressed:

The role of adult education (research and practice) in migration regimes

- Strategic alliance building and the development of anti-racist initiatives
- The challenges and learning processes in grass-root social movements and migrant organisations
- The strategies and pathways forged by transnational migrants as they confront everyday exclusions and racism in increasingly hostile environments
- The contribution of adult education research and practice to building solidarities, anti-racism and learning for democracy
- The gendered, classed and racialized nature of migration
- Critical reflections on knowledge production and research into migration

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## **Abstract 5**

### **Vagabond educational sanctuaries for human dignity in invisibilised zones of the public sphere : The concrete utopia of the itinerant 'Welcome Hut' in France.**

**Christian Hanser**

This study examines possibilities to practice anti-racist pedagogies through micro-mobilities and migrating practices in a formal educational system in Europe that is often perceived as rigid and hostile. Drawing on a concrete 'in-between' educational site, this case study research develops alternative perspectives to the often theorised dualism between the displaced, errant 'other' in adult learning and what is referred to as the static and normalising adult educational hierarchy. Linking pedagogies of radical practicality with subaltern human geography, this paper proposes a transfer of historical claims in the UK for 'really useful knowledge' towards the structural emergence of 'really useful spaces' for the social recognition of other learning. This research therefore analyses the 'concrete utopia' of

a roadworthy tiny house shepherd's hut, which had initially been sketched out as a mobile outreach version in the spirit of Denmark's folk high schools during a Scottish postgraduate degree in adult education. The 'Welcome Hut' found its way from theory into practice as an experimental activist space based on the applicant's professional credentials as community educator and practitioner of collective life storytelling and narrative arts.

Assessing eight years of cross-sector projects in social work, culture, art, education as well as health, the real-world potential for creating itinerant spheres for singularity, the politics of difference and anti-racist pedagogies will be assessed. The analysis will be illustrated through audio-visual archives of shepherd's hut interventions, mainly filmed in France's marginalised housing blocks (banlieues) from previous action research investigations. It will be questioned how an adult educational micro-system as vagabond antidote to rigid contemporary skills agendas can help consolidate anti-racist connectivities by bringing its own organisational hierarchies on the road. Theorised as a trans-national, cross-sector and inter-solidarity nomadic shelter for civil society, the project's gain in legitimacy and recognition from an initially belittled oddity to a funded and referenced NGO points at a potential to disrupt centre-periphery power relations and challenge inequalities, particularly about the access to educational spaces from distant lifeworlds. The shepherd's hut presence in the immediate proximity of marginalised zones raises the question if sedentarised institutions could address differently the increasingly invisible, migrating population groups that roam the public sphere but lack trust to enter the walls of the 'institutional system'. This case study research therefore reflects on a contradiction that the presenter has frequently been confronted with in his double role as grassroots community educator as well as ambassador of the concept in relation to funding bodies: If a more just adult education wants to reinvent itself starting from the margins, why is it predominantly organised around a sedentarising centre? It is argued that hospitality hubs in a fluid world in motion can be conceived beyond institutional ideals of stillness.

### **Abstract 6**

#### **Theoretical frameworks to inform equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in health education**

**Carla Hilario**

Pedagogical approaches for teaching equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) can be enhanced through transdisciplinary investigations of promising practices and strategies for teaching EDI and the theoretical frameworks that inform these approaches. Promising practices have emphasized self-reflection, dialogue, and empathy toward others, and have been

categorized based on four key objectives: promoting self-awareness, enhancing knowledge, developing skills, and inspiring action (Hartwell et al., 2017). The theoretical frameworks underpinning these practices and their application to teaching EDI in health education, however, require further study. The purpose of this presentation is to provide a narrative synthesis of theoretical frameworks that have informed EDI practices across various disciplines and to identify strategies within health education. Building solidarities for anti-racist education requires strategic alliances across disciplines and different contexts of teaching. This research will contribute to emergent and effective practices for teaching equity, diversity, and inclusion in the classroom and beyond.

Conference sub-themes: Strategic alliance building and the development of anti-racist initiatives

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### **Abstract 7**

#### **Using strategic alliances in developing more inclusive Liberal Adult Education**

**Katinka Käyhkö and Jyri Manninen**

The role of Liberal Adult Education in the integration of migrant populations is drawing attention in Finland. The national legislation was modified to include the different adult education providers in realisation of the obligatory integration studies for the migrants with residence permit. Multiple “third sector” actors are committedly preventing hate-speech. Even the latest Migration Policy Programme to Strengthen Labour Migration highlights associations as important forums of good intergroup relations and communication that offer low threshold activities and complementing services.

Though the importance of adult education providers, associations and civil society in supporting the integration processes is already recognised, the majority of Finnish adult education providers still struggle to open their doors to non-native populations. One particularly difficult aspect seems to be finding ways to create learning opportunities where members of both the native and migrant populations could learn together and from each other. Trying to include those still seeking asylum or the so-called paperless

to the whole is considered even harder, regardless their study rights or the institutional autonomy in admissions.

This ongoing grass-roots level ethnographic case study focuses on the efforts of one university-based but liberal adult education oriented initiative launched in 2015 as a response to the so called “refugee crisis” in Finland. The project in question has sought from its starting days strategic alliances with regional and national Adult Education providers and associations and has focused especially in the educational possibilities of the reception centre residents. Received funding in 2017 has facilitated bigger pilot projects.

In this paper we present preliminary results regarding a music course pilot; a joint operation of the university, one local music school and the reception centres of the region. Adults seeking asylum, already integrated migrants and native Finns are included and mixed in the same course in order to facilitate interaction, sharing of skills, and development of social networks. We look at the course planning process (i.e. the networks making the course possible and the joint planning process) and the active realisation phase of the course, which is organized during spring 2018. The data of this study is gathered by using network analysis, participant observation, course-specific social maps and interviews.

The data is analysed by using positioning theory (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999) to find out whose storylines dominate during the different phases of the pilot and how the different individuals and stakeholders position themselves – and are positioned by others. Moreno’s (1978) social atom is also being applied. Due to the course schedule we can present only partial and tentative results. Yet, it is clear that without the strategic alliances and cooperation networks, even the recruitment of the intercultural planning team would have been impossible. The results will bear implications for the realisation of future courses and shed light to the grass-root-level processes facilitating or hindering the collaboration within a very diverse group of adult learners.

**Key words:** Inclusive Liberal Adult Education, Strategic Alliances, Positioning theory

Sub-theme: “Strategic alliance building and the development of anti-racist initiatives”

## **Abstract 8**

### **The need for provision of language support for the migrant and refugee community in the East Midlands region, U.K.**

**Cora Lindsay and Renata Seredyńska-Abou Eid**

The European Handbook for Integration states that “basic knowledge of the host society’s language ... is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this ... is essential to successful integration”. Although politicians and campaigners frequently cite the benefits of language provision for incomers to the UK, there is currently no uniform approach to English as a second language (ESOL) support for incoming individuals to the East Midlands area, whether migrants or refugees.

This paper seeks to discuss the current situation with regard to language provision for these communities and then to describe an initiative established by the University of Nottingham to address a particular gap in this provision. The first part of this paper looks at the language needs of migrants, with particular focus on the Polish community in the East Midlands. Current policies emphasise the need for ESOL support for refugees over the migrant communities. This paper argues that language support should be an essential part of the integration processes for migrants to the UK.

The second part of the paper describes a programme set up at the University of Nottingham to address the gap in ESOL provision to refugee and asylum-seeking individuals dispersed to the Nottingham area. This part of the paper will describe the way in which the University, as part of its Community Engagement policy, set up a programme in which trainee ESOL teachers were able to engage with both adults and teenagers from the refugee and asylum-seeking community who are currently excluded from ESOL provision for reasons either of finance or status.

The paper concludes with the argument that this type of ESOL provision for both migrants and refugees should be the remit of educational and other institutions as opposed to a reliance on the support of charitable organisations as is currently the case.

## Abstract 9

### Examining the racialised nature of soft skill training in the context of South Asian immigrant women's labour market integration in Canada

Srabani Maitra

In the current Canadian neo-liberal labour market work-related learning and training are considered key strategies for developing workers' economic productivity and expediting their integration to the labour market. An important aspect of such training and learning now consists of soft-skills (also sometimes referred to as life skills or interpersonal skills). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines soft skills "as a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner" (World Health Organization [WHO], 2003, p. 3). Thus, reports and policy documents published by the OECD or ILO have been consistently emphasizing the need to develop national skill policies as well as invest in skill training.

Despite the policy emphasis on soft-skill training for labour market integration, a growing body of work has taken a critical approach toward the nature of such training and its impacts on workers, especially racialized immigrants trying to enter the Canadian labour market (Haque, 2014). They point out that soft-skill training programs in Canada are often designed from a "deficit orientation" that perceives the education, values, and cultures of immigrants of colour as different and therefore deficient and "incompatible and inferior" (Donaldson, 2007, p. 55) to the Canadian standard. Consequently, the curricula of such training are often suffused with cultural and racial values geared toward assimilating immigrants of colour to the dominant and normative national culture of the country.

Drawing on the above critiques, this paper critically explores soft-skill training by examining the training/learning experiences of a group of highly educated South Asian women trying to enter the Canadian labour market after immigration. In particular, based on qualitative interviews, I highlight these women's engagement with soft-skill training and their negotiation processes, thereby analyzing their agency in the context of work-related learning.

The concept of "negotiation," as employed in this paper, denotes a form of agency different from the commonly perceived notions of agency as formal, large-scale, macro organization or resistance. This particular form of agency as negotiation, constitutive of the simultaneous processes of conformity and contestation, demonstrates that resistance can also take such forms as critique or alliance put forward by individuals as they try to gain "cultural knowledge and Canadian communication" (McCoy & Masuch, 2007, p. 194). These alternative forms of agency suggest that there are bound to exist other "expressions [or]

conduct[s]” (Ong, 2003, p. 10) that can challenge or disrupt the assimilationist ideologies and practices that shape such skill-training programs. The study provides important conceptual insights into how and why, through soft-skill training, women learned to regulate themselves to fit the needs of the Canadian labour market. However, the women were not passive in the face of such hegemonic regulatory training. Through their critical reflection and meaning making, they were able to rupture some of the racialized and gendered assumptions inculcated through training.

### **Abstract 10**

#### **The Pedagogy of Fascism and Anti-Fascism as Youth Migrates**

**Shahrzad Mojab**

Our current research project Youth in Transition: War, migration, and regenerative possibilities has afforded us the opportunity to hear from young adult refugees from the Middle East in the processes of resettling in Toronto. We have noticed that young women and men from warzones speak of democracy as a dream, one where individual rights can be achieved: “freedom to wear what you like;” “gender and sexual freedom;” or, as one participant states: “In the west we see freedom, first of all. Freedom of speech, ... the ability to be who I am. In terms of, religion, sexual orientations, beliefs in general” (MN, October 19 2016, p.2). These young adults praised “multiculturalism,” “the rule of people and not the government;” as the meaning of equality. We understand that their countries of origin, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen are not structured around the rules of formal liberal democracy; nonetheless, they have idealized a form of private and public gratification, which is essentially based on a bourgeois regime of rights. These refugee youth, like most youth, perceive democracy as universal equality, freedom, and justice. In this paper, we argue that what is missing from this dehistoricized and ideological consciousness is the understanding that formal equality has not been achieved easily, neither has it been ensured permanently. The regime of rights can be overturn under the guise of security (war-on-terror), purity of blood (nationalism/fascism), cultural threats (Islamophobia), and issues of morality and ethics (sexism and homophobia). While liberal democracy is more advanced than authoritarian or theocratic political systems, nonetheless, it allows for confusion and much illusion among citizens. This means that democracy and fascism coexist and cohere in certain policies, but they also have conflictual relations. Their coexistence is deeply rooted in the fact that they both support and reproduce the racialized and gendered capitalist

social and economic system and its industrial and financial monopoly form. Both liberal democracy and fascist systems rely, in the reproduction process, on the institution of the state and especially on its military arm. Radical pedagogy should untie these intricacies, that is, the right to equality is the right to inequality. As migrant youth strive to settle in the Western democracies, it is imperative upon us, radical educators, to politically and pedagogically open new learning possibilities for them to discover the contemporary condition of their displacement and dispossession in the history of colonialism and the expansion of patriarchal capitalist imperialism throughout the world.

This paper addresses several of the themes of the conference, but specifically “Strategic alliance building and the development of antiracist initiatives;” “The strategies and pathways forged by transnational migrants as they confront everyday exclusions and racism in increasingly hostile environments;” “The contribution of adult education research and practice to building solidarities, anti- racism and learning for democracy;” and “the gendered, classed and racialized nature of migration.” Underscoring the fragility of formal rights, our analysis disrupts the binary of authoritarian/democratic, and challenges the conflation of antiracism and multiculturalism.

### **Abstract 11**

#### **Postcolonial analysis of migration and education**

**Linda Morrice**

This theoretical paper draws on the postcolonial writing of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016) and feminist writers (Anthias 2014; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992 and Koteweg 2017) to exposes the partial and distorted framing of migration, migrants and integration, a framing which gives rise to the current highly restrictive and ideological role of education and migration studies. Santos’ framework of global abyssal lines and cartographies of exclusion reveals how the current policy imperatives and discourses in migration and education derive from colonial ontologies which classify, sort and govern relations across the globe. As a result of transnational migration and growing inequality both across the globe and within countries of the global north, the world is no longer so clearly divided on geographical binaries of north and south. This necessitates a rethink of our approach to integration away from the current dichotomous focus and ever more vigorous attempts to stabilise national identities. It also provokes a response from education away from dominant epistemological canons which disqualify and make invisible the knowledge and skills of some learners, towards acknowledgement of the incompleteness of all knowledges.

This suggests a more dynamic understanding of education which is open and flexible, and prepared to enter into dialogue between different knowledges and practices, rather than seeking only to assimilate and construct learners according to some pre-determined image. The paper concludes with a reimagined conceptualisation and suggests a draft agenda for education and migration studies.

The paper will address two conference sub-themes:

- Critical approaches to the role of adult education in migration regimes, and
- The gendered, classed and racialized nature of migration

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### **Abstract 12**

#### **Arab migration and parenting: the experience of Arab migrant women in Italy**

**Alessandra Mussi**

Despite the considerable presence of Arab migrants in Italy and in the West, these communities are between the most affected by prejudices. These prejudices are rooted in an orientalist imaginary that is difficult to eradicate (Fabietti, 2002, Said, 1978) and that today is at the base of an increasing islamophobic sentiment and episodes of racism in the Western societies. Arab women are often described as veiled, passive, subjugated to the power of men. They are particularly affected by the incidence of prejudices but also by assumptions of academic research, which entails the risk of condemning them to immobility rather than helping to "free" them (Abu -Lughod, 2002; Ahmed, 1992).

My work intends to explore in particular the dimension of parenting in women belonging to Arab migrant communities because the experience of maternity can contribute to the

wellbeing and the integration of the whole family. Migrant mothers, especially those from North Africa and the Middle East, have low access to care and assistance services (UN Women, 2015-2016), instead of efficient parenting programs that could allow them to grow as women and as mothers.

Research has shown that maternity in a country different from home is a vulnerability factor for both mother and child (Moro, 2002), but also a crucial experience within which a positive negotiation and renegotiation of educational models develops starting from the confrontation between the culture of the country of origin and that of the destination country (Favaro, Mantovani, Musatti, 2013). This metissage contributes to a restructuring of the mother's identity, which can bridge the two cultures not only for herself, but also for her children. So it is necessary to activate parenting support programs that are aware of these processes and that can support efficiently the development of the parental skills in migrant mothers.

The study lies in the tradition of educational studies on family education (Formenti, 2000; Milani, 2001; Pourtois & Desmet, 1989). In particular, it cites the latest studies on parenting support that, together with Intercultural Pedagogy (Nigris, 2015; Portera, 2013), focuses on migrant parenthood (Balsamo, Favaro, Giacalone, Pavesi, & Samaniego, 2002; Iavarone, Marone, & Sabatano, 2015; Silva, 2006, 2012). In addition to this, it refers to the studies of engendering migration (Pessar & Mahler, 2003) and the research that analyses the topic of Arab women from a culturally specific perspective (Ahmed, 1992; Pepicelli, 2010).

The study presents an ongoing empirical research based on the ethnographic method and in-depth interviews with migrant mothers belonging to the most populated communities in Milan, Italy, within the framework of the European project ISOTIS – Inclusive education and Social Support to Tackle Inequalities in Society. The expected results are to enrich knowledge on parenting in Arab migrant women, as first step to fight against prejudices, and to provide criteria for the development of initiatives to support their experience and skills as mothers. The most significant impact will be on operators, whose professionalism will be enriched by new intercultural competences that can be particularly useful in supporting migrant parenthood.

Subtheme: The gendered, classed and racialized nature of migration

## Abstract 13

### Protecting moral subjectivities in popular education on global development

Sofia Österborg Wiklund Mimer

During the recent decades, volunteer work or “service learning” in the global South, has become a popular extracurricular choice among affluent youth in the global North. This paper addresses how this occurrence is manifested in a Swedish state-funded educational setting of today, namely, popular movement affiliated Folk High Schools and their courses on global development. The courses often stretch over a year and include a couple of months of a study trip to a country in the global South. They often attract female students in their early 20s from middle class backgrounds.

The article derives from a classroom study in a course that aims at raising awareness about the contemporary unfair world order and that calls for solidarity action against it. Drawing on feminist and critical theory, the courses are here understood as embedded in colonial and nationalist history and contemporarily, and as intrinsically marked by class, race, gender, nationalism and coloniality -conditions that regulate the engagement.

Due to the interweaving of popular education and the tradition of volunteer work, today's courses on global development can be read through a historical lens of development aid of the 19th and 20 century, and its importance in nation building of western countries (see eg. Engh, 2009; Keskinen et. Al, 2009; Ipsen & Fur, 2009) as well as Swedish popular education as a considerable part of Swedish national self-image (Ehn, 1993; Dahlstedt & Nordvall, 2009; cf. Osman, 2013; Berg, 2005 etc.). These are here related to the notions of white femininity (Shome, 2014) and respectability (Skeggs, 2000) and their function in the establishment and maintenance of western cultural, economic- and moral- hegemony.

The study highlights tensions and contradictions occurring when global classed and racialized privileges such as travel mobility and cultural capital are being used in order to question and unlearn the same. Stories from fieldwork show how students, teachers and supervisors from popular movements, as well as the researcher, negotiate, reinforce and/or resist this legacy and how this historically white middle classed room is interrupted in different ways. They also express how normativity concerning activism and solidarity is embodied in the learning and teaching practices. The article critically points out how restraining a critical curriculum, in order to protect and maintain ideas of moral subjectivities, here becomes a prerequisite for teaching and learning.

The study contributes to research on classroom studies on popular education and Swedish Folk High School courses on global development, which until now have not been extensively studied.

## **Abstract 14**

### **Social response to refugee movement: research workshops as a space for critical reflections on knowledge production**

**Angela Pilch Ortega**

If we focus on the current political response of societies to migrants and refugees, we can see that the formation of opinion and in general terms the production knowledge play an important role in producing racist regimes and practises. How we frame and respond to current challenges and problems as societies involves powerful patterns of interpretation, which are to a great extent implicit and hence not primarily reflexively available. As researchers we take part in such knowledge production processes, and moreover possibly contribute the (re)production of problematic discourses in this field. Having this in mind, this contribution aims to address issues of knowledge production and the powerful role of the interpretation of meanings. In particular, the paper will highlight research workshops as a space for critical reflection on knowledge production processes. In doing so, I will give an example of a research workshop for students on qualitative research methods focusing on issues of social response to migrants and refugees. Research workshops, according to Grounded Theory, are characterised by an interactive and collaborative structure, wherein the analysis of empirical data and the generation of theoretical assumptions is considered to be a dialogue which has to be systematically reflected upon, within which the development of a “theoretical sensitivity” is central. Strauss states in this context: “In this interplay between data and researcher, the latter brings to bear not some mythological neutral objectivity, but quite self consciously allows and encourages personal, disciplinary, and research experiences to enter into the analysis. (...) these experiences are part of ‘theoretical sensitivity’, are not used in an undisciplined way but with considerable self awareness” (Strauss 2004, p. 169).

Drawing on a research workshop for students focusing on qualitative research, I will give insights into the knowledge production process as a collaborative work. Over one year, students worked together in research projects focusing on different topics surrounding issues of the social response to migrants and refugees. They investigated, for instance, the motivation for social and voluntary engagement with refugees as well as the involvement of right-wing initiatives (such as the identitarian ‘movement’); responses from print and online media relating to refugee movement and finally patterns of interaction in dealing with migrants and refugees within the medical sector as well as educational settings. I will highlight some characteristics and challenges that appear when doing research on issues surrounding refugees and migrants. In particular, knowledge production related to migration and asylum are entangled with hegemonic discourses, Eurocentric perspectives and power regimes. In this regard the line-by-line analysis with students offers the

opportunity to question seemingly “approved” assumptions and opens up a space for critical discussion and reflection. Additionally I will give insights into the research findings of the students’ research projects on the topics raised.

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## **Abstract 15**

### **Anti-Muslim Attitudes in Andalusia and Conspiracy Theories concerning the ‘invasion’ of Islam: The role of intervention at fighting stereotypes and rumours**

**Carolina Rebollo + Estrella Gualda**

Andalusia is one of the Spanish regions with greater number of immigrants. The Padrón municipal de habitantes [Municipal Population Register] recorded 599,879 foreigners (7.17% of the total population) residing in Andalusia in 2017 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2017). Among foreigners who reside in Andalusia, people of Moroccan nationality are the majority group. The coexistence between Spanish and Moroccans has not been exempt from problems in the past. The economic crisis has impacted harshly in Spain and especially in Andalusia, one of the traditionally poorer region, increasing the sense of labour competition perceived by native citizens with respect to immigrants (Fernández et al., 2015). On the other hand, the recent refugee crisis and terrorist attacks in various European cities (Paris, Brussels, Nice) and in the immediate Spanish environment (Barcelona) could have contributed to increase the feelings of Islamophobia and the stigma commonly associated with Muslims as invaders and terrorists. In addition, we have witnessed the proliferation of far-right wing parties in various European countries that have filled electoral campaigns with discourses of racial and religious intolerance.

Through this paper, based on quantitative data, we want to know what are the Andalusian attitudes toward Muslims and the Islam. We also aim to identify what is the sociological profile behind anti-Muslim or anti-Islam attitudes in Andalusia. Our work is based on the application of a survey to a representative sample of Andalusians. The sample was composed of 1.103 questionnaires.

After knowing the degree of agreement or disagreement with the item: ‘*many Muslim immigrants plan to impose Islam in Spain*’, we try to establish the factors that are related to a greater perception of Muslims as invaders. The invasion perception has been strongly

associated to some conspirative theories in different mass media and social media, and also in the scientific literature. Our hypothesis, based on previous studies on attitudes towards immigration, is that older populations, people with lower levels of education, right-wing inclined, and people with greater beliefs and religious practices, are more prone to share anti-Muslims attitudes, and the belief of the invasion of Islam. Results show a polarization of Andalusian society with regard to this issue, with a clear emphasis on greater anti-muslim attitudes in older populations. From here, and after knowing the importance of these perceptions, we found enough room for the intervention, especially taking actions to fight against a conspiracy thinking that through disinformation could reinforce and promote stereotypes and rumours putting at risk the coexistence for future generations.

This paper is part of the research project "Theories of conspiracy and misinformation" in which the 5th Wave of the Citizen's Panel Survey for Social Research in Andalusia has been developed (EP-1707, PIE 201710E018, IESA / CSIC, [www.pacis.es](http://www.pacis.es)). We thank the Institute of Advanced Social Studies (IESA-CSIC) for the financing of the survey that forms part of this project, and in particular, its Technical Unit for Applied Studies (UTEA), executor of Panel, for the work performed. Our work is also framed in the COST Action (H2020) on "Comparative Analysis of Conspiracy Theories" (COMPACT, 2016-2020), funded by the European Union Framework Program Horizon 2020.

Keywords: Islam. Muslims. Attitudes toward Immigration. Conspiracy Theories. Andalusia. Spain.

## **Abstract 16**

### **Intercultural and Transcultural Education – Program structures, developments and fields of tensions**

**Steffi Robak**

In recent years, intercultural and transcultural education have developed intermediary in a special way, which means, inter- and transcultural offers can be found in various fields, especially in cultural education, but also for example in political, personal and vocational education. The professional program planners in adult education institutions not only collect educational policy guidelines, but also educational requirements and needs and transform them into programs and offers. Especially in the light of forced migration, this constitutes a challenge. The analyses of programs record, how the program structures and their offers are designed. They show the developments of the public adult education sector, both in terms

of the development of offering structures for refugees as well as for the majority population. Concentrations and gaps can be made clear.

This paper presents the results of program analyses, which were carried out in the context of own research projects, and classifies them theoretically with the background of current developments and with regard to future requirements of the program development. It refers to the main points of the calls for proposals *“how models of integration, resettlement and education policies shape activities and agendas of organizations”* and *„the contribution of adult education research and practice to building solidarities, anti-racism and learning for democracy“*.

The results show how the initiation and integration of refugees in the last three years have developed both a broader intercultural and transcultural understanding of education. Furthermore, this paper develops an integration concept that takes up these theoretical ideas and empirical results. This integration concept is developed in three dimensions and includes educational (developmental) perspectives in biographical, cultural and professional terms, in order to support a successful integration. Especially cultural/arts education and vocational education prove to be challenged to realize such a three-dimensional concept, which both takes up and shapes a concept of integration and education.

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## Abstract 17

### Volunteers' learning for democracy? A critical view on refugee relief

Annette Sprung and Brigitte Kukovetz

#### Sub-themes addressed:

- The contribution of adult education research and practice to building solidarities, anti-racism and learning for democracy
- The role of adult education (research and practice) in migration regimes
- The gendered, classed and racialized nature of migration
- The challenges and learning processes in grass-root social movements and migrant organisations

#### Background

At the end of 2015 the movement of refugees has become a big issue for the European Union and its citizens. Beside Germany and Sweden, Austria has hosted the highest number of refugees in relation to the total population. The so-called civil society organised massive support over weeks. Even if the number of refugees has been reduced in the meantime, there are still many people who engage as volunteers.

#### Research questions and methods

We want to explore the different potentials and limitations of social activism for developing solidarities, active citizenship, empowerment and for fighting racisms. In our presentation we will discuss the role of volunteer 'refugee aid', and within this field the contribution and potential of adult education. We will classify present activities of volunteers theoretically within a wide range between non-paternalistic (non-oppressive etc....) acts of solidarity with refugees on the one hand and approaches of charity ('solicharity') on the other hand. What are the motivations and ideas of 'solidarity' behind the observed activities? How far do pertinent projects and educational programmes aim on the empowerment of refugees and on developing shared strategies of resistance against racist practices in migration regimes? Where and how do they reproduce predominant power relations, stereotypes, racisms and sexism? In connection with these questions we are looking at informal learning processes within the engagement, especially with regards to democracy and anti-racism. This includes the question whether and through which processes there might be shifts in the activities and attitudes of volunteers over time.

The named topics are relevant for various countries within the European Union. Taking Austria as example, we will discuss different modes and phases of refugee relief, e.g. spontaneous basic support of newcomers vs. long-term development of relationships and

alliances. We suppose that these activities enable different approaches of collective and individual informal learning processes. The social environment might also have a major impact, as many volunteers reported that they have to deal with sometimes strong or even violent disapproval of their engagement. The recent political developments in Austria are of special interest, because since December 2017 a new government with the participation of the extreme right is in power. Thus we will discuss the influence of the legal/structural framework and dominant migration discourses (including the role assigned to adult education) on the actions and the learning of the volunteers.

For the theoretical framework we refer to literature on informal learning in social action (e.g. Duguid/Mündel/Schugurensky 2013), to theories on solidarity with "others" and to governmentality perspectives on volunteering and adult learning (e.g. Mosher 2015). The empirical analysis builds on a qualitative Grounded Theory study based on interviews with volunteers.

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### **Abstract 18**

#### **Organizational positionings of German Volkshochschulen to support the integration of refugees**

**Tim Stanik and Julia Franz**

It seems to be consensus that the current refugee situation is not just a big challenge for the German society in general, but it is also a huge task for the General Adult Education in particular (Egetenmeyer 2015). In that situation, especially the German "Volkshochschulen" as the most significant adult education centers and the most important partners of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees play a central role in terms of the initial linguistic orientation of refugees. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the public refugee discourse media and policy focus their attention on the Volkshochschulen. In this context, we focus on the following two research questions:

1. How do the Volkshochschulen as organizations position themselves in the

refugee discourse?

2. Which are their organizational strategies to support the integration of refugees?

To answer these questions, we analyze the prefaces of program booklets of representative-selected Volkshochschulen. We consider the prefaces as type of organizational self-descriptions. To analyze the data we use the method of thematic discourse analyses (Höhne 2004). Our findings show the self-positions are located between the poles of discourse reproduction and production. We can also point out that the published organizational strategies for dealing with the refugee situation take place between active and reactive responses. On the one hand, the findings will be discussed by using ideas of System Theory (Luhmann 2000) and on the other hand by using considerations concerning New Institutionalism (DiMaggio/Powell 1991).

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Conference sub-theme “How models of integration, resettlement and education policies shape activities and agendas of organisations, and the future which can be imagined for refugees and migrants?”

### **Abstract 19**

#### **Cultural positioning of the far right and its opponents in today’s Poland: hegemony and political subjectivity**

**Marcin Starnawski & Marcin Gołębnik**

Over the last two years, Poland not only experienced a significant shift towards the political right but has been an arena of increased nationalist mobilization. Indeed, the European moral panic in reaction to the humanitarian crisis and influx of refugees in 2015 played a

vital role in intensifying anti-Muslim populism and racist violence in Poland, especially in the context of parliamentary election the same year, and – like in other Central European new democracies – was played out by political elites in turning the nation into a peripheral victim of the core EU decision makers’ policy of ‘relocation’. Yet the expansion of aggressive nationalism, although somewhat spectacular in terms of street mobilizations and media presence, is not new to the Polish society and can be traced as a steady development over the entire post-transition period. Furthermore, ethnic nationalism with its characteristic components in constructions of national identity (combining, in varying degrees, instrumentalised Catholicism with anti-Communism and rejection of non-Polish ethnicities within the national symbolic universe, as rigid framework of ‘Polishness’) can be seen as a relatively constant historical feature in longer-term perspective. The current prevalence of right-wing ideological conglomerate, which can perhaps be described as a chain of equivalence (linking diverse claims into a coherent mobilization discourse), combines ‘old-style’ nationalistic themes with more recent constructions resulting from transnational circulation of ideas (especially conspiracy theories of various sorts that promote the ‘defence of Western civilization’). In our paper, we understand the far right as the trans-organizational political-cultural formation that both distances itself from the current government (taking anti-establishment or ‘anti-systemic’ position) and takes advantage of its success and continued social support (attachment to a common ideological framework). While nationalist mass mobilizations have been on the rise and gained publicity, the opposition has proven rather modest and relatively powerless. However, some new developments occurred as acts of resistance to neo-fascist presence (e.g. Student Anti-Fascist Committees or the Citizens of the Republic association functioning within the broader liberal anti-government opposition movement) or in response to ultraconservative policies (women’s ‘black protest’ with pro-choice postulates), along with more established forms of anti-racism or anti-discrimination action.

In our paper, we intend to analyse three aspects of how right-wing nationalists and their opponents can be positioned not merely as forces within the political spectrum but in terms of their cultural potential:

1. Cultural resources they use, including (but not limited to) powerful ideas and traditions, visibility and recognisability in public discourse, artistic productions, support of institutions vital for (re)production of collective identities etc.;
2. Types of political subjectivities: not only their specific ideological content but as ways of generational mobilizations, articulations of resistance via cultural resources as well as ‘practical theories’ of change-oriented action;
3. Educational power (a kind of symbolic power), that is, ability to foster development of those political subjectivities with formal and informal pedagogical means.

Cultural analysis of far-right nationalism and its opponents should not be separated from educationalist or pedagogical questions concerning the ways of making political

subjectivities, their content, function, structural differentiation as well as limitations. Our thesis claims the hegemony of the far right within the realm of 'the nation'; this cultural positioning is based not only on historical-intellectual legacy but largely on structural aspects of interpellation to subjectivity (intersection of generation, gender and class) and material resources (means of ideological production) provided to a significant extent by the official institutions of the state favouring extreme ideas in the name of illiberal-democratic populism as a way of governance within neoliberal capitalism undergoing a crisis of legitimacy.

We will use data from the existing studies (e.g. opinion polls and cultural analyses), popular culture productions (such as music, film and journalistic discourses), political message of organized groups (other than parties) as well as interviews with informants linked to anti-nationalist initiatives.

## **Abstract 20**

### **Anti-muslim racism in the context of neoliberal ideologies of competition: Challenges for Adult Education**

**Niels Uhlendorf**

The aim of this presentation is to discuss anti-muslim racism in the context of contemporary capitalism; to be more precise in the context of neoliberal ideologies of competition and its inherent forms of exclusion and downgrading of presumably non-productive individuals. Following Etienne Balibar's conception of a '(neo-)racism without races', it seems helpful to understand race less as a purely biological construction, but rather as an (almost) deterministic view of cultural imprints and as a narrative of unproductive groups threatening the progress of an imagined community of a nation. In this context, a construction of non-productive Muslim immigrants in European societies is intertwined with neoliberal ideologies of competition. In general, competition can be understood as a principle, structuring social life and offering a justification for inequalities and social stratifications. Individual self-optimization seems necessary to prove oneself as valuable while varying opportunities in different classes often remain invisible (cf. Boltanski & Chiapello 2007). In this context, discourses of race are often embedded in logics of competition. Therefore, norms of self-optimization often go along with a downgrading of those who are not successful and who do not seem to put any effort into getting out of their position of deprivation (cf. Hövermann et al. 2015). In discourses of migration, the inability of those who are not successful is then often stressed, rather than forms of discrimination

which lead to structures of inequality. The group that is increasingly seen as non-competitive are different individuals who are perceived as Muslim immigrants in European societies. This encourages and 'interpellates' immigrants to present themselves as useful human beings contributing to the progress of a society. What such a logic can imply will be presented with some material from my PhD-thesis, in which I analyzed pressures of self-optimization in the context of migration and interviewed successful immigrants from Iran.

A triangulation of media discourse analysis (Keller 2008) with biographical interviews (Rosenthal 2004) brought challenging processes of self-construction in the shadow of stereotyping discourses to the surface. Being successful often required to present oneself continuously in the best possible way; a task that can be hard to accomplish against structures of discrimination. Many people tried to present themselves as an exception to the bad stereotype of migrants from Islam dominated countries. The message seemed to be clear in many cases: We can be an advantage for the imagined community of this nation, and we will not be a risk. Successful education then often implied to distinguish oneself from racist stereotypes. Following these steps, the presentation will conclude with some challenges of adult education. In the tradition of Paulo Freire (1968), a critical consciousness needs to be addressed bringing the interrelation between economic logics and ethnic constructions into the focus. This requires an intensive analysis of the different intersectional positions of involved actors in the educational process and on the ideologies that justify it.

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## Abstract 21

### Paradoxes of Liaison Work in Bottom-up Perspective

Katarzyna Waniek

This paper will explore paradoxes, pitfalls and mistakes in liaison work (i.e. the work essential in intercultural communication which relies on translating differences in cultural codes and on defining and explaining the viewpoints of interaction partners) from the bottom-up perspective. The discussion will be based on an autobiographical narrative interview with a young Polish woman (Magda) who in 2006 went to Italy under the European Voluntary Service and helped young Pakistani female immigrants suffering from self-alienation, disorientation and marginality. However, her work to integrate immigrants with the local environment ended with fiasco, since they returned to their homeland. This in turn resulted in a fateful biographical experience, which 'suspended' her faith in intercultural dialog.

It will be argued that she wrongly triggered a hegemonic-paternalistic modality of liaison work (i.e. a schematic way of thinking about the Other and pre-defining his or her outlook on the world as incorrect or distorted) while asymmetrical liaison work (related to thoroughly problematic and painful experiences of violence and humiliation requiring giving voice to bearers of suffering) should be initiated. Thus, Magda – primarily (if not exclusively) defined by young Asians as a 'European' – rather fitted into the role of a patronizing instructor who tried to "mould" them for a specific European "image and likeness". Moreover, by determining what rules it should be based on and what objectives it should aspire to she forced a specific model of intercultural communication. This included a presupposition – not always fully realized – regarding a definite hierarchy of actions, value systems, lifestyles, i.e. the preferred European versions versus those strange ones originating in the Orient and in Islam.

Furthermore, it will be claimed that her attitude was shaped by European programs for young people 'promoting' a model of a 'useful' citizen – an individual who has specific features and abilities such as: rationality, agency, innovation, autonomy, mobility, flexibility, creativity, adaptation to various situations, responsibility for oneself and others, and skilful management of cultural differences. All this should ultimately contribute to a harmonic coexistence and optimal cooperation in the spirit of personal freedom and independence. In other words, features that seemed vital to her were all traits which – according to a common stereotypical view – a traditional Muslim community does not have and which those young women (oppressed by a patriarchal family, in her view) needed to be shown. That's why her support relied mostly on encouraging them to defy their own religion and culture, which – paradoxically – she hardly knew.

In the end, it should be mentioned that multicultural misunderstandings are seldom shortcomings which can be easily amended. Volunteer workers in the European programs are usually unaware of that fact, and for them an inability to reach successful communication can result in a serious biographical disappointment and, in consequence, build a reserve to the challenges of multiculturalism, thus depriving the society of the needed professionals who do liaison work on its behalf. Especially if their work at the grass-root level is seldom recognized and typically underappreciated.

## **Abstract 22**

### **Widening university access and building social solidarity with refugees**

**Sue Webb, Karen Dunwoodie, Mervi Kaukku Kristin Reimer and Jane Wilkinson**

Recently, Simon Marginson (2016) has argued that despite the intensely competitive international higher education sector, universities can still play a role in providing public good through building social solidarity and mobility in volatile and increasingly divided societies. This paper explores the visceral realities and tensions for universities as they develop policies and practices for public good in a context where there is increasing regulation of how public money should be used and the sector is becoming more competitive and stratified. The paper uses a Bourdieusian field analysis to explore how competing discourses about the deserving and less deserving educational needs for adults from refugee backgrounds are being played out in Australia. Drawing on a small-scale study of asylum seekers' experiences of applying for admission to universities and an ongoing study of the experiences of students in four universities, the paper critically reflects on the role of universities in building social solidarities. The broader setting is the global flow of refugees and asylum seekers, with the UNHCR estimating that more than 65 million people are on the move as refugees or 'persons of concern'. With much of the focus presently on Europe, Australia has by no means escaped this global phenomenon. In terms of higher education participation, universities have remained outside the purview of forced migrants (refugees and asylum seekers), with just one per cent of refugees attending university. However, a small but burgeoning body of literature is now examining the experiences of refugee background students as they move into the higher education sector. Although their numbers in Australian higher education may be less than other equity groups, nonetheless these adults are entering higher education in sufficient numbers that the institutional practices that enable this warrant scrutiny.

Recent research has acknowledged the multiple aspects of refugees and asylum seeker settlement difficulties in relation to re-establishing their lives and aspirations of many refugees to participate in adult and higher to develop the capabilities for a better life. One distinct group with the category of forced migration whose university experiences have rarely been documented is that of asylum-seekers. The paper begins to fill this gap in research, drawing on a small-scale qualitative case study currently in progress, which explores the opportunities, blockages and dilemmas these adults encounter accessing and participating in Australian higher education. The paper examines how participants experience a clash between the precariousness of their trajectory as asylum seekers, in part exacerbated by the effects of frequent changes in government policies in relation to the social and financial support provided from public funds, and the stability of the institutional practices these adults encounter which (mis)recognises their skills, knowledge and precarious position. Drawing on semi-structured interviews conducted with applicants, students and university staff, including those implementing admissions processes, as well as analysis of university equity and admissions policies, the paper highlights, the difficulties and frustrations of applicants and current students from asylum seeker backgrounds and the struggles and strategies they experience as universities attempt to balance notions of the public good within an increasingly competitive, yet strongly regulated public sector. Through this analysis the paper contributes to understanding how new anti-racist solidarities are developing in civil society between university staff and students, university practitioners and researchers facilitated by the organisational potential of the voluntary sector through for example, alumni groupings and special interest groups in the bodies such as the Refugee Council, which are beginning to offer some resistance to practices designed to exclude those migrants perceived by the public discourses to be less deserving.

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